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Being Controversial in Scandinavia. An Iconotextual Analysis of the Selected Norwegian and Danish Picturebooks

For some years Scandinavian picturebooks have been perceived as controversial and eager to discuss difficult taboo issues (e.g. Beckett 2012, Dymel-Trzebiatowska 2012, 2014; Evans 2015). It seems to imply that the Nordic countries are overall more dialogue-oriented, and children are considered there as more competent. In the paper I want to focus on four picturebooks which even in open-minded and tolerant Scandinavia have aroused some controversy: *Børnenes bedemand* (Oskar K. & Karrebæk 2008), *De skæve smil* (Oskar K. & Brøgger 2008), *Blekkspruten* (Dahle & Nyhus 2016), *Sesam sesam* (Dahle & Dahle Nyhus 2017). My goal is to reflect on the double address of the iconotexts, understood as the intricate interplay of text and image. I will try to examine the verbal and visual narration of the taboo themes (abortion, incest, pornography, child death) from the perspective of a novice reader and an experienced reader. Furthermore, I will include peritexts (e.g. Dahle 2013, Oskar K. 2012, 2013) in the discussion since they make a vital contribution to understanding the problem. My research method is a qualitative analysis focused on selected doublespreads featuring predominantly climaxes – assessed by their controversial content – of the stories, and it is based on the theoretical framework of narratology and picturebook studies.

Keywords: Scandinavia, picturebook, controversy, iconotext, double address

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