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Memory Visualized. A Comparative Analysis of Iconotexts in Selected Nordic Picturebooks

Abstract: Memory is a fundamental human capacity that affects human life, and it is therefore not surprising that its employment as a literary motif in children's books is prevalent and takes different forms. Moreover, it is strictly linked to human emotions, which today is a subject of debate within philosophy of memory. In my paper, I focus on memory and memories in a few selected Nordic picturebooks: from Sweden: *Jag såg, jag ser* (*I saw, I see*, 1997) by Håkan Jaensson and Gunna Grähs, and *Alfons och soldatpappan* (*Alfie Atkins and the Soldier Father*, 2006) by Gunilla Bergström; from Denmark *Så blev Farfar et Spøgelse* (*Then Grandfather Became a Ghost*, 2004) by Kim Fupz Aakeson and Eva Eriksson; from Norway *Tror du pappa gråter?* (*Do You Think that Dad is Crying?*, 2008) by Hilde Kommedal and Tone Lileng; and from Finland *Tyttö ja naakkapuu* (*The Girl and the Jackdaw Tree*, 2004) by Ritta Jalonen and Kristina Louhi. The goal of the paper is to reflect upon the character and possible specificity of representation of memory in Scandinavian picturebooks and to explore particular capacities of the picturebook as a medium while discussing memories. Methodologically, the paper is a content analysis employing terminology within picturebook studies and narratology, and references to the philosophy of memory.

Keywords: memory, philosophy, Nordic picturebooks, iconotext

INTRODUCTION

Memory seems to be today not only a more and more popular topic taken up in films and literature within both high and popular culture, but also a subject of profound discussions within academia. Significantly, it has been explored by both psychologists and other scholars, resulting for example in the emergence of the philosophy of memory as a distinct field of research. Its presence as a separate space of academic debates was clinched with *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Memory* (Bernecker and Michaelian 2017) showing multiple approaches, for example from a perspective of history, epistemology and metaphysics of memory as well as its moral and social dimensions. The issue is ex-

tremely broad and complex, and even approaching it is beyond the scope of the present paper. Therefore, during the analysis I will merely refer to a few selected works focusing on a correlation between memory, emotions and trauma.

In the paper I want to probe the iconotextual representation of memory and memories in five selected modern picturebooks from Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland: *Jag såg, jag ser* (*I saw, I see*, 1997)¹ by Håkan Jaensson and Gunna Grähs, *Alfons och soldatpappan* (*Alfie Atkins and the Soldier Father*, 2006) by Gunilla Bergström, *Så blev Farfar et Spøgelse* (*Then Grandfather Became a Ghost*, 2004) by Kim Fupz Aakeson and Eva Eriksson, *Tror du pappa gråter?* (*Do You Think that Dad is Crying?*, 2008) by Hilde Kommedal and Tone Lileng, and *Tyttö ja naakkapuu* (*The Girl and the Jackdaw Tree*, 2004) by Ritta Jalonen and Kristina Louhi². They belong to quality literature, written and illustrated by prize-winning artists, and have been translated into other languages, which is typical of books that are valuable and representative for the country. My goal is to reflect upon the character and possible specificity of representation of memory in Nordic picturebooks and to explore particular capacities of the picturebook as a medium while discussing memories. In order to achieve this purpose, I pose three questions: 1. What role does memory as a motif play in a given book? 2. How is it represented visually and verbally? 3. What is the relation between words and images? Methodologically, the paper is a content analysis based on the terminology within picturebook studies, narratology and philosophy of memory.

MEMORIES IN EXISTENTIAL DISCOURSE

Initially I want to point out that by *existential* I mean pertaining to human existence or, to be more precise, referring to a sense of life, fundamental life principles and the nature of life, including a reflection on the inevitable passing of life, and not to existentialism as a philosophy. To take up these themes in the picturebook, an increasingly crossover medium aimed both at experienced (adult) and inexperienced (children) readerships, is a real challenge. The Swedish author Håkan Jaensson in cooperation with the well-known Swedish illustrator Gunna Grähs achieved it perfectly in the book *Jag såg, jag ser*, sharing two viewpoints in a complementary interplay of images and short comments beginning with a recurrent phrase, included in the title “I saw, I see.”

The story starts with a recto image of a woman leaning and looking full-faced into a pram while the texts says “I saw my mom.” After turning the page

¹ The books have not been translated into English and the titles in brackets are my proposals of their literal renditions. The quotes in the course of the analysis are also my translations.

² The order in which the books are mentioned reflects the order in which they are discussed in the analysis below.

viewers encounter a picture of a rather gloomy room interior with an old lady sitting lonely on a bed, with the comment “I see my mom.” Successive doublespreads of the book follow this pattern, the recto featuring a picture of a selected person or thing seen with the child’s eyes, whereas upon turning the page the verso shows a picture referring to the image from the previous page, seen with the adult’s eyes. The text consists of the brief information “I saw...” alternating with “I see....” What is of interest here, this original verbal-visual focalization is constructed with a recto iconotext being a memory. It is noteworthy that “an ordinary memory is always a reconstruction, so an emotional memory is always a re-evaluation” (de Sousa 2017: 160). The narrative of memories – both in words and in pictures – is clearly re-evaluated in this book and marked with a discernible nostalgia which seems a preconceived strategy for telling this story. This “manipulation” is understandable in particular as we do not deal with real memories but fictitious ones. The compositional strategy of juxtaposition of two images perceived by the same person at different ages – the memory and the present experience – implies the changes all people and their environment undergo during their lives and is very impressive. It is significant that these two-time perspectives are not presented within the same opening and page turning, necessary to “reveal” the continuation of the part “I saw...,” functions here as a symbolic indicator of the passing time. This existential approach is emphasized in openings 5 and 6 when the verbal message “I saw my dad” with a man rushing to work in the first picture is paired with “I see my dad” visualized with merely a few frames of photographs of the man.

The nostalgic effect of the book is lessened by humorous contributions to the visual representation: for example, the text “I saw food” is illustrated with a big woman’s breast and correlated with a plate full of meat, potatoes, vegetables and a beer mug beside, with the comment “I see food,” whereas the phrase “I saw a girl” showing a shy little girl wearing a big red ribbon in her blonde hair has been juxtaposed with the words “I see a girl” and the illustration of an obese middle-aged woman in a bikini watering flowers in a garden.

The existential character of the story is enhanced by the penultimate and the last pairs of iconotexts. In the former a picture of a little huffy boy (“I saw myself”) is completed with a mirror reflection of a mild, slightly smiling middle-aged man (“I see myself”). In the latter, the last verbal message states that the narrator closes his eyes, represented with a plain dark picture, and his exclamation: “And now I can see you!” in the last opening with a silver foil and a mirror effect which reflects the reader’s face. This is a thought-provoking story resting on a relatively simple idea which is innovative due to the idiosyncratic qualities of the iconotext, since only the complementary³ interplay of images and a few commenting words can comprise a long life

³ The text-image relations rest on the taxonomy suggested by Nikolajeva and Scott (2006:12).

and indicate its fluent passing within 32 sides. Its message is clear and bears an unequivocal existential reflection: life passes, we change, the essence of being is relative as our perception undergoes permanent alterations, and this truth is universal for all of us – the related story could equally have been the readers' story.

The verbal text in *Jag såg, jag ser* is presented by the first-person, auto-diegetic narrator, and picturebook scholars agree that this form can disturb children's reception of the story. Nikolajeva and Scott share Nodelman's (1991) reservations that the first-person verbal narration conflicts with the visual one, which rarely reconstructs the same, that is first-person, point of view: "Picturebooks are supposed to be addressed to a young, inexperienced audience, yet they use within the same story two different forms of focalization, which puts very high demands on the reader. While identification with the "I" of the verbal text in itself presents a problem for young children, the contradictory perspective of the visual text is rather confusing." (Nikolajeva and Scott 2005: 125) But here Gunna Grähs reconstructed a consistent first-person viewpoint visually, which is rather rare within picturebooks for children and strengthens the feeling that this is a crossover book.

*Alfons och soldatpappan*⁴ by Gunilla Bergström tells the story of a Swedish six-year-old boy, Alfie in English, who makes friends with an immigrant dark-skinned neighbor, Hamdi. It is featured – like the whole series it is a part of – by a hetero-intradiegetic narrator. The book is written in a typically Swedish spirit of tolerance and equality, which makes it quite didactic reading. The boys are keen on playing football and Hamdi's father becomes their trainer, building a goal for them in the playground. Alfie and Hamdi are also typically fascinated by war games and weapons, and spend a lot of time playing war and fighting for fun. They find it very intriguing that Hamdi's dad used to be a real soldier in his home country, but the man generally refuses to recollect the war time. However, one day he changes his mind and decides to share a single memory with the boys, and to their surprise it turns out to be rather bewildering.

The man recalls an experience when he was hiding in ruins during an aerial bombardment. He happened to lie eye to eye with a little ant, dragging some stuff to build its home. Suddenly the insect stopped, petrified by a deafening bang, but the moment the bombing ceased it took up the burden and continued the job – like "a stubborn guerrilla" (Bergström 2006). The man ends his story with the assertion that he will never forget it. Even though the boys do not understand the message immediately, it will soon turn out what kind of "life wisdom" it expresses. When the newly built goal is devastated, Hamdi's dad takes his tool case and impassively repairs it, commenting "I guess we are not worse than a little ANT?!!?" (Bergström 2006)⁵.

⁴ *Alfons och soldatpappan* has not been translated into English but the book is a part of the series whose other volumes have with Alfons' name as Alfie.

⁵ Picturebooks are not paginated.

If we take into consideration that memory works pragmatically and people generally remember things worth remembering, which can be useful in the future (de Sousa 2017: 154), the ant memory gains a particular significance. In the middle of the war chaos the little creature's behavior and persistence in pursuing the goal seems to be the only thing that is sensible and valuable. And the only way forward for us is to follow our natural instincts and not to give up, even if the external circumstances keep discouraging us.

Visually Bergström employs different visual modes of representation in this book: naïve colorful drawings, black "empty" contours and cut-outs. The pale color scheme, with predominant sepia tones, evokes the atmosphere of the "forested, sandy country" Hamdi and his dad come from. The colors change significantly and become bright only when depicting computer game scenes. The war memory is featured on three successive doublespreads with a similar layout (openings 8–10) where the text is placed predominantly on the verso whereas the picture gradually "grows" within a circular light-green background, converging on the print. The images, in the symmetrical-complementary relation to words, become bigger and bigger with each opening, which within this three-page sequence symbolically indicates explosions of the falling bombs.

MEMORIES IN THE THERAPEUTIC DISCOURSE

Scandinavians often discuss the theme of death both in children's and young adult fiction. The picturebook is also a medium employed to take up this difficult and inevitable topic, whose frequency Boel Westin interprets as an expression of a "phobia of the idyll" (1996: 50).

In the Norwegian *Tror du pappa gråter?* an extra-heterodiegetic narrator recounts the story of five-year-old Olav, whose father, as it is stated already in the first line of the text, is dead. The book is a few-month flashback that features the process of the illness, a malignant eye tumor, its progression and reactions of the family. This is a strong, moving story told in a realistic mode, and its impact is amplified by the fact that it is true. As we read on the back cover, Kommedal lost her husband and decided to share the painful experience she had gone through with her sons in her book debut.

She described her family story employing a third-person narration with little Olav externally focalized. It results in a double effect; on the one hand it tells a convincing child's story, while on the other it protects readers from a too deep immersion and empathy. It should be pointed out that genuine traumatic memory is considered to be non-narrative (de Sousa 2017: 158, van der Kolk & Fisler 1995: 508) and its literary representation is inevitably transformed into a narrative which is conditioned by its preconceived, fictitious character. The encounter with dad's death is featured here in detail, in a calm atmosphere, full of acceptance. The boy touches the body, tickles it

and concludes: “He thought that dad was not as white as mom said. But he was cold. And he did not speak” (Kommedal and Lileng 2008). The picture on the recto expands the verbal information: Olav’s face contrasts with the father’s pale profile; the boy is smiling and cuddling his father’s face. But it is an account of the scene presented by the narrator, not a memory.

As van der Kolk and Fisler put it:

while traumatized individuals may be unable to give a coherent narrative of the incident, there may be no interference with implicit memory: they may ‘know’ the emotional valence of a stimulus and be aware of associated perceptions, without being able to articulate the reasons for feeling or behaving in a particular way. (1995: 508)

When father passes away Olav is angry and disappointed. He does not cry and his mom’s tears irritate him. His moods fluctuate: sometimes he says that dad was nice, whereas sometimes he insists he did not like his father. Then mom tries to remind him of all the wonderful things he did with his dad: how they played, laughed and drove a tractor together. The recto picture recaptures these moments – the memory is exemplified with a framed photograph placed diagonally against the greenish background. It portrays an idyllic scene in nature – the laughing dad lying on a blanket and holding Olav in his arms above him “in the plane position.” Memories like this literally embraced in the photo album are supposed to help to work through the problem along with non-material memories, verbalized on the last page: “One thing is sure, we loved dad and he still lives in our hearts” (Kommedal and Lileng 2008). Mom tries to substitute the potentially repressed traumatic memories, which due to an imperfect defense mechanism can surface in different ways (Bornstein 2017: 45). She seems to be in favor of so-called directed, intentional forgetting, which is proved by empirical experiences but depends on many variables and cannot be regarded as a universal remedy for treatment of all traumas (Bornstein 2017: 78). However, persons with predestination to react to positive stimuli benefit from this, and Olav in this story is revealed as one of them. This message is confirmed by a final picture closing the story without any verbal comment: a circular frame includes a piece of the previous illustration with dad and Olav driving a tractor. It is a close-up of their smiling faces, which suggests that this particular positive memory has overcome the other ones and the job of forgetting on purpose has achieved its therapeutic effect.

MEMORIES IN THE AUTO-THERAPEUTIC DISCOURSE

The next two books also take up the theme of death, which a young protagonist is confronted with, but in this category children are left to their own devices. They cannot count on any adult’s support but must tackle a traumatic loss

of a beloved member of their family by themselves. The picturebook *Så blev Farfar et Spøgelse* by the Danish author Kim Fupz Aakeson and the Swedish illustrator Eva Eriksson is narrated by a hetero-intradiegetic voice. It starts with a presentation of a few-year-old boy, named Esben, whose Grandfather⁶ unexpectedly died. They had strong emotional ties and Esben cannot accept his sudden death. He does not stop crying, and neither his mom's words that Grandpa is an angel nor his dad's explanation that he has turned to dust bring him any comfort. Fortunately, Grandfather pays the boy a visit at night and the process of working through the problem can start. The man himself is not aware what happened to him, and it is Esben who makes him realize that he is a ghost now.

The story tackles the theme of death in a comical convention and in a very child-friendly manner. In order to convince Grandpa about his new incarnation the boy gives him a book about ghosts where he reads that "people become ghosts when they have not completed something in their lives" (Aakeson and Eriksson 2004). In order to find out what it is, a memory work has to be engaged. In opening eight the old man is looking at photographs on the wall in his home and says: "I can remember many things" (Aakeson and Eriksson 2004). The pictures evoke a series of selected recollections which cover the scope of his life, and, what is remarkable, all of them are positive: a red bike he was given as a boy, the first kiss with Grandma, Esben's dad's birth, the first car. The memories are visualized with four small images in symmetrical-complementary relations to each other on one page (opening 9). This layout diverges from the predominant scheme in the book where a variable amount of text – from one to thirteen lines – is accompanied by one illustration on each page.

Grandpa's memories turn out not to be sufficient to explicate his conversion into a ghost. He returns to meet his grandson during the following nights and finally comes up with the idea that the problem has to do with both of them: "Try to recall" said Grandfather "everything that relates to you and me" (Aakeson and Eriksson 2004). Here the verbal narrative recaptures a long list of Esben's memories exemplifying their bond, which in the light of memory research must comprise the important contents since "There is evidence that unless an experience arouses some sort of effect, it will not be transferred to long-term memory at all" (Goor et al. 1982, qtd in de Sousa 2017: 159). For example, the boy remembers when they were together in an amusement park, how they planted a tree in the garden, built sand castles and went fishing. But the flashbacks also include moments of Grandpa's irritation when Esben kicked a ball into his tulip border, when Grandpa smelled of cigarettes or sang dirty songs about ladies. The dead person is not unnaturally glorified but appears from the child's perspective as a real human being with a number of weaknesses. This kind of account sounds true and persuasive, and enhances its

⁶ The name is spelled with a capital letter, which indicates its function as an anthroponym. The same technique was applied in Grandma's name.

credibility. The position of these recollections in long-term memory indicates their impact on constructing Esben's emotional attitude to his Grandpa, giving readers an insight into their particular relation: It was precisely the man's sense of humor, energy, authenticity and patience that contributed to the special bond whose sudden severing understandably resulted in Esben's feelings of emptiness and despair. What is of interest is the visual reconstruction of the memories. Here again Eva Eriksson employs a different arrangement of images which – as in the case of Grandpa's recollections – are three of four on one page (both on the recto and verso in opening 13). The seven illustrations, in a symmetrical-expanding relation to the verbal message, portray the selected scenes referring both to the joyful moments (for example, building sand castles) and Grandfather's flaws (his smoking).

This memory work – no matter that memory can be fallible – is presented in *Så blev Farfar et Spøgelse* as a powerful therapeutic tool. When Esben finishes listing his memories, Grandpa concludes:

- That's it.
- What do you mean by “it”?
- What you mentioned and did not mention – explained Grandpa, and the smile disappeared from his lips. – I miss... I didn't say good-bye to you, and after all you are my Esben. (Aakeson/Eriksson 2004)

It turns out that the last farewell solves the boy's problem and now – after the “night experiences” with his beloved relative – he can accept his death. The importance of the role that memories are ascribed in this picturebook is noteworthy: they not only let the child work through the grieving process but also – in Grandpa's case – interweave with the existential discourse, making the story multifaceted. In line with the observation that we preserve the most important memories, the elderly man evokes predominantly the moments linked to his family: coming into his older brother's bike, meeting his wife, having the first baby. These visually amplified experiences bear a clear message: the family and unity are the fundamental values in human life.

In *Tyttö ja naakkapuu* by Jalonen and Louhi the verbal narrator is a young nameless girl, telling her story while waiting for her mother, who is buying railway tickets. The child is standing outside the station, and we can follow her flow of thoughts evoked by the tree she is embracing. This is the title jackdaw tree, and the birds are currently flying away from it, which makes the child think about loneliness, returns and longing. This in turn arouses memories which allow us to hear the girl's story. In this picturebook the intrahomodiegetic narrative imitates the child's perception and makes the reading even more moving and affecting.

The jackdaws disappearing in the sky make her recollect her dad, who also disappeared. The man died and she mentions it among numerous observations, for example her wet, cold feet, the falling rain, the rough bark of the

tree, etc. This seemingly slightly chaotic narration seems to imitate a stream of consciousness. We never find out any specific details about her dad's death, its cause or time, as the story is focused just on the feelings and recollections interweaved in a flow of loose associations. The sensitive and empathetic girl sympathizes with the lonely tree and reveals that she recognizes the longing: "I feel it most inside, under my clothes, but I don't know exactly where. Sometimes it hurts in my throat, and even in the ears" (Jalonen/Louhi 2004). The emotion is caused by the missing father whose boat the girl recalls. The mom had to sell it and explained to the daughter that it would become a memory. Now the girl, while observing the birds, confesses:

When mom comes, I'll tell her that our boat is like a jackdaw that has flown away. And she will understand that I know now what memory is. You cannot forget memories, even if you don't think about them. They live in me and wander with me. They never stop. [...] I have many memories. There are pictures of the boat in the album. I will never forget it and nor will mom. (Jalonen/Louhi 2004)

The quote, in a childlike manner, expresses some serious observations within the philosophy of memory. The stance "you cannot forget memories" advocates against intentional forgetting, which has its supporters (Bornstein 2017: 75–79). But the dad's death is not depicted here as a deeply traumatic experience and therefore this approach is automatically understandable in a children's book. The memories featured in *Tyttö ja naakkapuu* appear as both valuable and sometimes tiresome. Their inevitability is emphasized a few pages later when the protagonist reveals that her mom and she are planning to move away and start a new life:

Mom talks about a new start. In my opinion 'a new start' sounds a little strange. I know that a new start will be followed by new memories. A blackboard will become a memory, too. And many, many other things. If I packed my memories into a backpack, it would be very heavy. I'll tell mom that I don't want any new memories for a while. (Jalonen and Louhi 2004)

Tyttö ja naakkapuu is a demanding reading as it uses two incompatible kinds of focalization. As stated above, picturebook scholars agree that auto-diegetic verbal narration juxtaposed with the omniscient visual viewpoint can disturb children's reception of the story (Nodelman 1991, Nikolajeva and Scott 2005). Nevertheless, the writer has decided to tell the story from the first-person perspective while the illustrator has employed a mixed technique, striving partially to preserve the protagonist's focalization – inevitably the external one as the visual text cannot express emotions or thoughts. In fourteen pastel illustrations Kristina Louhi portrayed the girl, automatically changing the perspective into the external omniscient one, and at the same time living up to the common expectation of seeing the protagonist. For example, we can see the girl embracing the title jackdaw tree both in opening 19 and on the front cover.

The remaining eight openings render the world seen through the girl's eyes, depicting the birds and both realistic and imaginary scenes, symmetrical to the verbal narrative: for example, the interior of the empty home when the girl returns from school. This shifting visual focalization is not a unique example among modern picturebooks, and in the light of the above-cited statements it can be interpreted as an inclination of children's literature towards crossover or a symptom of maturation of the genre and its audience, who can handle a more and more complex word-picture interplay.

The visual text of the book includes one memory of the dead father (opening 6) sailing in his boat in the sky. This a hybrid representation of the recollection and the present situation, i.e. observing the flying birds, which results in merging fantasy and reality. The picture is not differentiated in any way from the other ones and indicates children's capacity for daydreaming. The other visual depiction of the dad does not exactly refer to a memory but appears while the girl tells about their physical similarity and how she put their photographs side by side. The illustrations depict it symmetrically, employing the omniscient perspective since we also see the protagonist in profile viewing the photos.

CONCLUSIONS

As de Sousa points out: "Our emotions are composed of memories, and our memories are shaped by past and present emotions. Memory, we might say, would be empty without emotion, and emotion blind without memory" (2017: 163). Memory is a powerful device which in mental terms can either build or destroy – exactly as emotions do – and this assumption is reflected in the discussed corpus. As has been demonstrated, memories and memory perform different roles in it, and these have been roughly categorized into existential, therapeutic and auto-therapeutic. The feelings inscribed into the first group are nostalgia (*Jag såg, ja ser*), and a positive, perhaps lightly stoic acceptance (*Alfons och soldatpappan*). The former picturebook is imbued with reflection on passing of time and life, and consistently employs a first-person verbal and visual focalization which makes it a distinct crossover reading. The latter is explicitly more targeted at children, and its representation of memory – though referring to a single event – is fairly didactic.

Since there is no consensus among researchers with regard to intentional forgetting, it is not surprising that the discussed picturebooks reflect this dichotomy. In opposition to Dante's words that "There is no greater sorrow than to recall our time of joy" (de Sousa 2017: 161) both *Så blev Farfar et Spørgelse* and *Tror du pappa gråter?* are unanimously in favor of the position that substituting traumatic experiences with positive ones is possible and that we do a better job remembering pleasant than unpleasant events. In this way while discussing the most serious and painful moments in a dialogue with children

these books convey an optimistic message stressing the healing potential of memories. On the other hand, *Tyttö ja naakkapuu* emphasizes the inability of escaping from memories, represented metaphorically as a “heavy backpack.” But even though a therapy of intentional forgetting is questioned there, the book does not suggest a disruptive impact of the traumatic experience, which is rather replaced with a nostalgic acceptance. In the course of the analysis there was accentuated a slight difference in presenting the role memories play: in *Så blev Farfar et Spøgelse* and *Tyttö ja naakkapuu* the child goes through the grieving process alone and thus this category was classified as autotherapeutic, whereas in *Tror du pappa gråter?* it is the mother who supports her son with a therapy of forgetting on purpose.

The word-image relation in all the picturebooks is predominantly symmetrical-complementary and expanding, and memories are visually constructed by numerous agents: a juxtaposition of the same view from different time perspectives with a turn of the page (*Jag såg, ja ser*), photographs (*Tror du pappa gråter?*, *Tyttö ja naakkapuu*) and a specific visual composition (*Alfons och soldatpappan*, *Tror du pappa gråter?*, *Så blev Farfar et Spøgelse*). In one case, *Tyttö ja naakkapuu*, the aesthetic of the picture representing the memory does not diverge from the others, implying the stream of consciousness where reality, dreams, emotions and memories converge and mesh.

Although the five selected picturebooks are merely a small sample of the immense modern picture literature in the Nordic countries, they can serve as a representative group. Inarguably, they prove how great the potential of the memory motif is and interweave it into multiple discussions. They do it in a convincing, thorough, emotional and touching manner, addressing both children and adults. Interestingly, this is possible to achieve in such a compact format as a picturebook only due to the pregnant interaction of words and images. A picture is worth a thousand words, but its deliberate and wise interplay with a word is worth much more.

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