

Presenter: Edel Olsen

Sami

Abstract:

The first ever Sami children's book was published in 1976. Marry a Somby's book *Ammul ja alit oarbmælli* (Ammul and the blue cousin) was a fairytale about a Sami boy who meets and marries a girl from the underworld. Since then many Sami children's books are about children and youth who get to know someone from other worlds, most often a subterranean world, where life is easier and less problematic than the Sami everyday life. The inhabitants of the underworld wear traditional Sami clothing, speak Sami and they have both power and authority to live by traditional Sami philosophy and values. Most Sami Children's books are inspired by or retellings of traditional Sami tales, storytelling and fairytales or adventure books inspired by the old Sami mythology and religion.

The first Sami young adult novel, *Kátjá*, was published in 1986. Katja was a contemporary novel from a Sami environment, depicting the story of a Sami girl growing up in Inner Finnmark, from childhood life at her family's farm, through boarding school and to adult life in the Norwegian majority society. An important theme in the book is how the majority Norwegian society and government policies create internal struggles among the Sami.

Common for both books and Sami literature in general is their reflections of the old Sami worldview - the intimate relationship the Sami people has with nature, as opposed to the colonial power, the Scandinavian culture – which view nature as resources for exploitation. The old shamanistic religion and philosophy viewed humans as part of nature and everything in the world as living and connected. Therefore it is important to take care of nature. "If you exercise violence against the living, it will stumble upon you and you will destroy yourself", as the Sami poet Ailo Gaup said in 2008. He thought that the main purpose of Sami revitalization was to take care of nature.

Since 2013 Sami Writer's Association has nominated books for The Nordic Council Children and Young People's Literature Prize from the Sami language area. How does these 6 books reflect Sami values and tradition?