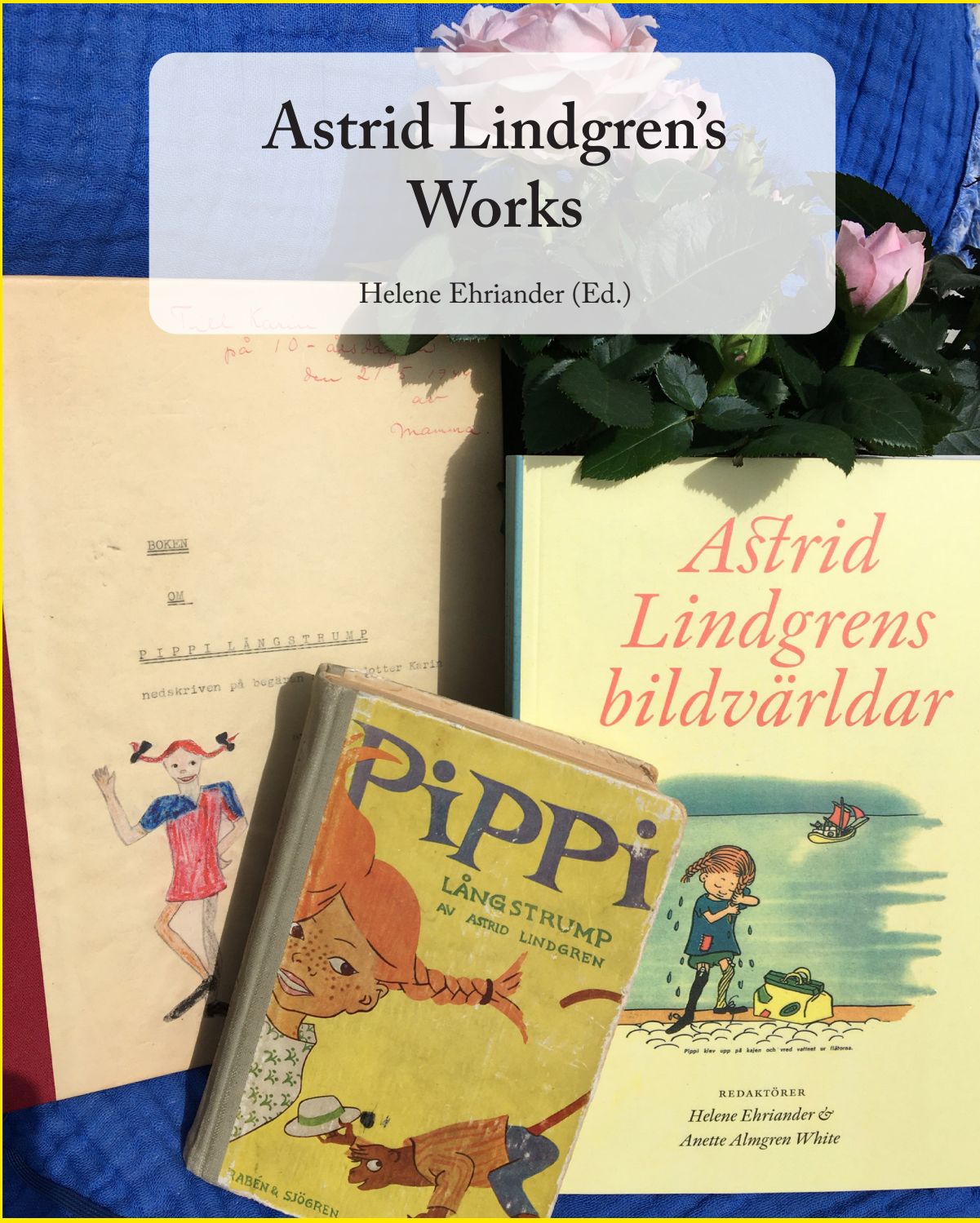
Astrid Lindgren's Works

Helene Ehriander (Ed.)



LINNÆUS UNIVERSITY

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Helene Ehriander

”The modern Swedish children's book”, as it is sweepingly and diffusely labelled in Children's literature research, was born after the Second World War when several of the great authors of children's and youth literature made their debuts. These include Astrid Lindgren, Lennart Hellsing and Tove Jansson. Rabén & Sjögren was, at that time, a relative newcomer to publishing. The business started in 1942 and very quickly established a profile as a publisher of quality books for children and young people. Certainly, a major factor in the establishment of the company's reputation was the double role of Astrid Lindgren as she was not only an editor for children's books but also the most important author for the company.

Author and editor

Astrid Lindgren worked as the editor-in-chief for Rabén & Sjögren from 1946 to 1970 and for almost a quarter of a century was responsible for children's literature. When Astrid Lindgren was appointed she was already well-known as an author; her first Pippi Longstocking book was published in 1945. She was also a qualified secretary. Who could have been better qualified and more suitable to assist Hans Rabén? Marianne Eriksson, Astrid Lindgren's colleague and successor as editor noted; ”It was an exciting challenge, it sounded fun and she also needed the money!” Eriksson went on; ”Anyway, in the autumn of 1946 Astrid became responsible for children's literature at Rabén & Sjögren. 'I knew absolutely nothing about publishing', said Astrid herself, 'but I knew a good book when I saw it. Or rather I should say, read it. It was simply to get going, searching for children's books.'”[1]

When Astrid Lindgren started her work at Rabén & Sjögren she had the valuable experience of being on ”the other side”, the author's, and therefore had a unique insight. In 1944 she wrote an accompanying letter to Albert Bonniers publishing house where, in principle she rejected her own and first Pippi Longstocking book. This letter bears witness not only to her special brand of humour and wit, but also how a company might regard the manuscripts that flood

[1] Marianne Eriksson, ”En bra bok ska vara bra” i *Allrakäraste Astrid. En vänbok till Astrid Lindgren*,(”A good book should be good” from *Dearest Astrid, a Dedication to Astrid Lindgren)*, Rabén & Sjögren, Stockholm 2001, s 80.

in. In *Excelsior! 150 years of Publishing at Albert Bonniers- a Jubilee Collection of Letters* the letter is reproduced in its entirety with commentary by Daniel Hjort. Even Daniel Hjort allows himself a humorous tone when he writes: "Receiving story books, written by creative mothers who maintain that the stories have made their own children happy are an everyday part of a publisher's work. As with all manuscripts, one has to remain very alert. Occasionally there can be something of exceptional worth. A housewife, a mother-of-two living on Dalagatan in Stockholm, sent in a whole bunch." Here is the accompanying letter which is well-worth including in its entirety:

Stockholm, 27th April 1944

Albert Bonniers Publishers Ltd

Please allow me to enclose a manuscript for a children's book that I fully expect you to return instantly.
Pippi Longstocking is, as you will discover, if you take the trouble to read the manuscript, a little ubermensch in the figure of a child placed in a quite ordinary environment. Thanks to her supernatural strength and other characteristics she is completely independent of adults and lives her life just as it pleases her. In her interactions with grown-ups she always has the last word.
In Bertrand Russell (*Education and the Good Life*, p. 85) I read that the strongest instinct in childhood is the desire to become an adult or perhaps the will to gain authority and that in fantasy the normal child clings to images that contain a desire for power.
I don't know whether Bertrand Russell is right but to judge by the sickly popularity of Pippi Longstocking over a number of years amongst my own children and their peers, I am inclined to believe it. Now, I am not so presumptuous that I imagine that just because a number of children have loved to hear about Pippi's adventures it doesn't necessarily mean that it will become a printable and readable book when I write it down on paper.
To convince myself of the situation, whatever that may be, I hereby leave this manuscript in your capable and knowledgeable hands and can only hope that you don't alert the social services. For safety's sake,

> I should perhaps point out that my own incredibly well brought-up small God's angels of children have not suffered any damage as a result of Pippi's behaviour. They have understood that Pippi is a special case, who in no way can be a role model for ordinary children.
>
> With great respect,
> Astrid Lindgren[2]

The publisher's rejection letter is dated 20th September. It is not signed, but contains stock phrases that they would have liked to have published the book and that "the manuscript was therefore circulated for reading" but they had already purchased manuscripts for the whole of 1945 and 1946 and that "we are not ready to commit to 1947." The letter ends with: "The manuscript is very original and entertaining in all its incredibility and we truly regret that we shall not be able to publish it. We therefore return it to you with this letter by registered post."[3] Astrid Lindgren is obliged to use similar phrases herself when, in later years, she herself is required to reject manuscripts sent in by other writers. The book about Pippi Longstocking was revised and subsequently published by Rabén & Sjögren in 1945.

Astrid Lindgren became an invaluable resource when it came to attracting new writing talent to Rabén & Sjögren. One cannot ignore her own experiences as a writer as well as her commitment and opinions about children's literature when one looks at the golden age of children's literature. One way for the publisher to come into contact with new talent was the recurring competitions where Astrid Lindgren participated in formulating the rules, was a member of the panel of judges and took great responsibility for the competitions. That Astrid Lindgren was skilful as an author is common knowledge, but few know anything about the huge contribution that she made as an editor and even fewer can imagine how her advice and comments have shaped the authors of classic Swedish children's books for at least 25 years.

Margareta Strömstedt wrote about Astrid Lindgren's roll as publishing editor in *Astrid Lindgren: A Biography* and she maintains that "Astrid Lindgren's

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2 In *Excelsior! Albert Bonniers förlag 150 år. En jubileumskavalkad i brev (*Excelsior! 150 years of Publishing at Albert Bonniers- a Jubilee Collection of Letters*)*, chosen by and with commentary by Daniel Hjort with the collaboration of Håkan Attius, Bonnier, Stockholm 1987, p 501.

3 Ibid.

contribution as publishing editor would make a suitable subject for study in itself. How did she influence 'her' authors? How was her own authorship affected?"[4] It is just such research that I am now on the way to complete and they do not as yet encompass how Astrid Lindgren's own writing was affected, but it is very interesting to see how she helped and guided a succession of her author colleagues in different ways. By studying the letters that have been preserved it is possible to construct a clear picture of how Astrid Lindgren worked and about her perception about what makes a good children's book. To sit on two chairs at the same time was not problematical for her. Astrid Lindgren had an obvious disposition to help and a benevolence towards achieving the overall goal that as many children as possible should have access to as much good literature as possible.

Altogether there are about 300 collected letters that bear witness as to how Astrid Lindgren worked as a publishing editor. Relatives have given me permission to use the letters that were written to Astrid Lindgren and by her in her role as publishing editor. I have collected these letters for many years. In this study I examine Astrid Lindgren's role as a publishing editor as part of the wider aspect of children's literature during that time. Rabén & Sjögren do not have a dedicated letters archive, but it has been possible to find relevant material within the company. Astrid Lindgren rarely took copies of her letters, but there are authors as well as Astrid's own relatives that have saved letters. In addition there is correspondence in the Swedish Royal Library's handwriting collection which is part of an archive that occupies 150 metres of shelves; one of the largest collections left by any individual Swede. In 2005 this archive was included as part of UNESCO's "Memory of the World Record". One of the most interesting exchanges of letters is with the author, Kai Söderhjelm (b.1918 in Helsinki - d. 1996 in Gothenburg). Kai Söderhjelm and Astrid Lindgren corresponded for more than 25 years and Kai Söderhjelm made a carbon copy of all his letters to Astrid Lindgren. Therefore, there is a complete collection of the entire correspondence between them.

The market for children's literature

When one looks back at children's and youth literature, during the time that Astrid Lindgren worked for Rabén & Sjögren, it is clear that the market conditions were

[4] Margareta Strömstedt, *Astrid Lindgren. En levnadsteckning (*Astrid Lindgren: A Biography*),* Rabén & Sjögren, Stockholm 1987, s 264.

quite stable, even though there was a thorough transformation in the view both of children and of society during the 1950s and -60s. The structural transformation of society that occurred meant that children and young adults – as they are now referred – even as readers, came to look differently. The concept of a youth market develops slowly during the 1950s and stabilised as a genre in the 1960s. Youth became a clearly defined market segment with its own interests and needs and literature developed to satisfy those desires. It is not always easy to identify how trends are created, what they are influenced by and what influence they have, but I would in any case like to highlight how changes in society lead to different styles of literature and how readers are influenced. Literature certainly affects society, but here it is clear that changes have taken place in society first. It is a matter of contention whether literature for adults influences children's literature or whether it is within trend-sensitive children's literature that one can first notice new tendencies. Further, one cannot avoid the question about international influences, especially from the English speaking countries, which obviously affected Swedish children during this time.

There was no publishing policy at Rabén & Sjögren and, when one looks at the correspondence that survives, I believe that it is clear that Astrid Lindgren's perception about what constitutes a good children's or youth book weighed more heavily than fleeting trends. However one can detect a change in output and an apparent renewal in the years prior to 1970, something that certainly didn't come suddenly but cautious fluctuations had begun in the early 1960s. Development went slowly towards greater reflections of society and everyday realities, this culminated around 1970 when Astrid Lindgren left her position at the publishers. Before the 1970s, authors and publishers as well as Astrid Lindgren herself defended security and harmony in books for the young. However this is an issue that slowly arises during the 1960s when the political and social conscience even came to encompass children's literature. In January 2009, in the Danish newspaper *Weekendavisen,* Liselotte Weimer reviewed, amongst other things, a new translation of Pippi Longstocking to Danish and commented, without quoting any reference, that Astrid Lindgren, in the shape of her position as a publishing editor, was holding back new trends: "Concurrently with her authorship, Astrid Lindgren was, for many years, a children's literature editor at her publishers. Here she was shown to be a clever reader with rather

conservative views. It has been humorously remarked that she certainly would not publish her own books."[5]

In *Tradition and Renewal, Swedish youth literature from the Nineteen Sixties to the Nineties,* Ulla Lundqvist takes up the question of trend sensitivity in youth literature, which she believes to depend upon "the moral undertone that is almost always present in books for youngsters [and that] tends to make the message so clear that the aesthetic qualities are easily assigned a lesser role". [6] Astrid Lindgren never renounced, either as an author or editor, the aesthetic qualities and it is my perception that she was very clear about what a good children's or youth book should look like and that she knew which way the wind was blowing.

Astrid Lindgren's view of children's books

In order to understand the background to Astrid Lindgren's position between her authorship and the manuscripts sent by others, it is fruitful to study the view of books that she presented in public. As publishing editor, she wrote sales letters to bookshops where, in both a clever and well-informed way she explained about the company's publications and attempted to encourage readership. In these letters, she wrote at the beginning "Astrid Lindgren calling." This is something that naturally ought to have contributed to awakening the readers' interest. The works of her author colleagues received the most attention even if her own books were mentioned in the letters. Astrid Lindgren was herself a great reader, read books for both adults and children in several languages and has testified in a number of contexts how important reading was to her throughout her entire life. It was important to her to explain this to others, especially to children.

There are very few texts where Astrid Lindgren has written about children's literature and children's reading. In these articles, written for the general public as well as the literati, Astrid Lindgren has directly written about children's literature and her views. The first article is from the newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* in 1953 under the headline "Writing for children". There, from what we can see, several years before all the children's book theorists, Astrid Lindgren, emphasised the child's role as co-creator of a work of literature.

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5 Liselotte Weimer, "Gær til guld"("Yeast to gold") in *Weekendavisen*, nr 5, 30 January 2009, p 3.

6 Ulla Lundqvist, *Tradition och förnyelse. Svensk ungdomsbok från sextiotal till nittiotal* (Tradition and Renewal, Swedish youth literature from the Nineteen Sixties to the Nineties*)*, Rabén & Sjögren, Stockholm 1994, p 36.

> The writer should not boast too much. It is not to his credit that his words and sentences have a shimmering life which can summon bliss. It is the reader who has created the miracle. In the child, and only within the child, is an eternal, enviable fantasy that can create a fairytale castle if one only provides a pair of rough stones to build with. Everything mystical that is hidden between the covers of a book is created by the author and the reader together.[7]

In the same article Astrid Lindgren reflects on a quotation form the creator of Mary Poppins, Pamela Travers, who is reputed to have said: ”One writes for the child within” and intuitively Astrid Lindgren feels that she is right: ”One writes to entertain and satisfy the child that one once was.”

The second article, ”Why children need books”, was written in 1958 and published in *Skolbiblioteket*. In content it is similar to the first article, but here Astrid Lindgren goes a step further when she describes how children create miracles when they read. From taking the point of view that that children co-operate by filling in the gaps, she has placed great faith in the power of books and developed opinions about the ability of fantasy to change reality:

> Books need a child’s fantasy, it is true. But it is truer that a child’s fantasy needs books to be able to live and grow. There is nothing that can replace the book as fertile ground for fantasy. [– – –] A child alone with a book creates pictures somewhere in the secret rooms of the soul that are superior to everything else. Such pictures are necessary for human beings. The day that a child’s fantasy can no longer create them is the day that the human race steps into poverty. All the great things that have ever occurred, happened first in someone’s fantasy and how the world of tomorrow will be depends to a large degree on the power of the imagination that exists with those who are just about to learn how to read. That is why children need books.[8]

”A short conversation with an aspiring author of children’s books” was published

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7 Astrid Lindgren, ”Att skriva för barn”(”Writing for children”) in *Svenska Dagbladet* 1953–11–14.

8 Astrid Lindgren, ”Därför behöver barnen böcker” (”Why children need books”) in *Skolbiblioteket*, no. 3, 1958.

for the first time in *Children and Culture* in 1970, but since then has been reprinted and quoted in several places. Here, Astrid Lindgren uses humour as the main weapon when she pokes fun at poor children's literature as well as authors who don't ask themselves the question about how a good book for children should be. Astrid Lindgren herself answers that she has arrived at a notion of what a good children's book should be: "It should be good. I can assure you that I have mused about it for a long time, but I can't find any other answer: It should be good." She also compares the working conditions for authors of children's literature with those of writers of books for adults. She maintains that the same freedom should apply to all authors regardless of the age of the readers: "Write freely and from the heart! I wish you and all authors of children's literature the freedom that a writer for adults obviously has, to write what he likes and how he likes."[9]

Alvar Wallinder studied the article closely in his book *Who decides?* He does not consider that Astrid Lindgren, apart from the importance of the harmony of content and language, is expressing any particular ideology in "A short conversation with an aspiring author of children's books." but is merely emphasising the right to freedom of expression for the authors of children's literature.[10] If it is not an ideology it is in any case a viewpoint that should have characterised her work as a publishing editor. The starting point for the reasoning in the article is clearly based upon from the experiences that Astrid Lindgren accumulated during her time as publishing editor. Even if Astrid Lindgren does not touch upon her own authorship in the article, her double role is not uninteresting here. By asserting the artistic and literary value of children's literature, placing it alongside adult literature and demanding the same treatment and appraisal she contributes to raising the status of children's literature and therefore indirectly her own position as an artist.

Astrid Lindgren was one of the first who demanded that the quality of a children's book be the same as for a book for adults and the same conditions for authors of children's literature as for writers of books for adults, irrespective of her role. Her view has conditioned attitudes towards children and children's literature on several levels as well as contributed to the development of a serious and literary approach to books for children.

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9 Astrid Lindgren, "Litet samtal med en blivande barnboksförfattare" i *Barn och kultur*"(A short conversation with an aspiring author of children's books"), 6, 1970.

10 Alvar Wallinder, *Vem bestämmer?*(Who decides?) Cikada, Gävle 1987, p 37.

Influence

Jack Stillinger maintains in his work *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius* that all authors are affected by others and what he calls ”pure authorship” is only valid as a concept. He illustrates this by a succession of examples of ”multiple authorship”, that is how world-renowned authors have been influenced by everyone from friends and wives to publishers and book buyers. This is true for all writers and even the most original genius is part of an existence that is outside of his control and affects authorship:

> Such disclosures and reminders of the complexities of authorship have an obvious place in biography and literary history. The romantic notion of single authorship is so widespread as to be nearly universal. In contrast, the accumulation of evidence for the prevalence of multiple authorship can support a more realistic account of the ways in which literature is created and, especially when the ordinary human motives of authors, editors, publishers, booksellers, readers, and the rest are brought into the picture all together, can contribute to the ongoing efforts of new and old historicists alike to connect literary works with the social, cultural, and material conditions in which they were produced.[11]

Further Stillinger shows that ”pure authorship” cannot exist as the text is dependent upon the co-operation of the reader to achieve any meaning. No author can have control over what happens when the reader meets the text. The most complicated aspect of ”multiple authorship” is, according to Stillinger, when one comes to an interpretation of the text and the intentions of the author. By studying the correspondence between Astrid Lindgren and ”her” authors, in the same way as, for example, studying the relationships of Max Perkins with ”his” authors,[12] one can gain an appreciation of how the influence has occurred in the relationship, but at the same time realise how complicated a tapestry is created and how difficult it is to identify the individual strands.

That an author is not an isolated genius working in a vacuum is demonstrated

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11 Jack Stillinger, *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius*, Oxford University Press, New York 1991, p 183.

12 Scott A. Berg, *Max Perkins. Editor of a Genius,* Dutton, New York 1978.

by Astrid Lindgren and Kai Söderhjelm in letters conveying views on freedom. Astrid Lindgren advocates freedom for authors of children's literature, but it is a modified freedom. Kai Söderhjelm has to consider Astrid Lindgren's view about what is commercial, what children can possibly appreciate, undefined "general orders from above", the views of librarians and teachers about what is suitable, etc. Freedom is, in other words, as illusory as "the pure author". If one examines Astrid Lindgren's declaration of freedom in "A short conversation with an aspiring author of children's books" one finds that the freedom that she "*wishes*" [my italics] for authors of children's literature is the same that writers of books for adults have. The only conclusions that one can draw from this is that not even writers of books for adults can use their freedom fully and that for authors of children's books to have equal freedom is actually wishful thinking. Freedom is really just a fine word the meaning of which is limited by miscellaneous values and financial constraints. Freedom within a defined framework is offered to the authors, regardless of the target readership, but there is still an important difference in the framework: "I can imagine that an adult writer who wants to be exclusive and needs the book as a playground for his desires and anguish can, perhaps, completely ignore his readers. He can have his small, narrow readership anyway as there is always the view that there are souls that will understand him. But those who write for children and youth and refuse to think about the readers are actually writing for no-one at all."[13] What Astrid Lindgren means here is a term in research into children's literature that later became known as "adaptation" or "adaption", that is to say acclimatisation of children's literature to suit child readers.

The finances of the company are touched upon in several places in the correspondence and it is clear that Astrid Lindgren is forced to think in financial terms. In her role as a publishing editor, she is obliged to consider the reality of market forces. She says that the income from the Enid Blyton books finances quality publishing and that she can't "work to any other principle than to recommend books for publishing that according to my own conviction, whatever that now is, are appropriate for the readership for which they are intended". The meaning of "appropriate" is a question of interpretation, but it is interesting to observe that it is Astrid Lindgren's own conviction that governs what is published by Rabén & Sjögren. In the previously quoted letters and articles, Astrid Lindgren

[13] Undated letter from Astrid Lindgren to Kai Söderhjelm in June 1955, handwriting section of Åbo Akademi.

turns against trends. This is true of her own authorship, for example *The Brothers Lionheart* (1973) is published during the height of social realism. The book is a genre cross-over tale with facets of both sagas and fantasy.

An interesting thought is that Astrid Lindgren, despite her pronouncements against fashions and fads, is herself a trendsetter. Her personality, values and opinions carried more weight than any other publishing consideration at Rabén & Sjögren. There was no policy to follow and the co-operative society that owned part of the company had no ideological significance for what was published. All manuscripts landed on Astrid Lindgren's desk and it was she who kept contact with Sweden's leading authors of children's books. The perspectives that Astrid Lindgren advocated concerning the readers, language, humour, excitement, etc. influenced the output of the company for more than 25 years. Her knowledge about the book market and her experience as an author plays a role when she balances the artistic element with financial considerations in the company's output.

Publishing work

Astrid Lindgren was a considerate, honest and professional editor who always had the child reader's interests at heart. She was focused and clearly explained her reasons for recommending changes in authors' manuscripts. Almost all authors have thanked her for the help that she has given them even if, at the beginning, felt hurt that their submission was not as good as they thought when they sent it in.

> Dear Astrid Lindgren!
>
> Mrs Lindgren, naturally, does not remember me but more than 7 years ago, I sent a novel to you "July and August" which you very kindly read and criticised. It was certainly not a good work, it was rejected and Mrs Lindgren did not think either that it was the greatest novel but advised me to write more and better. I vowed never to pick up a pen again... I wrote this and that, all of which were, of course, rejected. Until one year ago when Rabén & Sjögren accepted another novel that I had written; "Grandmother and Ebony". Perhaps Mrs Lindgren has seen it at sometime at the company? It hasn't become

a bestseller but has largely received positive reviews and I have come some way along the way. Now, I am not writing at all to say "what was it I said" or such like, but simply to thank you for the advice that you once gave me – to try to write and try to do better – and, in the future, I hope to do even better than the current book. I would have loved to have sent you a copy, but in arrogance I have already given out my copies and there are none left...!!! but I hope for a reprint and then!
With hearty greetings and wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Yours affectionately E P[14]

A concrete example of how Astrid Lindgren worked and how receptive she was to a good story when she saw it is the origins of *Will you play with me?* by Elle-Kari Höjeberg from 1962. Elle-Kari Höjeberg (b. 1952) had said that in 1959 she was with her mother, the journalist Elly Jannes, in Portugal. As a six year-old child she became ill with meningitis and when she recovered she would write a letter home to her father. Elle-Kari, who could already read and write, was very interested in joined-up handwriting but it was something that she had not yet mastered so she wrote in a kind of fantasy handwriting. As the father would not be able to read it, they agreed instead that Elle-Kari should tell the story and her mother would write it down. In that way, the text to *Will you play with me?* was written. The letters with the text were not preserved, but Elle-Kari Höjeberg has a clear memory of how it came about.

When they arrived home from their travels, Elly Jannes showed the letter with the story to Astrid Lindgren who immediately showed interest. There were several years' delay and the young writer was 10 years old before the book was published with illustrations by Ilon Wikland. She remembers that she received a one-off payment, that the book was translated into German, Norwegian and Danish and when she was older she thought that it was a little embarrassing that she had written a book for small children. Now, when the journalist Elle-Kari Höjeberg looks back on her first and only children's book she is most impressed

[14] Royal Library handwriting section.

at how ”Astrid Lindgren was great at taking up exciting ideas”. It is also clear in this context that Astrid Lindgren saw that the short story would be the perfect addition to the company's series of books for the smallest children. At the beginning of the 1960s, Rabén & Sjögren published several simple picture books in a small format, white with a clear front cover illustration that told short stories for children who were not yet old enough to read ordinary picture books.

Elle-Kari Höjeberg was a great reader as a child and as a six year-old already had an appreciation of how a good story should be told. The pattern is rigid with a continuous chronology and the story has an unambiguous construction with a climax where the story turns. Lisa sits in the porch and wants someone to play with. Several animals and children pass by, but none of them have time for her. Then a little kitten comes that wants to play with her and sits on her knees and purrs for a while. When it is most pleasant the story turns so that the animals as well as the children return in reverse order and want to play with Lisa but then ”she played with the kitten – and they played and played – for ever”.[15]

Astrid Lindgren was a witty and humorous person, something that leaps from the pages of the letters that have been preserved. In a letter dated 30th March 1966, Astrid Lindgren writes to a woman who has submitted a story written by her husband. Astrid Lindgren has considered the story and replies with a glint in her eye:

> I have looked at your husband's tale for intelligent children and it is very skilfully done, but I think that it is more for the intelligent than for children. We have no possibility to publish the story.
>
> With hearty greetings
> Astrid Lindgren[16]

When there was nothing else to do but reject a manuscript, Astrid Lindgren had the skill of doing so in a clear but friendly way, such as in a letter of the 9th of March 1966:

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15 Elle-Kari Höjeberg, *Vill du leka med mej?* (Will you play with me?) Illustrated by Ilon Wikland, Rabén & Sjögren, Stockholm 1962 and telephone interview with Elle-Kari Höjeberg 2009-02-16.

16 Rabén & Sjögren's archive.

> We have read your jungle stories, but unfortunately we have no possibility to publish them in book form. The genre of speaking animals is rather over-exposed. We think it is difficult to create something fresh. But we understand that the H*** children must have a wonderful time experiencing these adventures in the jungle together with their father.
>
> With friendly greetings
> Astrid Lindgren[17]

On the other hand when it comes to manuscripts that show the promise to become good books, Astrid Lindgren spends a great deal of effort to formulate what could be improved. On the 2nd of February 1956 Astrid Lindgren wrote to Hans Peterson, one of Sweden's most appreciated and productive authors of children's literature, about one of his early manuscripts, which eventually would come to be a much admired children's book:

> My dear little Hasse, even if you are so busy with the novel and do not want to be disturbed, I am sending *Magnus and Big Brother*, so that you have the manuscript available if the inspiration arises. As I said to you, I think that Magnus is a sweet little boy and we should take care of and cherish him. I have allowed a reader, in whose judgement I set great value, to read the manuscript and said to her: "I want to know in detail, what you like and dislike." The other day she arrived with the manuscript and said: "The first chapters about the birds and the gardens and the errand boys I like very much, but then the book floats away and becomes something quite different. The part about the invisible story is too long. And the nursery rhymes and the dream at the end I don't like." It was almost so that I had to smile. I think the same way too. The dream chapter I absolutely disliked. The nursery rhymes are sometimes funny, but not all and they are seemingly so loosely pasted into the story. No, let us have Magnus, dear, sweet Magnus, such as he is, when he wanders into

[17] Rabén & Sjögren's archive.

the farm alone and muses. The lonely city child, who gets directly to your heart, this you can describe, that I know. Big Brother is also a good person who you should develop more and let us find out more about what he and Magnus are up to. Simple short tales about Magnus' simple small inventions in the style of the birds and the farm. Please don't think that I am being difficult now, but you will certainly want Magnus to be absolutely great.
On Monday, I am going to Långbersgården in Tällberg to try to write a little myself. What if you wrote a few lines to me if you by chance have time over?
This is not as well-thought out as it should have been, but I have so much on and can't manage more just now. Good health and have courage.

Affectionately,
Astrid[18]

Evidence that Astrid Lindgren also tried to recruit skilful authors to Rabén & Sjögren is shown in a letter to Gertrud Lilja dated the 8th March 1950, which should have made the recipient very happy. With both humility and genuine admiration, discussion about finance and argument in favour of proper young peoples' books, Astrid Lindgren tries to get her colleague to try to write for youngsters:

Dear Mrs Lilja!

I read your short story in the latest edition of *Vi*. Arnell answers the questions about why he really writes and for whom, with the words: "For each and everyone, perhaps. Anyone who reads and exclaims: there you are! There you are – I have felt exactly the same way many times when I have read Gertrud Lilja. The first time was when I was around 20 years old and I read your short story collection "People". I think that I have read most of what you have written – and I have

[18] Rabén & Sjögren's archive.

never read a stupid or careless line that has come from your pen. There are not many authors you can say that about.

Many times, I have thought about writing to you and expressing my thanks, but I didn't and I probably wouldn't have done so now had it not been for another purpose. I am employed by a publisher, Rabén & Sjögren, where I have also had published a number of children's books. I don't know if you are aware that this publisher specialises in young people's literature. In the past few days the company has announced a competition for youth novels. I have taken the liberty of enclosing an invitation to take part. Also, I would like to take a further liberty to ask – would not Gertrud Lilja be willing to write a book for Swedish youth? When one recalls the superb portrayal of a girl in "The storm passes" one realises that there is hardly a writer in the country who could have done it better than you. If you don't have the desire to enter the competition, would you consider writing a book anyway? As you see the financial terms are equally as good as for adult literature. And books for young people have a much greater longevity in general and, above all, they are sorely needed.

With greatest respect,
Astrid Lindgren[19]

Astrid Lindgren's position as Sweden's leading author of children's literature combined with her duties as publishing editor for the largest publisher of children's books is unique and very interesting. She is genuinely skilful, diplomatic and humble in relation to the authors, who in fact were also her colleagues. In his memoirs, *Rather Love than War,* Kai Söderhjelm has confirmed the importance of Astrid Lindgren for him personally and for Swedish children's literature as a whole over the years:

For more than twenty years, she advised and guided me, took care of my books and was a constant support. I have perhaps already said many times that her great contribution as an editor should not

[19] University library, Lund, handwriting section.

be forgotten simply because she has had even greater success as an author. It is she that has made Swedish children's literature into an important and well-known branch of literature.[20]

[20] Kai Söderhjelm, *Hellre kärlek än krig,* (Rather Love than War*)*, Rabén & Sjögren, Stockholm 1991, p 195.

Pictures of Alma of Katthult

An Intermedial Study of Emil's Mother as a Writing Woman

Anette Almgren White

Alma Svensson of Katthult is a member of a select group of mothers in the work of Astrid Lindgren who distinguish themselves through their strong presence and the crucial role they play in the plot. Alma is a strong and courageous mother who cares for her children. Lindgren's mothers are otherwise notable by their absence, as in the Pippi Longstocking books or *The Brothers Lionheart,* or very much in the background, such as those in *Mardie*, *The Children of Noisy Village* and *Karlsson on the Roof*.

At first glance, Alma is very much the stereotype of the good mother who tirelessly defends her son with seemingly endless reserves of patience (Vivi Edström 2004: 62). She never considers his pranks – or mischief, as she prefers to put it – to be intentionally malicious; to her, they are a natural part of a child's play. Unlike the general opinion of the community, she seems to be in no doubt that her son will grow up to be a yeoman farmer, just like his father. It is as if she is certain from the outset that Emil, who is widely regarded in the district as an impossible child, will triumph in adulthood and put to shame all those who spread malicious rumours about him. Through prolepses we learn that Emil will indeed exceed society's expectations by becoming president of the local council, a position even more prestigious than that of churchwarden, which his father holds. One thing that is distinctive about the story of Emil is how closely it is linked to his mother through narrative devices. His mother functions as an internal focalizer and it is she who carefully notes down all of Emil's mischief in exercise books that she keeps in a drawer (Vivi Edström 1992). The anonymous first-person narrator apparently has free access to the exercise books and assumes the role of editor, claiming simply to select, arrange and structure the material with Alma's blessing.

Emil's mother is a complex character in as much as she performs various functions: mother, farmer's wife and diarist. In this way, she stands out from most of the other characters surrounding Emil, who generally appear as caricatures, a set of stereotypes who belong to the commedia dell'arte tradition: the stingy,

choleric father, Anton; the good-natured, easy-going farmhand, Alfred; the begrudging, lovesick maid, Lina[1].

The intention of this article is thus to explore the character of Alma as a mother, farmer's wife and writing woman, and how these roles interact to create Alma's complex character. The analysis of these roles is performed from the perspectives of intermediality and cultural history. Briefly, intermediality is both a field of research and an analytical perspective with an interest in intertextual relationships that transgress media boundaries. For our purposes, this implies an analysis focusing on how the character Alma is portrayed in the interplay between words and pictures.

The cultural-historical perspective highlights how the narrative, in collaboration with the illustrations, places characters, settings and plot in contemporary, intertextual context. The analysed material is based on the book *Stora Emilboken* [The Big Emil Book], a single volume compiling the three chapter books on Emil (Lindgren 1991). The black and white illustrations are the work of Björn Berg[2]. An intermedial perspective implies actively exploring the contribution of the illustrations to the characterization of Alma. When viewed in this way, we see that Berg helps in large measure to create the character Alma. The intermedial perspective also highlights the significance of literary and artistic influences on the presentation of Alma's character.

My study will methodically examine how the illustrations contribute to the characterization of Alma, arranged as follows: First, I will briefly present the traditional task of illustrations in illustrated novels, after which follow three separate sections that examine Alma as a mother, a farmer's wife and a writing woman.

Illustrated novels

Illustrated stories, the category to which the Emil books belong, rely on text to carry the narrative while the images are largely regarded as illustrative, their main function to interpret selected passages of text. Etymologically, the word *illustration* means to illuminate in the sense of enlighten and, according to Edward Hodnett (1982), book illustrations fulfil three basic functions: they can be decorative, providing a pause in the narrative flow; they can be informative, suggesting what the characters, objects and settings in the story look like; and finally, they can be interpretive, paraphrasing and explaining selected situations and events in the

story. The successful illustration unites all of these functions in a single image. Illustrations in novels are however rarely used to carry the plot as they are in picture books (Hodnett 1982: 12–15). An illustrator may be given a more or less free hand in relation to the text. If the author and the illustrator are one and the same, it is generally said that it is difficult to determine whether the emerging narrative was steered more by the text or the pictures. While this is particularly true of picture books, in my view it might equally be applied to illustrated stories, especially the Emil books, which have illustrations on almost every spread.

Even when the author writing the text and the artist making the illustrations are two different people, it is not always possible to know how the process has taken shape. While there is a common preconception that the illustrator always has a completed text from which to work, this is by no means always the case. Many collaborations between authors and artists are highly interactive, with the result that the original material may undergo many revisions before attaining its final form. Even when the work is not collegial, the illustrator still contributes to the final design of the work through the pictorial interpretations of the text. In their article on Berg's interpretation of the Emil character, Maria Hultman and Pernilla Tejera inform us that Berg was sent a finished story to illustrate (Hultman & Tejera 1997: 125). Regardless of how the text with its illustrations arrived at its final typographical form, readers will inevitably base their interpretation on the overall result.

Motherhood

Alma is her son's tireless champion, never losing hope that Emil will mend his ways. Deep down, she harbours the conviction that he is destined for greatness. Emil excels when he starts school and is top of the class. According to the narrator, his teacher is probably the first to sense his future eminence as president of the local council. The suite ends with Alma confiding her innermost thoughts to a family gathering: "'It's funny,' said Emil's mother, 'sometimes when I look at Emil I have a feeling that he is going to be very important some day.'" Her premonition is not shared by anyone else: Emil's father is dubious, wondering what she means, to which she replies "president of the local council perhaps – or anything." (Lindgren 1991: 406) Lina guffaws at the idea of a president of the local council who gets up to mischief.

Despite the ridicule, his mother's statement plants ideas in Emil's head and,

in his childish way, he tries to imagine what sort of tricks he might play in keeping with his future prestigious appointment. His mother's propitious comments come at the end of the final book in the trilogy but the seeds are already planted in the first. The conviction that he is destined for great things explains her stubborn insistence on defending Emil even during his most chaotic antics. That said, she never opposes his punishment and Emil is regularly banished to the tool shed. In reality, however, his banishment appears to be less a punishment and more a means to protect him from physical chastisement by his father; so, one might imagine that it is more a contrivance on his mother's part. During his banishment, which Emil does not seem to find too disagreeable, he spends his time carving his wooden men in an artistic parallel to his mother's writing. Alma and Emil have a close connection as artistic souls, a property that sets them apart from the rest of the family. One might even interpret his mother's meticulous diary entries recording Emil's mischief-making as encouragement to continue with his errant ways. The story utilizes repetition as a narrative technique. The mother constantly returns to the mantra "Emil is a dear little boy" and her love for her son through thick and thin is also expressed in pictures (Lindgren 1991: 103).

Emil is the only character that Lindgren describes in any detail: "He had round blue eyes, a round, apple-cheeked face and a mop of fair hair. In fact he often looked so nice that people might have thought he was a perfect little angel" (Lindgren 1991: 9). Berg sketches Emil's face with a few economical strokes to show his expressive eyes and mouth. He draws his hair as fair, curly and tousled, giving him angelic features. The other characters are not given physical form by Lindgren; it is Berg's illustrations that visualize their bodies. Alma is illustrated in everyday period dress: a collarless blouse, striped skirt and apron. Her hair is parted in the middle and fastened in a bun at her neck. Her appearance and the environment she inhabits belong to the late nineteenth century. It is not possible to place the stories historically with any more accuracy, as pointed out by Vivi Edström among others. The settings, phenomena and events that appear in the books suggest that the historical period is some time between 1870 and 1910 (Edström 1992: 139).

Alma is presented with a distinct set of gestures that emphasize the drama in the events surrounding Emil's pranks. Berg's pictorial interpretations help to iconically reinforce the written description of Alma as a tenderly protective mother. In the examples I discuss here, Berg has added significant meaning to the

narrative using Alma's gestures. As Hodnett points out, the illustrator does not simply describe events as they appear in the typographical text; the illustrator also interprets, which implies making a creative contribution. Berg makes just such an addition to the episode in which Emil gets his head stuck in the soup tureen. When his parents are on their way to the doctor with Emil, the illustration shows Alma turning to look at Emil, who is sitting in the back seat with the tureen on his head (Lindgren 1991: 23). Later, when they go to the market leaving the children at home, it is only the mother who turns around in the cart to wave goodbye (Lindgren 1991: 76). A mother turning around is an expression of emotional caregiving. When the parents enter the doctor's waiting room with Emil, Alma is shown with a sad expression emphasized by her bowed head. Hands clasped as if in prayer is another recurring gesture that underlines her concern for Emil, a concern that is all too often exacerbated and tested in conjunction with Emil's many pranks (Lindgren 1991: 17, 26, 30, 65, 347, 373). This gesture can be interpreted both as a manifestation of powerlessness and as some form of prayer to a higher power. "She too was a bit troubled about Emil. Mothers are, when people come and complain about their children" (Lindgren 1991: 103). In the narrative painting tradition – in the work of Rubens and Titian, for example – women in distress are often depicted in this manner.

Alma's caring nature is also underlined by physical contact with Emil. After Emil's shenanigans at the market, when he returns home, Alma "went up and sat beside him for a while" (Lindgren 1991: 103). Berg depicts Alma with head bowed, meeting Emil's gaze. They are holding hands as she sits beside him on his bed. Berg's interpretation reinforces the reader's image of Alma as a loving and empathetic mother. She is also prone to tears when her son is in trouble (Lindgren 1991: 63, 98, 330). She cries into the herring salad at the big party when Emil disappears and is feared dead. In the illustration she is pictured at an angle, half turned away but with a tear clearly visible dropping into the bowl she is holding (Lindgren 1991: 66). Berg has chosen to draw the bowl without visible contents, which in combination with the mother's pose leaves the image open to symbolic interpretation. The motif has an intermedial link to the Bible, specifically Psalm 56, in which David seeks comfort in God. He places his trust in God that no tears will fall unnoticed. David prays that God will not forsake him, that He will store his tears in His container. The pictorial motif alludes to Alma's silent prayer that all will be well and that Emil will be found alive.

In Latin, Alma means gentle and in Spanish, soul, and Alma is certainly a gentle soul. This does not preclude her being struck by wrath, and that too has biblical parallels. Like the furious Jesus casting the merchants out of the temple and overturning the tables of the money changers, Emil's mother angrily flings down the bag of money that the people of Lönneberga have collected to buy Emil a ticket to America, sending money flying everywhere. The mother refuses to bargain when it comes to human value. Berg adds his own interpretation of the reaction of the delegation of Lönneberga residents sent to hand over the "gift" (Lindgren 1991: 103). The illustration shows a row of five elderly men recoiling in horror. The illustration parodically suggests that the venerable citizens are about to collapse into a heap like a row of dominoes. Alma has executed the throw with her right hand, while her left is clenched into a fist, a visual symbol of struggle and resistance. Even her hair seems to be in uproar: Berg draws three prominent strands flying loose from her forehead. Ever since antiquity, loose hair has been an accepted symbol of threatening femininity.

Emil and Alma mirror one another's characteristics, and not only as artistic souls. Emil too is afflicted by righteous anger when faced with injustice, something that finds a physical outlet. When he discovers that the superintendent of the poorhouse has taken all of the Christmas food intended for the inmates, he is enraged. He seizes a porcelain bowl and throws it against the wall so that it smashes into smithereens, screaming "Bring me the superintendent!" (Lindgren 1991: 203). Berg's illustration emphasizes the strength of his throw by showing Emil's right arm flying and right foot lifted from the floor.

Alma is also a source of sage advice and it is often her solutions that win the day when it comes time to extricate Emil from whatever trouble he has wrought. When Emil repeatedly gets his head stuck in the soup tureen and has to be taken to the doctor, the option his miserly father prefers to simply smashing the tureen, she takes matters into her own hands when Emil manages to get his head stuck yet again. She resolutely grips the stove hook and whacks the tureen, smashing it as she had wanted to do on the first occasion. With the father absent, she makes full use of the extra room for manoeuvre. When he enters the house to find out what all the commotion is about, Berg pictures the mother standing head slightly bowed, looking at her husband entreatingly, as if to appease him. This image implies that Alma is subordinate to her husband, which of course she is given the sociohistorical context.

It is her husband who gives her permission to make cherry wine for the grand Mrs Petrell. Alma also possesses a rare kind of courage. When Emil mistakenly eats the fermented berries used to make the cherry wine that Alma has asked him to bury in the rubbish heap and becomes terribly drunk, she accepts responsibility for her actions. When the board of the local temperance society summons Emil to be lectured on sobriety, she insists on accompanying him, rather than her husband, the head of the family: "I'm the one who needs a temperance sermon, but Emil can come along too if you think he really ought to" (Lindgren 1991: 336).

Her courage is also expressed in other ways. It is she who mediates between Emil and his father when the latter is on the receiving end of Emil's pranks. Invariably it is she who takes her son by the hand and rushes him to the tool shed or warns him to give his father a wide berth. It is symptomatic that only those who are Emil's inferior in terms of intelligence and humanity who suffer from his pranks. His father's stupid parsimoniousness and pathetic irascibility are played out in the pranks he is subjected to. The same applies to Lina's overbearing and resentful disposition. Neither Alfred nor Alma, those Emil loves most, suffer the consequences of his inventive imagination. Nor does Ida, who is only an innocent bystander to his mischief. She allows Emil to hoist her up the flagpole and to paint her face so that it looks like she has typhoid. On a psychological level, the fact that Lina and Emil's father so often bear the brunt of his pranks might be viewed as him seeking their affirmation. When it comes to Alfred and Alma, his need for intimacy, empathy and care is already met.

One prime example of Emil's desire for attention is the prank with the frog. Emil packs a frog in the lunch basket as a surprise for Lina, who he fully expects to be "enchanted" (Lindgren 1991: 317). Unfortunately, it is his father who falls foul of the prank when the frog ends up in his trousers. Likewise, when Emil warms a pot lid on the stove and places it on his father's aching stomach it is unfortunately so hot that it scalds him. Emil labours in his own way to win over his whole family.

The professional role of farmer's wife

Emil is a member of an extended family that includes the maid and farmhand, a constellation that remains the same throughout the books. Old Krösa-Maja lives on her own croft but she is often on-hand to assist the family with household

chores, as well as looking after the children. The household is Alma's domain and it is not unreasonable to assume that she also holds the purse strings. While Lindgren never specifically says so, she does write that "she was a very good housewife" (Lindgren 1991: 319). Given that Alma decides on what fare should be served to guests, one can conclude that she is responsible for managing the household's resources. When the father's attempts to interfere in her domain, suggesting for example that she should make the meatballs a bit smaller, Alma will have none of this, declaring that the meatballs are exactly the right the size. Alma exercises control like a traditional wife of a landowner who is entrusted with household finances and has her own keys to the pantry.

The duties of a farmer's wife include being a good hostess, an important element of which is being a good cook. Alma herself prepares food for the summer party: spare ribs of pork, calves' liver, herring salad, picked herring, apple pie, boiled eel, stews, puddings, Småland cheesecake and, a particular favourite, a special kind of sausage. At Christmas the table is heaving with even more dishes and these are listed in an extensive inventory (Lindgren 1991: 215 f.). Alma is in the kitchen among the pots and pans, and she is appropriately wearing normal practical attire, not dressed up in fine clothes. The text, however, never mentions her attire or appearance. Alma excels at running a self-sufficient household: "No one was better than Emil's mother at making jelly and jams and syrups and preserves from the things which grew wild or in the garden" (Lindgren 1991: 317 f.). Alma has a gift for balancing thrift with hospitality. As well as cooking, a farmer's wife is expected to be able to weave and spin. Lindgren describes her spinning and Berg contributes illustrations of her working with a distaff and spinning wheel (Lindgren 1991: 190, 376). On the first occasion she is spinning a fine white wool to make stockings for the children. On the second occasion we are not told what the yarn will be used for, only that Alma was "treading the spinning wheel" (Lindgren 1991: 376). We find out indirectly that she can weave when the parson's wife visits to borrow a weaving pattern from Alma.

The distaff has been a symbol of skilled female labour since antiquity, in contrast to the mirror, which symbolizes female vanity. Both the distaff and mirror are illustrated. A dressing mirror is shown on a bureau, both of which are historically correct furnishings. That Alma is sitting at a bureau is however the result of Berg's pictorial interpretation. Lindgren only mentions a desk with an inkwell on it (Lindgren 1991: 294). Alma's blue exercise books are kept in one of

the drawers. Here Berg is creative in his illustration in order to underline Alma's role as a woman writer.

Alma's outfit changes whenever she leaves the confines of home to visit town. It is then that she is illustrated wearing fine clothes, a historically correct depiction of convention that Berg chooses to insert. Berg dresses her in the fashion of the time, in a hat with a wide brim and ribbon, a dark long-sleeved form-fitting blouse with fabric buttons and ruffled neck. On her feet she wears boots and a handbag dangles from her left wrist (Lindgren 1991: 30). Alma's handbag is never mentioned in the text and can therefore only be considered as an attribute.

In a cultural-historical context, the handbag is a status symbol that was increasingly adopted by women during the nineteenth century (Wilcox 2012: 17). Above all, it was the increasing tendency of bourgeois women to travel that led to a need for a bag to store essential personal belongings. The fashion for figure-hugging clothing worn over a corset left no room for pockets. The status afforded by handbags is evident from the fact that only Alma and her social betters, "grand Mrs Petrell" and the parson's wife, carry one (Lindgren 1991: 69, 351). Of these, it is only Mrs Petrell's handbag that is mentioned in the text when it is one of the ingredients in a prank. Emil has placed a rat in the handbag just before she departs for home and the story ends before we discover how well the surprise has been received. I consider his little prank to be a symbolic critique of female haughtiness and the pursuit of status.

The hat too is a status marker, and only those of higher rank could afford to wear one adorned with ostrich feathers. Previously the preserve of the aristocracy, ostrich plumes were considered to reflect elegance. By the end of the nineteenth century, ostrich farming for the fashion industry meant that even bourgeoisie women could afford this status symbol[3]. Only the hats worn by Mrs Petrell and the parson's wife are illustrated with feathers, underlining their social superiority. The plumes of the hat worn by the parson's wife are even mentioned in the text and play a significant role in a prank. In Berg's illustrations, Mrs Petrell wears long feathers in her hat at the first party at Katthult. Where Mrs Petrell's handbag is the vehicle for the consequences of her vanity, for the parson's wife her feathers serve the same purpose. Emil manages to singe the feathers while studying them more closely through a magnifying glass that he has borrowed from the parson's wife. Berg draws Emil standing behind the parson's wife, caught in the act of focusing the magnifying glass (Lindgren: 351). This too can be interpreted on a

symbolic level as a critique of hauteur. Once again, the prank finds a "deserving" victim.

Alma's association with bourgeois ladies and the parson's wife might be interpreted as an attempt to rise above her social station. Alma wishes to impress her social betters and ensures that her famous sausages are available in abundant quantities at the party to which the town's fine lady Mrs Petrell has been invited. Alma is a pushover for flattery. Mrs Petrell has previously tasted her sausages and praised them highly. When to everyone's dismay Emil devours all of the sausages, Alma's efforts appear to have been in vain, a view confirmed when the Svenssons are invited to visit Mrs Petrell in town. She treats them churlishly and it is readily apparent that friendship is out of the question, at least on Mrs Petrell's part. She attempts to meet any social obligation with the minimum of effort, offering the Svenssons a lunch of reheated leftover fish pudding and blueberry soup. She herself has eaten her fill of veal fillet and marzipan cake just before the couple arrive. Alma is also keen to be on good terms with another social superior, the parson's wife, and lends her a weaving pattern. During the visit she offers her coffee in the arbour (Lindgren 1991: 350).

It is not only the father who is punished for excessive thrift, so too is Alma. Unsure what to do with that year's record-breaking cherry harvest, she allows herself to be persuaded to make cherry wine for Mrs Petrell from the surplus. No remuneration has been agreed, so Alma does not agree for financial gain, she simply does not want to see anything to go to waste. She also finds it difficult to say no whenever anyone asks her for something. Class is also a factor; it is customary not to refuse a request from someone of higher social rank. Meanwhile, things take a turn for the worse when, with no ill intent, Emil eats some of the fermented berries left after the wine has been bottled. He gets very drunk and for a while is even believed to be dead. All's well that ends well, however, and the episode concludes with Emil promising to abstain from strong liquor, and "to work in whatever manner he could for the increased sobriety of his fellowman" (Lindgren 1991: 342). He also smashes Mrs Petrell's wine bottles, an act illustrated by Berg. The moral appears to be that thrift is a virtue, but only to a certain degree.

The writing woman

It is reasonable to assume that the mother deals with the accounts of the farm. "She was good at writing. She recorded all of Emil's misdeeds in a blue exercise

book which she kept in the drawer of her desk" (Lindgren 1991: 109). She wrote in her diary every day, as she also made an entry on the days when Emil was "well-behaved" (Lindgren 1991: 110). By extension, one can imagine that, while sitting down to record her son's exploits, she would take the opportunity to make entries in a ledger. Of course, this task is never mentioned but, given that the endeavour to use money frugally is at the root of many pranks, I still consider it justified to make such an assumption. Keeping the accounts is hardly likely to be among the father's tasks, certainly not based on Berg's illustration of the act of writing. Anton is pictured standing behind his wife, who is sitting on a chair leaning forward over the slide-out desktop of her bureau. In Berg's portrayal, he stands at a distance, bent slightly forward, not wishing to disturb his wife's concentration as she works. It seems that, when it comes to writing, he is subordinate to his wife, his position behind her back indicating that he is excluded from her creativity. Her writing does not appear to be solely – as she jokingly attests – a means of explaining to the grown-up Emil how she became grey-haired. It is tempting to interpret her writing from a psychological perspective, as a therapeutic pursuit through which the mother processes the day's events when her son has found himself in situations that have created family conflicts that she will generally be expected to resolve.

In Berg's illustration, the writing act is also a way for Alma to distance herself from her domestic role as a farmer's wife and a mother. As previously mentioned, Lindgren herself has little to say about the actual act of writing, only that Alma records all of Emil's pranks in an exercise book that she keeps in her desk drawer. Those moments, such as the one illustrated by Berg, when she sits down at her bureau detached from all her obligations, provide her with metaphorical room of her own, in the words of Virginia Woolf, whose famous essay *A Room of One's Own* (1929) deals with the conditions for women's writing. The bureau seems to be Alma's property, a symbol of her writing, as emphasized by the dressing mirror that rests upon it, conventionally a female attribute. While sitting at her writing bureau, she has an outlet for her creativity and is engaged in an activity entirely for her own amusement. The act of writing is completely divorced from the utility that permeates her many other chores. Her own facetious justification for her writing appears to be nothing more than a pretext. She makes no effort to involve her husband, who clearly doesn't understand her motives. He can fret to

his heart's content about her wearing out the pen; as the family scribe, Alma has the upper hand.

Berg's illustration of the act of writing contributes significantly to our understanding of Alma's multidimensional character. Berg remains true to conventional motifs of people sitting in deep concentration at a desk or lectern, a means of representing the author or intellectual since the Middle Ages. Alma, however, is unschooled; the stories she commits to writing are not in formal Swedish but in dialect. She also commits a great many spelling errors, giving her writing a patina of parody. Berg's illustration suggests how the act of writing is performed and thereby highlights a creative process. We are reading a story about a story and the illustration reinforces the way the illusion is broken in the text. There is another illustration of Alma at the writing bureau (Lindgren 1991: 110) in which she is in the act of either attempting to open or close a drawer crammed with exercise books.

Perhaps the first-person narrator holds a privileged position with the mother, given that the narrator has unfettered access to her exercise books. Edström deals with various aspects of the narrative perspective and the relationship between the narrator and the mother (Edström 1992: 150). We know that the narrator has promised the mother not to disclose certain events involving Emil. We are also told that all of the exercise books have been preserved with the exception of three that Emil attempted to sell. Having failed to do so, he makes them into paper boats instead. The first-person narrator takes on the role of omniscient observer and does not hesitate to interrupt the story mid-action to comment on what is happening. Events and situations are described from a third-person perspective and the internal focalizer, Alma, participates in the narration herself. As the narrator claims to be basing the story on source material in the form of the blue exercise books, yet still regularly interrupts the action to corroborate events, the narrative seems to be ironic.

This ironic tone is made tangible, for example, when the first-person narrator lists all of the dishes on the kitchen table at the Grand Clean Sweep at Katthult. This list does not appear to be based on any record kept by the mother. The narrator concludes the list of 29 dishes with the meta-comment: "That was all I think. I can't have forgotten more than three, at most four things, well, let's say five to be on the safe side, but otherwise I have included everything" (1991: 216).

Alma represents the writing mother, a literary motif that occurs intertextually.

One well-known example of this is the mother in John Irving's novel *The World According to Garp* (1978), in which a son competes with his mother for literary success. There are not many mothers in literature who write explicitly about their relationship with their own children; however, in Sweden we do have prominent examples in Saint Bridget (Birgitta) and, closer to our own era, Alva Myrdal. Myrdal used observations of her own son, Jan, in her research on child psychology, with the intention of reforming Swedish preschools[4]. Saint Bridget writes about her relationship with her adult son, Karl. While Lindgren's books about Emil of Lönneberga and Bridget's visions in *Revelations*, in which her son plays a prominent role, differ radically in terms of themes and genre, we can nonetheless affirm that the understanding and ever-forgiving mother is a motif that Lindgren shares with Bridget. The saint's close connection to her son is described in the *Revelationes* (Book 7: 13–14, Bernt Olsson 1993). Bridget mourns the death of her Karl and worries that his extramarital affair with the Queen of Naples has condemned him to Hell. She cries and prays to the Virgin Mary that he might be forgiven. In a vision, Bridget witnesses a wonder. She sees Karl saved from Hell. Mary, mother of Jesus, tells her that it is her insistent prayers and the many tears she has shed that have saved Karl from Hell. He is now in Purgatory, from where through his own penance and his mother's prayers, he may one day reach Paradise. The motif of clasped hands and falling tears is a distinctive feature of representations of Bridget, a motif repeated in Berg's portrayal of Alma.

The act of writing as such is also reproduced within the framework of an iconographic[5] tradition linked to female authors. Lindgren's and Berg's representations are founded on a rich iconography. Several such images depict Saint Bridget sitting with a quill in one hand and a book in the other. There are also images of her at a lectern (Bea Mankell 2003), a motif that is by no means new but follows a tradition of predecessors such as Hildegard of Bingen and Christine de Pisan (Whitney Chadwick 2003: 35, 61) and successors such as Charlotta Nordenflycht, Mary Wollstonecraft and Selma Lagerlöf.[6]

Conclusion

An intermedial analysis provides a deeper understanding of Alma's character. By weighing up the potential of the illustrations for conveying meaning and how they interact with Lindgren's prose, we reveal how Berg's interpretations of the mother's appearance, attire, gestures, movements and gaze contribute to making

Alma a complex character. In his illustrations, Berg depicts her relationship with Emil as one of reciprocated love, highlighting the tenderness of her glances and close physical contact with her son. When we consider Hodnett's three basic functions of book illustrations – to be decorative, providing a pause in the narrative flow, to suggest what the characters, objects and settings in the story look like, and to interpret situations and events in the story – we can see that Berg's illustration of Alma and of Alma together with Emil particularly fulfil the second and third of these functions. Alma is given physical form, as is her caring relationship with Emil, which is shown to be underpinned by physical contact and proximity and by her sometimes loving, sometimes anxious glances. When she sits beside Emil for a while in the evening, Berg has interpreted this as Alma sitting on the edge of his bed holding his hand as they exchange intimate glances. Lindgren does not offer any details about this, only that Alma "went up and sat beside him for a bit". It is Berg who interprets it as an intimate meeting. Berg's finely tuned illustrations reinforce the bond between mother and son.

Illustrations of Alma in her occupational role provide a credible representation of the chores and environment of a yeoman farmer's wife at the turn of the twentieth century. While the period is admittedly approximate, the chores depicted correspond well to the reality of a self-sufficient agrarian community. In light of this, the portrayal of work on the farm, supported by the illustrations, can be read as a nostalgic narrative.

Alma's role as a writing woman appears to be complex and contradictory. It turns out that she can barely spell and yet the stories flow from her pen. Her relationship to the anonymous first-person narrator is a mystery: how much influence does it have on how the stories are presented? We do not know, all we can be sure of is that this narrator stands between the reader and Alma's own account of events. It is also the narrator who chooses freely from the catalogue of mischiefs, apparently offering up the stories in no particular order. They do however generally follow the rhythm of the seasons, reflecting the cyclical agrarian society.

The narrator claims to have a special relationship with the mother and, according to Edström, takes on the role of a committed reporter (Edström: 152). I would go further in accentuating the narrator's position. Rather than acting as a reporter, he or she assumes the role of Alma's editor. Alma, in the role of a mother writing about herself and her son, has intertextual predecessors. The

most apposite of these from a Swedish perspective is Saint Bridget, who wrote about her son Karl in the form of revelations. Berg depicts Alma sitting at a writing bureau, his own creative addition. Lindgren herself says little about this act of writing; the reader is only informed that the mother keeps the blue exercise books in the drawer of her desk. Likewise, role models for Alma's intellectual pursuits can be found in an abundant iconographic tradition of writing women, including Bridget. The saint is often portrayed at a lectern holding a book and pen. Berg's interpretation reinforces the link to women who write, as well as to the significance of having a safe space in which to do so. The latter echoes Woolf's landmark essay on the importance to women's creativity of having a room of their own. Berg's illustrations portray Alma's creative, intellectual vigour, thereby highlighting her status as a woman who writes against the background of her other roles as mother and farmer's wife.

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Endnotes

1 Although the narrative style of the Emil books can be traced to various literary models, these do have one thing in common in that they all originate in a popular burlesque tradition. Edström refers to the narrative as having the tone of a crazy farce (Edström 1992: 136, 143). Ulf Boëthius associates the writing style with skaz, a written narrative that imitates a spontaneous oral account in its use of dialect, slang and idiom in which "the narrator's verbal actions are central" (Boëthius 1998: 78). The link I identify to commedia dell'arte thus underlines an association with popular forms of performance.

2 *Stora Emilboken* collects the unabridged trilogy *Emil i Lönneberga* [published in English as *Emil and the Great Escape*] (1963), *Nya hyss av Emil i Lönneberga* [*Emil and the Sneaky Rat*] (1966) and *Än lever Emil i Lönneberga* [*Emil's Clever Pig*] (1970), including complete illustrations in black and white. In the original illustrations, motifs have a colouration from red to pink. Cf. Lars Bengtsson (2012). *Bildbibliografi över Astrid Lindgrens skrifter 1921–2010,* p. 270.

3 Cf. Sarah Abrevaya Stein (2008). *Plumes: Ostrich Feathers, Jews, and a Lost World of Global Commerce*. The author describes the spread of the fashion for wearing plumes from the nobility to the bourgeoisie during the late nineteenth century. This trickle down from the upper echelons of society is exemplified in two pictures. In Lena Johannesson's *Konst och visuell kultur i Sverige: 1810–2000* (2007), Queen Josefina wears an enormous headdress crowned with ostrich feathers in a family portrait of the *Bernadottes*, 1837, p. 51). The cover photograph of Stein's book shows a bourgeois lady wearing a hat adorned with ostrich plumes.

4 In Jan Myrdal's *Childhood* (1982), it is revealed that his mother made observations of her son for use in her research into child pedagogy.

5 The word iconography is derived from the Greek *ikōn*, an image or likeness, and *graphia*, to write. It is used both to describe a particular depiction of a subject in terms of the content of the image, such as a specific set of figures – for example, in the Nativity – and as the name of a field of study that explores the

subject matter, meaning and interpretation of works of art. Source: Johannesson (2007: 318).

[6] The authors have been depicted in the act of writing, either pen in hand or at a lectern: Mary Wollstonecraft by John Opie, Hedvig Charlotta Nordenflycht by Ulrika Pasch, and Selma Lagerlöf in a number of photographic portraits.

A Pet for Pelle – A Picture Book's Relationship to *Seacrow Island*

Anette Almgren White & Helene Ehriander

On an islet in the sea sits a big dog flanked by a girl in yellow-checked dungarees and a boy in blue-striped sweater holding a spotted rabbit in his arms. The dog is resting its large paws in the girl's lap and licking her face. In the background, a ferryboat can be glimpsed among the islands and rocky outcrops of the archipelago. This is the scene depicted on the cover of the picture book *A Pet for Pelle* (2019), published in Swedish as *Ett litet djur* åt *Pelle*, with text by Astrid Lindgren and illustrations by Maria Nilsson Thore. It shows the main characters Tjorven and Pelle together with Tjorven's St. Bernard, Bosun, and Pelle's rabbit, Yoka. The idyllic scene is one of harmony; the children and animals sit close together, relaxed and serene. Tjorven looks plucky, while Pelle looks somewhat more pensive.

The picture book, which was simultaneously published as an audiobook, is the first literary publication in over fifty years to revisit the world of *Seacrow Island* (*Vi på Saltkråkan*, 1964), Astrid Lindgren's chapter book with illustrations by Ilon Wikland. *Ett litet djur* åt *Pelle* is based on the chapter with the same title, which is in turn a novelization of an episode of *Seacrow Island*, the television series with an original script by Lindgren and directed by Olle Hellbom. Filmed during 1963, the series was first broadcast on Swedish television in spring 1964. The series was an immediate hit with audiences and its child actors, especially Maria Johansson who played Tjorven, become high-profile stars. So too did the actor Torsten Lilliecrona, who played Uncle Melker and, according to Anders Wilhelm Åberg (2011b: 153) would forever be associated with the role. The fictional world of *Seacrow Island* encompasses an extensive gallery of islanders, with Tjorven at the forefront and leading characters in the holidaying Pelle and the rest of the Melkerson family. There is also Stina, whose mother is away working in Stockholm, leaving her daughter in the care of her grandfather. The television series has been repeated many times over the years and at the time of writing is available in the open archive of Sveriges Television (SVT). It is therefore primarily through the television series rather than the chapter book that most people have become acquainted with life on the fictional Seacrow Island. In an interview with the magazine *Svensk Bokhandel*, Annika Lindgren, Head of Publishing at the Astrid

Lindgren Company (Astrid Lindgren AB), explained that, while the company does not permit new stories to be written, it does allow existing texts to be used in new contexts, for example publishing a chapter from one of Astrid Lindgren's books as a picture book with new illustrations. Annika Lindgren added that this was a way to renew Astrid's work and keep it alive, while at the same time retaining the classic illustrations commissioned during her lifetime. The company is happy to have both versions available on the market at the same time. In the same article, Maria Nilsson Thore discussed her illustrations for the new picture book and the freedom she enjoyed to sketch the characters as she saw fit, while admitting that the final results were still influenced both by images from the television series and by Ilon Wikland's original illustrations, which are themselves based on the television characters. Nilsson Thore also commented that during the process she had changed the colour of Tjorven's and Pelle's hair, so that in the final version they have the same hair colour as in the television series. She has given Uncle Melker a little grey around the temples to reflect his age, given that he is father of the 19-year-old Malin (Damberg 2020:13–14).

The picture book takes advantage of the intermedial references by introducing a wider range of characters on its back page than appear in between the covers. This gives a thorough introduction to anyone who is unfamiliar with the story of Seacrow Island or has forgotten it. The reader is told that Tjorven, her dog Bosun and her entire family live together on the island. Melker Melkerson and family, children Malin, Johan, Niklas and Pelle, holiday on the island each summer. The youngest, Pelle, is described as a seven-year-old with a love of animals but no pet of his own. After a presentation of the main characters, there is a brief informative text concerning the events in the book and how Tjorven and Pelle come to find themselves in the middle of a dangerous adventure in which Bosun plays a key role. The plot revolves around Pelle's interest in animals and how he joins Tjorven on a boat trip to buy a rabbit. Their trip takes an unexpected turn when on the return journey they are caught in a storm, lose their oars and find themselves temporarily castaway on a deserted island. The story ends happily with Bosun pulling the boat home. On the way they also recover the lost oars.

Many of Astrid Lindgren's literary works have gone on to become picture books. The classic bestseller *Do You Know Pippi Longstocking?* (1947) was published only two years after the first Pippi Longstocking book; the first of many Pippi adaptations, its relationship to the first chapter book is analysed in intermedial

terms by Anette Almgren White in the edited volume *Starkast i världen*: *att arbeta med Astrid Lindgrens författarskap i skolan* [Strongest in the World: Working With Astrid Lindgren's Oeuvre in Schools] (2011). Similarly, the books on the Children of Noisy Village and Children on Troublemaker Street, the Emil and Mardie books and also her fairy tales have been adapted into picture books over the years, demonstrating that the publication of Lindgren's work in this form is more the rule than the exception. In some cases, picture books have been based on chapters from the original books, while others have been continuations of the stories of well-known characters already published in book form. The Emil picture books are adaptations of episodes in chapter books, while the picture books about the Children on Troublemaker Street and Mardie are new stories about characters from the books. Finally, the fairy tales have identical text but new illustrations in the picture books (Ehriander & Almgren White 2019; Ehriander & Hedén 1997).

There have however been few adaptations of the television series and book *Seacrow Island* until now with this new venture by the author's family and the Astrid Lindgren Company. The most recent publication was *Scrap and the Pirates* (1967), a tale told through a compilation of stills from the television and film shoots. In addition to the television series, four feature films about the families in the archipelago were produced between 1964 and 1967. It is interesting here to consider whether *Seacrow Island*, both in terms of characters and environment, is sufficiently recognizable to speak of constructing meaning. In her dissertation, Lisa Källström discusses how the world-famous Pippi has become a cultural icon and that such iconic status implies an exchange process through which, for example, a character such as Pippi becomes a nexus for various cultural practices and is 'remade' every time she is placed in a new context in which we recognize her through one of her characteristics (Källström 2020:17).

In light of this new addition to the Astrid Lindgren Company's media landscape, the question arises of how the new picture book (i) functions as a freestanding work and (ii) upholds the literary and filmic heritage. How is the story adapted to the specific storytelling requirements of a picture book and a new generation of young readers, and how does it relate to its predecessors, both the television series and the chapter book? The purpose of this article is to adopt an intermedial perspective to study and discuss how the picture book relates to earlier adaptations and changes the story has gone through on its intermedial

journey in terms of content and form, as well as any changes that can be reasonably attributed to the timespan between the publication of the picture book on the one hand and the television series and the chapter book on the other.

The study has been conducted using comparative intermedial analysis of the picture book and the source chapter of the novelization and the episode of the 1964 television series.

An intermedial perspective

The study's intermedial perspective means that the analysis focuses on how a change of medium affects the narrative of the picture book. A transformation occurs every time content is transferred from one medium to another. These changes in medium are placed in a cultural and historical context in order to increase understanding of how stories change over time to adapt to new conditions, conventions and tastes. Intermediality is a term that describes both an interdisciplinary research field, most prominently in the field of literary scholarship, and an analytical perspective that highlights and explores intermedial intertextual relationships across media boundaries.

That all literature, art forms and media are inherently mixed and that it is neither possible nor desirable to strictly demarcate or differentiate between them is a central concept of intermediality (Elleström 2010: 1–17). Nevertheless, to arrive at a better understanding of an individual work of literature, it is important that research should contribute knowledge about how stories connect to one another across media boundaries; in this case, how the new addition of a picture book relates to the sources, both the original and the adaptations. The term medium is used in the analysis. According to Jørgen Bruhn and Liviu Lutas (2016: 2), a medium is a phenomenon with three dimensions: one technical, one basic and one qualified. The technical dimension of a medium is its materiality, meaning the physical form of communication with which the reader/viewer engages. In this article, the examined relationship is between film, illustrated chapter book and picture book. The basic dimension concerns the basic media through which communication is conveyed; in this case, static and moving images, organized and unorganized sound and written and spoken text. Organized sound refers to compositions while unorganized sound refers to natural or unintentional sounds; i.e., sounds that have not been created for aesthetic effect. A song sung by a human is organized while birdsong is not, even if we might interpret it as "song". That

said, birdsong may of course be used to invoke a specific mood or as a leitmotif for a given artefact.

Finally, the qualified dimension refers to the contextual factors that shift over time and from place to place, and are thus controlled by convention. The basic conventional division of literature into prose, poetry and drama was already prevalent in antiquity and remains so today. The media of film, chapter book and picture book are likewise governed by various expectations and conventions that have emerged over time. Television series are episodic, often with the ending left hanging, while feature films usually demand resolution. The chapter book is more reliant narratively on the written word than a picture book. Film relies on moving pictures in combination with sound, often replacing the narration of a chapter book with performance. Chapter books also appeal to a broader readership than picture books, which are intended for a younger age group.

The qualified dimension of a picture book is a story of limited scope with a clear beginning, middle and end, told in words and pictures and aimed at children. This does not however preclude the existence of books that are undeniably picture books but that have greater scope and an adult target group, such as Shaun Tan's *The Arrival*. The technical dimension of the picture book remains printed matter, meaning that it is analogue and therefore dominated by the basic media of static images and the written word. All three dimensions interact and intervene with one another and it is therefore impossible to separate them completely.

The article is arranged as follows: first, an analysis of the picture book's visual and verbal representation in relation to the picture book as a medium, followed by a comparative analysis of the picture book with the chapter book and then the episode of the television series.

This comparative analysis is expected to reveal changes between the analysed texts that can be explained partly by the transformation related to the three dimensions of the medium and partly by the passage of time. To achieve this, however, the picture book must first be analysed based on its medial characteristics.

The picture book

An analysis of the technical dimension shows that *A Pet for Pelle* is in many regards a classic picture book: the pages are 28.5 × 25.5 cm in landscape format, the book is of limited scope at 40 unnumbered pages, and the illustrations are in a tinted colour scale covering the entire spread. Only a few spreads are not completely

covered by an illustration but every spread has both text and an illustration. There are panoramic pictures, full and half images and close-ups. On the left-hand side of the first spread there are two columns of text, each of 16 lines. A further five pages have double columns of text, a solution designed to accommodate a large amount of text without it appearing too dense. There is a tendency, largely driven by a desire on the part of bookshops, to categorize all picture books regardless of the complexity of the text as primarily for the preschool age group. The scope and realism of the text presupposes not only an adult reader but possibly even a slightly older primary target group, something we will return to in the comparison between the picture book and the chapter book. According to the publisher's website, the book is intended for children between 3 and 6 years of age, the normal target group for picture books.

While the illustrations are realistic in style, they do not follow realistic ideals in presenting the children: Pelle and Tjorven are depicted as unproportionate, with large heads and thin arms and legs. Their shoes are so small that they could be dolls' shoes. This may be due to some commercial consideration such as the future launch of the figures as toys. There is already one new toy on the market in the form of a "puzzle bag". Decorated with Nilsson Thore's illustrations, among other things the bag contains a puzzle book, writing pad, game and Memo memory tiles. The publisher Rabén & Sjögren clearly have high hopes for this book, having invested heavily in marketing and chosen to use an illustration from the book on the cover of its autumn catalogue. The book is also prominently displayed in many bookshop windows.

Nilsson Thore portrays the child characters in a naivist style. This stylization is a method for appealing to younger children and eliciting recognition. Firstly, Nilsson Thore imitates the way children at a young age draw people and, secondly, this stylization makes it more difficult to determine how old Tjorven and Pelle are, possibly with the intention of appealing equally to a three-year-old and a six-year-old. While this style is used to depict the story's central characters, Tjorven and Pelle, other characters such as Bosun, the rabbit and the adults are more realistically proportioned and in the correct scale. Thus one might say that the way characters are illustrated in the picture book aims for a dual appeal, on the one hand to small children and on the other to adults. A change of appearance to make a character look younger as a consequence of transmediation to a medium aimed at younger readers has also been undergone by Pippi Longstocking when

her books were adapted for cartoon series (Storn 1997: 57–84), as well as when picture books aimed at younger readers are published today using images from the series.

The medium of picture books has been extensively researched in recent decades. Although there is no uniform definition of a picture book, researchers have identified basic criteria (Hallberg 1982; Hallberg & Westin 1985; Rhedin 1992; Nikolajeva 2000). The strictest of these were formulated by Hallberg: A picture book should be a work of fiction, contain related text and images, and have at least one picture on each spread (Hallberg 1982:164). Nikolajeva, on the other hand, offers a qualitative definition, stating that: "It is not the density of images but the relationship between image and text that should be decisive" (Nikolajeva 2000: 16). As an example she names *Where the Wild Things Are*, which is considered to be a picture book even though not all of the spreads have images. In accordance with Anette Almgren White's view (2011a: 32), we argue that both image density and qualitative and quantitative relationships between words and images should be decisive. For her part, rather than focusing on the relationship between words and images, Rhedin has formulated three picture book concepts: (i) the illustrated text; (ii) the expanded text; and (iii) the genuine picture book (Rhedin 2001: 73–105). The illustrated text is a picture book whose narrative functions without images and often relies on an original source such as a chapter book. The expanded text and the genuine picture book are both created with the intention that text and images should collaborate to tell the story, and are not explicitly based on any source. In practice, however, these three categories are difficult to keep separate and for this reason we propose a system of only two categories: one category of *co-produced* picture books, the texts of which have been previously published in some other context, thus including adaptations of other works; and another category of *co-composed* books, the text and images of which have been created specifically for the picture book and therefore have no explicit reference to any source (Almgren White 2011b: 48). Co-produced picture books fall into Rhedin's first category, while co-composed picture books cover her second and third categories: "A co-produced book is new inasmuch as both the text and images are adapted to the picture book genre, but also old as it has a text and to some extent illustrations to fall back on" (Almgren White 2011b: 48). *A Pet for Pelle* can be placed in the category of co-produced picture books, meaning that it explicitly references an earlier work.

Book title and cover: anchoring the story in time and space

The title of the book is identical to the source television series episode/book chapter. On the book's cover, the title is printed in blue above the main characters: Tjorven, Bosun and Pelle. In order to reinforce the link to the fictional world of Seacrow Island, the heading "Seacrow Island" crowns the book's title in script in the form of a length of knotted manila rope. ´The same "Seacrow Island" motif is reproduced against a blue background at the top of the back cover above a brief summary of the book. Beneath this blurb are pictures of the three main characters: Pelle on the left, Tjorven in the middle and Bosun on the right. The additional heading "Seacrow Island" spelled out in looping rope raises the possibility of producing several picture books in the same series, as it constitutes a highly recognizable logotype for both children and adult book buyers or library borrowers.

Given the limited length of the picture book, the title represents a significant part of the whole, and empirical studies have shown that young people tend to choose books based on their title (Nikolajeva 2000: 65). In this particular case, the addition of the heading "Seacrow Island" suggests that the publisher wishes to widen the appeal of the book to adult readers, who have considerable influence over a child's book choices. Many in the older generation have grown up with the television series or feature films about Seacrow Island or have read the chapter book. The endpaper of a picture book is often used to visualize the time and location in which the story will take place; Nikolajeva (2000: 69) calls this an establishing image. Here, the establishing image is of the archipelago, an environment that is never mentioned by name in the book, only depicted. This setting is also central to the plot, especially since the natural environment in the outer archipelago where the fictional Seacrow Island is situated is exposed to severe weather conditions. Not only does the setting provide the beautiful natural backdrop, it is also an agent in the unfolding of events. It is the thunderstorm that makes the children lose their way before they are rescued by Bosun. Our contention is based on Pia Maria Ahlbäck's ecocritical article "Väderkontraktet: plats, miljörättvisa och eskatologi i Astrid Lindgrens *Vi på Saltkråkan*" [The Weather Contract: Location, environmental justice and eschatology in Astrid Lindgren's *Seacrow Island*] (Ahlbäck 2010). Ahlbäck affirms that: "While the nature poetry elements of Seacrow Island are many and strong, the natural

environment in the novel is far from simply lovely scenery; rather, it interacts with the characters, as articulated through Malin and her diary" (Ahlbäck 2010: 8).

The book's front endpaper establishes a panoramic view of the archipelago: in the background, small red-painted panelled cottages dotted around the islands; in the middle ground, water and islets. The cottages are depicted as crooked and asymmetrical, a tradition dating back to Ingrid Vang Nyman's modernist style (Druker 2007; Almgren White 2019). The illustrator conjures a pastel idyll in shades that bring to mind faded colour films. The technique is watercolour, the colours flowing out into contour lines and creating smooth transitions between different formations and colour fields. Rocky outcrops stretch across almost the entirety of the lower edge of the foreground. The composition is based on the principle of central perspective. This perspective presupposes an imagined observer looking out over the island landscape – a visual stylistic means of creating engagement and participation on the part of the reader. The same image of the archipelago is repeated on the rear endpaper, although with one significant change; Pelle sits on the left of the picture gently cradling his newfound friend, the pet rabbit. In this way, Nilsson Thore utilizes the endpapers to begin and end the story, a narrative finesse used to highlight the significant changes that have occurred over the course of the book (Nikolajeva 2000: 71). The rear endpaper emphasizes that Pelle's long-nurtured wish has at last been fulfilled.

Text and image in collaboration: complementary images of people and places

The book's basic media are static images and the written word acting in collaboration. Maria Nilsson Thore allows her illustrations to sprawl across the mass of text. The text includes not only archaic words and expressions, but also outdated practices and consumables. Using a typewriter, fetching milk in a bottle, driving cows onto a cattle ferry, all of these activities belong to a bygone age. No longer are there wooden crates with which to furnish a secret den. The value of money has also changed beyond recognition; the one krona that Melker gives the children when he sends them away so that he can work in peace would not buy two lollies today. Pantries are no longer in use, which is the room in which Melker liked to sit at his typewriter. Here, the illustrations can fulfil an educational function instead, enlightening young readers as to what obsolete objects, practices and customs once looked like.

In this case, the publisher has chosen to avoid didacticism and remain

true to Lindgren's text. Uncommon words that bring to mind the Bible include *sannerligen* 'verily', *syndafloden* 'the great flood' and *välsignade* 'blessed'. One adjective that is no longer in common usage *duven*, which appears in the expression "*duvna maskrosblad*" (spread 8). *Duven*, which means flaccid or in poor condition, is an adjective attested in Old Swedish and in use since 1385 according to the Swedish Academy's dictionary (svenskaakademien.se). This fidelity also extends to the reproduction of intertextual references to Robinson Crusoe and Friday, who come to Tjorven's mind during the sojourn on the deserted island. In writing and shooting the television series and writing and illustrating the chapter book, the author Astrid Lindgren, the director Olle Hellbom and the illustrator Ilon Wikland were describing the present day; however, for Maria Nilsson Thore, who was born in 1975, these events take place in a period she herself has no memory or experience of (Toijer Nilsson 1987: 18). A contemporary account, which admittedly shares traits with the idyllic setting of *The Children of Noisy Village*, but transferred to the archipelago, meets images depicting what for both the illustrator and modern readers is now very much history. What happens in this meeting is interesting to observe. Here, the significant thing is that the artist illustrating the picture book has no personal experience of the period on which to base her images, but must resort to gathering historical information. It is reasonable to assume that the television series plays a role here in that readers who have seen the series should be able to recognize the period setting, even if it is freely adapted.

Above the columns of text on the first spread is a scene-setting illustration of part of the archipelago around Seacrow Island, with Carpenter's Cottage on the right-hand side of the picture surrounded by other islands. The cottage is alone on the little island and is out of proportion to its surroundings, its doors and windows are oversized and the cottage covers most of the island. The house is pale red with a green door and an open window from which a yellow curtain flutters at an angle, a style that proves to be consistent throughout the book. A warm yellow light streams from the window. The imagery brings to mind the miniatures that research shows to be linked to a nostalgic reading experience: "The emotional strength of the miniature is its specific expression of human longing – and nostalgia," writes Niklas Salmose in his study of the chapter book *Emil in Lönneberga* (Salmose 2019: 53). As for the Noisy Village idyll that is so readily evoked, this is characterized by a "mediated preconception" of, among other things,

red cottages, as we "translate our preconceptions in signs and symbols in stories" (Källström 2011: 10, 15), and Carpenter's Cottage is red in both the text of the chapter book (Källström 2011: 196, 18) and the illustrations of the picture book.

One symptom of nostalgia is the tendency to enliven illustrations with details and objects that have come to define an era historically, even if these are not mentioned in the text. In the open window we can glimpse a typewriter. The right-hand side of the spread is covered with an illustration of Melker sitting at his typewriter at the open window. Beside the typewriter is a pile of typed sheets of paper, some screwed up, with a coffee cup resting on top. The period setting, the early 1960s, is denoted via typical retro objects and furnishings, the red and white patterned coffee cup is a homage to Stig Lindberg's Salix Röd crockery, while the side plate with red leaves on white resembles Gefle Vinranka, both coveted collectors pieces today. Later in the book, on the wall of the hut that Pelle and Tjorven discover while shipwrecked, we see a fishing reel, line and green glass float hanging neatly on hooks. The way these are presented brings to mind interior design details rather than items of everyday utility. Isolating retro objects in an otherwise sparsely decorated environment adds a nostalgic dimension, a stylistic touch that appeals to adults. Here, our contention is supported by Anders Wilhelm Åberg's study of cinematic adaptations of Astrid Lindgren during the 1980s and 1990s. Åberg describes how film scenes employ tableau-like compositions of objects that, at the time of film's production, were sought-after collectibles (Åberg 2011a: 79–82). Åberg refers to this stylistic device as the "fetishization" of the modern style that emerged during the early welfare state, between 1945 and 1965, as a definition of Swedishness. While the style initially signalled an orientation towards rationality and the future, in film adaptations it has taken on a new retro meaning: the adornment of a cultural past. Similarly, the thick patterned sweaters that Melker and Rollo wear in mid-summer contribute to this fetishization. In the window stands Tjorven, leaning her elbows on the window sill. Tjorven is looking at the man, who is pressing his right hand to his face and grimacing despairingly. His left hand rests on the keys of the typewriter. This scene captures Melker's thwarted creativity and, as this is our only meeting with him in the picture book, Melker is a much more one-dimensional character than in the chapter book, in which he is described as "impulsive as a child and more irresponsible than his own sons" (Lindgren 1964: 5). Magnus Öhrn has described Melker as a character in which two versions of masculinity are merged:

"the grown man and the playful boy" (Öhrn 2015: 233); in the picture book, however, the playful boy is absent, leaving only the grown man disturbed in his work. The text begins *in medias res*: "Melker sat typing in the little room behind the kitchen. His window was open so that he could smell the flowers outside, and when he lifted his eyes from the typewriter he saw a little blue stretch of bay, which was pleasant" (spread 1). This idyll is transformed into a nightmare. The reason for this is the little girl who stands outside the window, interrupting him: "And you're just writing and writing and writing," she said. "What are you writing actually?" (spread 1). The illustrator chooses to capture the moment when the main character enters the plot, which is very effective. The written text, on the other hand, is stylistically driven by litotes, underplaying by not explicitly mentioning the despair that the visual representation of Melker expresses. Melker groans, from Tjorven's perspective seemingly not feeling well, as the dialogue reveals: "Are you ill?" asked Tjorven. "Melker said that he felt quite well, but would feel better if she would disappear" (spread 1). Litotes is generally used to ironic effect, with the risk that the irony will go unnoticed. As shown in this example, and as supported by research, the illustrator has significant opportunity to influence our interpretation of the work through the content, style and form of the image (Nikolajeva 2000: 89–115). Edward Hodnett, who has studied illustrations in Victorian novels, highlights what he calls the illustrator's *moment of choice* (Hodnett 1982: 26), the freedom to decide which event is crucial to depict. This means that, in our case, the illustrations are the result of the illustrator's own interpretation, primarily of Lindgren's written text but also, it is reasonable to assume, of Ilon Wikland's illustrations of the chapter book as well as other representations of the fictional Seacrow Island. By reinforcing and supporting the narrative, the illustrator helps to control our reading and interpretation of the story. This reinforcing relationship between text and image is characteristic of the *enhancing* picture book based on Nikolajeva's typology (Nikolajeva 2000: 22). Nikolajeva delineates five basic relationships between words and images in picture books: symmetrical, in which the words and picture tell the same story in parallel; complementary, in which words and pictures each fill in the gaps in the narrative left by the other; enhancing, in which words and pictures extend each other's meaning, so that the story cannot be fully understood without both; counterpoint, words and pictures question each other's narrative in a creative manner and both are needed to fully understand the story; and finally, contradiction, in which counterpoint tips over into conflicting

narratives, with words and pictures creating confusion and uncertainty. Naturally, this typology should not be viewed as absolute; according to Nikolajeva herself it is only a "very rough division" (2000: 21). When testing the typology in our own teaching, it is also apparent that students find it difficult to apply; indeed, all of these relationships may occur to varying degrees within a single picture book. It is more appropriate to consider Nikolajeva's typology as a heuristic overview of those relationships between words and pictures that are characteristic of picture books. Here, in this enhancing relationship between words and pictures, it seems that the illustrator is at pains to ensure that the reader/viewer understands the ironic undertone of the text. The enhancing relationship in this picture book is largely concerned with the ability of the image to visualize emotions through mimicry and gesticulation, a device that Nilsson Thore uses consistently. The omniscient narrator is reticent about the inner feelings of the characters, with the exception of Pelle. The only articulation of Tjorven's emotions expressed by the narrator are those that are explicitly stated; firstly, the panic and fear of thunder that she feels and expresses when she and Pelle find themselves in peril on the sea and then the cry of joy when they manage to reach shore safely. While both of these expressions of emotion are revealed in text and images alike, Tjorven's innermost feelings are never divulged by the narrator. Unlike Pelle, Tjorven is externally focalized in the text, as revealed by the words in another part of the text, one which the illustrator has chosen not to visualize: "Then her face suddenly darkened, it was almost as if she were afraid of the thunder again" (spread 18). This refers to her concern regarding how the adults will react to their extended absence. Tjorven has no control over either the weather or the adult world.

Astrid Lindgren's stories often depict strong, plucky girls with agency, and sensitive boys that the reader is sometimes encouraged to feel sorry for. Pelle is Tjorven's opposite and they complement one another in the crisis set in motion by the thunderstorm. Otherwise, only the illustrations provide information about Tjorven's state of mind. She looks happy, curious, plucky (hands on hips), strong, determined, generous, caring and proud. Pelle's emotional life, on the other hand, is a matter for comment by the narrator on every page. Pelle "shivered with excitement" (spread 3), goes "quite wild" and looks "blissfully happy" (spread 5), "drew a deep breath, "thoughts rushed through his head" (spread 6), "looked tenderly" (spread 8), has mood swings from happiness to anxiety (spread 10), "wondered nervously" (spread 12), "almost lost his temper" (spread 17).

The illustrator complements the text by attributing feelings to Tjorven that are not expressed in writing, thus contributing to the multidimensionality of one of the main characters. Here, the picture book differs from the characterization of Tjorven in the chapter book. In the chapter book, Tjorven's thoughts and feelings are focalized both externally and internally. Something the illustrator emphasizes on the first spread is Tjorven's expression and body language when uttering her most famous line: "Uncle Melker, do you know what?" For modern readers and viewers of the television series, this is highly characteristic of Tjorven and, for adults especially, has become one of the Lindgren quotes used jokingly in various contexts, in particular with reference to those who like to offer unsolicited opinions regarding how things should be done. While in the television series and novelization the relationship between Tjorven and Melker is significant to the narrative, it does not come across in the same way in the picture book, in which he is only seen in full on the first spread. On the final spread, the reader sees him from the chest down: socks, trousers and a pair of arms attempting to rescue a falling manuscript. In the picture book, Tjorven's place in the narrative is asserted as she disturbs an adult who is trying to work, something she does in an inquisitive, somewhat demanding manner. She also has opinions about Melker's writing style: "Uncle Melker, you know what? If you can't write so that I understand it, then you might as well stop." (spread 1) *Seacrow Island* is a story of its time and, as Anna Sandahl underlines in an unpublished paper (2020), Tjorven's use of the informal form of address *du* is highly significant in distinguishing Seacrow Island from most of Sweden at the time of the television series and film, in that it reflects an equal relationship between children and adults. Before around 1967, when the use of the second-person singular pronoun *du* became widely accepted as a universal form of address in Sweden, it was considered bad manners for a child to address an adult in that manner. That this reform was already practised on Seacrow Island suggests that Tjorven and the other children have a more egalitarian relationship with adults, with less condescension on the part of the adults. It is Tjorven who takes the initiative to address Uncle Melker as *du* and this is entirely in line with Lindgren's stated opinion that children should be heard as well as seen: "Treat them with much the same consideration you are compelled to show your fellow adults. Give the children love, more love and still more love – and the common sense will come by itself," wrote Lindgren in an oft-quoted debate in the magazine *Husmodern* [The Homemaker] in 1948. Sandahl goes on to write that, on Seacrow

Island, there is no boundary between the familial sphere (within which *du* was in common usage much earlier) and the public sphere (within which the use of *du* was regulated by custom). As a means of address, *du* has become the norm on the island because it is an isolated and close-knit community regardless of age. It is this intimacy that makes Tjorven entirely comfortable with sticking her head into Melker's workroom, disturbing his concentration, addressing him as *du* and expressing her opinions on his writing, without appearing nosey. The closeness that Nilsson Thore depicts in her illustration is expressed through Tjorven's body language and her direct gaze at Melker. Both her verbal mannerisms and body language express a self-evident prerogative that contributes to the image of Tjorven as assertive, regardless of the medium in which she is portrayed.

The illustrator and the child's perspective

As previously touched on, Nilsson Thore contributes to the narrative by stylizing the child characters, making them appear younger, even doll-like to appeal to younger readers, while the adults and animals retain more realistic proportions. Downsizing the children in the illustrations makes these characters appear much younger, almost like pixies in comparison to the adults, something that is especially obvious on the final spread. Bosun the dog appears gigantic next to the children. Pelle and Tjorven are so small in relation to the adults that Malin has to crouch down to be at their level. Pixies make us think of fairy tales or fantasy, genres that preschool children in general are familiar with. The basic narratives of fairy tales and fantasies are circular, characterized by departure, adventure and return. The illustrator gratefully utilizes the journey motif in the technical composition of the picture book. The outward journey follows the direction of the pages from left to right, while the direction of travel on the homeward journey is right to left. The way in which the picture book's structure interacts with the turning pages is discussed in detail by Ulla Rhedin in her dissertation *Bilderboken – på väg mot en teori* [The Picture Book: Towards a Theory] (Rhedin 2001).

Reducing the children in size is also a stylistic trope used to contrast the world of the child with the adult world. This has the added effect of rendering the adult world out of focus. In close-ups in which children and adults both appear, only the legs or lower bodies of adults are visible; instead, at the centre of the children's world stands Bosun, a giant in comparison to Pelle and Tjorven, the dog's two charges. Depicted with an expressive face, Bosun takes on certain

anthropomorphic features in the illustrations, linking to both the animal stories that are abundant in children's literature and to Lindgren's text, which on several occasions attributes thoughts and feelings to the dog. In the picture book, for example, Lindgren writes "as if he were thinking" (spread 19) and in the chapter book, "Bosun *knew* what was going to happen" (Lindgren 1964: 199). Pelle also expresses the opinion that "he is wiser than a person", a line that appears in both the picture book (spread 18) and the chapter book (Lindgren 1964: 122). Something else that is readily apparent from the illustrations is that he is an active participant and even the children's faithful protector. On the second spread in the picture book, Tjorven and Pelle are crossing Jansson's cow pasture. Pelle swings a milk churn and both children are gazing up at a bird's nest, not really looking where they are going. Tjorven points upwards towards the bird's nest that has attracted the children's attention. Rather than following the children's gaze, as a dog would tend to do, the hulking Bosun follows behind observing the children with a conscientious, slightly anxious look, as if he has been tasked with keeping an eye on or even guarding them. As a Saint Bernard, Bosun is immediately associated with the breed's use as an Alpine rescue dog.

From an intertextual perspective, the composition of the image is similar to an old oil painting in which a guardian angel watches over two small children, a boy and girl, who wander in the forest, unaware of the dangers presented by precipices and watercourses. Bosun's tail even has the shape of an angel's wing and his fur is painted to resemble the feathers of an angel's wing. Close intertextual links between the picture book and fine art are also highlighted by Almgren White when she demonstrates the connections between Ilon Wikland's natural motifs and classical painting or the roots of Björn Berg's depiction of Emil's mother, Alma, in narrative painting (Almgren White 2011b: 55; 2015: 199).

Another interesting observation is that a few close-ups of scenes in which both Tjorven and Pelle appear in the text only depict one of them in the illustration. That one of the characters is involved in the plot but is not visible may be interpreted as focusing on that individual's subjective point of view, rather than the third-person perspective that otherwise dominates the imagery. This is also the case in the depiction of the book's *pregnant moment* (Lessing 1961: 70). Tjorven manages to convince Rollo to sell the rabbit to Pelle for only one krona. The illustrator has chosen to depict the moment when Tjorven presses the coin into Rollo's hand. The image, which shows the rabbit breeder and Tjorven but

not Pelle, is focused on Tjorven's action, possibly seen from Pelle's viewpoint. We can imagine that the shy Pelle, who has not said anything during the purchase, is standing to one side timidly witnessing Tjorven's achievement. On the following spread, Pelle is now in close-up, kneeling with the rabbit in his arms. By the same reasoning, here it is Tjorven who is the observer, the scene angled from her subjective viewpoint. In this way, both this and the preceding illustration break with the third-person perspective of the book's other illustrations and with the extradiegetic, omniscient narrator of the text. This interruption creates dynamic tension between text and image. According to Nikolajeva's typology, this kind of creative tension between words and pictures in a picture book can be characterized as a counterpoint relationship, given that the change of perspective helps to underline the climax of the story in a creative manner. One further aspect of the image perspective coinciding with an intradiegetic character is that it acts as a stylistic device for engaging the reader/viewer; i.e., it sucks them into the fiction. By sharing the character's view, the spectator becomes involved. The subjective viewpoint is thus a metafictional device intended to interact with the beholder. The scene of Pelle holding the rabbit in his arms is shown from a low angle and all we see of Rollo is his lower body. This low angle emphasizes the child's perspective and the child is the intended beholder.

The chapter book

The explicit references to the fictional world of Seacrow Island largely relate to Lindgren's text, which is in principle reproduced word for word, including the author's use of commas to mark pauses (Nordström 2019: 14–15). The title of the picture book is identical to the equivalent chapter of the book, although the latter is intended for readers from 9 years of age. The text has been shortened to adapt to both the limited scope of the picture book and the age group 3–6 years, the primary target group according to the publisher. The picture book discards the first 10 pages of the chapter from the 1964 book, as well as the final three pages, the parts in which Stina appears, choosing to focus on Pelle and Tjorven's boating adventure. The changes made to the middle of the chapter are limited to a few omissions of individual words or to changes to the word order; otherwise, Lindgren's text is unaltered. The text in the picture book is thus a truncated version of the text in the chapter book. It is questionable, however, whether the

abbreviated text is simply an adaptation to the limited scope of the picture book and its younger target group.

Traditionally, the qualified dimension of the picture book has not solely been strict chronology but also that it contains only one chain of events (i.e. it contains no parallel or secondary plot)) and only a few characters, making it easy to understand. Choosing an episode/chapter featuring an adventure involving only Tjorven and Pelle gives them the most space, which would explain the decision to omit the parts in which Stina appears. Stina's absence from the book does however leave the reference to her on the fourth spread unexplained: "And they had built one [a secret hut] in Jansson's cow field. Even Stina had been allowed to help" (spread 4). Stina is also mentioned in the spread on which Bosun pulls the boat (spread 18). This also applies to the references to several other Seacrow Islanders on the fourth spread, namely, Tjorven's elder sisters Teddy and Freddy and Pelle's elder brothers Johan and Niklas, who otherwise do not appear in the book: "They went to their secret hut too, as they were not in a hurry. It had been built as a protest against Teddy and Freddy and Johan and Niklas" (spread 4). The mention of so many characters who neither appear nor have any significance to the plot clearly breaches the basic criterion that a picture book should have few characters and is also likely to mystify readers.

The truncation also strips the chapter of the section in which father Melker frets over how life will work out for Pelle, the sensitive child who wishes no harm on any living creature and cares for all animals, even worms. Early in the chapter, there is a scene, also illustrated by Wikland, in which Pelle sits on the jetty with a fishing rod, flanked by Stina and Tjorven. Pelle casts but has no worm on his hook, as he has no wish to harm either the worm or the fish. The removal of this scene means that a reference to Pelle's reluctance to fish in the middle section of the text has also been excised. By discarding these references to Pelle's sensitivity and ethical concerns, the picture book loses an essential dimension of Pelle's character. The complex Pelle of the chapter book becomes a more one-dimensional character in the picture book. Readers lacking this understanding may well feel that the text has an unwarranted focus on Pelle's emotional life relative to Tjorven's (see previous section in this article). The chapter book as a whole also includes depictions of Tjorven's interior life.

There are also other technical reasons for shortening the text for the picture book, particularly any descriptions of people, places and events that can

be advantageously handed over to the illustrator to be visualized. Unlike the chapter book, which is informed by a polyphonic narrative in which Malin's voice is prominent through her diary, the verbal narrative of the picture book is solely provided by the omniscient, extradiegetic narrator. Yet, as we have seen, the images take a different approach, as the illustrator takes a detour into intradiegetic narration for the climax of the plot. In so doing, the picture book's subjective viewpoints courtesy of Pelle and Tjorven compensate somewhat for the otherwise slightly one-dimensional representations.

When it comes to references to Ilon Wikland's illustrations in the picture book, we can make a number of interesting observations. In the chapter of the original book there are two full-page illustrations. The first shows Tjorven and Stina on the jetty with Pelle sitting between them dangling his fishing line in the water. Pelle is looking troubled, eyes lowered. Tjorven and Stina are looking at one another, Tjorven in profile looks resolute, even slightly angry, as she fixes Stina with her gaze. Stina's expression, on the other hand, is one of concern and woe, with wrinkled brow and downturned mouth. Wikland's realistic black and white pen-and-ink drawing depicts a scene from the text in which the girls quarrel on the jetty, implicitly competing for Pelle's favour. The second illustration depicts the pregnant moment, the scene in which Pelle finally gets his longed-for pet.

The realistic style of the illustration emulates the portrayal of the characters on television, an imitation or interpretation of the equivalent scene in the series. In the illustration, Pelle stands holding the rabbit, eyes lowered. Tjorven is in the foreground, standing next to Pelle in half profile looking at him. In the background, there is a rabbit hutch, an outhouse and trees, and Bosun lowering his head to look at the rabbits through the mesh.

Aesthetically, Nilsson Thore's style differs from Wikland's, whose realistic black and white illustrations are based on the characters and settings as portrayed in the television series. Nilsson Thore's naivist images deviate strikingly from Wikland's: Pelle and Tjorven are out of proportion, almost constantly wide-eyed with large heads on rectangular bodies and matchstick arms and legs, something that is worth noting given that Lindgren describes Tjorven as looking "like a well-fed sausage" and as "the majestic child" (Lindgren 1964: 15) and as "a sturdy little child" (Lindgren 1964: 111). Their shoes are disproportionately small but it is interesting that the checked dungarees that Tjorven almost invariably wears in

both the television series/films and chapter book are also present and recognizable in the picture book.

In her naivist artistic idiom, Nilsson Thore not only deviates from any realistic and traditional yardstick, the illustrator goes one step further by divesting her portrayal of people and places of any similarity to either the original television series/films or a historically determined time. Nilsson Thore's brown-haired, hairband-wearing Tjorven is a new interpretation, as is the sweater with red and grey dots. This also applies to the perfectly knotted brown shoes and the white socks. Gone is Tjorven's wind-swept, sun-bleached hair, her short-sleeved polo shirt and sandals – a style that belongs in the early 1960s. The only intermedial reference is the classic dungarees. The picture book's version of Tjorven is refined and doll-like, never getting dirty no matter what she endures. The Pelle of the picture book is blonde with a pronounced fringe, wearing a green and white striped knitted sweater, red shorts, light-grey shoes and white socks. Wikland's Pelle wears a short-sleeved t-shirt, belted shorts and sandals. Pelle too appears doll-like in comparison to Wikland's representation; the only deviation that suggests that he might get into the occasional scrape is a sticking plaster on his right knee, an intertextual reference to an illustration by Wikland in the chapter "Does Malin Really Not Want a Husband?" (Lindgren 1964: 169) and the film *Tjorven, Båtsman och Moses* [Tjorven, Bosun and Moses] (Hellbom & Lindgren 1964).

The picture book is so stylized that it is not even remarkable that the young children set off to sea alone without lifejackets. While the chapter book makes no mention of lifejackets, they are worn in Wikland's only illustration of the children at sea, although this in a different chapter. In the television episode too, Tjorven and Pelle obediently fetch their lifejackets before setting off, which might be interpreted as the television series having a pedagogical element. The use of lifejackets was not a given in the 1960s and in Wikland's illustration for the chapter in question (Lindgren 1964: 109) the children sit on the jetty without them, while in the television series children of all ages wear lifejackets whenever they travel by boat. The chapter ends with a scene deleted from the picture book, in which Tjorven and Stina play with Stina's dolls on the jetty and Stina officiously informs the dolls that small children are not allowed on the jetty (Lindgren 1964: 125). As values change over time, it becomes a matter of judgement to balance

faithfulness to the original with adaptations to fit in with the values of present-day readers (Ehriander 2015: 29–34).

The setting for the picture book is outdoors with the exception of the opening and closing spreads, which are set inside the Melkerson's cottage. The natural scenery in the illustrations can be reduced to three archetypes: the green pasture, the grey archipelago, the coastal settlement with its red-painted houses. Lindgren's fragrant yellow buttercups growing beneath Melker's window, in Nilsson Thore's hands becomes stylized yellow splashes of colour against green vertical lines in the middle distance. The discarded sections of the text also mention cow parsley, saxifrage (Lindgren 1964: 151) and quaking grass (Lindgren 1964: 161). By avoiding detail, the picture book's flora is anonymized. This stylization extends to the blueberries and wild strawberries, represented by blue and red dots of colour to reinforce the text's description of the environment. When these are essential to the plot, on the other hand, the illustrator sharpens the focus, faithfully reproducing them. This applies to the wild strawberries that Tjorven eats and that the reader is clearly expected to recognize, identify and associate with long summer holidays and happy childhood memories. Of the animals mentioned in the text, the illustrator chooses to depict the ants and ant paths but not the butterflies (spread 2).

The illustrator does not limit herself to reproducing the surroundings as described by Lindgren. She makes use of the picture book's composition as well as the ability of the image to express individual events. On the second spread, where the text floats above the double spread of the two children running from left to right, Tjorven is slightly ahead of Pelle, pointing up at a birch trunk. Both children are gazing upwards at something unseen in the illustration but that the text informs us is "a bird's nest that Tjorven knew about in a birch" (spread 2). The picture and words have a counterpoint relationship to one another. Here, the illustrator's interpretation helps to create a dynamics in that Tjorven is performing an action in the illustration that is not specified in Lindgren's text. Tjorven's demonstrative gesture visualizes the familiarity between the children as it involves Pelle in Tjorven's knowledge of where the bird's nest is located. A counterpoint relationship also exists between the words and picture on the following spread, in which Tjorven points out the foxes' earth to Pelle. Tjorven is on her knees, pointing at the opening in the cairn while looking back at Pelle, who meets her gaze. To reinforce the link to the fox, Nilsson Thore has painted

three pawprints in the foreground. The illustrator also places Bosun in the scene, sniffing around the fox trail.

The illustrator has also added a visual sylleptical narrative. According to Nikolajeva, a syllepsis is an anachronic story linked to the primary narrative in some way other than temporally (Nikolajeva 2000: 226–227), which can be spatially or thematically. While the children are castaways on the island, there is a visual syllepsis in which a gull appears in the illustration, entering the action without the children noticing. The gull sits on a rock in the water flapping its wings. This event takes place simultaneously with Pelle waving his arms to attract attention. Later, when Pelle names his rabbit, a gull is sitting on a stone on the left of the picture looking on. When the children finally reach dry land, there is a bird on a rock in the background. The illustrator might reasonably intend the reader to consider that this is the same bird, and that the bird carries some meaning rather than simply being a decorative element in the scene. The gull underlines the archipelago environment and is something that children (and the parents reading aloud to them) might well identify with. The bird in the birch tree, on the other hand, is only "a bird" and the illustrator makes no effort to determine its species. The gull sets the scene and carries with it a whiff of the sea – not to mention an easily recognizable squawk.

This benevolent gull that keeps a watchful eye on the children during their tribulations does not appear in Lindgren's text, only in the illustrations in the picture book. That the gull has a function in the narrative's spatial plane is corroborated by its presence on the front cover of the book. There it sits, on its own rock, close by yet separate, looking at the islet on which the quartet of Tjorven, Pelle, Bosun and Yoka sit. This bird, not found in Lindgren's tale, is the illustrator's creative addition, using a highly recognizable bird to signal to the reader that the archipelago is rich in wildlife. Nikolajeva writes that a syllepsis demands paying attention to this level of the story as well (Nikolajeva 2000: 226–227). While the adult is reading aloud, the syllepsis offers an opportunity for the child to concentrate fully on the image and make discoveries that otherwise might pass the reader by. The bird's presence can also be linked to the thematic plane; in mythology, the bird was perceived as a heaven-sent augury of hope or misfortune, and here Nilsson Thore employs it as a positive symbol.

The television episode

The title of the picture book is taken directly from the episode of the original television series. At first glance, while they both utilize the basic media image and text, these two media appear to be essentially different. This is natural considering that in a picture book the story is written down while on film it is largely spoken, and in a picture book the pictures are still while on film, they move. As a technical medium, film uses a combination of the basic media sound and moving picture. The sound can be organized, as in spoken lines and musical score, or unorganized, as in unscripted sighs, an engine running or birdsong.

Of course, there will also be written text, such as the title, credits and other information superimposed on the image. Text may also appear in the action, perhaps in the form of a letter crucial to resolving the plot. Text can also be part of the set design, on signs or the books in a library.

The written word and illustrations can only refer to sounds verbally and visually, while on film the sound can be reproduced iconically, meaning we can *hear* the sound. A reader, on the other hand, can only imagine what the sound might sound like, the experience/interpretation being dependent on the level of detail conveyed in the text and the reader's understanding. Theoretically, of course, one can visualize both organized non-verbal sounds (music) and unorganized non-verbal sounds (birdsong) in detail in a text by appending notes for both musical sound effects and background music, but this presupposes that the reader is able to interpret scores and read music. Basic knowledge is of course sufficient to interpret visual patterns in a score relating to bars, rhythm, repetitions, volume and pitch. This will however take a good deal of time and divert the reader's attention from the plot.

Unorganized sound can be verbalized using onomatopoeia and signalled visually, such as by using symbols or markings that are conventionally associated with sounds. One example of this is the use of lines to indicate sound waves, as used when Tommy blows the whistle in the picture book *Do You Know Pippi Longstocking?* (1947) (Almgren White 2011b: 51). The sound is represented by lines above the hole; of course, how the whistle actually sounds can only be conveyed by an audio illustration. Sound can also be linked to visual mimicry. Depending on the context, an open mouth might be interpreted as an expression of either mute astonishment or as a scream, song or cry.

The above overview shows the various media-specific possibilities associated

with the basic media. It shows that the combination of the static image and the written word has great potential to produce the same story, compensating for their respective "inadequacies" compared to the moving pictures and spoken words of film. With the exception of iconic sound, then, it is not the properties of the basic media that significantly distinguish the narrative forms but how these properties are used, a use that can be related to the conventions for various technical media and, above all, how qualified media have been shaped over the course of history.

In the context of children's literature, the picture book has a limited scope, a linear main story aimed at preschool children, even if it presupposes the presence of a literate individual to read the text aloud. In this regard, Rhedin compares the reading of picture books to a theatre performance (Rhedin 2001: 143–144). The television episode "Ett litet djur åt Pelle" [A Pet for Pelle] is the ninth of thirteen episodes of the series *Saltkråkan* [Seacrow Island] and runs for 27 minutes (svtplay.se). The episode relates parallel events using crosscutting and different perspectives using montage in scenes that permit the same events to be shown from different viewpoints. The parallel events take place in two topoi: home and away. At home, Melker is the hub of the story; meanwhile, Tjorven, Pelle and Bosun are away on an adventure. The story begins and ends at home: Melker is sitting beneath a parasol tapping away on a typewriter. Beside him on the table are a book, papers and a binder. In alternating between two parallel storylines – in Melker's static home environment versus Tjorven's dynamic away environment – two parallel protagonists are created, Melker and Tjorven, thus catering for both the older and the younger audience. In the picture book, which instead follows the traditional circular pattern of children's literature (home–adventure–homecoming), in accordance with Greimas' actantial model, Melker acts only as the *sender*, dispatching the *subject*, Tjorven, on her mission. In order to work in peace, Melker sends Tjorven and Pelle to fetch milk.

In this example, we see how the qualified media offer different conditions for telling the story, based on genre conventions and intended recipients. In the television series, all scenes are exteriors and the characters are scantily clad or wearing thin clothing, befitting the hot summer weather. Initially, we see Melker sitting shirtless. In the picture book, Melker is sitting indoors fully dressed, as the scene is written in the chapter book. The picture book's fidelity to its literary source locates Melker in the small room behind the kitchen, thus creating a further division between indoors and outdoors. Intellectual endeavour takes place

indoors. When Tjorven turns up outside the window, leans on the window sill and asks after Pelle, she shatters the illusion Melker has created for himself of the archipelago as a landscape painting. "His window was open so that he could smell the flowers outside, and when he lifted his eyes from the typewriter he saw a little blue stretch of the bay" (spread 1). The framing of a slice of archipelago landscape in the window, with elements of blue and yellow reflecting the Swedish flag, symbolizes national romanticism, or at least Melker's infatuation with Swedish nature. The barrier between inside and outside creates not only distance between reality and illusion but also between realism and idealism. It also serves to differentiate between the childhood world of play, represented by Tjorven, and the adult world of creativity, represented by Melker. The television episode reflects a more integrated relationship between child and adult by setting the scene in shared space, partly erasing the borders between them and highlighting the similarities between Melker's serious yet somewhat grumpy and demanding personality and Tjorven's self-assured, precocious and autocratic manner. This unsegregated relationship between children and adults is reinforced by rapid cutting between the parallel storylines.

Neither the television series nor its novelization include any elements corresponding to Nilsson Thore's still-life-like addition of retro cups and saucers in the foreground of her illustration; this has its roots in the wave of nostalgia accompanying the new cinematic adaptations of Lindgren's stories during the 1980s and 1990s (Åberg, 2011a: 79–82). On the contrary, the television episode focuses on the action, utilizing the film medium's ability to convey sound and movement. A centipede crawls along a branch in close-up, a kitten backs uncertainly up a tiled roof, wasps buzz around the wall of the cottage, a beetle takes flight from a gate.

But we contend that the crucial difference between the static medium of the book and the motion of film is that film can integrate sound. All of this movement can be represented in a picture book using the same technique as stop-motion animation. Motion can be expressed by a sequence of someone running, the position of their limbs changed, and direction by using the movement of the pages from left to right. The television episode makes no effort to accentuate the direction of travel away from and back home, even though film also clearly offers this possibility. Rather than giving direction and a spatial overview, film uses

cuts between close-ups, medium shots and long shots, as well as wide shots and changes of point of view, to show Tjorven rowing with Pelle to the various islands.

Film is however superior when it comes to seamlessly reproducing sound, whether intradiegetic or extradiegetic. One intradiegetic musical element is the use of sound to illustrate the type of berry that Tjorven is picking. Although the viewer cannot see which berry she is picking, the fact that Tjorven is singing the Swedish children's song "Mors lilla Olle" [Mother's Little Ollie] offers a clue that is confirmed in the following scene, in which Tjorven and Pelle are munching blueberries. The songtext is about a little boy picking blueberries for his mother in the wood. In the picture book and chapter book, Tjorven is picking wild strawberries. It is possible that the original use of blueberries and their illustration via verbally organized sound may have been the suggestion of composer Ulf Björlin, who wrote score for the series.

One example of how non-verbal sound illustrations can create intertextual links that contribute additional layers of interpretation for those who recognize them is the extradiegetic musical cue in the scene in which the anthropomorphic Bosun swims with a rope attached to his collar, pulling the children's boat homeward. Interwoven with Björlin's score, we hear a few bars of the Russian folk song, the "Song of the Volga Boatmen". The song was traditionally sung by the burlaks, or barge-haulers, of the Volga, who are depicted in the famous painting by Ilya Repin, *Barge Haulers on the Volga* (*c.* 1870), undertaking the strenuous work of dragging a large boat behind them. The ambiguous use of such serious music for comic effect in this sequence might suggest that Bosun's chore is both enforced and ethically questionable.

It is characteristic of the film medium to integrate non-verbal sound into the soundtrack to create a certain mood. Björlin uses twelve-tone technique throughout the series to create a somewhat disquieting mood (Hallenmar 2019) that contrasts with the pastoral atmosphere conveyed by the series' moving pictures and dialogue. Even in Arcadia, the soundtrack seems to be saying, there is death. Arcadia is the traditional Greek and Roman rural ideal, based on the southern Greek province of the same name, and thus a parallel to the pastoralism of the series. Taking a holistic view of the fictional world of Seacrow Island, we construe an intermedial connection to the painting *The Arcadian Shepherds* (1637–1638) by Nicolas Poussin, in which the Latin phrase *Et in Arcadia Ego* [I too am present in Arcadia] is inscribed on the tomb around which the shepherds

are gathered. The "I" is a reference to death, which transposed to Björlin's subtly unsettling tonal language interacts with Melker's more philosophical utterances, such as "live for the day" (Lindgren 1964: 83 and television episodes 5, 13). The disconcerting tone underlines the transience of existence and death's constant presence. Several chapters of the book have a hint of melancholy, with titles such as "Sorrow and Joy", which begins with the words "Sorrow and joy go hand in hand – some days are black and full of misery and generally they come when least expected" (Lindgren 1964: 187) and "No, Pelle, the world isn't really an isle of sorrow," when Yoka the rabbit is taken by the fox (Lindgren 1964: 200). The picture book too employs a corresponding, if somewhat toned-down theme, when the children find themselves adrift at sea: "Pelle wondered nervously if this was what was called a wreck and if he would have to die now, just when he had got a rabbit" (spread 12). In the picture book, Lindgren and Nilsson Thore amplify the drama compared to the television series, which can be explained by the fact that picture book is based on its literary source, which describes the events with greater gravity. The visualization of the storm in the illustrations, with dark clouds, sheets of rain and lightning bolts, expands on the text and enhances the relationship between words and pictures. In the illustrator's creative interpretation of the adventure at sea, Bosun, calmness itself in the television series, is open-jawed, his neck extended, perhaps howling? There is no storm or even rain in the television episode, during which there is uninterrupted sunshine. The only intimation of inclement weather is the roll of distant thunder. The television series plays down the existential theme, possibly adapting to the tastes of a contemporary television audience.

Concluding comments

In this article we have studied how the chapter book *Seacrow Island*, the original television series of the same name and the subsequent films have been reimagined as a new picture book *A Pet for Pelle*.

We have discussed the artistic consideration given to remaining respectful to the source material and simultaneously making the story an understandable and enjoyable experience for a new generation of readers. Many of Astrid Lindgren's works are regarded as classics. Available in many media, they have been read and seen by many generations and have become templates for many successors. While they belong to Sweden's cultural heritage, many of her books

have been translated into multiple languages and are read around the world. It is interesting to ponder which of Lindgren's books will live on as classics and what adaptations are required in terms of their content, language, style and form for this to happen. Here, it is also appropriate to consider what Göte Klingberg called medium-choosing adaptations, in order to give due consideration to how a story can maintain the reader's interest in a new millennium (Klingberg 1972: 95). In the context of children's literature, classics are often adapted works that are more or less reworked versions of the source material, whether originally intended for children or adults. Many of the works we now call classics would not have survived without this reworking (Ehriander 2015: 26–27). It is also striking that the story of Seacrow Island, the archipelago and the people who live there, is now being reworked for a younger readership in much the same way as many of Lindgren's other works, in keeping with the changing times and changes in reading habits over the half century since the first generation of children encountered the fictional world of Seacrow Island.

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Nubban and Pippi

Transtextual relationships between two girls illustrated by Ingrid Vang Nyman

Helene Ehriander

The watershed year of 1945 saw the publication of the first book about Pippi Longstocking. Over the following years, a number of books for children and young people were published that were to shape modern Swedish children's literature. While many postwar authors carved a place for themselves in literary history, others are now completely forgotten. Christina Alin's first book, *Nubban: En historia för flickor om en flicka* [Nubban: A Story for Girls by a Girl], was published by Geber in 1946. Like the Pippi Longstocking books, it was illustrated by Ingrid Vang Nyman (1916–1959)[1] and there are obvious similarities between Nubban and Pippi, both in the illustrations and in the text itself. The first Pippi Longstocking book can be viewed as a hypotext to the story of Nubban, that is to say, a source that the later text more or less consciously relates to. This chapter examines the relationship between Pippi and Nubban, partly based on terminology used by Gérard Genette as described in the article "Den allvarsamma parodin" [The Serious Parody], published in the Swedish cultural journal *Ord & Bild* (Word & Image).[2] According to Genette, intertextuality, paratextuality, hypertextuality, metatextuality and archetextuality are all examples of transtextuality, that is, interaction and dialogue between different texts. Unless otherwise stated, I use intertextuality in the general definition of the term, that is to say, dialogue between texts; a throng of voices are heard here as the studied texts converse with one another. Like Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott in *How Picturebooks Work* (2001),[3] I also use the term *intertextuality* to describe various relationships between images. As for Genette's terms *paratextuality* and *archetextuality*, I use these to visualise and clarify other intertextual interactions and dialogues. My comparison is based solely on the first three chapter books about Pippi Longstocking, which are contemporaneous with the two books about Nubban. The Pippi Longstocking books were subsequently serialised and then published in the anthology *Boken om Pippi Långstrump* [The Pippi Longstocking Book] (1966), on each occasion with many new colour illustrations. They have also been adapted as picture books, cartoons, plays and films. When I discuss illustrations,

however, I am solely referring to Ingrid Vang Nyman's black and white pen-and-ink drawings and the colour covers of the books *Pippi Longstocking* (1945), *Pippi Longstocking Goes Aboard* (1946) and *Pippi Longstocking in the South Seas* (1948), and how these three books interact verbally and visually with the two Nubban books (1946 and 1947).

Nubban as a close relative of Pippi Longstocking

Christina Alin was born in 1911 and graduated from the Royal College of Music in Stockholm. Otherwise we have no information about either her private or professional life. Her oeuvre is limited to two books about a girl named Nubban and two books about Pelle and Gumpa, *Pelle och Gumpa: Berättelse för pojkar* [Pelle and Gumpa: Stories for Boys] (1947) and *Pelle och Gumpa i frihet: Berättelse för pojkar* [Pelle and Gumpa on the Loose: Stories for Boys] (1948), published by B. Wahlströms, a house specialising in books for children and young people. The first book about Nubban was No. 6 in the series Robinson Books. According to the back page text, the Robinson books are written for what the publisher defines as "Robinson-age readers (9–11 years). They seek to meet the child's yearning for voyages of discovery in an adventurous, realistic world when they leave fairy tales behind them." That Robinson was an appropriate and well-chosen point of reference is apparent in *Pippi Longstocking Goes Aboard*, when the nine-year-old Pippi, Tommy and Annika play at being shipwrecked on a desert island after Tommy and Annika have read *Robinson Crusoe*.[4] The back cover of the book also states: "Through the Robinson books, the publisher aims to meet our era's demand for a new type of book – with better content and format and at a price that makes the book accessible to all." The first book in the Robinson Series was Sven Hemmel's children's novel *Upptäcktsresanden Karlsson* [Karlsson the Explorer] (1945) followed by books including Pipaluk Freuchen's story from Greenland, *Ivik den faderlöse* [Ivik the fatherless] (1945), the third book in the series later published in English as *Eskimo Boy*, and Bernhard Stokke's Stone-Age story *Björnklo* [Bear's Claw] (1947), both illustrated by Freuchen's cousin Ingrid Vang Nyman. The second Nubban book, *Nubban kommer igen* [Nubban Returns], was published by Geber in 1947 as No. 9 in the Robinson Books series. This too was illustrated by Ingrid Vang Nyman. It may well be that the publisher chose Vang Nyman as she had previously illustrated Pippi Longstocking and they recognised a connection between the characters, or she may have been commissioned as part of

the company's quality drive, given that she was a skilled illustrator who had already contributed excellent work to the publisher's children's books. There is no doubt that Vang Nyman's illustrations were a factor in the success of the Pippi books and they remain popular and available in bookshops and libraries. The Nubban books, however, were never reprinted and are now forgotten, except when they are mentioned in catalogues accompanying exhibitions to commemorate Ingrid Vang Nyman's art, for example: "In addition to Astrid Lindgren's books, Ingrid Vang Nyman illustrated texts by many other authors. The protagonist of Christina Alin's *Nubban* (1946) and *Nubban kommer igen* (1947) has been characterised as a close relative of Pippi Longstocking, and that is how she appears in Ingrid Vang Nyman's illustrations," as Magdalena Gram writes in the catalogue for an exhibition at the National Library of Sweden in Stockholm in spring 2003.[5]

Paratexts are the texts that surround the text itself: the title, subtitle, cover art, notes, preface, chapter headings, etc. While paratexts are not part of the body text, they still affect how the reader perceives and understands the book.[6] The cover is the reader's first encounter with the work and it is quite likely that the picture of Nubban is deliberately intended to remind the reader of the famous Pippi Longstocking. The first books by both authors include the girl's name in the title, a common device in children's literature at the time and a paratextual reference that may create recognition and understanding in the reader. The Nubban book is linen-bound with an orange spine and a familiar looking girl greeting the reader on the cover. Nubban's name appears in neat black script at the bottom of the cover and above it the author's name in thin capital letters. The book's subtitle does not appear until the endpaper. Nubban's portrait is framed like a photograph with a thin white border against a bright yellow background. The girl's hair is tousled and gives an unruly impression. Her brown eyes meet the beholder's gaze, her upturned nose is freckled and a wide smile plays on her lips. Nubban grips a small stalk of blackcurrants between her teeth and her blue checked dress is stained, the top button undone at the back. Although Nubban is gap-toothed according to the text, this is not apparent from the illustrations, in which her teeth are white and even; it is conceivable, however, that the blackcurrant stalk is stuck in a gap between her front teeth.

The cover alone shows many similarities to Astrid Lindgren's *Pippi Longstocking*, which had been published by Rabén & Sjögren in 1945, the year before the Nubban book. The Pippi book is in a smaller format, with a greyish,

linen-bound spine with the title and author's name in muted blue lettering, each leaning in different directions to give a zestful impression. The yellow background colour is somewhat more subdued and matt than the bright yellow that dominates the cover of *Nubban*. Pippi's face is unframed, leaning into shot and looking at her little monkey, Mr Nilsson, who is bowing theatrically, straw hat in hand. One of Pippi's red pigtails, at the focal point of the image, is tied with a ribbon at the end, while the other pigtail is partly out of shot and apparently coming undone, strands of hair curling around the letters of the book's title. Pippi's white dress has a light green pattern and, judging by the flap sticking up at the neck, her dress too has not been properly buttoned. At first glance, Pippi and Nubban are strikingly similar: spirited, happy girls of the same age, with fiery red hair and freckled upturned noses, alert brown eyes, the same arched eyebrows and broad smiling mouths filled with healthy teeth. The differences that do exist offer important signals that Nubban, in her checked dress, is confined by the frame around her, while Pippi is more animated, both physically and symbolically. The things the girls are pictured with are also significant: Pippi's small, clothed monkey tells us something about her unorthodox way of life and contacts with exotic lands, while Nubban's blackcurrants locate her in a well-ordered Swedish garden where berry bushes and children alike are nurtured and cultivated. It is also worth pondering the illustrator's choice to depict Nubban in a checked dress, as this is not mentioned in Alin's text. In Pippi Longstocking, it is said of Annika that "she always looked pretty in her little well-ironed cotton dresses; she took the greatest care not to get them dirty".[7] Meanwhile, in *Ur-Pippi*, Astrid Lindgren's original 1944 draft manuscript of Pippi Longstocking, it is stated that "Annika always had small, checked, well-ironed cotton dresses".[8] When Pippi first meets Tommy and Annika in the opening chapter of *Ur-Pippi*, she says: "Greetings to you, dear little checked children! My name is Pippi Longstocking."[9] Pippi then asks the children to join her for breakfast and once she has made the pancakes, invites them to eat: "'Eat now, small, checked children,' urged Pippi."[10] In the afterword to *Ur-Pippi*, Ulla Lundqvist, who wrote her doctoral dissertation on the Pippi Longstocking phenomena, discusses what these references to checks might mean:

> Nowhere in the Pippi trilogy does she address her friends, or any other children, in this manner. So, what is a "checked" child? We can no longer ask their creator, only ponder the matter ourselves. Checks

> consist of straight lines crossing each other; a checked pattern is orderly, with no place for frills and squiggles. Pippi, a poster girl for wriggling out of conformity, is actually distancing herself from her new-found companions. The expression clearly delineates their differences and adds a smidgeon of condescension for good measure. Note also that this is repeated.[11]

While this reference to checks has been deleted from the published Pippi Longstocking books, it is possible to place Nubban in her stained, checked dress somewhere in between the clean and well-ironed Annika and Pippi in her home-sewn dress. Nubban strives to be rebellious, as demonstrated by the blackcurrant stains on the checked dress that the adults around her have purchased for her, which might be viewed as a symbol of their attempts to keep her in check and ensure she behaves more properly.

The back cover of *Nubban* is taken up with a presentation of the Robinson Books and a quotation from Nathan Johnson writing in the Swedish Teachers' Union magazine *Svensk Skoltidning*, who states that "the Robinson Books stand out through two splendid characteristics: the quality of the content and their compact format". There is also an extremely brief summary of the book itself, focused on the protagonist's appearance: "The story of the antics of the freckle-faced, snub-nosed, straight-haired and spirited little rascal Nubban." The back-cover text of *Pippi Longstocking* draws the prospective reader in with a list of the top four books in publisher Rabén & Sjögren's children's book competition, with Astrid Lindgren, winner of the first prize, at the top followed by the runner-up, Hans Peterson with his *Stina och Lars på vandring* [Stina and Lars on the Road]. The other two books on the list are the considerably more traditional children's tales, Vera Källbom's *Buam Bu, trollet som inte fanns* [Buam Bo, the Troll Who Wasn't There] and Martin Nylund's *Murre*, a "story about a wise and funny little kitten, his mistress and his friend White Foot the wildcat". Given the publisher's more sedate range of children's books, it is perhaps not so strange that the description of Pippi on the back cover requires some explanation. One can also suspect the publisher's anxious attempt to emphasise the book's merits and to gently disarm anticipated criticism by underlining that the child reader should of course not emulate Pippi's behaviour:

> Pippi Longstocking is quite an unusual children's book. Pippi is a girl who does exactly as she likes, which is so much easier because she is incredibly strong. She plays [hide and seek] with the police, rides to school on her own horse, eats the whole cake at tea parties, etc. In other words, she does everything that other children are not allowed to do, but she does it in such a funny and innocent way that both children and adults can't help but be fond of Pippi.[12]

The openings to both books establish their protagonists, whom readers have already encountered on the covers, and here there are striking similarities. There is a well-known description of Pippi's appearance in the first chapter: "Her hair, the colour of a carrot, was braided in two tight braids that stuck straight out. Her nose was the shape of a very small potato and was dotted all over with freckles. It must be admitted that the mouth under this nose was a very wide one, with strong white teeth. Her dress was rather unusual."[13] There follows a description of her dress, which is blue with little red patches sewn on here and there. Vang Nyman has chosen not to illustrate this on the book's cover, preferring a considerably more everyday, conventional dress in pale colours. That Vang Nyman chose to dress Pippi in a different outfit seems odd today given that the home-sewn dress is now one of Pippi's most recognisable characteristics. This may have been a purely aesthetic choice intended to match the colour of her hair and freckles and the monkey's fur, or perhaps she had not ascribed any particular significance to the dress as it would not have meant anything to prospective readers at the time the cover was designed. Nubban's appearance is also described in the first chapter of the book, in which she is awakened by a dancing sunbeam: "A pair of glittering eyes became visible beneath the unruly reddish-brown fringe, a sharply upturned nose and, finally, a rather large mouth, that in yawning revealed a row of large, white gapped teeth."[14] Nubban is also described as having long, skinny, brown arms and legs, basking her freckled face in the sun, wearing a dirty, wrinkled cotton dress, and sparky with a sharp tongue. Later in the story, the reader discovers that her eyes are "piercing blue" when she feels ill-treated by her siblings,[15] "large, grey innocent"[16] when she teases her big sister's boyfriend and "large and grey"[17] once again when she attempts to outsmart her big brother. In the text they are never brown as depicted on the cover, which raises the question of whether Vang Nyman simply forgot the information in the verbal description

or if she was influenced by her earlier commission and therefore rendered Nubban as a brown-eyed "relative" of Pippi.

Free girls

Nubban came out the year after the first Pippi Longstocking book, which was published in late November 1945. We know nothing of how the book about Nubban came about; in fact, Christina Alin may well have been writing her story about Nubban for years in blissful ignorance of the Pippi character, the similarities between the books purely coincidental and rooted in the literary genre of madcaps and rascals and other contemporary trends. It is nevertheless most likely that Alin was aware of the Pippi book and even how well it had been received, and that she was inspired to write about Nubban with an image of Pippi more or less in the back of her mind. It is worth noting that, if she did draw inspiration from Lindgren's Pippi, she would have had very little time to write her own book. Alin was by no means a recognised author, and it would have taken months for a publisher to accept and edit her manuscript and print the book before *Nubban* finally reached the bookshops in autumn 1946. The book is included in the Swedish Publishers' Association's 1946 Christmas book catalogue, which was published in good time to launch new books for the upcoming Christmas market. While Nubban has a physical resemblance to Pippi and both characters fit into the genre of madcap rascals, with the motifs in the Nubban books being similar to those found in the Pippi books, it is quite clear that the rich, incredibly strong, orphaned and norm-breaking Pippi is more aberrant, with all the attributes of the "strange child".[18] Despite her antics, Nubban is a realistic character more strictly controlled by her parents and societal norms. Her rebellion is often met with laughter and scorn by her elders and betters, especially her older siblings. Today, Nubban is forgotten by readers while Pippi, who created "a revolution in the nursery",[19] lives on in various forms. The author Christina Alin too is forgotten, while Astrid Lindgren has become a Swedish national icon.[20]

All authors must relate to genre conventions, either by embracing them or by breaking them. Genette's term *archetextuality* relates to genre connections between texts,[21] an interesting avenue to explore with regard to the Nubban and Pippi books. In her doctoral dissertation *Fria flickor före Pippi: Ester Blenda Nordström och Karin Michaëlis: Astrid Lindgrens föregångare* [Free Girls Before Pippi: Ester Blenda Nordström and Karin Michaëlis: Astrid Lindgren's

predecessors], Eva Wahlström writes That it is not always clear who was first to write in a given way or to highlight specific linguistic structures, themes and motifs. All authors exist within a literary tradition, and authors who work at the same time are influenced by the trends and ideas that flourish in society during that period.[22] Being first is not a quality in and of itself; it may be equally valuable to uphold a literary heritage, to actively relate to one's predecessors and use the building blocks of children's literature in an interesting way. Not even Astrid Lindgren's Pippi Longstocking arose out of a societal and literary vacuum, and it is interesting to study the extensive and complex transtextual sphere within which this character moves. Eva Wahlström highlights the fact that Pippi had forerunners in the children's literature of the 1920s and 1930s. Wahlström also shows that while the designation girls' literature cannot automatically be applied to the Pippi Longstocking books, there are nevertheless similarities with earlier publications aimed at girls. Nor is this simply a matter of tradition or renewal or a combination thereof, but something more.[23] Eva Söderberg has shown how Astrid Lindgren recycles and redefines genre tropes and how she uses devices specific to the genre of girls' literature.[24] The first Nubban book is subtitled *"A Story for Girls by a Girl"*, which all too clearly places the book in the girls' literature tradition and like other paratexts creates an expectation on the part of girl readers that they are about to read a book that complies with the conventions of that genre – and keeps boy readers at a safe distance. By virtue of this explicit genre choice, or the archetextuality,[25] the paratext inscribes Nubban into the girls' literature genre as a madcap and rascal. Pippi Longstocking, on the other hand, is less constrained by genre and the stories can even be categorised as magic realism with elements of slapstick.

In her dissertation, Eva Wahlström uses a more genetically and illustratively oriented comparative method through which she "attempts to capture common motifs and circles of motifs" in the works of the three authors she studies, Nordström, Michaëlis and Lindgren.[26] By contrast, I use a more modern method when comparing Pippi and Nubban, in which to some extent the focus has shifted from the psychology of the author to that of the reader and where the central question is how literary phenomena interact and how literary texts cross-fertilise one another. A modern comparison is therefore not focused on one-way relationships between source and influence. I also broaden the comparative study into a transtextual analysis that also encompasses the illustrations, which are by

the same artist and therefore constitute a much clearer link between the works than if they were by different illustrators. So, even if the two types of comparison resemble each other, I explore new literary phenomena and arrive at conclusions that partly differ from those of Eva Wahlström. The switch from a genetically and illustratively oriented comparative method to a more modern comparative method also contributes ensuring that traditional value hierarchies are challenged rather than reproduced. I use intertextuality in its general sense, that is to say, any dialogue between texts; in this case, a throng of voices as the studied texts converse with one another.

To return to the paratexts, there are also similarities between the chapter titles in the Pippi and Nubban books, both in that they provide a synopsis of the action and in their structure; for example, "Pippi Goes to the Circus" vis-à-vis " Nubban Goes to the Circus and Makes a Decision" or "Pippi Goes to School" vis-à-vis "Nubban Starts School". This intertextuality in the paratexts gives a sense of recognition for child readers while also reflecting the verbal text. Both the main characters start school, go to the circus, ride on a roundabout, go to a tea party with friends and administer justice in their own ways. The books are episodic and the child reader can easily take up reading once again from wherever they left off or reread a favourite chapter. Both Astrid Lindgren and Christina Alin address traditional themes and motifs that interact on various levels and can be found in many literary texts, but that more specifically recur as archetextual links in the madcap rascal genre.

To examine the intertextual interplay between the Nubban and Pippi books in more detail, we can begin by studying the first chapters of the books that lead the reader into the narrative. The first chapter of *Pippi Longstocking* is illustrated with an image of the titular character carrying her horse down the front steps to Villa Villekulla. The Nubban book is generously illustrated with three illustrations in the first chapter: In the first, Nubban in striped pyjamas wakes in bed, stretching and yawning, followed by a spread in which there are three hens with wide eyes in the bottom left of the picture while Nubban in her checked dress occupies most of the right-hand side as, barefoot and tousle-haired, she retrieves two eggs from beneath a protesting and flapping hen. The first illustration is similar to one in the second chapter of *Pippi Longstocking Goes Aboard*, in which Pippi sits on the edge of her bed with unplaited hair and the same pattern on her nightdress as Nubban has under her striped pyjamas. When Nubban wakes up in the early morning in

the cosy farmhouse in Lindesnäs, she enjoys the most delightful moments of her day while her parents, siblings and the domestic staff are still asleep. "Then she was free as a bird to do whatever she desired Nobody argued with her, nobody teased her, and nobody bothered her."[27] The reader understands that her parents and the domestic staff care about her and that they have a close relationship, even if she enjoys a great deal of freedom. The freedom that Nubban enjoys during those few early morning hours can be likened to the freedom in which Pippi lives her entire life, as described on the very first page of *Pippi Longstocking*: "She had no mother and father, and that was of course very nice because there was no one to tell her to go to bed just when she was having the most fun, and no one who could make her take cod liver oil when she much preferred caramel candy."[28]

Nubban's relationship with her almost adult siblings is characterised more by teasing and irritation on both sides than by consideration and affection. Nubban begins the morning by taking revenge on her older brother for insulting her and tripping her up, by taking away his trousers so that when he wakes up he will be a trouserless prisoner in his own room. She then devotes herself to her own morning ritual. Nubban has her own hen, Tjippan, and the eggs she lays are Nubban's. She sits on the kitchen table, scrambles the eggs with plenty of sugar and eats with great pleasure. She then eats unripe berries from the bushes, swings as high as she likes and wonders whether she could fly with the aid of an umbrella. Her brother wakes up and gets his trousers back in exchange for a promise that she can tag along to that night's party in the local park. Maja, who works in the kitchen and is terrorised by Nubban, has made porridge for her. As Nubban wanders around the farm, the reader is provided with details of the various characters and what life is like in the countryside. Here, there is verbal interplay between the two stories on a number of points: Nubban eats eggs sitting on the kitchen table, while Pippi whisks pancake batter with a bath brush and gets egg in her hair. Nubban's preference for perching acrobatically on the kitchen table rather than sitting on a chair can be compared to Pippi's even odder habit of sleeping with her feet on the pillow. Wahlström writes: "In the Pippi books, eating is both carnivalesque and grotesque while simultaneously parodying a good upbringing, with its rules for food and meals."[29] In the first chapter of *Pippi Longstocking*, the reader also discovers that Pippi lives alone with a monkey and a horse in Villa Villekulla "way out at the end of a tiny little town".[30] Flying with the aid of an umbrella is an archetextual reference that many madcap

children have pondered over and attempted with varying degrees of success, such as in Astrid Lindgren's later book about Mardie. Among other things, Nubban is characterised by the cunning revenge and extortion against her brother and Pippi by her tall tales of Egypt, the Belgian Congo and Brazil. This establishes the protagonists. The reader later discovers that Nubban is nine years old and actually has the somewhat more prosaic and sensible name Barbro Lind. While Pippi is the same age, all her names simply confirm for the reader that she is an unusual girl who should perhaps not be interpreted in realistic terms. Both girls have nicknames, Pippi's an abbreviation, while the reader discovers that no one knows why Nubban is called that.[31] Nubban shares certain characteristics with Pippi in that she is a child who does not fit in, she is wild and a rule-breaker, even if her limitations are symbolised by the checked dress and strict striped pyjamas. Unlike Pippi, she lives in a traditional, relatively prosperous family with clear patterns of control and in a recognisable rural setting for girls' literature – placing the story within a framework and to a certain extent limiting Alin's narrative scope. Here, we can also compare rural life with Ester Blenda Nordström's Ann-Mari, who becomes a farmer and estate owner, and Karin Michaëlis' Bibi, who becomes a farm worker.[32] Bibi also collects a large menagerie and Ann-Mari cares for unwanted animals.[33] Nubban is very fond of animals and during the course of the story she gets her own dog, Snubbel. Where Pippi's pets are indicative of her oddness and unconventional lifestyle, Nubban's dog is a means to inscribe her into a normal rural way of life. It is worth noting that Pippi's horse is given sugar and Snubbel licks the sugary sponge cake mixture, which nobody batted an eyelid at when the books were published.

While Pippi is presented as a strong, independent revolutionary, Nubban is never more than a child, a rascal who – although she makes every effort to do as she pleases and defy her family and community – never really shakes accepted norms. Nubban, for example, is not permitted to swing as high as she would like, suggesting that the limits her parents place on her are out of concern for her safety. The family encourages normal girlish behaviour and appearance and Nubban tries in various ways to adapt and live up to the expectations placed on her as a girl in the home, at school and in her circle of friends, even if she sometimes feels that she is on too tight a rein.

Circus, thieves and charity

There is a further archetextual and intertextual reference to be found in Chapter VII of Pippi Longstocking, "Pippi Goes to the Circus", and the chapter "Nubban Goes to the Circus and Makes a Decision". Neither of these chapters is illustrated.[34] Genre similarities can also be found in the work of Michaëlis, when Bibi walks the tightrope on a washing line, and Nordström, when Ann-Mari visits the circus and balances on a log. Eva Wahlström writes that this is about demonstrating the girls' physicality and command over their bodies.[35] The one thing above all that the texts about Pippi and Nubban have in common is the part where Nubban, just like Pippi, watches a tightrope walker perform. In *Nubban*, the tightrope walker is nameless but in *Pippi Longstocking* her name is Elvira and she "wore a pink tulle dress and carried a pink parasol in her hand". The name Elvira is also an intertextual reference to Johan Lindström Saxon's (1859–1935) "Visan om den sköna konstberiderskan Elvira Madigans kärlek och grymma död" [The Ballad of the Beautiful Circus Rider Elvira Madigan's Love and Cruel Death] (1889), which was written the same year as the circus artist and tightrope walker Elvira Madigan was shot by her lover, Lieutenant Sixten Sparre. It is interesting that this intertextual reference is also included in *Ur-Pippi* (1944) in the form of a nonsense verse that explicitly alludes to the ballad, in which Elvira dances "as happy as a lark", although this was excised from the published version: "She danced on the line / like a happy little gherkin."[36] Pippi is active during her visit to the circus, where she performs with greater skill than the circus artists. Nubban is enthralled by the show and is most taken with the tightrope walker, "a sweet little blonde girl in a white tulle skirt glittering with sequins. She held a small parasol in one hand and waved at the audience with the other as she danced on the high tightrope."[37] The chapter ends with Nubban reaching a decision and in the following chapter, "Nubban Puts Her Decision into Action", she dreams of being able to dance on the tightrope. She ponders her choice of dress and parasol and ties a rope between two trees. The illustration shows Nubban at an angle from behind, moving from left to right, caught in the moment when she realises she is about to lose her balance; her mouth is agape, terror in her eyes, the sturdy black umbrella intended to help her balance flapping uncontrollably in front of her.[38] On her first attempt, she falls immediately and decides to lower the rope, but she fails no matter how much she tries until: "Finally, she saw her golden dream as a tightrope walker evaporate into thin air."[39] While Pippi is brilliant at whatever she

turns her hand to, even without practice, Nubban also fails at juggling lemonade bottles and realises that, just like many other children over the years, she lacks the patience to practise hard enough to master the desired skills.

The chapter "Pippi Entertains Two Burglars" has an equivalent in the second Nubban book, *Nubban kommer igen*, in a chapter titled "You Have Acquitted Yourself Like a Real ... Girl", which winks knowingly at the limited agency afforded to girls within the framework of girls' literature. Pippi gets the better of tramps Thunder-Karlsson and Bloom, who are after her gold coins, while Nubban outwits the thief who is trying to rob the Carlsson family while Nubban is alone in the house babysitting for their little boy Anders. The thief is a horrid-looking young man who threatens Nubban while he is searching for Mrs Carlsson's cash and valuables. Nubban cunningly lures him into a wardrobe and locks him inside, so that he can be apprehended and handed over to the police. Nubban is rewarded with her favourite meal, mushroom omelette and cake, and is praised by her brother, who says that she has acquitted herself "like a real girl".[40] Vang Nyman has illustrated both sets of the thieves in similar style and entirely in line with the period's stereotype of a burglar. In *Pippi Longstocking*, Thunder-Karlsson is forced to dance the schottische with Pippi. He has a stubble beard, wears a cap on his head, has holes in his socks and pockets stuffed with the tools of his trade. The nameless thief in the Nubban book has a stubble beard, wears a cap on his head and has holes in his clothing at the knees and elbows. He has an identical burglar's tool in his pocket. Both thieves are in motion and are pictured in similar poses with outstretched legs, Thunder-Karlsson dancing with Pippi and the other burglar apparently about to fall off the chair he has climbed on to reach a box that he believes contains money.[41] By the way, an illustration by Ingrid Vang Nyman of the wild dance in John-Lennart Linder's "Kamelresan" [Journey by Camel] published in the children's magazine *Folkskolans barntidning* (1946/1947) is as good as identical to the illustration in the Pippi book. The thief is facing the other way and whereas we see Pippi from the rear, here we see the girl's terrified face.[42]

In *Pippi Longstocking in the South Seas*, there is a chapter titled "Pippi Arranges a Quiz", in which Lindgren parodies philanthropy by showing how Miss Rosenbloom humiliates and frightens poor children before distributing pink woollen trousers, soup and sweets. Pippi takes control of the proceedings, handing out a large bag of sweets and a gold coin to each of the children and sparing

them from both the pink woollen pants and further humiliation. Nubban likewise supports charitable causes in various ways and here too we find archetextual references, including to Nordström's Ann-Mari.[43] In the chapter "Nubban the Philanthropist" in *Nubban kommer igen*, she is more than happy to share her shoes with her new playmate Kersti, whose agricultural labourer parents have eleven children to support. A variant of this illustration appears on the cover of the book. Nubban sits on the floor surrounded by pairs of shoes while Kersti, with her lovely curly golden locks, looks on shyly and dubiously with one finger in her mouth. It is worth mentioning that Nubban is wearing the same blue checked dress on this cover as on the first book, although she is now depicted with brown hair. In the chapter preceding her meeting with Kersti, in the interests of greasing social relations between neighbours, Nubban is forced to attend a post-Christmas children's party for the rich, chubby, fawning, gossipy, arrogant, superficial and unreliable Gunilla. The event is boring and Gunilla bosses the guests and decides what games they should play. She opens the front door at regular intervals to show off her ruffled red silk dress and red patent leather shoes to the poor children of farm labourers flocking outside, a scene that Vang Nyman illustrates. Nubban, who is both bored and irritated by Gunilla's disagreeable behaviour, puts her silver tongue to use to rectify the situation. She convinces the guests that she can perform magic and can conjure twice as many children to the party. When the children demand proof, she opens the door to admit the labourers' children. The party immediately livens up and games are soon underway now that there are more children to join in. Vang Nyman concludes the chapter with an illustration of the wealthy children and the labourers' children having fun together around the table. Here too there is an intertextual relationship, this time to an episode in Astrid Lindgren's as yet unwritten *Emil and the Sneaky Rat*. Nubban also provides a good example to the family when she reads in the newspaper about the plight of war babies and decides to give up her Christmas presents to help the needy, after which the rest of the family follow suit.[44] Published in 1947, the book reflects everyday postwar life in a way that the Pippi Longstocking books never do. Both Nubban and Pippi are open-handed and empathetic, whether saving children from a fire or sharing whatever they have. They are also both capable of pointing out the error of people's ways, such as when Nubban makes sure that Gunilla gets itchy rose hip hairs in her dress when she performs at the summer party, and when Pippi puts wicked horse tormentor Blomsterlund in his place. There is however

an important difference in that Pippi broadly and openly speaks truth to power, while Nubban must content herself with causing mischief to those who treat others unjustly.

School and the beauty ideal

Pippi's brief sojourn in school has its equivalent in the chapter "Nubban Starts School", although here the story is about Nubban returning to school at the end of the summer. She is to start at the local girls' school in the nearby town and, even if she considers school to be an "unnecessary institution", she accepts her lot. Like Pippi's long exposition of her full name and nickname,[45] Nubban must explain to her teacher that nobody calls her Barbro.[46] When on her second day in school she is delayed because she is followed to the train by her dog, the geese and turkeys, she notices that her classmates are staring at her, whispering and giggling. The running geese and turkeys are illustrated and have many similarities to Vang Nyman's illustrations for another contemporary book, Anna-Lisa Almqvist's *Den missförstådda kycklingen Chipps* [Chipps, the Misunderstood Chicken] (1946). The turkey episode leads to the dominant girls in the class to tease Nubban and call her *lortgris* [mucky pig] on account of her freckles:

> Nubban's childishly direct behaviour only seemed ridiculous in their eyes. And the way she looked! That absurd snub nose and such straggly hair, not to mention her teeth and her big mouth. Really, no sensible person could look that way, they both reasoned. She was also gangly and skinny. And her clothes sat on her like sacks. Siv and Maude laughed uproariously and did their best to ridicule Nubban.[47]

Pippi's visit to the school is illustrated with Pippi on horseback at full gallop, waving to the children as she rides away. Pippi is located at the top of the frame, with the children in the schoolyard looking up at her. In the chapter "Nubban Administers Justice Again", this bullying is illustrated by three girls in pretty dresses with bows in their hair laughing at Nubban. The girls are active, pointing fingers and giggling, hands to their mouths. Nubban stands alone, hands behind her back, with tousled hair and dressed in that checked dress, her social exclusion highlighted by the large empty space the illustrator leaves between her and her tormentors. She looks slightly puzzled and the text states that Nubban took it

all in her stride. The girls' bullying escalates and they tell Nubban to buy false teeth, a nose shaper and bleach for her freckles. Entirely in keeping with the spirit of the times, Nubban realises that she can do nothing about the situation and "must undergo her trial alone, which she would also certainly do. Her innately sound disposition and sober view of things, in combination with her down-to-earth upbringing, would certainly help her to resolve the problem".[48] As so often happens when bullying occurs, when she does turn on her tormentors, Nubban is reprimanded by the teacher and sent out of the classroom. Her revenge is to knot together the arms of the mean girls' coats, so that the well-dressed young ladies will "be as wrinkled as two morels" and miss a birthday party.[49] This episode elicits a slight pang of conscience on the part of the uncomradely girls, who ponder whether it might be better to stop gossiping and mend their ways. An illustration shows the two meanest girls in their party dresses and shiny shoes, sobbing as they try to unknot their fur-trimmed coats. Like Pippi, Nubban is not especially pretty but demonstrates a willingness to act and competence in an unfeminine area of expertise by tying sturdy knots, a skill taught to her by her brother: "When it came to knots, Nubban was an expert. She had a good teacher in Svante."[50] In the chapter "Pippi Acts as a Lifesaver", the reader discovers that "Pippi could tie good knots, she could indeed. She had learned that at sea."[51] In other words, an explanation is required as to why girls are good at tying knots, and the explanation is that men have taught them. Nubban can therefore also be linked to Wahlström's conclusion regarding Ana-Mari and Bibi – and Pippi: "It is the girls' capacity to act that is emphasised, and this far exceeds their external charms."[52]

Both Pippi and Nubban are verbally described in terms of their appearance in what might be construed as intertextual references to earlier girls' literature, including Lucy Maud Montgomery's Anne of Green Gables (1908). However, as Vivi Edström observes in *Astrid Lindgren: Vildtoring och lägereld* (1992), published in English as *Astrid Lindgren: A Critical Study* (2000), Pippi's appearance can be interpreted as a parody of heroines in a literary tradition.[53] Nubban's appearance too might initially be taken as a caricature, given that her features are exaggerated and her homeliness constantly pointed out: "Nubban was uncommonly gifted with everything except beauty."[54] Nubban is especially gifted with freckles, which she considers detrimental to her appearance and tries to disguise. Pippi mocks contemporary ideals of beauty when she says she would like to have even more freckles as she doesn't suffer from them, and when, with obvious self-satisfaction,

she calls herself "delaightful": "'I thought that I ought to look like a Real Lady when I'm going to the fair,' she said, tripping along as daintily as anyone can in such large shoes. She held up the hem of her skirt, and said at regular intervals in a voice which was quite different from her usual one: 'Delaightful! Delaightful!'"[55] Pippi in the guise of a "Real Lady" disarms and parodies the artifice of femininity and makes fun of the image of a fine lady when she mimics their clothing, behaviour and language ("delaightful"). Fun is made of Nubban's temporary attack of vanity, the reader laughing at her failed attempts to improve her appearance, while in the Pippi books beauty norms are problematised and overturned. Here, Pippi is not the butt of the joke, rather the reader laughs at norms and the role women are expected to play: "Within the framework of fiction, patriarchal power structures related to appearance are twisted and parodied. The power structures that dictate how girls should act, look and be kept in place are efficiently revealed," writes Wahlström, at the same time as she highlights how the Bibi book describes people on the island of Fanö wearing masks to avoid freckles and that Ann-Mari, with her red plaits, is not a pretty sight.[56] While when invited to afternoon tea Pippi Longstocking breaks the rules by talking out of turn, helping herself and talking with her mouth full, Nubban sits quietly with her mouth closed. Pippi interrupts the adults and addresses them as equals then eats the entire cake, while Nubban sits still in her chair and shakes her head when offered cake, so as not to reveal the gaps in her teeth: "You have to be pretty. Otherwise they will step on your toes," says Nubban to her mother after the tea party. Her mother responds in typical adult manner: "The main thing is to be pleasant and jolly. Then it really doesn't matter what you look like."[57] Nubban ponders this, allowing her mother's opinion to sink in.

Nubban does her best to fit into the prevailing beauty norm by drawing on eyebrows, powdering her nose, curling her hair, experimenting with her sister's cosmetics and attempting to rid herself of her freckles.[58] Pippi, on the other hand, blackens her eyebrows and paints her nails and lips fiery red with crayons before going to afternoon tea at the Settergrens, "so that she looked almost dangerous".[59] Despite these similarities, as Vivi Edström writes in *Kvällsdoppet i Katthult: Essäer om Astrid Lindgren diktaren* [Night Swimming in Katthult: Essays on Astrid Lindgren the Poet] (2003), Pippi should be viewed as an "experiment in self-realisation" who reveals and alters our values.[60] Nubban, on the other hand, cannot be considered to be experimenting in this way; rather, she is a relatively

traditional rascal who, despite her attempts at rebellion, is gendered in line with the expectations of her community, limiting her freedom both internally and externally. Pippi's attempts to doll herself up become an ironic, parodic comment on the beauty ideal. She shapes her own conditions, defying both convention and ideals about girls. While Pippi's experiment in dressing up becomes an act of rebellion, Nubban maintains an ambivalent relationship to beauty norms; she tries to submit to the ideal but arrives at the conclusion that "being beautiful is a bother" and decides that she will no longer attempt to hide her teeth.[61] In classic girls' literature fashion, Nubban's revolt fails, order is restored and one is left with the feeling that this childish rebellion will prove insufficient to break down any barriers. Pippi though refuses to be cowed. She is quite satisfied with her appearance and has no intention of changing it for anyone: she refuses to be tamed or diminished.

Towards womanhood

In the chapter in which Nubban celebrates her tenth birthday, there are two illustrations that are similar to Ingrid Vang Nyman's pictures in the books on Noisy Village. The first of these, *The Children of Noisy Village* (1947), was published the year after the first Nubban book and in the same year as its sequel. The second, *Happy Times in Noisy Village*, was published in 1949 and the third, *Nothing But Fun in Noisy Village*, in 1952, all with illustrations by Vang Nyman. The similarities in question mostly relate to the motifs she has chosen to illustrate, and it is hardly surprising that for both Nubban's tenth and Lisa's seventh birthday she chose a tray with a cup and piece of birthday cake, which might be expected to appeal to child readers.[62] The other choice of motif relates to Nubban's birthday party, when the children spend several hours sledding and afterwards sigh in agreement that they have never had so much fun. This birthday party takes place after the episodes of bullying by Nubban's classmates in early autumn when the girls are spiteful about her appearance.[63] The organisation of this lovely party is her indirect reprisal and afterwards her classmates tease her less. An entire chapter of *Happy Times in Noisy Village* in is dedicated to the children and their fathers sledding[64] and, just as in the Nubban book, they continue until it gets dark. In the Nubban book, three sledding girls are pictured in the bottom left-hand corner of the illustration, which takes up about one third of the page. The girls are on their way out of the frame and the two girls on the sled are laughing delightedly at the

speed, with the wind in their hair. The third girl, who was sitting at the back of the sled, has tumbled off and her dress has ridden up, exposing her short pants. Her mouth is open and she appears to be letting out a scream. In the Noisy Village book, the three girls are on their way out of the full-page picture on the right-hand side of the spread, with swoosh lines and flying braids how they rocket down the steep slope. On the same spread, the boys at the bottom left have fallen from the sled and Bosse is lying face down dangerously close to a tree stump. In the final paragraph of the chapter, we discover that he has indeed struck his head on a root and has a large bump on his forehead. As well as being a pleasant pursuit that appeals to children, sledding also links to Ingrid Vang Nyman's own childhood and experiences. At the age of fourteen, while sledding down a steep slope she collided with a weeping willow, fracturing her skull and requiring a lengthy stay in hospital and blinding her permanently in one eye.[65] There is no mention in the text of the Nubban book of anyone falling from a sled but the illustration shows the two sides of sledding: a fun game and something that can actually go very wrong.

Nubban kommer igen ends with Nubban visiting the cinema to see a film about horses. While there she attracts the attention of Mr Morgan the managing director, who appreciates her straightforwardness and naive charm. Nubban is enthralled by the film, whooping and waving her arms in the same way as Pippi at the theatre in *Pippi Longstocking Goes Aboard*, unable to tell reality from fiction.[66] Mr Morgan invites Nubban to his home and she is smartened up by her mother and sister before being picked up by a car. Mr Morgan gives her a foal. His sister is a bitter and cantankerous spinster who considers Nubban to be a "dreadful child". Still, Nubban does her best to be nice and kind to her, and eventually their relationship changes. Nubban bakes a sponge cake for the director and his sister and, just like Pippi, proves herself to be deft at baking cakes. In the first edition, Vang Nyman has not illustrated Pippi's gingerbread baking, during which Mr Nilsson steps in the unrolled dough on the kitchen floor, but she has chosen to illustrate Nubban, hair tied back and sleeves rolled up, whisking the cake mix. Mr Morgan's sister somewhat reluctantly thaws in the company of the ingenuous child and here Nubban is part of a long archetextual tradition of small children with big hearts who reform alcoholics and convince many an irascible, stingy, aggrieved and lonely individual to change their attitude and bring out their forgotten, amiable selves. Both Pippi and Nubban act on impulses of the heart

and mean well, as when Pippi does her best to cheer up Aunt Laura. The episode with Mr Morgan's sister also reveals a similarity in Nubban's and Pippi's use of language, in that they both muddle words and sentences. Mr Morgan's sister is abrupt with Nubban and wonders how Nubban can have "be so terribly amused at nothing". Taken aback, Nubban replies: "But I'm not amused at nothing... I am amused at almost everything."[67]

While there are similarities between Pippi and Nubban, Christina Alin includes certain moralising elements that would have been completely alien to Astrid Lindgren. One example of this comes when Nubban enters her room and exclaims with some consternation how pleasant it is. In Alin's exclamation of pleasantness there are echoes of centuries of edifying authorial voices in children's literature: "It was certainly unusually neat and pleasant in here today. [...] Nubban suddenly understood where this sense of well-being originated. It was partly from her, because she had been dutiful today, and partly from the pleasantly neat and tidy room. Nubban immediately resolved to make the bed and tidy up every day."[68] The sense of well-being in Villa Villekulla is a direct result of the people (and animals) in the house and the activities that take place there. Pippi's values are entirely different when it comes to a pleasant and tidy home and her notion of cleaning the floor with two scrubbing brushes tied to her feet, which is also found in Michaëlis' Bibi books,[69] is far from Nubban's well-made bed, which has nothing to do with play. When they first visit Pippi in Villa Villekulla, Tommy and Annika think: "But it certainly looked as if Pippi had forgotten to do her Friday cleaning that week."[70] Nubban's cleaning is something that prepares her for her future role as a women – the woman she will one day be – while Pippi remains the strange nine-year-old girl that she is in all three Pippi books.[71]

In her chapter "'Under körsbärsträdet sitter Ann': Dialogen med L. M. Montgomery i Astrid Lindgrens verk" [Under the Cherry Tree sits Ann: The Dialogue with L. M. Montgomery in the Work of Astrid Lindgren] in *Nya läsningar av Astrid Lindgrens författarskap* [New Readings of Astrid Lindgren's Oeuvre] (2015), Åsa Warnqvist writes, with reference to Gabriella Åhmansson's doctoral dissertation on Anne of Green Gables, that the scenes in which the girls are first described have significant similarities. Their red braids, large mouths and shabby dresses unite them and signify subversion in both works. Warnqvist also writes, this time referencing Sarah Death, about Pippi's satisfaction with her freckles and general appearance in comparison to Anne's failed attempt to dye

her red hair black. Unlike Anne of Green Gables, Pippi refuses to be assimilated into the society in which she lives: "With this attitude, Pippi transforms everyday scenes that are common in children's literature,"[72] Warnqvist summarises her analysis thus: "Anne, despite her occasional rebellious tendencies, generally stands for adaptation, while Pippi stands for breaking with norms".[73] Anne of Green Gables too grows up and is schooled in her womanly role as a wife and mother, and it is this path that Nubban has chosen in the second book, as she turns ten and finds herself on the cusp of nascent womanhood.

The road to becoming a woman finds expression in both the text and the illustrations. Nubban's appearance and self-image are also closely linked with the leitmotif of the mirror, which offers another angle on the construction of self-image. The first time Nubban sees herself in the mirror, she does so with such "scorn" that she tears at her straight hair: "Then she suddenly pulled a face at herself. She pulled another one, this time even more violently, and then again and again, each worse than the last. She found a certain pleasure in making her face uglier than it actually was. But eventually, it became too unpleasant after all. Nubban suddenly felt relieved that she was not uglier than she actually was."[74] The illustration shows Nubban's reflection as she pulls at her big mouth, making it even larger while squinting at the same time. Her hair is pointing in all directions and she is wearing the checked dress. Vang Nyman has chosen to draw a heavy, square frame around the mirror, perhaps representing the narrow framework within which a girl might be considered to be pleasing to the eye. The second mirror illustration shows Nubban from behind as she looks in the mirror. She has shaped her hair in curlers but forgotten the hair at the nape of her neck, which remains hanging straight down. She is admiring her frizzy hair "that might have made a little Hottentot green with envy."[75] When she displays herself "in all her splendour" to the family at the breakfast table, they begin to laugh uproariously, sending the wounded Nubban back to the mirror to "see if perhaps something had gone awry, but no, Nubban thought that everything was as fine as could be".[76] That night she is given help to put in clips to curl her hair overnight "and the next day Nubban had very pretty hair. No one laughed at her and she was tremendously pleased. She kept looking at herself in the mirror".[77] When, a few pages later, Nubban applies borrowed beauty creams and makeup, she admires her reflection and the text states that she "strutted in front of the mirror like a rooster,"[78] something obviously intended to make the reader laugh at her given

that she clearly looks ridiculous with her powdered face, drawn-on eyebrows and coloured creams. The third mirror illustration is in the second book, in which the reader once again observes Nubban from behind, this time in full figure dressed in a homemade St Lucia dress and crown, the candles pointing alarmingly in all directions:

> So, Nubban finally placed the St Lucia crown on her head and looked at herself in the mirror. It sat high up on her head, the candles pointing here and there. Nubban looked somewhat quizzical. Well, it couldn't be helped, but how would she manage to light them? Nubban understood well enough that it would be less than satisfactory to set fire to one's hair.[79]

Before the final mirror illustration, there is an episode in the text in which Nubban is visiting a friend of her older siblings. She is wearing her new summer dress, which is light blue with little black bows, and she finds a pair of red slippers beneath the bed and tries them on. She pads around in the slippers but wants to see how fine she looks, so she climbs up on a chair beside the dressing table. As she turns to one side, the chair tips over sending her to the floor – something that might be interpreted as pride coming before a fall. The fourth and final time we see Nubban in a mirror is on the very last page of the second book. There is no equivalent to this in the written text and it is unclear how the illustration should be interpreted. Once again, the reader observes Nubban from behind, her face visible in the mirror as she presses her right index finger against her nose. Her dress is a single light colour and her hair is neatly combed with a clasp holding the long fringe in place. It could be the same mirror in which she pulled faces at the beginning of the first book but now she looks considerably more serene and it is clear that some kind of transformation has taken place. She appears to be smiling and she meets both her own and the reader's gaze. Perhaps she is pointing to herself to affirm her identity and smiling to show that she is satisfied with the person she has become over the course of events. From a cunning and manipulative young rascal, she has become a proper and caring girl who, while admittedly active and resourceful, is like so many other heroines of girl's literature, developing in a promising direction. This is also open to the intertextual interpretation that the ugly duckling is on her way to becoming a beautiful swan.

The checked dress is not ever-present in the second book and Nubban is shown in both simple and floral dresses as well as dungarees. At the beginning of the second book, Nubban is still tousle-haired and wearing her checked dress. She is shown in active situations, such as when she slides down the bannister with Snubbel racing down the stairs and when she helps to capture a runaway pig. Towards the end of the book, the illustrations of Nubban place a greater emphasis on relationships: she sits with her foal and dog, she travels to Mr Morgan's house in the car, she kneels beside the foal with her arms around its neck, while the activities depicted are more domestic, as she changes baby Anders' nappy and whisks the sponge cake mix. When a boy playing as an Indian takes Nubban hostage and demands that his unwilling captive play along, only the boy is active in the illustration as he performs a war dance around his tent, from which Nubban's tied feet protrude. He promises that Nubban can see his new-born sister if she plays with him and Nubban is completely beguiled by the baby, who looks like a little pink bundle with thumb in mouth. The illustration of the Indian is reminiscent of other illustrations of both Indians and other ethnicities by Ingrid Vang Nyman. The illustration of Nubban and Anders at the changing table has significant similarities to the double spread in *Happy Times in Noisy Village* in which the girls take care of Olle's new-born sister Kerstin. In the Noisy Village illustration the reader is able to see a sequence of several events in the same picture, an artistic device known as simultaneous succession.[80] The illustration of Nubban whisking the cake mix has an equivalent in the same Noisy Village book, in the chapter "When it Rains", in which Lisa bakes a sponge cake for the other children with the help of her mother. In the illustration, Lisa is whisking the cake mix in exactly the same way as Nubban.[81] Eva Wahlström points out that Ester Blenda Nordström's Ann-Mari is described as wild, full of mischief and capable of the craziest antics and yet remains so amazingly sensitive. Wahlström contends that this description could just as easily have been applied to Pippi or Karin Michaëlis' Bibi – to which I would now add Nubban, who shows loving and maternal care for baby Anders and for her animals. While Nubban belongs to the characters who revolt against the motif of captivity[82], deep down she is both sensitive and caring. This points towards a future in which she will conform to the role of woman, at home in the intimate sphere in which the girls and women of that era were deemed to belong.

Nubban's hair slide turns up in the illustrations in the second chapter of

the second book. There is no mention of it in the text, it is simply Ingrid Vang Nyman's way of illustrating that Nubban has begun the transformation from wild child to "prim and proper girl". In the second book, her hair is combed straighter, her tousled hair replaced by a side parting. That her hair is now brown on the cover may be a signal that Nubban is no longer wild, her hair darkening as she goes from rascal to young woman. The plot of the second book unfolds just after Nubban's birthday party, which takes place at the end of the first book, so begins immediately where the first book left off. Like Pippi, Nubban has her birthday is in the autumn. When the reader meets Pippi for the first time in *Pippi Longstocking*, she is nine years old. Like the first Nubban book, that book ends with a party in the chapter "Pippi Celebrates Her Birthday". Pippi invites Tommy and Annika, she receives a birthday present from them but she does not age. In the next book, she is still nine and expressing her concern about ageing: "'Yes, time flies, and I'm getting old,' said Pippi. 'I shall be ten in the autumn and then I s'pose I shall be past my prime.'"[83] In *Astrid Lindgren: En levnadsteckning* [Astrid Lindgren: A Biography] (2007), Margareta Strömstedt writes:

> When Tommy and Annika suddenly realise that they cannot take Pippi with them into the adult world, they are crestfallen. [...] But what Tommy and Annika don't yet know is that those who have had Pippi as a playmate can take her with them in secret. Pippi's happy-go-lucky acceptance of chaos as a creative force will remain useful later in life.[84]

While Nubban develops and matures – as the heroine of girls' literature usually does – with the aid of squiggle pills, Pippi is forever nine years old. Pippi will always be a child and, in accordance with the structure of the narrative, she will never play the role of an adult and woman that awaits Nubban.

Notes

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2. Gérard Genette. Den allvarsamma parodin, translated into Swedish by Johan Öberg. *Ord & Bild*, No. 3 (1990): 19–36, 33 ff.
3. Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott. *How Picturebooks Work*. New York: Garland, 2001, 227 f.
4. Astrid Lindgren. *Pippi Långstrump går ombord*. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 1946, 114.
5. Magdalena Gram. Ingrid Vang Nyman: Barnboksillustratör. In *Ingrid Vang Nyman*, Lena Törnqvist and

Sture Åkerström (eds.), 11–36. Stockholm: National Library of Sweden, 2003, 13.

6. Genette. Den allvarsamma parodin, 33.
7. Astrid Lindgren. *Pippi Långstrump*. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 1945, 10.
8. Astrid Lindgren. *UrPippi*. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 2007, 14.
9. Ibid., 15.
10. Ibid., 17.
11. Ulla Lundqvist. Comments. In *UrPippi*. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 2007, 117; Ulla Lundqvist. *Århundradets barn: Fenomenet Pippi Långstrump och dess förutsättningar*. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 1979.
12. Back cover text to Astrid Lindgren. *Pippi Långstrump*, Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 1945.
13. Astrid Lindgren. Pippi Långstrump, 11 f.
14. Christina Alin. *Nubban. En historia om en flicka för flickor*. Stockholm: Gebers, 1946, 7.
15. Ibid., 22.
16. Ibid., 43.
17. Ibid., 85.
18. Lundqvist. *Århundradets barn*, 186.
19. Eva Wahlström. *Fria flickor före Pippi: Ester Blenda Nordström och Karin Michaëlis: Astrid Lindgrens föregångare*. Gothenburg and Stockholm: Makadam, 2011, 46.
20. Helene Ehriander. Astrid Lindgren: Den motvilliga celebriteten. *HumaNetten*, No. 39 (2017): 19–36, https://open.lnu.se/index.php/hn/article/view/859 [28 October 2018].
21. Genette. Den allvarsamma parodin, 33 ff.
22. Wahlström. *Fria flickor före Pippi*, 14f.
23. Ibid., 17.
24. Eva Söderberg. *Sprakfålar och musor: Om Astrid Lindgrens förhållande till flickboksklassiker. I Makt och vanmakt: Texter från ett genusteoretiskt seminarium*, Ingeborg Nordin Hennel (ed.), 115–145. Härnösand: Mid Sweden University, Department of Culture and Humanities, 1998, 125 ff.
25. By the term *archetextuality*, I mean Genette's definition in the Den allvarsamma parodin, i.e. the relationship between texts.
26. Wahlström. *Fria flickor före Pippi*, 21.
27. Alin. *Nubban*, 9.
28. Lindgren. *Pippi Långstrump*, 5.
29. Wahlström. *Fria flickor före Pippi*, 131.
30. Lindgren. *Pippi Långstrump*, 5.
31. Alin. *Nubban*, 11.
32. Wahlström. *Fria flickor före Pippi*, 248.
33. Ibid., 256.
34. For example, the visit to the circus is illustrated in the anthology *Boken om Pippi Långstrump* (1952), for which Ingrid Vang Nyman completed several new colour illustrations.
35. Wahlström. *Fria flickor före Pippi*, 238.
36. Lindgren. *UrPippi*, 66.
37. Alin. *Nubban*, 98.
38. Ibid., 103.
39. Ibid., 104.
40. Christina Alin. *Nubban kommer igen*. Stockholm: Gebers, 1947, 101.
41. Lindgren. *Pippi Långstrump*, 120; Alin. *Nubban kommer igen*, 98.
42. Ingrid Vang Nyman, Lena Törnqvist and Sture Åkerström (eds.), 11–36. Stockholm: National Library of Sweden, 2003, 83.
43. Wahlström. *Fria flickor före Pippi*, 112.
44. Alin. *Nubban kommer igen*, 30 ff.
45. Lindgren. *Pippi Långstrump*, 51 f.
46. Alin. *Nubban*, 113 f.
47. Ibid., 117ff.
48. Ibid., 120f.
49. Alin. *Nubban*, 125.
50. Ibid., 123.
51. Lindgren. *Pippi Långstrump*, 154.
52. Wahlström. *Fria flickor före Pippi*, 118.

53. Vivi Edström. *Astrid Lindgren: Vildtoring och lägereld*. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 1992, 88–89.
54. Alin. *Nubban*, 11.
55. Lindgren. *Pippi går ombord*, 85.
56. Wahlström. *Fria flickor före Pippi*, 234 f.
57. Alin. *Nubban*, 72.
58. Ibid., 38ff.
59. Lindgren. Pippi Långstrump, 125.
60. Vivi Edström. *Kvällsdoppet i Katthult: Essäer om Astrid Lindgren diktaren*. Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 2004, 75.
61. Alin. *Nubban. En historia för flickor om en flicka*, 72.
62. Ibid., 133 and Astrid Lindgren. *Alla vi barn i Bullerbyn*. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 1947, 17.
63. Alin. *Nubban*, 117–126.
64. Lindgren. *Alla vi barn i Bullerbyn*, 20–25; Alin. *Nubban*, 140.
65. Teresa Nielsen. Ingrid Vang Lauridsen, Ingrid Vang Nyman – en levnedsmosaik. In *Ingrid Vang Nyman. Pippi fra Vejen*, Teresa Nielsen (ed.). Vejen: Vejen Kunstmuseum, 2016, 100.
66. Lindgren. *Alla vi barn i Bullerbyn*, 74 ff.; Alin. *Nubban kommer igen*, 129 ff.
67. Alin. *Nubban kommer igen*, 169.
68. Alin. *Nubban*, 36.
69. Wahlström. *Fria flickor före Pippi*, 238.
70. Lindgren. *Pippi Långstrump*, 16.
71. Lundqvist. *Århundradets barn*, 186.
72. Åsa Warnqvist. "Under körsbärsträdet sitter Ann": Dialogen med L. M. Montgomery i Astrid Lindgrens verk. In *Nya läsningar av Astrid Lindgrens författarskap*, Helene Ehriander och Martin Hellström (eds.), 103–212. Stockholm: Liber 2015, 106.
73. Warnqvist. "Under körsbärsträdet sitter Ann": Dialogen med L. M. Montgomery i Astrid Lindgrens verk, 107.
74. Alin. Nubban, 39.
75. Ibid., 45.
76. Ibid., 46.
77. Ibid., 47.
78. Ibid., 52.
79. Alin. *Nubban kommer igen*, 15.
80. Astrid Lindgren. *Mera om oss barn i Bullerbyn*. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 1949, 94 f.
81. Ibid., 102.
82. Vivi Edström, Fångenskapssymboler i ungdomsboken. In *Läs mig – sluka mig!*. Kristin Hallberg (ed.), 181–210. Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 1998.
83. Lindgren. *Pippi Långstrump går ombord*, 145.
84. Margareta Strömstedt. *Astrid Lindgren: En levnadsteckning*. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 2007, 189 f.

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Among Drystone Walls, Babbling Brooks and Lush Green Meadows

Nostalgia in the Gardens of Astrid Lindgren's Näs

Helene Ehriander & Maria Nilson

The new gardens at Astrid Lindgren's Näs opened in 2016. The gardens consist of a number of interlinked horticultural spaces that are rooted in Astrid Lindgren's life and career. The gardens cover a large area and are the result of many years of work, as a wealth of plants have been gathered and artworks have been specially commissioned to stand in harmony with their natural surroundings. The gardens are open to the public for a limited period each year and are recreated for each season. In this chapter, we discuss Karin Eliasson and Robert Blombäck's book *Trädgårdarna på Astrid Lindgrens Näs* [The Gardens at Astrid Lindgren's Näs] (2017) from the perspective of nostalgia.[1] We study how the Näs gardens project, the text of the book and, above all, the photographs in the book connect to Lindgren's life and works. While we have visited Astrid Lindgren's Näs at various times of the year to experience the gardens, it is Eliasson and Blombäck's book on which our analysis focuses.

The nostalgia we encounter in Eliasson and Blombäck's book can be illuminated by what Svetlana Boym calls *restorative* nostalgia, which seeks to reconstruct the past in as much detail as possible, and is somewhat different from the nostalgia we find in Lindgren's own texts, which Boym would define as *reflective*, in that it looks back on the past with a sense of longing.[2] The borders are not absolute, however, and both Lindgren's own work and the book on the gardens at her childhood home can be understood from both these concepts of nostalgia. It is not possible to discuss Eliasson and Blombäck's book with the aid of Boym's definitions of nostalgia without also reflecting on both Lindgren's possibly nostalgic view of her childhood and the places she associates with it and depicts in her writing, and the nostalgia readers and visitors experience as they remember reading Lindgren's books and watching film adaptations, or listening to Astrid Lindgren's voice (for example at the beginning of every episode of the television series *Emil i Lönneberga*). Now and again in this nostalgic universe, these become linked and the reader of the garden book and visitors to the gardens are

joined with Astrid Lindgren so that her experiences are to some extent also ours. We discuss whether the garden book primarily sets out to safeguard the values of the past (restorative) or if the gardens and the text and photographs in the book are used as a point of comparison that illuminates important sustainability issues, not only environmental but also social and cultural, that are relevant today (reflective).[3] This is studied with the aid of examples from Eliasson and Blombäck's book, and we conclude with our own reflections on how we might interpret and understand nostalgic notions about Astrid Lindgren's life and work based on the garden project as described in the book.

The concept of nostalgia

As we have seen, nostalgia is a multifaceted concept and we can understand it in various ways. The word *nostalgia* is a combination of the Greek *nostos*, which means homecoming, and *algos*, meaning pain. Today, it is perhaps more associated with a somewhat sentimental longing for, say, a childhood home or games one played when one was young. Boym, whose book *The Future of Nostalgia* is a key work in the field of nostalgia research, has a broader perspective on the term. She differentiates between two very different forms of nostalgia:

> Restorative nostalgia puts emphasis on *nostos* and proposes to rebuild the lost home and patch up memory gaps. Reflective nostalgia dwells in *algos*, in longing and loss, the imperfect process of remembrance […] Restorative nostalgia manifests itself in total reconstruction of the past, while reflective nostalgia lingers on ruins, the patina of time and history in the dreams of another place and another time.[4]

If we simplify Boym's complex theory, restorative nostalgia is more emotionally involved, and reflective nostalgia is more distanced and problematised.

In her book *Litterära resor: Turism i spåren efter böcker, filmer och författare* [Literary Journeys: Tourism on the Trail of Books, Films and Authors] (2011), Carina Sjöholm examines nostalgia, among other things discussing the "Bullerby syndrome" (or Noisy Village syndrome), an idealised notion of a Sweden that does not exist and has never existed.[5] This notion is closely associated with small scale, tradition and community, and Sjöholm quotes historian the David Lowenthal's assertion that "nostalgia is memory with pain removed".[6] In *Nostalgia: En känslas*

historia [Nostalgia: The History of an Emotion] (2001), Karin Johannisson, former Professor of the History of Science and Ideas at Uppsala University, is largely critical of nostalgia. She initially asks herself what nostalgia really is: "Is the epidemic of nostalgia a sign of cultural impoverishment, reality replaced with replication, the present with memory? Is it a critique of civilisation, an utopia, an escape or what?"[7] She discusses the history of the term, how nostalgia was long viewed as a disease of homesickness that often struck soldiers at the front, and its problematic links to nationalism. Nostalgia is often linked to memories of "home" and "it almost always carries with it issues of identity, community and belonging".[8] Although Johannisson discusses many different perspectives on nostalgia, she concludes her essay thus: "In nostalgia, fakery and falsification always lurk."[9] The sociologist Luc Sante follows the same train of thought when he writes that nostalgia shows contempt for the past by taking its artefacts and memories out of their true historical context and placing them in a new nostalgic situation.[10]

In her contribution to the edited volume *Platser för en bättre värld* [Places for a Better World] (2009), Cecilia Trenter calls nostalgia "the dream of what once was".[11] She emphasises that the nostalgic perspective unavoidably involves a comparison between then and now, in which the past is always superior to the present: "That people wish to relive history does not mean that they wish to live in another time or relive a part of their life – childhood, for example – but rather that they wish (preferably collectively) to gather around memory."[12] She also refers to a study of how museum visitors relate to the past that "shows that nostalgists are both those who long to return to a peaceful time they remember from experience and those who, while having never experienced that place or time, nonetheless hold it in greater esteem than the present".[13] The memories shared by visitors to the gardens at Astrid Lindgren's Näs include Lindgren's recollections of a happy childhood there, filled with games, the memories that form the foundations for her fictional tales and that have become the reader's and visitor's own childhood memories and reading experiences, given that the Lindgrenesque world has coloured so many Swedish childhoods.

Gardens and nature

In 2013, the cultural centre at Astrid Lindgren's Näs began work on creating a garden that would in various ways both reflect Lindgren's work and attract more

visitors to Näs. Literary tourism changes places, and any attempt to broaden the visitor base requires making connections to the author's work that will appeal to visitors:

> A garden that bears Astrid Lindgren's name cannot be just any garden. It has to be a garden with character and attitude. Our aim is for the garden to arouse feelings, to be a place of inspiration with room for thought and conversation. For each new green room we have created, we have chosen a theme with roots in Astrid Lindgren – her life, her person, her Småland or her work.[14]

The commission to construct the garden went to Karin Eliasson. In the book *Trädgårdarna på Astrid Lindgrens Näs*, she presents her work to create a garden that, in various ways, is linked to both Lindgren's childhood and her work. The book is sold in the giftshop at Näs and can be viewed as a guide to the gardens for visitors interested in learning more. It can be read as a book for gardening enthusiasts but also as an exhibition catalogue that explains and provides background information on everything the visitor can see during their tour of the gardens. Eliasson also quotes liberally from Lindgren's own writings. The book is richly illustrated with specially commissioned photographs by Robert Blombäck, as well as many older photographs from Astrid Lindgren's private photo albums. It is in many ways an interesting and beautiful book that fulfils a number of different purposes. One important function is of course to present the gardens and describe the construction process, including everything from the choice of plants to how irrigation is managed. Another at least equally important function is to connect the work of designing and building and the finished gardens to Astrid Lindgren's life and work. After all, this is not "just any garden" but a Lindgrenesque garden that must recreate for visitors the atmosphere of her books and films and their memories of Astrid herself.

Astrid Lindgren is one of the few children's writers that almost everyone in Sweden recognises and the vast majority admire. Her books have been read by generations and her films are constantly repeated on television. One key word in Lindgren's works is *childhood*, something associated with both Astrid's own happy and idyllic childhood at Näs and the fictional childhoods she recounts in her stories. In her biography of Lindgren, Margareta Strömstedt writes that

she only ever drew her childhood in bright colours: "For Astrid Lindgren, this is not nostalgia but a completely tangible reality, some kind of powerful and living wellspring from which she daily drew both the will to live and the joy of writing."[15] Naturally, Lindgren wanted to be read, but she deliberately avoided fame and only made her voice heard in the public discourse when she considered it important and necessary. She was a literary celebrity from the beginning of her career and her name quickly became both a brand and a stamp of quality. Literary celebrity is special in that it acquires and possesses cultural capital through the combination of literary, commercial and mass media success. The media also contributed to increasing Lindgren's cultural capital and a synergistic effect was created by her appearances in the media, where she could promote her work in various contexts to a wider public that might not otherwise have been interested in literature.[16] The symbolic values associated with Lindgren are all significant to the creation of a Lindgrenesque garden as a tourist attraction for both adults and families with children.

Astrid Lindgren has not been associated with gardens in other contexts, although she was often associated with the countryside and the occasional Stockholm park. She was not an enthusiastic gardener herself and her characters prefer to play in the woods and fields, even if they might find a swing hanging from a tree or a fruit-laden cherry tree in a garden appealing. In the 1940s, at the suggestion of Erik Palmgård of the Association of Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies, a large new garden was planted around Astrid Lindgren's childhood home at Näs and the nearby rectory. Although Lindgren had long since left home, her parents still lived in the house. Kajsa Althén and Elisabeth Essen, who have written about land use at Näs, underline that this change may have given the rectory a more "villa-like character compared to its earlier mansion-like appearance".[17] This highlights the fact that a building's setting in a garden affects the entire environment and how it is perceived, which also naturally applies to the newly created gardens at Näs.

To create a garden that imitates nature, as parts of the new gardens do, involves an interplay and balance between nature and culture, order and chaos. Nature must be tamed, shaped into a garden while still seeming natural, put in order, be made controllable and able to withstand many visitors. A garden is associated with orderliness and, to some extent, restricted growth in the form of mowed lawns, flower beds, and weeding. To attempt to recreate and mimic nature

in a garden may sound paradoxical and challenging, and indeed Astrid Lindgren's gardens at Näs exist in a tension between the tamed and the wild. The gardens are at least in part a representation of the natural surroundings we associate with Lindgren – an artistic and considered reconstruction of cultural heritage.

With regard to nature, Lindgren has said that when remembering her childhood her first thought is "not of the people. But of that beautiful world that framed my days then and filled them with such intensity that as a grownup you can hardly comprehend it".[18] This quotation is taken from the photographic memoir *Mitt Småland* [My Småland] (1987), which highlights natural environments of importance to Lindgren's life and work in a way that is both idealised and characterised by what Boym calls restorative nostalgia. In *Mitt Småland*, the kind of life that Lindgren lived, mostly outdoors in natural surroundings, and the activities she enjoyed there, are presented using rhetoric coloured by our perception of a bygone age on which we look back with yearning. The cover shows Lindgren herself striding through woodland covered with white wood anemones. New photographs of Vimmerby and the surrounding countryside by Jan-Hugo Norman are mixed with photographs taken during Astrid's girlhood and illustrations from her books. Cow pastures, grazing sheep, moss-covered boulders, drystone walls and mirror-like lakes covered with waterlilies, this is the natural and cultural landscape on which the book focuses, while from the town of Vimmerby, in addition to Näs, we are also shown cobbled alleyways, white-trimmed wooden houses and churchyards with backlit gravestones. The boundary between nature and the production landscape of agrarian society is blurred, and today it is difficult for us to conceive of how close they were only a century ago. Nostalgia is striking, in both words and pictures, and to the present-day reader the production landscape of cows and sheep might well be regarded as "nature". The above quotation continues with a Lindgrenesque poetic description of nature infused with yearning for something lost as the child Astrid grew up and moved to the big city, and as society changed:

> Wild strawberries among the rocks, carpets of blue spring flowers, meadows full of cowslips, special places where blueberries could be found, the forest where dainty pink flowers were nestling in the moss, the paddocks around Näs where we knew every little path and every little stone, the creek with the waterlilies, ditches, streams and

> trees – I remember all this more than the people. Stones and trees were our friends, almost like living creatures, and nature enclosed and nurtured our games and dreams.[19]

The interesting thing about Lindgren's texts is that they simultaneously express a longing to return to a vanished landscape and a critique of the contemporary hierarchical society.

The gardens as an idea and a tourist attraction

Astrid Lindgren's Näs opened for business in its current incarnation in 2007 and is very much part of the literary tourism linked to Lindgren's life and work. Dieter K. Müller, who has studied interest among German tourists in the landscape described by Lindgren, writes that within "literary tourism, tourist attractions consist of places that are mentioned in or play some role in the understanding of or origins of the literary work". He goes on to discuss "markers" as something that attach "meaning to an object" and create interest and awareness concerning the place amongst potential visitors: "In addition to being a marker for a place worth visiting, the literature also creates or influences images of a place or landscape. These images represent people's perceptions of the place, which affects their relationship with and behaviour towards that place."[20] In summary, Müller also states that visits to places of literary interest can satisfy the visitor's interest in the author's life, works and important events in the author's life; they can have a special significance for the visitors and recall childhood memories.[21]

In his 2009 article "Astrid Lindgrens upplevelselandskap: Där sagor blir verklighet och verkligheten blir sagor" [Astrid Lindgren's Experience Landscape: Where tales become reality and reality becomes tales], Per Strömberg expresses a concern that the municipally owned experience landscape around Astrid Lindgren's Näs was part of a larger "Astridified" experience economy in which Lindgren's "fairy tales" were translated into a cultural and economic context: "Through Lindgren tourism, her writings and tableaux of the Småland landscape have transformed Vimmerby into a thriving small town. At the same time, commercialisation may risk carrying us further and further from the source, her books; it is after all from there that we get our unique industry."[22] He concludes his article by underlining that, in Astrid Lindgren's way of combining landscapes with experiences, the narrative is never "far from the real landscape, as the landscape

of Småland appears in her children's books. Vimmerby is Astrid Lindgren and Astrid Lindgren is Vimmerby."[23]

In her book on literary tourism, Carina Sjöholm discusses the development of both Astrid Lindgren's World and Astrid Lindgren's Näs and the tension in Vimmerby regarding how best to manage Lindgren's legacy.[24] Whereas Astrid Lindgren's World largely caters to children, Astrid Lindgren's Näs is more intent on attracting adult visitors with a permanent exhibition about Lindgren's work, as well as temporary exhibitions and lectures and a library stocked with literature by and about Lindgren. The investment in the gardens can be seen as an attempt to attract the same families with children who flock to Astrid Lindgren's World to visit Näs as well, given that the gardens include a number of installations designed for children, such as the stream they can jump over just as Astrid did as a girl. It might also be viewed as a deliberate step towards highlighting Lindgren's stories that, as Per Strömberg was at pains to point out, are the foundation on which the town's tourist industry rests.

The gardens at Näs are not "just any garden"; through their various themes they communicate values that are associated with Lindgren, and visitors learn about the traditions and games of previous generations, as clearly illustrated in Eliasson and Blombäck's book. In an article on places in and visitors to Astrid Lindgren's world, Konstantin Economou and Rakel Hergli ask questions about what these places look like and how they are represented, as well what they communicate and how they are used.[25] They also explore the relationships between Lindgren, the stories and places, and underline that, as the majority of visitors are already familiar with both Lindgren and her stories, the modern construction that is the "Astrid Lindgren tourist attraction" becomes a place "we perhaps already know".[26] This implies that the gardens must relate to visitors' expectations and anticipation regarding the relationship between memory and place and what they will be able to experience there. In the planning and execution there is a conscious effort both to preserve and to renew a "horticultural heritage" and to include places in which both children and adults can be activated. One example of this is the playpen for "the playful person". This relates back to how Lindgren writes about play in her stories. According to Eliasson: "In the Noisy Village books, which are so close to Astrid Lindgren's own childhood, play is basically never-ending. There is a stream of fantasy, inventiveness and adventure from morning till night."[27] Play may be broadly defined and, as Eliasson observes, play is a way for children to learn to

understand the world, create experiences and prepare for the various trials of life.[28] The now almost classic quotation from Lindgren's *Samuel August from Sevedstorp and Hanna in Hult* (1973) is of course included: "And we played and played and played so much it's a wonder we didn't play ourselves to death." Meanwhile, in the garden book we see photographs of happy, active children playing in modern clothes, connecting past with present through play as an eternal value.[29]

While the playpen is clearly intended to build a bridge between Lindgren's childhood and these present-day playing children, the text also discusses the dilemma inherent in preserving and working with wild plant material. Eliasson writes: "The gardener's challenge may never be more starkly expressed than it is here in the lush playpen, to work both with and against nature, to control the natural power of growth with a gentle hand."[30] Here, information about botany and gardening coexists with reflections on both Lindgren's childhood and her fiction, at the same time as the "experience" of play is described as vital for the child. There is room here for both a yearning for another time and "nostalgic contemplation", given that children no longer have the same opportunities to play in natural surroundings and now spend so much time on organised activities and using smartphones and iPads. By reading the text and looking at the photographs in the book and experiencing the playpen oneself, ideally in the company of children, one can achieve the type of experience that literary tourism strives for. Sjöholm writes: "It is often said that the ultimate experience should educate people in some way, provide entertainment and some form of escapism and be wrapped up in an aesthetic package that combines these elements in an attractive manner."[31]

Eliasson's chapter on the playpen contains a number of ideas that are interesting to consider. One deals with the significance of being in a place where Lindgren herself once lived. Even though the playpen is not located exactly where Lindgren herself played, it still creates a personal link to her and the characters who play in her stories. This builds bridges to the Children of Noisy Village and creates connections to cultural heritage and ideas about sustainability in both text and images, as Eliasson and Blombäck describe and depict the work of creating the playpen and the final results. There is also a strong connection to Småland and by extension a "Swedish" identity.[32]

A stone wall in Småland

Nostalgia is also strongly associated with national identity, perhaps most of all its creation. By "remembering" a country's history, by recreating something as simple as the act of jumping across a stream, for good or ill a yearning to return can be transformed into a sense of community. In "Dialects of Nostalgia: Downton Abbey and English Identity", Rosalía Baena and Christa Byker discuss how Julian Fellowes' television series not only depicts an idealised bygone era, but also creates a form of collective nostalgia that makes us feel both proud to be English (even those of us who are not) and a yearning to return to the period in which it is set (even though we are well aware of that era's flaws). "Especially collective nostalgia can promote a feeling of community that works to downplay or deflect potentially divisive social difference (class, race, gender and so on) even if only temporarily."[33] At the same time as we reject the hierarchical society that Downton Abbey depicts, with all its faults from class divides to patriarchal gender patterns, we can still yearn to live in that world.

This longing for a bygone age that on one level chooses to turn a blind eye to how things "really" were can also be found in Eliasson and Blombäck's book, which includes an interesting chapter on drystone walls richly illustrated with beautiful, atmospheric photographs of backlit stone walls. The newly constructed gardens incorporate both old drystone walls and new artistic interpretations, including a variation built with split logs and covered with turf. Called WoodFlow,[34] this sculpture arouses associations of something flowing smoothly through the landscape – unlike the heavy, grey stones laboriously laid one by one to create a drystone wall. This chapter quotes Lindgren's own words:

> My forefathers, who without exception were Småland farmers – what masses of stone they must have broken from their barren soil and how they must have toiled. I still sometimes go to look at a long drystone wall that my grandmother built with her own hands.[35]

This quotation from Lindgren is infused with reflective nostalgia: Lindgren remembers her grandmother; she feels an attachment to this stone wall but also considers the hard labour that it represents. Eliasson's text highlights both the cultural value of the stone walls and the biodiversity they facilitate, there are facts about the difference between single and double walls and she too mentions the

hard labour involved in building them and yet, largely thanks to the very beautiful and atmospheric images of backlit drystone walls, this section is strikingly romantic and bewitching. Drystone walls are material evidence of a bygone era but are no longer presented solely in their original context but also as part of our "cultural heritage" and something as "beautiful".[36]

Boym writes: "Restorative nostalgics don't acknowledge the uncanny and terrifying aspects of what was once homey. Reflective nostalgics see everywhere the imperfect mirror images of home, and try to cohabit with doubles and ghosts."[37] We might say that Lindgren, who recalls her grandmother's hard work, is able to enjoy the stone walls without falling into the trap of uncritically yearning for the past. The rest of us, who perhaps do not have a grandmother who built a stone wall, must distance ourselves from the beautiful images of stone walls in order to remember that they are also a memorial to a hierarchical society in which it was the poor who toiled.

Play and freedom

In one of the garden spaces, a meadow has been recreated. There are a couple of reasons for this: firstly, the meadow is in itself an interesting biotope and part of an ancient cultural landscape; and, secondly, according to Eliasson and Blombäck's book, the meadow symbolises freedom. Eliasson describes the work of restoring an old meadow and how they created a new part of the meadow, two examples of labour that tests the patience. She also links the meadow to values such as diversity and freedom in Lindgren's work: "Freedom is one of the most important themes in Lindgren's works. Her stories vibrate with freedom: freedom from oppression, freedom to play, freedom to discover, freedom to be who you want to be. The freedom that is a prerequisite for development and diversity."[38]

Close to the meadow is an artwork by Patrick Dougherty titled *The Seven Wishing Jars*, where children and adults can write down a wish on a slip of paper and attach it to the one of the jars. The meadow is also linked to vagabonds and their free way of life, and Lindgren's "Luffarvisan" [The Vagabond's Song] is quoted in its entirety with a photograph of the author sitting in a meadow, perhaps the one that has now been restored.[39] After a fact-packed section about bees, there is a spread titled "Ängen är åkerns moder" [The meadow is the mother of the field], with photographs of wild flowers and a traditional haystack. Here too it is interesting to reflect on the ideas presented and what has been chosen to

exemplify the freedom found in Lindgren's work. It is well known that in various contexts Lindgren advocated for children to be given a great deal of freedom. She also stated in several interviews just how unique her own parents were in many ways, allowing their children far more freedom than was usual during the period she grew up in. It is also interesting that "Luffarvisan" emphasises a sense of freedom to such a degree, of being able to go where one pleases without answering to anyone.

There is an undeniable passion for the freedom of life on the road in her novel *Rasmus and the Vagabond* (1956). Vivi Edström writes: "The theme of the vagabond provides the author with an opportunity to indulge in experiences in nature."[40] Young Rasmus and Oskar the vagabond eventually leave the life on the road behind them and return home. The freedom-loving Oskar is not "a genuine vagabond […] In fact, Oskar is a highly competent crofter," writes Edström.[41] The life of the vagabond may be free, but it is a life of poverty and hardship. The life of a crofter is hard, but there is one bonus. On the final page of the novel, Rasmus ponders: "He had a home. The walls of the cottage were worn and shiny, almost like satin. What a beautiful house it was! With a thin, dirty little hand, Rasmus lovingly stroked the walls of the house that was his home."[42] The life of a vagabond is in a way a free and wonderful life, and the relationship between Rasmus and Oskar is both loving and respectful but, in the end, it is the home and Martha, who immediately sends them down to the lake to wash, that makes a happy ending possible. On the one hand, we can argue for the importance of keeping the story alive and creating opportunities for both children and adults to experience a haystack and lie stretched out in a meadow dreaming of the vagabond life; after all, such visual memories are an important part Lindgren's work. On the other hand, it provides a somewhat one-sided picture when "Luffarvisan" is taken out of context and without comment presented as a romanticised symbol of freedom.

Nostalgia and social criticism

One way to understand Boym's different definitions of nostalgia is to use them to study the Emil books, which undoubtedly have a nostalgic bent. Just as in the Noisy Village books, Lindgren uses her own memories and her father's stories of his childhood as a foundation – and the books express a fair amount of yearning for a bygone age. That said, there is also potential for subversion and a possibility to

decipher criticism of the society the books depict; for example, Emil's engagement in the plight of the paupers in the workhouse and the depiction of the farm labourer Alfred's limited opportunity to decide over his own life. And there is also a hope that society will change. We know that Emil will grow up to be chairman of the municipal council and therefore be in a position to implement reforms to improve life for a poor farm labourer and for the paupers crammed into lice-infested building, robbed of their Christmas snuff and abused by the warden. It is simultaneously hopeful and nostalgic, but tends towards Boym's reflective nostalgia, as the longing for the past includes a critique of it.

Much of this social criticism is however missing from film adaptations of the Emil books, as Anders Wilhelm Åberg discusses in the article "Remaking the National Past: The Uses of Nostalgia in the Astrid Lindgren Films of the 1980s and 1990s" (2011). He points out that the films about Emil and Noisy Village express a more fervent yearning to return to the past, with a streak of what we might call sentimentality that is significantly less pronounced in Lindgren's own texts, and that the film adaptations exhibit much closer links to what Sjöholm describes as "Bullerby syndrome", a longing to return to something traditionally and authentically Swedish.[43] In the same volume, Corina Löwe writes about film adaptations of Kalle Blomkvist and discusses similar problems. The films place considerably more emphasis on staging what might be considered "Swedishness": "devotion to nature, devotion to the home country and the home environment, empathy for children, and the sense of belonging to the community. Nostalgia is the instrument in the films to convey the relationship to the society."[44] This nostalgia described here is similar to what Boym calls restorative nostalgia. The critical dimension has disappeared in the adaptation from one medium to another.

In the description of both Lindgren's texts and her childhood presented in the garden book, it is possible to glimpse representations of nostalgia as both restorative and reflective; however, if the nostalgia in Lindgren's own texts is multilayered and in some cases is capable of social criticism and subversion, in the garden book it is more one-dimensional. When Boym discusses nostalgia, she emphasises the need to recognise that different projects have different points of departure: "Restorative nostalgia evokes national past and future, reflective nostalgia is more about the individual and cultural memory."[45] In Astrid Lindgren's World, adults and children encounter Lindgren's characters "in real life", played by actors, making it easy to inhabit her fiction. At Astrid Lindgren's Näs, that

sense of belonging must be created by other means. Eliasson and Blombäck's book is aimed at adult readers and, as an artistically and aesthetically appealing tome about an ambitious gardening project, it naturally has no ambition to offer a critical and nuanced image of Lindgren's work. On the contrary, it is the entire project's raison d'être and the garden books aesthetic to show an appealing tourist attraction to those who visit Näs or who are considering doing so. Every genre must be assessed according to its possibilities and limitations. Gardening books are generally intended as beautiful, artistic coffee-table books to brighten up the autumn and winter, allowing the reader to browse, enjoy and plan for the spring and summer while the rain falls and the wind blows outside. If we were to adopt a tougher line, however, it is something of a gamble to "isolate" a selection of images of stone walls and meadows from Lindgren's nuanced texts and recollections in order to create something that appeals to the modern tourist who (perhaps) will only see the surface of the beautiful backlit drystone wall divorced from historical context. This entails the risk that the nuances of Lindgren's texts, whether fictional or autobiographical, will be lost in translation, in which case we may find ourselves caught up in an uncritical and, in this day and age, glaringly problematic nostalgia. Still, the opportunity for nostalgic contemplation is available to the reader and visitor who is motivated and interested in reflecting, and one should not underestimate the possibility that the gardens will show the way to other literature about Lindgren's works and to the stories she herself wrote. Once there, they will also find important ideas about sustainable development represented in everything from children's games to plants that are particularly favourable for important bee colonies. Questions for consideration, with or without elements of nostalgia, are posed directly and indirectly concerning how we should use our planet in the best way to ensure that future generations and all other living things can grow, prosper and thrive and enjoy a good life. Although rooted in the past, this nostalgia also points forward and may inspire thoughts about how we should live in an environmentally, socially and culturally sustainable manner in the future.

Finally, it is also interesting and important to discuss what preconceptions this material contributes to the image of Astrid Lindgren as an author as well as a celebrity and "an ordinary Smålander", to her work and the childhood that formed the foundations for her abundant creative output. Those who buy or borrow the book about the gardens at Astrid Lindgren's Näs have a keen interest in Lindgren and are likely to count themselves among her admirers – most of them unaware

that they are both consuming and contributing to a production of nostalgia. Their expectation is that the gardens will bring them closer to Astrid Lindgren and that their appreciation of her will be affirmed. The fact that Lindgren has inspired her own gardens means that she is significant, and this creates a circle of expectations, tributes and nostalgic experiences that continue to contribute to the construction of Astrid Lindgren the icon and celebrity and create a yearning for both the fictitious universe she created and the values she stood for.[46]

Notes

1. Karin Eliasson and Robert Blombäck. *Trädgårdarna på Astrid Lindgrens Näs*. Stockholm: Salikon förlag, 2017.
2. Svetlana Boym. *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books, 2001, 49.
3. These ideas and the Swedish translation of terminology are taken from Peter Aronsson. Historiebrukens ekologi. In *Astrid Lindgrens världar i Vimmerby: En studie om kulturarv och samhällsutveckling*, Leif Jonsson (ed.). Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2010, 113.
4. Boym. *The Future of Nostalgia*, 41.
5. Carina Sjöholm. *Litterära resor: Turism i spåren efter böcker, filmer och författare*. Gothenburg and Stockholm: Makadam, 2011, 127.
6. Ibid., 151.
7. Karin Johannisson. *Nostalgia: En känslas historia*. Stockholm: Bonnier Essä, 2001, 8.
8. Ibid., 31.
9. Ibid., 149.
10. Luc Sante. *Low Life: Lures and Snares of Old New York*. London: Granta, 1991, unpaginated foreword.
11. Cecilia Trenter. Tre vägar mot framtiden: Industrimiljöer som nostalgiska utopier. In *Platser för en bättre värld: Auschwitz, Ruhr och röda stugor*, Peter Aronsson (ed.), 125–147. Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2009, 130.
12. Ibid., 131.
13. Ibid.
14. See http://www.astridlindgrensnas.se/utstallningar/tradgardarna/, accessed 24 May 2018.
15. Margareta Strömstedt. *Astrid Lindgren: En levnadsteckning*. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 2007, 23.
16. Helene Ehriander. Den motvilliga celebriteten. *HumaNetten*, No. 39 (2017), unpaginated, https://open.lnu.se/index.php/hn/article/view/859.
17. Kajsa Althén and Elisabeth Essen. Markanvändning vid Näs: Från medeltida storgård till temapark. In *Astrid Lindgrens världar i Vimmerby: En studie om kulturarv och samhällsutveckling*, Leif Jonsson (ed.), 26–44. Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 35.
18. Astrid Lindgren, Margareta Strömstedt and Jan-Hugo Norman. *Mitt Småland*. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 1987, 20.
19. Ibid.
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26. Ibid., 47.

27. Ibid., 75.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., 79.
30. Ibid., 80.
31. Sjöholm. *Litterära resor*, 109.
32. Olle Larsson, Lennart Johansson and Lars Olof Larsson write that Lindgren's stories, together with texts by other authors, have contributed to constructing a Småland identity: "The literary representations produced and interpreted by authors with deep roots in Småland have more than anything else shaped an image of the typical and positive Smålander: hard-working, reliable, contented, versatile and frugal, but with an indomitable will to manage by themselves and not be a burden on others." Olle Larsson, Lennart Johansson and Lars-Olof Larsson. *Smålands historia*. Lund: Historiska Media, 2006, 16.
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34. Eliasson and Blombäck. *Trädgårdarna på Astrid Lindgrens Näs*, 81ff.
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36. See ibid., 97ff. It might be worth mentioning 2007's bestselling book on drystone walls: Ida Andersson and Åsa Nyhlén. *Stenminnen: De småländska stenmurarna – ett kulturarv*. Öhr: Grodans förlag, 2007, a lavish volume richly illustrated with photographs of stone walls, backlit or in green moss-covered Bauer landscapes. Here too the text contains several reminders that the poor have toiled to build these walls, while at the same time the images are imbued with nostalgia.
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The importance of the Child

An essay on Astrid Lindgren's dramatizations of Pippi Longstocking

Martin Hellström

A relatively unknown side of Astrid Lindgren's writing is the plays she wrote to be performed by children. Lindgren created stories directly for the stage and also dramatized several of her novels, including Pippi Longstocking, which is the subject of this article.

I begin by painting a picture of the opportunities to see and play theatre that existed for Astrid Ericsson, as she was called then, in the town of Vimmerby where she grew up in the 1910s and 1920s. Early experiences gave the author an awareness of the importance of theatre for children, and the needs of children on stage. It was here she acquired an understanding of the difference between text that gets its meaning through the reader's reading and text that is conveyed by an actor's acting, and these cultural encounters in childhood influenced her work on the play about Pippi in the 1940s and 1950s. The idea behind the changes is clear, from the highly literary dialogue of the first version to the comedy and slapstick in the last version. Her understanding of the means of theatrical expression was also developed by observing the children who acted the play about Pippi Longstocking, and the audience reaction to it. The child is important for the growth of the script. For one thing, there was the memory of herself as a child on stage, but most important of all were the children who first performed the play. Ethel Sjögren was the name of the girl who first played Pippi, and her portrayal of the role influenced subsequent adaptations.

My archival research on cultural life in Vimmerby and the performance at Vår Teater (Our Theatre) in Stockholm, on which the article is based, has been presented in my book *Pippi på scen: Astrid Lindgren och teatern* ("Pippi on the Stage: Astrid Lindgren and the Theatre", 2015). Here I tell in more summary form about how the theatre was part of her youthful cultural experiences, and at the same time I show how biographical literary research can help us to understand the special type of texts that are in focus here: three theatrical versions of Pippi Longstocking. The second half of the article consists of a comparative reading of the three plays, against the background of archival information about what

Astrid Ericsson saw and performed, and what Astrid Lindgren later said about her versions. My larger study was designed in the same way: basic research in the archives provided a springboard for the comparative reading of the plays. The approach in the comparative analysis is similar to what is applied in comparative studies of novel texts, but this should be accompanied by an understanding of what a text intended for the theatre is, as expressed in the theories used in theatrical research. A fundamental aspect is to view the script as performative, as something shared by the audience. The script of the play is not in itself a completed work but rather a manual, a starting point for what is to be presented to the audience. One can better understand the text if this is taken into account, and one will arrive at a deeper understanding of the audience's reactions by taking into account the time and culture in which the audience lives. This is described in Willmar Sauter's *The Theatrical Event: Dynamics of Performance and Perceptions* (2000). This emphasizes how the context of the performance affects both the performance and the audience's experience. What is captured in the concept of the zeitgeist affects the writing of the script and the staging of the play, but also the audience's response.

This reasoning can be deepened with further theoretical approaches, but I will instead go on to show how the zeitgeist and the context are important for the birth of the play about Pippi Longstocking. For example, the play cannot be understood unless the reading considers that it is children who are on both sides of the footlights: the children on stage act and the children in the audience react. The emergence of children's theatre is linked to the reform pedagogy that influenced Swedish education the 1940s and 1950s in Sweden. Not only were children supposed to have access to the theatre as an audience, they should also have the opportunity to act creatively themselves. "It was not the actual performances that were the most important, however, but the educational goals: that children should be developed and strengthened through creative work" (Helander 1998, p. 81). Another important factor was that the City of Stockholm acted to give children opportunities to create culture, for instance through the construction of Medborgarhuset, the civic hall in Södermalm, a district characterized at the time by its working-class population, living in overcrowded housing and in poorer economic conditions than people in other parts of the capital (Hasselrot 2020, p. 73). Buildings are not enough; there must be enthusiasts too, one such being the children's librarian Elsa Olenius, and they must be given the necessary finance

and make the city leadership understand the needs, and Olenius succeeded in this (Lindvåg 1988, p. 36). Based on the storytelling sessions she held at the city's libraries, improvised performances were developed. "When Elsa Olenius planned her story session it was natural for her to use dramatic means of expression […]. It was the children's active participation that she aspired to achieve." This is how Olenius' pioneering activities in the 1930s have been described (Lindvåg 1988, p. 28).

Another precondition for the performances is the book *Pippi Longstocking* (Swedish *Pippi Långstrump*) from 1945. This is the story that the audiences knew something about, to varying degrees, before they saw the play. Sauter's study reveals all that cannot be understood about a play and the audience's experience of it if one only reads the script.

The archives that have been examined are the Vimmerby Association Archives, where the minutes of the temperance society record which theatre companies visited the town. There are also notes from other associations about amateur performances. In the archives of Vår Teater at the culture department in Stockholm, pictures and annual reports provide information about the first productions of Pippi, and the city archives have material about "Children's Day" in 1949 when the play about Pippi was staged. The Royal Library preserves letters conveying Astrid Lindgren's views on the play, and we also have *Wimmerby Tidning* with its advertisements and reviews of theatrical performances. Research in archives is also guided by a theoretical framework that describes the opportunities for knowledge that the sources can provide, but also the limitations that often affect archives. One must arrive at an understanding of what previous generations found worth saving and what they discarded, as well as how they have saved and sorted the material. A knowledge of why the material exists in the first place is also important. The researcher is a latter-day recipient of the information provided by the archive, information originally addressed to other types of recipients. If the recipient understands this, and is aware of the lacunae in the collections, more knowledge can be derived from the archives (Velody 1998).

The plays studied here are *Pippi L*ångstrumps *liv och leverne: Teaterpjäs för barn* ("Pippi Longstocking's Life and Times: A Play for Children", 1946), *Pippi L*ångstrumps *liv och leverne: Lustspel för barn i fyra akter* ("Pippi Longstocking's Life and Times: A Comedy for Children in Four Acts", 1950), and *Pippi L*ångstrump: Pjäs i en akt ("Pippi Longstocking: A Play in One Act", 1955). They

are included in my larger study, along with a previously unpublished addition to a professional production at Oscarsteatern in Stockholm in 1948, and a Christmas play about Pippi.

The travelling theatre companies

Vimmerby is located in the province of Småland, in southern Sweden. At the start of the twentieth century it took several hours to get to the nearest big towns, Linköping to the north and Kalmar to the south. Vimmerby can be seen as a small community, now as then. In the 1910s and 1920s, however, there was a railway station, a hotel and two newspapers, *Wimmerby Tidning* and for a period *Wimmerbyposten*. At the beginning of the twentieth century, association life was also beginning to flourish in Vimmerby, as in many other places in Sweden. The labour movement was one such association, along with the free church, but there were also associations campaigning for temperance and others who wanted to educate the broad masses of the population. These clubs were usually founded by those who needed them, by workers in the small-scale local industries or in agriculture, but the middle classes were often active too. The members appointed their own board, who managed the work and initiated activities to gather and interest the members. Often they sought to attract people to attend events of relevance to the issues that were important to the association, such as temperance or popular enlightenment, and they did so by arranging lighter events such as music or theatre. This activity can be traced in the minutes and annual reports of the associations, and in advertisements they placed in the newspaper, which then reported on the events. In Vimmerby the temperance association was the most prominent. It was founded in 1888, and in 1904 it was able to construct its own building with a large assembly hall, known as Sveasalen, and in 1910 a stage was added to this (Hellström 2015, pp. 42–48). After that, travelling theatre companies had more than just the hotel's assembly room to visit, and when movies caught on in the country in the 1920s, both Sveasalen and the town's other clubhouse, Frejasalen, could be rented for screening films several evenings a week. Both stages were also used for amateur dramatics and literary study circles (Hellström 2015, pp. 48–75). The range of events in a town with about 2,500 inhabitants in the first two decades of the twentieth century cannot be compared to what is available to today's 15,000-strong population of Vimmerby. Opportunities for culture and entertainment were actually far richer then.

Astrid Lindgren paints a different picture in the text "En ung kvinnas fyra liv" ("The Four Lives of a Young Woman"), quoted in Lena Törnqvist's *Det gränslösaste äventyret* "The Most Boundless Adventure", 2007). She says there that there was no way to meet young people with literary interests, and that theatre was rare in Vimmerby, but that she was enraptured any time a play came to the town (Törnqvist 2007, p. 23). The same description of the boring small town can be found in Astrid Lindgren's first book, *Britt-Mari lättar sitt hjärta* ("Britt-Mari Unburdens Her Heart", 1944). A dream of the possibilities of the big city is followed by this description of the small town: "Do you want to know what it looks like here? I can answer in a single word: boring. You could even say dead boring" (Lindgren 1944, p. 47). These texts are written from the perspective of a young person, depicting a period in life when very few people think that the place they live in satisfies their needs. The impression presented of the place is not an objective description of Vimmerby but of a young person's experience. An idea of what it was actually like is given by advertisements in *Wimmerby Tidning* in the years after the First World War. In 1919 there were twenty-three opportunities to see professional theatre, in the following year twenty, and another year later eleven. In 1922 there were six performances. This reduction came as Astrid Ericsson was growing up and had more opportunity to go to the theatre. One reason was the Spanish flu, which prevented companies from touring, but there was also the growing popularity of the movies. The range of events changed during the period. During Astrid Ericsson's childhood it was possible to see *Little Anna Becomes Queen, Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and other performances for children. Farces and comedies also attracted an audience of mixed age, until film took over as the chief form of light entertainment. Serious drama therefore continued to tour, and August Strindberg was among those whose plays were often performed in Vimmerby, and the balance between the genres became more even (Hellström 2015, pp. 56–71). If Astrid Ericsson really saw "everything", as she writes, it was a varied repertoire she could enjoy. And being able to see six professional productions in one year, besides amateur dramatics, cannot be described as a small amount.

Two different images of cultural experiences for young people are thus given here. They differ depending on whether you start from the place and the material produced locally about the range of culture on offer, as evidenced in association minutes and newspaper articles, or you start from the biographical texts left by

the author and undertake a biographical interpretation of a literary text depicting small-town life. The two are not actually contradictory, even though they might be perceived as such. What Lindgren does as an adult is to describe the small town in contrast to the big city of Stockholm where she was living at the time. From that point of view, of course, the range of theatrical events in Vimmerby seemed meagre. At the same time, she says that she took every opportunity to see theatre, but without estimating the number of opportunities there were. We learn about this from the other picture, the one painted by the archives, and here we can observe that the author, from an early age, had ample experience of what the theatre can be, what can be created on a stage. To this we can add her own acting. Lindgren herself tells us about this in different places, but never in an overall picture. Many different sources contribute pieces of the puzzle.

Astrid's own acting

It is possible to find information about five plays in which Astrid Ericsson participated. The sources are diverse. In a conversation with me, Lindgren's daughter Karin Nyman spoke about Anna Maria Lenngren's *Grevinnans besök* ("The Countess's Visit"), while *Féens guddotter* ("The Fairy's Goddaughter") is revealed through a combination of a text by Lindgren, an advertisement, and data from the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute, SMHI. Lindgren writes about a sudden peal of thunder one evening in May as she was taking off the crown she was wearing as part of her stage costume. The advertisement says when Anna Wahlenberg's *Féens guddotter* was to be performed, and the SMHI records confirm the thunderstorm over Småland that evening. A third play can be detected in the Vimmerby Association Archives. In one photograph, Astrid Ericsson is seen sitting with handwork in her lap. Behind her are other young people within the gold frame that is explained by the title, *Porträtterna* ("The Portraits"), yet another poem by Lenngren. A fourth play is found through a letter from Lindgren to Olenius, in which she highlights a line that she remembers saying on the stage of Sveasalen, and which a search in Litteraturbanken.se (a database assembling much of Sweden's older literature) leads to *Axel och Anna* ("Axel and Anna") by Fredrika Bremer. The fifth performance is seen in an advertisement from 27 January 1926: "The play Småflickor: fröknarna Fasth och Ericsson" ("Little Girls: The Misses Fasth and Ericsson", Hellström 2015, pp. 98–108). The assembled data demonstrate the importance of piecing together

whatever archival and press material is available. Together this paints a picture that is not complete but can still be used as a starting point for discussing the cultural experiences that Astrid Lindgren may have had, and the understanding of children's acting that she brought with her into her writing.

Often the play is part of a larger context, an event frequently labelled as a soirée. This often included songs, music, and poetry, and the purpose was not infrequently to raise money for some good cause. The Red Cross children's home on Öland was supported by *Småflickor*, a play by Ernst Lundquist published in 1891 (Hellström 2015, p. 98) This is a script, "a trifle in one act" as the subtitle says, as is *Féens guddotter*, published in *Sagoteatern* ("The Fairytale Theatre") in 1911. Other texts by Anna Maria Lenngren and Fredrika Bremer were not written for the stage. The former was active in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the latter in the nineteenth century, and their works, in various cheap editions, reached large sections of the population, and they could often be found in the lending libraries that many temperance associations founded. In other words, their texts were easily accessible when scripts for the theatre were otherwise hard to come by. This can be seen in the associations' discussions about the possibility of staging plays on their stages, and in the choices made by young people (Hellström 2015, p. 62). They chose whatever texts were available that contained dialogue and some kind of conflict.

In *Grevinnans besök* the young daughter is held up as a fine example as long as the Countess is visiting. Then she hears a very different tone from her mother. It is a matter of maintaining a facade in which the family's young daughter is expected to be the jewel that her mother does not otherwise consider her to be. The hypocrisy in the dialogue between the two women is palpable (Lenngren 1907, p. 41). It is much the same in *Portr*ätter, where we are more certain about which role Astrid Ericsson played than in *Grevinnans besök*. The girl opposite her in the photograph is dressed as an older lady of the upper class, and a dialogue between her and the maid played by Astrid Ericsson is what the audience heard. The lady talks about the relatives in the portraits, who probably acted by miming or commenting. Finally, the maid says something negative about the lady and is thrown out. It turns out that the less flattering qualities attributed to the relatives fit her too (Lenngren 1907, p. 53). The play can be regarded as a short comedy, as can Fredrika Bremer's *Axel och Anna*, from which Astrid Lindgren remembered the line: "You can get jaundice" (Hellström 2015, p. 105). Two young people are

yearning for each other but their romance is stopped by an elderly relative. The letters they exchange are just as much about the old man's contrary nature as they are about love. The comedy lies in the argumentation against the older generation, in the way the youngsters claim that they are in keeping with the times while the old people's opinions are a thing of the past (Bremer 1911, p. 6).

In all three plays, *Grevinnans besök*, *Portr*ätterna, and *Axel och Anna,* it is the way the older generation clings to convention, social hierarchies, and an impeccable exterior that is criticized. The young woman in *Grevinnans besök* reveals that the tone very is different when there is no one to brag to, while the maid in *Portr*ätterna shows that the fine elderly lady is stuck in her own false image of her relatives. In *Axel och Anna,* the mockery concerns antiquated ideas about what a relationship between two young people should look like.

The theme is incorporated in one of the plays that Lindgren wrote for Elsa Olenius' youth groups, *Jag vill inte vara präktig* ("I Don't Want to be Goody-Goody"). But here the conflict is not between young people and adults, but between two sisters who have different ideas about what a husband should be like and what the relationship should be like in terms of independence and equality. A conflict between the generations about upbringing, adaptation, and independence can instead be seen in the plays about Pippi. The policemen, the schoolteacher, and the ladies at the coffee party say many of the things that are expressed in the plays where Astrid Ericsson acted, but in a pithier form and in a manner clearly intended to provoke conflict. This is because Pippi's task in these scenes is to question and challenge, but also because the adults are somewhat caricatured. For Lenngren, the aim is not to give the young people an advantage, but to create a caricature of the situation. The young people are passive and express their criticism out of the corner of their mouths (*Grevinnans besök*), by accidentally saying too much (*Portr*ätterna), or in letters to another young person (*Axel och Anna*). The critique is not spoken directly to the adult generation, with the intention of shaking their foundations. The texts do not side with the young generation, as Lindgren does in the play about Pippi.

Play scripts for amateur dramatics

Féens guddotter and *Småflickor* are plays written for the amateur theatre. The first is aimed at children, the second at adolescents; Astrid Ericsson acted in the former in May 1921 and in the latter in January 1926 (Hellström 2015, pp. 102–109).

The interval between these performances was a formative time. In September 1921 *Wimmerby Tidning* printed the first text by Astrid Lindgren, an essay titled "På vår gård" ("On Our Farm"), and in 1924 she got a job at the newspaper (Andersen 2014, pp. 40 ff.). And two months after the staging of *Småflickor* she got pregnant. Her childhood and youth came to a end.

One of the characters in *Féens guddotter* by Anna Wahlenberg is a queen, the one whose crown Astrid Ericsson removes. One can imagine her playing this clever, bitter, and slightly ill-tempered part; no dress would fit the queen anymore and she was forced to realize that the days of youth were over. For Astrid Ericsson, it was the other way around, she was thirteen years old on this occasion when she got to perform Wahlenberg's rather witty dialogue, which in a way is reminiscent of the dialogues Lindgren would write. It is not as pale and tame as is often the case in fairytale plays from the time. This is especially noticeable in Lindgren's dramatization of *Snow White,* and in the parody of fairytale plays, *Serverat, Ers Majest*ät*!* ("Served, Your Majesty!"), but also generally in the dialogue written by Lindgren in her plays and novels.

Småflickor from 1891 was already old when it was performed. Two young people meet, one of whom is a member of the secret society S.F. This stands for "Strindbergsföreningen", the association of people who surreptitiously read the writings of the subversive August Strindberg, or it can stand for the disparaging term *Småflickor*, "Little Girls." In the 1890s, Strindberg was perceived as a radical writer whose ideas were not appreciated in the conservative camp, but after his death he became more of a national icon and in 1926 his plays were included in the repertoire performed for the somewhat reactionary Vimmerby audience. He was no longer dangerous. The second theme is more timeless, the question of whether a popular boy appreciates one or the other of the girls. The dialogue full of scheming machinations and must have entertained the audience. This play is surely the one of the five that felt most like a play rather than just a short sketch.

Astrid Ericsson probably participated in more plays than this, and these will perhaps be revealed through more systematic searches of Lindgren's interviews, letters, and other material. But the five plays presented here are enough to confirm that she had experience and that she understood the children in Stockholm who wanted to play theatre, and how they, like the youth of Vimmerby, needed scripts that could satisfy their ability and their desire. From the texts staged in Vimmerby, we can see what was wanted. First of all, the play should not be too long, preferably

with just one scene, a fast-moving dialogue with a clear conflict and above all with comic potential. Lindgren chiselled this out in her dramatization of the story of Pippi Longstocking. But she did not find the form immediately.

Astrid Lindgren and Vår Teater

If Astrid Ericsson's longing had been directed towards the theatre, more would have been written about her acting in Vimmerby. But nothing is known about any such ambition, and her artistic breakthrough took place later in life than is customary for actors. She moved to Stockholm at an early age, but she neither acted nor did any writing there (Hellström 2015, pp. 111–125). She was in her forties when *Britt-Mari lättar sitt hjärta* was published, and a year later, in 1945, *Pippi Longstocking*. But a play suitable for children's theatre groups was also published that year, *Huvudsaken är att man är frisk* ("The Main Thing is That You Are Healthy"). The reason for this is her contact with Elsa Olenius, who needed a play for young people. Olenius was a member of the two committees that awarded prizes to Lindgren's first books, and she soon came asking for texts for the theatre. A reply by letter with suggestions for parts of *Britt-Mari lättar sitt hjärta* that might be suitable for reading on the radio, where Olenius also worked making programmes for children and young people, is preserved in the Royal Library, and we can see there that humour was requested (Hellström 2015, pp. 137 ff.). Humour is also prominent in *Huvudsaken är att man är frisk*. Some young people are hanging out in a "sports cabin", and a radio broadcast about a robber on the run creates excitement and comedy in the youngsters' ongoing masquerade game. Who is the culprit and who is a friend in disguise? The young people are reminiscent of the children in *Mästerdetektiven Blomkvist* (*Master Detective: A Kalle Blomkvist Mystery*), which appeared the following year, and which was printed as a play in 1948. *Huvudsaken är att man är frisk* has the humour that Elsa Olenius requested in the selection from *Britt-Mari lättar sitt hjärta*, and it is possible that she inquired after the selected chapters and a humorous play at the same time. Such forwardness is not surprising if we may judge from the description of Elsa Olenius by Kent Hägglund and Anita Lindvåg in their books about Vår Teater and Elsa Olenius respectively (Hägglund 2002; Lindvåg 1988). It is clear that Olenius had a strong will. A clear example of this is that Ingmar Bergman's semi-professional children's theatre was thrown out of Medborgarhuset in favour of Olenius' theatre with children, for children (Lindvåg 1988, p. 36). At this time

the director who would later have an international impact that no director from Sweden ever had before or since was forced to give way to the pioneer of children's theatre, Elsa Olenius.

Ethel Sjögren as Pippi Longstocking

In a letter to her parents, Lindgren says that she is going to write a play about Pippi Longstocking. The reason was that at Christmas 1945 she had seen Ethel Sjögren play one of the roles in *Huvudsaken är att man är frisk*. Lindgren viewed her as a child prodigy (Hellström 2015, p. 138), and already in March 1946 the play *Pippi L*ångstrumps *liv och leverne* was premiered. One of the participants, Åke Hassler, has told me in conversation that Lindgren invited the ensemble to her home and presented her dramatization with the modest description: "I have put some things together." Lindgren thus participated in the work on the production (Hellström 2015, p. 143). On Saturdays they all met for exercises in drama and rehearsals, and a core troupe also rehearsed on Mondays (Hägglund 2002, pp. 25–27). This probably involved the children cast in the leading roles in the play about Pippi, those who played Tommy and Annika and, above all, Pippi as portrayed by Ethel Sjögren. There are several testimonials about how she played the lead role. Some come from interviews I have done, with Åke Hassler and Karin Nyman, already mentioned, but also with Margareta Byström and Kerstin Hallert. Likewise, Olle Johansson has shared memories in an interview of which I have heard a recording. In addition, there are several reviews in newspapers, which is both surprising, since it was unusual even then for children's cultural efforts to be reviewed in the daily press, confirming the traction Olenius had and the impact that Lindgren's presence gave to whatever she was engaged in, even at the beginning of her career. The overall picture is that Ethel Sjögren had a unique presence on stage for a children's theatre ensemble. Karin Nyman says that she was outstandingly good, forceful and with the right emphasis and timing, and Margareta Byström paints a similar picture, describing her as pleasant, cheerful, noisy and steady in a way that made her a natural choice for the role. Åke Hassler describes her as gentle and likable, and in Olle Johansson's voice one can hear his tenderness when he describes Ethel Sjögren's way of wearing the braids. The most eloquent formulation is by Kerstin Hallert, whom I have interviewed by e-mail. She begins her answer by comparing Ethel Sjögren's Pippi to Inger Nilsson's, the child who portrayed Pippi in the 1968 television series; she describes Pippi in 1946 as a

conscious revolutionary, a cool resistance woman who challenged the adults' blind spots without being a frolicsome type. Ethel Sjögren's own personality lacked the self-awareness that could easily have arisen from the trust she was shown by Elsa Olenius and Astrid Lindgren. Kerstin Hallert believes that was one reason why she was able to keep the role, despite fierce competition, for several years after the premiere in 1946 and also in the revival in 1950 (Hellström 2015, pp. 141–144).

In the Stockholm newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet,* Ethel Sjögren was regarded as an outstanding Pippi of eleven years, acting with splendid ruthlessness, and the other Stockholm newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* also had a favourable review of the play. The local press also described Ethel Sjögren as a natural when the group toured provincial towns, or when she alone travelled with Olenius and Lindgren to various events. The performances then appear to have been improvisations, which put Sjögren to the test even more. There are descriptions of magical virtuosity as she switched between the role of villain at one moment, to become Pippi in the next, and fighting with herself in between (Hellström 2015, pp. 145–150).

Lindgren describes her impressions of the play

The play ran for several years, in Stockholm and on tour, within a radius equal to the distance that one could travel from the capital over one day at the time. On the home stage, the play was revived several times, but it was also performed on the stage of the Concert Hall and in Humlegården during a celebration of "Children's Day" in August 1949 (Hellström 2015, p. 174). Both of these occasions have left traces that are reflected in the new version of the play that Lindgren presented in 1950. After the performance in the Concert Hall, comments could be seen in the press arguing that Pippi spoke too much of a mixture of child language and adult language, and that many of the jokes that adults appreciated went over the heads of children (Hellström 2015, p. 147). And when excerpts from the play were performed in Humlegården for a much larger crowd than planned for, it was obvious that they had to emphasize the lively action at the expense of the witty language. Articles from the time call this performance "the Humlegården chaos" (Hellström 2015, p. 179) and Lindgren refers to this event in letters to various people staging the play. One of these letters, written to the director of a children's theatre in Norway in 1950, indirectly explains the changes Lindgren had made between the 1946 production, the script of which was published in book form the same year, and the revival in 1950, which was also published in

1950 in the collection *6 pjäser för barn och ungdom* ("Six Plays for Children and Young People"). I quote the most important part of Lindgren's rather long letter:

> I have seen Pippi performed in so many theatres and I have closely observed the children's reactions everywhere, I have collaborated with the director of Stockholm Children's Theatre and time and time again I have made changes to my plays according to her instructions. That's why I know that what children want on stage, above all, is *movement*. Long lines and discussions, no matter how funny they are, are totally wasted on a young audience. Something has to be happening on stage all the time, otherwise the kids get distracted and start talking to each other, and then it's even harder to hear the actors' lines and the audience becomes even more distracted. In my play about Pippi there are two things that go down well, far more than anything else. The first is when Pippi is chased by the police, the second is when the thieves break into her house. The scene in the school does not cause the same amusement at all, because they are just speaking all the time but nothing happens. The same goes for the scene with the coffee party. There, the moment when Pippi dips her face in the cream cake causes lots of laughter, but the rest, which is mostly talk, leaves the audience rather indifferent (Hellström 2015, p. 201).

These experiences of Ethel Sjögren's way of playing Pippi influenced the changes between the different versions, and possibly also the next two parts of the book series, *Pippi Långstrump går ombord* (*Pippi Longstocking Goes on Board*) and *Pippi Långstrump i* Söderhavet (*Pippi Longstocking in the South Seas*). For example, Astrid Lindgren witnessed the audience's enjoyment of her father's return first on stage, before she wrote it in book form, in the second novel, *Pippi Longstocking Goes on Board*. The reviewer in *Dagens Nyheter* wrote that it seemed to be one of the high points of the production, the element of surprise when the father finally enters Pippi's house, when it turns out that, amidst all Pippi's invention and exaggeration, there is one thing that is true, that her father is a sea captain who lives on a South Sea island (Hellström 2015, p. 146). This part was also incorporated into the book.

Similarly, it is possible to see that the emphasis on action and visual comedy, rather than dialogue and long speeches, is something that Lindgren herself continued in the third book, *Pippi Longstocking in the South Seas*. Here the focus is on adventure and the action is propelled forward quickly.

The presentation of Pippi on stage

When she started adapting her own text at the end of 1945, Astrid Lindgren had little experience of writing for the stage. She was in a hurry too, as one can understand from the short time that elapsed between the presentation of the idea and the premiere. Lindgren had previously written a text directly for the stage, *Huvudsaken är att man är frisk*, but it is a different matter to dramatize an existing work, moreover if it is the playwright's own text. It is conceivable that a playwright who has all the authority to change and reshuffle her own text would do so, that she would take liberties that other dramatists might not dare to or be allowed to. But it can also be problematic to adapt a text that you yourself have written. It can be difficult to let go of the structure you created for the novel, and to see the possibilities that the theatre adds to the narrative, or to be aware of what might not have the same effect on a stage as on a page that a person reads at home. Lindgren learnt gradually, as she writes in the previously quoted letter.

In the 1946 version, one of Lindgren's problems becomes visible in the first scene. In the novel, the reader is prepared for the person that Tommy and Annika are going to meet because the author has told the reader about Pippi Longstocking's background, that her mother is an angel and her father a sea captain, and that she moved into the old house together with a monkey, a horse, and a suitcase full of gold coins. After that, Tommy and Annika are introduced to the reader, and we are told that they are unaware of the girl they see coming towards them. The reader knows something more about the main character than Tommy and Annika do. They are portrayed as very well-behaved and bored on their side of the fence, before Pippi appears.

The voice of an omniscient narrator is not part of the theatrical toolbox. Instead playwrights tend to use a newcomer arriving at the place, asking questions and learning about the situation. In Henrik Ibsen this is often an old relative, and in August Strindberg it is a friend of the main character who has been away for a long time. In her first version Lindgren introduces "Kalle", who hears Tommy and Annika talking about Pippi. He does not believe what he hears and questions

everything they say about Pippi, which is exactly the same information that the narrator gives the reader in the novel before Tommy and Annika are seen playing croquet in their garden: that she lives on her own in the house, that her father is on a South Sea island where he has become king, that she has a monkey and a suitcase full of money. Pippi's great strength is demonstrated when she enters the stage. She walks backwards, as in the novel, and the description of how she behaves in the same way as the Egyptians is very close to what is said in the book. Kalle questions this, starts arguing with Tommy and they wrestle for a while before Pippi steps in and lifts Kalle away. Annika calls Kalle stupid and says that they forgot the most important thing, that Pippi is the strongest person in the world. Kalle slouches away as Pippi utters the line about him being such a bonehead that you can see the bone.

It is not a likeable trio that is presented here. Their superior attitude is not exactly charming, and Pippi seems more like a boaster than anything else. Pippi here is more similar to the blunt Pippi we see in the version called *Ur-Pippi*, Lindgren's first rejected manuscript, before the revised version was published by Rabén & Sjögren. That text that has now been published, but back then it was known only to Lindgren herself. Her background in both texts leads to a sequence of events that only she could write, but it is not to the play's advantage. Perhaps this became clear to her when the text was performed on stage, when Ethel Sjögren was going to play Pippi as a bully. This is not very consistent with the descriptions we have of her way of playing Pippi.

In the 1950 edition the entire first scene, or first act as it is called, is changed. Here once again we see Tommy and Annika outside the deserted house, hoping that someone will move in. The author has realized that the audience does not need any advance information about Pippi Longstocking, who is now well known thanks to the book. It is different from the premiere, when children in the audience could cheer with joy when they were told that there was also a book about the girl they had seen on stage. We can read about this in the review in *Svenska Dagbladet* (Hellström 2015, p. 146) and I myself have been told about school classes that staged the play in 1946 without having read the book. Things had changed by 1950.

In the later version it is Tommy and Annika who know nothing about Pippi. They are standing outside the fence wondering if someone with children might have moved in, because there is now a sign that was not there before. "Villa

Villekulla" it says, and Pippi appears soon after, and the dialogue that follows is similar to the one in the first book. Pippi's personality here is more like the one in the book from 1945. Tommy and Annika are also recognizable, they are not at all mean, but they do skip the first lesson of school so that they can talk to Pippi, in contrast to their otherwise good behaviour.

Another noticeable difference is that, in the first version, there are no policemen chasing Pippi to put her in an orphanage. In the letter Lindgren wrote in 1950, she holds this up as one of the main attractions in her play. The 1950 version includes this police chase, which suggests that the policemen were added sometime after the premiere and the publication of the first version. It was not only the way the role of Kalle ended up changing Tommy, Annika, and Pippi that was a problem, but also that the whole opening scene, which occupies a quarter of the play, contained too little action. The audience lost interest, and it was difficult to win it back. That was why the policemen were added, to very successful effect. Their first documented presence on stage is seen in the extended version written for the professional performance at Oscarsteatern at Christmas 1948, and in Elsa Olenius' version starring Ethel Sjögren their presence is documented in the performance on Children's Day in Stockholm in August 1949. It is possible that the policemen were added after the Oscarsteatern production, but more likely they had also been incorporated in the production at Vår Teater before 1948.

The police are tasked with taking Pippi to an orphanage because she has no parents. When she gets them to chase her, she climbs up Villa Villekulla and the policemen follow, getting stuck in the chimney, and they see Pippi taking away the ladder just as they are about to bring her down. Pippi excels in courage, strength, and cunning, and it is not difficult to see that this was enthusiastically applauded by the audience, as Lindgren describes.

Two pictures are preserved of Ethel Sjögren performing in the first act, one from each version. In the picture from 1946, Ethel Sjögren is seen lifting Kalle off Tommy, but not with any great enthusiasm. She looks rather hesitant. In the second picture, however, we see liveliness and joy; in the Children's Day performance in 1949 she is lifting the two policemen by the collar. But in the latter picture she is a few years older and more accustomed to the character, it must be added.

Acts two and three

The second act, which takes place in the classroom, is quite similar in the two versions. Pippi rides in, the audience hears only hooves and horse sounds, and then Pippi behaves as in the book. She misinterprets the teacher's instructions and talks animatedly, and completely divorced from reality, about the school system in other parts of the world. The chapter ends with Pippi's realization that school is not for her, and the teacher is relieved to agree with her about something. This is also included in the play, but it is somewhat disturbed by the fact that Annika has to be given space to invite Pippi home for coffee, a concession required by the necessity to link the scenes together.

The scene in the classroom is one of those that Lindgren herself found less successful. It is mostly talk, and the fun is verbal in nature. When Lindgren created a shorter version for a smaller ensemble, the whole school scene was omitted, but as long as the play was meant to be suitable for performance by a children's group, it had to be included in order to give all the children something to do in the play. All the parts except Pippi, Tommy, and Annika have only one scene to appear in, but the school scene gives everyone an opportunity to play another role and thus have a little more time in the limelight. Here they get a chance to play the astonished schoolchildren who observe Pippi's antics.

The third act is set in Tommy and Annika's home. Their mother is having a coffee party for a group of ladies, and the children have been allowed to invite a friend. This kind of coffee party was already perceived in 1946 as a venerable tradition maintained by housewives, and the general image that these parties were mostly for the purpose of gossip between the ladies is something that Lindgren takes advantage of. They talk of the shortcomings of maids and the hostess's ability to bake good cakes, despite the post-war rationing of butter. But when Pippi marches in, it is not surprising that she turns the event upside down, and ends by dipping her head in the cream cake, the scene that, together with the police chase, provoked the most laughter in the audience according to Lindgren. The versions differ slightly, and here it is possible to see that Lindgren heeded the criticism expressed in a review of the printed play, which did not appreciate the way Pippi played with sugar in a time of food rationing (Hellström 2015, p. 152). The part where sugar cubes and granulated sugar are scattered on the floor disappears in the second version.

The more emotional ending of the second version

The final act shows the most interesting differences between the versions. It is set in Pippi's house and she is seen sitting alone, counting her money on the floor. In the first version that is all that is happening before the thieves knock on the door, while the 1950 version gives room for a certain sadness and thoughtfulness in Pippi. She asks her monkey if he doesn't feel alone sometimes, and she herself displays sadness at not having anyone close to her. This is expressed in a short line, but it gives the whole scene with the villains a different undertone, and leads to greater joy at the end of the play when Pippi's father enters. In the first version he is presented with only a few lines and lots of hugs, but in the 1950 version he is brought in as a surprise by Tommy and Annika. There is also a pointer towards the second part, *Pippi Longstocking Goes on Board*, when all four at the end chant: "To the South Seas."

In 1950, parts two and three of the trilogy had appeared. In addition, Pippi had been seen on the stage of Oscarsteatern in a version where some of the action was set on the South Sea island. The production was a professional one, with Pippi played by the adult actress Viveca Serlachius, and there was an orchestra and dancers. The set design was much more lavish than in the children's theatre version, but the reviewers who compared the two versions favoured the one by Olenius and Sjögren (Hellström 2015, pp. 156 f.). The premiere was at Christmas 1948, and just before that *Pippi Longstocking in the South Seas* was published. They are similar in that they both take into account what Lindgren said in her letter. Playfulness and slapstick are emphasized in both, while there are differences between the stage version and the book regarding the stereotyped image of South Sea islanders. From this perspective, the new act in the Oscarsteatern production is more problematic than the book, and this was perhaps something Lindgren realized and regretted when she saw the Oscarsteatern production, as she did not include the South Sea scenes in the new version of the play published two years later. On the other hand, in the play version from 1950 there is the melancholy that can be sensed in the last book. Perhaps Lindgren saw this portrayed by Ethel Sjögren and then let it influence her portrayal of Pippi. It is possible that the melancholy was quickly inserted into the stage version because of the way Ethel Sjögren played the role, but that, for those of us who have no recordings, it is not visible until the new version from 1950.

The third book, *Pippi Longstocking in the South Seas*, concludes with the

same sadness that Pippi expresses in the play to Mr Nilsson. Tommy and Annika can look into Pippi's house from their own and can see her sitting at the table with a candle lit in front of her, and they express the hope that Pippi will always be there in Villa Villekulla.

The last stage version

Overall, it is a faster version that Lindgren achieved for the second published version. The lines, mostly Pippi's, have been shortened. The second version probably represents the form that the play took on after several years of performance. There were periods when the play was not staged, but it was revived at regular intervals, always with Ethel Sjögren in the lead role, but with changes in the casting of the other parts. Several of the people I have spoken to describe Elsa Olenius as a rather severe lady whose trust one had to gain in order to retain a place in the flagship that was the play about Pippi Longstocking. Not least of all, Pippi Longstocking in dramatized form became a great symbol of "Stockholm Children's Theatre", as it was called before the term "Our Theatre" was coined in connection with Children's Day in Humlegården in 1949. Newspapers and one of the theatre's leaders, Brita Enberg, describe how chaos erupted when too many people wanted to see the performance. In her unpublished memoirs, Enberg writes about how valiantly Ethel Sjögren tried to make the story reach out to the great sea of people (Hellström 2015, p. 180). Most likely, she played the role more times after this, but this occasion can still be regarded as the grand finale after four years of playing the role.

The third and final version that Lindgren herself created was a one-acter for a production in Kungsträdgården in 1953. Stockholm was celebrating its 700th anniversary and there were many performances on the stage in this park in the middle of the city. Having learnt something from the performance in Humlegården, Lindgren wrote down a version that differs from the previous ones and now takes it for granted that Pippi is a well-known figure, and that the vast majority of the audience would find it difficult to hear the lines from the stage. The play begins with Pippi entering down a slide. Lindgren wrote in a letter to a director at Alléscenen in Copenhagen in 1950 about different productions of the play, about how the children in the performance at the Edderkoppen theatre in Oslo came in on a slide. "Let's have the slide and plenty of life and play and noise as soon as the curtain rises" (Hellström 2015, p. 200). That was Lindgren's

idea of how the play should be staged, and this was the vision that she brought to fruition in the short version. Pippi, Tommy, and Annika are in it, and the two couples who are responsible for most of the chases and action in the story, first the two policemen and then the two thieves. That is the whole cast.

The one-acter was published in 1955 in Elsa Olenius' collection of plays, *Serverat, Ers Majestät!* It can be seen as the termination of Lindgren's work of transferring the story of Pippi from the page to the stage.

Conclusion

Astrid Lindgren's understanding of what is needed in a play written for children, both as an audience and as actors, first came from her own experience of playing children's theatre. Here we have seen how Lindgren herself as a child acted in plays that built on comedy, but they were poorly adapted to the use of children and adolescents as actors. She did not find it strange that children want to play theatre, and she understood the needs. It was on this basis that Lindgren wrote her stage versions, and she was active in every part of the process of putting on the show: she saw the intended children's group in another performance, *Huvudsaken är att man är frisk*, discovered a person that could carry the leading role, Ethel Sjögren, presented the project to the children, visualized her ideas, and was quick in writing the first version. Then she seems to have been active during the rehearsals, and not least of all she saw repeated performances. This meant that both the audience response and the actors' performance influenced what she went on to write about Pippi; this is absolutely certain when it comes to the play versions, but it may also apply to the books *Pippi Longstocking Goes on Board* and *Pippi Longstocking in the South Seas*. Here it is clear how the author adopts the children's perspective, as has often been claimed about Lindgren. She observes the children from two directions, that of the receivers and that of the senders.

Ethel Sjögren plays a special role here. Admittedly, many actors have influenced the image of who Pippi is. Inger Nilsson in the 1969 television series is probably the one that most people in Sweden think about and see in front of them, but later people have also interpreted Pippi in many performances that have had an impact, such as the singer Siw Malmkvist in the early 1980s and the singer and show artiste Pernilla Wahlgren in the 1990s (Hellström 2015, p. 15). But none of these performers portrayed Pippi during the period when Astrid Lindgren continued to write about Pippi, as Ethel Sjögren did.

When the three plays about Pippi Longstocking are placed side by side, it is obvious how they became simpler and clearer, how the visual elements gained in prominence while the verbal elements were reduced. This is most clearly seen in the first act, where Pippi's rather long monologues are shortened to make room for her antics with the policemen on the roof of Villa Villekulla, and in the last act when her father's return is used for much more dance and play in the second version than in the first. Here it is also clear how emotions occupy a greater place in the later version, when Pippi talks about her loneliness, and her love for her father becomes even more prominent.

In the last version it is clear that the author submits to the situation in which the play must be performed. Lindgren takes into account the audience's inability to concentrate and their chance of hearing what is said, and so puts all the emphasis on the visual elements. The introduction of a slide on stage is one of the main signs of this, as it has no basis in the literary original. This is clearly expressed in the letter quoted above to the children's theatre director in Norway. Lindgren writes: "Excellent that Pippi fires a gun, hope it goes off with a good bang. Everything that makes a noise, everything that is thrown, everything that moves, the children like that" (Hellström 2015, p. 202). This is a line that was subsequently followed in Staffan Götestam's musical with Siw Malmkvist as Pippi, and also when Pippi is portrayed in the theme park in Vimmerby built around Lindgren's stories, Astrid Lindgren's World. Here the audience is similar to the one that saw Pippi in Humlegården and in Kungsträdgården, in terms of both size and ability to concentrate. The more tender sides are instead handled in productions for an audience assembled solely to hear the story of Pippi, as in Jonna Nordensköld's production at Stockholm City Theatre in 2007.

Two lines can be detected in the ideas that exist about how Pippi should be portrayed. One emphasizes the noise and the antics, the other the sensitive and thoughtful aspects (Hellström 2015, pp. 21–23). In Astrid Lindgren's dramatizations we can see that the author advocated both lines, but always adapting in one direction or the other depending on the composition of the audience and the conditions for enjoying the play, and with great regard for the personality of the person playing Pippi.

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Power! No Doubt About It

Power Structures in Swedish Crime Fiction for Children

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From Master Detective Kalle Blomkvist to Jerry and Maya

The detective genre has been popular with young Swedish readers ever since Astrid Lindgren's master detective Kalle Blomkvist, in English Bill Bergson, made his debut on the literary stage in 1946 with the line "Blood! No doubt about it" (Lindgren 1968, 7). Whodunits for children are often to be found among the top ten bestsellers. One example is Martin Widmark's series on detective duo Lasse and Maja, in English Jerry and Maya[1], published since 2012, which still tops the lists of book sales and library loans in Sweden. Lindgren's and Widmark's book has also become a film. Given the great popularity of the genre among young readers, it is relevant to ask what images of societal structures and norms these texts present.

Children's crime fiction provides perspectives on values and norms related to how society treats criminals and their victims. Lilian and Karl G. Fredriksson, who examined Swedish children's crime fiction in *Från Kalle Blomkvist till internetdeckare: Om deckare för barn och ungdomar* [From Kalle Blomkvist to Internet Detectives: On Whodunits for Children and Young People], go as far as to suggest that "crime fiction is the deepest source of knowledge about the society in which we live" (Fredriksson & Fredriksson 2004, 7, my translation). I believe that, just like any other text written for children and young people, crime fiction not only reflects certain societal phenomena but can also influence society through the set of values it conveys to young readers. In this chapter, I examine how power structures are represented in Astrid Lindgren's Bill Bergson trilogy and Martin Widmark's series of books on The Whodunit Detective Agency because the attitudes towards power that children encounter are of great importance to their development and how they engage with society.

As the material for my investigation I have chosen texts that have been and remain very popular and as such have the potential to provoke thought among

[1] To keep it readerfriendly I will continue with the English names for the characters and titles of the books available and translated into English..

many young readers. The choice of texts from two different eras also puts societal development in perspective.

My study focuses on power dynamics between adults and children, in relation to gender and to the way criminals are treated in the works. Among other things, I examine the types of crime presented and the attitudes to punishment reflected in the stories. First, I will briefly present the texts and outline the concept of power I apply to my analysis, before thematically comparing power structures in the two series.

In *Bill Bergson, Master Detective*, in Swedish published 1946, Lindgren develops a literary prototype. The text's narrative structure has provided a model for countless whodunits in Swedish children's literature.[1] In this first book and its two sequels, *Bill Bergson Lives Dangerously*, published 1951, and *Bill Bergson and the White Rose Rescue*, published 1953, Bill Bergson and his two friends Anders and Eva-Lotta are constantly in pursuit of new adventures. Given the generally sedate pace of life in their idyllic little hometown of Lillköping, detective Bill is grateful for every criminal case into which the ever-vigilant children are drawn. With their quick-wittedness and problem-solving skills, the children tie together the many plot threads that the adults in the stories miss, before eventually handing over the completed case to the police. With tension resolved and order restored, the adults take over responsibility once again. Thus ends the subversive element of children occupying a position of power in which their actions are crucial to social stability. The same compositional pattern is repeated sixty years later in Martin Widmark's series about The Whodunit Detective Agency, which started with *The Diamond Mystery* in 2002 and as of 2021 consists of 38 titles. This serial pattern in which plots are repeated with minor modifications is a tradition stretching back to earlier children's detective literature, such as Enid Blyton's Famous Five books and the Nancy Drew series by Carolyn Keene, both well-known and well-read among many generations of children. In Widmark's series, it is classmates Jerry and Maya who are repeatedly face a mystery that threatens law and order in the little town of Pleasant Valley. Bringing their intelligence and tenacity to bear, they piece the puzzle together and solve the case first, for which they receive the praise of the adult members of the community.

Both Lindgren's and Widmark's texts are intended for children with a taste for whodunits. This type of book is focused on answering riddles (Kärrholm 2005, 11f).[2] The puzzle must be assembled one piece at a time in order to solve the

crime. The narrative framework follows a given pattern that allows readers to recognise themselves in the story: an idyll – a threat to that idyll or a case arises – the detective (hero) takes on the case – the detective gathers clues and eventually confronts the villain – resolution (Eco 1998, 181–207).[3] To the young reader, this framework is reminiscent of the fairy tales with which they are already familiar (Nikolajeva 1996, 28). Usually, a group of children play the role of detective and their friendship and courage are put to the test. Letting child characters to take on the role of detective also constitutes a shift of power, as they outwit adult criminals or prove themselves more capable than the adults in their community (Bergman & Kärrholm 2011, 146).

The two series of books differ significantly, even if both publishers recommend them for children aged 6–9 years and the compositional pattern of the texts is very similar. Lindgren's texts are markedly more complex and descriptive, employing advanced language. Her elaborate intrigues seem to be intended for children older than the 6–9 age group. By contrast, Widmark's narratives are easy-to-read texts for younger children. His characters, settings and plotlines develop in the interplay between the brief chapters and Helena Willis's illustrations.

How is power manifested?

Power is an imposing word generally associated with oppression and dominance. In the broadest sense, however, according to the sociologist Fredrik Engelstad, power is "the ability to make something happen" (Engelstad 2006, 15, my translation). Engelstad emphasises that power should not be viewed as a uniform and coherent phenomenon; rather, it is better defined as a relationship between various stakeholders – an ability to make someone do as you wish (Engelstad 2006, 15).

In truth, we are all surrounded by and implicated in power structures; the question of who exercises power varies in different situations and from one individual to another. Michel Foucault concludes that everywhere in society we encounter power relations in a state of flux: "Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (Foucault 2009, 103, my translation). If everyone in a society participates in power-creating processes, this must apply to adults and children alike. But it is also true, that children clearly do not have the same opportunities as adults to exercise power, given that first they must learn the rules of the game. Of course, they do have their own will

and they can exert power by studying their parents and testing their own limits and the adult world's boundaries. Anyone who has witnessed the power struggle between parental norms and a child's desire for the contents of the supermarket confectionery shelf can attest to this. The exercise of power, however, requires a knowledge of and competence in relationships, which children pick up over time as they hone their social skills. Power in and of itself need not be viewed as negative but as a tool for controlling how people in a society interact; in fact, to some extent citizens hand over a monopoly on power to the representatives of the state – for example, the government and the police force – so that they can establish and enforce regulations concerning how we can live together.

The following textual analysis deals with three areas with a focus on children's place in society and how society deals with rule violations: the relationship between adults and children, gender perspectives and the image of criminals.

Relationships between children and adults

The children in the Bill Bergson novels enjoy a huge degree of freedom. For the most part, their time is their own and they are able to pursue their adventures. Yet it is clear that adults keep a controlling and benevolent eye on the children whenever they feel that their adventurousness may be verging on recklessness. The Bill Bergson novels present a form of mutual respect between adults and children that is characteristic of Lindgren's work. In *Bill Bergsson, Master Detetctive*, Eva-Lotta's mother expresses a firm opinion on how children should behave towards adults: "You mustn't be impertinent to older people" (Lindgren 1968, 74). There is no doubt that the adults are responsible for the children's upbringing; for example, "parents persisted in the quaint belief that children ought to be on time for meals" (Lindgren 1965, 38). The children "submit to these silly parental demands" (Lindgren 1965, 38) because they understand the potential consequences, such as "confining the contestants to their quarters" (Lindgren 1965, 38). While a generation gap is implied, this never degenerates into serious disputes. It is made readily apparent that children should obey their parents and other adults; at the same time, the children demand to be treated with respect and they react when adults adopt a patronising attitude (Lindgren 1965, 103f f.).

Relations between children and adults are not always harmonious. The criminals generally despise the children and refer to them as brats (Lindgren

1975, 71). Even adults who are closer to the children can sometimes demonstrate a lack of respect, such as the chief inspector who generalises: "Children are not capable of objective observation. They imagine too much" (Lindgren 1965, 102). The clearest criticism is applied in describing the parents of one of the characters, Anders's father, who is depicted as a "real tyrant", a patriarch whose authority is based on the oppression of every other member of the family (Lindgren 1965, 93). Anders defies his father by keeping out of his way and not taking his insults to heart (Lindgren 1965, 93).

Stepping forward in time to the books about the Whodunit Detective Agency, we see that the relationship between adults and children has changed. Parents are no longer present in the same way as in Astrid Lindgren's Bill Bergson-novels. This might indicate that children today are more independent or, as Fredriksson posits, that the author writing for younger children "may wish to portray that dream state – adventure without constant parental surveillance" (Fredriksson & Fredriksson 2006, 39, my translation). Jerry and Maya are inscribed in a modern autonomous childhood in which, rather than simply playing detective as a pastime, like their predecessor Bergson, they are performing something more like work. They own an office, computers and other equipment. The question of responsibility for the children's upbringing has also fallen by the wayside. Jerry and Maya's parents are never mentioned; these days, responsible children have the authority. As Fredriksson points out: "In their existence, the adult world mostly consists of people who can't cope on their own, but must employ their help. Not even the police can manage on their own without the children's efforts" (Fredriksson & Fredriksson 2006, 39, my translation).

The idealised aspects of an equal relationship are achieved without interaction with the adult world as a whole. In *The Mummy Mystery*, the museum director Barbara Palmer scoffs: "Two children? Nonsense! Give me one reason why I should waste my valuable time on you!" (Widmark 2015, 12). This reveals her, if not as the burglar, at least as morally culpable due to her authoritarian managerial style.

In both series, children are permitted to spend large parts of their time unsupervised by adults. While Constable Björk is admittedly grateful for Kalle, Anders and Eva-Lotta's observations, he and the other adults are not keen on the children exceeding their authority and acting independently. In the Whodunit Detective Agency series, the role reversal between children and adults is evident in

the Police Chief's inability to perform his job without Maya and Jerry's assistance. One motif common to both book series is that good adults respect the children. And generally speaking, the young detectives respect adults and, despite their human frailties, see them as role models. The wicked adults, on the other hand, oppose the will of the children in an authoritarian manner. The social place of the children can be described as differing between the texts. Bill Bergson and friends are subordinate to adult family members and receive support in the family home. One example of this is provided in *Bill Bergson Lives Dangerously*, when Eva-Lotta bumps into the killer and finds the murdered Mr Gren and is subsequently pampered by her parents to help her deal with her shock (Lindgren 1965, 87-88). Jerry and Maya appear to lack any guardians and are always depicted as independent; for example, they do not need to account for their whereabouts to any parents when they decide to stake out the museum overnight to catch a thief. As the adults they encounter seem bewildered in the face of the slightest challenge, it is the two children who act as responsible adults in their stead.

To be ladylike or a tomboy

When Constable Burke meets the self-confident and unabashed Eva-Lotta on the street in Lillköping, he remarks that: "sometimes I think that you should try to develop a little more womanly grace" (Lindgren 1965, 18). His reproach illustrates traditional gender roles, which imply that a woman should be more compliant. Eva-Lotta is unreceptive to such notions and sardonically replies: "Womanly? Oh sure – on Mondays" (Lindgren 1965, 18). Although she is "as daring and agile as any boy" (Lindgren 1968, 25), Eva-Lotta's fellow gang members Bill and Anders still wonder in passing whether "it was hardly appropriate for them to play with a girl at all" (Lindgren 1968, 25). In the Bill Bergson novels, Lindgren clearly addresses the theme of how girls are expected to behave, reminding us that this was a pressing discussion at the time the books were written. In her behaviour, Eva-Lotta blazes a trail for a more gender-equal depiction of women. Eva-Lotta's more conventionally minded mother seems to accept this and allows her to do as she pleases: "And even though Mrs Lisander might have wished her young daughter to associate a little more with girls of her own age instead of roughing it with the boys in the Prairie, it was not worth her while to say so" (Lindgren 1965, 26f.). Through Eva-Lotta's transformation from the socially adjusted girl of the first book, serving buns to the boys and performing as a circus princess,

to the latter books' young woman who "demonstrates greater cunning and agency", as Eva Margareta Löfgren puts it (Löfgren 1992, 67, my translation), Lindgren examines different stages of identity creation. In *Bill Bergson and the White Rose Rescue* in particular, she bravely takes on the heinous criminals. When her maternal instincts for the kidnapped little boy Rasmus emerge, it might be interpreted as an unstoppable force of nature, a woman's undertaking to care for a child, but Eva-Lotta defies contemporary gender mores by growing in her role, asserting herself and taking charge. It is thanks to her courage that the child is able to escape, as Anders and Bill are themselves captured while attempting to help Rasmus and his father.

The fact that Widmark chooses to give Jerry and Maya more equal billing in the original Swedish name of the Whodunit Detective Agency, *LasseMajas Detektivbyrå* [the JerryMaya Detective Agency], suggests that progress has been made since the view of gender that prevailed in Lindgren's time. After a first reading it is impossible to differentiate the characters.[4] Widmark's choice of the Swedish names Lasse and Maja is also a conscious attempt to erase gender roles. The name can be traced to a legendary Swedish thief of the nineteenth century, Lars Larsson Molin, who was in the habit of disguising himself in women's clothing and using the name Lasse-Maja during his crime sprees (Nationalencyklopedin 1993, 149).

In Widmark's series, the two children are described one-dimensionally without any prominent character traits beyond their aptitude for detection. The thoughts of each occupy approximately the same amount of space in the books and they are equally involved in the detective work in the field. While it is no longer remarkable that Jerry and Maya solve their cases together, a closer reading of the text indicates that they remain mired in gender stereotypes. In *Diamantmysteriet* [The Diamond Mystery], for example, Maya cleans the windows (Widmark 2006, 39) while Jerry looks for the thief (Widmark 2006, 43). In *Hotellmysteriet* [The Hotel Mystery], Maya disappears into the kitchen to peel potatoes and do the washing up, while Jerry mans reception or carries suitcases (Widmark 2006c, 18). Admittedly, what constitutes a typical male or female chore is open to discussion and the image is less clear in some of the books; for example, in *Brandkårsmysteriet* [The Fire Brigade Mystery], Jerry scrubs the floor while Maya polishes a desk (Widmark 2014, 12). If we interpret the two children's characters using the cross-dressing thief Lasse-Maja as a model, it becomes clear that Maya and Jerry are

two sides of the same coin, complementing one another in their detective work and other activities. And yet it is impossible to ignore the fact that, in the majority of cases, it is Jerry who performs the most prestigious tasks and it is generally he who produces a notebook and uses technical devices.

The presentation of female and male behaviour becomes even more stereotypical when adults are described. While the men are portrayed as active individuals with interests of their own, such as sports cars, the primary purpose of female characters appears to be to support male figures. In *Biblioteksmysteriet* [The Library Mystery], for example, librarian Karin Fahlén blushes when she thinks about a handyman (Widmark 2007, 43). In the adult world, Jerry and Maya meet male policemen, hotel managers and bank directors, while the women they encounter mostly have traditional female occupations such as shop assistant, cleaner or waitress, roles in which they report to a superior with obvious power ambitions, such as in *Saffransmysteriet [The Saffron Mystery]* when the cashier wants to make a telephone call: "Then Veronica will have to get a move on. The cash register can't be left unattended for any length of time", admonishes her manager (Widmark 2006b, 37, my translation). An unsympathetic and controlling boss and a low-wage job are far from Veronica's only problems, she is also pregnant and has an irresponsible husband. Another striking recurrent example is the emphasis on appearance; female characters are reduced to being attractive rather than intelligent. In *The Mummy Mystery*, the receptionist Penelope Green is described as follows:

"She was studying ancient art at the time, and she stayed on to earn money while in college. Penelope said she needed the extra income. And that's true, for sure! She has extravagant tastes! [...] She wears a different outfit every day and lives in a big expensive apartment in the middle of town. I'm not sure how she can afford all this on her museum salary. On top of that, she's far too nice to all the museum visitors" (Widmark 2015a, 31)

It is interesting to note that Penelope is judged in this condescending manner by her boss, museum director Barbara Palmer, one of the few female superiors in the series,[5] who appears to envy Penelope. Her unsympathetic demeanour is indicative of a strong sense of power that is roundly rejected by Jerry and Maya: "And Barbara Palmer can be a bit horrible [...] Some people might think that it ought to be Barbara Palmer who goes to jail," observes Maya in another example

of the role of children as moral guides in the Whodunit Detective Agency books (Widmark 2015a, 67).

This stereotypical depiction of how adults behave, their career choices and interests internalises power dynamics and maintains traditional gender roles. Even if young readers are left in no doubt that Maya is a tough and independent girl who is just as active as Jerry and enjoys an equal relationship with him, secondary female characters suggest the opposite. The adult characters are reminiscent of the excessively ironic tone of humorous children's crime fiction such as Åke Holmberg's Ture Sventon books, in English Tam Sventon. As the adults behave so theatrically, their every action seeming somewhat "over the top", they also provide a contrast to the common sense displayed by Jerry and Maya. Perhaps the author intends to reveal and criticise certain kinds of adult behaviour.

Gender-stereotyped normative representations are rarely upended; for example, the ringmaster is tormented and exploited by a shrewish wife. Although at one point the Police Chief opines that he has never encountered female robbers, they are not completely unknown (Widmark 2003, 18). Still, the majority of criminals are male. Two women do commit a crime in retaliation against bullying and oppression, while in *Goldmysteriet* [The Gold Mystery] and *Kärleksmysteriet* [The Love Mystery] respectively, the morally reprehensible head of bank security Maria Gonzales de la Cruz and the school nurse Mary are motivated by greed. The division of behaviour based on what is deemed morally acceptable or reprehensible by society plays an important role in how crimes are evaluated.

Criminals and society

The view of criminality is a further dimension for the study of societal norms in crime fiction written for children and young adults. What types of crime are presented, and how? Are all of the culprits treated equally, and what attitude to punishment is conveyed?

Starting with the analysis of state power we find two policeman: Constable Burke in the Bill Bergson novels and the Police Chief in the Whodunit Detective Agency series. Both are tasked with maintaining law and order in their respective towns and both enjoy a good relationship with residents. According to Kärrholm, the 1950s in Sweden, the period in which Lindgren's books were published, was characterised by a sense of solidarity manifested in what she describes as *Detektiv Allmänheten*, the Great Detective the Public, a climate in which all social circles

cooperated with the police to prevent crime (Kärrholm 2005, 64 ff.). In the Bill Bergson novels, it is readily apparent that the children have a guilty conscience about going behind Constable Burke's back to solve cases themselves (Lindgren 1992, 115 f.).

While this cooperative ideal lives on in today's crime fiction, it is as an idealised society in which everyone takes care of one another. The Police Chief is more than happy to place his trust in Jerry and Maya; however, he is well aware of the power of his office and of his responsibilities, as he demonstrates when the two child detectives present the guilty parties to him in *Saffransmysteriet* [The Saffron Mystery]: "In the name of the law, Robbert and Fransy Vik, I arrest you for attempted robbery and robbery of saffron" (Widmark 2006b, 85, my translation). This line is indicative of the transition from the scatterbrained character, the Police Chief usually is, who needs the children's help to solve the case to the adult authority figure taking back responsibility. His status as the guardian of law and order is underlined by external signals, as he is generally seen in uniform. However, when the situation demands, he is willing to turn a blind eye. In *The Circus Mystery*, the Police Chief shows himself to be merciful when the crime is solved and the culprit is revealed to be the ringmaster's daughter, the balloon girl Alice, who is tired of the hard life of the travelling circus, the constant lack of money, her bickering parents and not being able to attend a real school. Her thefts are revealed as a cry for help and she is relieved to be caught. By taking responsibility for the family, the Police Chief demonstrates that the state which he represents is capable of wielding power in moderation. There is no need to punish Alice and the family can be integrated into society. This scene infers that circus folk are outside society's framework and must adapt, as their wandering lifestyle is a threat to societal norms.

"You are welcome to stay here in Pleasant Valley," says the Police Chief. "I know the school is looking for a new caretaker. Maybe that would be something for you. And Alice, I'm sure a bright girl like you would be an excellent student in a regular school, studying English, history, and maths." (Widmark 2015b, 60f.)

Until 2014, where the corpus of 13 texts for this article were published, Alice is the only child criminal in the series. That unhappy romantic or family relationships lead to crime, or that muddle-headed residents of Pleasant Valley turn to crime, is a recurring pattern throughout the books. In such cases too, the crime is carefully analysed and the guilty are offered help rather than being harshly

punished. In *Biblioteksmysteriet* [The Library Mystery], for example, the priest sends stolen books to Jesus. In the texts in general, moral and immoral behaviour are frequently discussed. In *The Mummy Mystery*, the children sympathise with the female thief Cornelia, whose crime is viewed as a call for help: "I feel sorry for Cornelia. She just wanted to save the museum," (Widmark 2015a, 66) says Maya. Jerry agrees, condemning the authoritarian manner in which museum director Barbara Palmer treats her employees, but at the same time he understands that collegiality demands personal integrity, which Palmer lacks of: "Yes, but unfortunately there's no law against being mean," he observes (Widmark 2015a, 67).

Criminals who embezzle the taxpayer's money, such as those in *Cafémysteriet* [The Cafe Mystery], or commit theft and robbery, such as in *Saffransmysteriet* [The Saffron Mystery], *Biografmysteriet* [Movie Theatre Mystery], *Goldmysteriet* [Gold Mystery] and *Simborgarmysteriet* [Swimming Pool Mystery], cannot expect any mercy. The texts present an image of crime that visualises the boundary between those who in some way fail in society and are given a second chance, and those who deliberately place themselves outside society's rules.

This attitude to offenders is also found in Astrid Lindgren's Bill Bergson trilogy. One interesting aspect that provides an insight into the societal values reflected in the books is the choice of environments in which the children act. Jerry and Maya tackle cases in Pleasant Valley, "the kind of close-knit community where nearly everyone knows one another" (Widmark, opening vignette to all of the books). In part, Widmark's narratives seem preoccupied with nostalgia. Given the gender stereotypes and settings such as "the church in the middle of the village", Widmark might be describing a notional bygone Sweden, albeit transported to the present day. In this way, he refers back to Lindgren's Bill and friends as they ramble around the idyllic town of Lillköping. This can be compared to the *locus amoenus*, that idealised place of safety and comfort. It is linked to the romantic notion of a happy childhood. The picture it paints is a diptych; on one side, the community in which people take care of each other and, on the other, the expected code of behaviour when "nearly everyone knows one another". Kärrholm points out that adult whodunits construct "a kind of modern morality tale about the triumph of good over evil" (Kärrholm 2005, 8, my translation). This type of projection of community life is clearly incorporated into the work of

both authors. The adventurous child detectives are embroiled in a community of benevolent adults.

For this reason, there is a clear demarcation in the depiction of criminals; in Lindgren's texts, the reader meets Uncle Einar, the homicidal Claus and, in the final part of the trilogy, the criminal mastermind engineer Peters. The sudden appearance of Uncle Einar at the Lisander family home makes a strong impression on the children (Lindgren 1968, 19 f.). He is so intrusive and rude to Eva-Lotta that alarm bells ring for Bill and he begins to take notes on Einar's activities (Lindgren 1968, 21). This well-founded suspicion acts as a counterweight and signals that, even when adults have the wool pulled over their eyes by a superficial disguise, the children do not allow themselves to be fooled. Uncle Einar and his cronies are jewel thieves looking to lie low in Lillköping. Einar drifts around all day, playing with the children in the hope of finding good hiding places. His manner is reminiscent of a stray child unable to live a functional life, which may be why he elicits a certain amount of understanding and Kalle finally expresses his hope that Einar's punishment will lead him on the path to redemption (Lindgren 1968, 198).

Violence spirals when a murder is committed in the second book of the trilogy, *Bill Bergson lives Dangerously*. Killer Claus is described as having a foreign appearance, with long black hair, a moustache and thick black hair on the backs of his hands (Lindgren 1965, 107). This clear delineation is interesting: on the one hand, the blonde, socially integrated child Eva Lotta and, on the other, the swarthy Claus, a loner apparently lacking in social contacts. But as it was in the other novels of the series, here too the offender encounters a certain level of understanding on the part of the community once he self-critically analyses his life and confesses his fears (Lindgren 1965, 178 f., 210).

Things look different in *Kalle Blomkvist and Rasmus* [Bill Bergson and the White Rose Rescue]. Sweden – a paragon of democracy, freedom and self-realisation – is attacked by a criminal conspiracy of probable Eastern European origin, dating the story to the contemporary fear of the Soviets and Cold War paranoia. Criminal mastermind Peters has the Slavic name Stanislaus (Lindgren 1974, 134), while the pilot who is to fly the criminals out has an odd accent and speaks little Swedish (Lindgren 1974, 126). The book's plot unfolds at a symbolic distance from the security of the children's day-to-day life in Lillköping, on an island that has its role model in the Robinsonade genre. Here, though,

the detectives' difficulties are not rooted in being castaway alone in inhospitable nature but in the criminals' political aims. Peters admits to a past as a spy and would rather "fight the entire Swedish security service" (Lindgren 1975, 135, my translation) than the three child detectives. The severity of the situation is accentuated by the fact that they are no longer in Constable Burke's jurisdiction; here, the full force of the national police is brought to bear. In a demonstration of state power witnessed by Kalle [Bill], Anders and Eva-Lotta, Peters and his accomplices are paraded in handcuffs, the chief inspector clarifying that "we've been after you for some time" (Lindgren 1975, 134, my translation).

On one level, the analysed novels discuss the underlying causes of crime and how society should react to criminality and deviant behaviour. The state's task of maintaining order is presented unambiguously. At the same time, ideas about individual and societal moral responsibility are developed, such as when Jerry points out the impracticality of legislating against "being mean" to one's employees. The conscientious children Eva-Lotta, Kalle [Bill] and Anders put their own lives, and those of Rasmus [Eric] and his father, at risk, demonstrating that civil courage should be shown by all. The Police Chief attempts to arrange a job for the Ringmaster so that circus girl Alice can enjoy a secure upbringing. Community is the glue that holds society together. To this end, individualistic behaviour such as the children's detective endeavours are tolerated to the extent that they benefit society.

Power? No doubt about it

Children's crime fiction offers exciting plots, intricate mysteries and surprise endings. On first reading, this is generally what captures the interest of young readers. Reread on a deeper level, however, it is also apparent that beneath the plot the novels have a great deal to say about societal structures and values. That said, it is worth bearing in mind that while a comparison of two whodunits from different eras may provide material for discussing various observations, it does not point to general tendencies in society. Are these texts also about power? Yes, undoubtedly.

When it comes to Lindgren's characters, while they have their freedom it is contingent on parental requirements and they act under the supervision of the community. In Widmark's books, on the other hand, the children's situation is somewhat different. Jerry and Maya are portrayed as independent, competent, no

longer in need of adult guidance. On the contrary, the adults around them appear to rely entirely on the children's judgement. Although this might be interpreted as a shift in power, with Jerry and Maya showing the way for adults, it can also be viewed as an expression of gender equality. It also suggests that the abilities of children are no longer to be underestimated but taken seriously. Looking at gender relations, one has the impression that Widmark, especially as regards his adult characters, is less interested in challenging gender stereotypes than Lindgren was with her Eva-Lotta; rather, he mainly conveys a traditional view of female and male behaviour. How society treats a criminal depends a great deal on the circumstances. Regardless of when they were written, one unambiguous message conveyed by these children's whodunits is that crime does not pay.

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Endnotes

1 See Fredriksson & Fredriksson 2011, 19, Bergman & Kärrholm 2011, 154. In 1946, the publishers Rabén & Sjögren arranged a crime fiction competition in which Astrid Lindgren's *Mästerdetektiven Blomkvist* shared first prize with Åke Holmberg's *Skuggornas hus* [House of Shadows].

2 Cf. Bergman & Kärrholm 2011, 70 f.

3 Cf. Cawelti 1976, 5 f.

4 This is also apparent in the illustrations, which depict Jerry and Maya's faces as almost identical.

5 In *Brandkårsmysteriet* [The Fire Brigade Mystery], Corina Granat is described as the owner of fire safety company, although it is never made clear whether she has any employees.

An Ecocritical Reading of *Ronia, The Robber's Daughter*

Åsa Nilsson Skåve

Nature plays a central role in many of Astrid Lindgren's works; the forests, meadows and lakes of Småland in the Emil books are one example; the lyrical descriptions of how Mardie feels spring and life inside her is another. The nature motif is, however, most prominent in Lindgren's final novel, *Ronia, The Robber's Daughter*, originally published in 1981. This tale of love and enmity between two bandit families plays out in a medieval-inspired setting, against a background of majestic forests. While Ronia's world is populated with various supernatural creatures, there are also realistic features – not only on a psychological level but also ecologically. The narrative is furthermore characterised by considerable pathos with regard to humans in relation to the natural world – which is what this article intends to discuss from an ecocritical perspective.

An ecocritical approach involves placing fictional texts in relation to environmental concerns. Above all, focus lies on what underlying values regarding nature and the environment different texts express. Recent years have seen something of a shift from the use of *ecocriticism* to *environmental criticism*, reflecting the fact that it is not solely in a strictly ecological sense (the relationships between living organisms and their environment) that we speak of the environment, but rather in terms of ecological environments in interplay with societal and man-made ones (Buell 2005: 21 f.). While I too find this broader approach more fruitful, I choose to use *ecocriticism,* as this is the more established term.

In this chapter, I will examine how the interplay between people, animals and nature is expressed in *Ronia, The Robber's Daughter*. The novel has encouraged some earlier interpreters to adopt this type of perspective. Maria Ahnheim Farrar (2005) refers to her reading as ecocritical, but aspects to do with developmental psychology, translation techniques and history are even more prominent in her study. Both Vivi Edström (1992) and Maria Andersson (2012) dwell on the relationship between humankind and nature, albeit without applying an ecocritical approach. This is, however, found to a certain extent in an article by Roni Natov (2007), in which the novel is discussed in terms of a "dark pastoral". Marie Öhman in turn describes the "eco-pedagogical method" linked to the human-nature relationship in Lindgren's novel (Öhman 2013: 150). I suggest that nature plays a prominent

role in the work both stylistically and thematically, a combination that gives the book an important ethical dimension. One point of departure for my analysis is the problematisation already established within ecocriticism of a standardised dichotomy between nature and culture, in which nature is viewed as primordial, unspoilt, and culture as man-made. Other concepts that are central to the analysis are those of anthropocentrism and ecocentrism, where the former stands for a human-centred, and the latter for a nature-centred system of values (Garrard 2012: 24–25). Terms associated with this division include *anthropomorphism* (the attribution of human characteristics to animals and natural phenomena) and *zoomorphism* (the attribution of animal characteristics to humans) (Garrard 2012: 154–151, Buell 2005: 134). The extent to which these linguistic manoeuvres are positively or negatively charged is an indication of which is considered superior. This analysis will be placed in relation to the novel's depiction of the characters Matt and Lovis and the different ways of life they represent. The fact that Ronia's parents stand for different values and fulfil different functions in their daughter's development has also been addressed by Vivi Edström (1992: 268). I believe that this portrayal can be further developed by analysing the book's imagery. To some extent, the discussion will also make use of ecofeminist theory, that is a perspective that takes into account the symbolic parallel between a culturally constructed gender-based power structure and comparable mechanisms operating between man and nature (Curry 2013: 3).

First, human and nature will be discussed on a thematic level, where dialogue with previous Lindgren research is crucial. Next, the linguistic and stylistic levels will be dealt with in relation to this theme, focusing on how the animal world is used in the imagery, as well as on how nature is metaphorically personified. Finally, I will outline how the various levels can be viewed as an ethical synthesis, in which gender aspects also play an important role.

The human in nature

When Ronia first gets to leave the confines of the castle to explore her surroundings, Matt cautions her about both wild harpies, grey dwarfs and Borka robbers, and the risk of getting lost in the forest, falling into the river and plunging into Hell's Gap (12). The sense of freedom and wonder that Ronia experiences after having listened to the advice, yet fearlessly set off, is described in the following words:

> Of course, she had heard Matt and Lovis talking about things beyond Matt's Fort; they had talked of the river. But it was not until she could see how it came rushing in wild rapids from deep under Matt's Mountain that she understood what rivers were. They had talked about the forest. But it was not until she saw it, so dark and mysterious, with all its rustling trees, that she understood what forests were, and she laughed silently because rivers and forests were there. She could scarcely believe it. (13)

The emphasis is on the wonder and joy that the child feels in her first meeting with nature, as well as on how she subsequently spends her days getting to know the forest and herself. The forest as a place in which to search for and find one's identity is dealt with in Maria Ahnhem Farrar's essay, in which she writes: "Ronia has an ecological deep structure that runs underneath the depiction of the relationship between the child and the forest" (Ahnhem Farrar 2005: 72). Ahnhem Farrar links this to how portrayals of interior and exterior landscapes interact with the depiction of Ronia's development according to Pearce's developmental psychological model. In her discussion, she also refers to Dobrin & Kidd (2004) who point out, in the opening chapter to the anthology *Wild Things: Children's Culture and Ecocriticism,* that the notion of nature as therapy for humans does not go well with an ecocritical approach. It is easy to agree with such scepticism towards the anthropocentric idea that nature is there for the wellbeing of humankind. The discussion also refers to the important passage in Lindgren's book where Birk attacks the arrogant and destructive belief that one can possess nature:

> Your fox cubs! Your woods! Fox cubs belong to themselves – don't you know that? And they live in the foxes' wood, which is the wolves' and bears' and elk's and wild horses' wood too. And the owls' and the buzzards' and the wood pigeons' and the hawks' and the cuckoos' wood. And the snails' and the spiders' and the ants' wood./.../ In any case, it's my wood! And your wood, robber's daughter – yes, your wood too! But if you want it for yourself alone, then you're sillier than I thought when I first saw you. (39)

Besides the psychological aspects of this situation – the budding attachment between Ronia and Birk, mixed with the ingrained antipathy and aggression between their families – this rhetoric can be read as a credo for the right to roam and an equal relationship between all who live in nature. Edström (1992: 262) suggests that Birk's words express a kind of reasoning that, in the spirit of our times, places humans and animals on an equal level – something that, in ecocritical terms, can be referred to as ecocentrism. Some tension exists between this attitude and Ronia and Birk's project to each capture and tame a wild horse, an endeavour that takes up much of their summer. In order to understand this apparent contradiction, it may be helpful to bring to mind the ecocritical scepticism of the nature-culture dichotomy. Enlisting the help of animals is an important element of human history and culture, or, expressed differently, culture is dependent on and interwoven with nature. As is made clear in Lindgren's narrative, the crucial thing to understand in this context is that the 'exploitation' takes place with respect and understanding for the animals' intrinsic value. A recurring statement that captures this respect and understanding is the one about being in nature without claim or purpose. Birk expresses this in the following words: "I'm enjoying just sitting here in the midst of spring" (79), and further on, Ronja and Birk are described as sitting in the midst of spring for a long time, while the animals around them go about their lives without fear.

Animal metaphors

Metaphors and similes are figures of speech based on a visual or conceptual image, which has some kind of similarity to the subject (Elleström 1999: 80–86). The imagery is rich in *Ronia The Robber's Daughter*, and closely linked to the animal world. People are often likened to animals – they are zoomorphised – in a positive sense, as in the description of Ronia's development: "Ronja watched out and practiced more than Matt and Lovis knew, and in the end she was like a healthy little animal, strong and agile and afraid of nothing" (17). She is also compared to a fox when she runs through the forest to escape the wild harpies. The fox simile recurs in several places, also with the conventional reference to cunning, as in "cunning as a fox" (47, 65). When Ronia moves out to the woods, she is described as finding her way even without having a path to follow: "but she knew exactly how to reach it. In the same way as the animals knew it, and as all the rumphobs and murktrolls and grey dwarfs of the forest knew it" (103). These

quotes bear witness to the deepening relationship between Ronia and her natural surroundings. She understands and can deal with whatever she encounters.

The saying used in Matt's Fort, which recurs in several places in the text, is also typical: "We're as safe here as the fox in its lair and the eagle in its nest" (19, 30). The similarity evoked here is about being in one's element, safe at home, an experience that is similar for people and animals. This metaphor recurs, albeit from a different perspective, when the soldiers' quandary concerning the robbers in Matt's Fort is depicted: "There was no worse place, and the robber chieftain who lived there was harder to catch than an eagle on a clifftop" (48). When Lovis sings her Wolf Song (only referred to but never articulated in the book, as opposed to the film), the sense of security is once again associated with the animal kingdom. Not quite the animal kingdom, but natural phenomena are employed when Ronia is repeatedly referred to as "storm-night child" and "thunder-and-lightning baby". These epithets obviously refer to the fact that she was born on a stormy night, when lightning split the fort in two, but also to a similarity relation and symbolism, representing the fact that both her continued existence and her personality are characterised by great drama. The examples of imagery given above are leaning towards ecocentrism, that is, an approach in which nature is seen as being central, and humans are seen as part of nature, neither more nor less important than anything else.

There are also a number of expressions that are of a more anthropocentric nature, thus implying humankind's superior position in creation. What is striking about these expressions, however, is that they are almost exclusively associated with Matt and what he stands for in his capacity as robber chieftain. This approach, to simply assume the right to take whatever one desires, is in stark contrast with Birk's assertion that no one owns nature. In his wrath, Matt is repeatedly compared to a raging beast. When irked by those around him, not least his enemies at Borka's Keep, he himself is prone to using derogatory expressions such as "thieving hound", "gadfly" and "snake fry". Even in Matt's more paternally tender moments, animal metaphors stand out: "And he sat with his little pigeon on his knee and fed her porridge" (9). The most crucial scene for understanding Matt's conflicting characteristics, but also his incipient transformation, is, however, the one in which he fears that they will lose Ronia as she lies ill. He harshly reprimands Lovis for not being quick enough with the medicinal herbs, and when she goes off to attend

to their daughter, he continues her chore of feeding the sheep, at the same time talking to them:

> "You don't know what it's like having children! You don't know what it feels like to lose your dearest little lamb!" He stopped suddenly, remembering that they had all had lambs in the spring. And what had become of them? Nothing but roast mutton! (60).

Through his own choice of words, Matt is made aware of the actual, literal meaning of what he is saying, something that increases his anxiety even further. His self-reproach can be seen as a stage in the growing (if not yet flowering) insight and humility that characterises his later development.

Nature personified

Personification, the kind of imagery in which non-human entities are animated and humanised, or anthropomorphised, is also abundant in the text, forming a specific pattern, such as in the following passage:

> And then spring came like a shout of joy to the woods around Matt's Fort. The snow melted, streaming down all the cliff faces and finding its way to the river. And the river roared and foamed in the frenzy of spring and sang with all its waterfalls a wild spring song that never died. (76)

Spring shouting, water finding its way, roaring and singing an endless song; this imagery invests nature with a soul and human attributes. The same thing happens further on, in the description of how the forest "drank itself fresh and green" when the rain came (123). Singing and shouting in particular are metaphors that recur throughout the story. In the above quote, the coming of spring is compared to a shout of joy, and the fresh, wild song of spring is another recurring theme. Ronia comes into the world as Lovis is singing, which seems like a kind of joyful birth-cry. Ronia expresses her jubilant joy at the rebirth of nature through her "spring yell". Similes and images thus appear to interlink humans and nature, representing life's wondrous power in all its forms.

While imagery linked to animals and nature can be viewed as a

literary convention, it can also be problematised in terms of the concepts of anthropomorphism and zoomorphism (Garrard, 2012: 154). A common stereotype is a negative comparison between humans and animals, such as when someone acts in a beastly manner or commits an act of bestiality. Conversely, the humanisation of animals may be a way to elevate their value. Taken together, this establishes an anthropocentric worldview. This stereotypical power dynamic is, however, challenged in *Ronia, The Robber's Daughter*, in that the imagery operates in both directions – nature is compared to humans, and humans to nature in an altogether non-hierarchical way – thus creating balance, and in a way erasing the boundary between humans and animals. The function of the supernatural in the book has been described as "an antidote to the realism of Ronia's maturation" (Natov, 2007: 96). I contend that the fantastic creatures that also populate Matt's Forest can also be viewed as a metaphorical reinforcement of a thematic erasure of boundaries, since they are, to varying degrees, human-animal hybrids.

Ecofeminist traits and ethical synthesis

Ronia, The Robber's Daughter ends happily with the reconciliation of father and daughter, an end to the feud between the families, and Ronia and Birk moving back to the Bear's Cave, this time without anxiety and fear:

> The woods that Ronja loved, the autumn woods and the winter woods, they were her friends again now. In the last weeks in the Bear's Cave she had felt them to be threatening and hostile, but now she went riding with Birk in a frosty forest that gave her nothing but joy. (159)

The book's initial harmony is restored, while at the same time important changes have occurred. Even though the robbers maintain their way of life – now as one large band instead of two rival gangs – Matt and Borka have at least understood and accepted that the next generation does not intend to make a living in a manner that makes other people sad and angry. The fact that something new, something better, is about to replace the old order is accentuated by the paradisal description of Ronia and Birk in the forest at the end of the book.

> It is early morning. As beautiful as the first morning of the world!

> The new inhabitants of the Bear's Cave come strolling through their woods, and all about them lies the splendor of springtime. Every tree, every stretch of water, and every green thicket is alive. There is twittering and rushing and buzzing and singing and murmuring. The fresh, wild song of spring can be heard everywhere. (176)

Edström's analysis of the book places a great deal of emphasis on the conflict between Ronia and Matt. With almost tragic irony, the father's proud plan to shape his daughter into his successor as robber chieftain instead leads to a split between them. In order for them to be able to eventually reconcile, Matt needs to first recognise his own wrongdoings – at least to some extent – and second accept that Ronia is choosing another path. This is very much an ethical theme, and I suggest that it is also tightly interwoven with the depiction of both the role of humans in nature and the relationship between man and woman. The feminist tendency is touched on by Edström, who highlights the impact that Lovis has on Ronia's identity development. While the father used to be the idealised hero, the mother primarily represented security, but as the story unwinds, she becomes more and more of a role model (Edström 1992: 268). This is in turn associated with Lovis' view of life, which is characterised by calm, common sense and, not least, a deep understanding of the interplay with nature. She is the one who knows about healing, helping others with herbal ointments, water from the healing spring and moss when they fall ill or are injured. She also stands for the insight that the circle of life applies to humans too: "Matt, you know that no one can always be there. We are born and we die – that's how it's always been. What are you complaining about?" (173).

Adopting an ecofeminist perspective carries with it the risk of falling into essentialist thinking, as pointed out by Garrard (2012: 26 f.) among others. What it all comes down to, however – in the text as well as in my interpretation of it – is not biological distinctions, but rather the rejection of a male gender-coded *tradition* of ruthlessness towards others, in favour of a corresponding, female-coded tradition of greater understanding for the conditions of life. Which principle is more sustainable is clear from the different characters' development, something that, in the case of Matt, is accentuated by zoomorphic imagery. For quite some time, the descriptions of Matt as well as of his way of expressing himself tend to place animals and nature in a position subservient to man in

general, and him, in his capacity of robber chieftain, in particular. Meanwhile, it is equally clear that with the younger generation, Ronia and Birk, gender-coding ceases to exist, as a consequence of changed life principles. Together and as equals, they choose to live in harmony with their surroundings. They also make an active choice not only to refrain from banditry, but also to be wary of the hunger for wealth. Consequently, they leave the secret silver treasure that Noddle-Pete has told Ronia about untouched, in favour of living a more modest life, something that can be read as an anti-capitalist message.

Lindgren does not entertain any concept of simple dualism, neither as regards which characters are good or evil, nor in the relationship between nature and civilisation. The tendency for depictions of nature aimed at children to adhere to dichotomies – which Alice Curry describes thus: "/they/ adhere to a dualistic conception of human/nonhuman, culture/nature and male/female categories" (Curry, 2013: 5) – is *not* a characteristic of *Ronia, The Robber's Daughter*. Rather, Lindgren paints a picture of a complex whole. Human life always involves some kind of civilisation or culture, but as long as people retain an understanding of the conditions of life, this can exist in balance with nature – an ideal state that also goes beyond the distinction between anthropocentrism and ecocentrism. Lindgren captures this with the words: "They spent all the hours from morning to evening in their woods. They fished and hunted to get what they needed to eat, but otherwise they lived in peace with all the life about them" (148).

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People all around the world have a relation to Astrid Lindgren's stories and her treasured characters. Astrid Lindgren was both traditional and innovative in her writing and she had a great impact on generations of children's literature. In the speech she held at the reception of the H C Andersen Award 1958 she said:

"I want to write for a readership that can create miracles. Children create miracles when they read."

The author Astrid Lindgren is well known, abroad mostly for her stories about Pippi Longstockning, but she was also a chief editor at the publishing house Rabén & Sjögren for almost 25 years. Astrid Lindgren was a very popular person and she is for many Swedes a genuine national icon and celebrity.

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