

Getting Entangled in Literary Concepts:  
Short Stories for Icelandic Upper  
Secondary School and their Paratexts

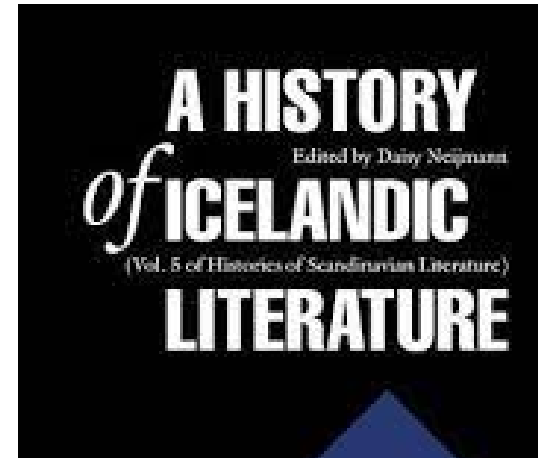
Jón Yngvi Jóhannsson



# Literary histories

---

- Íslensk bókmenntasaga
  - [A History of Icelandic Literature I–V, 1996–2006]
- A history of Icelandic literature, 2006
- Íslenskar bókmenntir – saga og samhengi
  - [Icelandic literature – history and context, 2021]



# Icelandic literature from Freiburg to Winnipeg



# Three fundamental questions?

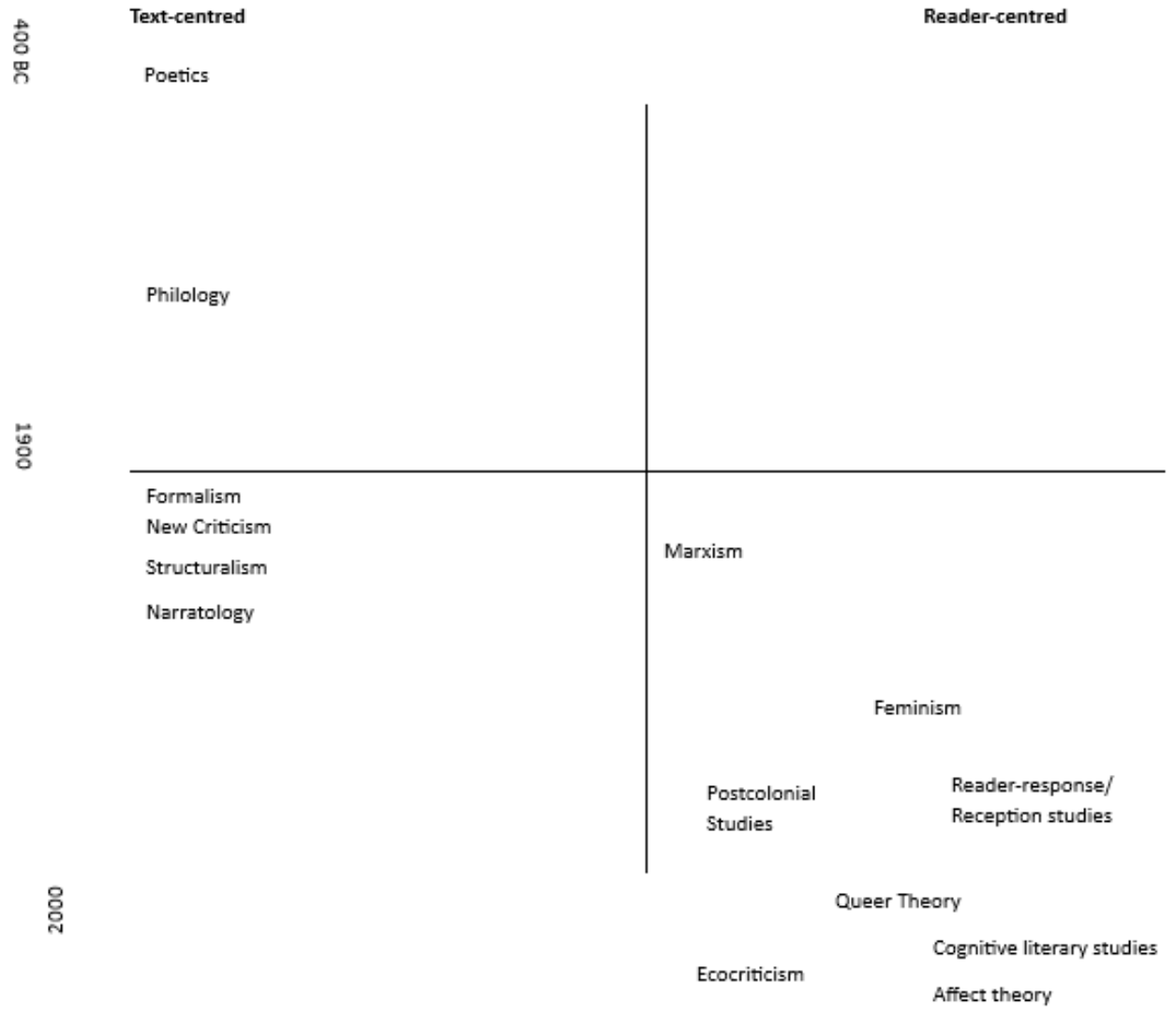
- Which **texts** are Icelandic?
- Which **text** do we count as literature?
- Which **contexts** are important?
  - Political
  - Psychological
  - Philosophical
  - Pedagogical?



# New currents in the 1970's

- Teaching in methodology, literary analysis, and theories about the relationship between society and literature became increasingly prominent. The instruction required the use of foreign materials, books, and articles. This reading material was replete with unfamiliar concepts and scholarly terminology, and the teachers had to grapple with finding Icelandic terms for these subjects. (Vésteinn Ólason, 200X)







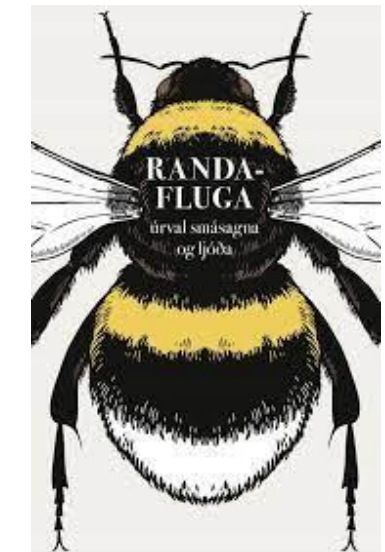
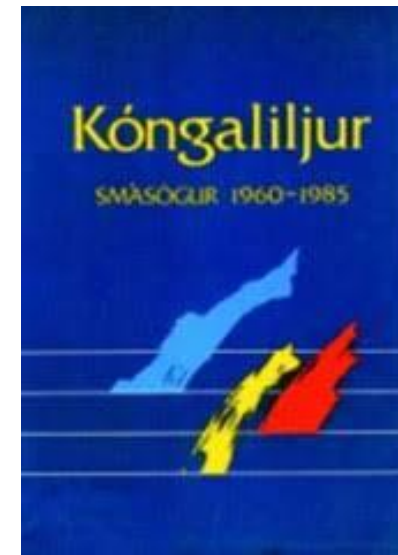
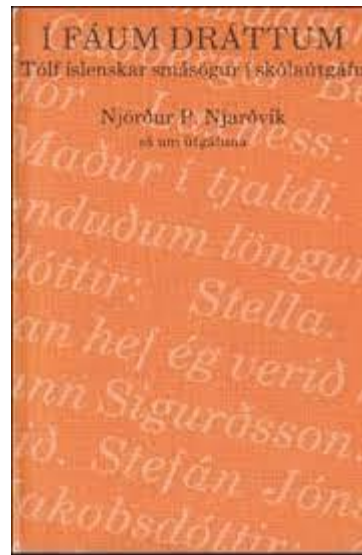
## Contemporary literature for upper secondary schools

- Punktur, punktur, komma, strik (Dot, dot, comma, dash) Originally published in 1976. School edition published in 1979
- Stalín er ekki hér (Stalin is not here). Premiered in 1979. School edition published in 1979



# Short story anthologies

- *Í fáum dráttum (In Brief)* 1979
- *Kóngaliljur (Regal lilies)* 1987.
- *Napóleon Bónaparti (Napoleon Bonaparte)* 1987.
- *Stjörnurnar í Konstantínópel, (The Stars of Constantinopel)* 1998.
- *Uppspuni (Fiction)* 2004.
- *Randafluga. (Honeybee)* 2020.





# Paratexts



Peritexts: Prologues, epilogues,  
assignments, explanation,  
bibliographical information



Epitexts: Teachers' guides

*Peritext+Epitext=Paratext*

# The old and the new

## **In Brief (1979)**

- Peritexts include prologue, glossary and student assignment

## **Honeybee (2020)**

- Peritexts include a very short prologue
- Epitext includes glossary, analysis and student assignments



# Assignments from „In Brief“ (1979)

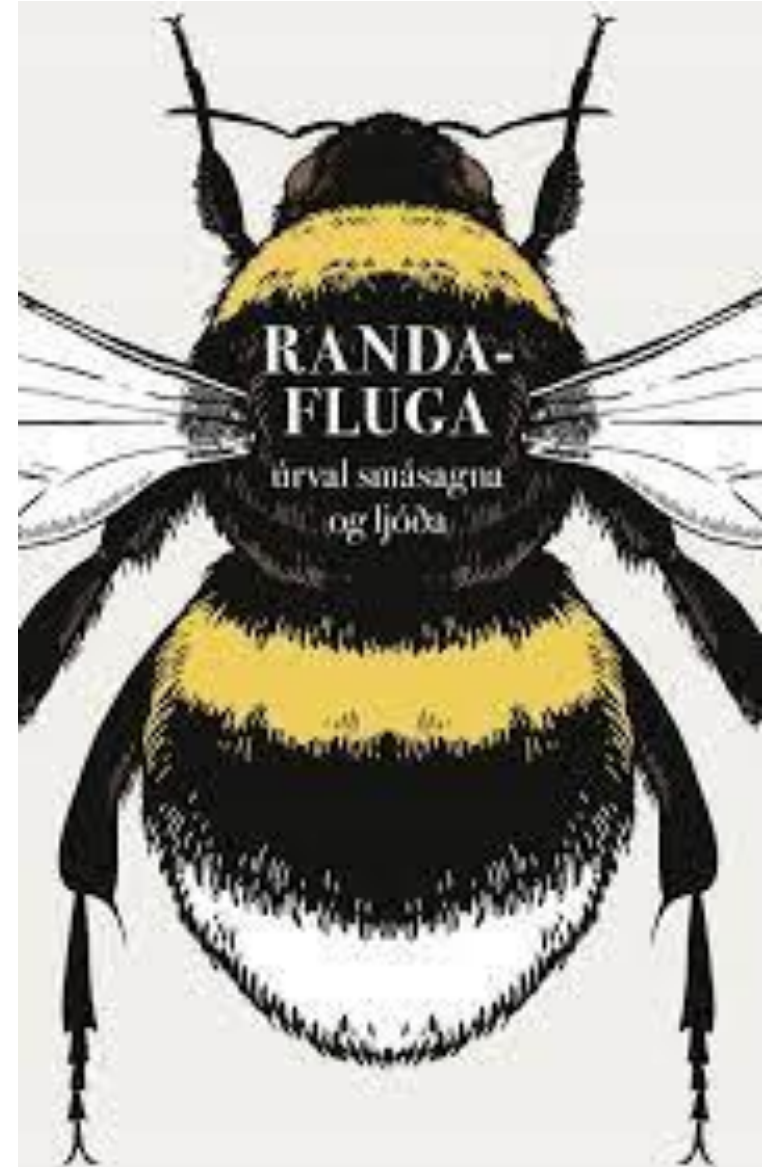
---

- How significant is it that the story is told in the first person and that the narrator is named Ásta, like the author?
- Ásta narrates the story as an intoxicated person. What impact does this have on the narration? Is this reflected in the language and style?
- Examine the style of the story, including metaphors and personifications.

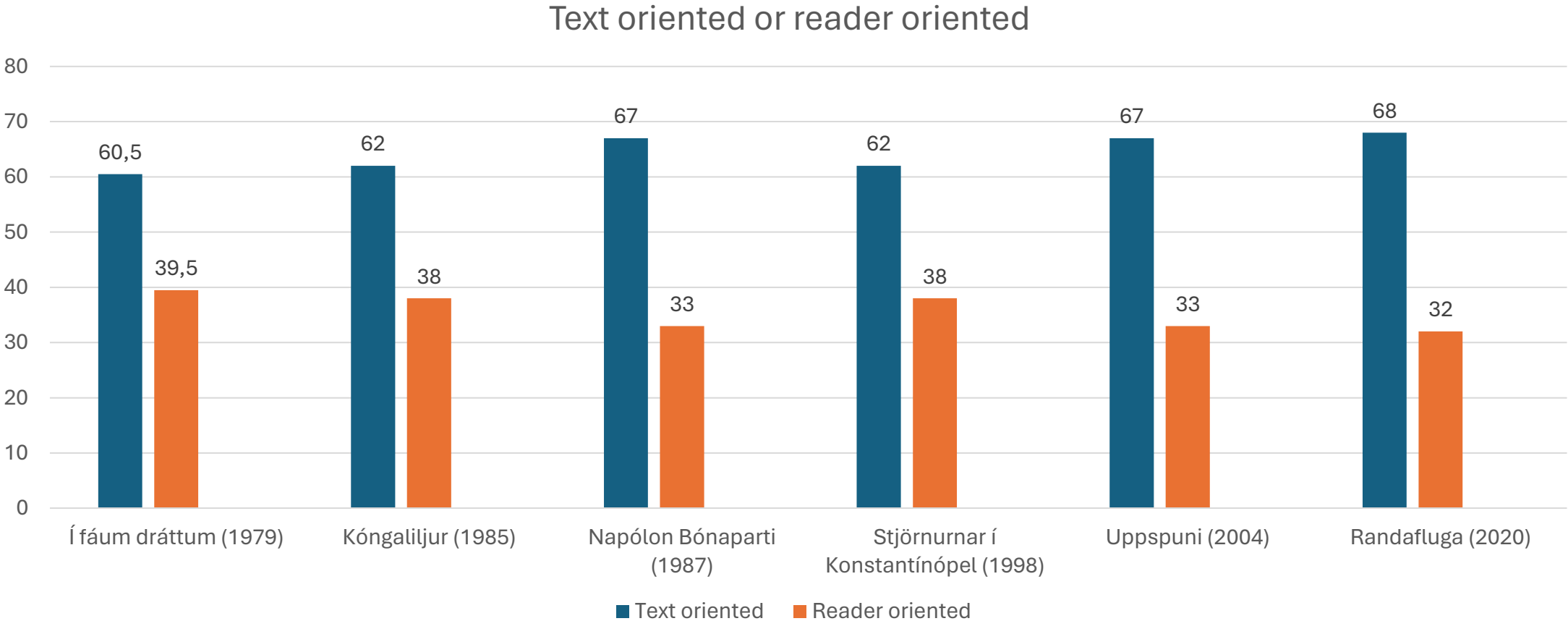
# Assignment from „Honeybee“ (2020)

---

- - Students could outline the construction of the story, consider the frame around Stjarna's story, and reflect on its impact. Identify where the introduction of the setting and characters ends, what the plot is, where the climax of the story occurs, and what the resolutions are.
- - Imagery and stylistic devices. Find examples of:
  - - Simile
  - - Metaphor
  - - Personification
  - - At least two instances of direct description
  - - At least two instances of alliteration



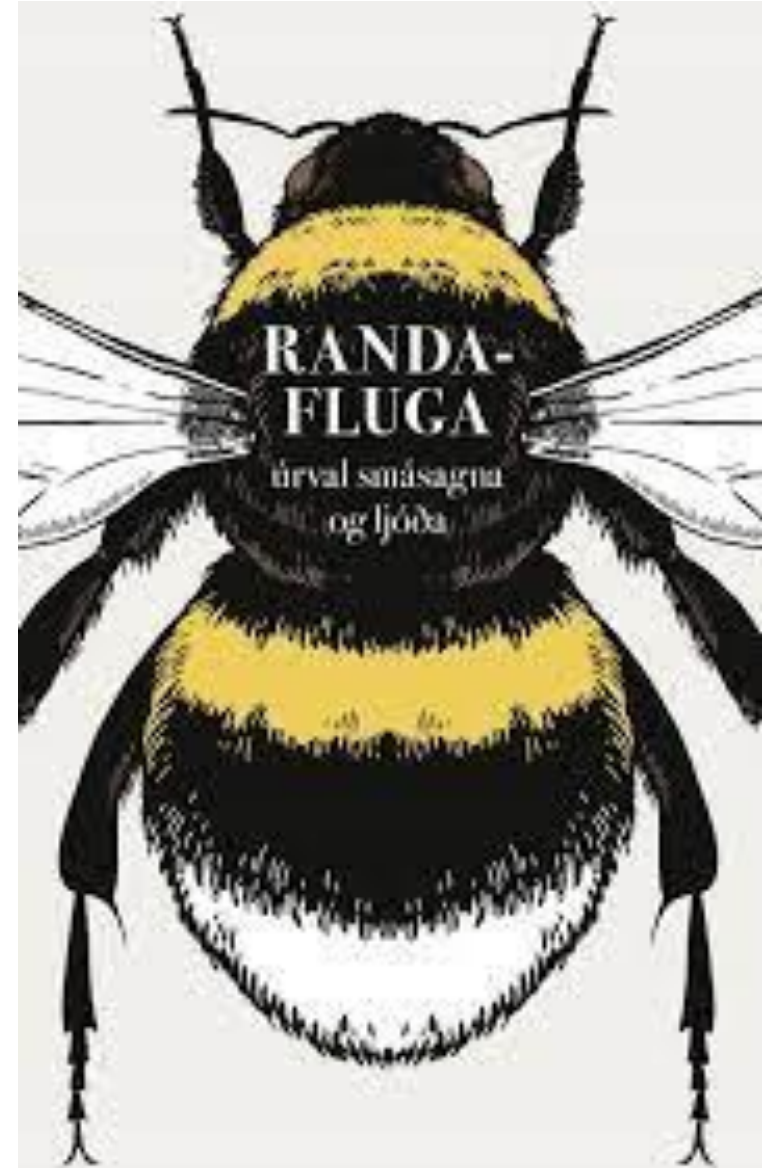
# Assignments in anthologies



# Assignment from „Honeybee“ (2020)

---

- Artistic Expression. The story lends itself to being turned into a comic strip. There are many opportunities to illustrate individual events. The intense emotions depicted in the story could inspire students to write poems



In Brief, 1979	Regal lillies, 1985	Napóleon Bónaparti, 1987	The Stars of Constantinopel, 1998	Fictions, 2004	Honeybee, 2020	
Structure	11 Climax	3 Style	17 Style	31 Symbol	9 Imagery	75
Character/ characterisation	5 Adventure story	3 Narrative technique	9 Realism	23 Point of view	6 Character/characterisation	48
Narrator	4 Epiphany	2 Character/characterisation	9 Symbol	19 Novel	4 Symbol	45
Narrative technique	4 Structure	2 Symbol	9 Motif	15 Character/characterisation	10 Structure	39
Style	3 Symbol	2 Realism	7 Antithesis	14 Flashback	4 Narrator	19
Point of view	3 Parable	2 Parable	5 Narrator	10 Style	4 Point of view	12
Imagery	3	Ideology	5 Time	10 Postmodernist	3 Gender	7
Symbol	3	Modernism	4 Gender	10 Epiphany	3 Time	6
Theme	2	Narrator	4 Form	9 Parable	3 Narrative technique	4
Gender roles	2	Paralells	3 Poem	9 Allegory	3 Setting	4
		Frame story	3 Character/characterisation	16	Identity	4
		Novel	3 Romanticism	8	Discourse	3
			Allusion	8	Allusion	3
			Message	7		
			Modernism	7		
			Novel	7		
			Imagery	5		
			Irony	4		

Poetics/Rhetorics

New Criticism/Narratology

Literary History

Later Trends



Shorts  
stories and  
literary  
concept in  
the dustbin?

