



Loss and Dislocation: The Representation of Refugees in Children's Picturebooks

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Abstract:

This paper represents issues faced by refugees. Children's books form an important body of literature because of their role in children's formative years. They enable them to be competent by addressing important cultural, societal, and environmental issues; this promotes psychological, social, and emotional development. Picture books allow discussion of difficult topics by addressing them in a gentle and comprehensible manner. This paper utilizes different styles of children's picture books to highlight the different perspectives on the lives of refugees. It employs psychological realism to provide an in-depth insight into understanding the character's psychology and elaborate on the impact of their environmental factors. By discussing the representation of refugees within the genre of children's picturebooks, it is shown how these books are an effective approach to discussing issues faced by them. The aim is to highlight how addressing such topics using picturebooks brings to attention the issues faced by refugees in hope of developing awareness and empathy in readers, which is crucial today.

Introduction

Over the course of the years, the rise in the number of refugees, migrants, internally displaced persons (IDPs), asylum seekers and stateless persons has rapidly increased. Despite this increase, adequate attention has been lacking paying attention to their immediate needs. Founded in 1950, the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees has logged data on refugee populations that date as far back as 1951. The global refugee crisis has been an escalating issue that has been slowly developing issue through decades of years and has emerged out of conflict. There are several factors which force people to leave their homes such as famine, war, poverty, persecution, sexual assault and climate change to name a few - all of whom seek to find a better life. The struggles and issues faced by people in such unfortunate circumstances require a deep understanding of the impact of human displacement on the refugees as well as the host communities. The experience which children and adult refugees endure is unfathomable but by sharing their journey through literature an awareness can be aroused. Apart from having access to basic necessities refugee children have limited access to proper education. It goes beyond just the lack of access to education but delves deeper into the exposure of such trauma which prohibits them from being able to integrate. Their physical, mental and emotional health is compromised due to the “Prolonged exposure to violence, fear and uncertainty” this prolonged exposure “can have a catastrophic impact on children’s learning, behaviour and emotional and social development for many years” as UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta H. Fore explains. These children have had their childhood ripped away from them and have been forced to switch to survival mode at such a tender age. Some children are even separated from their families, some are sent away on a lonely journey in order for them to find better lives, and others are left orphaned and placed in so many other unfathomable circumstances. Children are left to suddenly take on

mature roles such as tending to younger siblings and taking up the role of a parent. The children are placed in so many unimaginable circumstances all of which leave them in a position of vulnerability – none of which any child should endure. This is where organizations such as UNICEF, Save the Children, Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project and Kids in Need of Defense, to list a few, emerged in order to assist young refugees in different aspects of their lives.

Refugee Studies and Refugee Literature

With a constant rise in the number of refugees, which currently accounts for twenty-six million globally, a more persistent approach to bringing awareness must follow. But the question of which is the most effective and how impactful will the approach arise. Several approaches can be taken and literature is one of the effective modes of creating awareness. This is where Refugee Studies and Refugee Literature play a crucial role in spreading information and awareness. Refugee studies originated as an independent field in the 1980s at the University of Oxford's Department of International Development which aimed to create awareness of the implications faced by people forced to leave their homes. The focus is to research and understand the issues surrounding the lives of refugees, provide outreach programs, as well as research the legal and political aspects such as laws and policies that are related to refugees. This area promotes a wider understanding and insight into areas which should be addressed which provides a proactive manner to address the issues. Refugee literature is another aspect which provides readers globally with literary work which attempts to portray different aspects of the lives of refugees. This body of literature written by and of refugees has existed since the early twentieth century but has been left unrecognized until recently especially as the crisis demands to be noticed.

this literature often went unrecognized because it was hidden away in national literary traditions. Only with the publication of Lyndsey Stonebridge's *Placeless People: Writing, Rights, and Refugees* (2018), for instance, has it become possible to see Simone Weil, W.H. Auden, Samuel Beckett, and George Orwell as part of a generation of writers responding to the conditions of modern refugees. (Bakara 290)

Bakara goes on to explain that as refugee literature emerged in Palestine and Indian subcontinent another relevant category of postcolonial literature emerged simultaneously overshadowing refugee literature. But over the last decade, refugee literature has created a shift from the Eurocentric perspective of the refugee crisis to providing a holistic portrayal of what it entails and encompasses.

In an epoch marked by perpetual war and rising inequality across the globe, and the intensification of Europe's decades long 'refugee crisis,' the ideas and affects found in writing by and about refugees have become sources of intellectual and aesthetic resistance to both xenophobic nationalism and neoliberal globalization. Exploding stereotypes of refugees as 'silent emissaries' and suffering innocents, writers like Viet Thanh Nguyen, Roxane Gay, Warsan Shire, Abu Bakr Khal, Ahmad Almallah, and Jehan Bseiso have reclaimed the refugee's authority to challenge nationalism and national sovereignty as the only legitimate grounds of political community (Bakara 290-291).

Children's Refugee Literature

The transition has allowed for a space to be created to provide realistic portrayals of the struggles faced by refugees with a hint of optimism, resilience and determination. These themes and issues are illustrated not only in adult refugee literature but in children's refugee literature as well. As mentioned earlier, children are at the harsh receiving end of the global crisis. Literary works reflecting and representing this global crisis play a crucial role for they cater not only to provide awareness and empathy for younger and older readers but they also play a vital role for

children placed in the refugee crisis. Books addressing issues and experiences that they can relate to enabling them to relate to which could assist in the healing and recovery process. “Reading and discussing multiple books portraying immigrants and refugees can convey heterogeneity and diversity rather than expecting one text to be representative” (Cummins 24). Amy Cummins explains that books that portray immigrant children with empathy are important in combating ideologies that view immigrants as “outsiders and threats” (Cummins 27). Refugees and migrants integrating into host communities can pose a difficulty for both parties involved due to reservations. Therefore, children’s picturebooks play a vital role in representation for both readers reading about the refugee experience as well as children experiencing the refugee crisis. The body of children’s picturebooks reflecting these topics are growing rapidly but the question of how effective these picturebooks are will be analyzed in the paper. How will picturebooks make a difference to such a large scale issue will be highlighted and whether they can be used as effective modes of education? By addressing these topics through picturebooks the study will enable to analyze whether picturebooks provide a better comprehension of what the term refugee and migrant connotes and what their experiences represent.

Some notable works reflecting these themes are *Everybody’s Welcome* by Patricia Hegarty illustrated by Greg Abbott, *Boundless Sky* by Amanda Addison and Manuela Adreani, *The Day War Came* Nicola Davies illustrated by Rebecca Cobb and Kate Milner’s *My Name is Not Refugee*. This paper aims to utilize four children’s refugee literature specifically focusing on picturebooks and the significant role they play in the representation of their lives. The books which have been selected are *The Journey* by Francesca Sanna (reflecting the journey of family refugees), *Sugar in Milk* by Thrity Umrigar illustrated by Khoa Le (representing the immigrant child’s experience) and *Lubna and Pebble* by Wendy Meddour and Daniel Egnéus (highlighting the child refugee’s

journey). These specific picturebooks have been selected in order to reflect different aspects of the refugee journey and will be discussed in detail below.

Brief History of Children's Picturebooks

Visual images have been a source of communication for centuries and are still an effective mode of communication today. Before delving into the details of the picturebooks selected, a brief discussion will be made in order to provide an understanding of the importance of children's picturebooks and the significance of children's picturebook research. In *Children's Literature Studies: A Research Handbook* M. O. Grenby emphasizes on distinguishing the terms "picture book" and "picturebooks". The term "picture book" is used by some critics to define "any book containing illustrations" (Grenby 36). The term "picturebook" on the other hand emphasizes how the "pictures and words are equally significant, the interaction between them being of central importance" (Grenby 36). The term "picturebook" will be utilized in the paper as it targets the desired focus of the research which aims to analyse the relationship between the illustrations and text. The study of the picturebook genre has developed greatly from being considered a "paradox" due to differing opinions on its contribution to literature (qtd in Nodelman 69). It was of the notion that due to it being viewed as the "province of the young child, and is therefore beneath serious critical notice" it held no literary value (qtd in Nodelman 69-70). Recent developments have discerned that "children's literature, unlike most other areas of literary studies, has a significant visual component, including in the form of illustrated books, picture books, picturebooks, artists books..." (Grenby and Reynolds 72). Illustrations have long since been part of human history, the earliest book which began the trend of forging the relationship between words and pictures

belonged to the 12th and 13th centuries. These were Japanese illustrated scrolls which were intended for children to view. John Amos Comenius's *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* (1658), also known as *Orbis Pictus*, is considered the first picture book for children. Although *Orbis Pictus* was written in a picture book format, its style is very different from contemporary styles, and this evolution has tremendously influenced children's literature. A few examples of popular picturebooks are those of authors such as Julia Donaldson's *The Gruffalo* (1999), Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean's *The Day I Swapped My Dad for Two Goldfish* (1997), Eric Carle's famous *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (1969), *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963) by Maurice Sendak and *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* (1901) by Beatrix Potter to list a few of the plethora of incredible picture books.

Picturebooks are integral to individuals' lives for they encourage the love for reading while simultaneously promoting literacy, creative and critical thinking, empathy and understanding about the world around, an incredible bond is forged between the reader and the child. The illustrations play a crucial role in enhancing the plot as well as evoking emotions while creating new messages each time it is viewed. There are varied approaches to analysing picturebooks from examining them as an "art critic... art historian... a book historian... as a psychologist" (Grenby 200). Some critics observe and study picturebooks as "unified 'texts'" where the relationship between the image and the text is examined while others are studied independently of each other (Grenby 200). Analysis can be made from varied perspectives where the image and text are analyzed equally, where the text contributes to applying meaning to the image or where the image is the contributor to the text adding meaning.

Children's Refugee Picturebooks: *The Journey, Lubna and Pebble and Sugar in Milk*

The three picturebooks have been selected due to their diversity of representation of refugees and migrants from different perspectives and the implications these experiences have on the child refugee and migrant. Roland Barthes' *The Rhetoric of the Image* (1964) will be utilized to briefly illustrate the workings of the image and the text to convey the poignant meanings of each of the texts. Roland Barthes (1915-1980), a post-structuralist French literary theorist, provided the tools to analyze, interpret and understand images by elaborating on the relationship between them. He provides three classifications of meanings/messages within an image and terms them as the linguistic (text) and the coded: the symbolic/connoted message and non-coded messages: the denoted image/literal message (visual/image). The linguistic aspect is the. Employing the tools provided by Barthes text provided with the image is divided by Barthes into the denoted which is the literal meaning and message of the image and connoted which is the symbolic meaning which is derived from the sociocultural and personal connotation interpreted from the text and image. Barthes propounded that these messages need to be interpreted separately but essentially are required to be analyzed as a whole to form a holistic meaning. Barthes's tools of image and text analysis will provide a better understanding of the loss and dislocation reflected in the illustrations of each picturebook. This will enhance the ability to highlight the impact of these messages on the reader by utilizing the literary technique of psychological realism to study the characters. The aim of these approaches will be to illustrate how picturebooks are an effective mode of communicating and conveying messages, especially much-needed awareness regarding refugees.

The first book which will be discussed is *The Journey* by Francesca Sanna an Italian illustrator and graphic designer. Sanna explains that *The Journey* is "a story about many journeys"

based on experiences shared by several migrants and refugees whom she met. Their shared experiences sparked a realization that “behind their journey lay something very powerful” (Sanna npag). Their experiences inspired her to write and illustrate the powerful picturebook with stylized spread illustrations and contrasting colours which enhance the accentuation of the various themes addressed in the story. The story follows a young girl who shares her experience of having to flee her home with her mother and brother following the loss of her father after “the war began” (Sanna 4). The picturebook follows their journey to seek asylum in a new country and the perils they face along the gruelling journey. The text in double spread one to three introduces the arrival of the war which brought with it “bad things... nothing but chaos” (Sanna 4). Loss is experienced like no other when the war “took” her father as well as their city, homes, lives and everything they knew (Sanna 5). The texts in these three double spreads depict the war that arrives and disrupts all sense of normalcy. The illustrations begin with a contrast of the light and bright orange of the city representing normalcy contrasting the black sea which is seen slowly consuming and reaching out to cause “chaos.” The linguistic aspect (text) in double spread three states “And one day the war took my father” which is supported by the images of the protagonists' father's glasses and debris floating in the darkness (Sanna 5). The denoted message/meaning is that “war” brought “chaos” leading to destruction and fear. The connoted message/meaning is that this family represents the millions of families facing these tragedies and uncertainties that war brings about. This family represents the 103 million forcibly displaced people out of which 36.5 million are children as registered by the UNHCR. The underlying interaction between the linguistics and the images, specifically the hand of darkness reaching out and eventually bringing with it havoc and destruction effectively breaches the topic of loss in *The Journey*. The picturebook continues as the family decide to escape to a “safe place” where they will “not be frightened anymore” (Sanna 11-

12). The theme of dislocation enters the picturebook as their journey to escape begins in single spreads nine to twelve as they “leave at night to avoid being seen and keep moving for many days” (Sanna 15-16). As their journey progresses the images illustrate the switching roles of the mother driving and unknown drivers assisting their escape. The journey progresses and their belongings dwindle until it is the mother riding a bicycle with just her children in a trailer. There is a shift from the linguistic text “the more we leave behind” to the visual of the mother riding the bicycle which signifies that it is not just their belongings they have left behind – the denoted message but their lives which signifies the connoted message (Sanna 18). On being denied entry at the border the mother and children await their uncertain destiny in the “darkness of the forest” which scare the children but are reassured that “mother is with us and she is never scared. We close our eyes and finally fall asleep” (Sanna 23-24). Single spread fifteen and sixteen are poignant for they depict the silent pain a refugee and migrant mother/father/parent faces as they cradle their children for security. Spread sixteen depicts the perception the children have of their mother as brave and courageous as her attire is orange and colour fills the illustration. But the next spread illustrates the reality of the crying mother – the fears she faces for her children with the illustration turning dark. The connoted message works in relation to the linguistic text “she is never scared” to illustrate firstly the incredible strength a refugee mother/father has, the face of bravery they put up for their children (Sanna 24). This strength juxtaposed with the other side of the reality of their situation: the fear and uncertainty of their children’s lives where the mother is in tears as the children safely fall asleep in her arms. On finally being assisted to cross the border, their perilous journey on land shifts to the sea where the visual imagery once again depicts blue hands reaching out to their orange boat. Here they meet others on the same path, a connection is forged, and stories are shared – a glimpse of hope amidst the sea of uncertainty. Finally, back on land, the family

board an orange train in double spread nine and concludes with the protagonist observing the birds above “migrating just like us [them]” where she hopes that “one day, like these birds, we [they] will find a new home. A home where we can be safe and begin our story again” (Sanna 39). The picturebook concludes with the shift from linguistic in single spread twenty-one to single spread twenty--two with the mother, son and daughter on the neck of an orange flamingo soaring the skids over the sea with a diverse flock of birds. The extent of the sense of freedom can truly be conveyed through the use of the visual component. We are not informed about whether they find a home, but the story concludes with a sense of hope with the symbolic image of soaring on a bird creating the connoted message of freedom and the variety of birds reflects the scope of a diverse new land.

The second picturebook, *Lubna and Pebble*, written by Wendy Meddour describes the arrival of a young girl at a refugee camp who seeks comfort from a stone she names Pebble. It highlights the plight of child refugees and the loneliness felt in such camps while incorporating the theme of friendships that are forged and the unsettling and fleeting nature of the lives of refugees. The illustrator Daniel Eng us, employs a stylized spread illustration format which is delicately and sensitively executed. The first double spread depicts a wide-eyed Lubna gazing in admiration at her newly found “best friend” (Meddour 1). The linguistic text quickly shifts to the large innocent eyes (the visual) to depict the fondness Lubna has for her best friend, a pebble. Single spread one, two and double spread two elaborate on the attachment Lubna develops towards the stone after finding it “on the beach when they arrived in the night” (Meddour 3). Much like *The Journey*, the illustrations of *Lubna and Pebble* engage with the contrast of light and darkness. Single spread one has Lubna placed between two towering ships in the shadows as she delicately crouches on the waters placed in the light of the water. The visual transitions from darkness to light as it shifts to the linguistic on this page which connotes the innocence of little Lubna. Lubna

awakens to “a World of Tents. Lubna clutched Daddy’s hand and gripped her pebble. Somehow, she knew they’d keep her safe” (double spread two) where the image portrays several clotheslines draped with clothes (Meddour 4-5). The vastness of the clothesline is shown from the perspective of Lubna as they tower over her naturally causing a sense of unease, but her innocence allows her to find security in her father and Pebble. In single spreads three and four Lubna finds “a felt-tip pen. She drew a happy face on her pebble. ‘Hello, Pebble,’ whispered Lubna. Pebble smiled back” (Meddour 6-7). The linguistic perspective explains that Pebble smiled back which is supported by the visual which illustrates Lubna drawing the smile on the pebble. This is a perfect example of how the linguistic and image/visual work in a supportive and corresponding relationship with one another. The meaning of the linguistic text, “Pebble smiled back” would be lost without the visual image of Lubna drawing the smile on the pebble. Denoted this signifies a child’s enthusiasm towards drawing and coloring but the connotation signifies her loneliness through her journey and her desire for a friend to provide a sense of security and comfort. Lubna’s loss is elaborated in double spread three where she tells “Pebble everything. About her brothers. About home. About the war” where the text transitions to a whimsical display of her brothers flying kites and her next to her father. Fighter jets are flying into Lubna double spread where she sits with Pebble at the bottom left of the double spread. The flying of the fighter jets into her space is a salient signifier of the cause of her predicament and loss which provides the connotated meaning of the image. The story progresses to Lubna finding solace in Pebble and eventually establishing a friendship with another boy named Amir. Single spread seven displays a desolate boy with shadowed flowers forming a shadow below him but following his introduction to Pebble in single spread eight he “smiled” as the visual illustrates him reaching out for Pebble. The innocent nature of the friendship, despite the troubling circumstances that surround them, is transmitted in double spread five where

the whimsical illustrations depict a magical world of their own. On hearing the news of finding a new home, Lubna is conflicted between the emotions of excitement and the loss of leaving her friend Amir behind. The conflict of leaving a friend behind surrounds Lubna in single spread eleven as darkness surrounds her as she hides under her blanket. The next morning Lubna knew what to do and gifts Pebble to Amir and on being asked “what do I do if I miss you?” responds “Tell Pebble all about it... Amir nodded and held the shoebox tight” (Maddour 23-24). The linguistic code and visual code in single spread fourteen is incredibly powerful and significant. They complement each other with the text explaining how Amir holds the shoebox tight to the illustration which now contrasts the first image introducing Amir to this image where the darkly shaded floral shadows are now coloured and vibrant. Lubna boards the ship and picturebook concludes with double spread seven which mirrors the first double spread of Lubna gazing wide-eyed at Pebble. The image is of Amir who says, “Hello, Pebble,” connoting two significant messages, firstly that he now has a companion and a sense of security. This is a double-sided metaphor of how unfortunate the circumstances of a child refugee are where a stone becomes a companion and a sense of security. It also signifies the misfortune for these children to have to live in such temporary settings that are a repeated cycle. Lubna’s act of kindness creates a similar tone as Nicola Davies’ poem turned picture book *The Day the War Came* where a young, orphaned refugee child, who loses his family to the war, finds no room anywhere for him including a school for they had no more chairs. On accepting his loss, he returns to his hut to find a little girl banging at the door bringing a chair for him where “She smiled and said “My friends have brought theirs too, so all the children here can come to school” (Davies npag). The young boy finally gets an opportunity “to learn about volcanoes, frogs and singing/ And drive the war out of my heart.”

These stories reflect the large-heartedness children possess and the impact they can bring to society.

The third picturebook, *Sugar in Milk* by Thrity Umrigar an Indian-American novelist and journalist who immigrated from Mumbai, India to the United States. Born to a Parsi family, her roots and culture are imbibed into her picturebook as it is beautifully portrayed by Vietnamese illustrator Khao Le. It shares the story of a young girl who immigrated to a new country and initially struggles to integrate into her host community until her Aunt shares a traditional tale to encourage her. This story conveys the struggles immigrant children face as they are dislocated from their homes and familiar surroundings. Following the stylized spread illustration style as the previous two picturebooks, the story begins with the protagonist sharing “When I first came to this country, I felt so alone” (Umrigar 2). The linguistic text is supported by the visual double-spread image of a girl walking across carrying a vast area of snow with skyscrapers in the background. The vastness of the landscape in the image in comparison to her petite size accentuates the feeling of being “alone” as she walks across the snow-clad space. Double spread illustration two further displays her loneliness and loss as she shares about how her “friends and my [her] family were all back home. I missed my mom and dad and my cats” the visual mode supports the text by casting a large shadow of a cat covered in floral patterns behind the protagonist. The next double spread truly represents the sense of dislocation the protagonist experiences as she sits in her room adorned with representations of her home and culture as she stares out at the skyscrapers of the new city. There is a stark contrast between the detailed floral illustrations and colours of the room in contrast to the grey buildings beyond her windowpane. The contrast in detail and colours between the two spaces further connotes the perception the protagonist has of the two places and her sense of dislocation. The story progresses with her Aunt and Uncle attempting to bring happiness to their

niece but failing until her Aunt shares a story about the Persians migrating to India. The Persian leader arrives and pleads with the king of India “in a different language I [he] did not understand” (Umrigar 15) only to be turned away. The weight of the rejection laid heavy on the leader's chest, as depicted in double spread ten where the travellers are depicted in a manner which symbolizes the leader carrying them on his shoulders. The leader finally comes up with the idea of offering sugar to the King's milk which is incredibly illustrated in double spread fourteen where the text explains that “Between two wise people, sometimes words are not necessary” (Umrigar 31). The image denotes the leader bowing to the king with the freshly sweetened milk with the text “The king understood what the leader meant: *If you let us stay, O Mighty King, we will live in peace beside all of you*” (Umrigar 31). The respect the leader has for the king cannot be understood just from the text therefore requires the image to convey the message effectively. Behind the leader and the king are illustrations of a female and male peacock respectively. The peacock is believed to be a symbol of monarchy in Persian culture and is famously known as the National bird of India which symbolizes grace and beauty. The connoted message portrays the cultural context of the leader and the king and by double spread sixteen the unification between the travellers and the king has been forged as “the king hugged the group of travelers.” The image portrays the king embracing the leader as the peacocks behind forging a bond of their own. Following the conclusion of the story, the illustrations of the new city in double spread eighteen become more vibrant as the protagonist takes “another step – into the dazzling light of America. Nothing had changed. And yet, everything had” (Umrigar 40). Double spread nineteen captures the young protagonist integrating into the host community and the children responding and reciprocating her initiative where she “laughed out loud and wondered why I [she] had ever been sad or lonely in such a welcoming place” (Umrigar 42). The story concludes with the young girl dropping crystals of

sugar “to remind me [her] to make things sweeter wherever I [she] wandered” which formed a blooming flower (Umrigar 44). Integrating into a host community is challenging for any immigrant, especially children who are displaced from their homes. Both the migrant and the host community require approaches to integrate due to the different aspects which need to be acknowledged. Several challenges arise such as the language barrier, as represented in the story discussed, which disrupts the means to communicate effectively for both parties involved. The lack of linguistic integration can cause an invisible wall creating apprehension and preventing integration. This of course requires a delicate and intricate approach as the Council of Europe explains is a “multi-faceted process” and thus requires several steps and implementations. The aspect of cultural differences, linguistic barriers, and isolation to name a few are required to be delicately dealt with to enable a comfortable integration into society, which begins with awareness.

Picturebooks are an effective mode to bring about this awareness and share information about the topic of refugees and immigrants. “Pictures often slow readers down, the images becoming the subject for meticulous study” where the denoted messages can be interpreted by the child audience and connoted message understood by the adult audience (Grenby 201). This promotes different levels of analysis and interpretation which encourage different meanings which in return provide awareness. Picturebooks addressing the issues of refugees and migrants are

No longer bound to representing the traumatic events that legitimate claims to asylum, the new refugee literature works instead to participate in the creation of diverse political futures, for refugees and citizens alike. To encounter this literature, as Yogita Goyal observes, is to see how “the refugee demands new paradigms for conceptualizing relation both historically and spatially” (383) (Bakara 290-291).

Much like the three picturebooks discussed above, which bring to light the struggles faced by refugees and migrants especially children who endure such experiences, they all conclude with an optimistic hint of hope, which is not blaring or unrealistic but subtle and realistic. These

picturebooks illustrate the “creation of diverse political futures, for refugees and citizens alike” (Bakara 290). The study of the relationship between the linguistic and the visual illustrates the value, impact and significance of children’s picture books representing refugees and migrants. They effectively convey the necessary and poignant message of the gruelling experiences the refugees and migrants (especially children refugees and migrants) face. They facilitate and encourage a better understanding of the complicated topic as in the selected picturebooks which would naturally be difficult to broach as a general topic with children. The complimentary inter-animation between text and image enables an effective approach to such topics. Picture books are composite wholes, essentially made of words and images, and a true understanding of their meaning can only be achieved if both illustrations and language are read in combination and as equally essential parts of the multimodal ensemble (Guijaro 48). This relationship conveys effective meanings and modes to illustrate the realism of the situations the characters experience. It further highlights the psychologically realistic portrayals of the mental and emotional processes the characters experience. By delving into these aspects, the paper highlights the incredible depth and power the picturebook possesses to address and represent the loss, and dislocation as well as the optimistic aspect of hope in the lives of refugees and migrants.

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