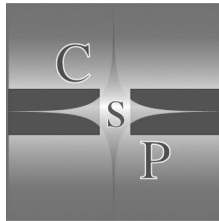


Tove Jansson Rediscovered

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Edited by

Kate McLoughlin and Malin Lidström Brock



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For Aleksi and Lorenzo

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The editors would like to thank Sophia Jansson for her kind help, especially for granting us permission to quote from Tove Jansson's texts and reproduce some of Jansson's paintings and illustrations. The copyright for the Moomin books and the comic-strips belongs to Tove Jansson. We would also like to thank Moomin Characters Limited for permission to reproduce Jansson's Moomin illustrations and The Estate of Tove Jansson for permission to reproduce her Alice illustrations. Seerit Sundell and Erja Sandell at Moomin Characters helped us considerably with permissions and photographs. Finally, we are very grateful to the Carnegie Trust for their funding of the Colour Plates that appear in this collection.

The editors, contributors and publishers have used their best efforts to trace other copyright-holders: any who have been overlooked are invited to contact the publishers.

CITATIONS AND TRANSLATIONS

Tove Jansson's Works

This is not intended to be an exhaustive bibliography of Jansson's works, but to list the editions of works used more than once in this volume and (where applicable) their citations. Where more than one edition exists, the year also appears in the citation. English titles are used in the volume, except where no English translation exists: in such cases, the Swedish title is used with an English translation given in brackets at the first occurrence.

Finnish / Swedish Editions

Småtrollen och den stora översvämningen. Stockholm: Alfabet, 1945.

Cited as *Småtrollen*.

Kometjakten. Helsinki: Söderströms, 1946. Cited as *Kometjakten*.

Muminrollet på kometjakt. Helsinki: Holger Schildts Förlag, 1956. Cited as *Muminrollet på kometjakt*.

Kometen kommer. Helsinki: Holger Schildts Förlag, 1968, 1997. Cited as *Kometen kommer*.

Trollkarlens hatt. Helsinki: Holger Schildts Förlag, 1948, 1956, 1968, 1992. Cited as *Trollkarlens hatt*.

Muminpappans bravader skrivna av honom själv. Helsinki: Holger Schildts Förlag, 1950, 1956. Cited as *Muminpappans bravader*.

Muminpappans memoarer. Helsinki: Holger Schildts Förlag, 1968, 1992. Cited as *Muminpappans memoarer*.

Hur gick det sen? Boken om Mumin, Mymlan och lilla My. Helsinki: Holger Schildts Förlag, 1952. Cited as *Hur gick det sen?*

Farlig midsommar. Helsinki: Holger Schildts Förlag, 1954, 1969, 1980. Stockholm: Alfabet, 2004. Cited as *Farlig midsommar*.

Trollvinter. Helsinki: Holger Schildts Förlag, 1957, 1962, 1970, 1992. Cited as *Trollvinter*.

Vem ska trösta knyttet? Helsinki: Holger Schildts Förlag, 1960.

Det osynliga barnet och andra berättelser. Helsinki: Holger Schildts Förlag, 1962, 1969. Cited as *Det osynliga barnet*.

Pappan och havet. Helsinki: Holger Schildts Förlag, 1965, 1969, 1987. Cited as *Pappan och havet*.

- Bildhuggarens dotter*. Helsinki: Gebers, 1968. Cited as *Dotter*
Sent i november. Helsinki: Holger Schildts Förlag, 1970, 1992. Cited as
Sent i november.
- Lyssnerskan*. Stockholm: Bonnier's, 1971.
- Sommarboken*. Stockholm: Bonnier's, 1972, 2001. Cited as *Sommarboken*.
- Den farliga resan*. Stockholm: Bonnier's, 1977.
- Dockskåpet och andra berättelser*. Stockholm: Bonnier's, 1978. Cited as
Dockskåpet.
- Den ärlinga bedragaren*. Stockholm: Bonnier's, 1982. Cited as
Bedragaren.
- Stenåkern*. Stockholm: Bonnier's, 1984. Cited as *Stenåkern*.
- Resa med lätt bagage*. Stockholm: Bonnier's, 1987.
- Rent spel*. Helsinki: Holger Schildts Förlag, 1989. Cited as *Rent spel*.
- Brev från Klara*. Helsinki: Holger Schildts Förlag, 1991. Cited as *Klara*.
- Meddelande*. Stockholm: Bonnier's, 1998. Cited as *Meddelande*.

**The following list gives the titles' literal English translations (1),
 then (if different, and if it exists) the title by which they are best
 known in English (2)**

- Småtrollen och den stora översvämningen*. 1. The Small Trolls and the
 Great Flood.
- Kometjakten*. 1. The Comet-Hunt. 2. Comet in Moominland.
- Mumintrollet på kometjakt*. 1. Moomintroll on a Comet-Hunt.
- Kometen kommer*. 1. The Comet is Coming.
- Trollkarlens hatt*. 1. The Magician's Hat. 2. Finn Family Moomintroll.
- Muminpappans bravader skrivna av honom själv*. 1. Moominpappa's
 Brave Adventures Written By Himself. 2. The Exploits of
 Moominpappa.
- Muminpappans memoarer*. 1. Moominpappa's Memoirs.
- Hur gick det sen? Boken om Mumin, Mymlan och lilla My*. 1. What
 Happened Next? The Book About Moomin, Mymble and Little My. 2.
 The Book About Moomin, Mymble and Little My.
- Farlig midsommar*. 1. Dangerous Midsummer. 2. Moominsummer
 Madness.
- Trollvinter*. 1. Troll Winter. 2. Moominland Midwinter.
- Vem ska trösta knyttet?* 1. Who Will Comfort Toffle?
- Det osynliga barnet och andra berättelser*. 1. The Invisible Child and
 Other Stories. 2. Tales from Moominvalley.
- Pappan och havet*. 1. Pappa and the Sea. 2. Moominpappa at Sea.
- Bildhuggarens dotter*. 1. Sculptor's Daughter.

- Sent i november.* 1. Late in November. 2. Moominland in November.
Lyssnerskan. 1. The Listener.
Sommarboken. 1. The Summer Book.
Den farliga resan. 1. The Dangerous Journey.
Dockskåpet och andra berättelser. 1. The Dolls' House and Other Stories.
Den ärlinga bedragaren. 1. The Honest Imposter.
Stenåkern. 1. The Stone-Field.
Resa med lätt bagage. 1. Journey with Light Baggage.
Rent spel. 1. Fair Play.
Brev från Klara. 1. Letters from Klara.
Meddelande. 1. Messages.

British Editions

- Finn Family Moomintroll.* Translated by Elizabeth Portch. London: Ernest Benn, 1950. London: Puffin, 1961. Cited as *Finn Family*.
Comet in Moominland. Translated by Elizabeth Portch. London: Ernest Benn, 1951. London: Puffin, 1967. Cited as *Comet*.
The Exploits of Moominpappa. Translated by Thomas Warburton. London: Ernest Benn, 1952. London: Puffin, 1969. Cited as *Exploits*.
Sculptor's Daughter. Translated by Kingsley Hart. London: Ernest Benn, 1969. Cited as *Daughter*.
Moominsummer Madness. Translated by Thomas Warburton. London: Ernest Benn, 1955. London: Puffin, 1971. Cited as *Moominsummer*.
Moominland Midwinter. Translated by Thomas Warburton. London: Ernest Benn, 1958. London: Puffin, 1971. Cited as *Midwinter*.
Tales from Moominvalley. Translated by Thomas Warburton. London: Ernest Benn, 1963. London: Puffin, 1973. Cited as *Tales*.
Moominpappa At Sea. Translated by Kingsley Hart. London: Ernest Benn, 1966. London: Puffin, 1971. Cited as *Sea*.
Moominvalley in November. Translated by Kingsley Hart. London: Ernest Benn, 1971. London: Puffin, 1974. Cited as *November*.
The Dangerous Journey. Translated by Kingsley Hart. London: Ernest Benn, 1978.
The Book About Moomin, Mymble and Little My. Translated by Sophie Hannah with Silvester Mazzarella. London: Sort Of Books, 2001.
Who Will Comfort Toffle? Translated by Sophie Hannah. London: Sort Of Books, 2003.
The Summer Book. Translated by Thomas Teal. London: Sort Of Books, 2003. Cited as *Summer Book*.

A Winter Book. Selected Stories. Translated by Silverster Mazzarella, David McDuff and Kingsley Hart. London: Sort Of Books, 2006. Cited as *Winter Book*.

Fair Play. Translated by Thomas Teal. London: Sort Of Books, 2007. Cited as *Fair Play*.

North American Editions

Sun City. Translated by Thomas Teal. New York: Random House, 1976. Cited as *Sun City*.

Moomin Book One: The Complete Tove Jansson Comic Strip. Montréal: Drawn and Quarterly, 2006. Cited as *Moomin*.

Secondary Works

Jones, W. Glyn. *Tove Jansson. Moomin Valley and Beyond.* Boston: Twayne, 1984. Cited as Jones.

Rehal-Johansson, Agneta. *Den lömska barnboksförfattaren: Tove Jansson och muminverkets metamorfoser.* Göteborg: Makadam, 2006. Cited as Rehal-Johansson.

Westin, Boel. *Familjen I dalen: Tove Janssons muminvärld.* Stockholm: Bonnier's, 1988. Cited as Westin.

Translations

We have used quotations from the British editions throughout (and the two North American editions where they occur), except where a point is being made about a Finland-Swedish edition or about the Finland-Swedish language. In those instances, quotations are in the original Finland-Swedish with an English translation given immediately after, where possible from the published British editions. The original Swedish is also provided where the source is an unpublished manuscript or other non-readily accessible text

INTRODUCTION

KATE MCLOUGHLIN
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For readers outside the Nordic countries,¹ the name Tove Jansson evokes childhood memories of small, white, hippo-like creatures, forest-dwelling and rather handy with boats. Were the Moomins Jansson's sole legacy, she would still be recognised as a writer of complex and sophisticated stories which give adults pause with their candid life-wisdom even as they charm children with their gleefulness. But the Moomins, important as they are, represent only part of Jansson's achievement in twentieth-century art and letters. Our purpose is to update her standing. We began this venture by organising a Tove Jansson Conference at Pembroke College, Oxford on 24 March 2007. Some 55 scholars from 13 different countries gathered to discuss all aspects of Jansson's writing and art. In the present volume, the first collection of critical essays about Jansson and the first full-length publication in English about her work since W. Glyn Jones' *Tove Jansson. Moomin Valley and Beyond* (1984), we aim to continue the project of presenting her as a more complex figure: as a leading children's author, of course, but also as a novelist, short-story writer, memoirist, painter, illustrator and cartoonist. In particular, we hope to demonstrate that Jansson's extraordinary output has the added value of showing what it is to write as a woman, as a lesbian and as a speaker of a minority language within a country.

Jansson was born to artistic parents. Her mother Signe Hammarsten Jansson was an illustrator, her father Viktor Jansson a sculptor. Her brother Lars became a comic-strip artist and writer, her brother Per Olov a photographer. Creativity was, therefore, Tove Jansson's natural milieu and she went on to study at Stockholm Art School from 1930 to 1933 and at

¹ Throughout this volume, we are using "Scandinavia" to denote Sweden, Norway and Denmark and "the Nordic countries" to denote Scandinavia plus Finland and Iceland.

the Graphic School of the Finnish Art Academy from 1933 to 1937. Opening the collection with an overview, Boel Westin uses self-representation in painting and prose as a prism through which to view Jansson's career. This is complemented by Sonia Wichmann's piece, which analyses Jansson's own exploration of her artistic identity in relation to her bohemian family in *Sculptor's Daughter*.

Other essays in the volume deal with Jansson as illustrator, cartoonist, painter and picture-book-creator. Sirke Happonen and Elina Druker both analyse Jansson's illustrations of the Moomin series, discussing ways in which her drawings explore and problematise the nature of the self. Mikiko Chimori compares Jansson's illustrations of Lewis Carroll's Alice books with those by the Japanese artist Takashi Saida and the French artist Marie Laurencin, incorporating rarely-seen images in her discussion of different cultural construction of the adolescent girl. The essay by Lena Kåreland also considers childhood, exploring familial dynamics in the picture-books. This is followed by an in-depth analysis of Jansson's comic-strips—particularly their borders—by K. A. Laity.

The focus of Laity's essay is the depictions of shifting or indeterminate sexuality in Jansson's work. In her essay, Barbro Gustafsson analyses erotic motifs and images in Jansson's later literature, finding both pessimism with regard to the situation of homosexuals and, in the novel *Fair Play*, a more hopeful depiction of lesbian love.

If her sexuality is important to Jansson's aesthetic, so too is her Finnishness. Jansson was born in Helsinki and later had her atelier there, but as a child she summered with her family in the islands of the Gulf of Finland and she spent much of her adult life on the tiny island of Klovharun, one of the Pellinki Islands in the Gulf near the town of Porvoo. The Gulf of Finland—its physical geography and its way of life—permeates her work. Moominvalley, as Yvonne Nummela suggests, owes its beauty and arduousness to this landscape, while Kate McLoughlin argues that the Finnish qualities of *talvisodan henki* and *sisu* are traits to be found in the valley's inhabitants. Sea-and-island life features in many of Jansson's texts. In her piece, Tess Cosslett focuses on the Finnish phenomenon of the summer cottage, drawing on Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope to describe its literary function. Jansson's membership of the six percent of Finns whose first language is Swedish² is a vital aspect of her work (in his essay, Jukka Mikkonen queries whether the disruptive, plain-speaking adoptee Little My occupies a similar position within the Moomin family). Yvonne Nummela provides a

² Liisa Suvikumpu, *Find Out About Finland* (Keuruu: Otava, 2007), 6.

thorough analysis of the Finland-Swedish elements of Jansson's diction, proposing an idiosyncratic use of language—the "Janssonesque".

The Moomin series, of course, is indispensable to a critical understanding of Jansson, both as a writer and as an artist. As an introduction to the books, the essay by Agneta Rehal-Johansson guides the reader through their complicated bibliographical history. In drawing on theories of the sublime by Longinus, Kant and Edmund Burke to illustrate the boundary-defying quality of the series, Corinne Buckland's essay exemplifies a particular trend, not only in this volume but also in developing Jansson studies: placing Jansson's work within wider European and global literary-philosophical contexts. The essays by Claire Sharpe, Sirke Happonen and Elina Druker, all focussing on the self as encountered in Jansson's work, continue this practice. Claire Sharpe draws upon romantic philosophy, as well as recent developments in clinical psychology, to analyse instances of depersonalisation in Jansson's stories. Sirke Happonen's investigation of the Fillyjonk, movement and the gaze is informed by work on (self-)perception by Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jacques Lacan, and Laura Mulvey. Elina Druker's piece compares Moominmamma's mural-painting with the unsettling experience of the woman protagonist in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's story "The Yellow Wallpaper".

Textual interplay is the focus of the essays which follow. Jukka Mikkonen's analysis of Little My as a debater applies Schopenhauer's theory of "eristical dialectic" to her provocative utterances. Evelyn Arizpe considers discourses-within-discourses in her exploration of meta-texts in Moominland. Kate McLoughlin suggests some links with the Russo-Finnish War in her proposal that *Comet in Moominland* bears the classic hallmarks of a war text. As mentioned, Yvonne Nummela provides a linguistic analysis of Jansson's lexis while Mareike Jendis's description of the Moomin books' reception in the German-speaking countries is a representative example of the multitudinous ways in which Jansson's reputation has been dispersed.

Possessing an uncanny ability to recreate the perceptions of childhood, Jansson's other great legacy is her depictions of old age. As close to nature as she was to art, she imparted through her works the wisdom of those who live by the seasons. Her characters pickle and bottle in the autumn, batten down the hatches for the winter, shake things out again in the spring and take off on adventures in the summer, adapting their lives to sun, snow, rain and wind. Above all, they live in harmony with the sea, anticipating, accommodating and enjoying its moods. Understanding mortality comes naturally to them. In one of Jansson's

most moving stories, a character very like her realises that she is too old to live in her island cottage any more. Without fuss, she and her companion pack up for the last time. Their final act before departing is to take a kite out onto the slope and give a little push to its tail. A gust of wind carries it far out above the Gulf of Finland:³ as perfect and poignant an image of letting go as could be imagined. We have concluded this collection, therefore, with two essays by Jean Webb and Nancy Huse about Jansson and aging. But in terms of English-speaking readers' rediscovery of Tove Jansson, we hope that they, and the other pieces in this volume, are only the beginning.

³ "Taking Leave", *Winter Book*, 205.

A PAINTER'S REFLECTION: THE SELF-REPRESENTATIONAL ART OF TOVE JANSSON

BOEL WESTIN

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"I myself am the subject of my book," Montaigne writes at the beginnings of his *Essays* (3). The same can be said of Tove Jansson. She herself is the subject of her work. She never wrote a traditional autobiography—that particular project she handed over to Moominpappa in *The Exploits of Moominpappa*, but she worked all her life on a self-narrative both in pictures and in words. In her most openly (at least in certain parts) autobiographic text, *Sculptor's Daughter*, which concerns a childhood in a sculptor's atelier, the narrating "I" is never given the name Tove.

The vast number of self-portraits in her artistic output, starting with pictures in her early diaries in the 1920s and ending with a self-portrait in oil in 1975, tell a story about Tove Jansson and simultaneously create a visual autobiography. They present her, conceal her and document her in different roles and contexts. Her stories, too, continuously narrate aspects of a self, sometimes unmasked and quite open, sometimes disguised and hidden behind different names. These range from the character "Tofslan" ("Toffle") in *Trollkarlens hatt* (*Finn Family Moomintroll*) to the character "Toft" in *Moominvalley in November*, from the narrating "I" in *Sculptor's Daughter* to the writer of short stories called Mari in *Fair Play*.¹ The final story in her last book, the collection of short stories *Meddelande* (*Messages*) (1998) (the story appears as "Message" in *A Winter Book*), speaks quite simply of a "Jansson". In this fragmentary text the author transforms herself from the recipient into the sender of short notes and messages, all different from one another, but united by being means of

¹ Other examples are the cartoon artist in the short story collection *Dockskåpet* (*The Dolls' House*) (1978), the children's book writer in *Den ärliga bedragaren* (*The Honest Imposter*) (1982) and the word-seeking journalist Jonas in *Stenåkern* (*The Stone-Field*) (1984).

communication. The bits and pieces of texts are cut out from different kinds of letters: fan letters and business letters, letters from students, letters from cranks and letters of love. Together they form a text about events in a life of someone called "Jansson". Examples include:

"My cat's died. Write at once." (*Winter Book*, 167)

"We look forward to your valued reply soonest concerning Moomin motifs on toilet paper in pastel shades." (164)

"Hi coming later heat the soup. Kiss. T." (166)

"My very dear friend you are wallowing in sin." (169)

Tove Jansson's transforming art of self-representation was consciously staged from beginning to end, and the self presented in text and pictures is constantly changing.²

Beginnings

Tove Jansson was born to be an artist. In a letter written in the spring of 1918, during the Finnish Civil War, her father, the sculptor Viktor Jansson, remarked in a letter to his wife Signe Hammarsten Jansson: "Maybe we will get a big artist out of Tove some day, a really big" (qtd in Westin 2007, 15). He was right.

Tove Jansson started early, and worked as artist and author for more than seventy years. When only fourteen years old, she had her first illustrations published in a magazine—pictures that were soon followed by a cartoon (about a strange couple of caterpillars) in a children's publication. Her first comic illustration—an area in which she made one of her multiple careers—was published in the magazine *Garm* when she was fifteen. Significantly enough, she made her exhibition-debut with a self-portrait (in Helsinki in 1933). The same year a picture-book, completed a couple of years before, was launched. She participated in a number of art exhibitions in the following years, but her first separate exhibition had to wait until 1943 as conditions for young painters were tough during the war. By then she had also published a handful of short stories, written during her travels in Europe in the late 1930s: these stories are located in places like Paris, Verona and Capri. Late in the autumn of 1945 the first Moomin book met the world under the title *Småtrollen och den stora*

² Examples discussed in this essay are all from Westin, 2007.

översvämningen. It passed almost unnoticed—I have only found one review—but after two more books about the Moomins, *Kometjakten* in 1946, and particularly *Trollkarlens hatt* in 1948, the author Tove Jansson was on her way to being known to a wider audience. The third Moomin book was translated into English (as *Finn Family Moomintroll*) as early as 1950.³

Tove Jansson's life was work from beginning to end (although with a great deal of love): a flow of aesthetic activities. Between the small pictures of 1928 and her last book *Meddelande* came figurative and abstract painting, painting *al fresco* and *al secco*, illustrations and cartoons, picture-books, novels, short stories, plays, a libretto for an opera, songs and poems, theatre work, commercials, book covers, post-cards, films, TV-productions and Moomin articles of all kinds. The repertoire developed beyond the thinkable, and so did the productivity. In the magazine *Garm* alone, where Tove Jansson made a name for herself as a political cartoonist (the signature "Tove" became quite famous), she published more than 600 pictures between 1939 and 1953.

Painting was her love, although the Moomin stories made her famous and gave her a position in public. The 1950s crowned her a megastar with the cartoon *Moomin* that started in the *London Evening News* in September 1954. At its peak it was published in 120 newspapers in 40 countries (Tolvanen, 94). The author Jansson wrote three new books, Moomin plays were performed in Sweden, Finland and Norway and Moomin articles began to be produced—this was a time of "Moomin fever", as one journalist wrote when Tove Jansson visited Stockholm in 1957 (Westin 2007, 20). But her artistic identity was dual from the start. She presented herself as painter and author, in that order, well into the 1960s, and throughout the great success of the Moomins, she stuck to painting, even though it was restricted to a few Moomin-free periods during the most intense years. The combination of painting and Moomin activities became more and more difficult, at times transformed into a painful struggle between demands and expectations and her own aesthetic needs and longings.

The notion of pleasure was always one of the most important concepts for Tove Jansson (the Swedish word is "lust"), and it is frequently

³ This early translation was the result of team-work by some friends of Tove Jansson: the English teacher Elizabeth Portch (who was staying in Helsinki at the time) who first translated the story, and the painter Kenneth Green, who presented the script at Ernest Benn Limited in London. It appeared in the United States in 1950 under the title *The Happy Moomins*.

discussed in her notes and private writings. In 1955, during one of the first peaks of the Moominboom, she wrote:

Duty and pleasure are a long story for me, constantly in question, and gradually I have come to a strange and quite private result. The only honest thing is pleasure, the wish, the joy – and nothing that I have forced myself into has been of joy for my surroundings. (qtd in Westin 2007, 332)

The worst nightmare would be the absolute loss of finding pleasure in her work. One of her great idols was the Florentine Renaissance painter Cennino Cennini, known for his early fifteenth-century work *The Book of the Art of Painting (Il libro dell' arte o Trattato della pittura)*, and his thoughts on the conditions of creativity and emotions were of great importance to her. You must work according to your own ideas and feelings, said the Italian master, all art demands knowledge but also joy in the work. This became one of Tove Jansson's most treasured mottoes.

The longing for new means of expression was one of her strongest artistic motives—from the first drawings to the last book. She was driven by the need to use words and pictures, to make pens, brushes and colours work: her hunger for new aesthetics never seemed to end. In this search, self-representational art occupied a prominent position. Every painting is a picture of one's self, she wrote in a letter to her close friend Eva Konikoff shortly after the war in 1945, and she explained her thoughts as following:

L'art pour l'art. You write that Dalí only works for himself. But for whom should one otherwise paint? As long as you work you don't think of the others! You try to express yourself, your perceptions, achieve a synthesis, explain, liberate. Every nature morte, every landscape, every canvas is a self portrait! (qtd in Westin 2007, 23)

Tove Jansson never lost touch with thoughts of this kind, and bore them in mind when writing her late novels and short stories after the Moomin books: *Den ärliga bedragaren (The Honest Imposter)*, *Stenåkern (The Stone-Field)* and *Rent spel (Fair Play)*. The conditions for creating art and the artist's problems, demands and expectations, are viewed from different perspectives throughout her works. One might say that she creates parts of a life narrative by different self-representations, or representations of different parts of her self (see Brockmeier, 247ff). The special thing about Tove Jansson is her dual artistic identity, the possibility of making a double self, both in picture and in text. In what follows I shall comment on three constructions of the Tove Jansson self: two from her work as a painter and one from her work as an author.

Self-Constructions: Paintings

As mentioned, Tove Jansson produced several self-portraits, many in the 1940s. She was young, open to new identities and expressions, on her way to making her living as a painter and illustrator. As a young artist she was eager to perform the self, experimenting with different positions and contexts for her self-portraits. She was constructing a self in the frames of the picture, making herself visible both as an artist and as a woman. In other words, she was creating a visual autobiography.

In the history of self-portraits there are two kinds of pictures: the representational portrait (dramatisations, projections, interpretations) and the self-portrait as signature, known from the Greeks, reappearing in the Middle Ages, and especially favoured during the Renaissance (see Lucie-Smith and Stoichita). The self-portraits of Tove Jansson discussed here are linked to both these categories. The first is a true self-representation. It is called “Loboan” (“The Lynx-Boa”) (**Plate 1**), and was painted in 1941-1942, during the war. At first it may seem a traditional self-portrait, a slightly dramatised representation of the self. The picture shows a woman in a strict-looking striped suit with a fur laid over her shoulders. In the background is a tapestry with flowers. The hair is brushed away from the forehead; the glance slips away from the spectator; the face is painted in brown tones; the animal-looking eyes have small shadows of yellow around them; everything emphasises a look that seems wild. This was one of the intentions behind the picture. In a letter to a friend, written when she had finished the painting, Tove Jansson commented: “I look like a cat in my yellow fur, with cold tilted eyes and the new smooth hair in a knot” (qtd in Westin 2007, 28). There is an atmosphere of distance and of the untouchable over the whole picture—this is a woman (and an artist) who may express herself just as she pleases—at this moment she wants to present herself as a feline.

There are two important things to note when discussing the self-representation of this picture. The first is the title of the painting, “The Lynx-Boa”. It is not called “Self-Portrait with Lynx” or anything of that kind. The focus is on the lynx, given to us as an interpretative key to the picture. But what are we in fact looking at? The lynx is a dead animal, in fact an animal that has been converted into a piece of decorative fur. Second, we might reflect on the combination of lynx and woman. Who looks more like an animal? The lynx with its dangling head, paws, and tail—is obviously without life and reduced to a piece of fur completing the elegance of the striped suit (it doesn’t really look like a lynx, either, more like a fox). The woman, on the other hand, is full of life, as though she has

stolen the vitality from the dead animal. Her appearance is animalistic, but at the same time she becomes even more human. "I *look* like a cat," Tove Jansson wrote, and that is just the point. She created a self-representation through the use of the lynx.

My second example concerns Tove Jansson's use of the traditional signature whereby the artist paints a picture of him/herself (perhaps a face) in the scenes or landscapes of the painting. This was common during the Renaissance (with its emphasis on individuality) as a method of signing a picture, but also as a means of making the painter or the painter's reflection visible. Among the most famous in this tradition are the self-portraits in the frescoes of Bennozo Gozzoli and Filippo Lippi (Brown, chs. II and III).

Tove Jansson followed this tradition when working with her first frescoes in a famous restaurant in Helsinki in 1947. She created two large pictures, both of them showing festival and joyful scenes, one located in the country, one located on a terrace. (They are called "Festival in the Country" and "Festival in the Town".) In the terrace-scene (**Plate 2**) two couples are dancing, another couple look as though they might start dancing at any minute, a girl is chasing a dove, other participants are placed at the corners of the scene. The faces of the acting figures belong to several of Tove Jansson's friends and colleagues (Westin 2007, 223). As for the artist herself, we find a woman looking like her sitting at the front of the picture, alone at a black table, her back to the dancing couples, smoking, with a glass in front of her. In one hand she holds a spread fan. She is looking quite smart.

As a self-representation this is a classical signature, a self-portrait within the fresco, entirely in the tradition of the Renaissance painters. It makes the artist part of the picture and a visible part of her art. She becomes creator, participant and spectator at the same time: she also seems to position herself at a distance. The smoking woman in the picture is looking at something outside the scene, as if she were not at all part of it. But there is one more representation of the self in the picture. On the table in front of the smoking woman sits a little Moomintroll, by this time—1947—for several years part of the illustrator's "Tove" signature. It connects the artist to the author. Two Moomin books had been published and a third was on its way. Tove Jansson had begun writing *Trollkarlens hatt* before Christmas 1946.

Self-Construction: Texts

Convincing children's books are full of symbols, identification, obsession, Tove Jansson said in one of her most quoted essays, and this self-declaration may speak for most of her work (Jansson 1961, 8-11). My third example of her self-representational art is *Moominvalley in November*, the last of the Moomin novels. This is a story about a family who, like Beckett's Godot, is spoken of but never appears on the scene. *Moominvalley in November* contains memories of a valley with a garden in bloom, white curtains of lace slowly moving in the breeze, sunny spots in green grass and some kind of family-life. But the book speaks about a valley filled with rain, dusk, wet leaves and autumn colours, about departure, farewell and melancholy. The family has sailed to a lighthouse and the house is empty. The valley should close, the narrator says in the end. There is a clear atmosphere of Chekhov and the cherry-orchard, and axe-blows also echo in Moominvalley. But it is only the Hemulen, who is cutting wood for the winter.

The valley is filled with new inhabitants, all with different longings for and memories of the lost family. The Hemulen pictures a valley where everything was easy and functioned without problem, thinking mostly of Moominpappa. The Fillyjonk remembers a community without complications, thinking mostly of Moominmamma. The old Grandpa-Grumble recalls a valley where he'd been a long time ago, with parties all night. He is looking for his own yearnings, Tove Jansson writes in the manuscript for the book, something that can be said to be relevant to the new family that establishes itself in the dale. Toft is looking for a valley he has been telling stories about, a Garden of Eden with Moominmamma at the centre, while Mymble is looking for her sister My, for a context. But one figure is missing: Moomintroll. It isn't until Snufkin returns to the valley that the text speaks about a troll.

This is the book about the great change in the world that Tove Jansson started to write about in the 1940s. It is significant that the author now presents herself under a new name, a variation of her own: Tove has become Toft. We can connect this to the signature method of the fresco: she doesn't conceal herself in the text, on the contrary, she displays a self, placing it in the middle of the story, forcing herself right into the new family that is seeking a home in the valley (the face of Toft, as it is drawn in the illustrations, has some similarities with the face of Tove). In the previous book, *Moominpappa at Sea*, Tove Jansson's artistic identities as author and painter are projected through the Moomin parents, thus demonstrating the two kinds of self-representation. Moominmamma

shows herself to be a painter *al fresco*, just like Tove Jansson herself, when painting her longing for the valley on the white walls of the lighthouse. But in *Moominvalley in November* all the characters appear as poets and artists in one way or another. During his search for a lost story and a lost Moominmamma, Toft must work his way through pictures and texts, dreams and illusions, a painful process metaphorically reflected through his reading about a prehistoric animal called the “nummulite”, close to an anagram for “mumin”. Behind this narrative another story is told, in which happiness is not taken for granted, childhood must be abandoned and, most important, the intimate relationship between mother and child must be broken.

Toft provides a voice for a narrator who tries to tell the Moomin story once more; he pictures the impossibility of continuing that story and opens up the possibility of finding a new one—as in the beautiful end. But the process is working its way through the whole text, the painter's reflection is seen through the words that describe new areas of the valley, a secret garden with different colours, shapes and forms:

Everything had withered and died, but right down on the ground the late autumn's secret garden was growing with great vigour straight out of the mouldering earth, a strange vegetation of shiny puffed-up plants that had nothing at all to do with summer. [...] There were strong new colours everywhere, and red rowanberries were shining all over the place. But the bracken had turned black. (*November* 1971, 30f)

“Moominvalley Revisited” is what Tove Jansson recurrently calls the story in her manuscripts, and this is a relevant formula for both the author and the new inhabitants of the valley. “They can't have moved away just like that without saying a word,” the Fillyjonk exclaims when arriving at the empty house (54) but that is just what has happened. But the family has left one message behind, linked to history and tradition: “Please don't light a fire in the stove because that's where the Ancestor lives.” It is signed “Moominmamma”. That is the last word of the Moomins.

When the author Tove Jansson depicts herself as Toft, writing about the impossibility of finding the way back to a lost story, she becomes an integrated part of her own work. Her self-representational art is reproduced at the end of the book, when Toft is looking to sea, spotting a light from a lantern, possibly from the boat of the returning family. What he really sees is not revealed to the readers, just the fact that he walks down to the sea, heading for the jetty, in order to catch the rope from the boat. This is a very private ending: it is Toft alone who is allowed to meet the family when they return. It is said towards the end: “Soon the valley

would be as empty as the crystal ball and would belong to no one except the Moomin family and Toft” (169). In the English version there is a fatal mistranslation of the last sentence of the book (which in fact changes the end of the story). The Swedish text is: “Homsan Toft hade god tid på sig att gå ner genom skogen och följa stranden till båtbyggnaden, precis lagom för att ta emot fånglinan” (*Sent i November* 1970, 161). In translation this becomes: “Toft had plenty of time to go down through the forest and along the beach to the jetty, and be just in time to catch the line” (*November* 1971, 175). The word for “line” in the Swedish text is “painter”, a more precise naval term. But the English translation adds a couple of words after the word “line”, like this:

Toft had plenty of time to go down through the forest and along the beach to the jetty, and be just in time to catch the line and tie up the boat.
(*November* 1971, 175)

By this addition, the non-referential assumption that Toft ties up the boat, the ending is changed and so is the self-representation. Whether Toft catches the line from the boat or not might be turned into a question of interpretation among readers and scholars. But it should of course be the author’s privilege to decide for herself. Her answer, if any, rests in the painter’s reflection.

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TOVE JANSSON: THE TRICKSTER CHILDREN'S AUTHOR

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“It all started with my wanting to depict an unusually happy family,” Tove Jansson commented in 1978 (3). The very first Moomin book, *Småtrollen och den stora översvämningen* (1945),¹ tells of how a family of trolls finds its home in a wondrous valley where they will live happily ever after. From the end of the volume it appears that Jansson had planned no further adventures with the Moomins:

All day they walked, and wherever they went it was beautiful, for after the rain the most wonderful flowers had come out everywhere and the trees had both flowers and fruit. They only needed to shake a tree slightly, and the fruit fell down around them. At last they came to a small valley that was more beautiful than any they had seen that day. [...] And there in the valley they spent the whole of their lives, apart from a few times when they left it and travelled for a change. (*Småtrollen* 50f)²

Instead, this modest nursery tale proved the beginning of a quarter-century-long literary project involving a further fifteen disparate Moomin books. Ultimately, and after a second comprehensive set of revisions in 1968-1970, it resulted in the eight-volume “Moomin Suite” that is published today. When the long row of books reached its end with *Sent i november* (1970), the pleasant summer valley had become autumnally grey and chilly, and the family had fled its former paradise. Only a lonely little whopper remained awaiting their return. But it was not only the physical landscape of Moominvalley that had changed. Thematics and narrative foci had also shifted: from the tensions in the early books between peaceful idyll and dramatic adventure, and between a benevolent

¹ For English translations of these titles, the reader is referred to the note on **Citations and Translations**.

² Translations in this essay are my own.

and inviting natural world and unpredictable and threatening natural forces, to the later books' treatment of experiences and events on the borderline between inward and outward phenomena, ideals, illusions and reality.

In this essay, based on my book *The Trickster Children's Author – Tove Jansson and the Metamorphosis of the Moomin Œuvre* (2006), I hope to shed new light upon the transformations that the two main motifs, the Moomin family and Moominvalley, undergo throughout the œuvre. I will also trace Jansson's radical revisions of the earlier works. In her final revision of the Moomin series, Jansson not only transformed the earlier spate of self-contained books into a coherent "family romance" suite but also submitted her works and characters to psychoanalysis. I argue that the final Moomin Suite should be considered the "true" Moomin œuvre.

Overview of the Œuvre

The entire Moomin œuvre consists of sixteen different Moomin books, that is, illustrated prose tales. The original editions are nine: *Småtrollen och den stora översvämningen* (1945), *Kometjakten* (1946), *Trollkarlens hatt* (1948), *Muminpappans bravader skrivna av honom själv* (1950), *Farlig midsommar* (1954), *Trollvinter* (1957), *Det osynliga barnet och andra berättelser* (1962), *Pappan och havet* (1965) and *Sent i november* (1970). The final Moomin Suite, first published in 1968-1970, comprises *Kometen kommer* (1968), *Trollkarlens hatt* (1968), *Muminpappans memoarer* (1968), *Farlig midsommar* (1969), *Trollvinter* (1957/1970), *Det osynliga barnet och andra berättelser* (1962/1969), *Pappan och havet* (1965/1969) and *Sent i november* (1970).

Three reworked titles were published in 1956: *Mumintrollet på kometjakt*, *Trollkarlens hatt* and *Muminpappans bravader skrivna av honom själv*. *Småtrollen och den stora översvämningen* was excluded from both this revision and the next one. The second revision was completed in 1967 (Westin, 11). It included the same three titles as in 1956 together with *Farlig midsommar*. When published, two of the reworked books had been given new titles: *Mumintrollet på kometjakt* had become *Kometen kommer* and *Muminpappans bravader skrivna av honom själv* was now *Muminpappans memoarer*. The titles of the other two reworked books—*Trollkarlens hatt* and *Farlig midsommar*—had not been changed.

Readers who have got to know the Moomin books from the final Suite would therefore be astonished to discover *Kometjakten* (1946). Instead of the forbearing musician and father-figure Snufkin they know from their