Torgeir Rebolledo Pedersen and Akin Duzakin: *Poems and Unpoems about a little of everything*

*An ecological reading of illustrated poetry for children*

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**Abstract**

In this article, I explore how the relationship between humans and nature is depicted in the illustrated poetry book *Poems and Unpoems About a Little of Everything* (Pedersen & Duzakin, 2016). Leaning on ecocritical theory and picturebook theory I analyse how the iconotext of the poetry picturebook depicts landscapes, ecosystems and biotopes, and the relationship between human and zoological species that inhabit the landscapes. The illustrated picturebook invites nuanced experiences of nature and digital culture and encourages reflections on and wonder about the interplay and mutual contact between animals and the human species.

**Keywords**

Ecocriticism, Nature, Picturebook, Wordplay, Children’s poetry

**Introduction**

The poetry book *Dikt og udit om likt og ulikt* (2016, *Poems and Unpoems About a Little of Everything*) is a collection of 17 poems written by the Norwegian poet, Torgeir Rebolledo Pedersen, and illustrated by Akin Duzakin. As the title of the book suggests, the poems show a great diversity of motifs. These motifs include exciting phenomena in children’s lives, from presents – “Hard packages, soft packages” (*Harde pakker, bløte pakker*) – to more inward-looking and quiet poems, such as “Sleeping song” (*Sovesang*). Throughout the entire book, the poems depict children in the context of nature, often interacting with animals through spring, summer, autumn, and winter, mostly in a Norwegian context. Poems about spring predominate, and recurrent motifs include human and animal life in and around water, fish, amphibians (frogs), insects and birds. Subsequent seasons are represented by motifs such as the sun, bathing, and greenery (summer); defoliation and mushroom collecting (autumn); and snow, darkness and thoughtfulness about time (winter).

In this article, I explore the depictions of animals and natural scenery in Pedersen and Duzakin’s picturebook *Poems and Unpoems About a Little of Everything*. My argument...
is that the verbal text of the illustrated poetry book, which is inspired by modernism, wordplay, and playing and building with language and words as concrete materials, opens up the meaning of words and phenomena, such as nature and culture. The poems, therefore, facilitate a discussion about the relationship between children/adults and the natural, physical environment. I explore how the illustrated poems depict the relationship between humans and nature from an ecocritical perspective.

In my reading of Pedersen and Duzakin’s *Poems and Unpoems About a Little of Everything*, I draw on the Nature in Culture Matrix, developed by the research group Nature in Children’s Literature and Culture (NaChiLitCul) (Goga, Guanio-Ulu, Hallås & Nyrnes, 2018). The matrix was developed by the research group as a conceptual tool for analysing the representation of nature according to some key ecocritical concepts in children’s literature and in other cultural products for children. On the vertical axis, the model establishes a continuum from a celebration of nature, including the idyllic relationship between the child and nature, to a problematising of nature, in which the impact upon nature of industrial production, such as pollution, climate change and the decline of zoological species, is considered. The horizontal axis thematises the extent to which nature and animal species are seen from a human (anthropocentric) or a biocentric or ecocentric perspective (Goga et al., 2018, pp. 12—13). The anthropocentric perspective has roots in the Judeo-Christian religious conception, which regards humans as superior to nature. According to the anthropocentric position of the matrix, biological and zoological life in nature has a merely instrumental value for humans. Only human species inhabit intrinsic value. In contrast, from a biocentric or ecocentric perspective, humans are part of a greater assemblage of other species, dependent on and dialogical in the relationships with these other species. The negotiation of values and understanding according to the two axes in the Culture in Nature Matrix allows for both an ontological construction of what nature is and a reflection on the everyday experiences of nature and physical environments (Goga et al., 2018, p. 12).

The matrix figure is enclosed by techne, in this context understood as a rhetorical term for “the art of shaping and manufacturing” (Goga et al., 2018, p. 13). The interplay between words and pictures, as well as the book as a medium, are important elements of the illustrated poetry book. Traditionally, the illustrations in poetry books for children have not received much commentary in children’s literature research (Bjørlo, 2015). In recent research, some studies have explored the relationship between words and pictures in illustrated poetry books (Rhedin, 2004; Bjørlo, 2015; Skaret, 2015), including contextualising the poetry picturebook from a media perspective (Christensen, 2015). In Scandinavian picturebook research, the term *iconotext*, introduced by Kristin Hallberg (1982), has been influential, with the author claiming that the real text of the picturebook is realised in the interplay between words and pictures during the reading process (Hallberg, 1982, p. 165). The term was originally developed to conceptualise the interplay between words and pictures in picturebook narratives. Anne Skaret argued that the term iconotext is also relevant as a depiction of and a perspective on the relationship between words and pictures in illustrated poetry for children, since the illustrations of children’s poetry also interact with the words, and the interplay between words and illustrations creates meaning in the single poem as it does for the entire work (Skaret, 2015, p. 128).

In picturebooks, nature is represented in the interplay between the visual and the verbal text (iconotext). Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott described different categories of interplay between words and pictures in *How Picturebooks Work* (2001). In *Poems and Unpoems About a Little of Everything*, there are symmetrical elements in the relationship
between words and pictures, such as when the pictures repeat or anchor the same biotopes or animal species described in words. Duzakin’s illustrations also fill out and complete the verbal text with more detailed nature sceneries, and sometimes the pictures expand the verbal text by introducing alternative narrative elements not mentioned in the verbal text. A girl and a boy, visually concretised as the poetic “I” and “you” in the first poem of the book, are visually present in almost all of the double-spreads. They experience the different seasons throughout the year and become child protagonists. The boy and girl are sometimes referred to in words and other times are only present in the visual backdrop in a nature scene, or their actions or presence in a particular environment illustrates or comments on the idea or theme of the poem, although the children have no agency in the poem.

The illustrator, Akin Duzakin (born in 1961), is one of the most frequently awarded picturebook illustrators in Norway. He was educated as an industrial designer in his homeland of Turkey, and after moving to Norway he studied at the National Academy of Arts in Oslo. Since the 1990s he has been the illustrator of a huge number of picturebooks for children in Norway. He depicts the Norwegian landscape and environment, but is also familiar with the landscapes, fauna and culture of the Middle East and Turkey, alluded to in Noa (Bringsværd & Duzakin, 1997). His visual style is characterised by precise figures and detailing, and his palette is often dominated by soft, earthy colours, exhibiting a special fascination with nature sceneries, opening inner reality and atmosphere.

Torgeir Rebolledo Pedersen (born in 1949) is one of the most central and distinct poetic voices of his generation in Norway, and in 2013 was awarded the “Doubloug Prize”, which is presented by the Swedish Academy of Literature, for his authorship. In addition to his work for adults, he has authored a variety of works for children, currently including dramatical texts, song texts and poetry books for children. One of the poetry books, Brødrene Zapata (The Zapata Brothers, 2014), was edited in Mexico and translated into Spanish.

From the perspective of ecocriticism, the specific and playful elements in Pedersen’s poetry offer the potential for change and the exploration of new ways of understanding the environment. According to Glotfelty, “ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” (Glotfelty, 1996, xix). Since wordplay sheds light on the dynamic relationship between words and reality, this type of rhetorical language holds some interesting possibilities for developing a critical consciousness of how we talk about and give meaning to nature and the physical environment. In nonsense and Dadaist poetry, abstract concepts, such as words, text and literature, become something definite and tangible (Druker, 2008, pp. 107-10). The twentieth-century modernist and formal experiments to which Pedersen refers in his poetry were driven by a desire to develop a new society, hence the need for a new language that could build a new type of human being.

Two of Pedersen’s poems, “Naturekeyboard” (Naturtastatur) and “Keyboardnature” (Tastatturenatur), thematise the relationship between literature and the physical environment in a special way. “Naturekeyboard” celebrates, in words and illustrations, the creation of new life in the spring, while “Keyboardnature” problematises modern human life in a digital culture. There are four poems with similar opening lines that depict interplay between humans, and between humans and other species, through sight, smell, sound and tactile contact. This quartet is spread throughout the book, unfolding the bodily and sensual basis in both animal and human communication. In the following, I first analyse the front-page picture, with a focus on how visual motifs turn up throughout the book, making visual narratives and expanding on the motifs in the verbal text. I then provide a close reading of the iconotext

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of one of the poems in the sense poem quartet. Finally, I analyse the two poems “Naturekeyboard” and “Keyboardnature”, in which the main focus is on wordplay and the verbal text.

Visual motifs and ecocritical narratives
On the front cover (see Fig. 1), Duzakin visually presents the girl and the boy as parts of a gathering of different animals presented throughout the book. They are standing with their feet in water up to their knees amidst birds, insects, fish and amphibians (frogs). The landscape is marked by a huge trunk to the left, rising from the water, and the back cover shows a meadow and a boy climbing a tree. The front and back covers, therefore, illustrate the development of life on earth, starting in water and gradually conquering land. The flyleaf and the insides of the front and back covers are coloured medium blue, introducing the visual depiction of nature elements in the book, such as water and the sky. The foregrounded children

Figure 1.
form the centre, but they are also a part of a multispecies gathering in which the animal and human species share the same natural space.

The evolutionary theme on the front and back covers is echoed throughout the book as a whole. The dominant species in the opening poems are fish, amphibians, birds and insects, often visually depicted in or near water. Humans as protagonists inhabiting forests become more dominant in the second half of the book. The changing of the seasons begins with spring, and the tone becomes more contemplative and softer in atmosphere, as visually reflected in the illustrations’ darker background colours in the four last double-spreads.

A paper boat is introduced on the front page as part of the nature scenery. The boat floats on the water behind the girl and the boy and is filled with what, in a Norwegian context, would be perceived as foreign, exotic, and colourful birds. They have taken their places on the crowded boat similar to the animals on Noah’s ark. Since ancient times, the boat, or ship, has been a symbol of the sun’s journey over the firmament (Biedermann, 1992, p. 341). In both Christian and Islamic stories, the ship symbolises the Church. Noah’s ark symbolises both the Great Flood and the possible rescue of life on earth.

The poem on double-spread five, “If I won an elephant”, is built on the anthropocentric image of the elephant as a fire constable. The illustration shows the elephant running, with the girl sitting on its head and the elephant with its trunk stretched forwards and upwards. They are both staring upwards, wide-eyed, echoing the poem’s verbal wish to collect a star from the sky. In the sky, a flock of birds is flying in the opposite direction, from the right to the left side of the double-spread, which, according to Ulla Rhedin, is from the “foreign side” to the “home side” of the double-spread (Rhedin, 1993). This visual cliffhanger by Duzakin is rather surprisingly dissolved into the visual extension of the poem on the next double-spread (spread six), where the elephant and the girl succeed in rescuing a cat from a forest fire.

The illustration of the forest fire initiates a visual narrative, with the flock of birds as its collective protagonist. The visual narrative, including the forest fire and fleeing animals, echoes the consequences of climate change and its threat to nature. The child is given agency and, together with the elephant as a companion species, is able to fight against the consequences of climate change and to make a difference (rescuing the cat). This wordless visual story expands the verbal text of the poems, disturbs the idyll and renders the idyllic presentation of child and nature more ambiguous.

The flock of birds is repeated as a visual emblem under the heading on the title page and can be connected to the crowded birds on the paper boat on the front page. On double-spread four, before the visual image of the fleeing flock of birds, a dove with a branch in its beak flies in the opposite direction. The dove symbolises peace and hope and was sent by Noah to seek land when the floodwaters began to subside. Today, fire and floods are modern signs of nature’s imbalance. The visual narrative that Duzakin uses to illustrate the story of Noah’s ark and the decline and renewal of civilisations is actualised in our time against the background of human-caused climate change, which leads to desertification and devastating fires and floods.

The paper boat is a recurrent visual motif throughout the book, expanding on different themes in the verbal text, such as children’s play, romance and change. In the third double-spread, which visually extends the poem “Naturekeyboard” (double-spread two), a frog awaits a kiss from the girl in a huge paper boat. In the penultimate double-spread, the paper boat appears as a visual motif for the last time. The illustration shows the boy sitting in a boat and setting paper boats gently down into the water, visually symbolising the poem’s words about “wordless thoughts, that can only float, without anchor”.

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Except for the elephant, which visually extinguishes a forest fire, the animal species that Pedersen mentions in his poems belong to Norwegian or other Nordic landscapes. Duzakin extends the landscape and ecological context by visually including exotic birds. The illustration to the poem “Naturekeyboard” includes a flamingo and a black swan, together with domestic species of ducks and sea birds. In one of the last poems, “New Year’s Eve” (Nyttårsaften), Duzakin visually depicts a modern city skyline, reminiscent of New York City’s, and uses the English language (Happy New Year!), once again extending the poems’ cultural and geographical context.

From an ecological perspective, this extended, global context can be read as a reminder that Norwegian culture and nature are parts of the changing global ecological system. Duzakin’s visual narratives, expanding the verbal text, give voice to threatened species, such as the exotic birds that have landed on the paper boat on the front page (evoking Noah’s ark). The girl and boy are in the centre of the picture, indicating an anthropocentric perspective, but the girl and the boy also interact with other species. A frog slips out of the boy’s hand and into the water. The children stand with their feet underwater (the flood) and share the ecological and natural circumstances together with the other zoological species. Along with Donna Haraway, we might say that humans and animals are depicted as companion species (Haraway, 2008) or as making kin across human and animal species (Haraway, 2016, pp. 99-103).

From an ecological perspective, I argue that the front page has an ambiguous character. At first sight, the image on the front page is an idyllic one that celebrates the children interacting with animals and nature, but the high water, reaching up the tree trunk, and the exotic birds in the paper boat potentially tell another story about a threatened nature that is shared by both animals and humans. There is a celebration of children experiencing life in nature but also a problematising of the sustainability of man’s impact on global nature.

Defamiliarisation and mutual interplay

There are four poems in the book that are built on the same theme and formula, thematising mutual sensual contact between two individuals. One subject, calling her/himself “I”, invites another, called “You”, to mutual contact by means of the senses of sight, smell, hearing and, last, tactile contact of the lips (a kiss). The first of these poems, “I have two holes in my head”, about mutual contact by sight, is the opening poem of the book. The poetic “I” addresses the “You” in human words/language and, of course, is therefore supposed to be a human being. In most of the poems, the girl and the boy are visually included as the actors of the sensual communication. The contact to which the “I” is inviting the “You”, however, is a reciprocal sensual contact that can be practised as a bodily and sensual interplay in which mutual contact and understanding can take place without the use of words. The poems therefore might include the wordless, reciprocal experience of interplay between zoological species without a spoken language.

The illustrations of the sense quartet explore the excitement and romantic feelings between the girl and the boy, as step by step they get closer to contacting each other through the different senses. The illustration of the sight poem contextualises the interaction between the “I” and “You” in the forest, showing the girl peeping out from a tree to make visual contact with the boy, who is hiding behind a tree in the foreground (see Fig. 2). In the smell poem, “If I can sniff you a little” (Hvis jeg kan lukte litt på deg), Duzakin visually completes the verbal text by showing the girl in playful interaction with a pig, and thereby elaborates and plays with the openness of interspecies contact made possible in the verbal text. The pig is running after the girl, while the girl turns her head and smiles at the pig. The illustration of the hearing
poem, “If I can listen to you a little” (Hvis jeg kan lytte litt på deg), shows the girl and the boy lying on a grey underlay, while the boy, eyes closed and with a smile on his face, lets the girl listen to his heart with a stethoscope. The iconotext of the last poem in the quartet, “If I can smooch you a little” (Hvis jeg kan smaske litt på deg), visually depicts the girl leaning forward, with her hands on the boy’s shoulders, ready to give him a smack (kiss) on the mouth.

The sight, smell and hearing poems have identical openings (the three first lines), here exemplified with the sight poem:

I have two holes in my head
You have two holes in your head
We have holes in each other’s heads
if I may look out on you
you may look in to me

(Double-spread 1, my translation)

Pedersen describes the sense organs, and the mutual interplay by means of the sense organs, using unfamiliar words. Instead of using established words such as “eyes”, “nose” and “ears”, Pedersen denotes these different sense organs as “two holes in the head”. By using the Russian formalist Viktor Sklovskij’s theoretical concept of defamiliarisation, Marianne Røskeland has demonstrated how relations between words and pictures can facilitate existential openness and wonder about the relationship between humans and the physical environment (Røskeland, 2018). Sklovskij (1991) has shown how literary language, by being different from everyday language, can make the reader see a phenomenon in a new way, as if for the first time. Leaning on Sklovskij, I will argue that Pedersen’s unfamiliar use of words (“hole in the head”) disturbs our habitual perception of the senses of sight, smell, hearing and tactile contact, with the result that the reader (listener) must reorganise the cognitive schemas of the concept of the senses. To subordinate the different senses under the common idea “hole in the head” opens a negotiating and rethinking of the very concept of a sense organ.

According to the Nature in Culture Matrix, I will argue that the expression “hole in the head” does not refer exclusively to either
human or animal sense organs. The "hole" formally defines sense organs as the topological quality of coming "through", from one side to another, neutrally in terms of the human or animal quality of communication. The hole, as a neutral concept, thus places human and animal species on a continuum, allowing for a negotiation of what is human and what is animal.

The illustrations expand the verbal motif of potential interaction between human and animal species by visually inserting two birds that "double" the visual contact between the children, one of the birds peeking at the boy, the other at the girl. The birds imitate the glances and bodily positions of the children and take part in the mutual interplay of contact and experience. As mentioned above, in the smell poem, the interspecies contact becomes even more explicit and humorous, because the "I" and the "You" here are visually depicted as a girl and a pig: "If I can sniff you a little, you can sniff me a little". Of course, the interplay and close relationship between the children and animals is a special theme often found in children's poetry (Bjørlo, 2015), but the original language style, visually depicted and extended by Duzakin, of this sequence of poems has an originality that makes the poems an interesting meeting point between culture and nature, between animal and human species.

By advocating the common bodily and sensual basis for interaction between both human and animal species, the verbal text distances itself from giving inner value exclusively to humans interacting with words (anthropomorphism). On the other hand, the illustrations focus mainly on the interplay between the girl and the boy, and the growing contact and tension between them; therefore, the iconotext of this suite of four poems, as a whole, tends to be anthropocentric. In addition, this sequence of poems, in words and pictures, focuses on the girl and the boy being together in natural surroundings, which is associated with a celebration of nature and not problematised. Nevertheless, a close reading of both words and pictures in the sense quartet opens up and encourages a reflection on and wonder about the interplay and mutual contact between animal and human species.

**Genesis and the construction of new words**

After introducing the two children in the first "hole in the head" poem, the poem "Naturekeyboard" functions as a wonderful overture to the verbally and visually depicted nature theme in the book. The poem praises and celebrates fertility, the pairing of species, copulation, eroticism and the creation of new life in springtime. When Pedersen depicts animals, they are part of a natural environment, the diversity of life in a given habitat, biotope or ecosystem. Pedersen focuses on the coming together of animal couples in water and in the air, "quacking between duck and duck/and frog and frog" and "the twittering between finch and finch/and starling and starling".

The poet verbally depicts genesis by creating new words that are compounds of two elements: the prefix "giant" (kjempe) and the second element illustrates the sound and activities connected to coming together in pairs, fertility and hatching eggs. According to Pedersen, the world is a "giantquackery" (kjempekvekkeri), a "gianttwittery" (kjempekvitri), a "giantcatchery" (kjempelklekkeri), and a "gianttwistery" (kjempervrikkeri). The alliterations sound better in the original Norwegian and it is impossible to adequately translate the material and musical quality of the words into English (see the alliterations using the k-sound).

The poem is illustrated with two double-spreads (double-spreads two and three). The first shows trees in a forest and birds building nests (see Fig. 3). In the sea is a pair of mallard ducks swimming on the surface of the water, a black swan and a flamingo on land, and two black-headed seagulls. High up in the trees are several pairs of smaller birds (with some similarities to yellow fin-
ches, black finches, and chaffinches). The poem is visually extended by an entire covering illustration on double spread three depicting an ecosystem in and around a pond; a paper boat is floating on the surface and frogs are swimming underwater. One of the frogs has climbed onto a lily pad close to the paper boat, is raising his head and looking at the girl in the boat. The paper boat visually expands the verbal motif in the poem of the transition of the frog to a prince at the moment he kisses a princess.

The central visual motif of the girl in the paper boat advocates an anthropocentric perspective, and a celebration of the relationship between child and nature. In the picturebook as a whole the visual motif of the paper boat is also connected to ecocentric motifs, such as the fleeing flock of birds finding refuge on the paper boat on the front cover, problematising humans’ relation to nature. The paper boat as a recurring visual motif in the book, therefore, negotiates the relationship between nature and culture, on a continuum from a human-centred to an ecocentric perception of nature.

Nature and digital culture

In “Keyboardnature”, the two parts of the compound word “Naturekeyboard” are transposed. The first part of the word, keyboard, denotes an instrument for producing letters, words and other written text (a keyboard for writing) or tones, melodies, and music (an instrument with a keyboard). The instrument or machine theme is connected to language or genesis and refers to concrete poetry and to the Dadaism and Futurism movements in art. Pedersen’s playful use of language and his energetic construction of new words that are almost “industrial” echo the modernist and formalist movements of the early 20th century.

“Keyboardnature” expresses, both verbally and visually, a critical view of humans’ use of electronic media. In the opening line of the poem, Pedersen makes fun of modern man’s use of electronic media by rewriting a line from Shakespeare: “To be online/or not to be online/is that supposed to be the question?” (å være på nett/ eller ikke på nett/ skal det være spørsmalet?) Visually, Duzakin depicts adults and the child protagonists in a...
forest, all of them occupied with their electronic devices except for the boy, who is trying to make eye contact with the girl, who is lost in her iPad. The sensual, mutual contact from the hole in the head poems is broken. Neither the verbal nor the visual narratives include animals. The world of electronic media is depicted as a human, or anthropocentric activity, and while in their media sphere, humans do not see the nature around them.

In “Keyboardnature” Pedersen plays with words, as in “Naturekeyboard”, such as double meanings and the use of electronic devices: I phone/You phone/I pad/you pad. He makes a series of nominalisations, among them innovations: “the uploading and the tapping/the essemessing/and the twittering” (lastingen og tastingen/ essemessingen/ og tvitringen). Another series of words is constructed using the common prefix “giant”: “giantweb” (kjempewev), “giantsurfery” (kjempesurferi), “gianttwittery” (kjempetvitreri), “facebookkeepery” (feisbokholderi). The electronic language also includes words and expressions denoting nature, such as “giantweb” (kjempewev) and “gianttwittery” (kjempetvitreri), and lets nature and digital culture meet and intertwine. Nevertheless, the poem remains critical of the alienation and isolated existence caused by the use of electronic media—albeit perhaps also with a fascination for the possibilities of modern media: “here we are captured/here we are so free” (her vi er tatt til fange/ her vi er så fri).

The poems “Naturekeyboard” and “Keyboardnature” set up a dualistic relationship between nature and culture. “Naturekeyboard” celebrates life in nature, a life of giving that is fertile, sensual and vital to being in the world. Conversely, “Keyboardnature” depicts modern human life in a digital culture, which includes a loss of contact with living nature and a life without sensual or bodily interaction with other human or animal species. The digital human beings are visually located in a forest, but each is isolated in his or her own private digital space. “Keyboardnature” is probably the most problematising poem about the relationship between children and nature. The girl, one of the child protagonists in the book, is, like the adults, occupied with an electronic device, her iPad, and does not recognise the boy peeking out from a tree trying to make contact with her.

In ecological thinking, as in the Nature in Culture Matrix, the traditional duality between nature and culture is questioned and considered more of a continuum; “Nature-culture suggests continual interpenetration and mutual constitution of the human and non-human worlds (Garrard, 2012, p. 208). In the poem “Keyboardnature” the verbal text is more ambiguous than the illustration. The rich and innovative production of words with semantic meanings from nature echoes the energy and playfulness of the contrasting poem, “Naturekeyboard”. The iconotext negotiates the gap between nature and culture and opens the door to a language that is in-between the natural world and the digital world.

Concluding remarks
In this ecocritical reading of the illustrated poetry book for children, Poems and Unpoems About a Little of Everything, my focus has been on exploring the relationship between the literary text and the physical environment (Glotfelty, 1996). In my reading, the physical environment includes landscapes, ecosystems and biotopes, and the human and zoological species that inhabit the landscapes. My analyses have aimed to examine the depiction of nature from an ecocritical perspective and to discuss the depiction of nature and different species on a continuum from anthropocentrism to biocentrism, which is in line with the horizontal axis of the Nature in Culture Matrix. In terms of the vertical axis, I have discussed whether the relationship between children and nature is celebrated or problematised in the book.
The relationship between anthropomorphism and ecocentrism is, for example, negotiated in the suite of four poems about sensual communication. Pedersen verbally depicts mutual sensual contact between two subjects in a way that includes both animal and human species in interplay. The unusual verbal expression “holes in the head”, denoting the eyes (sight), nose (smell), ears (hearing) and mouth (tactile contact), opens up and defamiliarises the phenomenon of the senses for the reader/listener. The wordless sensual interplay depicted using such strange and unusual words in the poem may make the reader aware of the fact that sensual, humorous interplay between two subjects can include both animal and human species. Düzakin’s illustrations make this openness explicit by visually including mutual sensual interplay that is both child–child and animal–human (child). Animals are included in this interaction, both verbally and visually, by means of birds “doubling” the visual contact between the children, and a girl and pig are depicted as companions.

The analyses of the relationship between humans and nature in the illustrated picturebook Poems and Unpoems About a Little of Everything have encouraged reflections on and wonder about the interplay and mutual contact between animal and human species. The poetic language, and the interplay between words and pictures, invite deep and nuanced experiences of nature and open the door to a language that is posthuman.

Notes
1 The translation is mine. The book has not been translated into English.
2 Original text in Norwegian: jeg har to hull i hodet/ du har to hull i hodet/ vi har hull i hverandres hoder/ hvis jeg får titte ut på deg/ kan du få titte inn til meg

References


