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# The Child-Artist Loop in Avant-Garde Art and Picture Book Creation

Ileana Holmboe's *Urskov-Æventyr* (1944)

*Abstract: The article discusses the mutual interaction and inspiration between avant-garde art and children as producers of texts and images in the 1920s through the 1940s. The key example is the Danish picture book *Urskov-Æventyr* (Jungle adventure, 1944), written and illustrated by the seven-year-old girl Ileana Holmboe. Holmboe won the first prize in a children's competition for making the best picture book, and the book was published shortly after. The theoretical framework is the idea of children as co-producers of texts and the so-called "kinship-model" proposed by Marah Gubar (Artful Dodgers; "Risky Business") which was further developed by Victoria Ford Smith. The analysis of *Urskov-Æventyr* focuses on the agency of the child narrator and the child reader, especially on how the narrator becomes a kind of stage director in relation to the narrative, and on the co-production between child author and adults engaged in the process. Furthermore, the article describes a loop in the production of avant-garde art and picture book, where avant-garde artists seek inspiration in children's drawings and their "spontaneous" and "natural" modes of expression, while Ileana Holmboe also seems to have been inspired by avant-garde author Jens August Schade and avant-garde author and painter Hans Scherfig's picture book *Urskoven* (The jungle, 1937). The article concludes that children's literature studies would benefit from paying more attention to the co-production and interaction between adults and children in relation to children's literature in general, and especially in relation to picture books in this period.*

**Keywords:** picture book, co-authorship, avant-garde, children's drawings, 1940s

“Syv Aars Pige skriver den bedste Børnebog” (“Seven-year-old girl writes best children’s book”) was the headline, when in May 1944 the Danish newspaper *Politiken* announced the winner of a competition to which more than 300 children had submitted manuscripts (Schwartz).<sup>1</sup> The winner was Ileana Holmboe, and her book *Urskov-Æventyr* (Jungle adventure) was published six months later (picture 1).

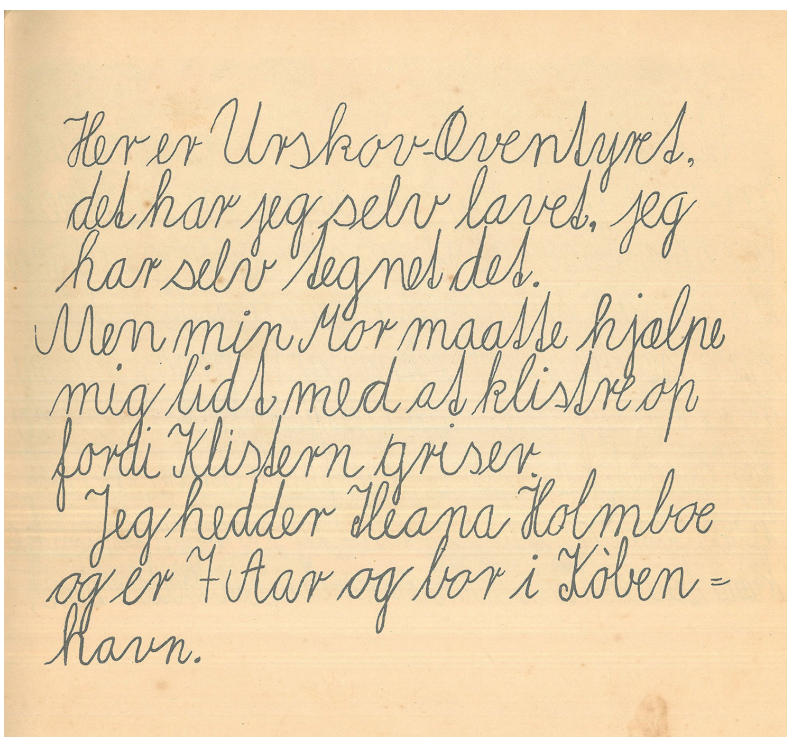
The use of strong, complementary colours, flowers and plants as the central motif, and the firm black lines defining the objects, create an expressive cover with a poster-like quality. The text reproduces a child’s handwriting, and the preface signals that the young author Ileana Holmboe is also the first-person narrator (picture 2).

Her er Urskov-Æventyret, det har jeg selv lavet, jeg har selv tegnet det. Men min Mor maatte hjælpe mig lidt med at klistre op fordi Klistern griser. Jeg hedder Ileana Holmboe og er 7 Aar og bor i København.

Here is the Jungle Adventure, I have produced it myself, I have drawn it myself. But my mother had to help me with the pasting and gluing because the glu makes a mess [the Danish word for “glue” is also spelt incorrectly in the Danish original]. My name is Ileana Holmboe, I am 7 years old, and I live in Copenhagen. (Holmboe, *Urskov-Æventyr*, no pagination)



Picture 1. The cover of Ileana Holmboe’s *Urskov-Æventyr* (1944).



Picture 2. Preface to Ileana Holmboe's *Urskov-Eventyr* (1944).

In the preface, the narrator declares that she is the author and illustrator of the story, adding that her mother helped her give the manuscript its final form. The preface reads like an expanded version of the word "pinxit," "painted by," which painters sometimes added to their signature on the canvas. The cover and the preface of Holmboe's book point to two central discussions in avant-garde research and children's literature studies: first, the role of the child as a producer of texts and images in the cultural life surrounding avant-garde art and education in the first half of the twentieth century. And second, the 1944 publication matches the current interest in children's literature and media studies concerning the child as a producer and co-producer of texts and media.

Using Holmboe's book as a key example, the first part of this article will introduce central theoretical positions in research on children as producers and co-producers of texts in historical contexts. In continuation of this, the analysis of *Urskov-Eventyr* focuses on the ways in which the book stages the child as an author and authority, and how the child narrator creates and informs an implied child audience in a playful manner. Subsequently, the article discusses possible

sources of inspiration for this instance of playful interaction with narrative and illustrations, and points to contemporary reflections on the relationship between children's drawings and visual art, and the child as a creative individual. In combination, the analysis and the contextualisation of Holmboe's book lead me to propose what could be described as an "artist-child loop" in relation to Holmboe's book and its context: adult artists idealise and imitate children's ways of expressing themselves, while Holmboe seems to find inspiration in adults' imitations of a childlike style.

## Research on the Child as a Producer and Co-Producer of Texts for Children

Texts written and illustrated by children have played a marginal role in children's literature studies until recently. From the 1970s onwards, it was the ambition of children's literature scholars to integrate children's literature in the curriculum of English studies and studies in vernacular languages and literature, and one way to achieve this ambition was to demonstrate the literary qualities of texts for children and young adults. From the 1980s, childhood studies emerged as a scholarly field, and a central concept in that context was children's agency: their right and opportunities to act, express themselves and have an influence on their own conditions of life (James 9). In a Scandinavian context, children's oral storytelling and play culture were studied by scholars who defined themselves as researchers in children's culture, which was regarded as a kind of counterculture compared with texts written and produced for children by adults (Mouritsen). In the twenty-first century, American scholar Marah Gubar has been among the first to develop a conceptual framework for discussions of children as producers and co-producers of texts. In her book *Artful Dodgers: Reconceiving the Golden Age of Children's Literature* (2009), she analyses nineteenth-century British fiction for children, and in a later article she writes on children as co-producers:

children function not just as recipients of adult-produced texts but also, sometimes, as coproducers and enactors of child-oriented texts. We have simply chosen to ignore this latter kind of cultural artifact because the critical story we have been telling about children's literature rules out the possibility that young people can function as artistic agents, participants in the production of culture. (Gubar, "Risky Business" 452)

In this article, Gubar also presents the so-called “kinship model,” partly in opposition to Jacqueline Rose’s influential idea that in relation to children’s literature, the child is a projection of adult wishes and desire. According to Gubar, adults and children are neither “exactly the same nor radically dissimilar,” rather they share a kind of kinship, a term which indicates “relatedness, connection, and similarity without implying homogeneity, uniformity, and equality” (Gubar, “Risky Business” 453). Victoria Ford Smith’s *Between Generations: Collaborative Authorship in the Golden Age of Children’s Literature* (2017) builds on Gubar’s work, with Smith delineating three types of collaboration between children and adults, based on a number of analyses of nineteenth-century texts for children: (1) “fictive collaborations” refers to representations of interaction between children and adults, for instance descriptions of scenes where an adult and children tell and listen to a story together, (2) “real collaboration” is where a living adult and a living child work together, “each contributing in a significant manner to create a text or other cultural artifact,” and (3) “hybrid collaborations,” which Smith places “somewhere in between the categories of real and fictive,” and which result in “a creative partnership caught in the dynamic relationship between real child and child-as-construct” (Smith 23–24).

According to the preface of Ileana Holmboe’s *Urskov-Æventyr*, what Smith calls “intergenerational cooperation” (7) only took place on a very practical level in this book, with the mother functioning as a kind of practical assistant to the child in the gluing process. So on an immediate level, this book would be considered an example of “real cooperation.” Nevertheless, other aspects of the book point to a less explicit interaction between child and adult, and I will return to this after taking a closer look at Holmboe’s book.

### The Child as Author, Narrator and Reader in *Urskov-Æventyr*

*Urskov-Æventyr* consists of ten colourful drawings placed opposite a relatively short prose text, and it is told by a first-person narrator who explicitly addresses her audience using “you.” The story begins in this manner:

Det er Urskoven. Den er saa mørk, fordi der er saa mange træer. Der er masser af Blomster, de er pæne men de er saa smaa, at man næsten ikke kan se dem. Der bor mange Papegøjer, men der er kun en paa Billedet, ellers vilde de fylde det hele. Saa er der en Slange, den har saadan en saft i sig som man ikke kan taale; hvis man rører den, saa bider den.

This is the jungle. It is so dark because there are so many trees. There are many flowers, they are pretty but they are so small that you can hardly see them. There are many parrots, but there is only one in the picture, otherwise they would fill it all. Then there is a snake, it contains a kind of juice which is dangerous: if you touch it, it bites. (Holmboe, *Urskov-Æventyr*)

Subsequently, the narrator introduces the other inhabitants in the jungle: the aggressive tiger, the kind elephant, and last but not least the playful monkey. Accidentally, the monkey falls off a tree while teasing the tiger, and it would have been eaten were it not for the elephant, who comes to its rescue. The elephant throws the tiger into a lake and the story ends:

Den lille Abe maa klatre helt op i træet for at takke og kysse Elefanten. Saa gaar Elefanten og Aben en Tur i Urskoven og naar det bliver Aften saa sover de. Men nu vil Aben aldrig mere drille Tigreren, fordi han ved, at det godt kan gaa galt en skønne Dag. Saa bliver han spist og kun Halen bliver tilbage.

The little monkey has to climb all the way up the tree to thank and kiss the elephant. The elephant and the monkey go for a walk in the jungle, and when the evening comes they fall asleep. But now the monkey will never tease the tiger again, knowing that things may go wrong. Then he will be eaten, and only his tail will be left. (Holmboe, *Urskov-Æventyr*)

On a basic level, Holmboe's narrative is Aristotelean: it includes the unity of setting, time and action. We are in the jungle, during a single day, a monkey is involved in a conflict with a tiger, but the conflict is solved with the help of an elephant. However, the story has an alternative potential ending: a gruesome one that moves the story from the adventure genre to the cautionary tale, or perhaps towards an avant-garde narrative in which the normal ideas of causality or logic are disrupted.

The playful authority of the explicit child narrator becomes most visible in the different strategies she uses to inform her audience in relation to text-image interaction and concerning the characteristics of fiction. On the very first double spread, the narrative begins with the words "Det er Urskoven" ("This is the jungle"), whereby the reader and the person reading aloud are encouraged to understand the connection between the visual and the verbal sign. Roland Barthes has coined the term "achorage" for this type of interaction between text and image, which is one of the basic aspects of picture

books that children learn in order to decode them (Barthes 40). The narrator also explains details of the illustration, for instance the facial expression of the monkey: "Nu skal I bare se Abens Ansigt. Den smiler fordi den tænker paa at drille Tigern [sic]" ("Now, have a look at the face of the monkey. It's smiling because it is thinking of teasing the tiger," Holmboe, *Urskov-Æventyr*). Here the narrator shows that she knows more than the reader and has the power to enlighten him or her. Furthermore, she draws attention to details she wants the reader to notice: "Der bor ogsaa en Elefant i Urskoven, den er tyk og fed. Den har en lang Snabel og store Tænder og Øren der hænger ned" ("There is also an elephant in the jungle, it is big and fat. It has a long trunk and big teeth and the ears hang down"). The long trunk turns out to be an important element in the narrative, so in this way the narrator also helps the reader, already knowing what is going to happen herself. Finally, the narrator makes a remarkable meta-commentary on a double spread in which there is an image of the tiger: "Nu ser I tigernes Ansigt, den er glad og smiler fordi den har saadan nogle pæne og hvide Tænder. Det er bare et Billede men det kan godt være at den en skønne Dag bliver levende, ikke legetøjslevende, men rigtig levende" ("Now you see the tiger's face, it is happy and it is smiling because its teeth are so pretty. It is just a picture, but one fine day it might come alive – not alive like a toy but actually alive"). Immediately after the narrator has stated that a picture is not reality, a kind of magic related to images is introduced: the tiger will not just pretend to be alive, like a toy, it will actually come alive. I interpret this as a sign that the narrator is not only playing with being an author; she is also playing with the play, and shows a meta-awareness in relation to storytelling.

As mentioned above, the book seems to have been written by hand, which gives the words a special kind of pictorial quality (see picture 2). The type of handwriting used is similar to that taught to Danish children in school up until the early 1970s. The choice to reproduce a child's handwriting can be interpreted as intended authenticity, but it can also be read as a way to present the child-author as an individual who has the capacity of expressing herself in writing and who masters the media technologies of her age. The letters, commas and punctuation marks are all handled with care, though spelling mistakes made by the author have been preserved. Another effect of the use of handwritten letters is that it makes the book look like a manuscript or a facsimile, thereby creating the impression of a close relationship between producer and reader.<sup>2</sup> Avant-garde artists who made illustrated narratives for their own children also paid

great attention to the visual quality of the letters used, as shown in picture books produced by Danish avant-garde painters such as Asger Jorn and Henry Heerup (Christensen). In a book that Asger Jorn wrote for his son around 1949, letters and image interact closely (picture 3). The size and shape of the letters function as a way to guide the oral performance of the reader, but these qualities also create a remarkable image text through the interaction between the verbal and the visual expression.<sup>3</sup>

As mentioned in the introduction, the narrator in Holmboe's book presents herself as a seven-year-old girl living in Copenhagen. Moving away from biographical readings, new criticism taught generations of scholars to abstain from references to information concerning the lives of authors, and warned against mixing up the "I" of the author and the "I" in the text. In relation to her previously mentioned interest in child-adult interaction in text production, Victoria Ford Smith questions whether it has only been productive for children's literature studies to refrain from a research interest in real children. Smith asks: "What do we miss, and what types of knowledge are inaccessible to us, when we deem the project of thinking about actual



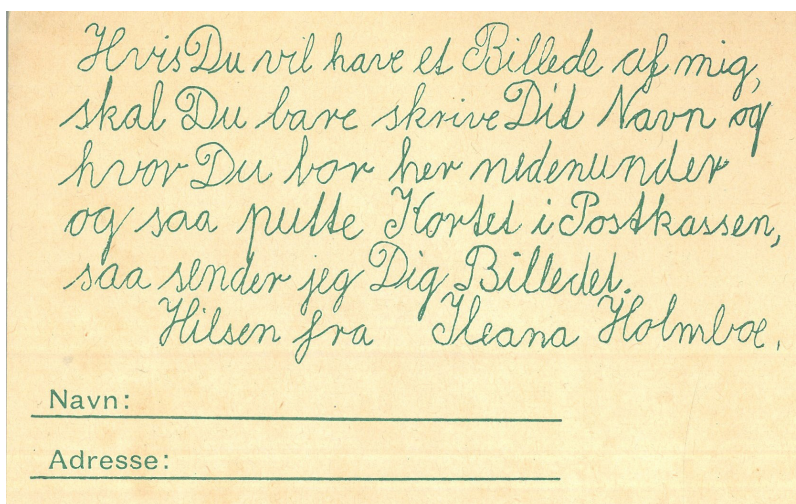
Picture 3. Visual text in Asger Jorn's *Troels Jorns bog om den sultne løve, den glade elefant, den lille mus og Jens Pismyre* (1949, 2013).



young people impossible, misguided, or naïve?" (11). Her answer is that we overlook "children's participation in literature and culture even when that evidence is readily accessible or familiar" (Smith 11). In the case of Holmboe, we know from the reception of the book and the biographical data that a seven-year-old girl living in Copenhagen received the prize, and thus the "I" interviewed about the book and the first-person narrator do indeed seem to be closely connected in this case. Holmboe's parents were interviewed when the winner was announced, and they even describe the production process and how their daughter developed the narrative (Schwartz 8).

The narrator's insistence on authorship, the reproduction of a childlike handwriting, and the parents' detailed description of the production process all seem to indicate a wish to emphasise the presence of an authentic child author: "A real child was here," the implied message seems to be. This interpretation is supported by the production of a postcard I found in a copy of the book. The text on the card reads: "Hvis Du vil have et Billede af mig, skal Du bare skrive Dit Navn og hvor Du bor her nedenunder og saa putte Kortet i Postkassen, saa sender jeg Dig Billedet. Hilsen fra Ileana Holmboe" ("If you want a picture of me, just write your name and where you live below and the put the card in the mailbox, and I will send you the picture. Greetings Ileana Holmboe") (picture 4).

Again the direct address from an "I" to a "you," the reproduced handwriting, and the possibility of getting a photo of the real-life author reveals the presence of a child narrator – as well as a child reader



Picture 4. Postcard published in connection with Ileana Holmboe's *Urskov-Eventyr* (1944).

– with agency and the possibility of interaction. Simultaneously, these traits as well as the postcard point to a kind of playful interaction between the child author, the child readers, and the adults engaged in the production, including the publisher.<sup>4</sup>

On the one hand, the overall impression an adult, contemporary reader of *Urskov-Æventyr* gets is that the book reproduces a playful situation: an oral story is retold in written text and images within the book format, in cooperation with adults. There is a long tradition of publishing children's literature in which the narrative evolves around the production of a narrative, but Holmboe's book is a rare example of the child taking the lead. While the animals act on the stage, the author-narrator is the director who arranges the play, sets the scene and directs the characters, but also instructs the reader about image-text interactions and media-specific qualities of picture books and fiction.

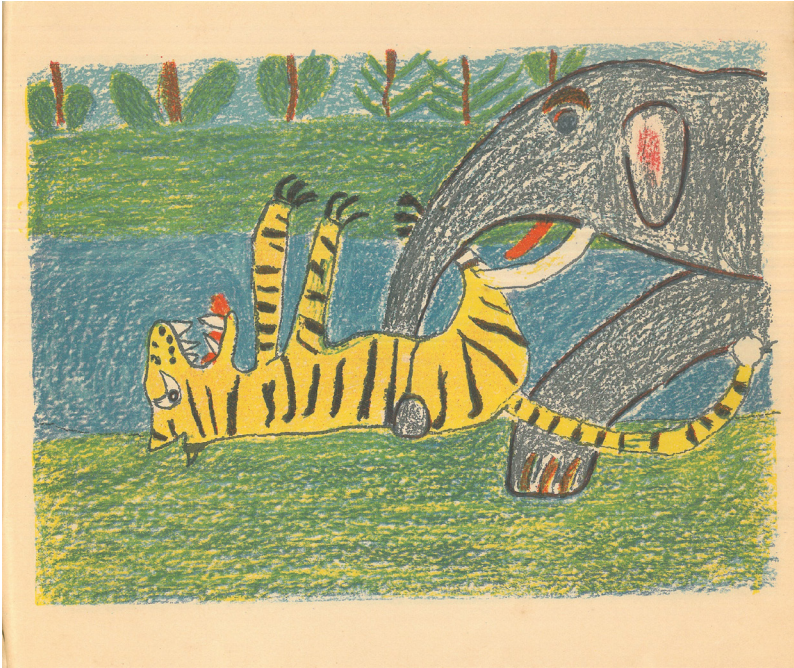
### Interaction between Children and Adults in Cultural Production around 1940

On an immediate level, the illustrations in *Urskov-Æventyr* are expressive, dramatic, humorous and appealing. The illustrator uses different perspectives, creates close-ups of the main characters, and is able to depict dramatic situations such as when the elephant grabs the tiger before it is thrown into the lake (picture 5).

The illustrations represent a number of remarkable links, or a strong kinship, in relation to elements of contemporary avant-garde art. Using the jungle as a setting for an illustrated book for children was not uncommon in Danish picture books in the 1930s and 1940s; and Holmboe's book reminds me of *Urskoven* (The jungle, 1937), written by avant-garde poet Jens August Schade and illustrated by avant-garde author and illustrator Hans Scherfig. The first illustration in *Urskoven* shares a main character with Holmboe's book (picture 6).

Schade's text accompanying this image reads: "Den tiger som Du ser her, er vokset frem af Urskovens Jord som en Blomst, en sjælden Plante, der er blevet levende!" ("The tiger you see here has emerged from the soil of the jungle like a flower, a rare plant that has come alive!"). Like Holmboe, Scherfig defines his motifs with black contours and clear lines, uses bright colours and draws in an intentionally naïve and stylised manner that might allude to a child's drawing.

On the other hand, Holmboe's tiger (picture 7) also bears a strong resemblance to Scherfig's tiger: both tigers are depicted in similar positions, have elongated bodies, sharp white teeth against a wide-



Picture 5. Illustration from Ileana Holmboe's *Urskov-/Eventyr* (1944).



Picture 6. Tiger on the first page of Jens August Schade and Hans Scherfig's *Urskoven* (1937).



Picture 7. Ileana Holmboe's portrait of a tiger in *Urskov-Eventyr* (1944).

open red mouth, and both drawings lack central perspective. On an immediate level, the similarity between Scherfig's and Holmboe's images might seem to question the child's originality and the idea of the child as a spontaneous, fanciful and inventive individual. But this approach would reveal a romantic approach both to childhood and to artistic creation. Another approach might be to consider Holmboe's tiger as an example of creative activity based on inspiration, imitation and manipulations with previous sources.

This line of thinking becomes even more relevant when one considers Scherfig's illustrations in the light of one of *his* main sources of inspiration among avant-garde artists, the French naivistic painter Henri Rousseau. For instance, Rousseau's painting *Le rêve* (1910) is also set in the jungle: big, green leaves occur in the foreground with brown, vertical tree trunks in the background; and animals, including a tiger, are placed at the centre of the image. The snake is also a striking presence in both Rousseau's and Scherfig's pictures, as well as in Holmboe's first illustration.<sup>5</sup> Another way to qualify an examination of possible connections between Scherfig and Holmboe's tigers is to turn to contemporary discussions of the relationship between visual art and children's drawings and children as creative individuals in avant-garde education.

## Children's Drawings and Artistic Inspiration: Roger Fry and Jens Sigsgaard

In 1917, the British art critic Roger Fry, a member of the Bloomsbury group, saw an exhibition of drawings by children. In his article "Children's Drawings," he discusses children's aesthetic sensibility, and argues that teaching methods in British schools harm their natural, creative talent. Fry compares children's drawings to what he calls "primitivist" artists, who create in a more spontaneous, unconscious, expressive and direct manner in his view: "it is certain that no modern adult can retain the freshness of vision, the surprise and shock, the intimacy and sharpness of notation, the impévu quality of primitive art. And it is just here that untaught children have an enormous superiority" (Fry 226).

According to Fry, a child experiences the world with more intensity than an adult can ever do, and is able to transform "vivid visual perceptions" (Fry 226) into drawings. Fry characterises children's drawings by referring to their "intensity," "simplicity," "power," "quality of line," "freshness of vision," "intimacy and sharpness of notation," as opposed to "cold observation" and the educated way of drawing (Fry 226). These adjectives link the child to a romantic view on childhood as a more natural and spontaneous stage of life, which is threatened by cultivation and education.

Years later, in 1940s Denmark, this child-artist connection was expressed by Jens Sigsgaard in his article "Naar Børn tegner" (When children draw, 1941). This article was printed in the avant-garde magazine *Helhesten* (The Hell Horse), to which Hans Scherfig, Asger Jorn, and the artist and illustrator Egon Mathiesen also contributed. Here Sigsgaard writes:

Do you remember from your childhood the great importance of the colour of things? A lacquered red ball or a blue booklet could fill your whole little body with joy. Most people lose this intense joy of colour – and perhaps it is a basic biological peculiarity. But it could also mean that it is possible for the adult individual to preserve or recall it, and this is not one of the least important aspects of a painter's tasks. (Sigsgaard, "Naar Børn tegner" 120, my translation)<sup>6</sup>

Like Roger Fry, Sigsgaard stresses the similarities or kinship between artist and child. Furthermore, the link between child and artist is supported by avant-garde artists themselves. In connection with the decoration of a kindergarten by Asger Jorn and his colleagues, Jorn writes that the adult has lost the pure joy of colour and form as well

as the ability to dream, play and imagine. It is, Jorn writes, adults' obligation to support and nurture "this immensely valuable side of the child's life by creating environments where this ability to imagine and feel can grow and flourish" (Andersen 112, my translation).<sup>7</sup>

### Playing the Avant-Garde Author

Taking recent research on the child as a producer of texts and illustrations in historical contexts as my point of departure, my analysis of *Urskov-Æventyr* focuses on the ways in which the child narrator acts with authority towards her audience, and demonstrates knowledge of the role of the narrator, the interaction between text and image, the picture book as a medium, and fiction as such. This example, as well as the historical context, stresses the mutual inspiration between child and artist, and the creative agency of the child. The book was published in a period when a strong kinship between child and artist was being promoted, based on the idea that children had a vivid imagination, a close connection to the unconscious, and a strong sensibility for colour and form. Against this background, it seems productive in this case to analyse children's books produced by children not as a particular or different kind of book, but as the result of real and hybrid collaboration, to use Victoria Ford Smith's terms.

So where do these trails leave us in relation to Ileana Holmboe's book? To what extent should her book be interpreted as an expression of the free, imaginative, childlike play that the avant-garde artists, educators and critics praised? Jens Sigsgaard actually proposes one answer to this question when he writes about the book in one of his articles on children's writings. On an immediate level, his verdict is quite sharp: Ileana Holmboe and another girl who won a prize are not prodigies. Instead, they are "very normal children who were so lucky that their imagination was kept within suitable limits, which must be drawn when the result is to be published as a book intended to please the discerning critics as well as the affluent audience among parents" (Sigsgaard, "Når Børn digter" 8, my translation).<sup>8</sup> Sigsgaard is fully aware that power structures also are involved in the child-adult relationship in relation to book production, and that the freedom and agency of the child is limited. Adult intervention is also very visible in the number of professionals involved in finding the winner of the competition in 1944, and in his article on the completion art critic Walter Schwartz makes sure to mention the range of professionals involved in the process, including a teacher, two librarians, an artist, an illustrator, and a child psychologist (Schwartz 8).<sup>9</sup>

This long list of arbiters of taste can be regarded as gatekeepers whose job was to ensure that a “proper” childlike expression won. However, they also represent a strong interest, among a variety of professions, in taking children as producers of artifacts seriously and helping them to get published. In this perspective, they also function as co-editors.

To conclude, *Urskov-Æventyr* was produced by a child, but it was surrounded by adults: her parents gave her material to work with, judges valued Holmboe’s work positively, and a publisher chose to produce the book using adult professionals in the production process. At the same time, Ileana Holmboe was an active agent participating in the production of culture, and the fact that inspiration, imitation and collaboration were involved does not devalue her work. As a narrator she shows the reader that she is in charge; and in the double ending of the book, she demonstrates that from a child’s point of view an uncertainty or an open ending is not necessarily a bad thing. Children’s literature studies might benefit from a similar open-minded attitude towards the uncertain boundaries between children and adults in the co-production of texts and images.

*Biographical information: Nina Christensen is Professor in Children’s Literature and Head of Centre for Children’s Literature and Media at Aarhus University, Denmark. She is the author of Videbegær: Oplysning, børnelitteratur, dannelse (Desire for knowledge: enlightenment, children’s literature, education, 2012) Barnesjælen: Børnelitteratur og det romantiske barn (A child-like soul: children’s literature and the romantic child, 2005) og Den danske billedbog 1950–1999: Teori, analyse, historie (The Danish picture book 1950–1999: theory, analysis, history, 2003).*

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## Notes

1 All translations are my own.

2 In the German translation of Ileana Holmboe's book, published as *Urwald-Abendteuer* in 1946, the handwritten letters are replaced by letters designed by one of the most prolific book designers at the time, Jan Tschichold. In this case, the modern Bauhaus-inspired typography transfers authority and authenticity from the child to a designer.

3 In both Asger Jorn's and Ileana Holmboe's stories, an elephant throws a threatening, aggressive animal far away and thereby saves the smaller animals. A similar story is told in Egon Mathiesen's *Aben Oswald* (Oswald the monkey, 1947), in which the small monkeys rebel against a big, bullying, tyrant monkey. Astrid Lindgren's Pippi throws the strong man Adolf far at the circus. The historical context of World War II seems to be an underlying current for such descriptions of violent battles between the strong and the weak.

4 Christine Alexander used the term "playing the author" in her article of the same name (2013), which examines children's playful activities in relation to family magazines.

5 The recurrent snake in Rousseau's, Scherfig's and Holmboe's jungles might also be reminiscent of the serpent in the Garden of Eden, with the jungle representing a kind of Paradise Lost in the modern world.

6 Original quote: "Husker De fra Deres barndom, hvor stor rolle tingenes farve spillede? En lakskinnende rød bold eller et blaat stilehefte kunde fylde hele den lille krop med fryd. De fleste mister denne intense farveglæde - og det er maaske en biologisk grundejendommelighed. Men det kunde jo ogsaa tænkes, at det var muligt i nogen grad at bevare den eller genfremkalde den i det voksne individ, og det er ikke en af de mindst væsentlig sider af en malers opgaver."

7 Original quote: "denne uhyre værdifulde side af barnets sjæleliv ved at skabe omgivelser, hvor denne fantasiens og følelsens evne kan vokse og blomstre."

8 Original quote: "ganske almindelige Børn, der blot har været saa heldige, at deres Fantasi har holdt sig inden for de passende Grænser, der maa afstikkes, naar Resultatet skal udgives i Bogform og tilfredsstillende baade de kræsne Kritikere og det købedygtige Forældrepublikum."

9 The members of the committee were the children's librarians Helga Mollerup and Anine Rosendahl, teacher Orla Lundbo, painter Alex Klingspor, illustrator Arne Ungermann, child psychologist Jens Sigsgaard, the sculptor Holger Kapel, director of the publishing firm Mrs. Jørgensen, director Rudolf Jørgensen and an anonymous member of the editorial team at the newspaper *Politiken!* The engagement among this broad group of professionals points to children's production of picture books as a subject that attracts serious attention within a number of fields in this period.