

SUMMARY

Established as a genre in Greek antiquity, the Aesopic fable reached Scandinavia during the Middle Ages. In Sweden, the fable experienced its glory days during the early modern epoch (1500–1800). The monograph *Fabelbruk i svensk tidigmodernitet. En genrehistorisk studie* [Usage of Fable in Swedish Early Modernity. A Genre History] takes a comprehensive look at the history of fable in Sweden during these three centuries. In dialogue with recent international scholarship on fable and on genre, the study focuses on the usage of the fable genre. Early modern fable usage was lively, diversified, and changing. The monograph sketches a general historical trajectory from the multifunctional usage of fable within a Lutheran humanist culture, via a mainly French-influenced aesthetical as well as pragmatical reorientation of the usage of fable during the Enlightenment, to a crisis that hit the fable around 1800, caused by the paradigmatic shifts of modernity, wherein a new literary understanding led to the questioning of the very idea of literature usage.

The monograph is organized into seven chapters. The first chapter (“Fabeln – en genre tagen i bruk” [The Fable – A Genre Made Use Of]) introduces the usage perspective of the study, including the central and newly coined concept of the usage arena. With reference to the macro-historical concept of early modernity, the chapter establishes and justifies the chronological bounds of the study. Moreover, it discusses how the object of investigation should be narrowed down, problematizes the issue of genre definition, and argues in favour of a methodology based on an open Aesopic genre field and on three principles that have historically governed the usage of fable: a chrestomathy principle, a vehicle principle, and an analogy principle. The chapter finishes off with a short outline of the extensive European research on fable and a more complete account of the highly limited Swedish research on the genre.

The following three chapters are devoted to what the study identifies as the three most essential usage arenas of the fable in early modern Sweden. The second chapter (“Fabelns språkdidaktiska bruksarena” [Fable’s Language-Didactic Usage Arena]) deals with the fable as textual material in language instruction in schools. This usage function was governed by a chrestomathy principle: fable texts were made use of in order to teach the vocabulary and grammar of a foreign language. After a background sketch of the fable’s long European history as a language-didactic genre, the chapter examines the prescriptions for reading fables in Latin and Greek included in the official Swedish school regulations.

In a subsequent step, all fable editions for school use printed in early modern Sweden are surveyed. What is striking in the Latin teaching material is the dominant line emanating from Joachim Camerarius's Leipzig edition *Fabellae Aesopicae Qyaedam Notiores, Et In Scolis Vsitatae* (1545), only supplemented by a Phaedrus line in the late seventeenth century. The Greek fable material gives a more fragmented picture, even though the most important eighteenth-century editions are clearly indebted to Johann Gottfried Hauptmann's *ΜΥΘΩΝ ΑΙΣΩΠΕΙΩΝ ΣΥΝΑΓΩΓΗ. Fabularum Aesopicarum Collectio* (1741). The sparser quantity of Aesopic text material printed in eighteenth-century Sweden for language education in French, German, and English indicates that learning methods were transferred from classical to modern languages. With the backing of tangible examples – some notes from a teacher, a pupil's exercise book, and a textbook for self-instruction – the chapter illustrates how fable texts were used in language-didactic practice. A closing discussion about the consequences of the language-didactic usage for the history of the genre stresses that the fable as statutory text material in early modern Sweden and that, thanks to the education system's concentration on national uniformity, it was disseminated all over the country. In accordance with the basic didactic method of early modern schools, the fable, furthermore, was made an object for large-scale memorization at the same time as it was ascribed a considerable degree of transformability due to the constant language exercises it underwent.

The third chapter ("Fabelns moralpedagogiska bruksarena" [Fable's Moral-Pedagogical Usage Arena]) deals with the fable as an instrument for moral edification in the vernacular. This usage function, which required that Aesopic texts were transferred into Swedish, was based on a vehicle principle: the fables were made into carriers of ethical decrees. The chapter analyses the four most significant fable collections printed in Swedish during the early modern era. The earliest Swedish-language collection, *Hundrade Esopi Fabler* (1603), is a faithful translation of the Rostock edition *Hundert Fabeln aus Esopo* (1574) by Nathan Chytraeus. It conveys classical virtue ethical lessons. In addition, it has a pronounced Lutheran profile and honours a just God, a hierarchically ordered society, and a patriarchal family structure, factors in tune with Sweden's recently adopted Protestant state religion, making the collection an efficient tool for confessional and social disciplining. The first fable collection rendered into Swedish directly from a classical language, *Phædri Fabler, J Swenske Rijm* (1736), is an almost complete translation, in verse, of the five books by Phaedrus. A new prose comment has been added to each fable, applying the Aesopic text in a way typical of the age and consistently exalting "en förnufftig menniska" [a rational human being] to a moral ideal. With its nearly 500 fables, *Allehanda Sedolärande Fabler* (1767), the period's most voluminous collection in Swedish, is characterized by moral-pedagogical heterogeneity as well as narrative redundancy. The edition can be described as a selective Swedish version of Roger L'Estrange's *Fables, of Aesop And other Eminent Mythologists: With Morals and Reflexions* (1692), which has been distinctly Lutherized by means of cutting out the original's Catholic reflections and replacing the English preface with Martin Luther's fable foreword of 1530. The fourth collection to be scrutinized is an

illustrated fable journal in two volumes: *Gull-Hönan* (1773) and *Herre-Gårds Tuppen* (1774). In most cases, the short Aesopic narrations presented in Swedish have been drawn from Latin fable books for school use, whereas the detailed epimyths are new and commissioned as propaganda for the editor's particular interests in realist politics, an arrangement that gives the collection a remarkably divided address. Summarizing the consequences of the moral-pedagogical usage of fable for the history of the genre, the chapter points out that the strong emphasis on the semantic double structure of Aesopic texts – it was maintained that every story concealed an important message – forced readers to decode the underlying meaning of each fable. Moreover, it is concluded that the epimyths in the vernacular collections normally reinforce the virtue ethical construct of the narrations at the same time as the vehicle principle is allowed to operate with great liberty, turning the fables into carriers of widely differing views and ideologies.

The fourth chapter ("Fabelns exemplumretoriska bruksarena" [Fable's Exemplum-Rhetorical Usage Arena]) deals with the fable as rhetorically warranted exemplifying narration in other texts. This usage function was regulated by an analogy principle, establishing a parallel between the subject of the host text and the quoted fable. To start with, the chapter goes through, firstly, the approach of classical rhetoric to the category of exemplum and to the fable as exemplum genre and, secondly, the prevailing mode of thinking by means of exemplum in early modern Europe. After that, precise analyses of 15 exemplum finds from Swedish early modernity are accounted for in chronological order. These exempla have been selected with the purpose of illustrating how 15 different fable types are made the subject of exemplum-rhetorical usage. Contributing to the breadth of the account are, likewise, circumstances such as the finds originating from host texts that both belong to widely varying genres and cover more or less the entire period of investigation. As a following step, the chapter puts forward analyses of ten finds demonstrating, instead, how one and the same fable type – the fable about the bird with borrowed feathers (ATU 244) – is made use of as a rhetorical exemplum in various ways in ten different host texts. A summing-up of the consequences for the history of the genre calls attention to the fact that the extensive exemplum-rhetorical usage loaded the fable with an ability to penetrate into different cultural contexts, as well as to narratively adjust to various textual environments. In relation to the discourse of its host text, the Aesopic narration often generated a contrasting effect at the same time as the continual reutilization of the same fable types within the exemplum usage as a whole affirmed norms and ascribed a certain constancy to human realities.

The fifth chapter ("Fabelbrukaren Aisopos och genretreditionen" [Aesop as Fable User and the Genre Tradition]) links the three usage arenas to a joint generic tradition. The character of Aesop stands at the centre of the analysis. The chapter opens with a section both examining Phaedrus's narrative of origin about his precursor Aesop, which was foundational for the fable tradition, and tracing the dissemination of this narrative in Swedish early modernity. It is followed by an investigation of the image of the genre's founding father given in the ancient biography *Βίος Αισώπου*; a particular focus here is placed on Aesop's role as fable user. Thereafter, the two versions of the Aesop biography

printed in early modern Sweden are scrutinized, one translated from German and included in *Hundrade Esopi Fabler* (1603), the other rendered into Swedish from French and published separately in 1766. In contrast to how the biography was received in other parts of Europe, the Swedish versions, in different ways, reduced Aesop's function as exemplary fable user. The chapter concludes by discussing two further aspects of Aesop's significance for the generic tradition. Firstly, since Aesop as a figure was modelled so as to combine misshapeness and prudence, he came to signify the fable as a genre and the interplay between vehicle and tenor that characterizes it. Secondly, in later European as well as Swedish writing about the fable's founding father, Aesop's interaction with the animal world was exploited in order to highlight the role of bestiality in the moral universe of the genre usage.

The sixth and lengthiest chapter ("Fabelbrukets modernisering" [Modernization of Fable Usage]) studies efforts to modernize the usage of Aesopic fable. These processes received their chief impulses from *Fables choisies, mises en vers* (1668) by Jean de La Fontaine and *Fables nouvelles* (1719) by Antoine Houdart de La Motte and made the fable into an extremely popular genre in European Enlightenment culture. The chapter begins by surveying the Swedish reception of La Fontaine's fables, which had stimulated an aestheticization of the genre in France. A corresponding account is dedicated to the reception of La Motte's fables, which in their native country contributed to a vitalizing of the moral-pedagogical usage of fable, not least through the device of constructing new Aesopic narrations. In Sweden, these divergences between the French fabulists were to a large degree erased. Moreover, the chapter maps the Swedish reception of another three figures who were influential in the eighteenth-century renewal of the genre: John Gay, Christian Fürchtegott Gellert, and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. As a main point, the chapter subsequently investigates the prolific Swedish-language production of new fables in the last four decades of the eighteenth century. The textual material under inspection consists of, on the one hand, singular fables anonymously published in the press, and on the other hand, fable collections with artistic ambitions. Whereas the press publications allotted new, medium-dependent functions, preferably critical or satirical, to the genre, the collections of fables, markedly often debut books, aimed at establishing new authors in the literary market and winning them cultural capital. A special section deals with a verse fable canonized by domestic literary scholars: Anna Maria Lenngren's "Björndansen" (1799). For a long time regarded as a Swedish original text, this fable is in fact a revision – in line with the general fable traffic in eighteenth-century Europe – of Tomás de Iriarte's Spanish "El Oso, la Mona y el Cerdo" (1782). In conclusion, the chapter accounts for the fable's quantitative expansion in Sweden from 1760 to 1799. The expansion is presented graphically through statistics on fable publishing in eight newspapers, and elucidated by references to prevailing press laws and to the culture of civic conversation that characterized the journalism of the period.

The seventh and last chapter ("Fabeln – en förbrukad genre?" [The Fable – A Used Up Genre?]) argues that the fable genre and fable usage in Sweden, as in the rest of Europe, were struck by a historical crisis towards the end of the eighteenth century. Whereas

the crisis for the modernized Enlightenment fable was primarily due to dilettantization, overexploitation, and the disintegration of the genre field, the more serious crisis for traditional fable usage was caused by the advancing modernity that undermined its most fundamental prerequisites: the virtue ethical way of thinking, exemplum-based rhetoric, the anthropomorphizing view of the animal world, and the poetological principle combining business with pleasure. The chapter closes with a short coda, sketching the presence of the Aesopic genre after 1800 within three domains: firstly, the continued yet declining usage of fable in language teaching in schools; secondly, the aesthetic reactivation of the fable in quotations, allusions, and parodies; and, thirdly, the successful fusion of usage and aesthetics in fable literature for children.