

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

The 20th Child and the Book Conference
“Diaspora(s), Exile, Nomads and Children’s Literature”
May 29-June 1, 2026

Co-Organisation



ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΚΡΗΤΗΣ
UNIVERSITY OF CRETE



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
Εθνικόν και Καποδιστριακόν
Πανεπιστήμιον Αθηνών
— ΙΔΡΥΘΕΝ ΤΟ 1837 —

Department of Primary Education, University
of Crete

&

Department of Pedagogy and Primary
Education, National and Kapodistrian
University of Athens

Venue: Gallos Campus, Rethymnon



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Former Venues

No.	Date	Place	Host Institute	Conveners	Theme
20.	May 29- June 1, 2026	Rethymnon, Crete, GR	Department of Primary Education, University of Crete (host) & Department of Primary Education, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens	Vassiliki Vassiloudi & Tzina Kalogirou	<i>Diaspora(s), Exile, Nomads, and Children's Literature</i>
19.	April 23- 25, 2025	Tilburg, NL	Tilburg University	Sonali Kulkarni, Élodie Malanda, Jessaline Tanjung, Rosalyn Borst, Lois Burke, Suzanne van der Beek & Sara Van den Bossche	<i>Children Shaping the(ir) World: Between the Exceptional and the Everyday</i>
18.	May 2 -4, 2024	Rouen, FR	University of Rouen	Virginie Douglas	<i>Making, Building, Mending: Creativity and Craftsmanship in Children's Literature and Culture</i>
17.	May 15- 17, 2023	Podgorica, ME	Faculty of Philology, Music Academy and Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Montenegro	Svetlana Kalezić Radonjić	<i>The Magic of Sound: Children's Literature and Music</i>
16.	May 26- 28, 2022	Valetta, MT	University of Malta	Giuliana Fenech & Vanessa Joosen	<i>The Role of the Child as Citizen: Constructing Childhood Through Agency and Activism</i>
15.	March 24-26, 2021	Berlin, DE	Freie Universität Berlin (host) and Humboldt- Universität zu Berlin and Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen.	Farriba Schulz, Bettina Kümmerling- Meibauer & Petra Anders	<i>Transformation and Continuity: Political and Cultural Changes in Children's Literature from the Past Century to the Present Day.</i>
14.	May 8- 10, 2019	Zadar, HR	Croatian Association of Researchers in Children's Literature & University of Zadar	Smiljana Narančić Kovač & Robert Bacalja	<i>Beyond the Canon (of Children's Literature)</i>
13.	March 30-April 1, 2017	Valencia, ES	Teachers' Training Faculty, University of Valencia	Xavier Minguéz Lopez & Maria Alcantud	<i>Interdisciplinary Links Between Children's Literature and the Other Arts</i>

12.	May 19-21, 2016	Wrocław, PL	Faculty of Philology, University of Wrocław	Dorota Michułka	<i>Children's Literature and Play.</i>
11.	March 26-28, 2015	Aveiro, PT	Centre for Didactics and Technology in Teacher Education, Department of Education, University of Aveiro	Ana Margarida Ramos	<i>Children's Literature. Fractures and Disruptions.</i>
10.	April 10-12, 2014	Athens, GR	National and Kapodistrian University of Athens	Tzina Kalogirou	<i>Time, Space and Memory in Literature for Children and Young Adults</i>
9.	March 21-23, 2013	Padua, IT	The Department of Philosophy, Sociology, Pedagogy and Applied Psychology, University of Padua	Marnie Campagnaro	<i>Children's Literature, Technology and Imagination. Research, Problems and Perspectives</i>
8.	March 30-April 1, 2012	Cambridge, UK	Faculty of Education, The Cambridge-Homerton Research and Teaching Centre for Children's Literature, University of Cambridge	Erin Spring	<i>Towards Common Ground: Philosophical Approaches to Children's Literature</i>
7.	April 8-10, 2011	Oslo, NO	Nordic Network for Children's Literature Research, University of Oslo	Åse Marie Ommundsen	<i>Picturebooks of the New Millenium</i>
6.	May 1-3, 2009	Nanaimo, CA	Faculty of Education, Vancouver Island University	Virginia MacCarthy	<i>This Land is our Land</i>
5.	May 16-18, 2008	New York, USA	Buffalo State College, Buffalo State University	Karen Sands-O'Connor	<i>Making the World Perfect</i>
4.	March 30-April 1, 2007	Istanbul, TR	Department of Western Languages and Literatures, Boğaziçi University	Anthony Pavlik	<i>Lost In Translation</i>
3.	April 7-9, 2006	Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK	NIASSH, University of Newcastle	Sarah Barber	<i>Children's Literature: From the Past to Present</i>

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|----|-------------------|-------------|--------------------------|---|--|
| 2. | April 16,
2005 | Antwerp, BE | University of
Antwerp | Vanessa Joosen
&
Katrien Vloeberghs | <i>Changing Concepts of
Children and Children's
Literature</i> |
| 1. | April 3,
2004 | London, UK | Roehampton
University | | <i>Current Scholarly
Approaches to Children and
Literature</i> |

The Programme at a glance

Day One (Friday, May 29, 2026)	
8.00-9.00	Registration & Networking
9.00-10.00	Opening
10.00-11.00	Keynote I
11.00-11.30	Coffee Break
11.30-13.00	Panel I-V
13.00-14.00	Light Lunch
13.00-13.30	Launch of Illustrators' exhibition (University Library); Introduction by Greek IBBY President Vangelis Iliopoulos
14.00-15.30	Panel VI-X
15.30-16.00	Coffee Break
16.00-17.30	Panel XI-XV
20.00 onwards	Reception by the Municipal Authorities of Rethymnon (Municipal Garden)

Day Two (Saturday, May 30, 2026)	
8.00-9.00	Registration & Networking
9.00-10.00	Keynote II
10.00-11.30	Panel XVI-XX
11.30-12.00	Coffee Break
12.00-13.30	Panel XXI-XXV
13.30-14.30	Light Lunch
14.30-16.00	Panel XXVI-XXX

16.00-16.30	Coffee Break
16.30-18.00	Roundtable
20.00-22.30	Conference Dinner

Day Three (Sunday, May 31, 2026)	
8.00-9.00	Networking
9.00-10.00	Keynote III
10.00-11.30	Panel XXXI-XXXV
11.30-12.00	Coffee Break
12.00-13.30	Panel XXXVI-XL
13.30-14.00	Closing/Farewell
14.00-15.00	Light Lunch
20.00-22.00	Scientific Board Dinner

Day Four (Monday, June 1, 2026)	
8.00-18.00	Day trip

FRIDAY, MAY 29 2026

8.00-9.00

REGISTRATION & NETWORKING

OPENING (Amphitheatre D7)

Welcome address

Prodromos (Xenakis), His Eminence, Metropolitan Bishop of Rethymnon and Avlopotamos
 Prof. George Kontakis, Chancellor of the University of Crete
 Maria Lioni, Vice Governor of Rethymnon
 George Marinakis, Mayor of Rethymnon

9.00-10.00

Prof. Andreas Fountoulakis, Dean of the School of Education, University of Crete
 Prof. Vassilis Tsafos, Dean of the School of Education, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
 Prof. Dimitrios Stavrou, Head of the Department of Primary Education, University of Crete
 Prof. Thomas Babalis, Head of the Department of Pedagogy and Primary Education, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

Opening remarks by Vassiliki Vassiloudi, University of Crete & Tzina Kalogirou, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

KEYNOTE LECTURE I (Amphitheatre D7): 'How Can I Long for a Place I've Never Been?' Postmemory and Generational Nostalgia As Imagined Memories and Drawn Identities In Picturebooks of the Diaspora, Petros Panaou

10.00-11.00

Chair: Vassiliki Vassiloudi

11.00-11.30

COFFEE BREAK

11.30-13.00
 [Panels marked with an * indicate a panel proposal in response to the CfP]

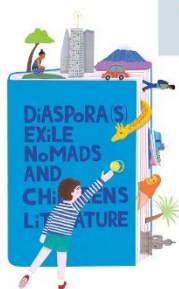
Amphitheatre D7	Amphitheatre G2	Amphitheatre G1.7	Amphitheatre O/A	Tsoupakis Room
<p>Panel 1 Mythic Roots and Classical Adaptations</p> <p>Chair: Maria Truglio</p> <p>Looking at the Mythic Roots of the Diaspora Narrative: Rewritings of Odysseus's Journey in Contemporary Italian Children's Literature Letterio Todaro</p> <p>An Ancient Myth About Exile and Flight: Adaptations of Daedalus and Icarus for Children Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer</p> <p>Tracing Greek Heritage in Ukrainian Diasporic Literature: From Aesop to Olympism Maryna Vardanian & Vladyslav Vardanian</p>	<p>Panel 2 Inter-species Kinship and Allegories of Displacement</p> <p>Chair: Susanne Reichl</p> <p>Elective Affinities? The Trope of Transspecies Adoption Anne Morey & Claudia Nelson</p> <p>Living Sculptures in Contemporary Greek Children's Fiction and their Stories of Displacement, Wandering and Nostalgia Maria Karaiskou</p> <p>Nowhere to Return To: Climate Refugees in Contemporary Children's and Young Adult Literature Alexander Miroforides, Triantafyllos H. Kotopoulos, Anna Vakali & Dimos Chloptsiodis</p>	<p>Panel 3 Performing Exile: Theatre and Dramatherapy</p> <p>Chair: Georgios Chatziavgerinos</p> <p>Modern Bildungstheater. The Experience of Migration as Material in Dramatherapy for Ukrainian Young Adults Justyna Kowal</p> <p>From Dramatic Text to Pedagogical Practice: Negotiating Displacement, Belonging and Children's Identity through Theatre Aimilia Karantzouli</p> <p>Staging Diasporic Memory: Metatheatricality, Intertextuality, and Child Refugee Identity in <i>The boy in the Ioge</i> Maria Dimaki-Zora</p>	<p>Panel 4* Voices of Exile in Early Holocaust Children's Literature</p> <p>Chair: Ada Bieber</p> <p>The First Children's Book about the Holocaust: Asscher-Pinkhof's <i>Sterrekinderen</i> Ada Bieber</p> <p>From Thessaloniki to Haifa: The Life Narrative of Alberto Matarasso Eleftheria Koukoura</p> <p>Janusz Korczak's Second Coming in Jerusalem: Uri Orlev and the Reincarnation of Polish Children's Literature in Hebrew Daniel Feldman</p>	<p>Panel 5 Displacement and Return Narratives in Picturebooks</p> <p>Chair: Angela Yannicopoulou</p> <p>Exile, Home, Return: Children's Literature and the Question of Belonging María Alcantud-Díaz & Carmen Gregori-Signes</p> <p>Mapping Childhood Displacement in Cypriot Narratives for Children: Space, Memory, and Trauma in Picturebook Narratives Despina Heracleous</p> <p>Waiting, Journeying, Uniting. Home and Space in Left-behind Children's Picturebooks Ginny Qian Qian Xu & Li Jinger</p>

13.00-14.00

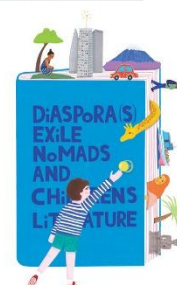
LIGHT LUNCH

13.00-13.30

Launch of the illustrators' exhibition (University Library):
 Introduction by the Greek IBBY President Vangelis Iliopoulos



	Ampitheatre D7	Ampitheatre G2	Ampitheatre G1.7	Amphitheatre O/A	Tsoupakis Room
14.00-15.30	<p>Panel 6 Indigenous Voices and Nomadic Subjectivity Chair: Larissa Rudova</p> <p>Carrying the Land: Indigenous Relationality as Resistance to Exile and Diaspora in Cherie Dimaline's <i>Hunting by Stars</i> Anah-Jayne Samuelson</p> <p>Reconfiguring Diasporic Identities through Hñähñu Children's Literature: Trilingual Craft and AI Mediation in Rosa Maqueda's <i>Hyazná</i> Ignacio Ballester Pardo & Dolores Miralles-Alberola</p> <p>Nomadism and a Reindeer Herder Childhood: The Story of Elle Kari as Children's Book and Beyond Sara Pankenier Weld</p>	<p>Panel 7 Visual Aesthetics of Mobility Chair: Dorota Michulka</p> <p>From Root Shock to Rhizomes: Visualising Home Loss and Post-Migration Belonging in Contemporary Picturebook Illustrations Tanja Schangin</p> <p>Arabic Picturebooks' Depictions of Forced Migration and the Use of Color Sondos Shehadeh</p> <p>Fragmented Visibility: The Visual Metonymy of Hands in Refugee Picturebooks Angela Yannicopoulou & Chrysa Kouraki</p>	<p>Panel 8 Powerful Metaphors in Mobility Narratives Chair: Nadiia Pavlyk</p> <p>The Pedagogy of Hospitality: Power, Silence, and Diaspora in Shaun Tan's <i>Eric</i> and Chris Naylor-Ballesteros' <i>The Suitcase</i> Elahe Mousavian</p> <p>When the Stranger Shrinks: Metaphors of Assimilation, Loss and Becoming in Contemporary Picturebooks Elli-Eleni Petala & Dimitris Goulis</p> <p>Can The Suitcase Accommodate a Whole Life? Kindergarten Children's Dialogues on Refugees in a Community of Philosophical Inquiry Sofia Nikolidaki</p>	<p>Panel 9 The Ukrainian Crisis: Perspectives from Outside and Within Chair: Eleanor Johnston</p> <p>Home, Identity, and Memory in <i>You Don't Know What War Is: The Diary of a Young Girl from Ukraine</i> (2022) Åse Marie Ommundsen</p> <p>People Are Now Afraid of Explosions. About Polish Children's Books Dealing with the War in Ukraine Dorota Ucherek</p> <p>Informational Picturebook On the Move: European Reception of Romana Romanyshyn & Andriy Lesiv's Informational Picturebook <i>Куду і зваїдку</i> Krzysztof Rybak</p>	<p>Panel 10 Mobility Narratives in Empirical Contexts Chair: Margarida Castellano-Sanz</p> <p>Between Homes and Stories: Co-Constructing Meaning and Sensitivity in Multimodal School Literacies Elena Guichot Muñoz, María Asuero Vázquez, Giulia De Sarlo & Margarida Castellano Sanz</p> <p>Exploring Migration Through <i>The Ferris Wheel</i>: A Bibliotherapy Case Study in Early Childhood Education Berna Sicim Sevim & Nuran Başoğlu</p> <p>Diaspora as Relation: Ethics of Care and Collaborative Work with Children in Post-Migrant School Contexts Giuliana Fenech, Farriba Schulz & Sandy Calleja Portelli</p>
15.30-16.00	COFFEE BREAK				
16.00-17.30	<p>Panel 11 Diaspora and Transnational Childhoods Chair: Sibylle Doucet</p> <p>Polish Diaspora in Sweden Presented in Barbara Gawryluk's <i>Moje Bullerbyn</i> (My Bullerbyn) Krystyna Zabawa</p>	<p>Panel 12 African Diasporas Chair: Svetlana Kalezić-Radonjic</p> <p>Travelling Wax, Travelling Self: Constructing Nomadic Subjectivities and Heritage in <i>Wax Paradoxe</i> by Justine Sow (2025) Kirsten Husung & Marianna Missiou</p>	<p>Panel 13 Digital Cultures and Displacement I Chair: Krzysztof Rybak</p> <p>Emotion Bonds and Liminal Becoming: How Retold Chinese Folktales Foster Diasporic Youth Identity Yanjin Liu</p>	<p>Panel 14* Different Countries, Same Aspirations: Exploring Diaspora Stories in International Picturebooks Chair: Janet Evans</p> <p>Yearning for Home – but Where is Home and Where Do I Belong? Emigration, Diasporas and Belonging in Allen Say's Picturebooks Janet Evans</p>	<p>Panel 15 Post-colonial Narratives and Readings of Migration and Diaspora Chair: Nina Friess</p> <p>Postcolonial Perspectives on Home and Unhomeliness in Contemporary Picturebooks About Diaspora Camilla Ringkjøbing Jensen & Sissil Lea Heggernes</p>



16.00-17.30	<p>Imagining Greekness in Greek-Australian Children's Literature: The Role of Oikogeneia and Maternal Agency in Transmitting Diasporic Memory Rosy-Triantafyllia Angelaki</p>	<p>Tangled-up Boundaries: Djaimila Pereira de Almeida's <i>That Hair</i> and the Boundaries of the Young Adult Category Paulina Junko</p>	<p>Lost Homelands and Surreal Hostlands: Diasporic Readings of Studio Ghibli's Worlds Georgios Chatziavgerinos</p>	<p>Where the Dragon Belongs: Cultural Hybridity in Chinese Diaspora Picturebooks Maggie Chan</p>	<p>Love, Communion, and Power: Postcolonial and Feminist Re-readings of <i>The Little Prince</i> in Religious Education Spyridoula Athanasopoulou-Kypriou</p>
	<p>What Should the Young Polish Diaspora Read—and Why? An Overview of Literary Texts Published and Recommended in Magazines for Young Poles Abroad Bożena Hojka & Elżbieta Jamróz-Stolarska</p>	<p>Deportation, Isolation, and Violence in the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Literary Strategies for Directing Empathy in 18th-century German-language Picturebooks Julia Bohnengel</p>	<p><i>Unfairytale Tales</i>: Digital Memory and Diasporic Belonging in Animated Refugee Narratives by Children Birsen Tütünis & Duygu Yalma Polatlar</p>	<p>Searching for Ithaca: Internal and Transnational Migrant Childhoods in Spanish and French Picturebooks from the Franco-Era to the Present Cristina Correro</p>	<p>Escaping Haunted Third Space: Diaspora Transformations Toward Colonial Liberation Julia Jin Wang</p>

Guided Tours: Museum of Education; the Division of International Pedagogy and Research-Collection of Eleni Glikatzi Arveler

20.00-21.30

RECEPTION BY THE MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES IN THE MUNICIPAL GARDEN OF RETHYMNON

SATURDAY, MAY 30 2026

8.00-9.00

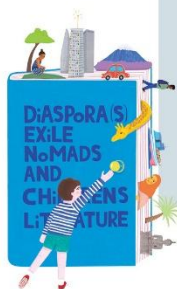
REGISTRATION & NETWORKING

9.00-10.00

KEYNOTE LECTURE II (Amphitheatre D7): *Growing Roots from Stories: The Subversive Roles of Children's Books, Authors, and Scholars*, Mateusz Świetlicki

Chair: Vassiliki Vassiloudi

	Ampitheatre D7	Ampitheatre G2	Ampitheatre G1.7	Ampitheatre O/A	Tsoupakis Room
10.00-11.30	<p>Panel 16 Roma Representations and Nomadic Ethics Chair: Stefanie Jakobi</p>	<p>Panel 17 Narrating Migration in Different National and Cultural Contexts I Chair: Xavier Minguéz Lopez</p>	<p>Panel 18 Wordless Narratives and the Aesthetics of Arrival Chair: Maria Asuero</p>	<p>Panel 19 Displacement in Historical Contexts I Chair: Xulong Fang</p>	<p>Panel 20 Jewish Diaspora and Interdiasporic Solidarities Chair: Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer</p>
	<p>Wander and Wonder: Nomadic Child-Guides in Children's Nonfiction Books Sarah Caré</p>	<p>Bringing the Sunshine?: Migration Picture Books in Britain and Canada Karen Sands-O'Connor</p>	<p>Exploring Aesthetics and Poetics through the Themes of Identity and Resilience in the Wordless Picturebook <i>Migrants</i> by Issa Watanabe Marina Rodosthenous-Balafa & Vasiliki Giannopoulou</p>	<p><i>Mama zawsze wraca</i> as a Postmemory Narrative: A Child, War, and the Loss of Home Elżbieta Kruszyńska & Maja Domaszek</p>	<p>Immigration and Transnational Deliberations in Jewish Children's Stories Between the World Wars Yael Darr</p>
	<p>"Becoming in Motion": Romanipe, Liminality, and Identity as Practice in Richard O'Neill's <i>Travellers Tales</i> Artemis Papailia</p>	<p>(Post) Reflections on the Children's Refugee and Immigrant Narratives: Towards a "Poetics of Misery" and an "Ethics of Representation" Dimitrios Politis & Nikoleta Korka</p>	<p>Mapping Migration and Empathy in Portuguese Children's Literature: A Comparative Study of Three Main Picturebooks Fernando Azevedo</p>	<p>The Korean Diaspora After the War Featured in US Middle-grade Novels Jongsun Wee</p>	<p>"Becoming Polish in Cuba": Renegotiating East European, Jewish and Cuban Identities in Jewish Youth Literature Anne Brüske & Karoline Thaidigsmann</p>



10.00-11.30	Roma in France: The Model Nomad Julie Fette	War, Forced Migration, and Nomadic Subjectivity in <i>Carousel</i> and <i>The Journey</i> Olgahan Bakşi Yalçın	Plot Engineering in Shaun Tan's <i>The Arrival</i> : Symbolic Patterns and Narrative Construction Fotis Dousos	When Home Becomes Hostland: Occupation, Belonging, and the Jews of Thessaloniki in Thanasis Petrou Graphic Novel <i>1941</i> Georgia Karantona & Tasoula Tsilimeni	Shared Pasts, Shared Stories: Memory, Resilience, and Identity in Contemporary Sephardic Children's Literature Agnieszka August-Zarebska
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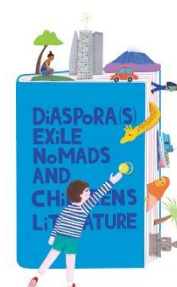
11.30-12.00

COFFEE BREAK

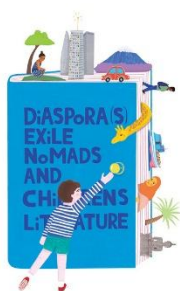
	Ampitheatre D7	Ampitheatre G2	Ampitheatre G1.7	Ampitheatre O/A	Tsoupakis Room
12.00-13.30	<p>Panel 21 In-between Homelands and Hostlands Chair: Ely Mccausland</p> <p>"Home Is Not a Country": Hybrid Childhood and the Poetics of Belonging in Safia Elhillo's Verse Novel <i>É</i> Joanna Hnatów</p> <p>Between Migration, Loss, and Transition: Liminal Childhood in the Works by Peter Härtling Jannis Pangalos & Christina Serafim</p> <p>Diasporic Identities and Anti-Racist Pedagogies in Theatre for Young Audiences: The Case of <i>A Celebration at Nourian's</i> Kyriaki Papaleonida & Maria Dimaki Zora</p>	<p>Panel 22 Nomadic Subjectivities Chair: Megan Swift</p> <p>Childhood as Process: Nomadic Subjectivity and Ethical Repetition in Gertrude Stein's <i>The World Is Round</i> Sultan Komut Bakiç</p> <p>The Book, the Ship and the Butterfly: Surviving in Diaspora with Abstract Picturebooks Vassiliki Vassiloudi & Viktoria de Rijke</p> <p>Multispecies Diasporas: Nonhuman Exile and Nomadic Identity in Children's Literature Anna Kérchy</p>	<p>Panel 23 Migration in Formal Educational Settings Chair: Elahe Mousavian</p> <p>Uprooted: Multilingual Childhoods in Three Graphic Memoirs of Diasporic Experiences Christian Carlsen</p> <p>The Refugee Issue In Greece in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. Representations and Reception In the Primary School Readers. Nikos E. Papadogiannakis & Elpiniki Nikoloudaki-Souri</p> <p>The Rubric Made Me Rethink My Story: Post-Design Reflections on Assessment-as-Learning, Ethical Representation and the Role of AI in Diaspora-Themed Science Narratives Kallia Katsampoxaki-Hodgetts</p>	<p>Panel 24 Displacement in Historical Contexts II Chair: Krystyna Zabawa</p> <p>Between Home and Hostland: Internal Diaspora and Foster Care in <i>Tre in tutto</i> by Davide Cali and Isabella Labate Luca Cipriano</p> <p>The Social Figure of the Child Evacuee in Historical Novels. The Case of <i>Unterland</i> (Lowland, 2012) by Anne C. Voorhoeve Jörg Meibauer</p> <p>Trauma, Memory and Exilic Identities of Diaspora in Anna Kouppanou's <i>When the Sea Left Us</i> Maria Chatzianastasi</p>	<p>Panel 25* Girls in Motion: Migration, Identity, and Diasporic Girlhood in Post-Yugoslav and Greek-Cypriot Children's and Young Adult Literature Chair: Svetlana Kalezić-Radonjić</p> <p>Diasporic Girlhood in Post-Yugoslav Fiction for Young Adults Svetlana Kalezić-Radonjić</p> <p>Narrating Diasporic Girlhood in Contemporary Greek Children's and Young Adult Literature Areti Dimitra Douka & Natasa Chalkia</p> <p>Diasporic Girlhood in Contemporary Cypriot Children's and Young Adult Literature Tzina Kalogirou & Vassiliki Oikonomopoulou</p>

13.30-14.30

LIGHT LUNCH



	Ampitheatre D7	Ampitheatre G2	Ampitheatre G1.7	Amphitheatre O/A	Tsoupakis Room
14.30–16.00	<p>Panel 26 Collective Memory and Postmemory Chair: Julie Fette</p> <p>"The Past is Another Country": Contrapuntal Perspectives in Children's Literature. Eleanor M. Johnston & Meg Fox</p> <p>From Yugoslavia to El Shatt and Back (into the Future): A Political Trip Down the Memory Lane of Temporary Exile Lilijana Burcar</p>	<p>Panel 27 Narrating Migration in Different National and Cultural Contexts II Chair: Bella Delacroix Ostromoukhova</p> <p>Heartbeats: Echoing Edmondo De Amicis in Today's Books About Migration in Italy Maria Rosa Truglio</p> <p>"In Research of Hop(m)e": Refugee Experiences in Greek Children's Literature Vicky Patsiou & Vasso Economopoulou</p> <p>A Review of Migration Theme in Turkish Children's Literature Ilgin Vereyeri Alaca</p>	<p>Panel 28* Migrations, Multidirectional Memory, and New Homelands Chair: Marek Oziewicz</p> <p>Future Memories: Indigeneity, Homeland, and Identity Marek Oziewicz & Kirsten Hunt</p> <p>Nonhuman Roots: Arboreal Narratives of Diaspora, Witnessing, and Belonging in <i>Big Tree and Wishtree</i> Jana LoBello Miller & Colleen Redmond</p> <p>Dramas of Becoming and Belonging in the Anthropocene Ben Screech & Nick Kleese</p>	<p>Panel 29 Climate Migration and Eco-Fiction Chair: Elżbieta Jamróz-Stolarska</p> <p>Climate Migration in the Adolescent Novel: Ecological Trauma, Loss of Place and New Forms of Dispersion Tasoula Tsilimeni & Athina Ntoulia</p> <p>"Looking for a Place to Stick to": Aquatic Allegories of Migration in Children's Books Elly McCausland</p> <p>Hydro-Nomads: Living with Water in Recent Dutch YA Climate Fiction Aleksandra Markiewicz</p>	<p>Panel 30* Nostalgia, Memory and Migration: (De)Constructing the Child Identity in Contemporary Children's Culture Chair: Sibylle Doucet</p> <p>Nostalgic Recollection, Traumatic Memory, and the Construction of Identity in Philip Pullman's <i>His Dark Materials</i> and <i>The Book of Dust</i> Sibylle Doucet</p> <p>Children as Pilgrims: Fantasy and Nostalgia in C.S. Lewis's <i>The Voyage of the Dawn Treader</i> Yannick Bellenger-Morvan</p> <p>Memory, Nostalgia, and the Discursive Construction of Childhood in Richard Zimler's <i>Hugo e Eu e as Mangas de Marte</i> Sara Reis da Silva</p>
16.00–16.30	COFFEE BREAK				
16.30–18.00	<p>ROUNDTABLE (Amphitheatre D7): Finding Home in the Field: A Roundtable on the State of Children's Literature and the Academic World Organisers: Ada Bieber & Karen-Sands O' Connor Moderator: Ada Bieber Participants: Ada Bieber, Macarena García-González, Katja Kobolt, Devika Mehra, Karen-Sands O' Connor, Mateusz Swietlicki, Anastasia Ulanowicz</p>				
20.00–22.30	SPECIAL CONFERENCE DINNER				



SUNDAY, MAY 31 2026

8.00-9.00

NETWORKING

9.00-10.00

KEYNOTE LECTURE III (Amphitheatre D7): *Colourful Suitcase: From Africa to Europe and Children's Book Illustration*, Chryso Haralambous

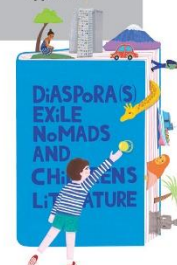
Chair: Tzina Kalogirou

	Ampitheatre D7	Ampitheatre G2	Ampitheatre G1.7	Ampitheatre O/A	Tsoupakis Room
	<p>Panel 31* Exiled Childhoods: Diaspora, Displacement and the Ethics of Remembering in Illustrated Narratives Chair: Smiljana Narančić Kovač</p>	<p>Panel 32* Presses, Books and Readers in Exile and Displacement – Ukraine, Belarus and Russia Chair: Karoline Thaidigsmann</p>	<p>Panel 33 Genre Considerations about Diaspora and Exile Chair: Letterio Todaro</p>	<p>Panel 34 Feminisation of Migratory and Exilic Narratives Chair: Sara Pankenier Weld</p>	<p>Panel 35 Digital Cultures and Displacement II Chair: Cristina Correro</p>
10.00-11.30	<p>Graphic Narratives of Child Removal: A Childist Reading of International Adoption, Archives, and Activism Macarena García González</p>	<p>From Publishing to Reading Displacement-themed Ukrainian Children's Books Today Birgitte Beck Pristed & Nadiia Pavlyk</p>	<p>History Is not a Fixed Thing: Imagining the Black Girl Detective In 18th Century London Susanne Reichl</p>	<p>Between Homelands: Migrant Motherhood, Children and Belonging in Award-winning Spanish Picturebooks (2000–2025) Margarida Castellano-Sanz & Rocio Domene-Benito</p>	<p>In the Shoes of Exile with a Suitcase of Memories: The Poetics of Diaspora as a Tool for Empathy and Active Citizenship in Adolescent Education Mary Hapsa & Eleni Arapi</p>
	<p>Reparative Reading of Impossible Returns: Childhood, Migration, and Memory in Two Post-Holocaust Visual Narratives Irena Barbara Kalla</p>	<p>Uprooted, but not Without Roots: Diaspora and Exile in Contemporary Belarusian Children's Literature Nina Friess</p>	<p>The Exile and Genre: Children's Literature of the Exile as Literary Heterotopia Stefanie Jakobi</p>	<p>Stitching the Self in Internal Exile: Disability, Gender, and Cultural Healing in Tang Sulan's <i>The Embroidered Tiger Boy</i> Fang Xulong, Wang Yisha</p>	<p>Learning Belonging through Digital Games: Online Bullying and the Reconfiguration of Homeland in Children's and Young Adult Literature Marios Demosthenous</p>
	<p>Exiled Childhoods, Affect, and Narrative Repair in <i>Fatty Legs</i> Lorraine Kerlake</p>	<p>Examining the Borders of the Russian Children's Press in Exile Through Samokat/SamTam Books Megan Swift</p>	<p>Liminal Communities: Exile, Identity, and Belonging in the World(s) of Fantasy Fiction for Young Readers Dimitris Goulis & Vicky Topouza</p>	<p>Children's Biographies and Female Migration: Representing Diasporic and Post-migratory identities Marnie Campagnaro & Ilaria Filograsso</p>	<p>The House with Too Many Stories: Memory, Belonging and Narrative Exile in <i>What Remains of</i> Edith Finch Louiza Mallouri</p>

11.30-12.00

COFFEE BREAK

	Ampitheatre D7	Ampitheatre G2	Ampitheatre G1.7	Ampitheatre O/A	Tsoupakis Room
12.00-13.30	<p>Panel 36* Crossing Borders: Difference, Moral Imagination, and Identity in Children's and YA Eastern European Literature Chair: Mateusz Świetlicki</p>	<p>Panel 37 Writing and Publishing in the Diaspora Chair: Dolores Miralles Alberola</p>	<p>Panel 38 Agency, Creative Thinking and Migration Chair: Sissil Lea Heggernes</p>	<p>Panel 39 Child Characters as War Refugees Chair: Petros Panaou</p>	<p>Panel 40 Liminal Identities and Young Adult Fiction Chair: Spyridoula Athanasopoulou-Kypriou</p>



	<p>Crossing Boundaries: Migration as an Allegory of Human Fate in Contemporary Narratives by Barbara Kosmowska and Emilia Dziubak — <i>Tru</i> (2016) and <i>Tru. Love Story</i> (2020) Dorota Michulka & Justyna Bajda</p>	<p>Diasporic Writing and Indigenous Stories: Padraic Colum in Hawai'i Pádraic Whyte</p>	<p>Literary and Cultural Agency for and with Children in Times of Displacement Katja Kobolt</p>	<p>Between Homeland and Unknown: Child Characters as Nomads of War in Two Recent Croatian Novels Irena Krumes & Smiljana Narančić Kovač</p>	<p>Diaspora and Forced Migration in Dystopian YA Fiction: An Affective Approach Maria Casado-Villanueva & Theodora Valkanou</p>
12.00-13.30	<p>Imagine There's No Country: War and the Politics of Scale in <i>Quiet Night. My Astronaut</i> Anastasia Ulanowicz</p>	<p>Navigating Exile: Professional Trajectories and Networks in Russian-Language Children's Publishing Bella Delacroix Ostromoukhova</p>	<p>Narratives of Displacement and Difference through Picture Books in Migrant Women Maria Dolores Madero Rodrigo & Xavier Minguez-López</p>	<p>Through the Eyes of a Child: The Narrative Voice of the Child-Refugee in Contemporary Children's and Young Adult Literature through the Lens of Genette Konstantinos Malafantis & Athina Ntoulia</p>	<p>An Analogous Experience: Trans* Identity and Exile in the German Speculative Youth Novel <i>Atalanta Läufer_in</i> Carla Plieth</p>
	<p>Strange Belongings: Childhood, Otherness, and Internal Exile in Eugene Yelchin's Fiction Larissa Rudova</p>	<p><i>Little Polonus</i>. Quarterly of the Union of Poles in Romania for Children and Youth as a Polish Diaspora Magazine (2017-2025) Bogumila Staniów & Agnieszka Wandel</p>	<p>Metacognition and Creative Thinking: a Dynamic Relationship and its Impact on Creative Writing Irini Gaki & Giannis Spantidakis</p>	<p>Seeking for Home, Roots and Identity: The Social-Emotional Profile (SEP) of the Literary Characters in Vagelis' Iliopoulos Books Katerina Dermata</p>	<p>Navigating Different Selves and Identities: Culture, Exile and Intersectionality in Adiba Jaigirdar's <i>The Henna Wars</i> Virginie Douglas</p>

13.30-14.00

CLOSING FAREWELL

14.00-15.00

LIGHT LUNCH

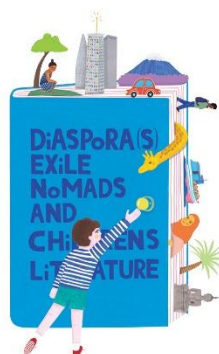
19.30-22.00

SCIENTIFIC BOARD DINNER

MONDAY, JUNE 1 2026

8.30-18.00

DAY TRIP



Keynote lecture I, May 29, 2026, Amphitheatre D7

Petros Panaou, University of Georgia, ppanaou@uga.edu

'How Can I long for a Place I've Never Been?' Postmemory and Generational Nostalgia as Imagined Memories and Drawn Identities in Picturebooks of the Diaspora

In Sylvester and Medina's picturebook, *A Maleta Full of Treasures* (2024), the child narrator/protagonist wonders: "I can't understand how I can miss someone before they're gone and long for a place I've never been." And the child protagonist in Díaz and Espinosa's picturebook, *Islandborn* (2018), asks her teacher: "Miss, what if you don't remember where you are from? What if you left before you could start remembering?". "No problema," the teacher responds, "Are there people around you who do remember?". Anastasia Ulanowicz argues that children's literature is a strong medium for representing vicarious, rather than direct, experience of the past. Picturebooks, Ulanowicz postulates, are particularly suited for this, as they combine image, narration, and intergenerational transmission. Picturebook illustrations help children process memory that comes through family stories, cultural traces, and mediated images; they engage children's mimetic faculty, their ability to take in and recreate experiences through imitation, image-making, and symbolic engagement (Ulanowicz). This means that *postmemory*, "the relationship of the second generation to powerful, often traumatic, experiences that preceded their births but that were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right" (Hirsch 103), is not passive. It is an active, fundamentally creative process: "Postmemory's connection to the past is thus not actually mediated by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation" (Hirsch 107). Art and imagination are vital, productive forces. Using content analysis of forty acclaimed picturebooks that portray refugees, Darragh and Kelley identified a central theme: the arts as a vehicle for refugees to ignite personal agency in coping with trauma. And in my article, "The Nostoi of Two Acclaimed Immigrant Picturebook Creators," I demonstrated how Peter Sís and Allen Say find refuge, solace, and identity in Art and imagination, negotiating the paradoxes of immigrant nostalgia, their yearning for *nostos* (return), and their traumatic experiences through highly autobiographical picturebooks. Building on these ideas, as well as on other texts from the *Libri & Liberi* special issue in which my "Nostoi" article was published, I analyze postmemory and generational nostalgia as imagined memories and drawn identities in immigrant picturebooks. In an author's note from her award-winning picturebook, *Watercress* (2021), Andrea Wang contemplates how she may have felt more pride and empathy, and less anger and shame, had her immigrant parents shared their family history and trauma. "Memories have the power to inform, to inspire, and to heal," Wang asserts, and so do Art, imagination, and picturebooks of the diaspora, I would add.

Keywords: picturebooks; diaspora; postmemory; generational nostalgia; art

References

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Petros Panaou is a children's and young adult literature author and scholar. He is a Professor of Children's Literature at the University of Georgia, where he chairs the annual Georgia Conference on Children's Literature. He served as a primary school teacher in Cyprus and taught Children's Literature at the University of Nicosia, Illinois State University, Central Michigan University, and Boise State University. His academic work focuses on international literature for children and young people, the social imagination, and creative reading and writing. He has coordinated European projects focusing on children's literature. He is a board member of the Cyprus IBBY section and was a member of the executive board of USBBY. He has served on various literary award committees, including the Newbery, and has also edited the international journal *Bookbird* from 2019 to 2022. In 2022, his first young adult novel, entitled *Operation LOGOS – The Mobile Mystery*, was published by Teleia Publications and received the Cyprus National Book Award for Literature Addressed to Children and Adolescents. It was also included in the international *White Ravens* list. Petros has since authored two other novels, within the LOGOS Trilogy. His first illustrated book, *Dora Mouse, Curiosity, and the Cat*, was released in spring 2025.

Keynote lecture II, May 30, 2026, Amphitheatre D7

Mateusz Świetlicki, University of Wrocław, mateusz.swietlicki@uwr.edu.pl

Growing Roots from Stories: The Subversive Roles of Children's Books, Authors, and Scholars

Seeds, roots, and stories have a lot in common—not only because of the many references to woods and plants in folk tales and literature, but mainly because all three can be scattered, take hold, and grow or wilt—in new environments. After all, the word diaspora, usually used to refer to communities living outside an ancestral homeland, comes from Ancient Greek *dia-* (διά) and *speirein* (σπείρειν), literally meaning “a scattering.” While this suggests agricultural imagery, people, stories, and memories can be metaphorically scattered like seeds and consequently sprout in many places, often growing roots in a changed form, in response to new habitats (cf. Wampole, 2016). In *Next-Generation Memory and Ukrainian Canadian Children's Historical Fiction: The Seeds of Memory* (2023), I argue that children's books can serve as the metaphorical seeds of the memory of the ancestral homeland shared by diasporic authors with mainstream child readers. In this talk, I want to focus on the subversive roles of diasporic books, authors, and scholars who study them. The talk moves from my own positionality as a nomad, a child raised with stories—but no access to ancestral places, born in a town that was never home to his grandparents—to an exploration of the motifs of searching for home, roots, and identity in the works of selected American and Canadian authors who represent Eastern and Central European diasporas. This will allow me to demonstrate representations of the history of diasporic communities in contemporary children's and young adult literature, shaped by the descendants of people born in places that, due to shifting borders and forced deportations, now exist primarily in memory or post-memory (Świetlicki, Drewniak, Kamińska-Maciąg, and Kimak, 2027). Next, I study how present-day authors challenge ethnic stereotypes prevalent in North America and address their ancestors' cultural traumas in ways that may resonate with young readers. Finally, I discuss the role of educators and scholars of children's literature who work with diasporic texts and communities, which will help me argue that excluding the voices and experiences of diasporic communities from mainstream discourses is not only morally ambiguous but also anti-intellectual, and that literature offers a site for subverting such exclusions.

Keywords: diaspora; exile; roots; palimpsest; transcultural memory

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Mateusz Świetlicki is Associate Professor at the Department of American Literature and Culture, and Director of the Center for Young People's Literature and Culture (Institute of English Studies), as well as Vice-Dean for Student Affairs and Extramural Teaching at the Faculty of Languages, Literatures and Cultures (University of Wrocław, Poland). He is the author of more than 100 publications, including *Next-Generation Memory and Ukrainian Canadian Children's Historical Fiction: The Seeds of Memory* (Routledge, 2023), which won the 2025 International Research Society for Children's Literature Book Award, and articles published in such journals as *Children's Literature in Education*, *Children's Literature Quarterly*, and *Bookbird: A Journal of International Children's Literature*. He has recently co-edited *Fieldwork in Ukrainian Children's Literature* (with Anastasia Ulanowicz, Routledge, 2025) and *Navigating Children's Literature through Controversy: Global and Transnational Perspectives* (with Elżbieta Jamróz-Stolarska and Agata Zarzycka, Brill, 2023). His research interests include historical fiction, memory and trauma studies, liminality, Ukrainian and Polish diasporas, and intersections of popular culture and literature. He is currently working on a book project focused on liminal identities in Polish-themed North American YA historical fiction. Świetlicki was a Research Scholar at the University of Florida's Department of English (Kosciuszko Foundation Fellowship), a Fulbright scholar at the University of Illinois at Chicago (2018), a visiting scholar at the University of Toronto (2022), and has held multiple other fellowships (Munich, Kyiv, Harvard). He is the deputy editor-in-chief of *Filoteknos* and a member of the editorial board of John Benjamins Publishing's "Children's Literature, Culture, and Cognition" series. Świetlicki is a member of various organizations, including IRSCL, and a co-officer of the Childhood in Eastern Europe, Eurasia, and Russia Working Group of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies.

Keynote lecture III, May 31, 2026, Amphitheatre D7

Chryso Haralambous, Illustrator, Cyprus, c.n.haralambous@gmail.com

Colourful Suitcase: From Africa to Europe in Children's Book Illustration

I was born and raised in South Africa to Greek Cypriot parents, growing up between cultures, languages, and ways of seeing the world. This early duality shaped me deeply, both as a person and as an illustrator. I was surrounded by diversity—from people to landscapes—and I think this is where my instinct for bold colour and expressive imagery began. My visual language formed before I could fully articulate identity in words.

As a teenager, I moved to Cyprus, a place that was meant to feel like home. Instead, I felt like an outsider. I struggled with the language and with a sense of not quite belonging, despite my heritage being rooted there. During this time, art became something more than just a passion—it became a way to communicate, to process, and, in some ways, to escape. Unlike language and culture, drawing had no barriers.

Later, I moved to the UK to study art, where I encountered a new kind of structure and discipline. There were also unexpected connections; echoes of South Africa and Cyprus through shared histories and language. After my studies, travelling to New York expanded my understanding of the world even further, but it also brought a lingering question to the surface: where do I belong? Over time, I realised that this question doesn't have a simple answer, and perhaps it doesn't need one.

In this talk, I reflect on how these experiences of movement, displacement, and cultural layering have shaped my work in children's book illustration. I will share selected projects, *To Poulover* [The Pullover], *Idia Echoume Mama* [We Have the Same Mom], *Filoi Demenoi me Klosti* [Friends Joined by a Thread], and *I Selini sto Parisi* [Selini in Paris]—that, for me, quietly carry themes of diaspora, connection, adventure and emotional belonging. Through colour, character, and atmosphere, I try to express feelings that are often difficult to define.

Sometimes I wonder if I don't belong to a specific place at all, but rather to my work. Illustration has become my way of holding together fragments of different homes, cultures, and experiences—a kind of colourful suitcase that I carry with me.

Keywords: children's books; illustration; expressive colour; diaspora and memory; identity

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Gerostathi, E. (text) & Haralambous, C. (illustr.). (2024). *Filoi Demenoi me Klosti*. Kaleidoscope.

Katsantoni, A. (text) & Haralambous, C. (illustr.). (2024). *I Selini sto Parisi*. Fourfour.

Michailidou, S. (text) & Haralambous, C. (illustr.). (2021). *Idia Echoume mama*. Kaleidoscope.

Chryso Haralambous was born and raised in Johannesburg, South Africa. She studied illustration in London and New York. She currently lives and works in Nicosia, Cyprus. She was awarded the State Literary Award for Best Illustrated Children’s Literature in Greece for her first book *The Pullover* written by Dimitris Baslam in 2020 and the State Illustrated Literature Award for Children and Teenagers in Cyprus in 2021 and 2023 for the books *We All Have the Same Mother: Tales from Gatouhan* written by Stella Michailidou and *1000 Ways to Squeeze a Lemon* by Danai Daska. Her books were included in the IBBY Honor list in 2022, the White Ravens catalogue in 2020 and 2022, and the Braw Amazing Bookshelf in 2023.

Important note: Abstracts are arranged in alphabetical order following the surname of the first author. Bios of the co-authors are listed beneath the first author's name.

COMPLETE PANELS¹

Panel 4*

Voices of Exile in Early Holocaust Children's Literature

Panel organizer: Ada Bieber, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany, ada.bieber@hu-berlin.de

Co-panelists

Eleftheria Koukoura, University of Haifa, Israel, koukouraelef@gmail.com

Daniel Feldman, Bar-Ilan University, Israel, Daniel.Feldman@biu.ac.il

The first generation of children's Holocaust literature emerged from the instability of displacement—authors who wrote in adopted languages, for children of new homelands, about traumas experienced in abandoned ones. This panel examines how exile shapes literary forms in survivor-authored children's books in Dutch, Greek, and Hebrew. We address how these texts challenge Bhabha's productive hybridity (1994) and Mani's "cosmopolitical" unsettlement (2007), which assume exile generates creative hybridity or cosmopolitanism. Instead, survivor-authors grapple with profound loss—writing in adult-learned languages for children unfamiliar with their destroyed worlds. Our analysis of Clara Asscher-Pinkhof, Alberto Matarasso, and Uri Orlev shows how their texts navigate commemorating destroyed worlds while addressing new contexts.

Reading these transnational texts challenges national literary frameworks (Žurek and Minslow 2025). Asscher-Pinkhof (Dutch in Israel), Matarasso (Greek-to-Hebrew), and Orlev (Polish-to-Hebrew) crossed linguistic and cultural borders to write *transnational* Holocaust testimony that belongs to no single national literature. Their texts feature characters who speak French to Kapos, Ladino to friends, Dutch or Polish to preserve identity, while narrators address children unfamiliar with these lost worlds. By reading these texts as exilic literature, we reveal how displacement and linguistic border-crossing determine the forms available for representing trauma to children.

Ada Bieber, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany

The First Children's Book about the Holocaust: Asscher-Pinkhof's *Sterrekinderen*

Clara Asscher-Pinkhof's *Sterrekinderen* (*Star Children*, 1946) presents vignettes of Jewish children in the Netherlands from persecution to deportation and death in concentration camps. Deported from Amsterdam to Westerbork and freed from Bergen-Belsen in 1944 in an exchange of British-held Germans for Dutch Jews, she wrote in Dutch in Israel, producing an episodic structure that enacts the dispersal and destruction of Dutch Jewish childhood—maintaining in the Dutch language what was lost in life. Her closeness to the Jewish children

¹ Panels marked with an * here indicate a panel proposal in response to the CfP.

and their suffering is visible in her authentic writing during and shortly after the Shoah, which makes the book one of the most relevant children's books about the subject.

Eleftheria Koukoura, University of Haifa, Israel

From Thessaloniki to Haifa: The Life Narrative of Alberto Matarasso

Alberto Matarasso's 2016 Hebrew life narrative begins in Haifa before retracing his Sephardic childhood in pre-war Thessaloniki, his imprisonment in Auschwitz, and post-war emigration to Israel. A survivor of the city's decimated Sephardic Jewish community that traces its roots to a prior exile, the 1492 expulsion from Spain, Matarasso writes of another transplant, a neighbor who was the only non-Jew to warn his father of the impending Nazi disaster. Matarasso's text is among the very few, if not the only, ego-document by a Greek Jewish Holocaust survivor addressed to young readers that extends the narrative to the post-war reconstruction of the narrator's life. His multilingual Sephardic heritage (Ladino, Greek, Hebrew) produces a narrative structured around moments of translation and linguistic border-crossing, making language itself a site of survival and loss.

Daniel Feldman, Bar-Ilan University, Israel

Janusz Korczak's Second Coming in Jerusalem: Uri Orlev and the Reincarnation of Polish Children's Literature in Hebrew

Uri Orlev (born Jerzy Henryk Orłowski), a child survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto and Bergen-Belsen, wrote children's books about the Holocaust that translate narrative elements by Polish author Janusz Korczak into Hebrew. Exile and escape are not only key thematic elements of Orlev's landmark *Island on Bird Street* (1981) and *The Man from the Other Side* (1988), but they also represent structural and poetic elements that Orlev brought with him from Polish children's literature when he settled in Israel. Orlev's Hebrew adaptations constitute literary reincarnation—preserving destroyed cultural forms by transmuting them into a new linguistic and national context, making exile the condition of cultural transmission.

Keywords: Early Holocaust children's literature; exile and World War II; Holocaust survivors; Holocaust in Greece; Holocaust in the Netherlands; Jewish literature; Israeli children's literature

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Ada Bieber (PhD) is Senior Lecturer in German Literature at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. She researches international children's and youth literature, especially Holocaust, graphic, picturebook, and urban narratives. Her scholarship has appeared e.g. in *The Lion and the Unicorn*, *Children's Literature*, *International Research in Children's Literature (IRCL)* and *Holocaust Studies*. Her work has also been recognized by a research grant from the *International Research Society for Children's Literature*.

Eleftheria Koukoura is an educator of Greek language and literature and a scholar of the Holocaust. Her MA thesis in Holocaust Studies from the University of Haifa explores the significance of Greek Jewish Holocaust ego-documents. She researches microhistories of the Holocaust, autobiographical discourse, and the transmission of trauma and memory across generations.

Daniel Feldman is a scholar of Holocaust and children's literature at Bar-Ilan University. He is co-author of *Poesis in Extremis* (Bloomsbury, 2024) on poetry written under Nazi persecution. His research has appeared in *Comparative Literature*, *Studies in American Jewish Literature*, and leading children's literature journals.

PANEL 14*

Different countries, same aspirations: Exploring diaspora stories in international picturebooks

Panel organizer: Janet Evans, Independent Scholar, England,
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Co-panelists:

Maggie Chan, Associate Lecturer, University College, London, maggie.chan@ucl.ac.uk
Cristina Correro, Université de Nantes, France, cristina.correro-iglesias@univ-nantes.fr

Most people seem to be interested in turning their dreams into reality. Then, there are those who turn reality into dreams. I belong to the latter group.

Allen Say

This panel/symposium will feature the work of three academics, from England, Hong Kong and Spain. Each presentation will share research relating to the way in which migrants find their way to, and begin to live in, different countries; countries they have chosen to move to or countries they have been forced to move to, often but not always because of conflict, violence and war. The presentations will share picturebooks that consider individual and group diaspora narratives along with the issues the diaspora have faced and dealt with in relation to their homeland and their host countries.

Janet Evans, Independent Scholar, England

Yearning for home - but where is home and where do I belong? Emigration, diasporas and belonging in Allen Say's picturebooks

Grandfather's Journey "is essentially a dream book, for the life's journey is an endless dreaming of the places we have left behind and the places we have yet to reach"

Allen Say Caldecott Acceptance Speech

Allen Say, international award-winning Japanese author/illustrator, has created almost 40 picturebooks. Many of them share the yearning, homesickness and desire to be in more than one place at the same time, a yearning that many Japanese immigrants experience; but, it is *Grandfather's Journey*, his famous, autobiographical Caldecott Award winner from 1993, that best conveys his love for the two countries he belongs to, Japan where he was born in 1937 and America, where he went to at the age of 16 years and where he now lives.

Say's personal, lifelong memories of being betwixt and between home and away have been enshrined in many of his award winning picturebooks. They convey what immigrants frequently experience as they settle in different countries away from their homeland. Also, how members of the diaspora, particularly the Japanese diaspora, construct new lives and new ways of living whilst holding onto culturally important aspects of their "old" lives from their homeland. Other picturebook creators, such as Peter Sis, Shaun Tan, and Valerie Losa, depict this "*keeping the old with the new*", but it is Allen Say who effortlessly allows the

reader/viewer to see how social, emotional, economic, political and culturally important aspects of life are dealt with in a new host country.

In looking more closely at Say's picturebooks, this presentation will consider some of the issues facing individuals from the Japanese diaspora: their adaptation, assimilation and integration in the host countries (Cormos 2022), and the way their descendants, *Nikkei*, find their way and begin to live their lives in diaspora communities in countries they have chosen to move to, or countries they have been forced to move to for many differing reasons (Adachi, 2006).

Allen Say questions where home is and where diaspora members actually belong. Often caught between two cultures, loving one and missing the other, he says, "*The funny thing is, the moment I am in one country, I am homesick for the other.*"

Keywords: Japanese diaspora; adaptation; assimilation; integration; homeland; host country

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Maggie Chan, Associate Lecturer, University College, London

Where the Dragon Belongs: Cultural Hybridity in Chinese Diaspora Picturebooks

This paper examines how contemporary picturebooks stage the Chinese diaspora's negotiations of cultural identity, belonging and transformation through the symbol of the dragon. Through multimodal analysis of *I Am Golden* (Eva Chen & Sophie Diao), *Powerful Like a Dragon* (Christopher Cheng & Jacqueline Tam), *Shu Lin's Grandpa* (Matt Goodfellow & Yu Rong) and *Paper Son: The Inspiring Story of Tyrus Wong, Immigrant and Artist* (Julie Leung & Chris Sasaki), I argue that the dragon shifts from a national emblem, that is, Chinese as

children of the dragon, to a more fluid diasporic marker that is invoked by parents and grandparents and reimagined by children across languages and generations with attachments to both 'here' and 'there'. Across these texts, migration emotions—homesickness, fear, excitement and pride—intersect with intergenerational memory, revealing how 'Chineseness', represented by the dragon, can belong in multiple places at once.

Keywords: Chinese diaspora; migration; cultural hybridity; intergenerational memory; picturebooks

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Cristina Corroero, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain & Université de Nantes, France

Searching for Ithaca: Internal and Transnational Migrant Childhoods in Spanish and French Picturebooks from the Franco-Era to the present

This paper explores how picturebooks from Spain and France narrate the experiences of both internal migrants, particularly the *charnego* communities shaped by mid-20th-century movements from southern and western Spain to Catalonia, and transnational migrants arriving from abroad after the Franco dictatorship. Drawing on the metaphor of Ithaca as a symbol of the search for home, belonging, and identity, the study examines how these diverse forms of displacement are represented in children's literature from the Franco era to the present.

The analysis focuses on works such as *Joselito*, *Una Nova Terra*, *¡Vamos a ver a papá!*, and *Tot el que estimo*, exploring how picturebooks construct diasporic childhood subjectivities, negotiate stereotypes, and depict the emotional and linguistic landscapes of children navigating new territories. These narratives reveal how young protagonists, whether internal migrants labelled as *charnegos* or children arriving from other countries, grapple with cultural hybridity, plurilinguism, and the tensions between homeland and the new homeland.

Methodologically, the paper combines close literary and visual analysis with insights from sociolinguistics and childhood studies. By bringing together internal and transnational migration, the study highlights how picturebooks function as cultural artefacts that document, reinterpret, and sometimes resist the social hierarchies and nationalist discourses of the Franco era and its aftermath. Ultimately, it argues that children's literature offers young readers tools to engage critically with diversity, memory, and the ongoing search for their own Ithaca: autonomy, social engagement, linguistic awareness, picturebooks, early childhood education.

Keywords: picturebooks; migration; cultural hybridity; diasporic childhood; plurilinguism

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Janet Evans is an Independent Scholar. She has written ten books on children's literature, literacy and maths education. Her current research interests include an exploration of children's responses to wordless picturebooks. Her last book, *Challenging and Controversial Picturebooks: Creative and Critical Responses to Visual Texts*, was published by Routledge in 2015. Janet has taught in India, Nigeria, Australia, America, Canada, Chile and Spain. She has presented keynote speeches and papers at many international conferences and has given numerous professional development courses at international schools. In 2010 she was awarded a research scholarship to study at the International Youth Library in Munich.

Maggie Chan is Associate Lecturer at University College London, where she teaches academic preparation and supports research writing. She recently completed her PhD on disability representation in picturebooks at the University of Edinburgh. Her current research focuses on Chinese diaspora, death representation and deaf identities. She is a published picturebook author and also supports the review for IBBY UK's Outstanding Books for Young People with Disabilities list.

Cristina Correro holds a European PhD in Education, a Master's Degree in Research in Language and Literature Teaching, a BA in Philology, and a BSc in Finance and Law. She teaches at Nantes Université and at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Her research focuses on children's literature (0–8), teacher education, digital literary practices and cultural entrepreneurship. She is a member of the Spanish IBBY, Nantes Livres Jeunes, and the Associació de Mestres Rosa Sensat. Her recent publications include *Lectures que fan lectors*, a literary education guide for future teachers, and *La poesia a les primeres edats*, a poetry anthology for children aged 0–8. She also coordinates the French pathway in Cultural Entrepreneurship within the CLMCE Master's programme.

Panel 25*

Girls in Motion: Migration, Identity, and Diasporic Girlhood in Post-Yugoslav and Greek–Cypriot Children’s and Young Adult Literature

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Svetlana Kalezić-Radonjić, University of Montenegro

Diasporic Girlhood in Post-Yugoslav Fiction for Young Adults

This study examines the representation of diasporic girlhood in post-Yugoslav young adult literature, aiming to address how themes of migration, identity, and belonging shape narratives of girlhood. The research corpus comprises novels that explore the experiences of young female protagonists within the contexts of both external and internal diasporas, familial migrations, and cultural dislocations—namely, *Hotel Zagorje* (2010) by the renowned Croatian author Ivana Simić Bodrožić, which straddles the boundary between young adult and adult fiction due to its narrative complexity, and the mosaic-style youth novel *Sve je u redu* [It’s All Right] (2017) by Jasminka Petrović, one of the most popular Serbian writers for children and adolescents. Both novels depict girlhood as a complex and vulnerable experience, intricately connecting the private and the social, through narratives of displacement, identity, bodily experience, emotional life, family, and home. The autobiographical *Hotel Zagorje* addresses the war that led to the dissolution of Yugoslavia, portraying the life of a twelve-year-old girl, who flees from the occupied part of Croatia to a free zone near the Slovenian border. The loss of home, stability, and, to some extent, language (as she speaks with a different accent and uses regionally unusual expressions), coupled with social exclusion despite her Croatian identity, produces in her a persistent sense of temporariness and transit, dividing her life into “before” and “after” the war. Conversely, the protagonists in Petrović’s *Sve je u redu* experience girlhood under peacetime conditions—some subjected to physical, others to emotional diaspora—yet both experiences leave a lasting sense of fragmentation and emptiness. This study combines literary analysis with theoretical frameworks drawn from feminist theory, postcolonial studies, and diaspora

studies, focusing on the representation of girlhood through the lenses of gender, identity, and the emotional landscapes of the protagonists.

Keywords: diasporic girlhood; post-Yugoslav literature; YA fiction; migration and identity; emotional diaspora

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Areti Dimitra Douka & Natassa Chalkia, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

Narrating Diasporic Girlhood in Contemporary Greek Children's and Young Adult Literature

This contribution examines how contemporary Greek children's and young adult literature constructs diasporic girlhood through emotional diaspora—the affective afterlife of forced movement, marked by loss, nostalgia, fear, resilience, and hope. In dialogue with the panel's focus on post-Yugoslav and Greek–Cypriot youth literature, it places the Greek case within a broader comparative discussion of migration, identity, and girlhood in transit. Anchored in girlhood studies (Driscoll 2002; Carlton & Bandarchian Rashti 2024) and in diaspora and postcolonial theory, it reads displacement through Bhabha's hybridity and cultural translation (1994), Brah's diaspora space (1996), and Yuval-Davis's gendered politics of belonging and nation (1997).

The contribution focuses on two primary texts selected for their temporal counterpoint and shared girl-centred focalization. Eleni Svoronou's *Σκληρό καρύδι* [*Hard Nut*] (2015) foregrounds contemporary forced migration through the first-person voice of Ayşe, a nine-year-old refugee girl who must remake everyday Athens—school, language, friendships, hostility—into home. Vana Mavridou's *Μέλι και Μελέκ* [*Meli and Melek*] (2021) re-mediates the Asia Minor Catastrophe of 1922 through a girl's attachment to her handmade doll, translating national trauma into intimate loss, separation, and survival, while revealing how children's literature mediates intergenerational memory and inherited forms of displacement (Fachinger 2022; Deszcz-Tryhubczak & Jaques 2021).

Read together, these texts map two interconnected configurations of girlhood in motion: the lived present of forced migration and historically mediated refugee memory. Placed alongside post-Yugoslav and Greek–Cypriot narratives, the Greek case both parallels and productively complicates the panel’s comparative frame by juxtaposing contemporary asylum realities with a foundational 1922 refugee history that continues to shape Greek cultural memory. Pedagogically, child focalization, illustration, and paratextual framing enable critical literacy work in multilingual classrooms by inviting students to ask how home and belonging are narrated, gendered, claimed, negotiated, or withheld.

Keywords: diasporic girlhood; emotional diaspora; forced migration; cultural memory; belonging

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Tzina Kalogirou & Vassiliki Oikonomopoulou, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

Diasporic Girlhood in Contemporary Cypriot Children’s and Young Adult Literature

The present study examines how contemporary Cypriot Children’s and Young Adult Literature approaches the experience of "diasporic girlhood" as a dynamic locus for reflecting on historical trauma, memory, and displacement. Drawing upon theories of intergenerational trauma and postmemory (Hirsch, 2012; Caruth, 1996; Deszcz-Tryhubczak & Jaques, 2021), this study analyzes two pivotal novels: Anna Kouppanou’s *When the Sea Left Us* (2024) and Antri Antoniou’s *On the Way Home* (2024). The analysis reveals two complementary narrative axes: the spatial re-mapping of trauma as political resistance, and the transition from national grief to a universalized refugee experience. Specifically, in Kouppanou’s novel, the partition of Cyprus is allegorically represented through the

dystopian retreat of the sea and the imposition of authoritarian boundaries. Refusing passivity, the young female protagonist negotiates this geographical and existential fragmentation by mobilizing imagination and inherited memory to cognitively re-map her environment. This conceptual cartography functions as an act of resistance against imposed borders, enabling the diasporic subject to reclaim her identity and process spatially transmitted trauma. Conversely, Antoniou's novel departs from the 1974 Cypriot trauma, utilizing traditional mnemonic objects such as the key to the lost home (Volkan, 2006; Fachinger, 2022; Whitehead, 2004). However, the narrative innovates by shifting the focal point from melancholic national mourning to the universal condition of forced migration. By aligning the Cypriot historical wound with contemporary refugee flows, the author constructs "empathy bridges." This approach fosters active solidarity toward the "Other" and enacts what Rothberg (2009) terms "multidirectional memory," where disparate histories of displacement interact productively rather than competitively. Ultimately, the examination of these works demonstrates how youthful diasporic subjectivity metabolizes inherited historical trauma: both by conceptually reclaiming lost spatiality and by recognizing the transcultural universality of displacement (Schwab, 2010; Atkinson, 2017).

Keywords: diasporic girlhood; intergenerational trauma; Cypriot Children's Literature; postmemory; spatial re-mapping; forced migration

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Svetlana Kalezić-Radonjić works at the University of Montenegro as Assistant Professor of Literature for Children and Young Adults. By vocation she is a rock musician and a poet who published seven books of poetry and won many literary awards. Being particularly interested in the relation

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Natasa Chalkia is a philologist, a graduate of the Department of Philology, Faculty of Philosophy of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, and holds a Master's Degree in Creative Writing from the University of Western Macedonia. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Creative Writing at the same institution. She has participated in the 4th (Florina, 2019), 5th (Palermo, 2022), and 6th (Kozani, 2024) International Conferences on Creative Writing, both as a paper presenter and as a member of the Organising and Scientific Committees, and has co-edited the Proceedings of the two most recent conferences. Her research and writing have been published in edited volumes, peer-reviewed academic journals, and conference proceedings in Greece and abroad.

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Greek Literature that have been published in academic journals, edited volumes, and international conference proceedings.

Panel 28*

Climate Migrations, Multidirectional Memory, and New Homelands

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The global climate crisis is triggering the planet's largest-ever human, animal, and plant mass-migration event. In 2022, climate-related disasters and subsequent conflicts displaced nearly 32 million people—a 41% increase from 2008 (Siegfried, 2023). By 2050, the mid-point of the "Nomad Century" (Vince, 2022), over one billion migrants and refugees will be forced to move (IEP, 2020). This panel considers the ways in which young peoples' literatures and media lend themselves to conceptualizations of the "affects and intensities" of climate-driven exile, displacement, and migration. Our focus is on representations of nomadic and displaced subjectivity—human and nonhuman—in environments that challenge the dichotomy of homeland and hostland as separate geographies. Building on Michael Rothberg's notion of "multidirectional memory" (2009), we argue that children's literature and media can model multidirectional pathways to engage with memory, truth, and identity as part of a larger exilic adaptation in which hostlands and homelands are seen not as separate but a lived continuum.

In "Future Memories: Indigeneity, Homeland, and Identity" Oziewicz and Hunt explore strategies of multidirectional memory in *A Snake Falls to Earth* and *Sheine Lende*: works of Indigenous Futurism by Lipan Apache author Darcie Little Badger. The novels are framed by climate-driven disasters—species extinction and extreme weather—and assert the inseparability of human and more-than-human lives. The erasure of species and cultural homeland is counterbalanced by re-kinning with the nonhuman world and the imperative to recover one's home, which both novels put forth as possible only through an engagement with transgenerational, multidirectional memory that is actively employed in the service of the future.

In "Nonhuman Roots: Arboreal Narratives of Diaspora, Witnessing, and Belonging in *Big Tree and Wishtree*", Lo Bello Miller and Redmond explore the more-than-human valences of multidimensional memory via the embodied arboreal narrators of *Wishtree* and *Big Tree*. Both narratives challenge anthropocentric notions of homeland, memory, and belonging in that each focalizes an emotional and ecological uprooting that transcends human boundaries and borders. Trees thus serve as archival holders of stories, knowledge, and experiences, which then support readers to understand migration and diaspora from

nonhuman memory, resilience, rootedness, memory, and witnessing (Nitzke & Braunbeck, 2021).

In “Dramas of Becoming and Belonging in the Anthropocene”, Screech and Kleese follow the temporal trajectory of multidimensional memory into the future via analyses of two speculative playscripts for young people: Flora Wilson Brown's *The Beautiful Future is Coming* and A. Rey Pamatmat's *A Spare Me*. Set in the near and distant future on a climate-changed Earth, both playscripts suggest that future memories of ecological alienation will directly shape young peoples' sense of themselves *as young people*. Acutely aware of their ancestral lineages, the young characters of both Rey Wilson Brown and Rey Pamatmat's dramas both embody and contest a youth identity contingent on their responsibility to adapt to ever-morphing homelands.

Keywords: multidirectional memory; climate migrants and refugees; climate crisis; Indigenous futurism; Anthropocene

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Marek Oziewicz is Chair of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Minnesota. He holds the Sidney and Marguerite Henry Professorship in Children's and Young Adult Literature at the College of Education and Human Development and serves as Director of the [Center for Climate Literacy](#). In this capacity, he coordinates international efforts to advance universal climate literacy education as a foundation for ushering in an ecological civilization. Dr. Oziewicz studies the Anthropocene as a challenge to our story systems. His research explores how literature empowers young people to develop a multicultural mindset, global citizenship, and climate literacy.

Kirsten Hunt is a Lecturer in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Minnesota. She teaches courses in reading methods, teacher education and children's and young adult literature with specialized interest in speculative fiction and theories of posthumanism. Her most recent publication is a forthcoming article in the *Journal of English Teaching: Practice & Critique*

titled, "Pedagogical Possibilities in the Speculative Landscape: Increasing Empathy Through *Your Pal Fred* by Michael Rex."

Jana LoBello Miller is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities. She specializes in preparing preservice elementary teachers, with a focus on writing methods, digital literacies, and climate literacy pedagogies. In both her teaching and scholarship, she has a deep commitment to fostering joy, creativity, and a sense of belonging in the classroom.

Colleen Redmond is a third year PhD student in Literacy Education at the University of Minnesota, where she also works as a graduate instructor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and a research assistant to the Marguerite Henry Professor of Children's and Young Adult Literature. With a background in teaching, youth programming, and climate engagement, Colleen is passionate about expanding climate education to better address students' emotional well-being. Her research focuses on supporting youth experiencing ecological grief through identifying hope in children's climate literature and creating emotionally responsive, story-based classroom practices.

Ben Screech is Senior Lecturer in Education and English at the University of Gloucestershire. He is currently editing a book (with Nick Kleese) provisionally entitled *Engaging Young People in the Climate Emergency through Authentic Texts*. This volume intends to combine close readings of climate themed children's and YA literature, with ideas for their pedagogical uses to increase climate change awareness in classrooms.

Nick Kleese is the Associate Director of Community Engagement at the Center for Climate Literacy at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. His research focus includes depictions of and methodologies for ecological democracy in young people's literatures and media. With Ben Screech, he is co-editor of the forthcoming collection *Engaging Young People in the Climate Emergency through Authentic Texts*.

PANEL 30*

Nostalgia, Memory and Migration: (De)Constructing the Child Identity in Contemporary Children's Culture

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Co-panelists:

Yannick Bellenger-Morvan, Reims University, France, Yannick.bellenger@univ-reims.fr

Sara Reis da Silva, University of Minho, Portugal, sara_silva@ie.uminho.pt

Whatever the medium, cultural objects aimed at children are intrinsically ambivalent as they address young readers and spectators while being produced by adults. Therefore, the creator's vision of childhood necessarily informs the subject matter as well as its treatment. In other words, the adult gaze—or a specific adult's gaze—on childhood and children shapes the story and storytelling as they address their implied reader or viewer. The very question of the nature of childhood is at the core of certain major texts—from McDonald to Lewis and Pullman—and their authors' stances vary greatly. As grown-up authors look back on childhood through the prism of their own memories, nostalgia often infuses their works. The three papers of this panel thus study how nostalgia and nostalgic recollection inform and influence characterisation, storytelling and identity construction in contemporary children's culture.

The first paper "Nostalgic Recollection, Traumatic Memory, and the Construction of Identity in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* and *The Book of Dust*" by Sibille Doucet will focus on Philip Pullman's related fantasy trilogies, *His Dark Materials* and *The Book of Dust*, with specific attention to the latter. It questions the relation between the two texts, both diegetically and extra-diegetically: the books' treatment of trauma and nostalgic longing as a consequence of coming-of-age is accompanied by a radical change in storytelling, which denotes a shift in its readership—both real and implied. This shift raises the question of the impact of nostalgic recollection and traumatic memory in the construction of character identity, reader identity, and even generic identity.

The second paper "Children as Pilgrims: Fantasy and Nostalgia in C.S. Lewis's *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*" Yannick Bellenger-Morvan will focus on one specific novel in C.S. Lewis's series of seven Narnia tales: *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, as this opus especially addresses the issue of loss and nostalgia. The loss of the children's home, of their identity, of their friends, of their childhood triggers an intense and painful nostalgic grief that a return to their familiar life cannot assuage, leading them to long for the fantasy land of Narnia. The paper thus aims to examine the connection between nostalgia and fantasy in C.S. Lewis's novel and explore the nature of that nostalgic urge to migrate back to Narnia, to go on an initiatory pilgrimage to the fantasy land—a uchronia where modern times (and World War II) have never come into existence. The paper will also examine how Lewis developed

and defined the concept of *sehnsucht* (the yearning for something one did not know was missing) in this novel about children torn from their homes.

The third paper “Memory, Nostalgia, and the Discursive Construction of Childhood in Richard Zimler’s *Hugo e Eu e as Mangas de Marte*” by Sara Reis da Silva will analyse *Hugo e Eu e as Mangas de Marte* [*Hugo and Me and the Mangoes from Mars*] by Richard Zimler (illustrated by Bernardo Carvalho), as a site where memory, nostalgia, and transnational affect intersect to (de)construct the figuration of the child in contemporary children’s culture. Drawing on theoretical perspectives that conceptualise childhood as a discursive construct mediated by adult retrospection, the analysis situates Zimler’s narrative—told from a child’s perspective during the Portuguese decolonisation that followed the Carnation Revolution of 1974— within the dynamics of melancholia and the commodification of nostalgia as cultural capital. The recollection of the ripe, succulent mangoes and the grandfather’s rough, reassuring hands, which lead Zezé to his chest where he discovers old letters dating from the decolonisation period, functions as an affective catalyst for narrative closure. The picturebook’s multimodal assemblage exposes its “medium identity” and foregrounds the tension between child address and adult mnemonic reconstruction in late modern children’s literature.

Keywords: nostalgia; *sehnsucht*; liminality; trauma; memory

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Sibylle Doucet is Associate Lecturer at the University of Grenoble-Alpes, France. She specialises in Children's and Young Adult literature of the English-speaking world. She completed her PhD at the University of Strasbourg, France, and defended her dissertation entitled *Poetics and Politics of Passage in Philip Pullman's Multiverse Ensemble* in 2021. She currently studies paratextual tools of engagement as well as gender discourses and dynamics of identity construction in literature for children.

Yannick Bellenger-Morvan is Associate Professor at the University of Reims. Her main area of research is Children’s popular culture (literature, film, television). She authored a doctoral dissertation on C.S. Lewis’s *Chronicles of Narnia* and published many articles on fantasy, gothic, and horror fiction with and for children (for instance, Neil Gaiman’s *Coraline* and its adaptation, Jim Henson’s *Labyrinth* and *Dark Crystal*, the Netflix series *Stranger Things*). She is currently working on a book project focusing on nostalgia and childhood in contemporary films and series. She is head of the English Department at the University of Reims (France) and editor of the online academic journal *Imaginaires* (Reims University Press).

Sara Reis da Silva, PhD in Children's Literature. She is Assistant Professor with Habilitation in the Institute of Education at the University of Minho (Braga, Portugal) where she teaches Children's Literature; Language, Literary Textuality and Reading Strategies; and Children's Literature Didactics. She is a member of CIEC (Research Centre on Child Studies) and the project RED LIJMI (University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain). She has also integrated the projects Gulbenkian/Casa da Leitura (www.casadaleitura.org) and "Living Among Books" (Erasmus+). She has participated in several conferences and has published widely. She has supervised six PhD students and is currently supervising six others.

Panel 31*

Exiled Childhoods: Diaspora, Displacement and the Ethics of Remembering in Illustrated Narratives

Panel organizer: Macarena García-González, Pompeu Fabra University, Spain, macarena.garcia@upf.edu

Co-panelists

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Lorraine Kerlake, Universidad de Alicante, Spain, kerslake@ua.es

This panel examines childhoods as sites of historical trauma and political violence, inquiring into how illustrated and graphic narratives for young people articulate an ethic of remembering. The panel brings together case studies from Canada, Chile/Sweden, and postwar Europe to explore how texts engage across fictional and non-fictional accounts with the legacies of genocides and colonialism. The three presentations articulate attention to how literature mediates trauma, belonging, and the politics of memory for intergenerational readerships, mobilising narrative repair as a political practice that unsettles dominant historical imaginaries. Building on Sedgwick's (2003) reparative reading, Ahmed's affect theory (2004), and Cvetkovich's (2003) understanding of trauma archives as affective sites of repair, we conceptualise narrative repair as a storytelling practice that reconnects damaged histories to emotional, communal, and more livable futures.

García González's paper analyses *Den uppgrävda jorden (Excavated Earth)*, a recent graphic novel by Swedish–Korean author Lisa Wool-Rim Sjöblom that investigates the appropriation of Chilean–Mapuche babies for international adoption, facilitated by Swedish NGOs in complicity with Chilean institutions. Read alongside her earlier autobiographical work, the analysis traces how Sjöblom's literary journalism mobilises archival fragments, interviews and sequential art to expose the structural violence of transnational adoption and to reframe adoptees not as rescued subjects but as displaced children whose origins have been administratively erased. The paper conceptualises adoptee narratives as a key site for understanding deterritorialized identities and the uneasy ethics of reconstruction and return.

Kerlake's contribution focuses on *Fatty Legs* (2010) by Margaret Pokiak-Fenton, an illustrated memoir recounting an Inuvialuit girl's experience in a Canadian residential school. Addressed to middle-grade readers, the narrative exposes the cultural and emotional violence of forced assimilation while reimagining resilience and self-definition within a system designed to erase Indigenous identity. Drawing on affect theory, the paper examines how emotions circulating through the hybrid visual-verbal form become a means of re-appropriating voice and agency for both author and audience, unsettling national myths of benevolence and reframing residential-school history through a child-centred perspective.

Kalla's paper turns to Barbara Yelin's graphic novel *Emmie Arbel: Die Farbe der Erinnerung (The Colour of Memories)*, which portrays a Dutch-born Jewish survivor's postwar childhood and adolescence across foster care in the Netherlands and later life in Israel. Juxtaposed with

the picturebook *Mama zawsze wraca (Mom Always Comes Back)*, the analysis foregrounds how visual narratives register the long afterlives of the Holocaust: the impossibility of “returning” to a pre-war childhood, and the ways in which migration, silence, and repetition of harm shape adult relationships and senses of home.

Together, the papers ask what it means to document, publish and translate histories of genocide, forced assimilation and child displacement into literature for young and crossover audiences. By juxtaposing Indigenous, transnational adoption, and post-Holocaust contexts, the panel theorises “exiled childhoods” as crucial sites for reconfiguring diaspora, exile, and the ethics of remembering within contemporary children’s literature.

Keywords: graphic narratives; violence; reparative readings; (auto)biographies; non-fiction

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Macarena García-González is a Ramón y Cajal Senior Researcher in the Faculty of Communication at Pompeu Fabra University, where she directs JOVIS, a research group dedicated to interdisciplinary approaches to youth and childhood studies. She leads the EU-funded project “Collective Remembrance: Engaging Youth Through Curatorial Practices,” which explores young people’s memory practices, and serves as an associate editor of *Children’s Literature in Education*. Her publications include three monographs—*The Borders of Empathy in Children’s Fiction* (Routledge, 2025), *Enseñando a sentir: Repertorios éticos en la ficción infantil* (Metales Pesados, 2021), and *Origin Narratives: The Stories We Tell Children about Immigration and International Adoption* (Routledge, 2017)—as well as several edited books and special issues on youth, culture, and education.

Barbara Kalla is Associate Professor, head of Dutch Studies, and founding member of The Centre for Research on Children’s and Young Adult Literature at the University of Wrocław. Her publications include *Minoes, Minnie, Minu en andere katse streken* (2017, with Jan Van Coillie), *Rulers of Literary Playgrounds* and *Children’s Literature and Intergenerational Relationships* (2021, both with J. Deszcz-Tryhubczak) and *Grenzeloos divers: Het Nederlandstalige kinderboek* (forthcoming, with Frauke Pauwels). Member of the research teams in the international projects: COHLIT (2020-2023), COREM (2025-2026), and EDU-CLIMA (2025-2026). Honorary member of Royal Academy of Dutch Language and Literature (KANTL) Belgium/Flanders, where she serves as chair of the jury KANTL Children’s and Young People’s Literature Prize.

Lorraine Kerslake teaches in the English Department at the University of Alicante, Spain, and is a member of the Research Institute for Gender Studies. Her research focuses on children’s and YA literature and ecocriticism. She is part of the GIECO research group and the RECONFEM project. She

currently serves as Co-Editor in Chief of the *Alicante Journal of English Studies* and is Literary Editor of *Climate Literacy in Education*. Her publications include *The Voice of Nature in Ted Hughes's Writing for Children* (Routledge, 2018), *Imaginative Ecologies* (Brill, 2021) and *Women Who Write Animals* (De Gruyter Brill, forthcoming).

Panel 32*

Presses, Books and Readers in Exile and Displacement – Ukraine, Belarus and Russia

Panel organizer: Megan Swift, University of Victoria (Canada), maswift@uvic.ca

Co-panelists

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Nadiia Pavlyk, Aarhus University, Denmark, pavnad@cas.au.dk

Nina Friess, Centre for East European and International Studies (ZOiS), Berlin, Germany, nina.friess@zois-berlin.de

Panel chair

Karoline Thaidigsmann, Heidelberg University, Germany, karoline.thaidigsmann@slav.uni-heidelberg.de

This panel explores Ukrainian, Belarusian, and Russian children's publishing and readership in exile due to war and state repression, highlighting new books that foreground civic rights, democracy, war, and experiences of displacement.

Birgitte Beck Pristed & Nadiia Pavlyk, Aarhus University, Denmark

From Publishing to Reading Displacement-themed Ukrainian Children's Books Today

Based on selected interviews with Ukrainian children's book publishers, Pristed will first demonstrate how the small niche-publisher Teza from the Kyiv-region and the well-established Lviv-based publishing house The Old Lion were differently affected by the 2022 invasion and how they responded to the mass evacuation of their staff, books, and core audience of children. Then, Pavlyk will present how young Ukrainian readers have responded to displacement-themed books from the above-mentioned publishers, by sharing selected findings from an experimental reading group study, carried out in winter-spring 2026 in collaboration with Ukrainian-Danish Youth House in Mykolaiv and Kyiv. Together, the presentations will uncover displacement not only as a literary motif in wartime children's books, but also as a condition for their production, distribution, and reception.

Nina Friess, Centre for East European and International Studies (ZOiS), Berlin, Germany

Uprooted, but not Without Roots. Diaspora and Exile in Contemporary Belarusian Children's Literature

Following the violent suppression of the 2020 protests against Belarus's rigged presidential elections, around half a million Belarusians—many worried about repression and their children's prospects in an increasingly authoritarian school system—have gone into exile.

Abroad, migrants are creating cultural and educational initiatives that offer children an alternative vision of Belarus, countering the official state narrative and articulating a commitment to a free, democratic, independent homeland.

This paper examines contemporary Belarusian children's literature in exile, focusing on Sveta Ben's *Bespracoŭnae dréva* (*The Unemployed Tree*, 2025; ill. Lina Chesé). It analyzes how the book addresses displacement and political agency for young readers and how such works foster democratic education and cultural self-affirmation.

Megan Swift, University of Victoria, Canada

Examining the Borders of the Russian Children's Press in Exile Through Samokat/SamTam Books

Among some thirty-four Russian publishing houses that have been established abroad as a result of Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, SamTam Books plays a unique role as the affiliate and émigré face of Samokat, the well-respected independent Moscow-based children's publishers. This is a Russophone press in exile that in fact straddles the border between Russia and "abroad."

The catalogues of Moscow-headquartered Samokat and Switzerland-based SamTam largely overlap, but also diverge in intriguing ways. SamTam offers texts that cannot be printed in Russia to Russophone émigré communities, but also provides multi-lingual editions of contemporary Russian children's books to non-Russophone readers.

My presentation explores SamTam's latest output of texts that cannot be published "at home," such as Maria Parr's *Oskar ila, Nashi Mesta* (*Oscar and I, Our Places*, Russian translation 2025) as well as translations of Russian originals that thematize memory and civic rights, such as *Granitsy* (*Borders*, by Natalia Bezhlebnaia, 2025).

Keywords: Ukraine; Belarus; Russia; displacement; democratic education

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Birgitte Beck Pristed is Associate Professor in Russian Studies at the Department of Global Studies, Aarhus University, Denmark. She is PI of the AUFF project "PUBLISH: Children's Books in the Russia-Ukraine War". <https://projects.au.dk/publish>

Nadiia Pavlyk is PI of the MSCA4Ukraine project DaR:UA "Dialogues and Reading: Shared Reading for Ukrainian Young People" at Aarhus University and professor at the Department of Social Technologies (Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University, Ukraine). Her research focuses on shared reading and children's books in the Russia-Ukraine war. <https://projects.au.dk/darua>

Nina Friess has been a researcher at the Centre for East European and International Studies (ZOiS), Berlin, since 2016. A co-organiser of the German-language Colloquium for Children's Literature, she focuses on children's and young adult literature and contemporary Belarusian, Kazakhstani and Russian literature and culture.

Megan Swift is a professor and specialist in Russian children's literature and book art. Her book *Picturing the Page: Illustrated Children's Literature and Reading Under Lenin and Stalin* (U Toronto Press, 2020) was the recipient of the CAS-Taylor and Francis Book Award and the International Research Society for Children's Literature (IRSCL) Book Award. Her most recent article, on nature writing for children in the post-Soviet period, will appear in *International Research in Children's Literature*, 19(1) (2026).

Karoline Thaidigsmann, is associate professor of Polish and Russian literature and culture at Heidelberg University in Germany. Her research focuses on children's and crossover literature, emancipation narratives, memory and transregional studies.

Panel 36*

Crossing Borders: Difference, Moral Imagination, and Identity in Children's and YA Eastern European Literature

Panel organizer: Larissa Rudova, Pomona College, USA, lvro4747@pomona.edu

Co-panelists

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Justyna Bajda, University of Wrocław, Poland, justyna.bajda@uwr.edu.pl

Anastasia Ulanowicz, University of Florida, USA, aulanow@ufl.edu

Panel chair

Dr. Mateusz Świetlicki, University of Wrocław, Poland, mateusz.swietlicki@uwr.edu.pl

This panel explores how contemporary children's and YA East European literature imagines borders—geopolitical, social, ethical, and psychological—and how young protagonists inhabit and respond to the limits these borders create. Across allegorical landscapes, orbiting perspectives, and repressive societies, the papers examine how literature for young readers engages with vulnerability, difference, and moral reflection.

The first paper, "Crossing Boundaries: Migration as an Allegory of Human Fate in Contemporary Narratives by Barbara Kosmowska and Emilia Dziubak— *Tru* (2016) and *Tru. Love Story* (2020)," by Dorota Michułka and Justyna Bajda examines Barbara Kosmowska's *Tru* and *Tru. Love Story*, in which hare communities divided by wealth and privilege allegorize migration, inequality, and the ethical stakes of crossing boundaries. The forest is split between affluent Colorful hares and marginalized Grey hares, yet the school provides a shared space where encounters between these groups become possible. Kosmowska's narratives highlight how engagement with difference fosters empathy, ethical reflection, and moral imagination. Through the daily challenges her characters face, the texts explore how they learn to navigate inequality, recognize social hierarchies, and consider the ethical implications of their choices.

The second paper, "Imagine There's No Country: War and the Politics of Scale in *Quiet Night, My Astronaut*," by Anastasia Ulanowicz juxtaposes Samantha Harvey's *Orbital* with Oksana Lushchevska and Kataryna Stepanischeva's picturebook *Quiet Night, My Astronaut*. Harvey positions astronauts above Earth, imagining a world without conflict, emphasizing the abstraction and moral idealism that distance produces. Lushchevska and Stepanischeva, in contrast, depict a Ukrainian child who finds comfort imagining an astronaut watching over her during wartime invasion. By reversing the gaze—from cosmic overview to intimate, lived experience—these texts explore how perspective and scale shape readers' engagement with global crises, vulnerability, and moral responsibility.

The third paper by Larissa Rudova focuses on Eugene Yelchin's portrayals of childhood under Soviet authoritarianism, where young protagonists inhabit psychological states of exile and dislocation. Across his novels, including *Breaking Stalin's Nose*, *Arkady's Goal*, and *I Wish I Didn't Have to Tell You This*, Yelchin depicts children navigating surveillance, social hypocrisy, and ideological pressure, revealing the tensions between public expectation and private thought. His works explore how young people create spaces for reflection, self-expression, and ethical reasoning even under extreme constraint. By highlighting the psychological, social, and ethical borders his characters face, Yelchin's narratives illuminate how identity, conscience, and moral judgment are formed under pressure, while also addressing questions of memory, home, and belonging in contexts of displacement and marginalization.

Together, these papers demonstrate that children's and YA literature treats borders not merely as physical or political lines, but as sites of ethical challenge, imaginative possibility, and psychological complexity. From forests and classrooms to orbiting spacecraft and authoritarian societies, these narratives reveal how young readers encounter difference, cultivate moral insight, and envision the possibilities of belonging, justice, and human connection.

Keywords: borders and belonging; childhood and identity formation; ethics and moral imagination; migration and social inequality; war and conflict in children's literature

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Justyna Bajda is an Associate Professor, literary scholar, and art historian at the Institute of Polish Studies, University of Wrocław. Her research focuses on Young Poland and European modernism, exploring aesthetic movements and the interplay between literature, art, and material culture. She examines the influence of French culture on Central European arts at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, with recent work on the symbolism of blue in Young Poland. Bajda has collaborated with

the European Center for Slavic Research and the University of Poitiers and is the author of *The Blue fin de siècle* (2023).

Dorota Michułka is an Associate Professor at the University of Wrocław, where she heads the Department of Polish Language Education. A literary scholar and historian, she is a member of the Polish Academy of Sciences, IRSCL, and the advisory board of "The Child and the Book" conferences. She previously taught at Tampere University in Finland and has been a research fellow in the USA and Germany. Author of over 200 publications on children's literature, culture, literary education, and reader response theory, she publishes widely and serves as editor-in-chief of the international journal *Filoteknos*.

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ROUNDTABLE

Finding Home in the Field: A Roundtable on the State of Children's Literature and the Academic World

Organisers

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Rationale & structure

Writing in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, poet and scholar Gregory Betts called the university 'a haunted, indeed uncanny space' ('Uncanny Academe', p. 13). Isolation from each other, uncertainty about our futures, and global political upheaval have left many of us feeling alone and unsupported in the vast field of children's literature and in the wider academic system. As our society becomes more polarized and academics (particularly in the humanities) are under threat, we feel that the traditional conference structure of paper-giving and brief audience response limits our ability to support each other as colleagues, to share knowledge across national and cultural borders, and to build networks and collaborations that will strengthen our work and our field. Stoica comments that 'What we need are common ideas and actions to fight precarity and refuse to nourish it' by focusing on 'shared responsibilities' ('Precarity without borders' pp. 83–84) to each other. This shared academic support includes conversations and knowledge about different academic systems and national requirements, and recent changes in institutions facing economic and political scrutiny. With this roundtable, we would like to encourage and start a structured meta conversation about contemporary academia in times of political, academic, and social challenges. While we will begin the round table with statements from panelists, the 'round table' will be expanded to include the entire audience in an attempt at a wider co-creation of

knowledge and understanding. The main goal is to address the following questions, which will help to collect and reflect on political and social impact, in order to consider future perspectives for our field. Additionally, we want to build a larger understanding of different national, cultural, and social impacts on academic structures. The aim of this first initiative is to voice and identify current challenges inside academia, and to start a conversation on which future conversations and workshops can be built. The roundtable will be conducted in three parts:

1 Change and challenge in academia

How has academia changed within the last two decades, and which factors have been most significant?

How significantly have national, local and world politics influenced your own university/your national university system, and your own work?

How do those changes impact your own teaching, research, and perspectives on children's literature?

What are the most significant challenges that you have faced as a children's literature academic over the last five years or so?

2 Perspectives on support in children's literature

How can we, as colleagues, best support each other in these times?

What is needed in terms of individual support, and what is needed in structural opportunities, visibility, and career development?

How can academic associations contribute to better individual and institutional development?

How can conferences be beneficial places for all academics?

How can we discuss ideas respectfully and with care for each other in times of political divisions?

3 Ideas & initiatives

In the final phase of the roundtable, small groups (matched in terms of needs and support) will discuss and develop ideas for future initiatives and structural development. The idea is to develop supportive processes and procedures that can be implemented into future conferences as alternatives to traditional forms of presentation and response; as well as highlighting ways of initiating academic collaborations that provide greater opportunities for all inside the field of children's literature. The roundtable will conclude with short presentations from each group.

The intention is an open and active conversation with the whole audience, who will take actively part in the full discussion; the participants of the roundtable will share important insights, statements and questions;

Methodology

Darren Chetty points out 'the educational significance, when it comes to cultivating genuinely democratic dialogical deliberation, of attending not just to the question of who is present in the community of inquiry, but to the underlying relationships of domination and their historical roots' ('Racism as Reasonableness', p. 46). Janet Jull, Audrey Giles, and Ian D. Graham argue that the most lasting way to achieve change is through 'a commitment to working in partnership with members of marginalized communities to reduce or eliminate injustices and/or inequities that have been identified by community members themselves' ('Community based participatory research' p. 3), and we argue that developing supportive dialogue in the children's literature community must involve a broader spectrum of participants than the traditional conference panel. Using a modified version of the "kitchen table methodology" developed to counteract more top-down methods of discussion (see Crooks and McPherson, *Kitchen Table Conversations: A Guide for Sustaining our Democratic Culture* 2023; Littletree, Andrews and Loyer, "Information as a relation: Defining Indigenous Information Literacy" *Journal of Information Literacy* 17.2), we therefore hope that by leveraging collective expertise, resources, and advocacy efforts, we can drive meaningful change as well as better support one another by starting sharing different experiences.

For the roundtable, we will produce a clear set of questions prior to the conference and ensure these are sent to conference participants in different areas of children's literature and different stages of their careers. There will be time during the roundtable for whole group and smaller group discussion, and the discussion will be captured by scribes, possible in audio-video snapshots. All participants will be sent the notes from the discussions, will be asked to verify their contributions (where appropriate), and add in anything that they wanted to say but didn't.

Goals

Discussions will begin generally but lead to an Actions for Support and for Change, to give participants a sense of agency in their field and develop new directions for methods of scholarship. The primary goal is to create a forum and regular meetings in which academics across our field and from different systems engage in a meaningful conversation about working conditions, major challenges in academia today, changes within the field and their structural consequences. Secondly, the initiative is designed to strengthen the community through open conversation in a respectful and safe space with the long-term goal of continuing network meetings and workshops throughout 2026 and beyond.

Keywords: academia & children's literature; working conditions & major challenges in academia today; institutional development in academia & collegial support; international & transcultural awareness; Actions for Support and for Change

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Mateusz Świetlicki is Associate Professor of American Literature and Culture and Director of the Center for Young People's Literature and Culture at the University of Wrocław, where he also serves as Vice-Dean for Student Affairs and Extramural Teaching. He is the author of *Next-Generation Memory and Ukrainian Canadian Children's Historical Fiction: The Seeds of Memory* (Routledge, 2023), winner of the 2025 International Research Society for Children's Literature Book Award. His research explores historical fiction, memory, trauma, diasporic identities, liminality, and literature's intersections with popular culture. He is currently writing on Polish-themed North American YA fiction and serves as an executive officer of CHEER.

Anastasia Ulanowicz's research is primarily focused on the representation of intergenerational relationships and memory in children's literature and graphic narratives. Her first book, *Second-Generation Memory and Contemporary Children's Literature: Ghost Images* (Routledge, 2013) received the Children's Literature Association Book Award in 2015. She is the co-editor (with Manisha Basu, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign) of *The Aesthetics and Politics of Global Hunger* (Palgrave, 2018), which includes her essay on representations of embodied memory and childhood games in Oksana Zabushko's *The Museum of Abandoned Secrets*. Her recent scholarly collection, *Fieldwork in Ukrainian Children's Literature* (co-edited with Mateusz Świetlicki, University of Wrocław) has just been published by Routledge.

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A Review of Migration Theme in Turkish Children's Literature

This article offers an overview of migration in Turkish children's literature, examining how issues such as homelessness, belonging, and refugee experiences are represented through selected works. While some books are grounded in real-life experiences (see *Kumruve Kikiça*), others approach migration in more general and abstract ways (see *The Polar Star Collective*, *Kaplangı*; *Kozikoğlu*). Migration has long been a prominent and evolving theme in Türkiye, manifesting in diverse narratives dealing with internal and external migration to the more recent refugee crises in the Middle East. Although internal migration constitutes a primarily national concern, it is closely intertwined with issues of external migration. Internal migration emerges as a significant literary theme due to ecological and economic pressures and is articulated through landmark works (see works by Vedat Dalokay and Latife Tekin). These texts at times encapsulate and transform the authors' own migration experiences through distinct literary strategies. External migration is also prominently featured, particularly in narratives depicting workers who travelled to Germany (see *Geyikler*, *Annem ve Almanya*). Bilingual books published in German and Turkish reveal another layer of how migration is woven into lived experience within today's diaspora (see works by Fulya Gezer Bachmann). Recent upheavals in the Middle East have led to a deeper focus on this multi-dimensional subject, resulting in the publication of new children's books centered on migration. For instance, there are bilingual books that portray migrants' journeys and provide details about their homelands (see Hadia). Some of these books are a product of teamwork, and they are sponsored by numerous foundations. Children's literature has become critical in fostering inclusive educational strategies in which children are actively included. In this article, contemporary children's books are examined against the backdrop of landmark texts that enable an understanding of migration as represented in Turkish children's literature.

Keywords: migration; Turkey; children's books; review

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Exile, Home, Return: Children's Literature and the Question of Belonging

Migrant literature for young readers exhibits substantial diversity, yet representations of the migratory journey and the complexities of adaptation remain central concerns (Pourjafari Abdolali Vahidpour, 2014; White, 1995). This thematic focus is evident in *Stepping Stones. A Refugee Family's Journey* (2016) by Margriet Ruurs. The narrative portrays a family compelled to abandon their homeland as war encroaches, joining a movement of displaced individuals in search of a place free from violence. Toward the conclusion, the protagonist, Rama, asks, "Will this be home, or will we return one day?", opening a space for reflection on picture books that engage with the prospect of returning to one's country of origin.

Return migration, the process by which individuals or families resettle in their homeland, has become increasingly relevant and encompasses both voluntary and involuntary forms. Its examination is crucial for policy development, as it has implications for labour markets, social integration, and broader developmental outcomes (Cassarino, 2004; Dumont & Spielvogel, 2008). Moreover, it shapes migrants' senses of identity, belonging, and socioeconomic pathways (De Haas, 2007). In a globalised era characterised by heightened mobility, a deeper understanding of return migration helps address its associated challenges and recognise its potential opportunities (Vullnetari & King, 2008).

Hence, this proposal examines the representation of return migration in picture books targeted at young readers. Through a critical analysis of selected picture books, this study aims to explore how return migration is depicted, the themes, including belonging, that it addresses, and the potential impacts on young readers (Alcantud-Díaz, 2024). By examining the narratives and cultural contexts presented in these picture books, this article seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of migration experiences in children's literature and their broader societal implications, including the role of migration in fighting poverty and the acceptance of diversity.

Keywords: return migration; picture books; young readers; children's literature; representation; cultural diversity; SDGs

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Imagining Greekness in Greek-Australian Children's Literature: The Role of "Oikogeneia" and Maternal Agency in Transmitting Diasporic Memory

An important part of the modern Greek diaspora has lived in Australia since 1829. Greek-Australians have ever since tried to establish their community as a cultural entity and as a repository of intellectual history. In Greek-Australian literature, first-generation immigrants fashioned their diasporic identity through the reconsideration of their migration experiences while evoking the fragmented traces of their personal, familial, and collective cultural memory, attempting to preserve a culture that existed in the society they left behind at the time of their migration. The descendants of Greek immigrants in Australia, recognizing themselves as members of the diaspora, also produce nonfictional accounts of the familial, social, and cultural orders of memory, aiming to transmit their own diasporic consciousness. In many of these works, "oikogeneia" (family) is conceived as a foundational social institution and a "common good" that retains significant value for the community. At the same time, the homeland often emerges primarily as a symbolic construct shaped by longing; Greece is re-imagined through selectively recalled or idealized elements, and "Greekness" becomes an imagined, reconstructed space rather than a lived and immediate condition. While all members of a family may contribute to the transmission and preservation of cultural identity across generations, this study focuses specifically on mothers, who are widely recognized in scholarship as key carriers of cultural memory. I examine works produced by next-generation female Greek-Australian writers who, according to their books' peritexts, initially addressed these texts to their own children, driven by a strong sense of responsibility to introduce their descendants to aspects of Greek culture. Approaching diasporic memory as a liminal phenomenon that crosses the boundaries between individual and collective, familially unique and transgenerationally common, I aim to present preliminary findings from a long-term, ongoing research project and to identify the role of Greek "oikogeneia" and maternal agency in transmitting diasporic consciousness and imagining Greekness through children's literature. Additionally, I consider how these authors' efforts to cultivate their children's, and young readers' more broadly, interest in Greece and to foster a sense of connection to the homeland—whether remembered, imagined, or newly constructed—may inadvertently produce simplified or stereotypical representations of Greece.

Keywords: Greek-Australian children's literature; mothering; diasporic consciousness; reconstructed images

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Love, Communion, and Power: Postcolonial and Feminist Re-readings of *The Little Prince* in Religious Education

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince* (1943) has long been celebrated as a universal humanist and spiritual book (Harris, 1990; Piolata, 2023) and is frequently employed in religious education (Ter Avest & McDougall, 2014) and Christian theological discourse as a narrative of love, responsibility, and relationality. Within this framework, the prominent Christian Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas (1997) has read this book as implicitly theological, aligning it with an ontology of love and communion.

The aim of the proposed paper is to destabilize this largely unanimous reception by bringing *The Little Prince* into dialogue with postcolonial and feminist criticism. Drawing on recent postcolonial readings (Nabipour, 2023), it argues that the book's representations of nomadism, exile, and relationality are deeply ambivalent. Although the Little Prince appears as a nomadic and exilic figure, this mobility is aestheticized and dehistoricized, thus detached from the lived realities of colonial displacement. Indigenous and colonized subjects are rendered absent, while relationships of "taming," care, and love are structured through paternalistic and gendered hierarchies.

From this perspective, even theological interpretations that emphasize communion and otherness require critical reassessment. The paper argues that Zizioulas's influential ontological reading risks overlooking how love in *The Little Prince* is frequently articulated through asymmetrical power relations that echo colonial and patriarchal logics, thereby turning an apparent ontology of love into a subtle form of relational control and objectification.

Rather than rejecting this book as a pedagogical resource, the paper proposes a critically reframed use of it in religious education (or in any kind of critical pedagogy). Such re-reading aligns with current debates on exile and nomadism in children's literature and highlights the need to cultivate critical literacies, particularly religious literacy, capable of engaging reflectively with canonical texts traditionally deemed ecumenical and caring.

Keywords: postcolonial criticism; feminist critique; nomadism and exile; children's literature canon; critical religious literacy

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Shared Pasts, Shared Stories: Memory, Resilience, and Identity in Contemporary Sephardic Children's Literature

The history of the Sephardic diaspora is divided into three periods: Sepharad-1, from the formation of Sephardic culture in the Iberian Peninsula until the expulsion; Sepharad-2, from the expulsion until the twentieth-century migrations and the Holocaust; and Sepharad-3, from the settlement in new lands to the present. Language constitutes a key marker of these stages. In Sepharad-1, besides Hebrew, Arabic, Spanish and Portuguese were the dominant languages. During Sepharad-2, the Mediterranean diaspora gave rise to Judeo-Spanish, a Jewish language based on Ibero-Romance varieties. Until the twentieth century, it functioned as a central component of Sephardic identity and a vehicle for the transmission of cultural memory and values. The transition to Sepharad-3 led to the decline of Judeo-Spanish, which is now an endangered language.

In the twenty-first century, a crucial question has emerged: how can elements of Sephardic identity be transmitted to children from Sephardic or mixed families whose cultural environments are shaped by local cultures? One significant answer to this challenge is the publication of children's literature that narrates key events of Sephardic history and highlights shared diasporic experiences. These works are authored by second- and third-generation descendants of migrant families, who, while often lacking direct experience of exile, remain connected to their diasporic heritage.

This paper analyzes four picture books published in Spain and the United States with the aim of fostering children's engagement with the Sephardic past and roots. *The Sephardic Jews* by Esther Bendahan (2018) and *The Inside Name* by Randi Sonenshine (2023) focus on departure, loss, and the uncertainty of migration. In contrast, *Tía Fortuna's New Home* by Ruth Behar (2022) and *The Keys from Spain* by Debbie Levy (2019) emphasize successful resettlement and integration in new homelands. The analysis demonstrates how these narratives convey core elements of the Sephardic collective self-image and transmit values such as resilience, memory and cultural continuity to younger generations.

Keywords: sephardic diaspora; Sepharad; cultural memory; resilience; identity transmission

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Mapping Migration and Empathy in Portuguese Children's Literature: A Comparative Study of Three Main Picturebooks

This paper explores how contemporary Portuguese-published children's literature engages with themes of migration, exile, and displacement, focusing on the emotional, ethical, and pedagogical representation of migratory experiences. Central to this analysis is *Migrantes* (Watanabe, 2021), a wordless picturebook that portrays anthropomorphic figures journeying through desolate landscapes in search of refuge. Through a deeply symbolic and visually evocative narrative, *Migrantes* universalizes forced migration and prompts ethical reflection and empathy among young readers.

To broaden the analysis, the study includes two additional works available in Portuguese editions: *A Viagem* (The Journey, Sanna, 2018), a critically acclaimed book supported by the Portuguese High Commission for Migration (ACM) and Amnesty International; and *Emigrantes* (The Arrival, Tan, 2022), published in Portugal by Kalandraka. Both works use visual storytelling to explore the experience of leaving one's homeland, navigating unfamiliar environments, and reimagining identity in new cultural contexts. *A Viagem* offers a child's perspective on fleeing war, while *Emigrantes* depicts a surreal and immersive portrayal of alienation, adaptation, and resilience—both without relying on textual narration.

Drawing on migration studies, visual literacy, and children's literature theory (notably Nikolajeva, 2014; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021; and Sipe, 2008), this paper examines how these books develop affective literacy and critical empathy. The analysis highlights the capacity of children's literature to cultivate intercultural awareness and promote inclusive, socially engaged reading practices.

By situating these books within the Portuguese context of publication and their global literary significance, the paper argues that literature for young readers plays a vital role in fostering ethical engagement with real-world humanitarian issues such as displacement, diaspora, and the right to belong.

Keywords: Migration in children's literature; visual narratives; Portuguese literary publishing; empathy and ethical reading; global citizenship education;

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War, Forced Migration, and Nomadic Subjectivity in *Carousel* and *The Journey*

Contemporary children's literature has increasingly engaged with complex global realities such as war, displacement, and forced migration, often relying on visual storytelling to address ethically charged issues without overt didacticism (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001; Nikolajeva, 2014). Picturebooks, in particular, create affective spaces in which young readers are invited to encounter difference, vulnerability, and relational responsibility through image-based narratives. Within this context, Tülin Kozikoğlu and Hüseyin Sönmezay's *Dönme Dolap* (*Carousel*, 2020) offers a visually driven exploration of unequal childhoods shaped by peace and war. *Dönme Dolap* juxtaposes the everyday lives of a boy and a girl growing up under radically different conditions of peace and war. Through visual contrast rather than explicit narration, the picturebook foregrounds unequal childhood experiences shaped by safety, disruption, and instability. The narrative culminates in the girl's forced migration and her arrival in the boy's country, where the image of both children riding the same carousel with their parents creates a shared space that exemplifies what Maria Nikolajeva terms ethical co-presence (2014). A similar concern with childhood shaped by conflict and displacement can be observed in Francesca Sanna's *The Journey* (2016). Like *Dönme Dolap*, Sanna's picturebook centers on a child whose everyday life is interrupted by war and reconfigured by forced migration. Together, *Dönme Dolap* and *The Journey* articulate forms of childhood subjectivity that resonate with Rosi Braidotti's concept of the nomadic subject (1994), foregrounding fluid identities, relational becoming, and movement as constitutive rather than exceptional aspects of childhood. Through their distinct yet complementary narrative strategies, the two texts emphasize relational encounters and shared spaces as central to ethical understanding. Drawing on Nikolajeva's theory of affective and ethical engagement (2014), alongside Braidotti's nomadic subject (1994), this paper argues that *Dönme Dolap* and *The Journey* construct empathy and ethical awareness through visual contrast and moments of co-presence, demonstrating how children's literature can address war and forced migration by fostering relational belonging without explicit moral instruction.

Keywords: affective and ethical engagement; ethical co-presence; nomadic subjectivity; picturebooks; war and forced migration

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Deportation, Isolation, and Violence in the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Literary Strategies for Directing Empathy in 18th-century German-language Picture Books

From the early days of children's and young adult literature in eighteenth-century Germany, the deportation of Africans to plantations in America and the Caribbean as well as the transatlantic slave trade were already being discussed intensively. In recent years, researchers have paid particular attention to picturebooks and illustrated books: historians Overhoff/Lange (2024), in particular, have compiled an extensive annotated collection of richly illustrated publications that makes it possible to examine different literary strategies used in the countries that profited from the slave trade to elicit empathy for the displaced people in images and text. On the one hand, this includes attempts to impart knowledge about the institution of the slave trade using encyclopaedic information. On the other hand, some texts refer to slave narratives from Western cultural history, while others rely on the power of drastic images or adapt well-known colonial topics from adult literature (Inle and Yariko) for children and young people. The normative value standard here is the (new) values of the bourgeois educated elite in the eighteenth century. Against the backdrop of a Christian, partly secularized worldview, children and young people are shown the fundamental equality of human beings, who suffer in particular from separation from their families and physical violence. At the same time, (proto-)racist topics are conveyed. In a final step, the article addresses this tension between practicing compassion and empathy and strategies of distinction.

Keywords: transatlantic slave trade; enlightenment; picturebooks; directing empathy

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“Becoming Polish in Cuba”. Renegotiating East European, Jewish and Cuban Identities in Jewban Youth Literature

Since the 1990s, a growing anthropological interest in the Jewish community of Cuba and its diverse migration contexts has emerged in US academia. In the twenty-first century, this anthropological storytelling has itself migrated from academic discourse to fictional narratives for young readers, giving rise to a corpus of "Jewban" diaspora novels (Bettinger-López 2006, p. 113). Written primarily by US-Cuban authors of Jewish origin, these books largely focus on the flight of Eastern European Jews to the Caribbean in the aftermath of the Shoah. By renegotiating multiple strands of cultural identity (Eastern European, Jewish, Cuban, and American), they aim to reconfigure their protagonists' and readers' sense of national, ethnic, and familial community.

A striking example of this shift from academic writing to children's literature can be found in Ruth Behar's oeuvre. The US-Cuban anthropologist has increasingly turned her attention to youth novels and picture books (Behar 2007, 2020, 2022), thereby combining the conventions of Jewban literature for young people with contemporary academic discourses on "multidirectional memory" and "interdiasporic solidarity." In our joint cross-disciplinary contribution (Latin American and Slavic Studies), we focus on Behar's youth novel *Letters from Cuba* (2020), which tells the story of a Jewish girl who follows her father from Poland to Cuba. The novel offers a double-diaspora perspective, evident in both its content and its contexts of production and reception. Analyzing, on the one hand, the complex renegotiation of Polish/East European, Jewish, and Cuban identities within the story, we will ask, on the other hand, to what extent the academically informed key assumptions of the text—the need to foster new multidirectional and interdiasporic communities—are tailored to the US children's and young adult book market.

Relevant keywords: interdiasporic communities; Shoah; Cuba; Eastern Europe; US book market

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From Yugoslavia to El Shatt and Back (into the Future): A Political Trip Down the Memory Lane of Temporary Exile

In September 1943, Fascist Italy capitulated and withdrew from its occupation zones in Yugoslavia including from the Adriatic Coast. These zones were immediately taken over by the Nazi German army as they were of strategic military importance for holding the Balkans. To protect the civilian population from reprisals and massive executions by the rapidly advancing German army, the partisan liberation movement with the support of its Western allies organized a large-scale evacuation of the civilian population from the Adriatic coast (Mataušić 2007, p. 8). Between November 1943 and January 1944, approximately 40.000 women, children and elderly people were transferred across the Adriatic to the Italian cities already held by the British and American armies. From there, approximately 30.000 people, among them at least 10.000 children, left for a newly erected refugee camp in El Shatt in Egypt, near the Suez Canal (Mataušić 2007, p. 12). Unlike the Polish and the Greek sections of the camp that were under direct British control, the Yugoslav section was self-managed by Yugoslav refugees themselves until they returned back to their liberated country in 1946.

A recently published novel for children and young adults, titled *The Refugee's Children: A Novel about El Shatt*, revisits this part of once common Yugoslav history. Written in the post-1990 political context of Yugoslavia's dissolution and historical revisionism, the novel pays tribute to this collective experience of WWII temporary displacement and exile by erasing its broader geopolitical context. The paper makes use of the so-called postmemory theoretical approaches in narratives of collective trauma and displacement. It introduces a new approach, the so-called "post-postmemory" approach as a tool to investigate forms of revisionisms in historical narratives for children on displacement and migration in the post-1990 context of (the restoration of) global capitalism, new imperialisms and rising militarism.

Keywords: El Shatt refugee camp; WWII, partisans; postmemory; Yugoslavia

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Children's Biographies and Female Migration: Representing Diasporic and Post-Migratory Identities

Narrative forms, whether realistic or fictional, play a crucial role in shaping cultural imaginaries, ethical frameworks, social and political values (Filograsso, 2023). Within children's literature, biographical and biofictional texts function as powerful literary and educational devices, as their genealogies reveal how the selection of exemplary lives has always been intertwined with literary and pedagogical agendas, ethical projects, and structures of power (Douglas, 2022; Malpezzi, 2024).

In recent years, children's publishing has witnessed a significant proliferation of biographies and collective life-writing devoted to women's lives, often framed through an explicitly feminist lens. While these works seek to fill memorial gaps and promote more inclusive imaginaries, scholars have noted that such narratives may also reproduce simplified or depoliticised representations of social inequality (Seveso, 2025).

This paper investigates how contemporary biographical narratives for children represent female migration, asking whether they challenge passive and victimising portrayals or inadvertently reinforce hegemonic tropes of resilience and empowerment. The study is situated within the national research project *BIBI* (Campagnaro & Ferrari, 2025) and adopts a comparative approach based on three criteria: editorial circulation (mainstream vs independent publishing), typology of biographical form (individual, collective, graphic), and representational models of female migration across diasporic and post-migratory contexts.

The corpus includes success-oriented biographies such as *Lina* (2019) and *Storie della buonanotte per bambineribelli. 100 donne migranti che hanno cambiato il mondo* (2020), alongside three graphic biographical narratives: *Etenesh* (2010), *Sindrome Italia* (2022), and *Sotto il velo* (2016).

Through close reading and critical content analysis, the paper examines visual, textual, and paratextual strategies, highlighting how illustrated biographies, thanks to their semiotic complexity, allow for more critical representations of female migration, labour, care, and post-migratory identities. The concluding discussion also addresses the issue of the feminisation of migratory flows, arguing that these narratives expose, or at times obscure, overlapping forms of violence, exploitation, and discrimination constructed at the intersection of gender, race, and class.

Keywords: children's biography; female migration; diasporic identities; graphic narratives and picturebooks; feminisation of migration

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Wander and Wonder: Nomadic Child-Guides in Children's Nonfiction Books

In times of increased globalization, internationalization, and migratory movements, children's literature plays a crucial role in showing the world, representing realities, and encouraging virtual border-crossing. This is particularly true for nonfiction, which endeavours to show facts and reality.

One type of character in children's nonfiction is recurrent but not yet studied systematically: the nomadic child-guide, a child who embarks on an adventure to explore unknown places or times as both a participant in a framing story and a leader helping the readers navigate through expository or narrative content. By being agentic, independent, and knowledgeable, nomadic child-guides challenge traditional adult-child power relationships. In their wandering and wondering, they model autonomy and stimulate the readers' imagination.

In order to show readers the richness of the world, nomadic child-guides leave home to become nomads and freely travel across space and time in a border-less world, constantly moving from place to place with each page turned before going back home at the end of their adventure. Thus, they follow the "universal mythical pattern we find in the vast majority of [fiction] narratives" (Nikolajeva, 2002, p. 28), which is home-away-homecoming. I will analyse four contemporary children's nonfiction picturebooks with child-guides showing readers around the world. I will adopt a critical-multicultural analysis approach (Pratt et al., 2023) to expose the power dynamics behind the nomadic characteristic of the child-guides and the "home-away-homecoming" narrative structure. Indeed, the freedom to leave home, explore a seemingly border-less world, and come back home reflects the passport privilege of only some but not all nationalities. Additionally, the child-guides lead young readers to extraordinary places only, which reinforces the "our land – barbarian land" dichotomy (Said, 1978, p. 54) and creates a comparison with the implicit superiority of "home" that might obscure the transformative potential of travelling.

Keyword: children's nonfiction; nomad; geography; literary character; critical multicultural analysis

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Uprooted: Multilingual Childhoods in three Graphic Memoirs of Diasporic Experiences

In recent years, there has been growing scholarly interest in how graphic authors represent diasporic communities, linguistic diversity, the interplay of linguistic codes, and language ideologies (e.g. Dong, 2023; Laser, 2024; Woerly, 2023). Amongst other things, these contributions show that graphic literature is especially suited for representing multilingual experiences because of their combination of verbal and visual elements and the various ways in which these can be combined.

Building on this research, the present paper examines multilingual childhoods as depicted in three recent graphic memoirs that centre on diasporic experiences: Ruth Chan's *Uprooted* (2024), Christine Mari's *Halfway There* (2024), and Pedro Martín's *Mexikid* (2023). The memoirs have been selected because they focus on language learning experiences, particularly emotional and social challenges connected to these experiences and how these shape the protagonists' sense of identity. At the same time, the authors have chosen very different ways of representing these translingual environments, both on verbal and visual levels.

The main focus of the paper will be on the following two questions:

1. How are different languages represented semiotically in the three memoirs, and with what effect?
2. Which subjective experiences relating to language learning and multilingualism do the authors highlight, and how?

In discussing the first question, the taxonomy developed by Laser (2024) serves as a useful framework, showing how the authors employ a range of approaches to showcase linguistic diversity while ensuring that the narrative is accessible to general audiences. To answer the second question, a selection of scenes from the memoirs will be discussed that portray the protagonists' emotional and mental struggles in adapting to a new language and culture (*Uprooted* and *Halfway There*), and positive scenes of multilingualism and identity affirmation (*Mexikid*). I will draw on research on multilingualism and identity (e.g. Norton, 2013; Pavlenko, 2005) in discussing the protagonists' subjective experiences of language learning.

The paper will conclude with reflections on pedagogical implications of the analysis, especially relating to aims about multilingualism in pedagogical framework documents for ESL/EFL teaching (cf. Christensen et al., 2025).

Keywords: graphic memoirs; coming-of-age narratives; multilingualism; literature in language education

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Diaspora and Forced Migration in Dystopian YA Fiction: An Affective Approach

Migration and diaspora in children's books have received increasing scholarly attention in recent years (Nel, 2018), while these themes in YA literature represent a developing area of academic inquiry. This paper draws on affect theory (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010) and cognitive approaches to literature (Nikolajeva, 2014; Moruzi, et al. 2019) to consider the representation of forced migration and diaspora in two recent dystopian YA novels: *Nubia: The Awakening* by Omar Epps and Clarence A. Haynes (2022), and *The Things We Leave Behind* by Clare Furniss (2024). In the former, three teens, children of refugees from an African utopia, struggle to find their identity in a New York city destroyed by climatic disaster. In the latter, sixteen-year-old Clem, like many other Londoners, flees the violent far-right regime that has been established in England, seeking refuge in independent Scotland, while trying to come to terms with loss to begin anew.

Both novels explore the emotional aspect involved in migration and diaspora, as well as in personal and collective trauma, defying the dominant dehumanising narratives associated with migrants. At one level, they articulate affective economies (Ahmed, 2004), portraying how within the fictional world negative emotions are mobilised to mark certain groups as inferior. At another level, they seek to provoke strong emotional responses from the reader, facilitating identification with the main characters.

Through critical comparison, the paper seeks to underline the different means by which the emotional experience of the diasporic subjects is portrayed in each of these texts. *Nubia* deploys multiple focalisation to convey notions of collective trauma and reflect the ways communal diasporic identities are forged, whereas in *The Things We Leave Behind* the fragmentary structure and chronology serve to thematise issues of traumatic memory and strategies of healing on a personal level. The analysis will highlight how these examples of speculative YA fiction mirror real-world diaspora and foster the readers' affective engagement.

Keywords: YA dystopian novels; diaspora; forced migration; affect theory; cognitive approaches to literature

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Between Homelands: Migrant Motherhood, Children and belonging in Award Winning Spanish Picturebooks (2000–2025)²

In an increasingly mobile world, migration narratives in children's literature offer a crucial context for examining how women and children inhabit and transform the liminal spaces between homeland and hostland in different ecosystems (Adair et al., 2025). Echoing Yuyi Morales's internationally awarded picturebook *Dreamers* (2018), this research foregrounds migrant motherhood as a key locus where gender, care and diasporic subjectivities intersect. Taking Morales's work as its point of departure, the study turns to picturebooks about motherhood that have been awarded or strongly promoted in the Spanish context between 2000 and 2025, in order to explore which mothering experiences are made visible (De Sarlo et al., 2023) and whether migrant mothers and their children are present, marginalised or absent from these visualized imaginaries.

Drawing on feminist and childhood studies and following an ethnographic classroom-based design, the research undertakes a multimodal critical discourse analysis of a corpus of Spanish award winning picturebooks from the last twenty-five years. Together with a group of first year Early Childhood Education pre-service teachers (n=50), it examines the interplay between image, typography, paratexts and narrative voice, following recent developments in picturebook research (Arizpe, 2021). The analysis focuses on how visual and verbal choices construct motherhood, maternal bodies and practices, and on how the participants respond to these representations through multimodal and reflective tasks. Specifically, the study asks: How are mothers and children framed in relation to migration, care, vulnerability, and agency? To what extent do these texts reproduce idealised, normative models of motherhood rooted in stable homelands, and when, if at all, do they begin to recognise and articulate migrant, racialised or precarious maternal experiences?

Building on Human Rights Education (Von Berg, 2023) and critical literacy (Gutiérrez-García & Álvarez-Álvarez, 2025), the paper discusses the implications of these findings for early childhood teacher education. It outlines a qualitative proposal that combines dialogic readings, arts-based activities and additional-language learning around a central picturebook acting as a trigger and other place-based titles. In doing so, it argues that analysing these contrasting representations can help future teachers critically reflect on whose motherhood and childhood are recognised within children's literature, and how picturebooks may either reinforce or challenge dominant imaginaries of diasporic, exilic and subaltern subjects.

² This research is part of the R+D+i project MUJER-PI-11-7-ID25 *SEMILLA: saber, empoderamiento, mujer, identidad local, liderazgo y autonomía*, funded by the Ministry of Equality of the Government of Spain. Both researchers participate in the research group TALIS (University of Valencia).

Keywords: critical literacy; diasporic identities; migration; motherhood; picturebooks.

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Rocío Domene-Benito holds a PhD with international distinction in Specific Didactics on picturebooks and its use in the teaching/learning of foreign languages in Primary Education. Her research interests include gender and democracy studies, Children's Rights, and Agency and the use of picturebooks in language teaching and learning. She has published papers, chapters, and coedited volumes, and has undertaken research in international institutions on these lines. She is Associate Professor in the Department of Language and Literature Education at the University of Valencia, a member of the ELCIS research group, and she also collaborates with TALIS and LI(T)ERART.

Trauma, Memory and Exilic Identities of Diaspora in Anna Kouppanou's *When the Sea Left Us*

For over four decades Greek-Cypriot writers have been producing a body of writing for young readers, which represents trauma associated with the invasion of 1974, registers its impact and negotiates the special position of childhood in relation to that trauma. Since 1974, however, the modes, motivations, and the kinds of stories have changed significantly, affecting how childhood trauma is represented and reexperienced in Cypriot children's literature but also how memory functions in those texts (Chatzianastasi 2022; Χατζηαναστάση 2023). The paper focuses on a more recent example of Cypriot writing addressing young readers, Anna Kouppanou's novel *When the sea left us*. Kouppanou's book touches the case of Cypriot child refugees who fled unaccompanied to Greece after the invasion of 1974, an aspect of Cypriot history that has been overlooked by earlier writing for the young. Through close reading, the paper explores the ways in which the fictional characters of the story arise as exilic figures who are forced to leave their home and move to a culturally relative but unknown place. Of particular interest is how the trauma of exile is intertwined with memory and nostalgia giving rise to a fluid form of identity that is negotiated throughout the story. The sea in the title of the book arises as a symbolic vehicle of diaspora working as a literary canvas on which the characters, through the narrative voice of Katerina, begin a quest for a new identity. This discussion attests to Hope's (2017) claim about fiction's potential to offer young readers important insights into experience, highlighting the literary value of migration and refugee literature. Significantly, the outcome of the paper extends previous arguments regarding the presence of children's books about trauma in Cyprus that have managed to deal effectively with the traumatic experiences and explore complex questions about loss and memory.

Keywords: refugees; exile; diaspora; trauma; memory

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Καρατάσου *Με το νήμα της εντοπιότητας: Σύγχρονες τάσεις και εξελίξεις στην κυπριακή παιδική και νεανική λογοτεχνία* (σσ. 213-234). Κυπριακός Σύνδεσμος Παιδικού και Νεανικού Βιβλίου.

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Lost Homelands and Surreal Hostlands: Diasporic Readings of Studio Ghibli's Worlds

The nostalgic gaze toward a lost home, the search for roots, the struggle to embrace a new identity while trying not to forget an old one, and the liminality between borders, both literal and symbolic, are consistent themes in Studio Ghibli films, rendering them ideal candidates for allegorical readings of diasporic experiences. Founded in 1985, Studio Ghibli has become one of the most beloved animation studios worldwide, celebrated for its “emotionally resonant tapestries” filled with “surreal or dreamlike imagery” (Napier, 2018, pp. xii–xiii). More recently, the studio has attracted increased attention due to director Hayao Miyazaki's stance against AI-generated animation and his commitment to “keep animators drawing” (Ellis, 2010, p. 22). Some of its most popular films, such as the Oscar-winning *Spirited Away* (2001) and *Kiki's Delivery Service* (1989), have been interpreted as coming-of-age narratives (Karademir, 2025; Napier, 2018), where the search for identity and roots is linked to a process of development and maturation. *Spirited Away*, in particular, has been described as an archetypal story of *nostos* similar to Homer's *Odyssey*, as the protagonist is displaced in the spirit world and longs to return to her own version of Ithaca (Lye, 2018). This paper argues that these films are ripe for a diasporic reading as well. Specifically, it explores how the diasporic themes of navigating life in a new hostland while reminiscing about a lost homeland and of negotiating a hybrid identity permeate *Spirited Away* and *Kiki's Delivery Service*. Through dreamlike, and at times nightmarish, visual poetics and symbolism, these films offer surreal, deeply affective narratives that resonate with the struggles of diaspora members to preserve their homeland identity while finding roots in seemingly bizarre hostlands. In this way, the films provide diaspora members with a sense of meaning, optimism, and hope as they navigate their own Odysseys.

Keywords: Ghibli; diaspora; homeland; hostland; surrealism

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Between Home and Hostland: Internal Diaspora and Foster Care in *Tre in tutto* by Davide Cali and Isabella Labate

In the aftermath of World War II, more than 70,000 children from Southern Italy were hosted by families in the North as part of a large-scale initiative of temporary foster care, known as the “Trains of Happiness.” *Tre in tutto* (2021) by Davide Cali and Isabella Labate is a powerful picturebook that reimagines this moment of Italian history through the lens of a child narrator whose voice is infused with memory, irony, and loss. This paper examines how *Tre in tutto* represents an internal diaspora that, while not crossing national borders, radically destabilizes the child's sense of home, family, and belonging. The picturebook transforms geographical displacement into an inner journey of affective exile, where silence, waiting, and transformation emerge as central narrative and visual elements. Through the subtle tension between traumatic separation and nurturing encounter, the book blurs the boundary between “hostland” and “homeland,” showing how new maternal figures can emerge from unexpected solidarity. The analysis explores how both the textual voice and the visual grammar of the book (notably its sepia palette, understated imagery, and symbolic motifs like the “W” on bread) construct a layered memoryscape where exile is not rupture, but recomposition. The child narrator's shifting perception—between suspicion (fear of being cooked) and affection (calling his host “mamma Ildè”)—exemplifies how temporary foster care redefines the family as a mobile, plural structure. *Tre in tutto* reveals how children's literature can recount historical episodes of domestic displacement not through ideology or nostalgia, but through the lived intimacy of the child's gaze. Rooted in Italian history yet echoing universal themes, it contributes to global conversations on mobility, memory, care, and hybrid identities within and beyond national borders.

Keywords: narrative memory; childhood displacement; picturebooks, affective exile; care

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Immigration and Transnational Deliberations in Jewish Children's Stories Between the Worldwars

My lecture will deal with intergenerational aspects of the Jewish mass-immigration that took place during the first three decades of the 20th century: The dilemmas and emotional conflicts faced by first generation of immigrants, when trying to educate and chart a path for the younger generation who was born and raised in new geographical and cultural environments. I will point to a fundamental emotional tension between the radical Zionist fantasy to start afresh, to educate a generation fundamentally different from the negated Jewish Diaspora, and the opposing yearning for generational continuity, and the fear of forgetting and repressing their own heritage, with its languages, peoples and cultures.

I will focus on the transnational emotions, as manifested in an intergenerational discourse platform which, one might expect, was not supposed to highlight them: namely, the Zionist-oriented children's press, both in Poland and in Jewish Palestine. As I will show, alongside the Diaspora negating "here" and "there", with its judgmental character, which was the predominant Zionist narrative promoted by this press, another voice resonated: a position which tried to reconcile the two extremes and express an inclusive and emphatic perception of Jewish identity.

In my lecture I will address several stories written by the Polish-Jewish writer, physician and pedagogue, Janusz Korczak (1878–1942), which deal with transnationalism and immigration on the thematic level but also manifest these subjects in the very circumstances of their publication – as they were in fact published simultaneously in Zionist children's magazines in both Poland and Palestine.

Through a discussion of these stories and the circumstances of their publication, I hope to shed light on the complex sentiments that these magazines tried to establish among young readers – towards Jewish life in Poland, immigration, and toward the various Jewish communities overseas, and the complex national identity that these engendered.

Keywords: transnationalism; zionist diaspora negation; Jewish immigration; first generation immigrants; Janusz Korczak

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Navigating Exile: Professional Trajectories and Networks in Russian-Language Children's Publishing

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine triggered a major wave of emigration, including a significant number of highly educated professionals critical of the regime (Kamalov, Kostenko & al, 2023). Among them are key figures from Russia's independent children's book industry—a critical publishing scene that developed over the past two decades (Lanoux, Herold & Bukhina, 2021). Their departure, alongside that of a significant part of their primary audience—the children of emigrant families—has accelerated a profound reconfiguration of the field that was already underway prior to 2022. This process has fragmented the industry into diverse professional paths, ranging from maintaining a primary career in Russia, to focusing on integration into a new local market, to building a transnational or international profile.

Drawing on biographical interviews conducted by the author since 2022 with key players in Russia's independent publishing scene (writers, illustrators, publishers, booksellers), we will outline a typology of their professional trajectories, examining how they embody the process of perpetual "becoming" (Hall, 1990).

Beyond individual trajectories, we will analyse how professional networks of Russian children's publishing are being constituted in exile, and how this field asserts its legitimacy (Guijarro Arribas, 2022) by negotiating its autonomy within the nascent "new Tamizdat" (Achechova, 2024) as well as inside the broader ecosystems of the global and local markets.

Finally, a case study of two albums produced in exile will help us to illuminate how these actors aesthetically render exile and cultural hybridity, and how the socio-cultural identity markers inherent to their professional milieu are refracted and renegotiated through the prism of emigration.

This paper directly addresses the theme "Émigré, diaspora, nomad authors and artists of children's literature." It examines both the lived professional experiences of these cultural actors in emigration and the representations of displacement and identity they create for young readers.

Keywords: Russian children's literature; children's book industry; publishing in exile; emigration during the War in Ukraine; representation of exile

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Learning Belonging through Digital Games: Online Bullying and the Reconfiguration of Homeland in Children's and Young Adult Literature

This paper explores how patterns of belonging and exclusion learned through digital games and experiences of online bullying shape literary representations of home, homeland, and identity in contemporary children's and young adult literature. Using qualitative textual analysis, the study examines how digital environments function not merely as narrative settings but as pedagogical spaces that teach children and young people specific logics of visibility, performance, and punishment (Gee, 2003; Ito et al., 2010).

The paper argues that online games model rule-based systems in which belonging is conditional, reversible, and dependent on correct performance. These learned patterns are reinforced through representations of cyberbullying, where difference—often linked to ethnicity, language, accent, or cultural background—is publicly exposed and transformed into shame (Marwick & boyd, 2014). Within the literary texts examined, experiences of online bullying are not represented solely as moments of trauma, but as part of a broader economy of digital pain, in which suffering is circulated, witnessed, and sometimes aestheticized (Ahmed, 2014).

This study further demonstrates how these digitally learned patterns are transferred onto literary understandings of homeland. Rather than being depicted as a stable or protective space, homeland emerges as a fragile and regulated territory governed by surveillance, judgment, and the constant threat of exclusion. For diasporic and hybrid child subjects, belonging is therefore imagined as performative and precarious, mirroring the structures of digital game worlds (Hall, 1990; Bauman, 2000).

Drawing on theories of diaspora, exile, and identity (Hall, 1990; Said, 2002), the paper shows how children's and young adult literature reconfigures homeland through the logic of digital culture and the rule-based structures of online games, contributing to current debates on digital childhoods, diasporic identities, and the ethics of representing pain and belonging (Nel, 2018).

Keywords: digital games; online bullying; diasporic identities; home and belonging; children's and young adult literature.

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Seeking for Home, Roots and Identity: The Social-Emotional Profile (SEP) of the Literary Characters in Vangelis' Iliopoulos Books

The search for identity and roots is an essential theme in children's literature worldwide. Especially in Greece, where cultural identity holds a great significance, issues of identity and roots are often reflected in children's books. Identity is explored not under the light of the sense of the one-and-only, unchanged, common history that unites cultural entities but recognizes that "there are also critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute 'what we really are'; or rather—since history has intervened—'what we have become' (Hall, 1990, p. 225). The presentation portrays the Social-Emotional Profile of the literary characters in Vangelis' Iliopoulos books connected with the issue of home, roots and identity and the ways the author and the illustrators reveal the social emotional traits of the displaced—emotionally, physically or culturally—characters. Social-Emotional Profile (SEP) is the way words and images reveal to the reader the social and emotional traits of the fictional characters (Dermata, 2020). Through the SEP approach, we attempt to limelight how "the effects of physical and emotional displacement on those who have been othered geographically or culturally" (Nel, 2018, p. 358) are represented in the work of Iliopoulos. Such an approach is based on Velmeule's perspective that literary characters are a means to think about others and us (2010), and comes in align with Nikolajeva's point of view that picturebooks "is an important first step in the development of emotional intelligence" (2013, p. 254).

Keywords: social-emotional profile; identity; picture books; social semiotics; emotional literacy

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Staging Diasporic Memory: Metatheatricality, Intertextuality, and Child Refugee Identity in *The boy in the loge*

This paper explores the children's novel *To αγόρι στο δωρείο* (*The boy in the loge*) by Angeliki Darlasi and its theatrical adaptation by Andri Theodotou, with particular emphasis on theatre for young audiences and the use of metatheatricality as a key aesthetic and dramaturgical strategy. Focusing on the motif of "theatre within theatre", the paper examines how diasporic childhood and refugee experience are not merely represented but actively staged and re-experienced through performance. Drawing on theories of diaspora, memory, and metatheatricality, the analysis addresses three interconnected textual and performative layers: the original narrative, its dramatic adaptation, and the stage production presented at the National Theatre of Greece in 2021. In the novel, the theatre emerges as a liminal space between homeland and hostland, offering displaced children a temporary yet meaningful site of belonging. This spatial and symbolic function is intensified in the theatrical version, where the embedded performance of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* becomes the central metatheatrical core of the work. The paper argues that metatheatricality functions as a mechanism of diasporic memory-making, allowing individual trauma—particularly the child protagonist's experience of loss—to intersect with the collective memory of Asia Minor refugee communities. Within the context of theatre for young audiences, this layered theatrical structure enables historical displacement and exile to be approached through aesthetic mediation rather than didactic narration. The child spectator is thus positioned as an implicit participant in a performative process where memory, identity, and empathy are negotiated. By foregrounding performance, adaptation, and metatheatrical self-reflexivity, the paper contributes to current discussions on diaspora aesthetics and theatre for young audiences, highlighting how theatrical form can transform refugee histories into shared spaces of reflection, resilience, and becoming.

Keywords: theatre for young audiences; metatheatricality; diasporic memory; child refugee identity; theatre within theatre

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Navigating Different Selves and Identities: Culture, Exile and Intersectionality in Adiba Jaigirdar's *The Henna Wars*

This paper will apply postcolonial theory to children's and young adult literature in the form of a case study of the novel *The Henna Wars* (2020) by queer Bangladeshi-Irish author Adiba Jaigirdar. Through this analysis, we will explore how various marginalised identities (in terms of ethnicity, religion, culture or sexuality) intersect in recent YA fiction from former colonial empires. Jaigirdar's narrative equates the young protagonist's coming-of-age journey with the process of constructing a new, hybrid identity to come to terms with the culture of her country of origin and better integrate into the culture of the host country.

Not only is *The Henna Wars* a largely autobiographical YA novel based on Jaigirdar's experience as a lonely Asian immigrant teenager growing up in Ireland, but it is also dedicated "to queer brown girls" and is committed to addressing the lack of adequate representation of diversity in children's and YA fiction (Adichie 2009; Bold 2019; Thomas 2016). Beyond its weighty topical themes, ranging from racism and Islamophobia to the difficulty young people face in coming out to their families and friends, the story has a more subtle metafictional dimension. The novel uses the metaphor of henna designs and tattoos—an activity passed down to Nishat by her Bengali grandmother—to explore how individuals can construct their own multifaceted postcolonial identities by shaping their cultural heritage.

The heroine's creative reinterpretation of her grandmother's traditional henna patterns in an attempt to carry out an original school project is, on the one hand, reminiscent of Jaigirdar's recycling of old texts into popular modern stories (her novel was an instant hit on BookTok, in the same way that photos of Nishat's henna decorations in the novel go viral on Instagram); on the other hand, the teenager's henna tattoos are described as genuine works of art that can contribute to their creator's self-fulfilment, provided they are never appropriated by another culture, whether dominant or marginalised. The "henna wars" that turn Nishat and Flávia (a half-Brazilian girl and Nishat's new crush) into rivals before they become lovers according to the classic "enemies-to-lovers" trope in YA romance, act as both a comic narrative device and a serious postcolonial commentary on the necessity of not erasing the Other's culture by exoticising and appropriating it (Said 1993).

Keywords: LGBTQ+ romance; racism; sexual/cultural identity/diversity; coming-of-age novel; metafictionality

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Plot Engineering in Shaun Tan's *The Arrival*: Symbolic Patterns and Narrative Construction

This paper presents a technical analysis of plot construction in Shaun Tan's graphic novel *The Arrival*, highlighting how narrative structure operates as a mechanism for meaning production. Episodic organization, visual repetition, and the systematic absence of verbal language all contribute to shaping the progression of the plot and articulating the subjective experience of migration.

By examining the interplay between narrative technique and ideological content, the study draws on concepts from archetypal theory and the myth-critical tradition, with particular attention to the frameworks developed by Joseph Campbell and Northrop Frye. Such an approach proves especially suitable given the work's extensive use of symbolic associations and archetypal patterns.

Additionally, structuralist narrative approaches proposed by Tzvetan Todorov are employed to trace tendencies of improvement or deterioration within the sequence of events, offering a more precise understanding of how the story's progression builds tension, resolution, and emotional engagement.

The analysis demonstrates that the controlled distribution of symbolic motifs functions as an integral component of plot development rather than a mere illustrative device. These motifs not only advance the narrative but also convey themes of displacement, estrangement, and the migrant subject's effort to *blend in* and negotiate cultural assimilation within an unfamiliar environment.

Keywords: narratology; symbols; plot construction; migration; graphic novel

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Diaspora as Relation: Ethics of Care and Collaborative Work with Children in Post-Migrant School Contexts

This paper explores diaspora as a relational and ethical practice enacted through collaborative work with children and schools, rather than solely as a representational theme in children's literature. Drawing on the interdisciplinary work of the Seen and Heard project (www.seenandheardproject.eu), the paper examines how an ethics of care shaped the formation of sustained working relationships between researchers, educators, and children in post-migrant school contexts.

Grounded in feminist ethics of care (Gilligan 1982; Noddings 1984; Tronto 2013), care is approached not as sentiment or pedagogy alone, but as a moral and political practice that structures how research relationships are initiated, maintained, and negotiated. Within diasporic and post-migrant settings—where children often inhabit liminal positions between languages, cultures, and institutional expectations—care becomes a mode of relational attunement that enables trust, reciprocity, and shared meaning-making. In this sense, diaspora is understood not as a fixed identity or origin story, but as a dynamic process of becoming enacted through everyday interactions, responsibilities, and forms of recognition (Hall 1990; Zembylas 2021; Balagopalan et al 2023).

The paper reflects on how the Seen and Heard team worked with schools and children over time, co-creating spaces in which children engaged with stories (in literature, art, and film), and discussions that resonated with their own experiences of mobility, belonging, and difference.

These collaborations positioned children as active participants and ethical agents, rather than objects of study or symbolic representatives of diaspora. The relational methodology foregrounded listening, responsiveness, and shared authorship, allowing diasporic identities to emerge through practice rather than prescription.

By foregrounding care as a methodological and relational framework, the paper argues that children's literature-based work in schools can function as a form of ethical world-making. It demonstrates how diaspora, when approached through care, is lived and negotiated in relation—with others, institutions, and stories—reconfiguring diasporic childhood as participatory, relational, and future-oriented.

Keywords: diaspora; ethics of care; children's literature; relational methodology; post-migrant childhoods

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Justyna Deszcz-Tryhubczak (University of Wrocław) works on children's participation, the Anthropocene, and posthumanism. She is the author of *Yes to Solidarity, No to Oppression: Radical Fantasy Fiction and Its Young Readers* (2016). *Intergenerational Solidarity in Children's Literature and Film* (2021), which she co-edited with Zoe Jacques, was awarded the 2023 Edited Book Award from the IRSC. She also co-edited, with Irena Barbara Kalla, *Rulers of Literary Playgrounds: Politics of Intergenerational Play in Children's Literature* (2021) and *Children's Literature and Intergenerational Relationships: Encounters of the Playful Kind* (2021), with Macarena García-González. In addition to *Children's Cultures after Childhood* (2023), and, with Terri Doughty and Janet Grafton, *Children's Literature, Cultures and Pedagogies in the Anthropocene: Multidisciplinary Entanglements* (2025). She is the University of Wrocław coordinator of the Erasmus Mundus International Master: Children's Literature, Media, & Cultural Entrepreneurship (<https://www.gla.ac.uk/postgraduate/erasmusmundus/clmce/>). Since 2023 she has been the University of Wrocław coordinator and academic lead in *Seen and Heard: Young People's Voices and Freedom of Expression* (www.seenandheardproject.eu).

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Roma in France: The Model Nomad

Is there any group more nomadic than Roma? Referred to in French as *Roms*, *Tziganes*, *Gitans*, or *gens du voyage*, this ethno-social group is – at least figuratively – consubstantial with nomadism. The largest ethnic minority in Europe, Roma have long been on the move, often to escape discrimination yet subject to stereotyping where they stop to rest. Visible minorities in French society, Roma have served as subjects of many French children's books since the 2010s. My proposed presentation will examine a dozen French picturebooks about Roma for young readers.

Based on this corpus, I will make several arguments. First, unlike representations of other minorities in French children's literature, Roma are typically portrayed positively for specific values, namely, freedom and mobility, as well as for colorfulness, music, and *joie de vivre*. Second, while the roaming lifestyle is an inherent feature of Roma families in this corpus, their sense of home and community is also strongly emphasized, and not without contradiction. Home is most exemplified by the *roulotte* or traveling caravan. In some stories, the *roulotte* is personified and plays the role of the main character; its hybrid identity symbolizes both refuge and uprootedness. Third, the pronounced presence of Roma girls and women contrasts with female underrepresentation in French children's literature in general. In these stories, Roma girls and women are often dancers, markedly gendered, and occasionally eroticized. I will analyze the relationship between such exoticization and non-Roma authors' identities. Finally, while several stories portray Roma encountering prejudice and discrimination in the host society, most conclude with a happy ending and a moral lesson about the social benefits of diversity. Through this analysis, I hope to contribute to research on the intersections of nomadic identities and 21st-century children's literature.

Keywords: Roma; nomadic; home; gender; hybridity

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Metacognition and Creative Thinking: A Dynamic Relationship and its Impact on Creative Writing

Metacognition and creative thinking are two high-level thinking skills that all students need in order to be creative when they are engaged with problem-solving activities (Gaki, 2024), such as the cognitive processes of the production and reading comprehension of written speech. They are two skills necessary for the twenty-first century citizens (Paz-Baruch et al., 2025), and although their relationship has not been sufficiently explored (Gaki, 2024; Paz-Baruch et al., 2025), most empirical research shows that enhancing metacognition leads to improved creative thinking (Gaki, 2024). A basic creative thinking activity is creative writing (Hubert et al., 2025), which is also closely linked to metacognition in both the first and the second or foreign language, as evidenced by the limited research that has been conducted. Creative writing brings significant benefits to students on academic, social, and professional levels (Vicol et al., 2024). In addition, among other things, it supports individuals who, for various reasons, live far from their homeland to present themselves, improve their self-image, communicate, build relationships of mutual understanding, reshape their identity and integrate into their host societies (Bdeir, 2025). However, it is not systematically reinforced in the field of education. Within this context the aim of this paper is two-fold; on the one hand, it seeks to highlight the dynamic relationship and interaction between metacognition, creative thinking and creative writing; on the other hand, it aims to propose a strong literacy framework required to enhance creative writing (Paz-Baruch et al., 2025), such as the learning environments of socio-cognitive apprenticeship (Gaki, 2024).

Keywords: metacognition; creative thinking; creative writing; socio-cognitive apprenticeship learning environments

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When the Stranger Shrinks: Metaphors of Assimilation, Loss and Becoming in Contemporary Picturebooks

This paper explores the metaphor of shrinking as a subtle yet potent representation of migrant and refugee experiences in contemporary picturebooks. Drawing on *My Strange Shrinking Parents* by Zeno Sworder and *The Boy Who Tried to Shrink His Name* by Sandhya Parappukkaran and Michelle Pereira, the study examines how shrinking functions as an embodied response to displacement: a symbolic contraction that occurs when people lose parts of themselves, retreat inward to remain unseen, or adapt reflexively to unfamiliar surroundings. These narratives foreground shrinking as a socio-emotional process tied to identity negotiation, visibility, and survival in the host environment.

The paper argues that the shrinking of the Stranger, whether migrant or refugee, depicts the pressures of assimilation and the silent sacrifices demanded of those marked as “Other.” Through powerful imagery and minimal text, both books visualize the extraction or suppression of aspects of the self, rendering perceptible the otherwise invisible burdens carried by newcomers. This metaphor resonates with Stuart Hall’s notion of identity as a continual “becoming” shaped through difference, as well as with Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of deterritorialization, whereby subjects inhabit liminal spaces between homeland and hostland. The shrinking body becomes an emblem of this liminality: a site where belonging is negotiated, constrained, or reshaped.

At the same time, the metaphor invites young readers to engage empathetically with displaced subjects. By making the experience of shrinking recognizable and emotionally accessible, the picturebooks challenge societies accustomed to assimilation rather than acceptance, prompting reflection on how marginalization is normalized and internalized.

Ultimately, this paper proposes that foregrounding the shrinking of the Stranger offers a compelling lens for understanding contemporary representations of otherness, highlighting the symbolic weight of smallness as a social problem and as a critical narrative strategy in children’s literature.

Keywords: shrinking; migration; assimilation; otherness; picturebooks

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Between Homes and Stories: Co-Constructing Meaning and Sensitivity in Multimodal School Literacies

Contemporary reflections on migratory experience unfold within a social climate marked by the re-emergence—and persistent presence—of fear as a structuring force. Bauman argued that modernity promised an escape from fatality, yet this “route of escape” ultimately led back to conditions defined by insecurity, making the school and literature essential spaces where coexistence, dialogue, and the co-construction of meaning can be cultivated despite social uncertainty (Colomer & Fittipaldi, 2015). In today’s Europe, the uneven empathy shown toward those fleeing war or extreme vulnerability—for instance, the contrasting reception of Ukrainian refugees and other displaced groups—reveals the urgency of challenging the implicit logic that produces “first-class and second-class migrants.” Within this context, education and culture emerge as key spaces from which to ask a fundamental question: how can identification and empathy toward migrants be fostered, regardless of origin?

This study analyzes a school-based literate event: a literary conversation with children from two different Spanish school contexts, both characterized by high rates of migration and situated within a complex emergency situation (Arizpe, 2025), shaped by migrant vulnerability as well as by their location in communities affected by the DANA, the extreme weather event that impacted parts of Spain this year. The methodology understands reading as a process of co-construction of meaning among teachers, students, and text, while engaging critically with the multimodal languages—verbal, visual, conceptual, and affective—that shape picturebooks (Arizpe, 2014) and opening space for situated and plural interpretations. The picturebooks used were carefully curated to avoid a paternalistic tone and to represent diverse ways of narrating migration. Their visual dimension allows for a broader perspective, enabling discussion of the migratory phenomenon beyond textual narratives alone, and fostering reflection on both individual and collective experiences of displacement.

Literary conversation does not aim for correct answers, but rather for interpretive pathways that reveal how readers articulate multiple modes of signification to construct understanding and aesthetic sensitivity, in response to contemporary educational challenges. The analysis of children’s discourse is informed by postcolonial and posthumanist perspectives (Ahmed, 2000), viewing literacy as emerging from encounters among picturebooks, children, peers,

and teachers. These encounters function as contact zones in which testimonial, embodied, and nonhuman dimensions participate in meaning-making (Arizpe, 2021).

Migratory picturebooks embody a liminal condition, situating protagonists between a lost home and a home yet to come, while students themselves navigate deficit-oriented discourses that often silence their diverse epistemologies (Compton-Lilly, 2022). In this sense, the study positions migratory experience as an opportunity to unsettle homogenizing narratives of school literacy and to reimagine reading practices as spaces of recognition, dialogue, and shared belonging (Compton-Lilly, 2021).

Keywords: migration; picturebooks; literary conversation; posthumanism; children's literacy

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In the Shoes of Exile with a Suitcase of Memories: The Poetics of Diaspora as a Tool for Empathy and Active Citizenship in Adolescent Education

This presentation explores the aesthetics and poetics of diaspora as reflected in contemporary poetry, through a multimodal pedagogical approach designed for adolescents. In the context of today's global movements, experiences of exile and nomadic identity give rise to new forms of subjectivity, with hybridity and the "third space" (Bhabha) offering a framework for understanding narratives that unfold between two cultural horizons. Conceptualizing identity as a fluid "becoming" (Hall) and drawing on the theory of exile (Said) illuminates the emotional and psychological dimensions of displacement, while the suitcase emerges as a symbolic vessel of memory and identity. This symbolism resonates with the role of collective memory (Halbwachs) in preserving and transforming cultural continuity. The presentation investigates how poetic texts that address "home", flight, the experience of otherness, and the emotional mapping of space can serve as starting points for cultivating creativity, critical and digital literacy, and active citizenship among adolescents through multimodal instructional practices. De Certeau's perspective on how individuals "read" and re-signify the spaces they inhabit provides a fertile lens through which students may approach mobility not only as spatial transition and existential experience, but also as a springboard for creative self-expression, collaborative learning, and action. Special emphasis is placed on creative writing and the workshop "The Suitcase of Memories" framed as a tool for nurturing empathy and active citizenship (Nussbaum). Through imaginative storytelling and digital environments, students metaphorically "walk in the shoes of exile", gaining deeper insight into contemporary realities of displacement and developing a democratic, inclusive stance toward diversity. Ultimately, the presentation argues that the poetics of diaspora can function as a powerful site for social awareness and the promotion of active citizenship within the school classroom.

Keywords: memory; third space; digital literacy; creative writing; active citizenship

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Mapping Childhood Displacement in Cypriot Narratives for Children: Space, Memory, and Trauma in Picturebook Narratives

This paper examines three picturebooks as explorations of childhood displacement, diaspora, and ethical encounter within the socio-political context of Cyprus. Drawing on childhood studies, diaspora theory, and picturebook scholarship (Salisbury, M., & Styles, M. 2020), it investigates how these narratives articulate experiences of migration, loss, and belonging while foregrounding children's agency and resilience.

Rihla [Ρίχλα] (2022) portrays a girl arriving in an unfamiliar city who, despite being ignored, offers objects, gestures, and emotions to others. Framing displacement as an ethical practice (Levinas, 1969), the story positions the child as a moral agent within an indifferent society.

My Home [Το σπίτι μου] (2024) explores "ghost houses" along the Green Line and children living in liminal spaces. Using memory and material culture theory (Hirsch, 1997; Hoskins, 1998), abandoned houses become metaphors for interrupted lives and fragmented belonging, inviting young readers to engage with the traces of exile embedded in landscapes.

The Lion and the Girl [Το λιοντάρι και το κορίτσι] (2026), is set in the historical context of the 1974 Turkish invasion. It parallels the journeys of unaccompanied Cypriot children sent to Athens with the secret transfer of Cypriot antiquities to the National Archaeological Museum in Athens. Both children and cultural heritage return to Cyprus after years of exile, illustrating narratives of survival, restoration, and the intertwined fate of human and cultural displacement (Tölölyan, 1996).

Together, these picturebooks demonstrate how children's literature can negotiate exile, diaspora, and return, creating a space where ethical engagement, memory, and historical testimony intersect. They offer young readers stories of displacement that emphasize empathy, resilience, and hope.

Keywords: displacement; memory; liminal spaces; cultural displacement; exile

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“Home Is Not a Country”: Hybrid Childhood and the Poetics of Belonging in Safia Elhillo’s Verse Novel

Safia Elhillo’s verse novel *Home Is Not a Country* (2021) offers a nuanced portrayal of diasporic girlhood shaped by migration, cultural dislocation, and intergenerational memory. Centering on Nima, a Sudanese American adolescent negotiating identity across homeland and hostland, the novel reimagines the verse form as a diasporic aesthetic that intertwines poetic voice, multilingual expression, and magical realism to render the complexities of belonging and unbelonging.

Drawing on Homi Bhabha’s concept of the *Third Space* (1994), this paper argues that Elhillo’s work constructs a hybrid linguistic and affective terrain where English and Arabic coexist in dynamic tension. Central to this negotiation is Nima’s encounter with Yasmeen—her imagined alter ego who remains in Sudan, speaks flawless Arabic, and embodies an idealized cultural authenticity. Through magical realist strategies, Yasmeen functions as a spectral figure of the homeland, materializing the pressures of nostalgia, loss, and self-comparison that shape diasporic subjectivity.

Through close attention to stylistic devices, lineation, white space, repetition, and nonlinear temporality, the paper shows how form enacts fragmentation and silence as expressions of memory and trauma, while also referencing orality and the rhythms characteristic of African-Muslim poetry. The interplay between Nima and Yasmeen stages homeland and hostland not as oppositional geographies but as an interior dialogue through which identity is continually reconstituted. The verse form amplifies this dialogue and foregrounds listening as an ethical and affective practice that invites young readers to inhabit linguistic and cultural in-between spaces.

By situating *Home Is Not a Country* within broader debates on diaspora, genre, and adolescence, this study highlights how the verse novel offers a powerful model for representing diasporic identity formation, challenging fixed notions of home and authenticity while fostering empathy and intercultural understanding.

Keywords: verse novel; homeland and hostland; Third Space; diasporic poetics; hybrid subjectivity

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What Should the Young Polish Diaspora Read—and Why? An Overview of Literary Texts Published and Recommended in Magazines for Young Poles Abroad

Poles have a long-standing tradition of migration that can be traced back to the nineteenth century, largely driven by economic and political factors, particularly in the aftermath of World War II and during the communist era. In maintaining awareness of ethnic distinctiveness and preserving the ties between Poles living abroad and their homeland, contact with the Polish language and culture, as well as with Polish literature, has played and continues to play an important role (Sękowska 2011). Reading Polish texts constitutes an element of cultural education and the development of linguistic competence, but it is also an important vehicle of ethnicity and of the national system of values. In the case of children and young people living abroad, contact with Polish literature was—and continues to be—provided by the magazines directed toward them, which publish excerpts from selected literary works, write about the national literature, and encourage the reading of particular books. Such periodicals emerged and operated in all postwar centers of the Polish diaspora, and literary texts consistently formed an essential component of their content (Chwastyk-Kowalczyk 2017). In our presentation, after briefly presenting the history and distinct features of Polish diaspora magazines for children, we will attempt to answer the following questions: How much space is devoted to Polish literature for young readers in these magazines? What forms of promoting Polish literature are employed in them? Which works are published and recommended in the analysed periodicals (genres, authors, time of creation, literary quality)? What values and attitudes are promoted through the specific selection of literary texts discussed, and can we speak of their ideological character?

Keywords: children's magazines; Polish children's literature; Polish young diaspora; emigration; national identity

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Travelling Wax, Travelling Self: Constructing Nomadic Subjectivities and Heritage in *Wax Paradoxe* by Justine Sow (2025)

This proposition examines the comicbook *Wax Paradoxe* written by the Belgian artist Justine Sow for the exhibition "Wax" at La Maison de l'homme in Paris in 2025. Wax, a textile handicraft, has a transnational and (post-)colonial trajectory, originating in Indonesia, passing through the Netherlands, and reaching Africa. It has become a marker of heritage both in various African contexts and within the African diaspora in Europe. The fabric carries stories of movement, cultural exchange, and power relations. It has travelled across continents and generations, paralleling the nomadic movement of people and ideas. The protagonist, Sophia, a young mixed-race Belgian textile design student, is confronted with questions of cultural identity and her own heritage when she is tasked with researching the fabric, an emblem of the African women. Although she has never been to Africa, where her father lives, and considers herself an ordinary young Belgian woman, her Black skin provokes cultural assignations and exoticisation both in public and in her personal relationships. As she works on the history of wax, which was appropriated by the Dutch(post-)colonists and destined for African women, she begins to develop a consciousness of her own subjectivity. Our analysis is based on aspects of nomadic ethics and nomadic subjects by Rosi Braidotti (2006; 2011), linked to questions of cultural appropriation in the arts by James O. Young (2008), as well as the significance of the fragmented structure of comics by Hillary Chute (2010), which mirrors the protagonist's gradual process of becoming aware of her own nomadic subjectivity.

Keywords: nomadic subjectivity; heritage; post-colonialism; comics; cultural appropriation.

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The Exile and Genre. Children's Literature of the Exile as Literary Heterotopia

Jana Mikota (cf. 2023, 55), Bettina Bannasch, Theresia Dingelmaier, and Burcu Dogramaci (cf. 2023, 1) argue that German children's and young adult exile literature remains a research desideratum, noting specifically that a discussion regarding the relationship between exile and literary genre is still missing. While Mikota (2023, 55) discusses this relationship regarding the detective novel and von Bernstorff (2023, 30) regarding the fairy tale, the proposed talk seeks a broader perspective. It argues that the exile setting functions as a literary heterotopia, offering freedom not only on political and thematic levels—as seen in Erika Mann's *Zehn jagen Mr. X*, HansJahn's *Babs und die Sieben*, Marianne Lange-Weinert's *Mädchenjahre*, and Lisa Tetzner's *Kinderodyssee*—but also on the level of genre.

Drawing on Michel Foucault, this presentation explores how these texts imaginatively depict critical positioning, thus reflecting the utopian potential of literature through the narrative itself—functioning as heterotopias (cf. Foucault 1990, 42). As von Bernstorff posits, exile serves as a “mirror and place of reflection” (von Bernstorff 2023, 39). As argued by Doerte Bischoff and Susanne Komfort-Hein, this freedom is linked, on the one hand, to the traumatic experience inherent in displacement (cf. Bischoff/Komfort-Hein 2013, 6), and on the other in exile as an experience of the ‘in-between’ and liminality, as discussed by Gianluca Solla (cf. 2013, 124).

Through a wide reading of German children's exile literature, this talk seeks to highlight the generic freedom that the exile context offers and analyze the narratological strategies utilized. Finally, the presentation will discuss how these strategies are applied in current German children's and young adult literature dealing with alterity.

Keywords: exile; heterotopia; genre; German's children literature; utopia

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Critical Hybridity: The Haunted House as Third Space in *She Is a Haunting*

While diaspora subjectivity is often considered to be hybrid (Hall, 1990), hybridity does not guarantee harmony (Amin, 2002). In Trang Thanh Tran's (2023) gothic novel, *She Is a Haunting*, a young Vietnamese-American woman, Jade, visits her estranged father's house in Vietnam and sees ghosts that try to kill the inhabitants. She is attracted to a ghost of a Vietnamese woman, but she also likes another Vietnamese woman from town. From my postcolonial framework, the women represent two types of cultural hybridity of Western and Vietnamese cultures. This paper argues that Jade's eventual choice to reject the house's particular type of hybridity enables her to survive.

Specifically, the house is a romanticized third space (cf. Bhabha, 2004/1994). It belonged to a French colonial officer during the founding of French Indochina, and now Jade's father is working with French investors to fix it up as a Bed and Breakfast. However, his project only provides illusory agency over the colonial past, for maintaining the house also maintains its murderous ghosts. Instead, "conceptual rehabilitation of the hybrid subjectivity would consist in releasing this subjectivity from the fragmented, alienating third space" (Acheraiou, 2011, p. 188). The ghost woman's colonial trauma is static and schematized. Contrastingly, the living woman's demeanors and languages represent a hybrid subjectivity that arises out of an agential incorporation of past and present. As with how the concept of the homeland could carry "a danger of slipping into essentialist reasoning" (Cohen & Fischer, 2019, p. 6), so does the concept of a static history that one must accept as part of identity. If culture is "a strategy of survival" (Bhabha, 2004/1994, p. 247), then when Jade ultimately refuses to enter the burning house to join the ghost girl, she refuses to incorporate schematized trauma into her selfhood and therein survives.

Keywords: hybridity; subjectivity; ghost; gothic; postcolonialism

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“The Past is Another Country”: Contrapuntal Perspectives in Children’s Literature.

Inspired by Say’s description of his childhood “Like Urashima Taro, I had gone back to a world without a past. My childhood was entirely in my mind.” (Say, qtd in Mathis & Panaou, 2021), the authors build on Mathis’ and Panaou’s (2021) contention that children who must construct their futures in exile, find ways to integrate the lost homeland. We suggest that children construct their world through narrative both of their own history and of imaginary worlds. For children whose stories include diasporic identities, often of worlds that are not accessible, these stories may be constructed from a melange of observation, treasured, sometimes imaginary objects, and literature. Cassin (2016) posits a nexus of exile and desire for a homeland, extended by the authors to these children, for whom, the world is not the concrete-operational surety of Piaget (1971). One piece of their inheritance is an echo of the contrapuntal perspective (Said, 2002) or what Said called the consolation of the exile. Furthermore, with reference to Hirsch’s concept of postmemory (Hirsch & Spitzer, 2006), stories of powerful experiences make these children feel as though they were actually there, so that memory and story are inextricably entwined.

In this paper, the authors explore their own family history of diaspora, immigration, and identity in/through literature in conjunction with two recent books of immigrant authors: Yuyi Morales’ (2025) *Little Rebels*, and Danny Ramadan’s (2023) *Salma Writes a Book*. They unwind themes of ambivalence, reunion, postmemory, and new, cosmopolitan identities in conversation with these works, and those that wound through family life such as historical novels, Greek mythology, and Russian fairytales.

Keywords: contrapuntal perspective; diaspora and identity; search for home/homeland; ambivalence; cosmopolitanism and diaspora experience; postmemory; children’s literature.

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Meg Fox, Ph.D. (English Literature, School of Graduate Studies, University of Toronto, 1986) was founder and principal of The Dragon Academy, an accredited laboratory school (Toronto, 2001–2019), an adjunct lecturer, an independent scholar, and creative writer. Her areas of specialisation include the role of the reader (both the implied eventual reader of the book and the writer as reader), internalised structural devices, and character construction as accomplices in the creation of the metafictional world, reconceptualising history and homeland.

Tangled-up Boundaries: Djaimilia Pereira de Almeida's *That Hair* and the Boundaries of the Young Adult Category

Djaimilia Pereira de Almeida's book *That Hair* (*Esse Cabelo*, 2015) is difficult to categorize. Hovering between fiction and fact, and bearing the hallmarks of an essayistic reflection, it is most often classified as auto-fiction. The book tells the story of a young girl growing up in post-colonial Portugal, exploring her relationship with her African heritage through her relationship with her hair. Although most often analyzed in the light of postcolonial studies and feminist theory, this paper proposes reading this work as belonging to the Young Adult category. The plot of *That Hair* focuses on the complex dynamics of growing up across countries, cultures, and nationalities, where the aspect of adolescence and the specificity of this particular period for the formation of an individual's identity is crucial.

This presentation aims to analyze how the novel fits into the YA genre and whether it can be interpreted within it. When literary criticism raises questions about the classification of Djaimilia Pereira de Almeida's writing, it tends to focus on national issues: is the Angolan-born, Portuguese-raised author, who writes about the complex identities of her characters torn between cultures, a Portuguese or Angolan writer? The potential affiliation of her novels with the Young Adult genre eludes this discussion. This paper hypothesizes the importance of this type of analysis, which could broaden not only the analytical perspective on this particular book but also contribute to the discussion on the boundaries of the YA genre. Almeida's book will also be analyzed in the scope of transcolonial perspective.

Keywords: YA genre; postcolonial identity; contemporary Portuguese literature; diaspora; transcolonial theory

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Living Sculptures in Contemporary Greek Children's Fiction and Their Stories of Displacement, Wandering and Nostalgia

This paper aims at the exploration of the image of a living sculpture and its interrelation with human characters (both adults and children) in three Greek illustrated children's books, Christos Boulotis' *The Shivering Statue* (1999), Eleni Svoronou's *Lord Byron and Elgin* (2020) and Stavros Stavrou's *Still! A Statue Travelling Around the World* (2024). In all three cases sculptures display a hybrid identity. On the one hand, they are emblematic objects of art rooted in a specific place, exhibiting a timeless immortalized nature and symbolizing aspects of national or global ideology. On the other hand, partly due to the fact that they are themselves representations of humans (a child refugee, an ancient Lapithe and a soldier), they are presented as living subjects with voice, movement, sentiments and sentience. It is their ambivalent nature and the way it is developed throughout the narrative that makes them ideal reflectors of the notions of displacement, isolation, nostalgia, loss and reinvention of identity, and finally resilience that the human protagonists themselves experience in the stories under examination. The paper will focus on common narrative and visual motifs of the three stories, such as the idea of the sea or air journey, on their parallel symbols of hope (a bird, an acclaimed poet, a balloon), and on the similar ideas they propose as a counterbalance to the exilic predicament (friendship, art, internal freedom, peace). It will also examine the way that their different generic character—«παραμυθιακή ιστορία» (Boulotis), historical tale (Svoronou) and fairy-tale (Stavrou)—affects the formation of the image of the sculpture and its intermingling with displacement and nostalgia. Moreover, the dialogue the three books open with classic children's stories with statues, such as those by Oscar Wilde and Hans Christian Andersen will be discussed.

Keywords: sculpture; animism; nostalgia; displacement; hybrid identity

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When Home Becomes Hostland: Occupation, Belonging, and the Jews of Thessaloniki in Thanasis Petrou Graphic Novel *1941*

Thanasis Petrou's *1941* is the first Greek graphic narrative depicting the Nazi Occupation of Greece, with particular attention to the occupied hostland as a space of fractured belonging and everyday trauma. Although not produced exclusively for children, the book can be read as a crossover text, as visual language makes it accessible to young readers. This paper examines how *1941* represents the hostland through the experiences of the Jews of Thessaloniki, a community historically embedded in the city yet rendered increasingly vulnerable and alienated during the Occupation. Drawing on children's literature theory and memory studies, the paper explores how the graphic narrative constructs Thessaloniki as a contested hostland, *a city of ghosts*, as acclaimed historian Mark Mazower called Salonica, simultaneously home and site of exclusion for its Jewish people. Through visual representation, sepia colour palettes, and the use of silence, Petrou depicts the gradual loss of security, belonging, and civic identity experienced by Jewish residents. From an educational perspective, we argue that *1941* offers opportunities for classroom engagement with traumatic memory, particularly regarding the Holocaust in Greece. By delving deeper into the lived experience of the Jews of Thessaloniki within the hostland, the text enables discussions of cultural memory, minority histories, and ethical responsibility, highlighting especially the reaction of Christian people against the persecution of their neighbours. Situated among children's historical fiction, crossover literature, and visual literacy, this study highlights the potential of graphic narratives to support pedagogical approaches to teaching trauma, memory, and belonging to young readers.

Keywords: traumatic memory; hostland; Holocaust; Jews of Thessaloniki; graphic narrative

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**From Dramatic Text to Pedagogical Practice:
Negotiating Displacement, Belonging and Children's Identity through Theatre**

Contemporary children's literature—and particularly theatre for young audiences—constitutes a fertile space for exploring issues of mobility, loss, and the formation of children's identity in a world of constant social and emotional change. Today, experiences of displacement extend beyond physical migration to include forms of internal transition, emotional instability, and the ongoing renegotiation of belonging. Within this context, theatre operates as a privileged space of encounter and transformation, where children's voices can articulate and reconfigure identities “in motion.”

The aim of this paper is to examine how children's theatre functions both as a literary form and as a pedagogical practice for negotiating displacement, belonging, and children's identity. Theatre is approached as a liminal space in which difference is not framed as a deficit but as a condition for communication, coexistence, and creative connection. Emphasis is placed on the child's perspective, spontaneity, and performative action, which allow complex themes to be addressed without didacticism, foregrounding shared human needs that transcend differences in background and experience.

Taking Sofianna Theofanous's play *Merry Christmas, my dear Charlie*, as a case study, this paper explores contemporary dramatic writing aligned with the conference's thematic axes. The play centres on the dialogue between two children from markedly different backgrounds—one from a contemporary urban environment and the other a migrant child—who meet on stage through their shared identity as children. Their interaction highlights common needs for play, communication, and trust, creating a bridge between difference and emotional closeness.

The second part of the paper presents theatre-in-education activities designed for the play's publication. Grounded in theatre pedagogy, these activities enable students to explore issues of identity, otherness, loss, and communication through improvisation and collective creation, positioning children's theatre as a dynamic site where literature and pedagogy intersect.

Keywords: theatre for young audience; Theatre in Education (TiE); children's identity; displacement; theatre pedagogy

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“The Rubric Made Me RethinkMyStory”: Post-Design Reflections on Assessment-as-Learning, Ethical Representation and the Role of AI in Diaspora-Themed Science Narratives.

This paper draws on the reflective diaries of ten pre-service science teachers who designed children’s stories integrating scientific ideas with themes of mobility, belonging and identity-in-transition. The diaries were written after the collaborative co construction of an assessment rubric, and the study focuses on how participants interpreted that process as part of their learning, especially in relation to ethical representation and the place of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in their writing practices. Thematic analysis shows that rubric co-construction was frequently described as a moment of re-orientation, shifting attention from “finishing a story” toward questions of positionality, emotional safety and age-appropriate framing when evoking experiences of movement and displacement. Several writers reported that the criteria prompted them to revisit narrative choices they had previously taken for granted, especially in scenes where metaphor and science explanation intersected. A second theme concerned the role of AI during drafting. Some participants experimented with AI to trial vocabulary or plot structure but later reflected that its suggestion stended toward generic or sentimental depictions of mobility. Others emphasised that the jointly negotiated criteria helped them exercise greater critical distance from AI outputs, reinforcing authorial judgement rather than replacing it. Across accounts, AI was framed less as a threat or solution and more as a tool requiring careful pedagogical and ethical filtering. The paper argues that reflective writing undertaken after rubric co-construction offers a valuable lens onto how future teachers reason about authorship, responsibility and technology when creating diaspora-themed science stories for children. In doing so, it contributes to discussions of Assessment-as-Learning, children’s literature pedagogies and AI-mediated creative practice in teacher education.

Keywords: assessment-as-learning; reflective writing; diaspora; AI in education; teacher education

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Multispecies Diasporas: Nonhuman Exile and Nomadic Identity in Children's Literature

My paper adopts an ecocritical perspective to examine narratives of non-human migration and exile in children's literature, reading animal movement through the conceptual lens of diaspora. In the context of the environmental crisis marking the end of the Anthropocene, the humanities increasingly recognise the border-blurring hybridity of "multispecies entanglements" (Haraway, 2008) as a condition of sustainable future and planetary survival. I argue that nomadic animal figures in children's literature function as allegorical and material counterparts to human diasporic subjects, whose identities are shaped in liminal spaces between homeland and hostland, belonging and displacement.

Drawing on a selected corpus of international children's literature, the paper pursues three interrelated aims. First, it explores how these texts problematise the social construction of otherness by exposing bestialisation as a mechanism of ideological exclusion and anthropomorphisation as a "carnophallogocentric" gesture of domination (Derrida), driven by speciesist notions of human exceptionalism. These narratives foreground the ethical need for solidarity through the embrace of a "nomadic subjectivity" (Braidotti, 2011) grounded in hybridity, mobility, and becoming rather than fixed hierarchical binaries. Second, the paper considers how these works function as "environmental texts" (Dobrin & Kidd, 2004), rich in green epiphanies that shape children's ecological awareness and foster ecocitizenship (Bradford, 2011). Children's literature thus emerges as a pedagogical space in which diasporic, exilic, and nomadic modes of belonging are imaginatively rehearsed and ethically negotiated. Third, I examine the alternative ecosystems of survival imagined by these narratives and their potential to model non-exclusionary forms of coexistence.

The analysis focuses on two recurring animal figures. The fox appears as an icon of nomadic wandering and relational belonging: an agent of peace in Sara Pennypacker's *Pax*, a facilitator of friendship in Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*, and a decoloniser of natural law in István Fekete's *Vuk*. The mouse, by contrast, functions as an emblem of precarious minority existence in works by Franz Kafka ("A Little Fable") and Transylvanian Hungarian authors András Ferenc Kovács (*The Book of Mice*) and Sándor Kányádi (*The Little Globe-Trotting Mouse*). Their mouse fables exemplify minority literature in Deleuze and Guattari's sense, articulating the affective dimensions of displacement, vulnerability, and survival, deterritorializing dominant norms to foreground the struggles inherent in minority existence. I conclude that animal figures in exile reconfigure diasporic identity as relational, hybrid, and multispecies, while insisting on the ethical urgency of mutual understanding.

Keywords: ecocriticism; multispecies diaspora; nonhuman migration; animal exile; nomadic subjectivity; minority literature

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Literary and Cultural Agency *for* and *with* Children in Times of Displacement

The paper outlines the concrete literary and cultural agency of displaced writers and artists, as well as children, in the context of their migration to Slovenia and also Germany because of the war in Bosnia and Hercegovina (1992–1995).

By referencing the conceptual apparatus of narrative agency from narrative hermeneutics, the paper follows the modes, conditions, and roles of literary and cultural agency *for* and *with* children. The concept of literary agency incorporates a polysystemic understanding of literature and considers different levels (writers, children, readership, and (infra)structures of the literary polysystem) and allows for observations of awareness, imagination, and dialogicality.

Through literary agency, children with the experience of displacement created their own “in-betweenness” with other displaced children, as well as with other readers. Due to the (multi)linguistic, thematic-motivic, and formal characteristics of their (original, translation, pedagogical, editorial, and publishing) work, the writers with migration experience have addressed their native, diasporic, as well as host environments. However, the latter, especially in terms of their hegemonic institutional structures and readership, do not succeed in opening themselves up sufficiently to the dialogicality of the literary agency of writers with migration experience. Above all, this closes off the possibilities for children, the readership and other stakeholders in the literary polysystem for dialogue with those “in-betweens” that characterize our postmigrant reality.

Keywords: children’s literature; narrative agency; literary agency; cultural agency; writers with migration experience; children’s creativity

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Selected publications:

["Confronting \(post\)war precariousness and precarity: socialist Yugoslav literature for children"](#) in *International Research in Children's Literature*;

["Literature builds children, children build literature: literary education in socialist Yugoslavia and children's literary agency"](#) in *Anthropos*;

"The Little Prince Defies Silence: Literary and Cultural Agency for and with Children in Times of Displacement" in [The Resilience of History: The Yugoslav Wars through Art](#);

["Artistic work for children between productive and social reproductive work"](#) in *Libri et liberi*.

Childhood as Process: Nomadic Subjectivity and Ethical Repetition in Gertrude Stein's *The World Is Round*

Gertrude Stein's *The World Is Round* (1939) portrays childhood as a space defined by repetition, uncertainty, and ongoing identity formation, challenging conventional narratives of linear development and resolution. The narrative centers on Rose, who keeps asking herself who she is, goes back to using her own name, and does familiar things without receiving clear answers or changing. Stein's modernist strategies, which emphasize experience over advancement and reflect a concentration on consciousness and perception in place of traditional plot-driven closure, include the use of circular narrative frameworks, simplified language, and rhythmic repetitions. These formal strategies mirror the temporal and affective patterns of children's thought, emphasizing presence and engagement within uncertainty. Rose's iterative movements serve as continuing identity work practices, drawing on Rosi Braidotti's concept of nomadic subjectivity. Her experiences create a space for inhabiting ambiguity and maintaining selfhood instead of leading to mastery or resolution. This effect is enhanced by Stein's modernist experiments with form and language, which enable repetition to function as a temporal and ethical tactic. In this sense, rather than portraying uncertainty, vulnerability, and relational interaction as flaws that need to be fixed, the text presents them as essential elements of childhood experience. By reading *The World Is Round* through modernist aesthetics, childhood studies, and feminist theories of non-linear subjectivity, this paper argues that Stein reconceives identity formation in childhood as a fluid, continuous, and performative process, in which repetition, uncertainty, and modernist formal innovation function as essential mechanisms through which children inhabit time, relationality, and selfhood.

Keywords: identity; modernism; nomadic subjectivity; repetition

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**(Post)Reflections on the Children’s Refugee and Immigrant Narratives:
Towards a “Poetics of Misery” and an “Ethics of Representation”**

The recent increase in refugee and immigration flows in Greece has led to a growing body of Children’s Literature, ranging from picturebooks to young adult novels, commonly referred to as Refugee and Immigrant Literature. These works aim both to raise young readers’ awareness of refugee and immigrant issues and to give voice to children with refugee or immigrant identities, enabling identification with literary characters and, at times, serving a therapeutic function. At the same time, these texts operate primarily as aesthetic constructions. They shape young literary protagonists who represent refugee and immigrant children while drawing on familiar narrative modes, such as adventure and melodrama, and on cultural symbols associated with European humanism. This dual function raises critical questions about how the reality of the refugee crisis is transformed into literature and how aesthetics and ideology intersect within these narratives. Moreover, Refugee and Immigrant Literature typically addresses selected aspects of displacement, including the causes of migration, the journey itself, reception in the host country, schooling, and social inclusion. Research, however, suggests that many refugee picturebooks privilege the motif of the “perilous journey,” foregrounding a single traumatic episode at the expense of the broader refugee/immigrant experience. While such texts can foster both social awareness and literary competence, they rarely seek to generate knowledge about the diverse cultures from which refugee/immigrant children in Greece originate. It is therefore crucial to acknowledge that the refugee, as the cultural “Other,” once transformed into a literary protagonist, inevitably conforms to dominant literary conventions and prevailing constructions of reality. Against this backdrop, the present study examines selected, aesthetically demanding works of contemporary Greek refugee and immigrant literature through postcolonial and posthumanist perspectives, focusing on the dynamics between the implied and the actual reader and on the pre-understandings that shape the reception of these texts.

Keywords: Greek children’s refugee and immigrant literature; representation of the “Other” in children’s literature; postcolonial and posthumanist theory on children’s refugee and immigrant literature

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Modern *Bildungstheater*. The Experience of Migration as Material in Dramatherapy for Ukrainian Young Adults

The main goal of the paper is to present and analyse how theatre and dramatherapy become a tool in dealing with the difficult experiences of forced migration and living in a foreign country as part of the diaspora. As an example, I examine the project 'Tomorrow 10 Years Ago', carried out with a group of Ukrainian teenagers by the GAS Theatre—the first institutional Ukrainian theatre in Poland founded after 2022. The creators, who focus on art with community, invited a group of young refugees to collaborate and made them full-fledged artists: authors of scripts, directors and actors. Young refugees become the subjects and objects of artistic activity; verbalising their refugee stories aloud on stage in front of an audience allows them to speak with their own voice, while at the same time, "being an actor" and the framework of theatrical convention introduce an element of distancing from personal experiences. The therapeutic path is equated with theatrical work in so-called studio model, in which rehearsals, the ability to create something together, and the process itself are much more important than the result—the finished performance. The autobiographical narratives performed on stage are generational stories about growing up, in which individual fates intertwine with the fate of the nation and important events: the Orange Revolution and the Euro-Maidan (the foundation of the memory of parents who told young people about events before they were born), the Russian invasion of Crimea and Donbas, the pandemic, and the milestone year 2022, which for young people was the beginning of their migration. Following the model of the well-known literary genre of the *Bildungsroman*, I refer to this type of theatre as *Bildungstheater*, in which being forced to leave one's country is a point of reaching maturity, but also opens up an optimistic perspective for the future.

Note: Thanks to the kindness of GAS Theatre, I have been given permission to show a short excerpt from the recording of the play 'Tomorrow, 10 Years Ago' during my presentation.

Keywords: community art; dramatherapy; theatrical self-narration; Ukrainian diaspora in Poland; Russian invasion on Ukraine in 2022

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Between Homeland and Unknown: Child Characters as Nomads of War in Two Recent Croatian Novels

The search for home in contemporary children's literature becomes a universal metaphor for the human need for identity, security and belonging. This paper aims to describe a variety of child characters in Croatian children's novels on war refugees. Representations of such characters are found in two recent novels; *The Tears of God Mars* (Babić Višnjić, 2018) and *My Titanic Is Not Sinking* (Huljić, 2019). Affected by expatriation, the insecurity of war, the flight and the need to settle in an unknown environment, children adopt different roles. Yet, they all experience radical changes in their lives and face unexpected challenges. To establish the variety of their traits, the characters are analysed by means of categories established in previous studies of narratives on war. Researchers of Croatian twentieth-century-post-WWII children's literature offer different typologies: (1) observers vs. active participants (Težak, 1997), narrative models "war as maturation" vs. "war as an adventure," resulting in focus on characters' psychological states and direct involvement in warfare, respectively (Zima, 2001), and (3) "child hero" vs "child-citizen of a children's republic" (Majhut and Lovrić Kralj, 2022). Beyond Croatian scholarship, another useful view is a distinction of the ways in which children's texts advocate the sociopolitical change (Beauvais, 2014), and a study of the WWI narratives (Galway, 2014), which reveals three types of characters: victim, soldier and peacemaker. The traits and actions of child characters in the analysed novels reveal a versatility of character types, from those who show courage and agency when their world is changed to those who turn into traumatized victims. In the process, they develop complex personalities, individuals who influence the course of events in the world where people change countries and need to re-establish homes, and become mediators between the past and the present, between the homeland and the land of a new home.

Keywords: child characters; contemporary children's novel; Croatian children's literature; expatriation; war refugees

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***Mama zawsze wraca* as a Postmemory Narrative: A Child, War, and the Loss of Home**

This presentation offers an analysis of *Mama zawsze wraca* (Mom Always Comes Back) by Agata Tuszyńska and Iwona Chmielewska as a unique postmemory narrative in Polish children's literature. Based on the true story of Zosia Zajczyk, a Jewish girl hiding with her mother in the Warsaw Ghetto, the book addresses themes of trauma, memory, maternal bond, and the loss of home during war and the Holocaust. The talk will explore how the book conveys the memory of lost childhood—both through text and illustration—and the role of such narratives in intergenerational transmission of survival and identity. Ethical and aesthetic challenges of representing the Holocaust for children will be discussed, along with the role of empathic memory in fostering cross-generational dialogue.

Key words: child; war; postmemory; identity; "empathetic memory"

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An Ancient Myth About Exile and Flight: Adaptations of Daedalus and Icarus for Children

The ancient myth of Daedalus and Icarus, first transcribed in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (8 CE), has captivated readers ever since. Set on the island of Crete, the story is about exile, flight, and the search for freedom. However, it also involves deception, death, and overconfidence, which ultimately lead to a tragic ending. This paper focuses on adaptations of the myth addressed to children. A thorough analysis of five children's books from Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States reveals the various approaches adopted by the authors. By creating new versions of the classical myth, the authors sought to highlight its relevance to current political and societal issues. This is particularly evident in the protagonists' exile to Crete and the reasons for their flight. While the reason for Daedalus' escape from Athens to Crete is often omitted (he was charged with murder), the books center on Daedalus and Icarus' flight from the island. Through various focalizations and affective dimensions, the adaptations emphasize two key elements that drive the narratives: the intimate bond between father and son intensified by the exile and the protagonists' yearning for freedom, symbolized by the desire to fly. Against this backdrop, the retellings by West German author Hans Baumann (*Flügel für Ikarus* [Wings for Icarus], 1978), and East German author Gerhard Holtz-Baumert (*Daidalos & Ikaros*, 1984) use the myth to symbolize the challenging circumstances of the two German states which had different cultural agendas and political systems. In contrast, Jane Yolen's *Wings* (1991) reflects the myth's power dynamics which is shaped by the conflict between the islanders and exiles. Finally, Grahame Baker-Smith's *Farther* (2010) and Federico Delicado's *Ícaro* (2014) are free adaptations that use the dream of flying as a metaphor for the pursuit of freedom.

Keywords: adaptation; classical myth; Daedalus & Icarus; exile; flight

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Emotion Bonds and Liminal Becoming: How Retold Chinese Folktales Foster Diasporic Youth Identity

This paper investigates how four canonical Chinese folktales (*The Cowherd and the Weaver Girl*, *Lady Meng Jiang*, *The Butterfly Lovers*, and *The Legend of the White Snake*), through their contemporary, cross-media adaptations (animation and film) for young audiences, serve as crucial resources for cultural identity negotiation among overseas Chinese youth and young adults. Moving beyond text-based analysis, this study centres user-generated comments on YouTube as primary data to access the lived, affective responses (Patterson, 2018) of this diasporic community. Employing a framework that integrates emotion analysis (Aman & Szpakowicz 2007; Liu et al. 2025) with Stuart Hall's (1990) conception of diasporic identity as a process of "becoming," the analysis reveals how these "re-childified" narratives operate in a *liminal space*. In this space, young viewers engage with reconfigured cultural symbols, navigate between homeland heritage and hostland realities (Brinson & Hammel, 2016), and articulate shared emotional experiences (e.g., nostalgia, resonance, pride). The findings argue that these adaptations are not mere cultural translations but active sites where diasporic identity is dynamically performed, felt, and reaffirmed through collective affective engagement, thus exemplifying Hall's notion of identity being constantly reproduced "through transformation and difference."

Keywords: Chinese diaspora; children's literature adaptations; cultural identity; emotion analysis; folktale retellings

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Narratives of Displacement and Difference through Picture Books in Migrant Women

This paper presents the findings of a qualitative study focused on the experiences of migrant women living in situations of social vulnerability, who participated in a non-formal education program run by a foundation working with socially excluded groups in València, Spain. The study aimed to analyze the processes of identity construction, social integration, and cultural negotiation from an intersectional and intercultural perspective. To this end, discussion groups were used as the main data collection method, structured around the pedagogical use of picturebooks, which allowed for a situated and collaborative exploration of the participants' lived experiences. The analysis of the narratives revealed five key thematic axes: (1) migration as both rupture and expectation, (2) asymmetric integration, (3) the absence of connections with the host population, (4) the reconfiguration of cultural references, and (5) the symbolic exclusion of second generations. The findings show that the identity processes of these women are shaped by a dual tension between the desire to preserve their cultural roots and the difficulty of establishing meaningful relationships with the host society. The research highlights the need to rethink inclusion policies through the lens of critical pedagogy, recognizing migrant women as active epistemic subjects and agents in the construction of citizenship. In this context, intercultural education emerges as a key tool for advancing social transformation and justice in diverse societies.

Keywords: female migration; identity; intersectionality; interculturality; critical pedagogy; literary education.

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Through the Eyes of a Child: The Narrative Voice of the Child–Refugee in Contemporary Children’s and Young Adult Literature Through the Lens of Genette

In recent years, children’s and young adult literature has emerged as a privileged space for processing collective traumas such as forced displacement and refugeedom. The child’s perspective transforms the loss of homeland, fear, and insecurity into experiences with human and existential resonance, presenting the child protagonist as a witness to a historical reality deeply felt, yet not fully understood. The child’s voice—fragile yet incisive—functions as a mechanism of reflection, allowing memory, imagination, and hope to reshape trauma into narrative form.

This presentation examines how selected works of children’s and young adult literature construct and foreground the voice of the child–refugee, with emphasis on violent displacement, the loss of place, and the search for a renewed identity. The theoretical framework draws on Gérard Genette’s narratology, particularly his concepts of narrative voice, focalization, and modes of storytelling. The methodology is based on a focused qualitative comparative analysis of Menelaos Lountemis’ *Melios* tetralogy—an emblematic Greek example of the child’s perspective on displacement—as well as contemporary multimodal picturebooks, including *The Arrival* (Shaun Tan), *The Journey* (Francesca Sanna), *My Name Is Not Refugee* (Kate Milner), and *The Day War Came* (Nicola Davies & Rebecca Cobb).

The analysis investigates how internal focalization conveys subjectivity and fear, how external perspectives highlight the collective and socio-political dimensions of displacement, and how illustration functions as a second, visual narrative voice. These works collectively create a polyphonic narrative space in which the child’s gaze illuminates the experience of uprooting with humanistic and aesthetic sensitivity, transforming trauma into a discourse of empathy and hope. The study thus underscores the contribution of children’s literature to shaping a cultural field in which the voice of the child–refugee gains visibility and significance.

Keywords: narrative voice; focalization; child’s perspective; trauma; displacement

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The House with Too Many Stories: Memory, Belonging and Narrative Exile in *What Remains of Edith Finch*

In *What Remains of Edith Finch*, a story-driven video game centered on a teenager's return to her family home, the house explored is not merely a setting but a narrative force, a haunted map of family memory, and, arguably, the game's most compelling protagonist. As teenage Edith returns to her ancestral home, she steps into a space with sealed rooms, suspended stories and inherited silences. Told through multimodal storytelling, each room becomes a self-contained episode, either playful, surreal or tragic. As Edith, and the player, move through this space, they do not discover a coherent family legacy, but rather negotiate identity through fragmentation, affect and partial truths.

This paper proposes that *What Remains of Edith Finch* enacts a form of narrative exile, where the child/adolescent must piece together a belonging that was never fully offered. The house functions as a diasporic structure, where stories are dispersed, spaces are unreachable and memory is stylized and unreliable. Drawing on Marianne Hirsch's concept of postmemory and Gaston Bachelard's *Poetics of Space*, I argue that Edith's homecoming is not a return but a journey into a home she knows yet no longer recognizes, a place where identity must be narratively rebuilt rather than inherited.

Through this analysis, I explore how interactive YA narratives like *What Remains of Edith Finch* expand the possibilities of children's and young adult storytelling, offering new ways to frame exile, displacement and belonging not as physical uprooting but as a process of reconstructing identity through fragmented spaces and memories.

Keywords: interactive storytelling; postmemory; narrative identity; displacement; spatial storytelling

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Hydro-Nomads: Living with Water in Recent Dutch YA Climate Fiction

For centuries, the Dutch have lived in a tense relationship with water (Esser, 2016, p. 100), which has resulted in the belief that they have "tamed" this element—a conviction deeply rooted in their national consciousness (Colenbrander et al., 2025, p. 12; Kullberg, Iedema, & Schlette, 2019, p. 1; Mostert, 2020, p. 312). This antagonistic relationship manifests itself in numerous literary texts: Water has been portrayed primarily as an enemy bringing destruction in the form of floods, a threat that the Dutch consistently depict as mitigated with their hydro-engineering expertise. However, since 2018, the Dutch book market has witnessed a rapid increase in publications addressing the climate crisis, shifting away from anthropocentric narratives towards relational and posthumanist perspectives (Van Uchelen, 2021). Within these frameworks, humans no longer occupy a superior position but are instead perceived as elements of a fragile, interdependent ecosystem (Beulens, n.d.). This shift invites critical reflection on how recent literary texts for young readers reconceptualize human-water relations. Drawing on the theoretical framework of hydrohumanities (De Wolff et al., 2022), this presentation focuses on the case study of Sjoerd Kuyper's dystopian YA novel *De grotevloed* [The Great Flood] (2024), in which the young characters confront rising sea levels as a consequence of climate change. In the novel, water becomes a reterritorializing force that compels the characters to embark on a journey in search of dry land. My analysis shows that, in Kuyper's work, water functions not merely as the backdrop to catastrophe, driving the characters into a nomadic lifestyle, but also as an agentic force that actively shapes interpersonal relationships. I conclude with a broader reflection on current representations of human-water relations in recent Dutch children's and YA literature.

Keywords: climate fiction; water; hydrohumanities; YA; Dutch literature; Sjoerd Kuyper

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'Looking for a Place to Stick to': Aquatic Allegories of Migration in Children's Books

In early 2022, a photograph of a Kyiv resident fleeing a shelled building with his pet fish went viral on social media, prompting discussions about forced migration and the overlooked victims of war. This paper explores the ways in which underwater life is used in children's literature to focus and amplify discourses of migration and to cultivate empathy for both human and non-human animals, establishing wider networks of care predicated upon multispecies justice (Heise, 2016).

Linda Wason-Ellam (2010) points out that "in quality children's literature, vistas widen when conversations address relationships in social ecology and how we relate to one another." The Seattle Aquarium—who published a picturebook, *Catastrophe by the Sea*, in 2019—argue that the use of diminutive underwater life can be an important tool in the cultivation of inter-species empathy among young readers. This takes on an added dimension when combined with, or used allegorically for, tales of human migration. As Silvia Granata (2021) has noted in her work on Victorian aquaria, the stories we tell about underwater animals are often also stories about ourselves. Beginning with Eli Balsler's light-hearted picturebook *Life as a Barnacle* (2015), which explores notions of home, rootlessness and nomadism through the figure of a current-borne crustacean, I then explore L.S. Matthews's novel *Fish* (2003). This narrative homes in on a life often perceived as non-'grievable' (Butler, 2009)—that of a fish found in a puddle—in order to amplify its themes of survival, hope and empathy. Matthews's novel avoids narrative specifics in order to emphasise the tragic timelessness of its forced (human) migration plot, while simultaneously focusing on the fish to incite nuanced engagement with survivors' individual stories. Urging readers to consider migration on both macro- and microcosmic levels, such texts also encourage us to imagine "ourselves as bodies of water, carrying each other across species, generations, and geographies" (Neimanis, 2017).

Keywords: blue humanities; picturebooks; ecocriticism; empathy; migration

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The Social Figure of the Child Evacuee in Historical Novels. The Case of *Unterland* (Lowland, 2012) by Anne C. Voorhoeve

Evacuation refers to the temporary relocation of groups of people to another area or country. The reason for evacuation is an imminent danger to these groups. Thus, London children were sent to the countryside to protect them from German bombing raids (Michelle Magorian, *Goodnight Mister Tom*, 1981), and children from England were sent to Canada (Kit Pearson, *The Guests of War Trilogy*, 1989-1993). In such evacuation novels, memories of the environment left behind and the hope of a speedy return always play a central role. The evacuated children have to deal with difficulties arising from their new living situation. Since the authors aim to generate empathy for the evacuated children and thus contribute to historical learning, a compelling narrative structure is fundamental. In this paper, I argue, based on Anne C. Voorhoeve's novel *Unterland* (Lowland, 2012), that the evacuated child is a *social figure*. Social figures, such as the tinkerer, the city kid, or the homecomer, establish a relationship between socially categorized groups in reality and literary figures (characters). Thus, it is a social fact that children and their families were evacuated from Heligoland in the post-war period before the island was largely destroyed by RAF in a massive air strike on April 18, 1947. In *Unterland*, which recounts the situation of the evacuees in Hamburg, the Heligoland girl Alice, who was injured in a low-level air raid, represents the social figure of an evacuee in that she experiences recollections, anticipatory foresight (anxiety), and humorous, everyday confrontations with the present situation. While this situation is largely perceived as unfair, there seems to be no escape except through greater personal initiative and trust in others. Slowly, Alice's critical view of the English occupying power is counteracted by her growing insight into the causes of the war.

Keywords: social figure; child evacuee; Heligoland; historical learning; historical novel

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“Nowhere to Return To”: Climate Refugees in Contemporary Children’s and Young Adult Literature

This paper examines how children’s and young adult literature across different cultural contexts represents *climate refugees*—young people displaced, or threatened with displacement, by environmental catastrophe and climate change. While climate fiction, also known as *cli-fi* for young readers, has expanded rapidly, critics’ attention has focused more on dystopian futures and environmental activism than on the specific figure of the climate refugee, despite the centrality of climate-induced migration in contemporary debate.

Drawing on ecocriticism, education, and Creative Writing studies, the paper offers a comparative close reading of a corpus of picture books, novelettes, novels, and young adult texts that depict sea-level rise, desertification, catastrophic storms, and slow-onset environmental degradation. Texts such as Julie Bertagna’s *Exodus* (2002), Marcus Sedgwick’s *Floodland* (2000), and Paolo Bacigalupi’s *Ship Breaker* (2010) are read alongside less canonical works from diverse national traditions. In Greek literature, the example of *Mavro Nero* (eng. *Black Water*), a novelette by Michalis Makropoulos, is an outstanding example of this type of literature.

The paper analyzes the ways in which these narratives construct loss of home, community, and language, and delineate responsibility (human versus “natural” causes), vulnerability, and agency. How are race, class and indigeneity negotiated when young protagonists are forced to move?

The analysis highlights recurring patterns—such as the sentimentalization of displacement through literary character profiles, the eviction of political and corporate responsibility onto abstract “nature,” and the tension between hopeful endings and structural hopelessness—while foregrounding texts that imagine solidarities across borders and species. By mapping rising depictions of child and youth climate refugees in international literature, the article opens a discussion on how educators, writers, and publishers could properly engage young audiences with one of the most important and ethically difficult facets of the anthropocentric universe.

Keywords: climate refugees; eco-fiction; eco-criticism; dystopia; creative writing

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Elective Affinities? The Trope of Transspecies Adoption

In science fiction, transspecies adoption often accompanies diaspora. We propose to examine two strands of such adoptions, the animal and the alien. The former tends to be the less successful. In Randall Jarrell's *The Animal Family* (1965), for instance, a man and a mermaid acquire three "children": a baby bear, a baby lynx, and finally a baby human. While the parents give bear and lynx care and nurture, the boy's arrival establishes that they are animals and he is not. Similarly, Katherine Applegate's *The One and Only Ivan* (2012) features a gorilla displaced from Africa to the US. As an infant, Ivan lives with a human couple, who treat him as their child. However, the family dissolves, and Ivan's erstwhile father becomes his exploiter when Ivan is repurposed into the principal attraction of an economically marginal shopping mall. Although Ivan acquires non-gorilla family members, namely two elephants and a stray dog, the happy ending requires a sorting by species: elephants with elephants, gorilla with gorillas, dog with humans. And while Keiko Kasza's *A Mother for Choco* (1996) depicts successful cross-species adoptions involving animals, none of the characters is human.

Integrating aliens into human families seems easier. Consider the Disney animation *Lilo & Stitch* (2002, remade 2025). Stitch is the product of illegal genetic experimentation by a mad scientist who designed him to foment destruction. After he escapes to Earth and is adopted (as a "dog") by two orphaned human sisters, however, he overcomes his programming, and by the film's end he is not pet but sibling, performing hulas alongside Lilo and "teach[ing] her classmates about space" (King 95). Our presentation will suggest why the human-alien barrier might be more permeable than the human-animal barrier and what these contrasting successful and failed adoptions have to say about displacement.

Keywords: adoption; posthuman; alienation; tropes; family

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The Pedagogy of Hospitality: Power, Silence, and Diaspora in Shaun Tan's *Eric* and Chris Naylor-Ballesteros' *The Suitcase*

This paper offers a comparative reading of Shaun Tan's *Eric* (1997) and Chris Naylor-Ballesteros' *The Suitcase* (2019) to examine how contemporary picturebooks negotiate diasporic and exilic subjectivities through silence, hospitality, and asymmetrical power relations. Both texts depict an unnamed, displaced Other who enters a domestic space, yet they employ markedly different ideological strategies in framing exile, belonging, and the child reader's ethical position.

Drawing on Althusser's concept of ideological interpellation and Foucault's notion of disciplinary and pastoral power, the paper argues that *The Suitcase* exemplifies a liberal-humanist pedagogy of containment. While the book gestures toward empathy and inclusion, it ultimately neutralizes exile by withholding historical and political specificity, rendering displacement as a personal mystery to be compassionately managed by the host society. The refugee figure remains largely voiceless, positioned as an object of care rather than a political subject, thereby reinforcing asymmetrical relations between host and guest.

In contrast, *Eric* resists narrative closure and pedagogical reassurance. Tan's use of estrangement, visual ambiguity, and narrative silence destabilizes the adult/host perspective and refuses to translate the exilic subject into familiar moral terms. Rather than assimilating difference, *Eric* foregrounds non-knowledge, miscommunication, and epistemic failure as central to diasporic experience. The exiled figure's interiority remains inaccessible, disrupting the reader's desire for mastery and challenging the implicit authority of the host culture.

By juxtaposing these two texts, the paper demonstrates how picturebooks about exile may either reproduce dominant ideological frameworks of benevolent hospitality or open a space for critical disorientation and resistance. Ultimately, the comparison reveals how formal choices in word-image relations function as ideological acts, shaping whether exile is presented as a manageable moral lesson or as an unresolved political condition.

Keywords: diaspora and exile in picturebooks; hospitality; otherness; belonging; narrative silence

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Can The Suitcase Accommodate a Whole Life?

Kindergarten Children's Dialogues on Refugees in a Community of Philosophical Inquiry

Living in a constantly changing world, people's notions of identity are increasingly understood as fluid, mobile, and in process rather than fixed or stable (Hall, 1990; Bauman, 2000). Within this shifting social reality, children—whether refugees themselves or members of host communities—are required to negotiate difference, and learn to live together peacefully and respectfully (UNHCR, 2019). Children's literature, and particularly approaches to philosophizing with children, can support young learners in rethinking what identity means (Lipman, 2003; Haynes, 2008).

The purpose of this paper is to explore preschool children's views and perspectives, as expressed through their questions and dialogues within a community of philosophical inquiry, regarding the representation of refugees in a picturebook. Through dialogical engagement, children are invited to reflect on concepts such as nostalgia, identity, home, and mobility—concepts that are central to contemporary discussions of forced migration and displacement (Kohli, 2014; Dryden-Peterson, 2016). The study is guided by the following research questions: How do young children understand concepts related to refugees? What kinds of questions and dialogues emerge among them? What do children consider important for refugees to have?

This qualitative study adopts a case study design and is conducted in two kindergarten classrooms and one mixed second- and third-grade classroom. The picturebook *The Suitcase* by Chris Naylor-Ballesteros is used as a stimulus to provoke dialogue within a philosophical community of inquiry. The data include children's recorded dialogues, questions, and drawings produced in follow-up activities. The data are analysed using qualitative content analysis, with particular attention to how the combination of images and narrative text supports philosophical dialogue around issues of migration, identity, and what is considered important in life (Murriss, 2016; Tschida, Ryan, & Ticknor, 2014).

Keywords: identity; refugees; philosophy with children; community of inquiry; dialogue

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Home, Identity, and Memory in *You Don't Know What War Is: The Diary of a Young Girl from Ukraine* (2022)

After Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022, there are numerous eyewitness accounts describing individual memories of suffering caused by the Russian attacks. The transition of eyewitness accounts through various media, including televised media events (Dayan and Katz 1992, 7), transfers the trauma of the Russian invasion out of the communicative memory and into the collective memory (Assmann 2006, 7; Ommundsen 2025). Contemporary children's literature recounts the experiences of war and flight from a child's perspective (Neraas 2025; Ommundsen and Stavem 2023). Still, most eyewitness accounts are told by adults. One exception being the twelve-year-old Yeva Skalietska, who was caught on camera by journalists when trying to leave Ukraine. Yeva's gift of speech and writing skills helped her flee Ukraine and reach a prosperous future in Ireland.

In the interview broadcasted on Channel 4 News March 6, 2022, Yeva reads aloud from her handwritten diary and says that one day she hopes to publish it. The diary *You Don't Know What War Is: The Diary of a Young Girl from Ukraine* (Skalietska 2022) gives a unique insight into how Yeva and her friends turned to songs, prayers, and social media when Ukraine was invaded. Through Yeva's diary, which includes excerpts from the news and messages between Yeva and her friends in social media, we follow Yeva and her grandmother Iryna through the bombings, the flight, and to their new home. From the diaspora perspective, Yeva reflects on her experiences and includes four of her friends' autobiographical stories. Both the diary and the interviews provide unique insights into Ukrainian children's experiences of war, flight, and resettlement in new hostlands.

In this paper, I will analyze Yeva Skalietska's diary and compare it with the stories about Yeva published on Channel 4 News and social media. The analysis is informed by theories on multimodality, media divergence, remediation, and collective memory. The research question is: How does the young protagonist experience war, and what feelings and traumas does she struggle with?

Keywords: war in Ukraine; child refugee; diary; autobiography; eyewitness accounts; media divergence

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Between Migration, Loss, and Transition: Liminal Childhood in the Works by Peter Härtling

Peter Härtling is one of the most influential authors of German-language children's and young adult literature. For decades, his texts have been part of both school curricula and academic research in Children's and young Adult Literature, often shaping students' first conscious encounters with literary representations of transition, trauma, and social exclusion. This paper focuses on a selection of Härtling's works that foreground different forms of migration, displacement, and experiences of "in-betweenness": *Ben liebt Anna* (1979) as a narrative of otherness and belonging; *Krücke* (1986) as a postwar novel set among ruins and structured around a wounded helper figure; *Reise gegen den Wind* (2000) as a literary condensation of loss and transitional experience; and *Djadi, Flüchtlingsjunge* (2016), which addresses contemporary forced migration and vulnerability through a deliberately restrained and unexaggerated narrative style.

The experiences depicted in these texts are read as transitional situations in the sense of Arnold van Gennep's rites de passage and—as processes of identity formation—in line with cultural theories of identity as dynamic, relational, and non-essential. Child protagonists appear as subjects of the "in-between," lacking stable belonging and situated between origin and arrival, past and future. Their marginality is not presented as a temporary narrative obstacle but as a constitutive condition of modern childhood under conditions of migration and historical rupture.

Drawing on trauma-theoretical approaches (notably Hannes Fricke), the paper argues that Härtling's writing consciously avoids pathos, "false empathy" (Fritz Breithaupt), and emotionalization in the sense of the identifiable victim effect (Thomas Schelling). Rather than staging children as easily identifiable victims designed to elicit shock or pity, Härtling presents complex, vulnerable subjects in states of transition. His restrained and ethically reflective narrative mode takes childhood experience seriously and makes exile, loss, and vulnerability visible as structural features of modern childhood.

Keywords: Peter Härtling; migration; transition; liminal childhood; war

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The Refugee Question in Greece During the 19th and 20th Centuries: Its Representations and its Reception in Primary School Reading Textbooks.

The so-called “unredeemed” regions of Hellenism present two main types of mobility immediately after the establishment of the Greek state: migration and refugee displacement. Migration aims at the economic and educational improvement of populations in Europe and America, whereas “refugee displacement” is caused by violent, forced, and persecutory displacements toward urban centers of the free state. From Makriyannis’s *Memoirs*, as well as from newspapers and letters, we know that the reception of refugees was met with an unfavorable response. The textbooks of the period, and somewhat later those of the Cretan State, attempt to soften the harsh response of public opinion, mainly with regard to the refugee issue.

The method through which a positive attitude toward refugees is promoted is the invention of a story structured according to the functions of the folktale (Vladimir Propp), in which the positive outcome of trials and adventure reconciles the place of origin with the place of relocation. In such hybrid texts, with both cognitive and emotional character, literariness is limited to minimal aesthetic demands. Humor, the contrast between representations of interior spaces and nature, and the symbolic metaphor of the school as a harbinger of the value and prosperity of the primary sector render them exemplary and enjoyable.

A case study in our paper is the *Anagnosmatáron* by I. Stavrakakis (Chania, 1911), which introduces the refugee question as a creative invitation of the “other” into the familiar place, with the prospect of improving the present. In any case, the refugee was nowhere entirely or absolutely welcomed or thought of as someone creative.

Keywords: language question; education; Cretan State; reading books; exile children; history; literature and story

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“Becoming in Motion”: Romanipe, Liminality, and Identity as Practice in Richard O’Neill’s Travellers Tales

Historically, mainstream children’s literature has relegated Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller (GRT) characters to the margins, often confining them within polarized tropes of romanticized exoticism or societal deficit. Challenging this paradigm, narratives authored from an insider perspective offer a critical counter-discourse that reclaims GRT subjectivity and unsettles static representations of nomadic life.

This paper examines the complete Travellers Tales picturebook series by Richard O’Neill (*Ossiri and the Bala Mengro*, 2016; *Yokki and the Parno Gry*, 2016; *Polonius the Pit Pony*, 2018; *The Lost Homework*, 2019; *The Can Caravan*, 2022; and *The Story Bridge*, 2026), in order to explore how these narratives construct and negotiate mobile forms of identity.

The analysis draws on Stuart Hall’s (1996) understanding of identity as a socially produced and historically situated process. While O’Neill’s series engages with the broader GRT context, the analysis focuses on how his Romany heritage informs these representations. Acknowledging that Romani identity is internally diverse and cannot be viewed as a monolithic category (Marushiakova & Popov, 2016), the in-group concept of *Romanipe* is employed as an analytical frame to examine how identity is enacted through shared practices and everyday interaction, rather than expressed as fixed cultural traits.

Guided by three research questions, the paper examines how the series’ protagonists navigate liminal positions between mobility and institutional structures; how recurring everyday practices across the corpus function as modes through which identity is enacted and sustained; and how these narrative patterns reframe the nomadic experience beyond fixed or deficit-based models.

The paper argues that O’Neill’s work shifts the understanding of GRT identity from a representational category to a practice-based process, in which identity is actively produced through situated practices rather than assumed as a given.

Keywords: gypsy; Roma, and Traveller (GRT) identities; Romanipe; liminality; children’s literature; Richard O’Neill

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Diasporic Identities and Anti-Racist Pedagogies in Theatre for Young Audiences: The Case of *A Celebration at Nourian's*

This paper examines the stereotypes and forms of racism experienced by refugees and migrants through a textual analysis of the play *Mia Giorti Stou Nourian* (A Celebration at Nourian's), an adaptation of the German play *Ein Fest bei Papadakis* by Volker Ludwig, founder of the GRIPS Theater Berlin. The study focuses on the ways in which diversity, cultural identities, and social tensions emerging within a multicultural environment are represented on stage, through the analysis of the play's dialogues. Through dialogue, action, and character development, the play highlights mechanisms of social exclusion, prejudice, and stereotypical perceptions attributed to "foreigners." At the same time, it employs theatrical convention and humor to deconstruct dominant narratives of fear and suspicion, emphasizing the importance of acceptance, solidarity, and intercultural communication. The analysis underscores the pedagogical role of theatre for young audiences as a means of raising awareness about racism and as a space for shaping attitudes that promote respect for diversity. Ultimately, the play functions as a symbolic "celebration" of coexistence, proposing a model of an inclusive society.

Keywords: diaspora; stereotypes; Theater for Young Audiences; inclusion; GRIPS theater

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Reconfiguring Diasporic Identities through Hñähñu Children's Literature: Trilingual Craft and AI Mediation in Rosa Maqueda's *Hyaznä*

This presentation examines the trilingual children's poetry book *Hyaznä / Luz de Luna / Light of the Moon* by Rosa Maqueda (2023) in the context of a case study on AI-mediated translation. Written in Hñähñu (Otomí), self-translated into Spanish, with an English version by Nora C. Blome and Patrick Cheney, Maqueda's work emerges from the Otomí community of the Valle del Mezquital, a territory historically shaped by cultural displacement, internal mobility, and linguistic marginalization.

By foregrounding oral knowledge systems and local cosmogonies, Maqueda reconfigures poetry as a space where Indigenous voices claim representation, memory, and continuity. Building on Hall's conception of identity as 'becoming,' the book's trilingual format embodies a dynamic negotiation among ancestral language, the national lingua franca, and global English, decentering hegemony and showing the power of Indigenous languages (Hernández-Ávila, 2003).

In the study at the University of Alicante (2024-2025), student teachers experimented with AI-assisted translations of the poems. The activity revealed significant limitations in recognizing lexical and cultural features of Indigenous languages. As previous scholarship suggests (Deance, 2023), the fragility of oral traditions in technological environments mirrors the sociopolitical vulnerabilities of *Pueblos Originarios*. These findings resonate with broader concerns in literary education regarding the exclusion of minority voices from dominant canons (Cerrillo, 2014; Llorens et al., 2022).

Maqueda's work shows how children's literature nurtures rootedness without essentialism, offering young readers pathways to imagine home, memory, and belonging in contexts of diaspora and cultural negotiation. Integrating her poetry into teacher education advocates for intercultural models that not only position children's literature as a site of resistance against linguistic displacement and epistemic marginalization but also recognize children as authors with agency, as Hñähñu children were the illustrators of the book. The study thus underscores the need to develop AI literacies that critically engage with technological bias while promoting creative, ethical, and culturally sustained uses of digital tools in plurilingual classrooms.

Keywords: Indigenous children's literature; trilingual poetry; AI-mediated translation; Hñähñu (Otomí) language; representation

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"In Research of Hop(m)e": Refugee Experiences in Greek Children's Literature

The present study undertakes an exploration of how children's literature handles the concepts of the "foreigner", the refugee, and the immigrant, focusing on the confrontation of identity and alterity (otherness). It proceeds to analyze how works of refugee literature integrate historical facts with fictional narratives to cultivate a sense of temporality and to symbolically depict historical figures. The research corpus encompasses diverse literary genres (novella, short stories, picturebooks), written by renowned Greek authors, that explore the refugee experiences of their young protagonists: *His bicycle* (2024) by Christina Frageskaki, *Melak, alone* (2016) by Argyro Pipini and *The yellow bus for the homeland* (2012) by Christos Boulotis. Utilizing the analysis of these works, the current research posits that this genre of literature seeks to counteract xenophobia and racism, while simultaneously championing the values inherent in the Western humanitarian tradition. These narratives employ realistic storytelling, fragmentary writing, or magical realism to acquaint readers with the lived experience of the "other", with the ultimate goal of disarming collective prejudices and fostering the acceptance of cultural heterogeneity (multiplicity).

Keywords: refugee; immigrant; foreigner; cultural heterogeneity; literary genres

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An Analogous Experience: Trans* Identity and Exile in the German Speculative Youth Novel *Atalanta Läufer_in*

"[T]he experience of transgender [...] is analogous to the early experience of exile" (109–10), claims Pamela Caughie, referring to Lili Elbe, the first trans* woman who underwent gender reassignment surgery in 1931 while in exile. Like Elbe, many trans* women and men choose self-exile following dismissal by family and friends and legal restrictions against e.g. public cross-dressing: they feel like a stranger in their own homeland. Drawing an analogy between the experiences of being trans* and being exiled can thus shed light on the respective histories, especially when a trans* person seeks out exile as a result of their gender identity. In a world that still too frequently alienates people for living as their authentic selves and draws stark borders whose crossing is punished, the analogy between the trans* experience and exile necessitates attention from a literary perspective on both the levels of *histoire* and *discours*.

Merging scholarship on trans* representation (Corbett; Planka) with that on nomads and exile (Bannasch et al.; Bernhardt), this paper reads German Lilly Axster's speculative youth novel *Atalanta Läufer_in* [Atalanta Runner] (2014) as a loose retelling of Greek mythology's Atalanta, a human huntress devoted to Artemis who, among others, outruns several male suitors. Axster's character continuously crosses borders in the search of home and gender identity: Atalanta not only questions gender categories and competes as male runner Lan but, always on the run, frequently crosses the borders between two fictional countries, *Festland* [Main Land] and *Eiland* [Island], eventually forgetting which is homeland and which hostland. I argue that Lan's search for gender identity is analogous to their search for a national identity, and vice versa, although the novel outlines the affordabilities of a liminal space and challenges why a steady identity (regarding gender or nationality) is so often mandated in the first place.

Keywords: German literature; Trans*; sports fiction; youth literature; gender identity

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Waiting, Journeying, Uniting: Home and Space in Left-behind Children’s Picturebooks

Migration is one of the most significant global issues today. Among migrant families, left-behind children represent a unique phenomenon: children who stay in their hometowns while one or both parents migrate for work to other countries or regions. These children are often cared for by a single parent or surrogate guardians such as grandparents. The scale of the issue is striking. By 2020, left-behind children accounted for 22% of all children in Thailand, 27% in the Philippines, and 36% in Georgia. In China, 46.4% of children (around 138 million) are affected by parental migration (Antia et al., 2020, p. 4335; Bălțătescu et al., 2023, p. 1941; UNICEF et al. Bureau of Statistics, and UNFPA, 2020)

Migration is the human movement related to the changing of space. The migrant parents in China rarely return home due to their workload and lack of funds. Except for the annual Spring Festival, which symbolizes national cohesiveness, reflects Chinese citizenship, and serves as a crucial occasion for family reunions. Therefore, this paper will borrow Lefebvre’s The Produce of Space and Maria Nikolajeva’s picture book theory by focusing on textual and visual analysis to investigate how spatial narratives are constructed through the words and illustrations in the selected picture books and study how three picture books portray domestic space (the home as a space of waiting and uniting) and outer spaces related to home (journeys that reflect the parent’s migration experiences) and examines the following questions:

- Waiting: How are children waiting in domestic space for the Spring Festival and family reunion?
- Journeying: How do parents journey back home from their migrant place?
- Uniting: How is the sense of home transformed after their migrant parents are united with their children?

Waiting	Journeying	Uniting
 <p>Footprints Written by Xue Tao Illustrated by Yu Rong</p>	 <p>Returning Home Written by Wei Jie Illustrated by Xu can</p>	 <p>A NEW YEAR'S REUNION Written by Yu Li-qiong Zhu Cheng-liang</p>

Keywords: migration; left-behind children; space; home; Chinese citizenship

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"History Is Not a Fixed Thing:" Imagining the Black Girl Detective in Eighteenth Century London

In this contribution I will analyse the historical dimension of diaspora and migration in J. T. Williams' *The Lizzie and Belle Mysteries* series (2022 and 2023), specifically the use of historiographic metafiction (Cross, 2015) to introduce two young black female detectives into a story set in the eighteenth century. Both protagonists have their roots in historical figures of different social status, which demonstrates friendship and solidarity across social and economic divides and paints a broader picture of the diversity of Black lives and politics in 1770s London. Child detectives tend to be characters on the margins of society that interrogate boundaries between childhood and adulthood (Routledge, 2001, 64; McGee, 2025, 4), and the historical setting lends an extra dimension to the intersectionality of race, class and gender.

Strategically, the novels fulfill the aims I identified in Black and Asian British writing for children: they lend visibility to children of colour, extend the subject positions available to them, and thematise racism and discrimination (Reichl, 2020, 560). In addition, they embed this in a historical context that young readers might not be familiar with. By extending such a set of strategic choices to two protagonists, their families, allies and foes, the *Lizzie and Belle Mysteries* move the protagonists' agency from the level of the individual to a social context in which the breadth of eighteenth century black British experience can be understood as more than an isolated phenomenon. With a view to media phenomena such as *Bridgerton*, Jones and Pelling (2026, 2) redirect our focus away from notions of historical accuracy towards the way that eighteenth century reimaginings "might be enlisted, sometimes ambiguously or conflictedly, in current political arguments". I will argue that and show how the historiography highlighted in the novels directs young readers' attention to contemporary issues of social injustice, class divides, media representation and solidarity, while painting a rich picture of black lives in eighteenth century London.

Keywords: Black British history; social injustice; children's detective novels; historiographic metafiction; intersectionality

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Postcolonial Perspectives on Home and Unhomeliness in Contemporary Picturebooks about Diaspora

Contemporary picturebooks depicting refugee flight frequently employ a home–away–(new)home structure that frames the hostland as a “happy ending” or utopian site of safety and belonging in which trauma and conflict are resolved (Warnqvist, 2018; Strekalova-Hughes, 2019). This paper explores to what extent two contemporary picturebooks *Vannlilje på havet* (Salinas & Mohammadi, 2024) and *Pedros store ønske* (Santos & Kjærgaard, 2025, original title *A Birthday Wish*) diverge from these typical utopian narratives in the ways they construct home and belonging.

Using Short’s (2019) critical content analysis through a postcolonial lens and informed by Homi Bhabha’s (1997) concept of *unhomely moments* in literature, the study analyzes how each text constructs home, diaspora and belonging. *Vannlilje på havet* follows the traditional narrative structure of homeland, flight, and new “home” by depicting diaspora through the refugee protagonist’s loss and gradual return of colour as she reaches the shore; yet its open ending withholds any promise of welcome or instant belonging. In contrast, *Pedros store ønske* is situated entirely in the host country, foregrounding struggles of loneliness and xenophobia as a newly arrived immigrant. Although Pedro’s birthday wish for a new friend is ultimately fulfilled, offering a sense of belonging through friendship. The paper explores whether and how these works, might offer counter-narratives to integrationist or utopian tendencies in picturebooks about diaspora and refugees by presenting home and belonging not as fixed destinations but as ongoing, unsettled processes shaped by unhomely moments.

Keywords: diaspora; belonging; unhomely; critical content analysis; postcolonial theory

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Exploring Aesthetics and Poetics Through the Themes of Identity and Resilience in the Wordless Picturebook *Migrants* by Issa Watanabe

This paper explores the route of a diverse group of migrants, illustrated as anthropomorphised animals, their physical and emotional displacement, and their geographical and cultural otherness (Nel, 2018) in the wordless picturebook *Migrants* by Issa Watanabe (2020). Her background in literature and fine arts is evident as a visually literate reader recognises techniques drawn from artistic and literary traditions.

Migrants is characterised by polysemy, symbolism, and allusions at the visual level and within the silent narrative, where varied narrative modes are employed, contributing to the foreshadowing of the ending. The carefully chosen colour palette, the vibrant figures, and the bleak landscapes shape the physical and emotional portrayal of the characters, resulting in a challenging wordless picturebook of high aesthetic value (Campagnaro, 2021), thus creating a visual framework for young readers to engage with current issues (Pereira, et al., 2023).

Profound questions are raised through the figures of the animals and the moving skull, rarely represented in silent picturebooks related to immigration and diaspora. The skull figure invites reflection on its identity, its relationship to the group of animals, and their cultural and existential dynamics. The animals engage readers to reflect on their cultural identity (Hall, 1990), resilience on the way to their new homeland, and the ever-unfolding cycle of life, illustrated through symbolic indications.

The deliberate ambiguity broadens the horizons of the aesthetics and poetics interpretation of a wordless picturebook and prompts critical reflection on the concepts of identity, resilience, loss, trauma, memory, and the experience of displacement.

Keywords: aesthetics; poetics; *Migrants*; identity; resilience

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Informational Picturebook On the Move: European Reception of Romana Romanyshyn & Andriy Lesiv's Informational Picturebook *Куду і звидку*

Migration is one of many topics of contemporary informational (von Merveldt, 2018) or non-fiction picturebooks (Grilli 2025). One of the reasons may be forced migration due to military conflicts, such as the Russian occupation of parts of Ukraine that began in 2014 and developed into a full-scale invasion in 2022. Since then, many informational picturebooks have been devoted to this topic explicitly or implicitly. The case of the latter may be *Куду і звидку* [*On the Move*] by Romana Romanyshyn and Andriy Lesiv (2020), a White Raven of the International Youth Library in Munich, which was translated into many languages.

Besides the picturebook's high artistic quality, its ideological stance—however covert it may be—seems to be a significant factor for foreign publishers considering translating it. Hence, the question arises: What rationale prompted publishers to translate it and how was the book received in other countries amid the Russian aggression and invasion of Ukraine? Referring to the picturebook's content (the main text and the peritext), as well as public epitext, including publishers' websites and reviews, I will draw on comparative studies (O'Sullivan, 2004) to investigate how the Ukrainian informational picturebook *Куду і звидку* was translated into selected European languages. Moreover, I will draw on information directly from publishers to shed more light on the translation publishing process and its implications, so-called "paratranslation" (Lathey, 2016, 127).

Eventually, my paper will shed light on the translation of an informational picturebook on migration that gained international attention during the troubling times of military aggression against its author's homeland, adding new insights into the developing field of non-fiction children's literature translation studies (Borodo, 2025).

Keywords: migration; home; informational picturebook; comparative studies; translation studies

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Carrying the Land: Indigenous Relationality as Resistance to Exile and Diaspora in Cherie Dimaline's *Hunting by Stars*

For generations, North American Indigenous Peoples have been displaced and confined across their own homelands—conditions of exile and internal diaspora. For Indigenous Peoples, land is not merely property, resource, or capital but is a living constellation of relations that includes waters, the skyworld, plant, and animal nations (Simpson, 2016, 22). As Robin Wall Kimmerer (Potawatomi) affirms, land is “everything: identity, the connection to our ancestors, the home of our nonhuman kinfolk, our pharmacy, our library, the sources of all that sustained us” (31). Land thus serves as an “ontological framework for understanding relationships” (Coulthard, 2010, 79) that grounds Indigenous epistemologies and ethical orientations deeply in relationality and reciprocity. The Canadian settler-colonial project’s removal and containment of Indigenous Peoples—through reserve creation, residential schools, and resource extraction—constitute territorial dispossession and are attempts to sever the relational networks between Indigenous Peoples and their ancestral lands. Yet, these relationships with land and more-than-human kin persist; they can travel with those who embody relationality, and sustained in new, imposed, or hostile spaces.

This presentation examines Cherie Dimaline’s (Métis) young adult novel *Hunting by Stars* (2021) as a narrative of exilic and diasporic survivance (survival through resistance, and survival as a form of resistance). In the novel, the protagonist (French) is imprisoned within a dystopian iteration of the residential school system: a space designed to disconnect and assimilate. Nevertheless, French sustains his relationships to community, land, and other-than-human kin through relational practices. This presentation will show that through French’s continuity of relational living, Dimaline demonstrates how land-based ethics can be carried into even the most coercive environments, transforming spaces of enforced displacement into sites of resurgence deeply connected to the land. In doing so, the novel offers a powerful model to young readers, especially to Indigenous readers who continue to be displaced, of how Indigenous identity and relationality continue to thrive amidst exile and unsettle settler-colonial logics of isolation and containment.

Keywords: Indigenous diaspora; young adult literature; Canadian literature; relationality; land-based knowledge

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Bringing the Sunshine?: Migration Picture Books in Britain and Canada

For many countries in Europe and North America, migration consistently ranks as one of the issues of greatest concern. The US president's comments about Global South migrants and about 'civilisational erasure' in Europe ([Trump administration says Europe faces 'civilisational erasure' - BBC News](#)), and versions of the so-called 'Great Replacement Theory' (Mohn, 2024) have contributed to a global rise in violence and racism against migrants. While children's novels can address complex issues of migration, children's picture books frequently focus on journeys of child migrants from home country to host country as ultimately positive progressions. Often, this results in books depicting the 'model migrant' in an attempt to counter media images of migration camps with poor facilities, undocumented migrants being arrested, and angry protests both for and against migration. In this paper, I examine picture books about child migration journeys from Global South countries to Britain and to Canada to understand how issues such as racism, colonialism, economic and forced migration are explained to a young audience in a former imperial and a former colonized country. First, I consider the many versions of Floella Benjamin's *Coming to England* (chapter book 1995, picture book 2020, board book 2025) as a way to understand ideas around 'age appropriateness' of difficult issues. I then compare recent picture books about economic and forced migration to Canada, such as Aine Moorad's *O Canada Here I Come* (Movement 2020), *Migrant* by Maxine Trottier (Groundwood 2011), and *The Most Beautiful Thing I Have Ever Seen* by Nadia Devi Umadat (Second Story 2023); and to Britain (Kate Milner's *My Name is Not Refugee*, Bucket List 2017; Nicola Davies' *King of the Sky*, Candlewick 2017; *Sunny and the Birds* by Wendy Meddour, OUP 2023; and *Noah's New Home* by Zeshan Akhtar, Templar 2025) to consider different national attitudes toward migration.

Keywords: model migrants; Britain; Canada; racism; refugees

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From Root Shock to Rhizomes: Visualising Home Loss and Post-Migration Belonging in Contemporary Picturebook Illustrations

This paper analyses contemporary migration-themed picturebooks published after 2010 that move beyond the visibility of the journey experience to depict the slower, less visible aftermath of making a home and re-shaping a sense of self after arrival. Drawing on housing and displacement research, it starts from the premise that losing a home is frequently experienced as bereavement that fractures ontological security (Giddens, 1991) and can lead to ambiguous loss (Boss, 1999) without the relief of proper closure. Fullilove's concept of root shock (2004) further emphasises the stress reaction following the destruction of one's emotional ecosystem after displacement. Home is approached not simply as shelter but as a dense web of memory, stored intimacy, care routines and everyday rituals that stabilise identity and enable the imagination of a future.

Focusing on how 'home grief' and the labour of belonging are made visible through the language of illustration, this paper identifies recurrent patterns and tenors of visual narratives shaped by diaspora agency, material culture and the re-weaving of social constellations in the here and now. These books, the paper argues, encourage the idea of what Édouard Glissant (1990) terms a rhizomatic identity: a self in flux that does not appeal to a singular root but is entangled with multiple languages, memories and spaces, continually re-making itself at home. The aim is to show how the active meaning-making power of visual literacy (Salisbury & Styles 2012) affects visions of migrant resilience and the narratives children's literature—and its gatekeepers—shape around losing and re-building a moral geography of belonging after migration. It argues that attending to these visual strategies not only enriches understandings of diasporic and exilic experience in children's literature but also contributes a nuanced vocabulary for thinking about the invisible mourning and creative world rebuilding that follow displacement.

Keywords: picturebook illustration; visual literacy; migration; displacement grief; identity

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Exploring Migration Through *The Ferris Wheel*: A Bibliotherapy Case Study in Early Childhood Education

Bibliotherapy is defined as a dynamic interaction process between the reader's personality and literature, guided by a trained facilitator (Russell & Shrodes, 1950), in which books become a supportive material in addressing specific problems. In early childhood, bibliotherapy supports children's ability to express their emotions and thoughts, solve problems, cope with negative emotions, develop a positive self-concept, strengthen self-confidence, and manage challenging life situations (Akgün & Karaman Benli, 2019). The present study aims to present a developmental bibliotherapy practice conducted with preschool children using a carefully selected, high-quality, and purpose-appropriate children's book addressing migration, which is considered a challenging theme in children's literature. For this purpose, the book *The Ferris Wheel* (written by Tülin Kozikoğlu) was selected, and the application will be implemented in a public preschool. The book was chosen because it is structured in a way that enables readers to understand and empathize with both children who experience migration and those who do not, rather than focusing on a single child's emotional experiences (Başoğlu & Sicim Sevim, 2025). This study is designed as a single-case study conducted with 60–72-month-old preschool children, together with their families and teachers. A developmental bibliotherapy session will be implemented with the participation of children, their parents, and teachers, aiming to explore participants' awareness and perspectives regarding migration and children's rights. The bibliotherapy process will be structured in line with the stages of identification and projection, catharsis, insight, and integration (Öner & Yeşilyaprak, 2006), and will be enriched through pre-reading, during-reading, post-reading, and follow-up activities. Data will be collected through researchers' observation notes, children's drawings, and feedback from teachers, and analyzed using descriptive analysis. The findings are expected to demonstrate that bibliotherapy can be used as a protective and preventive awareness-raising tool in early childhood education.

Keywords: migration; children's literature; bibliotherapy; *The Ferris Wheel*; case study

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Arabic Picturebooks' Depictions of Forced Migration and the Use of Color

Forced migration and exile are defining realities in much of the contemporary Arab world. Ongoing conflicts such as the war in Syria, the Israeli occupation and genocide in Palestine, and the war in Sudan have shaped a generation of children who have either experienced or witnessed displacement. Contemporary Arabic children's literature—an emerging field—has increasingly turned to narratives that engage with themes of forced migration, diaspora, and mobility. This paper examines how Arabic picturebooks represent the experiences of forced migration and displacement, with particular attention to how aesthetic strategies convey and represent these realities as well as take into consideration its psychological effect on the reader.

Drawing on a selection of Arabic picturebooks, the study analyzes how word–image relations and the use of colour function as key narrative devices. It explores how these strategies simultaneously represent displacement and mediate the difficult emotions it evokes for child readers. Building on the premise that the use of color within a specific medium and cultural context constructs a “color discourse” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2010; Papazian, 2018), the paper asks: What dominant color discourses emerge in Arabic picturebooks addressing forced migration and displacement?

The paper also foregrounds the pedagogical implications of representing diasporic experiences in children's literature. It examines how picturebooks approach traumatic aspects of forced migration while functioning as educational texts. Drawing on theories of aesthetic knowledge in picturebooks (Nodelman, 1988; Painter, 2008; Nikolajeva, 2014), the study considers how visual aesthetics teach indirectly, shaping children's understanding of trauma, loss, and im/mobility. My argument will center the ways in which Arabic picturebooks frequently deploy color as an affective and visual mode that renders trauma legible to young readers while creating narrative space for experiences of migration and displacement.

This study highlights the role of color in Arabic children's literature in fostering a unique approach in representing displacement and forced migration both as aesthetic and pedagogical interventions in addressing the reader's ongoing experience.

Keywords: displacement; trauma; Arabic picturebooks; aesthetics of colour; word-image relationship

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„Little Polonus. Quarterly of the Union of Poles in Romania for Children and Youth” as a Polish Diaspora Magazine (2017-2025)

“Little Polonus” [“Mały Polonus”] is a magazine published by the Polish community in Romania (Suceava) and is an example of a project initiated, edited and published by Poles and their descendants living outside the country (with financial support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland). This quarterly is intended for young readers who feel close to Poland through blood ties, cultivate Polish traditions and the unity of the national minority that emigrated from the country many years ago. The subject of the analysis will be issues of the magazine from 2017-2025 (available online on the website of the Union of Poles in Romania). Quantitative and qualitative methods (content analysis) will be used. The communication model of the magazine, its profile and the way of presenting the most important information and values will be characterized. It will be particularly interesting to indicate how the editorial office conveys patriotic and cultural values (e.g. how it cultivates traditions and folklore), and how it maintains knowledge of the Polish language. The scope and methods of familiarization with contemporary Poland and its inhabitants (especially the lives of children and young people) will also be described, as will the image of the home country painted on the pages of this magazine. The forms and contents that particularly emphasize the sense of unity and identity of the Polish minority in Romania will be highlighted. The most frequently used forms of communication in the magazine will be indicated. In consultation with the editorial staff of “Little Polonus”, the most important problems facing this magazine and the plans it has for the future will be discussed. Polish diaspora magazines, like other minority magazines, are a special case of periodicals that—in the era of social media and the decline in the popularity of the print press— perform important, community functions.

Keywords: magazines for children and youth; “Mały Polonus”; Polish diaspora; Romania (Suceava); The Union of Poles in Romania

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Looking at the Mythic Roots of the Diaspora Narrative: Rewritings of Odysseus's Journey in Contemporary Italian Children's Literature

Narratives about the fate of wandering across the sea in the hope of reaching a land where one might feel at home, as well as those centred on the longing to return to one's native soil, retain within their latent imaginary the traces of a primitive, mythical tale and of a foundational matrix: the story of Odysseus's wanderings, the emblem par excellence of the errant traveller.

The paper presented aims to offer an analytical contribution to the persistence of this myth in contemporary children's literature. In particular, the focus will be directed toward a selection of children's books published in Italian in the latest quarter of this Century. The analysis will show not only the enduring strength of that mythical tale and the unaltered condition of its appeal, but also how its rewriting continues to represent a significant challenge for authors and illustrators of children's literature. Indeed, one of the most interesting aspects the analysis can highlight is how, within the Italian context, some of the most highly regarded writers and illustrators in the field—such as Roberto Piumini, Mino Milani, Andrea Molesini, Tommaso Percivale, and Lucia Scuderi—continue to engage with the task of rewriting Odysseus's journey for young readers.

The study will also seek to identify the various models of rewriting, taking into consideration both picturebooks and narrative fiction, with the aim of understanding which symbolic traits drawn from the wandering figure of Odysseus tend to assume predominant significance today: whether the hero, the castaway, the genius or the man of nostalgia. Finally, the paper will attempt to highlight the value that the rewriting of this myth shows in its contemporary versions within the realm of children's literature, particularly in terms of fostering an understanding of the dramas of migration and diaspora in our own time.

Keywords: Odysseus; Mediterranean Sea; myth; rewritings; Italian children's Literature

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Liminal Communities: Exile, Identity, and Belonging in the World(s) of Fantasy Fiction for Young Readers

Fantasy fiction offers a uniquely elastic narrative space for exploring exile, identity, and belonging. By unsettling the familiar and opening liminal zones where transformation becomes possible, fantasy allows characters to inhabit unstable territories between worlds, selves, and communities. Folk-horror intensifies this dynamic by foregrounding the haunting presence of place, memory, exposing tensions between inclusion and exclusion, home and displacement.

This paper examines three contemporary Greek fantasy novels for children and young adults: *The Girl with the Wooden Sword* by Spyros Giannakopoulos, *The Moon-Lowering* by Chrysostomos Tsaprailis (illustr. Kanellos Cob), *The Anderson Family* by Evlampia Tsireli (illustr. Alekos Papadatos). In these works, magical beings—water-women, elves, vampires—grapple with their place in the world and negotiate shifting forms of identity and belonging. Neil Gaiman’s *The Wolves in the Walls* (illustr. Dave McKean) enters into dialogue with Tsireli’s novel through the shared motif of “exile inside the house,” where walls become symbolic structures of both refuge and exclusion. Humor, central in both Gaiman and Giannakopoulos, reframes fear and otherness by transforming them into playful, subversive narrative energy.

The discussion is enriched by a parallel reading of Luke Pearson’s *Hilda and Twig, The Hidden People* (by Stephen Davies), where giants, elves, and other magical species form distinct cultural groups with their own rules, hierarchies, and territories. In these imaginative universes, magical communities operate as allegorical counterparts to real social categories and marginalized populations. Across all texts, the forest emerges as a recurring threshold space—an archetypal locus of the liminal—marking the boundary between the ordinary and the magical.

Taken together, these narratives portray exile not as a single rupture but as an ongoing, fluid process of identity formation. The study explores how fantasy and folk-horror environments function as allegorical liminal spaces that stage the emotional, cultural, and existential dynamics of displacement and belonging.

Keywords: fantasy fiction; folk horror; exile; liminality; identity formation

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Heartbeats: Echoing Edmondo De Amicis in today's books about migration in Italy

Since the 1990s, a growing number of books for children and young adults in Italy have offered readers stories about immigrants and refugees. These books seek to promote the reader's empathy for the protagonist, often in resistance to other media portrayals. Some authors incorporate references to older, familiar books in their stories to achieve this end. At least three books have embedded echoes of Edmondo De Amicis's canonical novel *Cuore* (Heart) (1886) in their accounts of contemporary child migrants. I analyze the effects of this intertextuality. Maria Attanasio's illustrated novel *Dall'Atlante agli Appennini* (From the Atlas Mountains to the Apennines, 2008) explicitly leverages *Cuore*, particularly its story "Dagli Appennini alle Ande" about young Marco's journey from Genoa to Argentina. Attanasio creatively connects contemporary immigration to Italy to the context of historical emigrations, providing readers with resources to reflect more deeply on migration. The echoes of De Amicis resound more subtly in *Click! Ragazzo in mare* (Click! Boy Overboard, 2010) by Daniela Morelli and in the picturebook *Volare sipuò* [You Can Fly, 2018] by Lisa Lardon and Erika Cunja. In these cases, elements from *Cuore* may not have been employed intentionally. Rather, De Amicis's narrative strategies toward representing the "other" reemerge as symptoms of deeply embedded rhetorical practices and cultural attitudes. *Click!*, like *Cuore*, uses the diary form to establish the white, middle class boy's perspective as the reader's lens, while "other" characters work as props for his development. *Volare sipuò*, in word and image, re-stages *Cuore*'s famous scene of the arrival of the Calabrian boy, a swarthy southern presence in the northern Italian classroom. Now, Ahmed takes on the role of the new arrival from afar, and the picturebook similarly, and problematically, depicts him as silent and grateful to promote its message of inclusion.

Keywords: Italy; Edmondo De Amicis; immigration; empathy; intertextuality

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Climate Migration in the Adolescent Novel: Ecological Trauma, Loss of Place and New Forms of Dispersion

This paper examines the theme of climate migration in contemporary children's and young adult novels, focusing on the literary representation of forced departure from one's place of origin due to ecological destruction or environmental collapse. At the core of the study is the notion of the child-refugee of climate change, a category that emerges strongly in international scholarship but often remains at the margins of critical analysis in children's and young adult literature. Representative novels are studied in which an ecologically destabilized world drives young protagonists into a continual condition of nomadism, loss, and the search for a new place. Through analysis of these works the paper explores: (a) how the ecological crisis operates as a narrative mechanism that sets the plot of flight in motion, (b) how collective and individual memory of loss is constructed through ecological trauma, and (c) how adolescent identity is reframed through negotiation with a changing, often non-familiar environment. The presentation draws on theoretical tools from ecocriticism, mobility theory, and contemporary approaches in environmental anthropology, proposing that young adult novels about climate exile function as "sensory spaces of learning." Through these texts, readers come to understand the consequences of the climate crisis, develop ecological awareness, and confront new forms of dispersion that shape the ways 21st-century children perceive the concepts of homeland, place, and belonging.

Keywords: climate migration; forced departure; ecological destruction; climate change; new form of diaspora

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Unfairy Tales: Digital Memory and Diasporic Belonging in Animated Refugee Narratives by Children

In the context of global displacement, children are increasingly represented as narrators of their own stories through digital media. This paper explores how the *Unfairy Tales* series—animated shorts by UNICEF based on real refugee children’s testimonies—constructs digital spaces of memory, identity, and belonging. Focusing on three short films, *Malak and the Boat*, *The Story of Ivine and Pillow*, and *Mustafa Goes for a Walk*, the study examines how digital storytelling gives voice to children’s lived experiences of migration, fear, and cultural dislocation.

Through rich visual symbolism, metaphor, and affect-laden narration, these stories foreground how children process the rupture of exile while maintaining emotional connections to their past. Ivine’s stuffed toy Pillow becomes a site of continuity and protection; Malak’s perspective aboard a sinking boat reveals both the terror of the crossing and the imaginative resilience of a child in motion. These narratives do not simplify trauma but render it legible through the language of childhood memory.

Drawing on diaspora theory (Hall, 2015; Said, 2000), intergenerational memory studies (Hirsch, 2012; Ulanowicz, 2013), and multimodal digital narrative frameworks (Hull & Nelson, 2005), the paper argues that *Unfairy Tales* functions as an ethically grounded form of digital storytelling where children are positioned not as passive victims, but as agents of memory and emotional literacy. These stories act as digital “hostlands,” enabling diasporic children to narrate and reimagine belonging across borders.

By centering children’s own perspectives in digital form, this paper contributes to scholarship on diaspora, children’s media, and emotional storytelling, showing how digital narratives can mediate complex experiences of migration through child-authored or child-centered lenses.

Keywords: digital storytelling; diasporic childhood; memory and belonging; multimodal narratives; emotional literacy

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"People Are Now Afraid of Explosions". About Polish Children's Books Dealing with the War in Ukraine

The aim of the paper is to present the ways in which Polish authors of children's books approach the subject of the war in Ukraine. The analysis will be based on four examples: *Teraz tu jest nasz dom* (This Is Our Home Now) by Barbara Gawryluk (2016), *Będę jak Patron* (I Will Be Like Patron) by Katarzyna Ryrych (2022), *Świat jest piękny. Książka przeciw wojnie* (The World Is Beautiful: A Book against War) by Justyna Bednarek et al. (2022), and *Podwójne święta* (Double Holidays) by Joanna Jagiełło (2022). The first is a literary reflection of the effects of the conflict in Donbas, while the other three were written after the outbreak of full-scale war. The comparison will take into account the selection of text and illustrations, including the motifs shown and the ways of talking about the war, as well as the methods of combining the verbal and visual layers. The comparison of the results will allow us to answer the questions of how the protagonists—Ukrainian refugees—work through their war trauma and how their identity is reconstructed in cooperation with their Polish hosts, who are open to the Other. This answer will be formulated from the perspective of Michel Foucault's (2005) concept of heterotopia and the findings of Aleksandra Sikora (2014), Katarzyna Kotaba (2015), Anna Józefowicz (2019) and Joanna Chłosta-Zielonka (2024). It will suggest how to talk to a child about war and refuge, and how the analysed literature can have a therapeutic function.

Keywords: children's literature; war in Ukraine; refuge; trauma; heterotopia; therapeutic function

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Tracing Greek Heritage in Ukrainian Diasporic Literature: From Aesop to Olympism

Greek cultural imagery has played a notable role in Ukrainian diasporic intellectual life. The myth of Antaeus, whose strength depended on his link to the earth, was reinterpreted to express a core belief: even when far from home, maintaining cultural roots sustains national identity (Kostiuk 2002; Shevelov 2009; Vardanian 2018). Yet this symbolic reference is only one dimension of how Greek heritage appeared in the cultural work of the diaspora. Greek antiquity also served as a practical educational tool used to support cultural continuity among young Ukrainians abroad.

Building on prior scholarship on cultural transmission and children's literature in the Ukrainian diaspora (Świetlicki 2023; Vardanian 2025), this paper offers a new perspective by examining how Greek antiquity became a strategic cultural resource in diaspora educational publishing. The analysis focuses on three interrelated perspectives.

First, fables and moral instruction: the Aesopian tradition, along with its Ukrainian adaptations, provided ethically authoritative and ideologically flexible narratives for cultivating virtue and social responsibility among young readers. Second, classical ideals and physical education: youth organizations such as Plast and the Ukrainian Youth Association (S.U.M.) integrated the ancient principle of *mens sana in corpore sano* into their training programs and used the idea of the Olympic Games to promote physical strength, discipline, and civic values. Olympic symbolism also functioned as a marker of national dignity and the ongoing struggle for sovereign representation on the international stage. Third, Greek heritage as a cultural code: educational readers and periodicals (e.g., *Soniashnyk*, *Veselka*) incorporated classical narratives to present Ukraine as a historically grounded European nation with a long cultural tradition.

Ultimately, the reception of Greek heritage in Ukrainian diasporic children's literature functioned as a deliberate strategy of cultural sovereignty—a pedagogical project aimed at sustaining Ukrainian identity, pride, and continuity across generations.

Keywords: Ukrainian diaspora; Greek heritage; children's literature; cultural transmission; Olympism

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The Book, the Ship and the Butterfly: Surviving in Diaspora with Abstract Picturebooks

In *Culture & Imperialism*, Said codifies the 'voyage in' as the movement and integration of 'Third World' thinkers into the metropolitan 'First World'. Said's humanist reappropriation of the journey motif suggests ways in which exiled intellectuals 'write back to the centre' (Rushdie, 1982) by migrating across a liminal space separating overdeveloped and developing cultures. Given that the diasporic is theorised as challenging the idea of whole, integral, traditionally unchanging cultural identities (Hall, 2017), this paper explores the ideas of 'voyage in' and 'voyage out' as the hybrid cultural work of anti-imperialism, resituating the struggle for decolonisation in abstract works of children's literature that cross the constraints of 'readability' or cultural normativity. Taking the motifs of journeys made by ship, book and butterfly across five picturebooks that all share the illustrative use of an abstract art aesthetic, we apply these decolonising principles—touching on Haraway's posthumanist exploration of the on-going migration of Monarch butterflies (2016)—as symbolic of both the exile of expatriation or voluntary journeying and repatriation, plus the right to migrate across borders, to take flight and settle momentarily, to voyage in and out.

Beginning with a 'Second World' picturebook—El Lissitzky's *A Tale of Two Squares* (1922)—which urges not reading but constructing, we go on to explore migratory tensions in more contemporary works such as Maro Katsika's *The Little Ship that Wanted to Travel to the End of the World* (2014), Christos and Chemin's *Les Livres* (2016), Argiro Pipini and Erifili Arapoglou's *If You Wish to Travel to the Moon* (2016) and Vangelis Iliopoulos and Stephen Livanos's *The Great Flight* (2019), not least from the relation of abstract art to exile, as an aesthetics of displacement. We will reflect with works that play on the idea of the child as 'foreigner' to the book, reading refusals such as construction or hide and seek in its pages contrasted with children's literature's tendency to colonise the child, mythologise nationalism and close down meaning. If books "*Il peuvent le transportes, t'emportertrés loin...*" [They can transport, carry you far away] what is that process of transportation or migration, for the child and the book? Is it one of exile, being momentarily 'out of place,' or Said and Haraway's 'surviving in diaspora'?

Keywords: abstract picturebooks; diaspora; exile; journey; ship; butterfly

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The Korean Diaspora After the War Featured in US Middle-grade Novels

In this presentation, we introduce the Korean diaspora portrayed in two U.S. middle-grade novels that inform children about the Korean War. Children's books are critical resources for introducing children to war and peace (Walter, 32) because they offer a vicarious experience of war, enabling them to reflect deeply on its effects on people's lives (Wee, 300).

Sylvester argued that traditional studies of war focus too much on states, armies, and strategy, thereby failing to discuss what war actually feels like for people. Therefore, studies on wars need to begin "from people" to understand how a war affects bodies, emotions, routines, and relationships (483). Drawing on Sylvester, we view that war is more than a political event that destroys people's ordinary lives and reshapes social connections.

In this study, we employed Johnson et al.'s critical content analysis of children's literature to examine people's lived experiences portrayed in two U.S. middle-grade novels, *Brother's Keeper* and *Finding Junie Kim*. The Korean diaspora described in these two children's literature resulted from the Korean War and is somewhat distinct. The difference may have come from the different genres of the novels. The Korean War has a reputation as a forgotten war in the U.S. despite many U.S. soldiers being killed, severely injured, and missing (Vergun, July 24, 2023; Zur 209). Through our study, we aim to examine how Korean people relate to one another to survive the suffering, fear, trauma, and changes resulting from the war, so that their stories won't be forgotten (Sylvester, 2012).

Keywords: The Korean War; a forgotten war; Korea; Korean diaspora; war refugee

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Nomadism and a Reindeer Herder Childhood: The Story of Elle Kari as Children's Book and Beyond

The 1951 Swedish children's book *Elle Kari* by Elly Jannes, featuring photographs by Anna Riwkin-Brick, shares everyday episodes in the life of 4-year-old Elle Kari from a nomadic Sámi reindeer herding family in the Swedish north. Having originated in a photo book by Jannes and Riwkin-Brick entitled *Nomads of the North* for adult readers, the book for children about Elle Kari was a great success, being translated into 18 languages and becoming the first in a 15-book series entitled *Children of the World*, which involved famous writers. Offering further evidence of its impact, it inspired a Swedish documentary about Elle Kari's own daughter and an Israeli documentary entitled "Where is Elle Kari and What Happened to Noriko-San?" which visits Elle Kari later in her life. Such materials can deepen the analysis of this depiction of a reindeer-herding childhood and help trace the movements of this story across space and time, cultures and memory. This paper will consider how nomadism figures in the story, as well as in its conception and realization, and how the story itself succeeds in traveling across cultures and audiences internationally. On the one hand, the nomadic and reindeer herding life displays a more intimate relationship with other animals, like reindeer and a dog, and with nature, seasons, and the elements. At the same time, however, Sámi life may be distorted, exoticized, or romanticized in the book in ways that disregard the impacts of settler colonialism on traditional Sámi practices, even as these get transmitted abroad. This paper will thus ask to what extent the book sensitively renders the life of a reindeer herder childhood and to what extent it suffers from its own limitations and the fact that it is written from an etic rather than emic perspective.

Keywords: nomadism; childhood; Sámi; photography; reindeer-herding

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Diasporic Writing and Indigenous Stories: Padraic Colum in Hawai'i

Padraic Colum (1881–1972) was born in Ireland and had a distinguished career as playwright, a poet, a folklorist, a collector of stories, and as a novelist. He left Ireland for America in 1914 and settled there as a member of the Irish diaspora, eventually becoming an American citizen. Inspired by stories he'd heard during his childhood in Ireland, Colum made a name for himself as a re-teller of myths and legends for children. His work had a significant influence on the development of children's literature in the United States and three of his books were cited, retroactively, as Newbery Honor Books.

In this paper, I draw on original archival research to explore the complications surrounding Colum's visit to Hawai'i in 1923, his subsequent publications on Hawaiian myths and legends, and his hybrid identity as an Irish American author. At the invitation of the Hawaiian Legend and Folklore Commission, Colum spent three months in Hawai'i researching the myths, legends, history, and folklore of the islands. This resulted in three volumes of 'Tales and Legends of Hawaii' for children, published by Yale University Press. Colum viewed his Irish identity—and experience of colonial oppression—as key to connecting with the people and stories of Hawai'i. However, as I've discovered, the Commission had hired him because of his status as a successful author within the realm of American children's literature. Arriving just over twenty years after the illegal annexation of Hawai'i by the US, Colum—through his rewriting of Hawaiian myths and legends—suddenly found himself complicit in a process of cultural imperialism; not everyone welcomed his visit. This paper explores the circumstances and controversies surrounding Colum's trip and his retellings, as well as the author's connections with figures such as WJ Coehlo, Martha Beckwith, Juliette May Fraser, Theodore Kelsey and others.

Keywords: Ireland; Hawai'i; diaspora; myth; imperialism

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Stitching the Self in Internal Exile: Disability, Gender, and Cultural Healing in Tang Sulan's *The Embroidered Tiger Boy*

This paper examines the interplay of disability, gender, culture and childhood in Tang Sulan's novel *The Embroidered Tiger Boy*, focusing on the protagonist Ziyi's journey from a body subjected to the gaze of others to a body shaped through self-creation. The analysis explores societal issues surrounding childhood disability, particularly how families, educational systems, and peer groups perpetrate subtle forms of discrimination that place disabled children in a marginal and often liminal position within their own communities. This exploration delves into the relationship between disabled and non-disabled children, with particular attention to how disabled children negotiate identity formation under conditions of social exclusion that may be understood as a form of internal displacement. The paper further elucidates the dual discrimination Ziyi faces as both a disabled and male child in rural China, where normative expectations of masculinity intensify his sense of non-belonging. An analysis of Xiang embroidery, a cultural medium frequently linked to "femininity" in global literary discourse, reveals its role in the novel as a conduit for cultural transmission and a therapeutic practice for disability. This craft functions as a restorative bridge that enables a symbolic reconstruction of belonging, allowing the protagonist to renegotiate identity across bodily and gendered boundaries. By foregrounding disability as an embodied experience of marginality and liminality, this paper demonstrates how Chinese children's literature employs gentle realism to reflect on social discrimination and cultural healing. It highlights the genre's potential to imagine inclusive forms of belonging and ethical coexistence, particularly for children whose bodies and identities are positioned at the margins of the social "home" and community.

Keywords: disability and childhood; gender and masculinity; liminality; cultural healing; Chinese children's literature

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Fragmented Visibility: The Visual Metonymy of Hands in Refugee Picturebooks

Over the past two decades, conceptual metonymy has attracted increasing attention as a fundamental cognitive mechanism shaping human understanding. One of its best-known variants is synecdoche, whereby a part stands for the whole (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), operating not only verbally but also visually and multimodally (Forceville, 2009). Studies on picturebooks have shown that visual metonymy, through partial character representation, foregrounds key aspects of characterization and plot development (Moya-Guijarro, 2019).

Nevertheless, the question remains: What happens when visual metonymy is not an occasional stylistic device, but a systematic strategy employed in every image of a picturebook? This paper examines children's picturebooks in which the experiences of refugees are represented exclusively through the visual metonymy of hands. Adopting a methodological approach that integrates cognitive metonymy (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) with social semiotics (Painter et al., 2013), the study examines how systematic visual fragmentation foregrounds agency and vulnerability in contexts of forced displacement and deportation.

Although the depiction of refugees in children's picturebooks is often framed as apolitical and humanitarian, emphasizing a merciful Europe that offers protection and care (Vassiloudi, 2019), the systematic use of the visual metonymy of hands, which withholds faces, foregrounds the exclusion of refugees from full humanization. In Levinasian terms, the absence of the "face"—understood not as a physical feature but as an ethical phenomenon that signifies the irreducible presence of the Other and confronts the self with an immediate ethical demand—signals how deported refugees are stripped of ethical recognition by becoming invisible to society (Levinas, 1969/1961). As regimes of power decide whose lives are protected and whose are abandoned, the visual erasure of refugees' faces renders their lives less visible, less "grievable" and therefore more "precarious" (Butler, 2004). In this context, the hand operates as a metonymic form of ethical address, exposing how refugee lives are rendered fragmented and only conditionally recognized as human within a European 'humanitarian' framework that extends care selectively.

Keywords: visual metonymy; picturebook; refugee; hand

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Polish Diaspora in Sweden Presented in Barbara Gawryluk's *Moje Bullerbyn* [My Bullerbyn]

My presentation aims to analyze the Polish diaspora in Sweden as depicted in the children's novel *Moje Bullerbyn* by Barbara Gawryluk (who is also a translator from Swedish). The narrator is the nine-year-old protagonist, Natalia, and the reality of Polish immigrants is seen through her eyes. My main research questions are: what stereotypes of both countries, the Polish and the Swedish, are presented in Gawryluk's book? What are the feelings of a child who has to live in a foreign country? What are the ways to overcome the feeling of foreignness/alienation?

In my research, I employ the method of imagology, which allows me to analyze "the cultural construction and literary representation of national characters" (Beller and Leerssen, 2007), "self and cultural other" (O'Sullivan, 2011). This approach, as O'Sullivan claims, "can contribute to the study of migration narratives in children's literature" (13). In this way, I want to indicate the differences that make living in the Polish diaspora in Sweden difficult, especially for children. In Gawryluk's book, one also finds the ways to overcome alienation: art and literature as a kind of cultural "bridge". The evolution of the little girl's attitude towards the unwanted situation of living in the diaspora is also shown and emphasized.

Keywords: diaspora; migrant child; stereotype; alienation; imagology

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