

# Is there really no place like home?

## Changes in the perception of domestic spaces in German picturebooks from 1945 to the present

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### Abstract

This chapter investigates the changing perceptions of domestic spaces and how it impacts on the complex concept of home in German picturebooks from 1945 until the present. The corpus consists of 38 picturebooks, with roughly five exemplars for each decade. The selection likewise considers the historical fact that Germany has been divided into two states in 1949, the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, until the re-union of both states in 1990. Based on the theoretical framework of cognitive studies with an emphasis on cognitive mapping and cognitive narratology, this chapter inquires how children are introduced into the concept of home on the one hand, and how this concept is closely connected with children's emotional, moral, and cognitive development on the other. As this concept is subject to political, social, and cultural modifications, this survey also demonstrates the impact of these changes onto the narrative and visual depiction of domestic spaces in picturebooks.

**Keywords:** cognitive studies; concept of home; domestic space; Germany; picturebook

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## 1. Introduction

The topic of home plays a significant role in children’s literature. Myriads of children’s books emphasize that children need a home as a place of safety and belonging. If they have to leave home or have no home at all, they long to go back home again or to find a new home. This attitude is congenially captured in the final lines of the movie *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), directed by Victor Fleming, where the girl Dorothy claims, “There is no place like home”<sup>1</sup>.

Based on the theoretical framework of cognitive studies with an emphasis on cognitive mapping (Uttal & Tan, 2000; Kümmerling-Meibauer & Meibauer, 2013; Goga & Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2017), this chapter inquires into how children are introduced to the concept of home on the one hand, and how this concept is closely connected with children’s emotional and cognitive development on the other. As this concept is subject to political, social, and cultural modifications, this survey also demonstrates the impact of these changes on the narrative and visual depiction of domestic spaces in children’s books.

The corpus under consideration consists of 40 German picturebooks published in the period 1945–2018, with roughly five exemplars for each decade<sup>2</sup>.

Table 1. The analysed corpus

Picturebook creators		Title	Year	Decades
Author	Illustrator			
Fritz Nötzoldt	Horst Lemke	<i>Torsten und der Seestern</i> [Torsten and the Starfish]	1947	1945-1950
Anna Süß	Herbert Lehmann	<i>Sonne, Mond und Sterne</i> [Sun, Moon and Stars]	1947	
Hedwig Strahl	Dorothea Geifes	<i>Der Strichmann</i> [The Matchstick Man]	1948	
Frans Haacken		<i>Das Loch in der Hose</i> [The Hole in the Trousers]	1951	1951-1960
Annemarie Wimmer	Kurt Weinert	<i>Wir ziehen um</i> [We Move]	1951	
Günther Hunold	Eva Worel	<i>Vom lieben Gott und der schönen Welt</i> [On the Dear Lord and the Beautiful World]	1953	

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Picturebook creators		Title	Year	Decades
Author	Illustrator			
Carola Gärtner-Scholle	Arthur Lipsch	<i>Die Uhr. Ein froher Tag – im Stundenschlag</i> [The Clock. A Happy Day – in the Strike of the Hour]	1958	
Emerich Huber		<i>Bei Tüddelwitts im Zwergen</i> [With the Tüddelwitts in the Gnomes' Forest]	1958	
Hans Magnus Enzensberger	Gisela Andersch	<i>Zupp</i> [name]	1959	
Alfred Könnner	Karl Fischer	<i>Wenn ich groß bin, lieber Mond</i> [When I am Grown Up, Dear Moon]	1961	1961-1970
Ilse Kleberger	Liselotte and Armin Orgel-Köhne (photos)	<i>Pietro und Anna leben in Italien</i> [Pietro and Anna live in Italy]	1963	
Rita and Peter Volkamer		<i>Ein Bilderbuch zum Erzählen. Für kleine Kinder in der Stadt</i> [A Picturebook for Storytelling. For Little Children in the City]	1963	
Rudi Strahl	Eberhard Binder	<i>Sandmännchen auf der Leuchtturminsel</i> [Little Sandman on the Island of the Lighthouse]	1964	
Heinrich Jeanjour	Gertrud Classen	<i>Die Uhr</i> [The Clock]	1970	
Binette Schröder		<i>Lupinche</i> [Little Lupine]	1970	
Johannes Merkel	Christian Borngräber, Klaus Metschuk (photos)	<i>Zwei Korken für Schlienz</i> [Two Corks for Schlienz]	1971	
Johannes Eucker, Inge Eucker	Helga Kämpf-Jansen, Günter Kämpf	<i>Die Sache mit der Glotze</i> [The Thing with the Telly]	1973	1971-1980
Rüdiger Stoye		<i>In der Dachkammer brennt noch Licht</i> [In the Attic is Still a Light on]	1973	
Reinhard Lippelt	Corinne Senkblei	<i>Papa, was machst du immer im Betrieb?</i> [Daddy, What Are You Doing in the Factory?]	1973	
Janosch		<i>Oh wie schön ist Panama</i> [Oh, How Beautiful Is Panama!]	1978	
Fred Rodrian	Gertrud Zucker	<i>Paul und Janni finden Teddy</i> [Paul and Janni Find Teddy]	1978	

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Picturebook creators		Title	Year	Decades
Author	Illustrator			
Peter Hacks	Klaus Ensikat	<i>Jules Ratte</i> [Jule's Rat]	1981	1981-1990
Nikolaus Heidelbach		<i>Eine Nacht mit Wilbel</i> [A Night with Wilhelm]	1984	
Peter Knorr	Hans Traxler	<i>Der mächtige Max</i> [Mighty Max]	1984	
Nele Maar	Verena Ballhaus	<i>Papa wohnt jetzt in der Heinrichstraße</i> [Daddy Now Lives at Heinrich Street]	1988	
Dieter Wiesmüller		<i>Komm mit, Moritz</i> [Come With Us, Moritz]	1988	
Gudrun Mebs	Quint Buchholz	<i>Die Sara die zum Zirkus will</i> [Sara Wants to Go to the Circus]	1990	1991-2000
Kirsten Boie	Jutta Bauer	<i>Kein Tag für Jul</i> [Not a Day for Juli]	1991	
Peter Schössow		<i>Baby Dronte</i> [Baby Dodo]	1992	
Klaus Baumgart		<i>Laura's Stern</i> [Laura's Star]	1996	
Amelie Fried	Jacky Gleich	<i>Hat Opa einen Anzug an?</i> [Does Granddad Wear a Suit?]	1997	
Peter Schössow		<i>Ich, Kater Robinson</i> [I, Cat Robinson]	1997	
Karoline Kehr		<i>Schi-Schwa-Schweinehund</i> [not translatable, it is a wordplay on the notion of stinker]	2001	2001-2010
Brigitte Luciani	Vanessa Hie	<i>Die Hempels räumen auf</i> [The Hempel Family Tidies Up]	2004	
Siglint Kessler		<i>In einem anderen Haus</i> [In Another House]	2004	
Sonja Bougaeva		<i>Zwei Schwestern bekommen Besuch</i> [Two Sisters Get a Visit]	2005	
Heinz Janisch	Aljoscha Blau	<i>Rote Wangen</i> [Red Cheeks]	2005	
Antje von Stemm		<i>Unser Haus</i> [Our Home]	2005	

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The following criteria formed the basis for the selection: (a) being representative of a specific cultural and societal period of German history; (b) introduction of new or unusual topics, such as finding a new home after the end of the Second World War or having two homes instead of one after the parents' divorce; (c) a focus on the relationships between children and their domestic environments; and (d) representation of the impact of home on the child's cognitive and emotional development. The majority of the picturebooks are fictional stories – both realistic and fantastic narratives – whose texts are mostly written in prose, with the exception of a few older picturebooks that are written in verse. The corpus also includes some informational picturebooks and picturebooks that represent a mixture of descriptive and fictional passages. While almost all picturebooks have black-and-white drawings or full color illustrations, three exemplars feature photos.

Finally, the selection considers the historical fact that in 1949, Germany was divided into two states: the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR). This situation persisted until both states were reunited in 1990. A comparison of picturebooks published in both German states therefore gives an insight into underlying political, social, and cultural issues that have influenced the representation of home over the course of four decades.

## 2. Establishing the concept of home

Still little is known about when exactly children acquire and understand the concept of “home” and whether picturebooks might enhance this process<sup>3</sup>. In this regard, early-concept books and concept books play a significant role. Early-concept books target children aged 12–24 months and show single objects from the child's surroundings, e.g. an apple, a teddy bear, a toothbrush, or a chair. Concept books address children from two years of age and go a step further, since they depict objects that belong to the same conceptual class or domain, for instance toys, furniture, food, and clothing (Kümmerling-Meibauer & Meibauer, 2005, 2018). These objects are closely connected to the child's home. The titles of some early-concept books and concept books, such as *Bei uns zu Hause* (At Our Home, 2014), by Dorothea Cüppers, and *Zu Hause* (At Home, 2010), by Heike Vogel, already point to this close relationship.

By attentively looking at the images of domestic settings, the child learns the words that are necessary to describe the items, thus fostering the child's lexicon. Secondly, the child learns to recognize three-dimensional objects from the surroundings in the two-dimensional depictions of the same objects. Third, the child is able to store mental pictures of these objects, which is a seminal step in the child's acquisition of visual literacy. Since children's homes are the first space they become familiar with, early-concept books and concept books support young children's discovery of their domestic space.

Some concept books allocate objects to a frame, such as the garden, the bathroom, or the nursery. Susanne Ehmecke's *Das kleine Bilderlexikon* (The Little Picture Dictionary, 1949), for instance, depicts individual rooms on the right-hand page and single objects that belong to these rooms on the left-hand page. As a complement to this book type, concept books that focus on scripts very often display domestic scenes that represent actions, such as celebrating a birthday party, helping in the household, or eating dinner together. These concept books introduce children to the behavioral patterns that belong to the particular scripts. In this regard, the popular picturebook series about the little girl Connie (2010-2018) by Liane Schneider, with illustrations by Eva Wenzel-Bürger, is quite effective, because the individual books emphasize everyday situations as well as singular events, such as celebrating Christmas, moving house, and inviting a friend to sleep overnight.

In general, these book types mainly serve the functions of teaching new words and getting acquainted with frames and scripts (Kümmerling-Meibauer & Meibauer, 2015). Moreover, children may understand that home is the space where the child's own bedroom is located and where the child's family lives. However, home is also the starting point for going outside in order to gradually discover the surroundings. In the ensuing sections, this chapter demonstrates how these issues are represented in German picturebooks and how they affect a child's emotional and cognitive relationship to domestic spaces.

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### 3. Preferences in the depiction of domestic spaces

Domestic spaces that are regularly depicted in the picturebook corpus are the living room, the kitchen, the children's bedroom, and the bathroom. The living room and the kitchen play a significant role as they both serve as meeting points for the family. The family members eat breakfast or dinner together, use home appliances, cook food and do other actions that are related to the preparation of meals or the cleaning of the house. The living room is also a space for leisure time, where the family sits together watching TV, reading a newspaper or a book, doing homework, etc. The bathroom is significant for two reasons, namely it highlights the importance of hygiene (showing children having a bath or brushing their teeth) but it is also a place of relaxation and play.

Other domestic spaces, such as the entrance hall, the parents' bedroom, and the garden, sometimes appear in the picturebooks, but they do not seem to be as prominent as the previously mentioned ones. The garden, as represented in *Lupinchen* (Little Lupine, 1970) by Binette Schröder and *Die Sara die zum Zirkus will* (Sara Who Wants to Go to the Circus, 1990) by Gudrun Mebs and Quint Buchholz, is a place of security and discovery at the same time. Two picturebooks, *Zupp* (1959) by Hans-Magnus Enzensberger, and *In der Dachkammer brennt noch Licht* (The Light is Still on in the Attic, 1984) by Rüdiger Stoye, introduce the attic as a space of discovery and excitement. The children in the first picturebook find a violet lion in the attic (although it is not quite clear whether this "lion" might actually be a cat), while the siblings in the second picturebook meet an outsider who lives in the attic. Three picturebooks show unusual domestic spaces. In *Sandmännchen auf der Leuchtturminsel* (Little Sandman on the Lightkeeper's Island, 1964), by Rudi Strahl and Eberhard Binder, the boy Hein lives with his father in a lighthouse on a small island. *Torsten und der Seestern* (Torsten and the Sea Star, 1947) by Fritz Nötzoldt and Horst Lemke, takes place on a boat which is the home of a skipper and his family. Finally, *Komm mit, Moritz!* (Come Along, Moritz!, 1988), by Dieter Wiesmüller, depicts the roof as a refuge for the boy Moritz.

The examined picturebooks have a clear preference for depicting the child's bedroom or playroom. Almost all picturebooks illustrate this room at least once, and in some cases more than once. The actions in *Eine Nacht mit Wilhelm* (A Night with Wilhelm, 1984) by Nikolaus Heidelbach and *Lauras Stern* (Laura's Star, 1996) by Klaus

Baumgart take place in the child's bedroom only. Interestingly, in picturebooks of the 1940 and 1950s, this room looks more like a bedroom than a playroom, as the bed(s) of the children are center stage. In the same picturebooks, these rooms are sparsely furnished, with bed(s), chairs, sometimes a table and a sideboard or night table. Playthings are either not depicted or we find only one toy, such as a ball or a stuffed animal. Frans Haacken's award-winning picturebook *Das Loch in der Hose* (The Hole in the Trousers, 1951), for instance, shows the bare bedroom of a boy, in which nothing but a bed, a wooden chair, and a chamber pot are on display. The wooden planks on the floor and the plain wallpaper additionally underline the room's spartan quality.

This representation changed starting from the 1960s, when the economic boom enabled parents to buy more furniture, clothes, and toys for their children. Consequently, the children's rooms are increasingly equipped with playthings and other items, such as school bags, books, crayons, and posters. In this regard, it is remarkable that the older picturebooks represent orderly and clean children's rooms, while picturebooks from the end of the 1980s onward display rooms in which the floor is covered with playthings, clothes, and other things. Showing such a mess indicates a shift in the adults' perspective, since they seem to respect the child's different attitude towards order. However, some illustrations may also be interpreted as an ironic comment on the child's inability to clean up the chaos. A pertinent example is Karoline Kehr's *Schwi-Schwa-Schweinehund* (2001). In this picturebook, a girl strikes up a friendship with a so-called "Schweinehund" (stinker), who is only visible to her. The Schweinehund persuades the girl to disregard rules of good behavior, such as tidying one's room and not eating sweets after having brushed one's teeth. However, one day the girl changes her mind and tidies her room, which upsets the Schweinehund. In the end, both parties reconcile, which leads to a mess in the girl's room again. The viewer thus can compare the same room in two different states and consider how they reflect the girl's different emotional conditions.

This obvious shift in the depiction of children's rooms mirrors changing pedagogical attitudes, mostly influenced by the anti-authoritarian movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s. From then on, parents and other caretakers seem to be more tolerant and accepting of the chaotic arrangement of objects in the child's bedroom. Moreover, images of the child's bedroom may also provide information on the child's emotional



condition, for instance, whether the child is feeling comfortable or uneasy. In this respect, the arrangement of items in the bedroom as well as the topics presented in the pictures on the wall give insight into the child's potential emotional disturbances. These examples evidently demonstrate that a comparative analysis of the depiction of children's rooms in picturebooks over the course of time may serve as an indicator of pedagogical, social, and cultural changes.

In general, the rooms depicted in the picturebooks are sparsely furnished, at least in those picturebooks that were published in the period 1945-1980. Very often, just few pieces of furniture are shown: a bed, a chair, and a night table in the bedroom (for parents and children), a table, chairs, and a sideboard in the living room or dining room, a table, chairs, and a cupboard or stove in the kitchen, and a sink, bathtub, and chair in the bathroom. The same applies to the objects presented on the visuals: a flower pot, pictures on the wall, a clock, some dishes, sometimes a book or a toy. In relation to the first decades after the war, this representation might reflect the poverty of the inhabitants. They simply could not afford many playthings or expensive furnishings for their homes.

From the 1980s onward, the rooms are depicted with more furniture, thus emphasizing the general prosperity of the population. Moreover, home electronics are evident such as a television set, radio or computer. Particularly the children's playrooms depict children having more toys and books on display, to the extent that these rooms are sometimes crammed with objects – they are strewn on the floor, on the bed and on other furniture<sup>4</sup>.

Another interesting observation is that the illustrations tend to depict recurring scenes and motifs, such as sitting together at the table eating dinner, going to bed, reading the newspaper or a book in the living room, and playing in the child's bedroom. In this regard, the illustrations combine the cognitive concepts of "frame" and "script". While the setting displays furniture, household items, and other objects which are related to a specific domestic space, thus constituting a frame, the actions happening therein refer to scripts. When children have learned that rooms within a house or flat serve specific functions, which are closely connected to frames and scripts, they might recognize those changes that contradict the usual frames or scripts, such as causing mayhem, turning a

living room into a playroom, or decorating a specific room in order to celebrate a festivity.

A comparative study of these scenes gives an insight into the societal and pedagogical changes over the course of more than six decades. The bare rooms of the 1950s and 1960s increasingly give way to rooms filled with furniture, clothes, and toys, thus mirroring economic fortunes as well as the acceptance of child consumerism. Moreover, the order and tidiness of the children's rooms, which dominated the older picturebook versions, give way to illustrations that point to children's imaginative play and the acceptance of a somewhat chaotic arrangement of items that are mostly spread on the floor.

#### **4. Regaining a new home after the Second World War**

Due to the economic crisis and paper shortages, poorly printed picturebooks appeared on the book market during the second half of the 1940s. However, only a few publishers and artists openly addressed the challenges that the German people faced from the second half of the 1940s until the middle of the 1950s (Wehler, 2008). Postwar picturebooks rarely depict the devastation of the German cities caused by the Second World War. The reasons for this are manifold. The German people usually did not want to be reminded of the recent past and its consequences for the present, which resulted in a deep economic, social, and national crisis. Although children witnessed the bombed areas and ruined cities, authors and publishers display a tendency to represent a protected space of childhood. Therefore, many picturebooks of that time showcase a neat and cozy home that depicts an intact world without any housing and food shortages. Werner Hans Bartmes' *Fips im Zirkus Firlefanzy* (Fips in the Circus Firlefanzy, 1948) shows a happy family in a nicely furnished house. They sit at a pretty laid coffee table decorated with a birthday cake and sweets. In Marigard Bantzer's *Die Straße* (The Street, 1950), two children are staying in a big room equipped with comfortable furniture and toys, as if the war had never happened.

Exceptions to this rule are two picturebooks. An illustration in the first of these, *Sonne, Mond und Sterne* (Sun, Moon, and Stars, 1947) by Anna Süß, shows a gang of boys playing in an urban area which is covered by rubble and the ruins of walls. In the GDR

picturebook *Wir gehen durch die große Stadt* (We Walk through the Big City, 1953) a mother visits East Berlin with her two children. A double-page spread shows ruined houses on the left page and newly erected houses and a construction site on the right. The accompanying verses state that bombing during the war has caused the destruction of these houses and streets. The text goes on to say that, following the ideology of the peaceful politics of the new East German state, the GDR government has enabled the erection of new housing within a short time period<sup>5</sup>. While both German states had to deal with housing shortages and faced the challenge of building new homes for the population, this topic seems to be addressed only in GDR picturebooks.

In this regard, moving into a newly-built house was something highly sought among residents of Germany. The GDR picturebook *Wir ziehen um* (We Move, 1951) by Kurt Weinert particularly addresses this idea. A family whose father actively participated in the construction of a new factory, moves into a new house. The three children carry boxes, pots, and lamps upstairs. The subsequent spreads show the family eating dinner together in the new home and the children enjoying the modern bathroom, which was quite luxurious by the standards of the early 1950s.

In line with the precarious conditions that the German people faced in the postwar years, the domestic spaces are scarcely furnished. They display only the most important furniture, such as a bed, a wardrobe, a table, and a chair, and a number of household items. Toys are mostly absent, some pictures show a ball, a stuffed animal, or a doll, if any. Even the concept books of that time reflect the poverty and simplicity of the few objects that children might see in their immediate surroundings. A prominent example is the photobook *Das erste Bilderbuch* (The First Picturebook, 1949) by Erich Retzlaff. The black and white photos show single items, such as a teddy bear and a pair of shoes, which are worn and sometimes even damaged.

## 5. Home scenes as a frame

Most picturebooks in the corpus have a storyline that follows the home-away-home script. That is, the story begins at home and also ends at home, but in between the child protagonists leave home in order to make a trip, visit friends and grandparents, go to kindergarten or school, etc.<sup>6</sup>. In these picturebooks, the home serves as a frame: the child

protagonists leave home but they know for sure that they will return to the same place, where they are awaited by their parents and other caretakers. The respective picturebooks thus emphasize a routine: leaving the comfortable private home in order to discover the public space or to go to public institutions such as the kindergarten, supermarket, or playground, and finally returning home again.

This script emerges in picturebooks in both German states, but it was particularly dominant in GDR picturebooks. This requires an explanation: in accordance with the dictates of Social Realism, the collective was more important than the individual (Wolle, 2013). Therefore, the depiction of domestic scenes seems likely to be restricted to a minimum. At the same time, the child collective is emphasized, whether at the kindergarten, at school, or at official visits to administrative institutions such as a factory, hospital, harbor, or town hall (Bode, 2006). Interestingly, the lived-in spaces of these public places are frequently depicted, for instance, the classroom, pioneers' clubhouses, and the nursery school room. Edith Bergner's *Der erste Schultag* (The First Day at School, 1959), with illustrations by Ingeborg Meyer-Rey, centers on the urban space (the route between home and school) and the different school rooms. Ingeborg Friebel's *Katja und Martin und die acht lustigen Stunden* (Katja and Martin and the Eight Funny Hours, 1950) depicts the multiple settings and activities in a kindergarten. These picturebooks clearly indicate that children are regarded as equal members of the socialist society (Andresen, 2006). From early on, they are acquainted with the public space and encouraged to see the close connections between their private home and public institutions, which together serve the child's welfare. By doing this, the picturebooks impart the new values of the GDR, which consists in constructing a modern society that follows the rules of socialism. This radical change in the perception of reality becomes even more evident in those picturebooks that introduce children to the world of labor. In *Walter und die eisernen Riesen* (Walter and the Iron Giants, 1952) by Siegfried Wagner and Günter Hain, the little boy Walter becomes familiar with the labor conditions at a railway car factory. Günter Eichen's *Der Weg deines Briefes* (The Path of Your Letter, 1952), on the other hand, shows a boy who writes a letter at his desk and then puts it into the letterbox. The reader then follows the path of the letter to the post office and so on, until the letter finally reaches the recipient.

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Following the official policy of the GDR, home is not the prime setting for the child, rather official institutions of education and the site of the adults' labor are.

In contrast, picturebooks published in the FRG brought the individual child to the forefront. Although the individual child is also surrounded by other children, whether siblings, schoolmates, or friends, the protagonist's individuality is at center stage. FRG picturebooks published in the 1950s and 1960s usually avoid political and economic issues, even if the depicted actions happen in public spaces, such as the playground, doctor's office, or shopping mall. Although the child reader is introduced to frames and scripts related to these specific public spaces, one fails to find any connection to general social and political aspects.

However, an interest in political issues emerged in the wake of the 1968 movement (Scott Brown, 2013). The political and pedagogical changes during the 1968 movement had a strong impact on the representation of the home and the related intergenerational discourse in picturebooks. This concerns the emphasis on the equality of children and adults as well as the increasing psychologization of picturebook stories. A case in point is the self-contained picturebook *Papa, was machst Du eigentlich im Betrieb?* (Daddy, What Do You Do at Work?, 1973) by Reinhart Lippelt and Corine Senkblei. Two siblings, a girl and a boy, are curious about their father's job at his company. They secretly leave home to discover the world of labor. By asking questions, the siblings cast a critical eye on the current economic situation and understand that the domestic situation is tightly coupled with the family's economic conditions. The crudely created woodcuts, whose black contours are filled out with different colors (yellow, red, and blue), stress the authors' political approach. The family finally sits down together and discusses important issues on an equal level. Thus, the home becomes a political space as it is closely connected with the current societal conditions. This topic is predominant in picturebooks inspired by leftist and anti-authoritarian ideas that came out at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s.

While most picturebooks focus on actions that happen in the daytime, some picturebooks situate the home-away-home script at night. An eye-catching example is *Komm mit, Moritz* (Come Along, Moritz, 1988) by Dieter Wiesmüller, where the boy Moritz travels on a flying ship to a small island in order to retrieve his favorite book, which has been stolen by pirates. This picturebook like many others ignites the child's

imagination while at the same time imparting the idea that the nighttime is not frightful or dangerous just because of its darkness. Other picturebooks use this schema to narrate a journey to an extraterrestrial or fantastic place. In Alfred Könner's *Wenn ich groß bin, lieber Mond* (When I Am Grown Up, Dear Moon, 1962), the child protagonists fly in a rocket to the moon. In the end, the child characters are cuddled up in their beds again. This narrative strategy indicates that the fantastic journey might be interpreted as a dream in which children are led away into the sphere of imagination and fantasy.

## 6. The child's emotional relationship to home and its inhabitants

While picturebooks that focus on the home-away-home-script usually show 2-3 illustrations that depict the domestic space, there are other picturebooks whose storyline and actions center on the child's home. In this regard, two aesthetic strategies are discernible. In the first case, the everyday experiences of children during the day are narrated. A case in point are informational picturebooks that explain the function of the clock to child readers. The GDR picturebook *Die Uhr. Ein froher Tag im Stundenschlag* (The Clock: A Happy Day at the Striking of the Full Hour, 1958), by Carola Gärtner-Scholle, consists of a sequence of illustrations on which a clock is depicted in the upper-right corner. This clock displays the actual time during which a particular event takes place. The FRG picturebook *Die Uhr* (1970), by Henri Jeanjour and Gertrud Classen, however, has cut-out holes in each illustration. On the final spread, a clock with movable hands is inserted. It invites the child reader to move the hands to point to the correct time, which is indicated in the accompanying text. Apart from the different artistic style, it is striking that the West German picturebook never shows the children's parents, while the East German picturebook always depicts the children together with their parents, thus emphasizing their collaboration and close emotional connection.

The second strategy points to the increasing psychologization of modern picturebooks by highlighting the child's emotional attachment to home and the actions happening in the domestic space<sup>7</sup>. To emphasize this emotional condition, the child is mostly shown together with family members (parents, grandparents, siblings). Prototypical actions on display are sitting together at a table in the kitchen or dining room, playing in the child's

room, bathing or brushing teeth in the bathroom, going to bed, and celebrating a festivity. The majority of actions focuses on joint activities where at least two persons are involved. By contrast, even in pictures that show family members doing different things at the same time, such as reading the newspaper, watching TV, playing with toys, and doing the household chores, the domestic scenes always provide a sense of harmony, which is underscored by the people's smiling faces and relaxed body positions.

The position of the child in relation to the whole space in general and to other persons in particular gives an insight into the child's emotional condition. Whether placed in the middle or at the margins of the illustration, whether shown at equal level with the beholder or from a bird's eye or worm's eye view, whether being singled out or being among a group, the positioning of the child provides implicit information on how the child is emotionally involved with or detached from the other persons.

While the picturebooks from the 1950s and 1960s usually present a harmonious domestic setting, picturebooks from the 1970s onward increasingly display scenes which are emotionally laden. Children show emotions of distress, for instance, crying or fighting with siblings, being in a sad mood, throwing a tantrum by tossing their toys into the corner or turning their back to their parents. The gradual psychologization of characters is mirrored in the domestic settings, since the ordering of the furniture, the position of the figures in space, the coloring scheme, and the light conditions impact on the atmosphere provided by the illustrations and the accompanying texts.

Kirsten Boie's *Kein Tag für Juli* (Not a Day for Juli, 1991) deals with the emotional situation at home. The storyline centers on the emotional imbalance of the girl Juli. Her parents do not have enough time for their daughter, since her father has a huge workload and her mother is busy with Juli's baby brother. The picturebook follows the daily routine of Juli and her parents. The illustrations show different rooms in the apartment, the kitchen, the hall, the bathroom, the living room, and the children's room. Every illustration refers to Juli's feeling of unease. Her mother is tired, her father is making a phone call, while Juli is still putting on her clothes. When her mother is breastfeeding the baby, Juli does something stupid just to attract her parents' attention. The stressful atmosphere finally leads to a situation in which Juli is close to tears. This happens when she finds her mother sitting together with other women and their babies on a carpet in the living room. Her outbursts in the morning and in the evening indicate



that Juli is feeling uncomfortable at home and wishes for some solace. She gets it at last, when her father has a conversation with her while sitting at her bedside.

In the picturebook *Hilfe, der Babysitter kommt* (Help, the Babysitter is Coming, 2015), the boy Olli is waiting for the new babysitter to arrive, because his parents are going to the movies. Since it is the first time that his parents are going out, Olli is quite anxious about the potential babysitter's qualities. The subsequent spreads represent various imagined babysitters, whereby every babysitter turns out to be unsuitable for different reasons. One babysitter behaves like a silly girl who is only interested in clothes and makeup. Another demands that the boy lift heavy weights, the next is a maniac for housework, and so on. However, the real babysitter is a young woman disguised as a pirate who cooks the boy's favorite food, plays hide-and-seek with him, and tells a hilarious goodnight story. Interestingly, each spread shows the family's living room, the kitchen or the boy's room as they are affected by the respective babysitters' behavior and interests. For example, the boy's room is furnished with perfume bottles, combs, brushes, candles, and cushions in pink that match the silly girl's favorite things. In the case of the house-cleaning maniac, the floor of the boy's room is covered with cleaning utensils such as a vacuum cleaner and rags.

Whereas this picturebook is dealing with children's emotional conditions in a slightly comic fashion, more critical topics emerge in picturebooks starting in the 1980s. Anne Maar's *Papa wohnt jetzt in der Heinrichstraße* (Daddy Now Lives on Heinrich Street, 1980) deals with the subject of divorce and how it affects the boy Bernd. The very first picture already demonstrates the cool and combative relationship of the parents who ignore each other. After having an argument, the father leaves the apartment. Bernd hides beneath his father's desk, and in the meantime his father takes some furniture to a moving van. The bird's eye perspective perfectly mirrors the boy's emotional distress. He refuses to have dinner with his mother, but he finds solace in sleeping in his father's empty bed. When he visits his father in the latter's new home for the first time, they have fun making dinner together. Nevertheless, Bernd still refuses to stay overnight, since he cannot accept having two homes instead of one. The next double-page spread with the staircase in the mother's apartment building convincingly depicts the complicated relationship between the three family members. The father is standing lonely at the bottom of the stairs, looking desperately into the void. The mother is

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standing on the apartment's threshold, waiting for her son to join her, while the staircase with its many steps indicates the emotional distance between the parents. However, in the end, Bernd has come to terms with the new situation. The newly-built loft bed in his father's apartment symbolically represents Bernd's insight that he has two homes now.

Amelie Fried's *Hat Opa einen Anzug an?* (Does Grandpa Wear a Suit?, 1997), with illustrations by Jacky Gleich, focuses on the subject of death. A young boy attends his beloved grandfather's funeral and is struggling to cope with this difficult emotional situation. He asks his parents and his older brother about what happens when someone has died. While his brother makes fun of him, his parents show an honest interest in the boy's concerns. The bare rooms with the sparsely distributed furniture tinted in brownish colors mirror the boy's sadness. Sitting in his grandfather's armchair, where he is still reminded of its former owner by the glasses and the book on the windowsill, the blanket on the armrest, and the slippers, the boy seems to be shrunken to a dwarf-like size. As in the subsequent images, the small size of the boy indicates his frailty as well as his feeling of being overwhelmed by an event that he cannot really understand. The picturebook story does not culminate in a happy ending. However, the final spreads show that he is still sorrowful but he has received support from caring and loving parents. Accordingly, the depiction of the domestic space changes by showing a lighter color scheme.

## 7. Discovering other people's homes

Another significant topic in contemporary picturebooks is the discovery of other people's homes. The wimmelbook genre has introduced the motif of the house cut open, thus giving the viewer an insight into what happens in different rooms and flats at the same time. In this manner, children may comprehend that people have varying preferences in relation to furnishings, pets, and hobbies. This strategy also provides an understanding that one's home is part of a bigger domestic space, that is, a building with many flats. This is evident in Ali Mitgutsch's *Rundherum in meiner Stadt* (All Around My Town, 1968) and the renowned wimmelbook series about the fictive city of Wimmlingen, created by Rotraut Susanne Berner. In her textless *Winter-Wimmelbuch*

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(Winter Wimmelbook, 2006), the child reader can follow the actions of multiple characters from their home to the station, the inner city, and a lake district on the city's outskirts (Rémi, 2011). Hence, a comparative perspective on various flats in the same building reveals that the concept of home might have a different meaning for different people. Antje von Stemm's *In meinem Haus!* (In My House!, 2007), for instance, shows a panorama of different ways of life as well as people from various social classes and diverse ethnic and national backgrounds. While one flat is neatly decorated with cozy furniture, plants, carpets, and paintings on the wall, another one looks like a modern loft with spare furnishings, whitewashed walls, and huge posters. Still another flat is crammed with bookshelves, while the neighboring flat is populated by many children who make trouble by throwing their playthings all over the place. In this regard, the visualization of other people's way of life in the same building represents a microcosm, which offers the child an opportunity to understand that all people have a home, but possibly with a different design and varying priorities concerning the furnishings, the relationships of the inhabitants, and the usage of the individual rooms.

Other picturebooks combine the theme of discovering other people's homes with an emotion-related issue. The picturebook *In der Dachkammer brennt noch Licht* (The Light is Still on in the Attic, 1973) by Rüdiger Stoye focuses on an elderly and crippled man who lives in the attic all by himself. The building's inhabitants are prejudiced and rumors are buzzing around the man's outsider status. Two siblings who cannot fall asleep notice that the light is still on in the attic and they speculate whether the man is perhaps sleepwalking on the roof. Intrigued by this, they clandestinely creep up the stairs. The elderly man invites them into his room. Although suspicious, the children finally accept the invitation and learn the reasons for the man's disability. Since he cannot sleep at night due to awful pains, he spends the night on the balcony observing the traffic, the public space, and other people's behavior with his binoculars. This encounter serves as an eye-opener for the siblings and completely changes their behavior toward the elderly man. This change is depicted in the pictures. While the first spreads are dominated by gloomy colors, the man's flat radiates with yellowish and reddish colors. Although his room is sparsely furnished, the stuffed birds on the wardrobe, the many books, and the optical instruments point to the man's erudition and keen interest in observing nature and mankind.

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In almost the same vein, Antje Damm's *Der Besuch* (The Visit, 2015) centers on an old lady, Elise, who lives alone in a house. Since she is afraid of almost everything, she never leaves her home. The gray tones of the walls, furniture, pictures, and dishes give an insight into Elise's emotional condition. Even the plants are tinted in gray and the sunlight cannot penetrate the gray windowpanes. However, the situation changes when a boy knocks on the door and asks Elise whether he is allowed to use the bathroom. Hesitantly, Elise lets him in and while the boy goes upstairs, his red cap and trousers and his yellow shirt seem to stain the stairs. As they engage in a conversation about the pictures on the wall and the books on the shelf, the room gradually changes as different colors, such as yellow, red, and blue, sprawl across the walls and furniture. Even Elise gets red cheeks and her pale skin takes on a rosy glow. When the boy finally leaves and promises to visit her again, the whole room is full of colors and light. The paratext ingeniously captures this surprising change. The front papers show an empty room dominated by grayish tones, thus establishing a depressing atmosphere. The endpapers, however, display the same room radiating with colors and light<sup>8</sup>.

To get an insight into what other people's homes look like is not restricted to one's own neighborhood but can be extended to other cities and even foreign countries. With regard to the effects of the Second World War, German publishers encouraged authors to create children's books that promote mutual understanding, tolerance, and solidarity among children all over the world. The popular photobook series (1962-1971) on children's everyday life in different European countries, with texts by Ilse Kleeberger and photos by the couple Liselotte and Armin Orgel-Köhne, perfectly matches with this goal. The eleven books, which are characterized by a combination of descriptive and narrative passages, focus on two siblings, a boy and a girl. Each photobook follows the same storyline, beginning in the sibling's parental home, showing their living together with their parents and their everyday life at home before they stroll through their hometown and undertake a trip in their country.

These picturebooks presuppose that child readers have already acquired an understanding of the concepts of home and domestic space in order to evaluate and comprehend the housing conditions of other people, whether in their neighborhood, the local area, the surrounding urban or rural space or even farther away. In this way,

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children get an insight into the wide range of living conditions that encompass different social, national, and ethnic groups.

## **8. Conclusion: Changing images of home in picturebooks**

Focusing on the depiction of domestic spaces in picturebooks is a challenging topic, since it encompasses multiple perspectives concerning social, political, educational, and cultural issues. Home is something all human beings need to have, but what exactly constitutes a home differs in relation to the context. The understanding of home may even undergo a change over the course of time. The multifarious aspects of this broad concept cannot be fully covered within a short chapter, but from a cognitive perspective, the following aspects come to the fore. Firstly, the concept of “home” is introduced in early-concept books and concept books that show single objects from the child’s domestic sphere, thus fostering the child’s conceptual and linguistic development. Concept books that focus on a frame or script invite the child to comprehend conceptual domains as well as scripts related to actions that typically take place at home.

Second, the majority of picturebooks use the concept of home as a frame for the picturebook story, following the home-away-home pattern. The home here serves as a starting point for the main characters’ adventures but also as a safe harbor to which they eventually return. Third, the domestic space is characterized by recurring motifs and a preference for specific rooms, above all the child’s bedroom, and standard situations, such as eating breakfast in the kitchen, saying goodbye at the front door, brushing one’s teeth in the bathroom, and playing or going to bed in the child’s room, thus introducing child readers to scripts related to activities at home. Fourth, a host of picturebooks are distinguished by the psychologization of the child characters, as their emotional attachment to home and its inhabitants becomes increasingly important starting in the 1970s. The depiction of the domestic space, exemplified in the arrangement of furniture and objects in the rooms and the modified appearances of the children’s rooms, mirrors the characters’ cognitive and emotional states of mind. Fifth, the depiction of home is closely related to political, social, and economic changes. A case in point is the postwar period, where people were struggling to find a new home after their former homes had

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been destroyed during the war. Following in this line, picturebooks about home may also serve ideological purposes with regard to intergenerational discourse as well as the relationship between the private home and the public space. Finally, there are picturebooks that invite children to discover other people's homes, prominently in wimmelbooks and photobooks that display the living conditions of people residing in the same building, across the neighborhood, and in foreign countries. In this manner, child readers can recognize that there are different conceptualizations of home and they see how these are represented in the furnishings and behavioral patterns of its inhabitants. To conclude, this chapter has demonstrated that the concept of "home" is far from easily understood and that picturebooks may enhance children's understanding of the various meanings of this concept. This chapter could only scratch the surface by revealing the multiple facets of the depiction of domestic spaces in German picturebooks from the end of the Second World War to the present. However, we can clearly see that there is still ample research to be done.

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<sup>1</sup> See also Mavis Reimer's statement, "home is an auratic term in children's literature generally" (Reimer, 2008, XIII).

<sup>2</sup> The corpus solely includes picturebooks created by German authors and illustrators. Picturebooks translated into German have not been considered.

<sup>3</sup> Various studies have analyzed the significance of "home" from a social, environmental, psychological, and literary perspective (Cooper, 1974; Hayward, 1975; Sopha, 1979; Rybczynski, 1986; Naficy, 1999). However, empirical studies on children's acquisition of this concept do not seem to exist yet.

<sup>4</sup> See Goga (2014) on the representation of books and bookshelves in picturebooks.

<sup>5</sup> On the complicated relationship between children's literature and ideology, see McCallum and Stephens (2011).

<sup>6</sup> For more information on the importance of this script, see Clausen (1982), Nodelman (2008, 222-227), and Nodelman and Reimer (2003).

<sup>7</sup> On emotions in picturebooks, see Nikolajeva (2018).

<sup>8</sup> The poetics of space play a dominant role in many children's novels. This finding can definitely be extended to picturebooks (see Bachelard, 1994; Wolf, 1990).

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