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“Absent Illustrations” in *The Listener* Visual Narration Across Tove Jansson’s Authorship

*Abstract: Tove Jansson is known the world over for her Moomin books – especially for her illustrations of their characters. Recently, her books for adults, to which Jansson dedicated her writing efforts almost exclusively after publication of the final Moomin novel in 1970, have also garnered international praise and attention. Although Jansson has clearly “left” Moominvalley in these later works, themes, imagery, and even characters from the late Moomin books carry over into her texts for adults. For Tove Holländer, this carryover begs the question of the “absent illustration” (“frånvarande illustrationen”) in Jansson’s first collection of short stories for adults, Lyssnerskan [The Listener], first published in 1971. The notion of the “absent illustration” raises compelling questions in relationship to Jansson’s authorship: On what basis can we argue that illustrations are absent from a text? How can or should we imagine these “absent” images? Using Gérard Genette’s concept of paratext, I argue that “absent illustrations” in *The Listener* illuminate the tension between word and image that characterizes Jansson’s body of work. Genette’s theory is useful for Jansson scholarship as it allows one to see the parts of Jansson’s production not just as thematically and aesthetically related, but as potentially constitutive of one another’s meaning and reception.*

Keywords: Tove Jansson, Moomin, *The Listener*, short story, paratext, illustrations

Tove Jansson is known the world over for her Moomin novels (1945–1970) and their illustrations. Recently, her books for adults, to which Jansson dedicated her writing efforts almost exclusively after publication of the final Moomin novel, have also garnered international attention and praise. Although Jansson has clearly “left” Moominvalley in her later works, themes, imagery and characters from the Moomin books carry over into her texts for adults. As Tove Holländer points out in her article “Den frånvarande illustrationen i Tove Janssons ‘Lyssnerskan’,” this crossover begs the question of the

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“absent illustration” (“den frånvarande illustrationen”) in Jansson’s first collection of short stories for adults, *Lyssnerskan* [*The Listener*], first published in 1971.¹ The concept of the absent illustration raises compelling questions: On what basis can one argue that illustrations are *absent* from a text? How can or should one imagine these “absent” images? Below, I invoke Gérard Genette’s notion of the paratext to argue that *The Listener* invites readers to see illustrations beyond the text’s boundaries, reflecting the tension between word and image that is so much a part of Jansson’s work.

During her long and prolific career, Tove Jansson (1914–2001) produced a body of work that includes paintings, comic strips, picture-books, novels, poetry, and more.² As Jansson scholarship has shown, a number of themes cut across this diverse corpus, including, for example, problems of self-representation, the artist’s need for solitude, the enduring beauty of the sea, and the inner life of the aging woman (see especially Jones, “Artist’s Problem”; Westin; Karjalainen; McLoughlin and Lidström Brock). Boel Westin in particular has pointed to continuities across Jansson’s authorship (see especially chapters 14–17 in Westin’s *Life, Art, Words*). Building on this work, I have chosen to privilege the illustration in examining a portion of Jansson’s authorship. This is for a few reasons. Not only did Jansson produce a great deal of visual art, her writing is highly imagistic, even ekphrastic. Thus, her books evoke the importance of the visual not just via images, but via language. Problems of illustration, and of the illustrator are thematized in *The Listener* (as I discuss below) and elsewhere in Jansson’s books for adults. Most importantly for this article, and as I argue below, the proliferation and quality of illustrations in Jansson’s Moomin books create in the reader a sense of contrast – even of lack – when engaging with her books for adults. As I later indicate, Jansson craved a “clean break” between what I call the Moomin and post-Moomin halves of her authorship. Central to my argument is how the Moomin half of Jansson’s writerly production seems to encroach on the latter half despite this break, in part via the absent illustration. My argument is focused on a selection of illustrations and examples from some of Jansson’s late Moomin texts – *Det osynliga barnet och andra berättelser* (1962) [*Tales from Moominvalley*], *Trollvinter* (1957) [*Moominland Midwinter*], *Pappan och havet* (1965) [*Moominpappa at Sea*], and *Sent i november* (1970) [*Moominvalley in November*] – in relationship to her first book of fiction for adults, *The Listener*.³ Usefully for my argument, this selection represents the transition between the two halves of Jansson’s authorship.⁴ To consider the prospect of the “absent illustration” in all of Jansson’s books for adults – and to do so

in relationship to the entire Moomin œuvre – is a project well beyond the bounds of a single article. However, I hope my approach invites further inquiry as to how “absent illustrations” might be considered in Jansson’s post-Moomin texts.

Paratext: Making the case for absent illustrations

Obviously, most texts that lack illustrations – including most fiction for adults – cannot be said to have *absent* illustrations. To make the case for absent illustrations in *The Listener*, I draw on Gérard Genette’s theory of the paratext. In *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, Genette defines paratext as “what enables a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers and, more generally, to the public” (1). Paratext includes physical aspects of the book, such as covers, titles, and author names. These Genette calls *peritext*, that is, elements that “have a *location* that can be situated in relation to the location of the text itself” (1). I explore an example of peritext below. Most important for my argument, however, is Genette’s notion of *epitext*, which he defines as “any paratextual element not materially appended to the text [...] but circulating, as it were, freely in a virtually limitless physical and social space” (344). Per Genette, this category includes author interviews and the author’s correspondence, though I also take it to include the author’s various works (one text is epitext to another), materials and events promoting the author and her production, and spin-offs of the author’s originals. Critically, Genette conceives of paratext – including the epitextual “fringe” (346) – not as excessive to but as constitutive of the text and its received meaning.⁵ My reading of *The Listener* relies on the theoretical premise of invoking the text’s epitextual surroundings in making sense of the text itself.

In the case of a famous author such as Tove Jansson, epitexts are many, diverse, and widely circulated, such that they can powerfully influence the reception of an individual text by that author. The circulation of epitexts is especially significant in thinking about Jansson’s texts for adults, since, almost inevitably – at least in the Nordic countries – readers encounter a work like *The Listener* with a strong awareness of (and with a likely affective relationship to) Jansson’s Moomin production.⁶ This hypothesis is supported, for example, by book reviews that suggest readers come to Jansson’s books for adults *because* they love her Moomin books, and that readers may even think of Jansson’s texts for adults as subordinate to the Moomin books (see Ljubomir; “Lyssnerskan: noveller”; “Tove Jansson: Lyss-

nerskan"; Ylva). Indeed, my argument leans on the likelihood that (many) readers of *The Listener* are exposed to an array of paratexts that highlight Jansson's Moomin production as well as her persona.

Perhaps the richest source of epitext in connection to Jansson's authorship is the commodification of all things Moomin. Moomintroll came on the scene in 1945 with the publication of *Småtrollen och den stora översvämningen* [*The Moomins and the Great Flood*]. This was followed by seven Moomin novels, a long-running Moomin comic strip published in multiple international newspapers, Moomin picture books, Moomin plays, and a Moomin television series. Merchandise featuring the Moomin characters includes t-shirts, teacups, candy, cutlery, and couture (to name a few). The Moomin World theme park opened in Finland in 1993, and one is scheduled to open in Japan in 2019. Google Translate provides accurate translations of the Moomin characters' names between Swedish and English, and there are a host of Moomin apps and video games. The proliferation of Moomin goods and images points to an important fact about Jansson's illustrations: they have migrated off of the page and into the world. One need not have read a single Moomin text to be acquainted with the Moomin characters, and with the tone and atmosphere of the Moomin stories. The possibility of "seeing" Moomin illustrations in Jansson's texts for adults is enhanced by the fact that these images can be conjured from a rich paratextual environment.

Another example of epitext surrounding Jansson's authorship is her biography. Recent scholarship – such as the collection of essays entitled *Tove Jansson Rediscovered* (2007) edited by Kate McLoughlin and Malin Lidström Brock and biographies by Boel Westin and Tuula Karjalainen – explores the self-reflexive nature of Jansson's texts and paintings, including how Jansson represented herself and her loved ones in the Moomin characters.⁷ Themes of loss, loneliness, and the restless artist cut across the range of Jansson's works, strengthening the ties between the Moomin and post-Moomin halves of Jansson's production as a writer. Jansson herself talked about "the artist's constant and natural return to the same motifs, the same unresolved motifs" (Happonen 72).

Jansson was an immensely popular figure during her lifetime and remains so today. As a 1957 ad from a Helsinki department store suggests, Jansson was firmly identified with her Moomins in the public imagination. In the ad, which promotes the launch of Moomin merchandise, Jansson sits in a chair surrounded by her Moomin characters: three sit on her lap, one is perched on her shoulder, and various others stand nearby (reproduced in Westin 286). Importantly, the

image is illustrated, reinforcing Jansson's association with the mode of illustration, showing her not only with her illustrated figures but as an illustrated figure herself, collapsing boundaries between the author and her creations. Jansson scholarship points to the immense pressure the author felt in connection with the Moomin enterprise. A deeply private person, Jansson longed to escape the public eye, and to write for adults. As Westin puts it, "Moominvalley was something [Jansson] had to leave behind if she was herself to be seen" (424). Westin points out that Jansson's transition to writing for adults included an explicit desire not to illustrate *The Listener*. This point may appear to contradict my thesis. However, I think it actually reflects Jansson's ambivalence about leaving Moominvalley, and points towards a persistent tension between word and image, between the child-like and the adult, in Jansson's work. Indeed, it could be argued that the late Moomin novels are more appropriate for adults than for children;⁸ Jansson's first book for adults, *Bildhuggarens dotter* [*Sculptor's Daughter*] from 1968, is told in the voice of a child; *Den ärliga bedragaren* [*The True Deceiver*] published in 1982 and *Rent spel* [*Fair Play*] from 1989 thematize the challenges of the illustrator. In

addition, various editions of *Sommarboken* [*The Summer Book*] first published in 1972, a text for adults, contain illustrations by Jansson that are highly reminiscent of those in the Moomin books.⁹

Peritext: The non-absent illustration in *The Listener*

In addition to these examples of epitext, I will consider one example of peritext before offering a close reading of short stories in *The Listener*.¹⁰ The book's original cover, illustrated by Jansson, contains what we might call the non-absent illustration in *The Listener* (picture 1). The cover does not literally depict any one story, but suggests motifs



Picture 1. The cover of *Lyssnerskan* by Tove Jansson. (Reproduced with permission from ©Moomin Characters™)

that weave throughout the book, while evoking the visual style and themes of the Moomin books. The cover illustration depicts an eerie scene. Its central image is framed on the left and right by tall, looming buildings that look like a Gothic version of Moomin architecture.¹¹ A nightmarish band of creatures flies across the top: a floating skeleton, a crowned reptile, a winged iguana flanked by a fox. These are not familiar figures; rather, they may represent the inner demons faced by the characters in *The Listener's* stories. A similar illustration in *Moominvalley in November* depicts exactly this. In that text, the Fillyjonk opens a cupboard and encounters a stream of insect-like critters (picture 2). Their postures and faces (or lack thereof) suggest an affective range similar to that represented by the creatures on the cover of *The Listener*: aggression, shock, terror, reticence. "They've got out!" the Fillyjonk screams, "they have been living in there and now they've got out!" (Jansson, *Moominvalley in November* 89). She calls Toft into the kitchen and he says, "I let it out" (ibid. 90), alluding to his psychological release of the dark "Creature" within. The figures at the bottom of *The Listener's* cover illustration are reminiscent of the hattifatteners. Hattifatteners are nervous, voiceless creatures that travel in groups and emit an electric charge. They have no destination, but constantly pursue the horizon. Similarly, characters in *The Listener* are often reaching without purpose, sometimes hiding or escaping. Finally, I consider the water scene in the center of the cover. This part



Picture 2. "They've got out!" (Jansson, *Sent i november* 80). (Reproduced with permission from ©Moomin Characters™)

of the illustration contains the only color, the only signs of life. Is this the vibrant scene that the figures on shore long for? In *The Listener's* final story, "The Squirrel," an isolated woman is both desperate for and terrified of human company. The last Moomin novel ends in a similar way: Toft goes to the end of the dock where he sees a lantern far out at sea – ostensibly the Moomin boat coming home (picture

3). But *readers* do not see that light; it is not pictured in the illustration. Perhaps the boat illustrated on the cover of *The Listener* is the one Toft sees, making the transition from Moomins to humans, from books for children to books for adults. Borrowing Westin's idea that Toft is a stand-in for Jansson lends this interpretation further weight, given the author's fraught transition.



Picture 3. Toft looking out for the Moomin family (Jansson, *Sent i november* 161). (Reproduced with permission from ©Moomin Characters™)

Text: Seeing the absent illustration

In the preceding sections I have aimed to show that *The Listener* proceeds from a rich paratextual environment, which makes it an excellent candidate for imagining “absent illustrations” amongst its pages. I now turn my attention to the text. *The Listener* is a collection of seventeen stories that comprise a short story cycle. The short story cycle is a genre that demonstrates simultaneous fragmentation and unity: the stories can stand alone while common characters, setting, and/or themes give the collection a sense of cohesion. *The Listener* has no recurring characters or settings; rather, the stories are connected by shared themes. As Susan Garland Mann argues, by virtue of its form, the short story cycle lends itself well to themes of “isolation and fragmentation” (11). These are core themes in *The Listener*, as are obsession, the life of the artist, and the search for identity and freedom. Below I examine three of *The Listener*'s stories that invite us to imagine illustrations from the Moomin oeuvre. Two of the stories – “Lyssnerskan” [“The Listener”] and “Svart-vitt” [“Black-White”] – contain ekphrastic descriptions, which, as mentioned, lends them especially well to imaging their “absent illustrations.” While I hope my interpretations demonstrate the strength of the “absent illustrations” prospect, they should not be taken as definitive; indeed, reading *The Listener* might evoke in the reader a range of images from Jansson's Moomin oeuvre and broader visual production.

The first story in the collection, “The Listener,” tells the story of the aging Aunt Gerda who abruptly leaves behind her life of polite lis-

tening and letter-writing for a private existence of artistic expression. Friends and relatives are disappointed with her disengagement, but Aunt Gerda is unconcerned with outsiders as she turns, for the first time, to her inner voices. What these voices have to tell are the stories of love, loss, lies, and death that she has stored for so long. Weary of carrying around a “mental map” of relationships and events (Jansson, “The Listener” 13), Aunt Gerda moves the map out of her head and onto paper: she makes a picture out of words. What appears is a frenzied arrangement of dots, lines, and double lines that stand for people, relationships, and “forbidden alliances” (ibid. 15). “Violet,” “crimson,” and “cerulean” are introduced to represent “divorce,” “hate,” and “loyalty” (ibid. 15–16). The map becomes dense with networks of meaning, “a solar system of past and emerging lives” (ibid. 16). Eventually, the map is transferred to thick paper, where Aunt Gerda makes “her own lines, new lines” in silver and gold (ibid. 17). The map becomes “a terrifying and irresistible mental game [that] could only be played in the evening by the window” (ibid. 18). Eventually, the map is tucked away in a closet and labeled: “To be burned unread after my death” (ibid. 20).

Something similar happens with an aging Moominmamma in *Moominpappa at Sea* (picture 4). Isolated in a lighthouse on an unknown island, Moominmamma becomes obsessed with depicting her memories. On a wall of the lighthouse, she paints flowers and furniture from her home in Moominvalley, and eventually moves on to painting only herself, over and over again. When Little My asks if she can paint something too, the usually accommodating Moominmamma replies: “No. [...] This is my wall” (Jansson, *Moominpappa at Sea* 152). When Moominpappa wrongly interprets a peony as a rose, Moominmamma is hurt: Pappa’s misinterpretation is an unwelcome intrusion in her artistic world. Both Moominmamma and Aunt Gerda use art to negotiate who they are and where they stand at this later stage in life. The maps and murals help them flesh out the “constellations” (Jansson, “The Listener” 17) of power and identity that circulate in their personal cosmos. Elina Druker calls this artistic immersion escapist (78), and it may well be, but it is also grounding: the map keeps Aunt Gerda from feeling like a helium balloon stuck against the ceiling (Jansson, “The Listener” 15); the murals give Moominmamma a sense of stability in her otherwise suspended life in a lighthouse. The look on Moominmamma’s face as she stares into the eyes of one of her portraits is the kind of look I can imagine on Aunt Gerda’s face as she looks at her map, knowing for the first time “the sweet and bitter experience of power” (Jansson, “The Listener” 19).¹²

As W. Glyn Jones notes, the short story “Stormen” [“The Storm”] bears striking resemblance to a Moomin story, “Fillyjonkan som trodde på katastrofer” [“The Fillyjonk Who Believed in Disasters”] in *Tales from Moominvalley* (Jones, *Tove Jansson* 121). The Fillyjonk is a nervous creature, compulsively tidy and with an apocalyptic bent. In “The Fillyjonk Who Believed in Disasters,” she cannot escape the uncanny feeling that something terrible will occur. “The weather



Picture 4. Moominmamma’s self-portraits (Jansson, *Pappan och havet* 141). (Reproduced with permission from ©Moomin Characters™)

was far too fine, quite unnatural. Something or other had to happen” (36). Similarly, the protagonist in “The Storm,” who, like the Fillyjonk is female and lives alone, muses: “Something is going to happen. [...] They’ve been talking about it on the radio all day” (Jansson, “The Storm” 86). In both cases, this *something* is a magnificent storm. The stories are remarkably similar in how they describe the storm’s escalation. In the Fillyjonk story, “the wind was coming on in rushes; one could hear a gale getting an extra push on its way in from the sea” (Jansson, “The Fillyjonk” 47–48). In “The Storm,” “now the wind pressed in on the city from the sea in a single continuous roar” (Jansson 86). Both characters are simultaneously afraid of and drawn to the storm’s power. Everyday life is tedious. “I’m so sick and tired of being sick and tired and just waiting,” thinks the woman in “The Storm,” “[m]ost of all, I’m sick and tired of myself” (86). The Fillyjonk is also sick and tired of herself, of her anxious habits, of her pointless preparations. When the storm finally comes, she thinks, “now comes the end. At last. Now I don’t have to wait anymore” (Jansson, “The Fillyjonk” 50). The woman in “The Storm” also seems relieved at the thought of “one day when everything cracks and falls and there is nothing more to remember and hold fast to” (Jansson 87).

The illustrations in the Fillyjonk story can easily be imagined in “The Storm,” especially the frightening illustration of the storm breaking through the Fillyjonk’s window (picture 5). There is a fitting description in the adult story: “The storm flew into her violently opened room in an explosion of ice-cold air that was thicker than



Picture 5. The storm comes crashing in (Jansson, *Det osynliga barnet och andra berättelser* 53). (Reproduced with permission from ©Moomin Characters™)



Picture 6. The Fillyjonk beneath a blanket (Jansson, *Det osynliga barnet och andra berättelser* 49). (Reproduced with permission from ©Moomin Characters™)

flesh,” leaving the floor “covered with snow and shards of glass” (Jansson, “The Storm” 88). The woman crawls through the snow and glass to her bed where she “[crept] in under the covers and drew them around her, tight against the wall with knees drawn up to her chest” (Jansson, “The Storm” 88). Readers get a picture of the Fillyjonk in a similar position before facing the storm (picture 6). When the Fillyjonk does face the storm, it is a massive white tornado. The Fillyjonk seems to command it in the illustration, reminding us of the woman’s thoughts in “The Storm” as the snow blows wildly outside: “Power, she thought, how I love power!” (Jansson, “The Storm” 86). When the gale passes in “The Storm,” the woman, like the Fillyjonk, is left in peace. In both stories, the real storms were trapped inside. When the glass shatters, and the outsides come in and the insides go out, there is room for a new kind of safety, and maybe for freedom.

The final story I will consider, “Black-White,” is of special interest because it addresses the problems of the illustrator. Given Jansson’s rejection of illustrations at the time of writing, it is not surprising that the illustrator in “Black-White” reflects: “It’s the unexpressed that interests me [...] I’ve been drawing too explicit-

ly; it's a mistake to clarify everything" (Jansson, "Black-White" 47).¹³ According to Jones, the central concern in this short story is "the need for the right conditions in which to create" ("Artist's Problem" 39), a theme Jones locates throughout Jansson's work. In the story, the illustrator is concerned with how to get enough of the color black into his illustrations for a collection of horror stories: "I'm going to use black as a dominant element. I'm going to do darkness. Grey, well, I'll only use grey when it's like holding your breath, like when you're waiting to be afraid" (Jansson, "Black-White" 42). His wife, Stella, by contrast, is obsessed with light. She designed their house with walls of glass and no interior doors. Stella is open, she has nothing to hide. The man – quite the opposite – is opaque and primal: he loves the feel of pen on paper; he longs to be closed in; he wants to roll around on a bear rug. Unable to achieve enough black in his illustrations, the man tells his wife he must go away for a while to work on his art. Stella consents to his leaving, offering up her aunt's house, which now stands empty.

This house proves the perfect studio for the illustrator. Like a bear in a cave, he tucks in for winter. Food is delivered to the front step; he almost never leaves. He goes completely into his art. "He was no longer working to make a picture but only in order to draw" (Jansson, "Black-White" 46). There is a newfound patience about the "vague and shadowy grey that felt its way inwards, seeking darkness" (ibid. 46). For a while the man draws vignettes of the strange house where he is working. Soon, though, his illustrations become abstract: "It's a picture of the footsteps that passed through the room, of the shadows that fell on the wall, of the words that still hang in the air – or maybe of the silence" (ibid. 49). What, the reader wonders, might such an illustration look like?

Though not as abstract as the illustrations suggested in "Black-White," a number of illustrations in the late Moomin books seem to wrestle with the black element. Of course, all of Jansson's illustrations in the Moomin books are black and white. However, there is a clear range in Jansson's use of black, from simple line drawings without shading, to line drawings with shadow elements (such as the Fillyjonk in the blanket), to drawings thick with black (such as the Fillyjonk at the broken window). *Moominland Midwinter* contains drawings in which the white elements appear to have been etched away from a black background. These, I argue, provide a visual reference point for the kind of art described in "Black-White."

In *Moominland Midwinter*, Moomintroll awakes from hibernation. Outside, the world is bright with snow and activity; inside, the world



Picture 7. Moomintroll sees a version of himself in the ancestor (Jansson, *Moominland Midwinter* 79). (Reproduced with permission from ©Moomin Characters™)

is dark, and there is sometimes a fine line between the cozy and the morbid. In one scene, Moomintroll goes into the bathhouse where hanging robes and a limp blow-up Hemulen figure suggest the absence of life, and corpses. In that illustration, “the ancestor” is seen walking out the door. The ancestor is an elusive figure in the Moomin series. Presumably the ancient forefather of the Moomin species, he lives in the family furnace and eats pine needles, making only occasional appearances. He, too, evokes an element of death. In another scene, Moomintroll finds the ancestor hiding in the chandelier. The only white elements in the illustration are revealed by the light from Moomintroll’s

lantern. The ancestor and his descendent hold each other’s gaze, as Moomintroll realizes something like: *here is another version of myself* (picture 7). This, I contend, is an illustration of silence, of unspoken “words that hang in the air.”

Another visual reference point for “Black-White” may be seen in illustrations of the Groke and of Toft’s “Creature.” In the Moomin books, the Groke represents depression. She appears without warning, and is both pitied and feared. In *Moominpappa at Sea*, Moomintroll is growing up; the process is unsettling. He ventures out on the island alone and encounters the Groke without the protection of his parents. In one illustration, the Groke appears to have fused with the waves of the sea: this is a world in which it is hard to tell shadow from solid form (picture 8). The Groke does not appear in the final Moomin novel, though a similarly haunting figure does: Toft’s “Creature” (picture 9). The Creature takes an even more amorphous form than the Groke, and unlike the Groke, who is sadness and fear externalized,



Picture 8. The Groke in the waves (Jansson, *Pappan och havet* 137). (Reproduced with permission from ©Moomin Characters™)



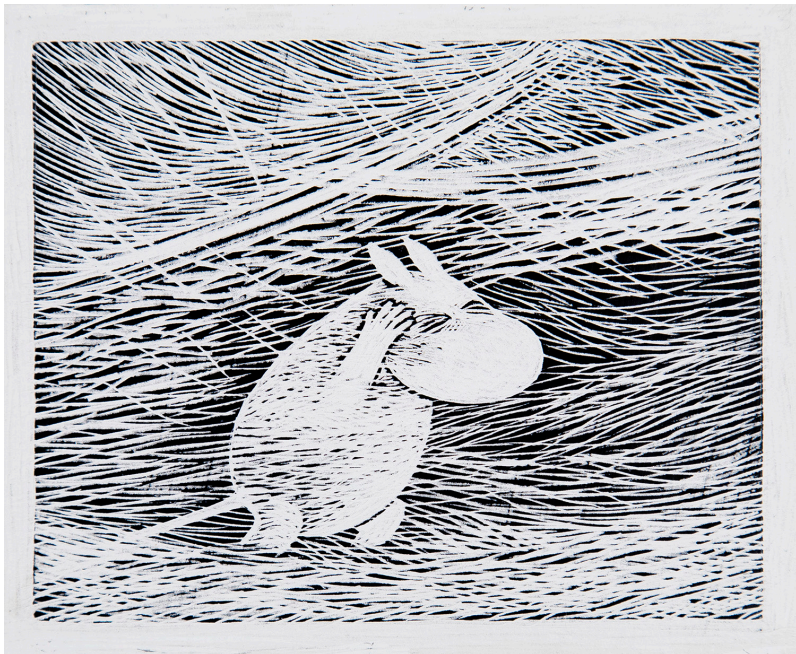
Picture 9. Toft's "Creature" (Jansson, *Sent i november* 135). (Reproduced with permission from ©Moomin Characters™)

the Creature is ultimately an interior being – the shadowy aspect of the self that must be nurtured, not urged away. Toft eventually makes peace with his Creature.

The illustrator in "Black-White," by contrast, does not make peace with his demons; rather, he experiences a breakdown. Caught in the world of Grokes, Creatures, and shadows that he has created around him, the illustrator loses track of time and place. He is aware of the house's eerie architecture, especially its uncanny outward leaning. The worlds of "real" space and illustrated space eventually fuse in the story's final paragraph where the illustrator draws the most horri-

fying place he can imagine: Stella’s cold glass living room. “He drew the room, a terrifying room without doors, bulging with tension, the white walls shadowed with imperceptibly tiny cracks” (Jansson, “Black-White” 51). As he proceeds, the walls show signs of bursting: “He worked faster and faster, but before his pen could reach the darkness the room he was drawing turned and crashed outwards to its ruin” (ibid. 51). Illustration, house, psyche, or all three have collapsed. Whether the implosion is one of light or of darkness is hard to say. The wild scribbles of a blizzard in *Moominland Midwinter* might be imagined here (picture 10).

Lines between the real and imagined, word and image, inside and outside prove unstable in *The Listener*. The Moomin illustrations considered here offer some visual touchpoints for the often difficult and abstract stories in the text. However, it has not been my intention to make the stories more accessible or to concretize them via illustration. Rather, I hope the illustrations both complement and complicate the interpretation of Jansson’s works for adults by bringing attention to “the obvious interplay of visual art and the written word” that cuts across the body of Jansson’s work (Jones, “Artist’s Problem” 33). My approach in this article has been to treat a selection



Picture 10.¹⁴ A blizzard (Jansson, *Moominland Midwinter* 115). (Reproduced with permission from ©Moomin Characters™)

of Jansson's Moomin illustrations as epitexts to one of her works for adults. In part, my analysis suggests that Jansson was not "finished" with Moominvalley or the Moomin illustrations when she shifted to writing for adults, despite her stated intention not to illustrate her later works. More broadly, though, I have aimed to show that Genette's theory of the epitext is useful for Jansson scholarship as it allows one to see the parts of Jansson's production not just as thematically and aesthetically related, but as potentially constitutive of one another's meaning and reception. I believe this methodology can be applied more broadly to Jansson's works in ways that help us to read, see, and imagine across their boundaries.

Biographical information: Ida Moen Johnson is a PhD candidate in the Department of Scandinavian at the University of California, Berkeley where she has taught courses in Norwegian language and modern Scandinavian literature. She is currently working on a dissertation titled "The Barn and the Beast: The Queerness of Child-Animal Figurations in Scandinavian Literature and Culture."

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Notes

1 While Holländer's article makes some connections between *The Listener* and the Moomin oeuvre, it does not address the questions I pose here.

2 Jansson's first known illustrations were made when she was two-and-a-half, she was first published in 1928, and she worked up until a few years before her death (Westin).

3 *Bildhuggarens dotter* [*Sculptor's Daughter*], a "collection of autobiographical stories" for adults, was published in 1968 (Wichmann 198).

4 Agneta Rehal-Johansson identifies Jansson's turning point towards adult writing in *Moominland Midwinter*, in which she sees Jansson interrogating her own motifs (18, 20). Westin identifies *Moominpappa at Sea* as "the real breaking point between Tove's writing for children and writing for adults" (Westin 370).

5 Epitext can be usefully distinguished from intertext, which Genette understands in narrower terms, i.e., quotation.

6 Readers outside the Nordic countries may encounter *The Listener* without connecting it to (or being aware of) Jansson's Moomin production, especially since international marketing of Jansson's adult books does not necessarily make the connection to her Moomin books.

7 Jansson has stated that Moominmamma represents her mother, Ham (Signe Hammarsten), and that Too-ticky is based on her life partner, Tooti (Tuulikki Pietilä) (Jones, "Artist's Problem" 37). Westin effectively argues that Jansson represents herself in the character of Toft in *Moominvalley in November* (Westin 407, 413). W. Glyn Jones sees Snufkin as Jansson's representation of herself as an artist ("Artist's Problem" 37).

8 The question of whether Jansson's children's books are better suited for adults has long played a role in critical, media, and academic attention to her work (Westin 358-359).

9 Jansson did not want to illustrate *The Summer Book*, but eventually conceded to her German publisher to do so (see the section on *The Summer Book* in chapter 16 of Westin). Many editions now contain the illustrations. Some examples of illus-

trations in *The Summer Book* that resemble those in the Moomin oeuvre: the often slumped figure of the child Sophia resembles Toft in *Moominvalley in November*; Sophia's grandmother walking with a stick is evocative of Grandpa Grumble in *Moominvalley in November*; the illustration of a hat, a bottle, and some flowers set against the backdrop of the setting sun is a close cousin of the many cluster-of-objects illustrations that pepper the pages of Jansson's Moomin books.

10 Throughout the article, all quotes from Jansson's works are taken from the English editions listed in the Works Cited. The illustrations reproduced are, however, taken from the Swedish editions listed in the Works Cited except for picture 10, which is taken from the American edition of *Moominland Midwinter* listed in the Works Cited.

11 Compare these to the Fillyjonk's house and the cluster of houses in Moominvalley illustrated in the first chapter of *Moominvalley in November*.

12 Aunt Gerda's mapping and Moominmamma's portraiture may invite readers to think about Jansson's broader visual production, which includes self-portraits and murals.

13 As Westin points out, this was not really something new for Jansson: "The Moomin books are in fact full of things hinted at and left unsaid: that was a programme she had adopted early on" (439).

14 The edition of *Moominland Midwinter* cited in this article contains a cropped version of this illustration that shows just the blizzard (Moomintroll is absent) (Jansson 119), which is an especially strong evocation of the way form collapses in "Black-White."