

## Establishing a children's and young people's literary canon based on literary awards

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### Abstract

Establishing a literary canon is a complicated and controversial task due to the multitude of factors to be considered. This article is rooted in the idea that winning literary awards may be a key factor and, therefore, proposes a canon of children's and young people's literature based on the number of literary awards received by a certain book in Spain in the first twenty years of the 21st century. A sample of seventy-one books that had been awarded two or more prizes was selected from a total of 1,315 award-winning literary works. The prestige and reliability of the awards was examined, as well as the author, language of publication, genre, subject matter and reading level of the books. The final proposal is made up of eighteen books that have received the most awards and are the most widely recommended by national and international institutions and specialized journals. This article concludes that this canon is characterized by the fact that it is aimed at a young audience, it focuses on realistic and mystery novels, and all the official languages of Spain are represented in it.

**Keywords:** Children's and young adult literature; literary canon; literary awards; Spanish literature.

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## Los premios como configuradores de un canon literario infantil y juvenil

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### Resumen

La constitución de un canon literario es una tarea complicada y controvertida por la multitud de factores que hay que considerar. Partiendo de la idea de que los premios literarios pueden ser uno de esos elementos, en el artículo se hace una propuesta de canon de literatura infantil y juvenil basada en el número de premios recibidos en España en los primeros veinte años del siglo XXI. Para su elaboración se seleccionó una muestra de setenta y un títulos que habían obtenido dos o más premios de entre un total de 1.315 obras premiadas. Se estudió el prestigio y solidez de los premios, lenguas de edición, género, temática, niveles lectores de las obras y sus autores. La propuesta final está formada por dieciocho títulos que responden a los más premiados y recomendados por instituciones nacionales e internacionales y revistas especializadas. Se llega a la conclusión de que dicho canon se caracteriza por estar dirigido a un público juvenil, centrado en novelas de carácter realista y de misterio, en el que están representadas todas las lenguas oficiales del Estado.

**Palabras clave:** Literatura infantil y juvenil; canon literario; premios literarios; literatura española.

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## Introduction

Not least, the growth of works aimed at children and young people has generated multiple proposals to create a canon of Children's and Young Adult Literature (hereinafter CYAL), a sign of its struggle to establish its own identity and be accepted as it is, defending its literary, formative and educational values (Lorente-Muñoz, 2011). There are many monographs and articles on the subject of the CYAL canon, especially the school canon. Among them, Kümmerling-Meibauer and Müller (2017) discuss the teaching utilitarianism that sometimes marks the selection of works in a canon. In our country, we can cite the work of García-Padrino (1999; 2001; 2004; 2007a; 2007b); Barrena et al. (2000); Cano-Vela and Pérez-Valverde (2003); Tejerina-Lobo (2004), or the one coordinated by Bermúdez-Martínez and Núñez-Delgado (2014). Mention should also be made of those by Vita (2003); Mendoza-Fillola (2002; 2006); Dotras-Bravo (2013); Ortiz-Ballesteros and Gómez-Rubio (2022) on the existence of various canons, Lluch's on the popular youth canon among peers (2021) and the Protagonista Jove award and the canon (Lluch & Cantó, 2021). More recently, the studies by Mateo-Girona (2022) on the creation of a CYAL canon for teacher training or Lluch (2022) on a non-school canon.

Authors such as Dueñas et al. (2014) also refer to the social canon, such as the selection of reading material directly promoted by the publishers themselves or by the circles close to the reader (friends and family), apart from the official recommendations of the education system. They even see the rejection of degrees that are part of the school academic canon.

Along the same lines is the study by Rivera-Jurado and Romero-Oliva (2020), who advocate for the need for a renewal of the academic school canon in which the most widely consumed literature is also included and which is incorporated into the literary training of future teachers.

At present, there is no fully accepted literary canon for children and young people, as there are many factors and agents that influence and make it difficult to establish the field of study. We do find recognised, although also controversial, approaches, among which are the various selections and guides, of undoubted interest, carried out individually or collectively by specialists and professionals (Tejerina-Lobo, 2004). For years now, various proposals have been put forward for all kinds of works, genres and even ages, such as the one drawn up by the Germán Sánchez Rupiérrez Foundation at the 6<sup>th</sup> National Symposium on Children's Literature in 2000. Other similar initiatives include the one coordinated by Félix López and the team of the magazine *Peonza, cien libros para un siglo* (López, 2004), a chronological overview of the 100 most representative titles of the 20<sup>th</sup> century or, on an international level, the suggestive and not very academic selection by Quentin Blake and Julia Eccleshars, *1001 Children's Books You Must Read Before You Grow Up* (2009). There are also selections for specific genres such as *Innovar e investigar desde la narración gráfica: hacia un canon literario del cómic* (Ortiz-Hernández et al., 2014) or a specific group of readers, *Del canon literario juvenil a la creación adolescente* (Pazos, 2018).

As in any literary canon, in the CYAL canon, criteria must be used to eliminate personal or commercial tastes. The literary quality and the suitability of the books to the levels of the readers are clear, but an authority is also needed to support and apply it, which, according to different research, can come from the academy (Chartier, 2018), the educational system (Martín-Barbero, 2003; Mendoza-Fillola, 2002), or literary criticism (Lluch, 2010). A canon must adapt to historical, political, social, economic, cultural and even ideological changes (Kümmerling-Meibauer & Müller, 2017), but also to the transformations that have taken place in the book

ecosystem and in the role of the traditional mediator in recent years. These changes are forcing us to rethink the creation of new literary canons that have little to do with the traditional concept.

Francés-Díez (2021) points to two important factors in this process:

- the sharp increase of formats and platforms through which the literary event flows (Adrada-Sánchez, 2009);
- the growing importance of peer-to-peer recommendation, i.e., the opinion of readers, mainly on social networks.

To this should be added the use of titles in reading clubs, recommendations in libraries and prizes and awards, which in the literary market of the twentieth century became another element in the canonisation of an author or a work (Lluch et al., 2015).

Authors such as Tarrío-Varela (2013) present literary prizes as shapers of the canon. Awards such as the Andersen Award, the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA), the various awards at the Bologna Book Fair or, in Spain, the Lazarillo, the National Children's Literature Award, the International Award for Illustration-BCBF/Fundación SM award and many more, show its importance in the publishing market for children and young people. Aguiar et al. (2013, pp. 38-39) also state that "es innegable que para la LIJ estos [los premios] han ejercido una función de legitimación de la calidad literaria y de la proyección de autores y obras, que pasan a constituir el canon de este sistema literario".

Awards add cultural value to books and have an impact on selection and purchase, give visibility and attract readers to read a specific work. They are also a showcase for young adult literature and help it to emerge from anonymity, increase print runs, translations and sales, and be included in reading lists and recommendations (García-Rodríguez & Gómez-Díaz, 2022). The fact that a book receives a prize makes it more talked about and can be a further criterion for the establishment of a canon.

*Dentro de la LIJ, [...], libro premiado no es necesariamente sinónimo de libro de calidad, pero con frecuencia se le aproxima. Uno lee los libros publicados a lo largo del año en las distintas lenguas del Estado, señala al lado de cada título aquellos que destacan por su excelencia, o que sin ser excelentes significan una aportación a tener en cuenta al ámbito de las lecturas. Y es que un premio, en la literatura infantil y juvenil española, sigue constituyendo un factor diferencial (Neira-Cruz, 2004).*

## Objective and methodology

Based on the idea that award-winning CYAL can be considered a sample of literature that could be the subject of a possible canon (Tarrío-Varela, 2013; Aguiar et al., 2013), the aim of this paper is to determine which titles would form part of a list that could make up a canon of award-winning CYAL books in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Spain.

To that end, as an initial phase of the study, a database of CYAL awards (regional, provincial and local) in Spain<sup>1</sup> between 2000 and 2020 was compiled, based on those sources in which the awards, their announcements and the historical lists of the prize-winners are included. The initial resource was the database of literary prizes awarded in Spain compiled by the Spanish Ministry of Culture and Sport, which was supplemented with information from:

- Websites of the Departments of Culture of the Autonomous Communities.
- CYAL prizes and competitions section of the National Library of Spain.

- Spanish Children's and Young Adult Book Organisation (OEPLI) and its corresponding regional sections.
- Publishers' and writers' websites.
- Specialised magazines.
- Wikipedia entries for the different awards located in the above sources.

The final result was 176 awards that made up 1,437 entries corresponding to the winning works in the different calls for entries, with a total of 1,315 titles. The difference in figures is due to the fact that a book may have won more than one prize. Of these 1,315 titles, those with at least two awards were considered eligible for inclusion in the canon, resulting in a final sample of 71 books<sup>2</sup>. It should be noted that, in some cases, the same work has been awarded prizes in several languages, such as *Verne o la vida secreta de las mujeres planta o La balada de los unicornios* by Leticia Costas, and *El pintor del sombrero de malvas* by Marcos Calveiro, que won prizes for both the work in Galician and Spanish.; *¡Corre, Kuru, corre!* by Patxi Zubizarreta in Basque and Spanish; *Kafka y la muñeca viajera y El aprendiz de brujo y los Invisibles* by Jordi Sierra i Fabra, and *Un hijo de Alejandro Palomas* in Catalan and Spanish.

For each work, the following information was collected: title, author/s, illustrator, publisher, date of publication, date of prize, prize received, genre, age and subject. As for the subjects, the classification table of the public libraries of Salamanca was used, as well as the age brackets. This information was used to characterise the most awarded works.

We believed it would be interesting to check whether the proposed works had received any kind of recognition from institutions or journals of recognised prestige in the field of CYAL, confirming, title by title, their presence in the available years in the following sources of information.

**Table 1. Sources used for the recommendation**

Section	Source	URL	Years
IBBY Honour List	IBBY	<a href="https://www.ibby.org/">https://www.ibby.org/</a>	2000-2020
White Ravens	Munich Youth Library	<a href="https://www.ijb.de/spezialbibliothek/white-ravens-online">https://www.ijb.de/spezialbibliothek/white-ravens-online</a>	2000-2020
Este libro me encantó	OEPLI	<a href="https://www.oepli.org/Este-libro-me-encanto">https://www.oepli.org/Este-libro-me-encanto</a>	04/2012-12/2020
Galician Books for Children's	GALIX	<a href="http://www.galix.org/">http://www.galix.org/</a>	2012-2020
Recomendados año tras año. Indispensables	Galtzagorri Elkarte	<a href="https://www.ibbygaltzagorri.eus/eu">https://www.ibbygaltzagorri.eus/eu</a>	2008-2020
Lista de Honor	Revista CLIJ	<a href="https://www.revistaclij.com/">https://www.revistaclij.com/</a>	2000-2020
Indispensables en mi maleta	Canal Lector	<a href="https://canallector.com">https://canallector.com</a>	2000-2020
Aconsejamos	Revista Peonza	<a href="https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/portales/peonza/?conten=catalogo">https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/portales/peonza/?conten=catalogo</a>	2000-2020
Imprescindibles Nuestro preferidos	Revista Babar	<a href="https://revistababar.com/wp/">https://revistababar.com/wp/</a>	2000-2020

Note. The dates show the years consulted for each source.

Source: Prepared by the authors

## Results, analysis and discussion

Of the total of 1,315 award-winning books, 95% received only one award, compared to 4% who received 2 awards; only 9 titles (1%) received 3 awards and only one received 4 awards.

In view of the data obtained, it can be affirmed that there is no tendency for the same title to be awarded many awards, the usual situation is only one or at most two. In the case of two or more prizes, it is usual for the first one to be for the original work and the subsequent ones for the work already published and of an institutional nature, as is the case for *Barro de Medellín* by Alfredo Gómez Cerdá; *Cándido y los demás* by Fran Pintareda; *Cielo abajo* by Fernando Marías; *El efecto Frankenstein* by Elia Barceló; *Escarlatina, la cocinera difunta* by Leticia Costas; or *¡Corre, Kuru, corre!* by Patxi Zubizarreta, for example.

### Types, prestige and strength of awards

Prestige is one aspect that can be assessed when configuring a canon of award-winning works, which is related to the authority of the jury and the institution that awards them, but also to the maintenance of a reputation over the years.

Within the almost endless variety of prizes that are announced and awarded in Spain, according to previous research (García-Rodríguez & Gómez-Díaz, 2022), 54% are of an institutional nature, that is, organised by public or private entities or bodies, associations, guilds and groups related to books, which aim to highlight the quality of one or several works already published, which have stood out in the panorama of annual production. Their purely honorary nature (in these cases, this aspect is reinforced through financial incentives), the authority of the juries or their independence from editorial connections and particular interests, tend to endow them with a credibility that, in the field of the CYAL, is not usually questioned (Neira-Cruz, 2004). In second place are those of a mixed nature organised in collaboration between companies and institutions with 21%. Third place would go to private awards granted mainly by commercial publishers (18%) and lastly to those originating from specialist CYAL magazines (6%).

For the 71 titles analysed, the distribution is very similar: 32 of them are institutional (58%), 13 private (24%), 6 mixed (11%) and 4 of them, granted by journals (7%).

Institutional prizes are often more prestigious and generate fewer doubts about the jury's judgements (Sotomayor-Sáez & Díaz-Armas, 2013). The Lazarillo award is one of the most prestigious awards in Spain and its list of winners includes the most important Spanish CYAL authors.

Mention should also be made of the National Creation Award, which currently rewards the author of a work published in any of the official languages of Spain. This is one of the biggest awards in the field of CYAL (EUR 20,000).

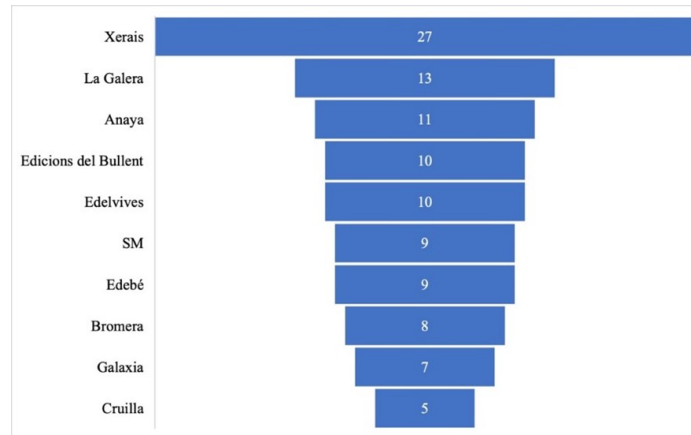
At the autonomous community level, in Galicia we should mention *Fervenzas Literarias. Juvenil* created by the magazine of the same name to give an honorary award to the editor of a work already published in Galician, and the one awarded by the Galician Writers' Association.

In Catalan, the award *Protagonista Jove* by the Catalan Branch of Spanish IBBY is particularly noteworthy, as it is one of the few awarded by the readers themselves; that of *Hospital San Joan de Deu* or *Libros Mejor Editados de la Generalitat Valenciana*.

Finally, for the Basque Country, mention should be made to *Premio Euskadi* for works in Basque or the *Lizardi* prize awarded by the Zarautz city council.

As for prizes awarded by publishers, some of the most renowned publishers are also represented, albeit with lower numbers. It is worth highlighting the work of Galician publishers, especially Xerais, Anaya, SM and Edelvives, and those that also publish in Spanish and another language, such as La Galera and Edebé (graph 1).

**Graph 1. Publishers with the highest number of awards**



In recent years, the commitment of Valencian publishers such as Edicions del Bullent and Bromera is noteworthy, possibly motivated by the consolidation of Valencian as a working language and by the interest in promoting Valencian CYAL.

## Editing languages

The awarding of prizes has played an important role in the promotion of the co-official languages and in the consolidation of authors who write originally in them. Several of his books have been translated and nominated for international awards, such as the Galician writer Agustín Fernández Paz, nominated for the Andersen Award in 2012 and 2016 and for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award in 2010; the Basque author Mariasun Landa, included in the IBBY Honour List, and nominated for the Andersen in 2008; or the Catalan Jordi Sierra i Fabra, nominated for the Andersen 2006, 2010 and 2020.

In fact, of the total of 71 award-winning titles, 65 were awarded exclusively for works in Catalan - including Catalonia, Valencia and the Balearic Islands - 31 in Spanish and 18 in Galician, to which must be added those awarded for both Spanish and Galician (2 works) and bilingual Spanish-Catalan works. Basque language is the least represented with 4 awards.

It can therefore be affirmed that the Spanish publishing of young adult literature is fundamentally multilingual, that is to say, the same works are published in the different languages of the State, either in their original language or through translations. In the case of awards, it is common for a work, especially in the case of unpublished works and private awards, to be translated from Spanish into Galician, Catalan or Basque and vice versa. This is more common when the publishing house awarding the prize belongs to a business group with imprints that publish exclusively in those languages.

## Awards and genres

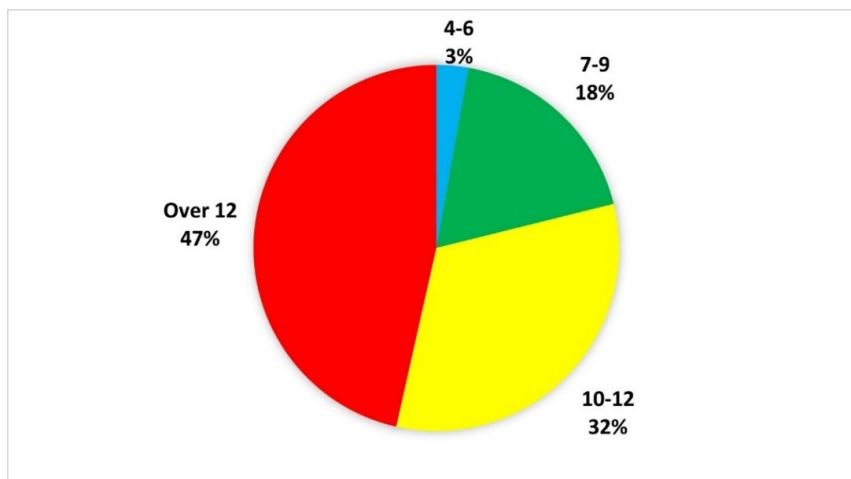
Spanish national publishing of children's and young adult books is characterised by the overwhelming predominance of narrative, especially novels, a behaviour that is reproduced in the case of the award-winning books, which include 63 novels and 8 short stories. This figure is directly related, on the one hand, to the fact that 70% of the prizes awarded in Spain are for narrative, while only 6% are for theatre and 4% for poetry (García-Rodríguez & Gómez-Díaz, 2022). On the other hand, most of the award-winning works on the list are aimed at audiences over the age of 12, regular readers of the genre.

Not a single work of theatre or poetry appears among the most recognised, although there are awards focused on these minority genres, such as the SGAE for Children's and Young Adult Theatre and the ASSITEJ for Theatre for Children and Young Adults, or the Luna del Aire, Arume or El Príncipe Preguntón for poetry. Logically, they do not appear because in no case have they won more than one award, but it can be noted that 70 poetry works are included in the original database, of which 18 belong to the three aforementioned awards. In the case of theatre, 71 works appear, 31 of which have been awarded the two aforementioned prizes. The small financial amounts and low sales volume may not be enough of an incentive for creators, but neither is it enough of an incentive for publishers.

## Awards, readers' level and subject matter

In terms of reading stages, the analysis of the data shows that almost half of all the works that have won two or more awards are for young readers (33 works), while those aimed at readers aged 10 to 12 (23 titles) are in second place. Books for readers aged 7 to 9 account for only 18% (13 works) and those focusing on younger readers are merely testimonial (2 works) (graph 2).

Graph 2. Distribution of awards by age group



If we analyse the thematic classification, real life is recurrent with 30%, mystery and terror (25%) and fantasy works with 20%, themes usually dealt with in literature for young people, representing in total 74% of the sample analysed (graph 3).

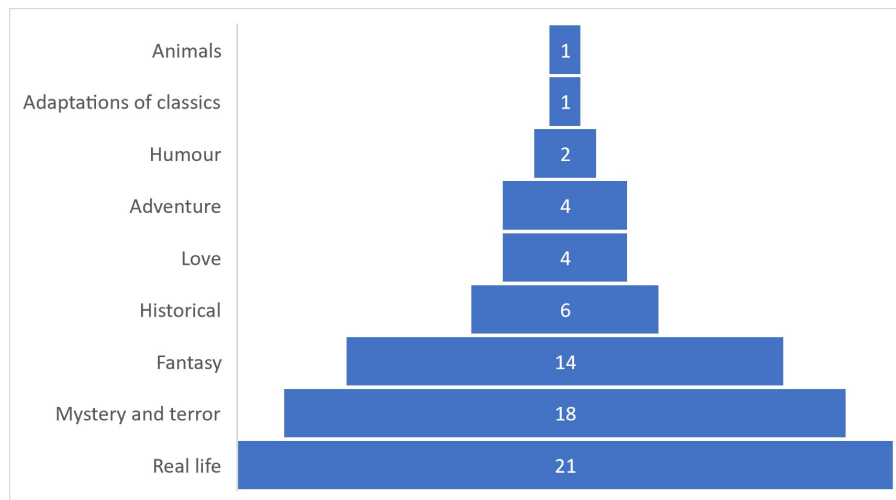
Within real life are plays, usually starring young people, depicting similar environments and problems faced by potential readers, family relationships and conflicts, adaptation, social problems, etc. As for fantasy literature, its boom may be due to the growing consumption by young people of titles such as *Harry Potter* or *The Lord of the Rings* (following its film adaptation)



and all the series and sagas of these characteristics that have appeared on the publishing market and which have often become true cult objects.

The last places are occupied by adaptations of classics, and titles starring animals, probably related to the fact that most of the winning works are, as mentioned above, aimed at a young audience where these themes have hardly any place.

**Graph 3. Subjects of the most awarded works**

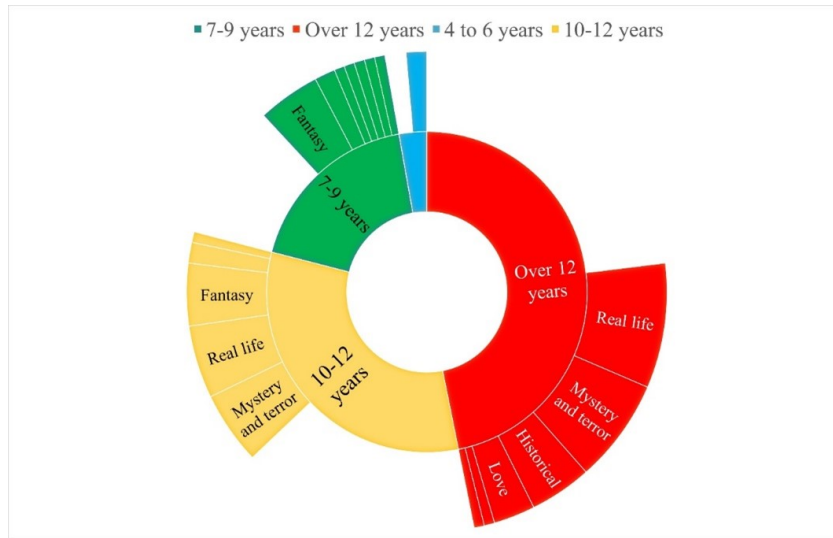


If we cross-reference the age data with the most important subjects, we find that, for the youngest children up to the age of 9, fantasy continues to be the predominant theme, while from the age of 10 onwards, the titles focus on real life, mystery and terror, although fantasy is still present (graphs 4 and 5).

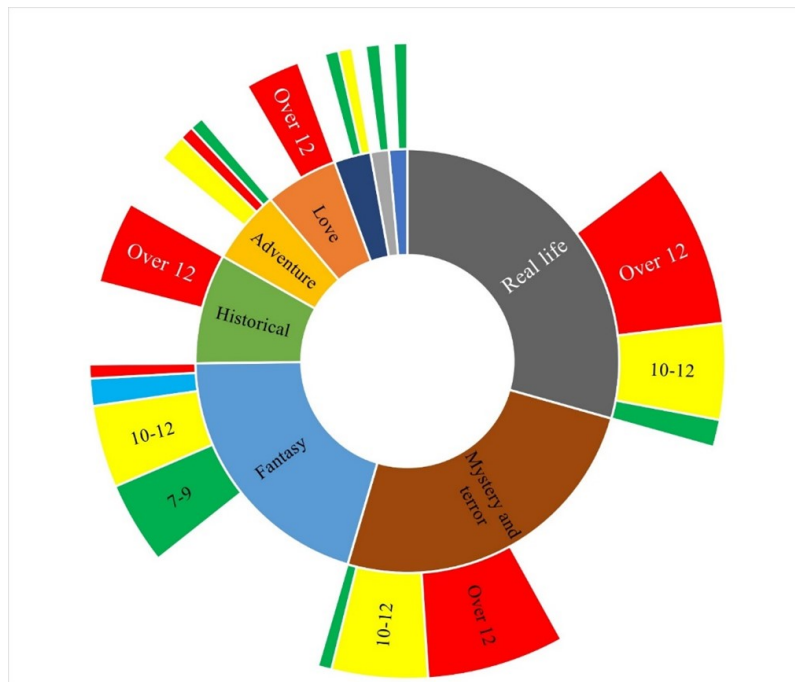
In terms of young adult books, it is striking that romance novels, which are a great success among young people and about which there are recurrent comments and recommendations on blogs and YouTube channels for prescribing juvenile reading, have such a limited presence.

It is worth mentioning the scarcity of humour, which is widely used in children’s literature as a way of showing reality from a different perspective and overcoming hard and unpleasant moments, a fact that is again related to the reading stage for which most of the award-winning titles are intended, for children aged 10 and over.

**Graph 4. Distribution of subjects in the different age groups**



**Graph 5. Distribution of subjects by age**



## Authors and the gender perspective

The creation of a canon of works is also marked by the need to select a list of authors (Montaner, 2011) and, although it is not the aim of this work to establish a canon of authors, it is unavoidable to highlight the work of those who have received a considerable number of awards, either for one or several works or for their career. If we consider those who have received the highest number of awards, we can see that there are 6 women compared to 4 men (table 2).

**Table 2. Most awarded authors between 2000-2020**

Author	Award-winning books
Ledicia Costas	<i>La balada dos unicornios // A balada dos unicornios Escarlatina, la cocinera difunta Verne y la vida secreta de las mujeres planta A señorita Buble</i>
María Solar	<i>O meu pesadelo favorito Os menos da Variola</i>
An Alfaya	<i>A sombra descalza Illa soidade</i>
Patxi Zubizarreta Dorronsoro	<i>¡Corri, Kuru, Corre// Kori, Kuru, Kori! Pantaleón badoa</i>
Rosa Aneiros Díaz	<i>As de bolboreta Xelís, o Guerreiro das botellas de mar</i>
Marcos Calveiro	<i>El pintor del sombrero de malvas // O pintor do sombreiro do malvas Palabras de auga</i>
Emma Pedreira	<i>Os corpos invisibles</i>
Elia Barceló	<i>El efecto Frankenstein</i>
Alejandro Palomas	<i>Un hijo</i>
Xavier Aliaga Villora	<i>El mio nom no ès Irina</i>

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Among these 10 creators, considering that some authors received several awards for the same title, it is worth highlighting the figure of the Galician Ledicia Costas with several awards for four of her works, both in Galician and in Spanish; Emma Pedreira with four awards for the same work *Os corpos invisibles* and Elia Barceló with three for *El efecto Frankenstein*.

However, among the most prize-winners there are no names of recognised prestige in the Spanish CYAL who have received between 2000 and 2020 such important awards as the Cervantes Chico (Jordi Serra i Fabra; Elvira Lindo; Marinella Terzi; Fernando Lalana; Pilar Mateos or Maite Carranza); the National Creation Award (Juan Cruz Igerabide; Jordi Serra i Fabra; Antonio Rodríguez Almodóvar; Alfredo Martín Garzo or Emilio Pascual) or who have been proposed by OPELI for the Andersen Award (Bernardo Atxaga; Juan Farias; Mariasun Landa; Agustín Fernández Paz; Fina Casalderrey and Jordi Serra i Fabra).

## Awards and the canon generation: a selective approach

According to these data, a first proposal for a canon of award-winning books for young readers in Spain between 2000 and 2020 would be made up of 71 works. However, the high number of titles made it advisable to draw up a second canon applying more restrictive criteria: titles with three or more awards or titles with only two, one of them being the National Young Readers' Book Award or the Lazarillo Award, as these are the oldest and most prestigious institutional awards in Spain.

By applying these two filters, the list is reduced to 18 works (table 3) in which some of the best-known authors, titles and awards in our country are represented, both nationally and regionally. In addition, several of them have been recognised and recommended by prestigious institutions such as the IBBY, the Munich Youth Library, the OEPLI or some of its regional sections, the Canal Lector and magazines such as *Peonza*, *Babar* or *Faristol*.

Five of the selected books have been included in the White Ravens and another four in the IBBY Honour List, although only one appears in both cases, *Barro de Medellín* by Alfredo Gómez Cerdá, also recommended in the selections of *Peonza* magazine and Canal Lector. In contrast, few

books are included in the selections of the specialised journals, none in *CLIJ*, six in *Peonza* and five in *Babar*. The source with the highest number of recommended titles is Canal Lector, 11 of the 18 that make up the proposed canon.

If a ranking of the three most awarded and recommended titles were to be made, they would be: *Os corpos invisibles*, *Verne y la vida secreta de las mujeres planta*, or *Escarlatina, la cocinera difunta*.

This second selective canon has the same behaviour as the data obtained from the analysis of the 71 award-winners: narrative works aimed at the over-12s, with a predominance of real-life themes and, to a lesser extent, fantasy, mystery and terror.

Another fact that may support the validity of the proposed canon is the fact that the works have been translated into other languages. Following a search of the ISBN database, it was found that 11 of them are available in several languages.

**Table 3. Canon proposal**

Title and languages	Authors	Awards	Recommendations
1. <i>¡Corre, Kuru, corre!// ¡Korri, Kuru, Korri!</i>	Patxti Zubizarreta	Ala Delta (2018 (Basque), 2019 Spanish) Euskadi Literatura Infantil y Juvenil (2018)	Galtzagorri Elkartea OEPLI Peonza
2. <i>A sombra descalza</i>	An Alfaya	Xosé Neira Vilas ao mellor libro infantil e xuvenil (2006) Lazarillo creación (2005)	White Ravens
3. <i>Barro de Medellín</i>	Alfredo Gómez Cerdá	Ala Delta (2008) Nacional creación (2009)	White Ravens IBBY Peonza Canal Lector
4. <i>Cielo abajo</i>	Fernando Marías	Anaya Internacional de Literatura Infantil y Juvenil (2005) Nacional creación (2005)	Peonza Babar Canal Lector
5. <i>El efecto Frankenstein</i>	Elia Barceló	Edebé juvenil (2019) Kelvin 505 (2020) Nacional creación (2020)	OEPLI Canal Lector
6. <i>El meu nom no és Irina</i>	Xavier Aliaga	Crítica dels Escriptors Valencians. Juvenil (2014) Libros mejor editados Generalitat Valenciana. Libro infantil (2013) Samaruc Juvenil (2014)	
7. <i>El nen gris</i>	Lluís Farré	Hospital Sant Joan de Deu (2006) Crítica Serra D'or. Infantil (2007) Junceda de ilustración. Ficción (2006)	White Ravens
8. <i>Escarlatina, la cocinera difunta// Escarlatina, a cociñeira defunta</i>	Ledicia Costas	Fervenzas Literarias. Infantil (2014) Merlin Infantil (2014) Nacional creación (2014)	IBBY Galician Books for Children's Canal Lector
9. <i>Kafka y la muñeca viajera // Kafka i la nina que se'n va anar de viatge</i>	Jordi Sierra i Fabra	Protagonista Jove (2009) Nacional creación (2007)	Peonza Canal Lector
10. <i>La balada de los unicornios // A balada dos unicornios</i>	Ledicia Costas	Lazarillo creación (2017) Kelvin 505 (2019) Fervenzas Literarias. Juvenil (2018)	Canal Lector
11. <i>La isla de Bowen</i>	César Mallorquí	Edebé juvenil (2012) Nacional creación (2013)	IBBY Babar Canal Lector
12. <i>O meu pesadelo favorito</i>	María Solar	Lazarillo creación (2014) Fervenzas Literarias. Infantil (2015) Gala do Libro Galego (2016)	White Ravens Galician Books for Children's
13. <i>Os corpos invisibles</i>	Emma Pedreira	Fervenzas Literarias. Juvenil (2019) Jules Verne de literatura Xuvenil (2019) Gala do Libro Galego (2020) Gala do libro Galego Libro Ilustrado (2020)	IBBY OEPLI

Title and languages	Authors	Awards	Recommendations
14. <i>Prohibido leer a Lewis Carroll</i>	Diego Arboleda	Lazarillo creación (2012) Nacional creación (2014)	Peonza Babar Canal Lector
15. <i>Un hijo //Un fill</i>	Alejandro Palomas	Joaquín Ruyra (2014) Protagonista Jove (2016) Nacional creación (2016)	OEPLI Babar Canal Lector
16. <i>Una habitación en Babel</i>	Eliacer Cansino	Anaya Internacional de Literatura Infantil y Juvenil (2009) Nacional creación (2010)	Canal Lector
17. <i>Verdadera historia del perro Salomón</i>	Javier Serrano	Mejores ilustraciones de libros infantiles y juveniles (2001) Nacional creación (2001)	
18. <i>Verne y la vida secreta de las mujeres planta// Jules Verne e a vida secreta das mulleres planta</i>	Ledicia Costas	Fervenzas Literarias Juvenil (2016) Gala do Libro Galego (2017) Lazarillo de Creación (2015)	White Ravens Galician Books for Children's OEPLI Peonza Babar Canal Lector

Note. N.B. For works available in several languages, they are grouped together using the Spanish title for literacy whenever one of the awards is available in this language.

Source: Prepared by the authors

## Conclusions

At present, it is not possible to speak of a fully accepted children's and young adult literary canon, academic or otherwise. Even authors such as [Escandell-Montiel \(2019\)](#) consider that we cannot speak of a single canon, but that it is plural and diverse. Therefore, it is possible to propose a fee that takes into account other factors such as the case of awards, which has been the main objective of this work.

Questioning a canon is always healthy if we consider that any proposal involves an inevitable dose of arbitrariness ([Cerrillo, 2010](#)). However, despite the many discussions on the elements to be taken into account when defining a canon for children and young people, it is increasingly accepted that an award can be a component in the canonisation of a work, a factor that gives visibility to titles and influences their selection and purchase. It is true that an award-winning book is not always synonymous with quality, but as [Neira \(2004\)](#) states, it usually comes close.

[Selfa et al. \(2017, p. 11\)](#) believe that the more radical positions that advocate the elimination of the literary canon have a restrictive view of this phenomenon by considering that

*“el derecho de un determinado texto literario a formar parte del canon no depende -no debe depender, no puede depender- de elementos externos al texto, especialmente contextuales, que no sean los ‘rigurosos criterios estéticos’ a los que se refiere Bloom (1995)”.*

Various types of canons can be made, official or scholarly, personal, popular and even, like the one proposed in this work: the canon of award-winning children's and young adult books. After analysing the 71 works initially selected, as well as the 18 that would make up the more selective canon, it can be affirmed that in the majority of cases we are dealing with novels with institutional awards aimed at readers over the age of 10, in which real life, mystery and fantasy themes predominate. There is an important presence of titles in Catalan In this canon, whether or not they have subsequently been translated into other languages, as well as works recommended and recognised by specialised critics.

In the case of the 18 works, 88% are also recommended by the specialised critics, so it can be affirmed that they are recognised works and can be included in a possible canon.

The proposal is not intended to be an exhaustive canon, but a representative one, which can serve as a reference for teachers or librarians outside the strictly scholarly and/or academic sphere. This is a first approach to the subject that requires an extension of the temporal and chronological framework of the study, for example, going as far as 1958, the year the Lazarillo Award was created, in order to check whether they have continued to be reprinted as a sign of their quality and validity over time. On the other hand, it will be essential to broaden the geographical scope of this canon, analysing international award-winning works that have been translated into Spanish.

Likewise, considering that these are mainly works for young people, it will be necessary to allow for the possibility of making a proposal for a children's canon, restricting it not by the number of awards but by age group among the 1,315 initial titles, as well as to tackle the task of creating a canon of award-winning works in Catalan, Galician and Basque.

The proposals for a children's and young adult canon cannot continue to distance themselves from the preferences expressed by the readers themselves, which is why it is necessary to contrast this proposal with others that are closer and made among peers in social networks, with the proposals for titles from reading clubs, recommendations from libraries and even from specialists in cultural supplements.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The awards have been counted independently with different modalities.

<sup>2</sup> Data set available in: García-Rodríguez, A., & Gómez-Díaz, R. (2023). *Libros de literatura infantil y juvenil con dos premios o más concedidos en España entre 2000 y 2020* [Data set]. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10411464>

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