

Greenland in Children's Literature in Danish

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Abstract

*As children's literature shapes child readers' view of the world, Danish children's literature depict Greenland and life in Greenland for Danish children. This article examines the image of Greenland that meets the (child) reader in Danish children's literature through a comparative analysis. The focal point is the portrayal of Greenland in the tale *Pigen som søgte havets mor* [The Girl who sought the Mother of the Sea] with the subtitle *Eventyr fra Grønland* [Fairy Tale from Greenland] (1972) by Jørn Riel and in the graphic novel *Ivalu* (2019) by Morten Dürr and Lars Horneman. The analysis highlights the representations of Greenland through an investigation of the fictional worlds, the characters, the plot and the narrator. The result of the analysis is a close correspondence between the paradigm that prevails in the fictional worlds and that which prevails in the context of the works, i.e. the understanding of the arrangement of reality that is valid in a Danish context. In conclusion, the two children's literary works are viewed in a broader historical perspective and new questions are asked about the representation of Greenland in Danish children's literature that include a wider spectrum of literary works written for children.*

Resumé

*Børnelitteraturen spiller en central rolle i dannelsen af menneskenes forestillinger om verden. Dette er også tilfældet, når det drejer sig om danske børns forestillinger om Grønland. Denne artikel undersøger det billede af Grønland, der møder (børne)læseren i dansk børnelitteratur gennem en komparativ analyse. Omdrejningspunktet er fremstillingen af Grønland i eventyret *Pigen som søgte havets mor* med undertitlen *Eventyr fra Grønland* (1972) af Jørn Riel og i den grafiske roman *Ivalu* (2019) af Morten Dürr og Lars Horneman. Analysen belyser repræsentationerne af Grønland gennem en undersøgelse af de fiktive verdener, personerne, plottet og fortælleren. Resultatet af analysen peger på en tæt overensstemmelse mellem det paradigme, der hersker i de fiktive verdener,*

og det, der gør sig gældende i værkernes kontekst, det vil sige forståelsen af den virkelighedsorganisering, der er gældende i en dansk kontekst. Afslutningsvis ses de to børnelitterære værker i et bredere historisk perspektiv, og der stilles nye spørgsmål om fremstillingen af Grønland i dansk børnelitteratur, der omfatter et bredere spektrum af litterære værker skrevet for børn.

Children's literature plays a significant part in creating human perceptions of the world. This is also the case when it comes to Danish children's perceptions of Greenland. In other words, the representations of Greenland in children's literature in Danish affect Danish children's perception of Greenland. My purpose is to investigate representations of Greenland in Danish children's literature. With reflections on two works of literary fiction – the tale *Pigen som søgte havets mor* [The Girl who sought the Mother of the Sea] with the subtitle *Eventyr fra Grønland* [Fairy Tale from Greenland] (1972) by Jørn Riel and the graphic novel *Ivalu* (2019) by Morten Dürr and Lars Horneman – I am going to point out both constants and variations in the representations of Greenland and discuss to which extent these are bound by the genres used and the historical context in which they are written.

The article is structured as a comparative analysis, which will be rounded off with perspectivation questions and an attempt to answer them. Before the analysis of the two titles, I will briefly present my concept of children's literature, two turning points in the history of Danish children's literature, and the two works of literary fiction.

Children's literature

In the following, I use the term children's literature pragmatically in the sense of literary fiction written for children (Weinrich 2001, 117). This definition, which is a slightly corrected version of the definition that Torben Weinrich uses in his article 'Den fortællende læser – bidrag til udviklingen af en teori om mødet mellem tekst og læser' [The Reader as Narrator – developing a theory of the interaction between the text and the reader] (2001), is perceived here

as a loose and frayed frame that allows picture books, literary fiction including illustrations, graphic fiction for children, and graphic novels.¹

In this context, it is crucial that children's literature is perceived as fiction. I define fiction as particular artificial worlds that organize time and space in their very own way:

These worlds are characterized by having an autonomous existence. Like play, celebration and the medieval carnival, fiction exists in its own right. Fiction has no embedded function determined by the context, but it can be assigned a function by the culture to which it belongs.

(Hejlsted 2012, 57)

The consequence of this point of view is that the representations of Greenland in both *Pigen som søgte havets mor* and *Ivalu* are perceptions of constructions, not of Greenland, but of ideas about what Greenland is.

The two works of fiction in focus – *Pigen som søgte havets mor* and *Ivalu* – have been selected respectively in the light of the paradigm shift in Danish children's literature in the sixties and in view of today's children's literature, which can be described as complex.² The paradigm shift in Danish children's literature denotes a fundamental change of attitude towards children and thus the role of children's literature. While the role of children's literature in general had been didactic and aimed at giving instructions and role models, the paradigm shift implied that children gained value in their own right and that children's literature addressed the competent child who had its own cognitive epistemological interests. The paradigm shift was marked by a competition arranged by the Danish Academy in 1967, which was won by Cecil Bødker, who also debuted as a children's book writer with the modernist children's novel *Silas og den sorte hoppe* [Silas and the Black Mare]. 'Complex children's literature' denotes the renewal of children's literature that took place in the

1. Kimberley Reynolds discusses these kinds of pragmatic definitions of children's literature in the introduction to her book *Children's literature* (2011).

2. The link between the paradigm shift and the development of Danish children's literature in the sixties was made by Torben Weinreich. Here the term 'paradigm shift in Danish children's literature' is used in basically the same sense, but with a slightly greater focus on the child's integrity as a human being (Weinrich 2006, 520 ff., 539 ff.).

1990s, and which is still ongoing. The concept of complex children's literature usually focuses on literature as word art, but may also characterize different narrative forms that do not rely on books as their medium (Christensen 2016, 9; Kampp 2002, 151 ff).

Pigen som søgte havets mor and Ivalu

The author of *Pigen som søgte havets mor* from 1972, Jørn Riel (1931-2023), was born and grew up in Denmark. As a young man he participated in the Lauge Koch expedition in 1951-53, and he subsequently lived ten years in Greenland. Since then, he has been living in a number of different countries, among others Sweden and Malaysia (Laugesen 2010). Jørn Riel had his literary breakthrough with fiction that takes place in Greenland, for example *En fortælling hvoraf man får et smukt ansigt* [A Tale to Give You a beautiful Face] (1970). He has been a treasured author since his debut and his books have contributed significantly to Danes' image of Greenland. On the other hand, he has been largely ignored by academia (Krogh 2010). Late in his career he received the greatest Danish literary recognition with the award of De Gyldne Laurbær [The Golden Laurels] in 1995 and Det Danske Akademis Store Pris [The Danish Academy's Grand Prize] in 2010.

Morten Dürr (b. 1968) and Lars Horneman (b. 1966), who created *Ivalu*, were both born and raised in Denmark, where they also live. Morten Dürr had his debut as non-fiction author in 1998 with *De blinde vandrere: migration og urbanisering i det moderne Kina* [The Blind Hikers: Migration and Urbanization in Modern China]. The fictional debut came in 2004 with *Skodfilm* [Crap film]. Lars Horneman debuted in 1993, and he went on to illustrate books, but first and foremost he is a cartoonist. The collaboration between Morten Dürr and Lars Horneman began with *Zenobia* (2016). They did research on *Ivalu* both from Denmark and by travelling in Greenland (Larsen 2019). *Ivalu* was adapted for the screen by Anders Walter and Pipaluk K. Jørgensen and was an Oscar nominee in 2023.

The two texts have some common denominators, chief among which that they are written in Danish and by Danish authors. In other words, they represent Danish images of Greenland. The primary audience for both works is Danish readers. This is evident not only from the language but also from the way in which the authors address the reader in the books. This feature is most

prominent in Jørn Riel, where the narrator addresses the reader directly and tells about conditions in Greenland:

Pani was an Eskimo girl and she lived in a country that was called the Land of the People. It was so high up to the north that they did not have night and day as we know it. It was dark night for almost four months of the year, and it was sunlight all day long for another four months. Only the last four of the twelve months of the year they did have night and day as we do. They slept when they were tired and ate when they were hungry and had no set times for this or that.³

In Dürr and Horneman, addressing the reader is more indirect and appears as information that is only necessary for an outsider. The narrator Pipaluk addresses a certain 'you' who, in principle, agrees with the fabricated (fictional) world. The 'you' thus addressed is the personified sister, and the reader is placed as a spectator and observer at a proper distance of the tale. When the narrator says "He spends all his money on beer. He buys them in the big store",⁴ it is information to the reader and not a message to the 'you', who of course knows very well where to buy beer.

Both works consist of texts and pictures. The concept of iconotext can represent the relationship:

Iconotext refers to the combined use of visual and textual elements within a work of art or literature, acknowledging the interdependence and mutual influence of images and words. It encapsulates the idea that meaning is generated through the dynamic interplay between these semiotic

3. Riel 1972, 7: "Pani var en eskimopige og boede i et land, som kaldtes Menneskenes Land. Det lå så højt mod nord, at man slet ikke havde nat og dag, som vi kender det. Deroppe var det sort nat i næsten fire måneder om året, og det var sollys dag i andre fire. Kun de sidste fire af årets tolv måneder havde de nat og dag, som vi har det hernede. Menneskene i dette land levede også helt anderledes, end vi gør. De sov, når de var trætte, og spiste, når de var sultne og havde slet ingen tider at passe." All translations from Danish are mine.

4. "Han bruger alle pengene på øl. Han køber dem nede i den store butik."

modes, resulting in a more nuanced and layered interpretation of the work.⁵

However, how the 'iconotexts' play out differs widely. In Jørn Riel's *Pigen der søgte havets mor*, the written text is quite dominating, and the pictures have an illustrating function, while the pictures in the graphic novel by Dürr and Horneman dominate and have a meaning-generating function.

The differences between the two works are manifold. The most obvious ones have to do with their genre affiliation. Riel's *Pigen der søgte havets mor* comes close to a literary tale, while Dürr and Hornemans *Ivalu* is recognizable as a graphic novel. The literary tale that *Pigen der søgte havets mor* resembles is an overreaching and unifying term for a wide range of narrative genres, which all in one way or another have the oral narrative situation as their point of departure. Among these subgenres are tall stories, fables, anecdotes, and urban legends. Central to these genres is that the texts they encompass all contain whole and rounded plots. These are well-turned plots where the events are linked causally, so that they end up forming a meaningful pattern rounded off by a point. Usually but not always, the tales take place in an identifiable historical time, but they do not commit themselves to accepted norms of the arrangement of reality (paradigms). Literary tales can without concern tell of goblins, pixies, elves, trolls, and other creatures, and let them be a part of everyday life and be a source to surprising events. In general, literary tales depict our common external reality (Hejlsted 2016, 112).

The graphic novel is a kind of hybrid between the novel and the cartoon. The inventor of the genre, American cartoonist Will Eisner, improved the idiom of the cartoon and combined it with the twisted course and compound characters of the novel.⁶ Today, the genre is still evolving, and it has been used as primary school teaching material. In paratexts, *Ivalu* is labelled a graphic novel, but it does not quite live up to the distinctive features of the genre.⁷

5. [Iconotext in Literature & Literary Theory](#).

6. Pedersen 2019. A profound mapping and characterizing of the genre has been carried out by Jan Baetens and Hugo Frey in *The Graphic Novel* (2015).

7. The concept 'paratext' is developed by Gérard Genette in his book *Paratexts* (1997, 1): "Paratexts are those liminal devices and conventions, both within and outside the book, that form part of the complex mediation between book, author, publisher, and

The plot of *Ivalu* is not novel-like long, branched, and twisted, but rather like a short story plot concentrated on a single surprising event with fatal consequences.

Comparative analysis

My comparative analysis of Jørn Riel's story *Pigen som søgte havets mor* and Morten Dürr and Lars Horneman's graphic novel *Ivalu* will be structured as a classic analysis of narrative fiction with focus on the following points: The fictional worlds, characters, plot, and narrator.

Fictional worlds

The fictional worlds in the two works each constitute their independent artificial worlds built from references to Greenlandic nature, culture, myths, social forms, family life, etc.

In Jørn Riel's *Pigen som søgte havets mor*, nature is presented as the harsh living conditions for human life. Thus, the people in the settlement that is the setting for the story are threatened by famine:

All autumn and most of the winter it was all high winds and storms, making it completely impossible for Pani's father and the other hunters to go hunting. When spring came, they had almost no meat left. But even though it was getting brighter and warmer again, and even though the great storms had stopped, it was still not possible to catch anything. The prey did not return and the people in the settlement continued to starve.⁸

This harsh world also contains enchanting elements: it is full of supernatural beings and nature is endowed with spirit. Some of the characters have magi-

reader: titles, forewords, epigraphs, and publishers' jacket copy are part of a book's private and public history."

8. Riel 1972, 39: "Hele efteråret og det meste af vinteren blæste og stormede det i ét væk, så det var helt umuligt for Panis far og de andre fangere at komme på fangst. Derfor havde de næsten intet kød tilbage, da foråret kom. Men selv om det igen blev lyst og varmere, og selv om de store storme ikke længere blæste, var det alligevel ikke muligt at fange noget. Fangstdyrene blev borte, og menneskene på bopladsen måtte fortsætte med at sulte."

cal abilities and can talk to animals. The social life in the narrative universe is concentrated around the family with close ties between the individual members of the family across generations. The universe of the story is structured so that the settlement, where the main character lives, is the centre of the world; from here they tell stories about other places, and the main character herself travels to the periphery of this world to visit the Mother of the Sea.

In Dürr and Hornemans *Ivalu*, nature is portrayed as magnificent and dominant through the graphic side of the graphic novel. The novel opens with a five-page prelude, which wordlessly follows a raven flying through a Greenlandic coastal landscape in the summer. The world of the novel is built up like an onion: Nature forms the outermost shell, the next shell is a small town, then follows the house where the main character lives, and then the bedroom. Deep down are the main characters' thoughts, memories and dreams. Isolated on the periphery of the portrayed world is a closed-down military base. Completely deserted with abandoned car wrecks, rusty oil barrels, and collapsed metal constructions, the base appears as a decayed modernity. Socially speaking, this is a modern lifestyle where the adults put their own needs first and men commit sexual assaults on adolescent girls, spend all their money on alcohol so there is nothing left for food, and sell the children's things (here a national costume) to buy more beer. Thus, there is a distinct individualization. The relationship between children (sisters), on the other hand, is presented as one of solidarity and caring, and the main character expresses great empathy for her older sister's experiences and sufferings.

An enchanting element is also embedded in Ivalu's fictional world. The raven, which at the beginning takes the reader into the world of the novel, acts as a kind of wordless and almost omniscient guide for both the main character and the reader. Like Hugin and Munin in Norse mythology, the raven knows what happens in secret and can therefore direct the main character to the right path. There is an almost unspoken conversation between the raven and the main character, which is akin to the conversations that Pani has with animals and spirits in *Pigen der søgte havets mor*, but without all the words.

Characters

In both works, the main characters are children. The two children, Pani in Riel's *Pigen der søgte havets mor*, and Pipaluk in *Ivalu*, are surrounded by a

number of 'characterants' whose only function is to contribute to the characterization of the central character (Krogh Hansen 2000, 180-198, 285). Some of these characters also play a role in the plot development.

The age of the two girls is uncertain. But it appears indirectly that neither of the girls has reached the age of confirmation, and that they are both at an age where they take responsibility for other people's well-being. Here the parallels between the two main characters end. Pani, featured in *Pigen der søgte havets mor*, has supernatural talents. In addition to being able to talk to animals, she also has magical abilities, is surrounded by countless auxiliary spirits, and is herself going to be an *angakkoq* (shaman). She possesses the skills necessary to become an *angakkoq*, and she can undertake a voyage to the Mother of the Sea, a quest that will establish her as an *angakkoq*. Pani is portrayed as a girl who is alone with her thoughts, but at the same time her thoughts are in line with the world she lives in. When she thinks that she must save the village from famine by travelling to the Mother of the Sea, she is completely in accordance with the surrounding world. An old woman, Ningiok, even suggests that Pani take on the role of the new *angakkoq* who should travel to the Mother of the Sea when needed (Riel 1972, 22). Socially, Pani drifts harmoniously and without conflict in both the family community and the community at the settlement. The conflicts Pani is involved in are the community's common struggle for survival. It is the whims of nature that are the opponent, not other people.

Pipaluk in *Ivalu* is not endowed with magical powers, although, as mentioned, she has some form of dialogue with the raven. She is a socially responsible girl who tries to fight for those she cares about, first and foremost her sister, Ivalu, with whom she has a very close and affectionate relationship. The sister disappears on the day the queen is going to visit the small town. Shortly before, Ivalu has been sexually abused, which Pipaluk has witnessed. Pipaluk links (on the pictorial side) these two events, searches for her sister Ivalu only to find she has hanged herself at the deserted military base.

In the fictional world, Pipaluk is alone with her experience of both the close relationship with her sister and the loss of her. Unlike Pani, Pipaluk in *Ivalu* has no community to fall back on. She is a lonely person in a culture where everyone seeks to satisfy their own needs without considering the cost to others,

such as the father who drinks up all the money and sells the national costume to raise money.

The story of Ivalu is first and foremost a story about a child's (Pipaluk) experience of another child being abused and committing suicide. Only secondarily is it a representation of abuse and suicide. But sexual abuse and suicide are the driving forces of the graphic novel's plot.

Plot

According to the Russian formalists, "fabula is defined as the order of events referred to by the narrative, whereas sjuzet is the order of events presented in the narrative discourse" (Brooks 1992, 12). The plot itself "could be thought of as the interpretive activity elicited by the distinction between sjuzet and fabula" (Brooks 1992, 13). From this formalist point of view, the plots in the two works are very different, but both stories are based on Greenlandic living conditions which are different in their substance. In Jørn Riel's *Pigen der søgte havets mor*, the story actually consists of several stories (fairy tales from Greenland), which are eventually linked and given a double meaning, partly as a portrait of Greenlandic culture in the broadest sense, and partly as the story of Pani (the girl) who sets out to find the Mother of the Sea. Overall, the course of the narrative is chronologically progressive without meaning-creating flashbacks. In other words, there is a parallel between the sjuzet and the fabula. The story of Pani's journey to the Mother of the Sea is in effect a deviation from the norm – namely the absence of prey. The plot is propelled by Pani's desire to restore this imbalance by searching for the Mother of the Sea and restoring her goodness through the act of combing her hair. In Riel, the plot is a force in nature, and thus the living conditions as such create the plot.

It is completely different with Dürr and Horneman. In *Ivalu*, there is one coherent narrative characterized by a chronological progression that is interrupted by memories of events in the past, thereby establishing a discrepancy between the order of presentation and the chronology of the story. The plot in *Ivalu* is set in motion by the main character Pipaluk saying, in an inner voice/monologue, to her absent sister Ivalu that she herself must look nice because the queen is coming. In this inner speech addressed to the sister as a you, she recounts both what is happening right now, and what has happened in their common past. The initial riddle of why she speaks to the absent sister is grad-

ually resolved. During the course of the story, it turns out that her sister Ivalu has disappeared after their father sexually abused her. With the help of the raven, Pipaluk finds her sister Ivalu hanging by a rope at the deserted military base. The sexual abuse of the young girl is explained in the story by the father's alcohol abuse, his pursuit of his own needs and wants combined with his complete lack of empathy. In *Ivalu*, then, it is a modern (western) way of life that is plot-triggering. In summary, the difference between the two narratives is that nature triggers the plot in Riel's tale, while it is modernity in Dürr and Horneman's graphic novel.

Narrator

The narrators in the two works are fundamentally different. Riel's is a classic epic narrator who has an inner view of a single person, namely Pani. Sometimes, the narrator role is left to fictional characters, e.g. the scientist Umimak. The epic narrator is anonymous but uses explanatory and instructive rhetoric that gives the creator a personal voice. Occasionally, the voice takes the shape of an oral narrator, who tells an ignorant audience about Greenland, its nature, people, culture, and myths.

The narrative body in *Ivalu* appears completely different. Here, the narrator is split in two. There is, on the one hand, an overarching narrator who possesses a high degree of knowledge without knowing everything. This narrator is embedded in the pictures. On the other hand, there is a personal narrator (homodiegetic narrator) in the shape of the main character Pipaluk, who tells the story of her own experience of her father's sexual abuse of her sister Ivalu by speaking to her in a you-tale (second-person narrator).

My comparative analysis indicates that the essence of Greenland's nature is crucial in shaping the context of the two Danish works of children's literature, with magical themes appearing in both, yet being most prominent in Riel's story. The main characters are girls who both embody a sense of duty towards their community. The differences between the two works are significant. The fabricated world of *Pigen der søgte havets mor* can be characterized as idyllic,⁹

9. "The idyll celebrates (...) continuity, unity and the almost mundane. The Russian literary scholar Michael Bakhtin characterizes the idyll as a stable and closed uni-

while in *Ivalu* the fabricated world is at its core conflict-ridden and modern. And the plot in *Pigen der søgte havets mor* springs from a (natural) shortage situation, i.e., the absence of prey, while the plot in *Ivalu* has its origins in the social – and criminal – disparity between generations, i.e., the father's abuse of his own daughter. The literary design is different in that Riel's narrative points backwards towards the oral narrative and the knowledge-transmitting children's literature, while at the same time maintaining and exposing magic in the narrative. Dürr and Horneman's narrative is topical and innovative as it deals with a current Greenlandic problem and uses an untraditional narrative construction that connects it with complex children's literature. On the other hand, Dürr and Horneman's narrative is enchanted, as there is only a glimpse of magic with the raven, and it is a dark realism that permeates *Ivalu*.

The two works participate in their respective genres – *Pigen der søgte havets mor* in the literary tale and *Ivalu* in the graphic novel. The question is what significance the genre has. The literary narrative that Riel uses is closely related to the traditional oral Greenlandic tale, and it thereby generates a kind of common narrative that embeds *Pigen der søgte havets mor* in Greenlandic culture. The genre of graphic novel, in which Dürr and Horneman write, allows for a double narrative, a pictorial and a text narrative, which is utilized for two angles and narrative tracks that make it possible to portray the sexual assault and how it is experienced in a complex and dynamic way. The two works are strongly linked to the historical time in which they were created. Their genre participation contributes greatly to shaping them so that they can express images of the Greenlandic reality as it is perceived in the present. At the same time, the two works each contribute in their respective periods to shaping the genre in which they participate.

New questions

The differences and similarities that I have found in Jørn Riel's *Pigen der søgte havets mor* and Morten Dürr and Lars Horneman's *Ivalu* raise some questions:

verse. It is everyday life, often the craft or – as a substitute – the preparation of food that is at the centre. The performance of time is concentrated around the cyclical time, i.e., the course of the day and the year, the continuation of the lineage, the succession of one generation by the other" (Hejlsted 2014, 100; Bachtin [1937–1938] 1981, 225).

Are they random or an expression of a general development in Danish children's literature's depiction of Greenland or, in other words, is there a development from an idyllic and magical representation of Greenland to a (socially) realistic representation of an almost non-enchanted Greenlandic reality that deals with current problems in Greenlandic society?

My preliminary answer to the question is based on a selection of other Danish children's books that use Greenland as a setting. These books cover the periods 1934–1959 and 2003–2020:¹⁰

- Estrid Ott: *Børnene på Grønland* [The Children in Greenland] (1934)¹¹
- Pipaluk Freuchen: *Ivik. Den faderløse* [Ivik. The Fatherless] (1944)
- Kirsten Bang: *Lars i Østgrønland* [Lars in East Greenland] (1958)¹²
- Karen Plovgaard: *Sanne. Fortælling fra Nordgrønland* [Sanne. A Story from North Greenland] (1959)¹³
- Henrik Nilaus: *Pinligt! - ferien i Grønland* [Embarrassing! – Holiday in Greenland] (2003)
- Jim Højberg: *Malte og Simon i Grønland* [Malte and Simon in Greenland] (2008)
- Kim Leine: *Drengen der drog nordpå med sin far for at finde julemanden* [The Boy who went North with his Father searching for Santa Claus] (2015)
- Kim Leine: *Pigen der kunne tale med hunde* [The Girl who could speak with Dogs] (2017)
- Birgitte Bregnedal: *En ven blandt isbjerge* [A Friend among Icebergs] (2019)

10. In addition to this list, Palle Petersen (b. 1943) should be mentioned. He has written a large number of books about children's lives in Greenland, including 18 photographic books. He is also the author of historical fiction for children about Greenland, for example *Pok Grønlænder* (1982), and literary stories based on the Greenlandic legend *Den stærkeste* [The Strongest] (1980).

11. Estrid Ott (1900–1967) wrote several children's books that take place in Greenland. Among these are *Lillefinger rejser til kolonien – en historie fra Østgrønland* [Little Finger Travels to the Colony – a Story from East Greenland] (1935), *Bimbis utrolige Grønlandsfærd* [Bimbi's Incredible Journey to Greenland] (1939), and *Gertrud og grøn-lænderne* [Gertrud and the Greenlanders] (1962).

12. Kirsten Bang (1908–2003) used Greenland as the setting in several of her novels for children. *Lars i Østgrønland* is the first in a series of books about Lars travelling the world.

13. Karen Plovgaard was one of the first Danish authors to write fiction set in Greenland. She made her debut in 1935 with *Nordlys. Fortællinger fra Grønland* [Northern Lights. Tales from Greenland].

Kim Leine: *Drengen og pigen og miraklet i snehulen* [The Boy and the Girl and the Miracle in the Snow Cave] (2020)

Lise Bidstrup: *3900 Nuuk - en rigtig outsider* [3900 Nuuk - A Real Outsider] (2020)

Lise Bidstrup: *3900 Nuuk - isbjerge og turister* [3900 Nuuk - Icebergs and Tourists] (2020)

Lise Bidstrup: *3900 Nuuk - en vigtig sag* [3900 Nuuk - An Important Case] (2020)

Maria Boesen: *Et nyt sted at bo* [A new Place to Live] (Lærke i Grønland [Lærke in Greenland], 1) (2020)

Maria Boesen: *Vinter i Grønland* [Winter in Greenland] (Lærke i Grønland, 2) (2020)

Maria Boesen: *En vild fødselsdag* [A Remarkable Birthday] (Lærke i Grønland, 3) (2020)

The answer to the question is completely different to what I had expected: All the works listed portray Greenland as a non-enchanted place. There is a striking correspondence between the paradigm that prevails in the fictional worlds and that which prevails in the context of the works, i.e., the understanding of the arrangement of reality that is valid in a Danish context. In this connection, it is remarkable that in some of the works we encounter idyllic representations of Greenland, where the rhythm of the day, the change of seasons and generations together with small and closed worlds in the form of smaller settlements and cities are significant. This is the case in Pipaluk Freuchen's *Ivik. Den faderløse*, which is set in North Greenland, where the boy Ivik and his family lose their breadwinner when the father dies during a walrus hunt, and Ivik must take on his father's role and provide for the whole family. Even more pronounced is the idyllic element in Karen Plovgaard's *Sanne*, where the reader follows the strong and independent Sanne from when she is a little girl to when she is a young and responsible, almost grown, woman.

This is also evident in Kim Leine's three books about the siblings Andreas and Sofie. The books are about Christmas, a birthday wish, and a birth. The idyll is less prominent in Maria Boesen's series about Lærke in Greenland, and in Lise Bidstrup's 3900 Nuuk series (2020), the idyll is withdrawn in the representation of the Greenlandic school reality in Nuuk. The nature and way of life is recognizably Greenlandic in Leine, Bidstrup, and Boesen, and the plots

are rooted in the representation of Greenlandic reality – it is the Greenlandic weather, climate, way of life, geography, etc. that create the plot by challenging survival and welfare.

In some of the children's books, however, Greenland is just a piece of scenery. They could have taken place anywhere in a modern society. This is especially true of Jim Højberg's *Malte og Simon i Grønland* [Malte and Simon in Greenland], which is a children's crime story with drug crime as the plot's focal point. In Henrik Nilau's *Pinligt! – ferien i Grønland* [Embarrassing! – Holiday in Greenland] (2003), the issues are related to relationships within the family, falling in love, etc., which could play out in many other places.

The depiction of the social problems in Greenland that we encounter in Dürr and Horneman apparently stands quite alone in Danish children's literature. In *Lærke i Grønland*, social problems with poverty, high alcohol consumption, dangerous working conditions, and accidents at work are hinted at, but do not play a key role in the story. But in older children's literature, the poverty and tough conditions of the traditional way of living are exposed. In Pipaluk Freuchen's *Ivik. Den faderløse* [Ivik. The Fatherless] (1944) a whole family are destined for death by starvation when the father cum breadwinner dies during a hunt.

The two works, *Pigen der søgte havets mor* and *Ivalu*, which have been the focus here, depict Greenland as it is experienced from the inside by children who are born and have lived their whole lives in Greenland. Apparently, this approach is an exception in Danish children's literature. What is typical is that Greenland is portrayed as a foreign place – a place that visitors explore and discover to be entirely different from their familiar environment. Estrid Ott's main characters travel to Greenland, Lars stay involuntarily in Greenland for a year, Lærke lives temporarily in Greenland, Anna in *3900 Nuuk* moves with her parents to Greenland for three years and Lærke's mother in *En ven blandt isbjerge* [A Friend among Icebergs] (2019) gets a job as a helicopter pilot. Malte and Simon go on holiday to Greenland and Cristina in *Pinligt!* wins a trip to Greenland. In general, Greenland is a place you travel to, where nature is harsh and hostile, sometimes downright threatening.

In the light of the other works of children's literature about Greenland, *Pigen der søgte havets mor* and *Ivalu* together with a couple of older literary works

for children appear to be atypical and something special because they present an identification with and an emphatic appreciation of the Greenlandic reality. My brief study of how Greenland is depicted in Danish children's literature points to a rich diversity that calls for more exploration regarding how and why these representations occur. A documentation of children's literature that includes representations of Greenland in Danish and other foreign literary contexts as well as various minor projects that analyze the patterns that I have pointed out are much needed. In continuation of such projects, it would be obvious to investigate the impact of these books and their distribution across libraries, schools, and individual households.

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