

Abstract for the conference *Børn og kultur – det æstetiskes betydning?*

The paper is to be placed within the theme: **Det æstetiskes betydning i medier, kunst og kultur for børn?**

Aesthetic in Recent Danish Poetry for Children

Poetry for Children can be said to be a literary playground for a special kind aesthetic, which can be found certain places and to certain times in the literature for grown-ups. However it has a privileged place in the literature for children because it emerges from an idea of the child and the childish as a special approach to language and to the world. Through examples of recent Danish poetry for children from authors like Kirsten Hammann, Hanne Kvist, Jakob Martin Strid, Louis Jensen I wish to investigate how the aesthetic in these texts appears. In poetry for children there seem to be a special aesthetic which is literally spoken. It is an aesthetic which is grounded in the body and in sensuousness and in an orally, non-abstract and pre- reflexive language, but it comes to a special expression being mixed with written language and reflection of the nature of language.

In *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* Terry Eagleton asserts that “aesthetics is born as a discourse of the body.” He refers to the fact that the ”father” of aesthetic, AG Baumgarten (1714-1762) when using the word ”aesthetic” to begin with, not refers to art, but to aesthetic in the meaning of the Greek word “aisthesis” as human perception and sensation as opposed to the conceptual and abstract thought. In her article ”Æstetik og anæstetik. Walter Benjamins ’kunstværksessay’ revurderet” Susan Buck-Morss takes us back to the original etymological meaning of the word aesthetic. *Aisthithikos* is the Greek word for that which ”can be perceived through the senses”. Aesthetic is hence what you can experience through the sensuous perception. The original field of aesthetic is not the Arts, but the reality – tangible and material. Aesthetic is hence the discourse of the body as Eagleton pointed out. Baumgarten was hardly thinking of children’s literature when he founded the aesthetic, but his thoughts evoke a response in the poetry for children as a sensuous approach to language. Merleau-Ponty’s ideas of the phenomenology of language and body and Wittgenstein’s thoughts of the gestures of language can also bring us closer to an understanding of the aesthetic we find in new Danish poetry for children and hence to the thoughts of the relation between children and language that these texts and their aesthetic express.

The presentation will be in Danish.