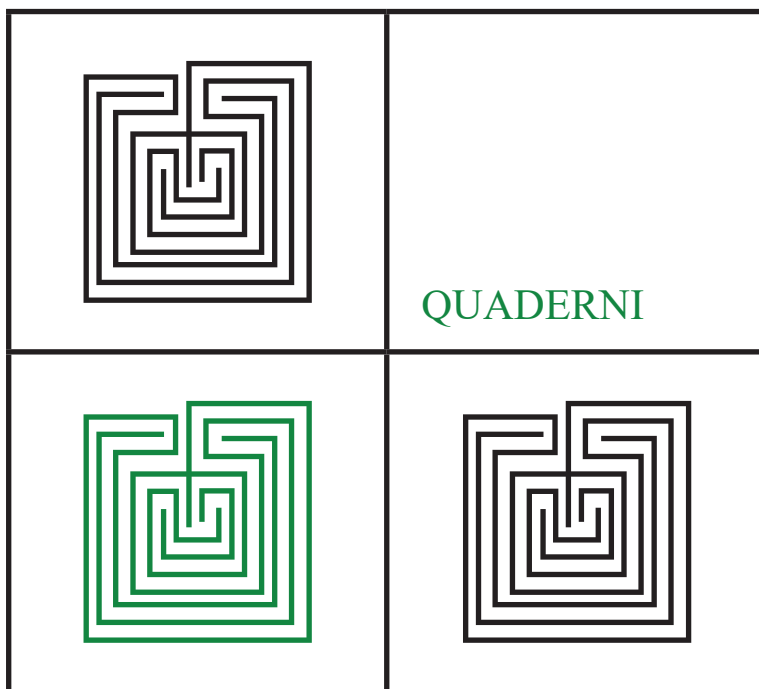

ADAPTATIONS OF STORIES
AND STORIES OF ADAPTATION

ADAPTATION(S) D'HISTOIRES
ET HISTOIRES D'ADAPTATION(S)

edited by / sous la direction de
Sabrina Francesconi / Gerardo Acerenza



LABIRINTTI 187

Università degli Studi di Trento
Dipartimento di Lettere e Filosofia

A collection of interdisciplinary essays by thirteen international scholars in Canadian studies, this volume explores adaptation process and practice from synchronic and diachronic perspectives. These contributions critically analyze linguistic and textual dynamics across genres (opera, poems, short stories, novels, TV series, films, picture books) adopting a broad range of methodological frameworks and tools. They examine the adaptation of stories alongside stories of adaptation, exposing many facets of complex issues such as identity, agency, culture, space, and time. Attention is also devoted to how different media (e.g. books, TV, digital devices) and modes (e.g. writing, music, images) affect the codification, transcoding, and decodification of Canadian narratives. The authors convincingly argue that, when stories move and change, they emotionally and cognitively engage and transform readers, listeners, spectators, audiences – all of us.

Ce volume collectif regroupe les articles de treize chercheurs internationaux en études canadiennes et québécoises qui tentent de cerner les différents enjeux et stratégies de l'adaptation. En s'appuyant sur des cadres théoriques divers et des méthodologies variées, les contributions analysent de manière critique les dynamiques de l'adaptation à travers les genres littéraires (poésie, nouvelle, roman), les médias (littérature, cinéma, série télévisée, musique) et les cultures. Les lecteurs sont ainsi invités à découvrir d'un côté des adaptations d'histoires et de l'autre des histoires d'adaptations. Les auteurs soulèvent plusieurs questions liées à la pratique de l'adaptation, puisque à partir du moment où des histoires sont adaptées, elles voyagent à travers les pays et les langues, elles changent de médias et peuvent mobiliser des émotions différentes chez les lecteurs, les auditeurs ou les spectateurs d'une autre culture.

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ADAPTATION OF STORIES
AND STORIES OF ADAPTATION:
MEDIA, MODES AND CODES

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CODES LINGUISTIQUES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

<i>Canadian Studies in Italy</i> (ORIANA PALUSCI)	VII
<i>Introduction</i> (SABRINA FRANCESCONI, GERARDO ACERENZA)	XIII
LINDA HUTCHEON, MICHAEL HUTCHEON, Adapting His/Story: Louis Riel in History, Drama, Opera, and Staging(s)	3
HÉLIANE VENTURA, The Lens and the Boat: Accommo- dating Objects in <i>The Love of a Good Woman</i> by Alice Munro	21
CORINNE BIGOT, Alice Munro's <i>A Wilderness Station</i> and Anne Wheeler's <i>Edge of Madness</i> : Filling in the Blanks	37
SABRINA FRANCESCONI, Transparent Tricks: Looking in the Mirrors of Screen Adaptations	57
MARINA ZITO, «Une payse dépaysée»: réflexions sur <i>Poèmes des quatre côtés</i> de Jacques Brault	83
YLENIA DE LUCA, <i>Comment faire l'amour avec un Nègre</i> <i>sans se fatiguer</i> de Dany Laferrière: entre succès litté- raire et échec cinématographique	107
GERARDO ACERENZA, <i>La grande séduction / Un village</i> <i>presque parfait / Un paese quasi perfetto</i> : adaptations intersémiotiques et transculturation	123
CHIARA FEDDECK, «Don't You Forget About Me»: The Use of Music in <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> TV Series	141
FEDERICO PIO GENTILE, Rebooting Montreal in English: The 19-2 Case Study	161

ANNA MONGIBELLO, New Discourses of Canadianness in <i>Anne with an E</i>	185
ANGELA BUONO, <i>Agagak</i> , le roman et le film: un double cas d'adaptation transculturelle	219
KATARZYNA WÓJCIK, Le rôle identitaire de l'adaptation filmique dans le cinéma québécois	231
LYNN MASTELLOTTO, Engaging Young Learners' Multili- teracies through Picture Books and Multimodal Story- telling	251
<i>Authors / Auteurs</i>	275

ENGAGING YOUNG LEARNERS' MULTILITERACIES
THROUGH PICTURE BOOKS
AND MULTIMODAL STORYTELLING

Lynn Mastellotto

Free University of Bolzano

Introduction

In her influential work, *A Theory of Adaptation*, Linda Hutcheon examines the concept of adaptation as both «a product and a process of creation and reception»,¹ revealing how the different media and genres that stories are transcoded to and from are not just formal entities, but also represent various ways of engaging audiences. She distinguishes three main modes of engagement with stories: being told a story (e.g. through novels, short stories); being shown a story (e.g. through performance media); and interacting with a story physically and kinesthetically (e.g. through videogames or theme park rides).

Drawing on Hutcheon's conceptualization of how we engage with stories, children's picture books and classroom storytelling practices can be seen to potentially combine all three modes by immersing children in story worlds through «transmedia storytelling».² By reading stories and hearing stories read aloud, seeing stories performed through animated readings, dramatiza-

¹ L. Hutcheon with S. O'Flynn, *A Theory of Adaptation* (2nd edition), Routledge, New York-London 2012, p. XIV.

² *Ibidem*, p. XXIII.

tions, roleplays, and film adaptations, and interacting with stories through tactile engagement with picture books and related cultural artefacts such as masks, puppets, lapbooks, and props, children participate in storytelling in all three modes. Multimodal approaches to storytelling offer rich opportunities for communication and meaning-making activities with young learners through multi-sensory input that activates their learning on multiple levels, as we shall see below.

The article begins with an examination of how stories, in general, are an effective teaching-learning tool that make use of different modes of communication³ to develop children's multiple literacies, from functional literacy to visual literacy to cognition and metacognition, as well as their social, emotional and intercultural competences. Then, through an analysis of Canadian author Maxine Trottier's picture book *Migrant*, the article unpacks specific modes of engagement, showing how stories are selected and adapted for pedagogical purposes in order to immerse young learners in compelling story worlds or «heterocosms»⁴ that are both accessible and instructional.

Language and literacies through stories

As a rich source of high-quality language input, children's stories lend themselves to language and literacy work with young learners. They gain language exposure in a rich, authentic and meaningful context, first through the sounds of the language, then gradually through the recognition of words as their literacy de-

³ G. Kress defines mode as a «socially shaped and culturally given resource for making meaning. *Image, writing, layout, music, gesture, speech, moving image, soundtrack* are examples of modes used in representation and communication». See *What is Mode?*, in C. Jewitt (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Multimodal Analysis*, Routledge, Abingdon 2009, p. 54.

⁴ L. Hutcheon with S. O'Flynn, *A Theory of Adaptation*, p. XXIV.

velops.⁵ The images and peritextual features offer scaffolding to help unlock the meaning of the text in early literacy. Story books stimulate learners' emotions and inspire their creativity while activating their prior knowledge about how language works (metalinguistic awareness) as well as their prior knowledge about the world (metaphysical awareness).

Wright also suggests that authentic stories are highly motivating and rich in language experience, allowing learners to develop a «reservoir of language»⁶ as vocabulary and sentence constructions are introduced first through receptive learning. Reading aloud stimulates children's listening and reading fluency as they search for textual meaning and predict outcomes of stories. Listening to and telling stories helps them learn the rhythm, intonation, prosody and pronunciation since stories present the language through repetition and rhyme, which are predictable and memorable, thus facilitating language acquisition and retention through pattern practice.⁷ Speaking and writing fluency develop gradually as children build up knowledge of lexis and grammar, moving the acquired language into their productive control through an input-intake-output cycle wherein language exposure leads to language emergence. Story-based activities for lexis and grammar development alongside reading and writing activities enable all learners, including second-language learners, to acquire productive control of the target language.

⁵ I.-K. Ghosn notes that exposure to «rich, natural language typical of quality children's literature will facilitate the procedural memory's processing of the correct structures to the cerebellum» (see I.-K. Ghosn, *Storybridge to Second Language Literacy: The Theory, Research, and Practice of Teaching English with Children's Literature*, IAP, Charlotte NC 2013, p. 134), claiming that conventional ELT course books, by contrast, often present discourse in de-contextualized and artificial situations, thus «minimizing opportunities for meaningful learner engagement and cognitive development» (*ibidem*, p. XVII).

⁶ A. Wright, *Storytelling with Children*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2001, p. 5.

⁷ See L. Mastello, G. Burton, *Storytelling*, in L. Dozza (ed.), *Maestra Natura. Per una pedagogia esperienziale e co-partecipata*, Zeroseiup, Bergamo 2018.

Gail Ellis suggests that using picture books also helps children develop key transversal competences. Her research on «learning literacy» (learning how to learn) demonstrates that cognitive and metacognitive skills are supported by picture books, including wordless picture books, since they ignite curiosity and nurture «an inquisitive mindset».⁸ Metacognitive strategies encourage children to reflect on their learning in order to plan, monitor and evaluate how they learn, enabling them to develop an awareness and understanding of their own learning processes, preferences, and learner autonomy. Cognitive strategies are more task-specific and involve children using the language and their learning materials for specific purposes, including information retrieval, sorting, classifying, hypothesizing, predicting, sequencing, and summarizing.⁹ Both cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies can be embedded in book-based approaches and storytelling activities in the language arts classroom.

As Ellis further notes, written-linguistic modes of communication interface with oral, visual, audio, gestural, tactile and spatial patterns of meaning as teachers make use of multimodal resources for teaching and learning in the classroom; consequently, children must be able to decode information from many sources, reflect on it and discuss their learning.¹⁰ Janice Bland claims that through their *multi-layered* (i.e. readable in different ways at different levels of linguistic sophistication and cognitive maturity) and *multi-modal* (i.e. combining written text, visual images and graphic elements) dimensions, children's stories encourage engaged analysis on many levels.¹¹ This complexity helps foster children's multi-literacies, that is, not only their functional literacy (the ability to read and write) but the many different literacies – visual literacy,

⁸ G. Ellis, *Promoting 'Learning Literacy' through Picturebooks: Learning How to Learn*, «Children's Literature in English Language Education», 4/2 (2016), p. 30.

⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 31-32.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 28.

¹¹ See J. Bland, *Introduction*, in J. Bland, C. Lütge (eds.), *Children's Literature in Second Language Education*, Bloomsbury Academic, London 2014, p. 2.

emotional literacy, cultural literacy and digital literacy – needed to interpret and decode information today.

The term «multiple literacies» embraces the notion that knowledge is constructed through many sources and modes that extend beyond language itself, and children must become literate in all of these. A multi-literacies pedagogy is thus underpinned by multimodal theory which recognizes that children create meaning using a «multiplicity of modes, means and materials»¹² for self-expression. Immersive and participatory story worlds encountered through diverse media enable children to receive, reproduce and produce new stories. Kress notes that children move easily between and across modes, semiotically recycling information in creative and transformative ways according to their interests. The ability to express their thoughts, to be understood, and in so doing to act upon their culture is, according to Kress, an essential part of the child's development of a sense of agency and voice.¹³

Social, emotional and intercultural learning through stories

Listening to stories in class is a social experience and allows children to share emotions as a group and forge a deep connection with others. Roney notes that the «co-creative and interactive»¹⁴ dimension of sharing stories makes storytelling a powerful tool for social learning in childhood. Discussing stories allows children to express a range of emotions and understand their sources. Stories link fantasy or imaginative worlds with children's real worlds, helping them make sense of their everyday lives. Stories also help children situate themselves in the world and identify ever-widening circles of belonging – home, school, community.

¹² G. Kress, *Before Writing: Rethinking the Paths to Literacy*, Taylor & Francis, London 1997, p. 97.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ R.C. Roney, *Storytelling in the Classroom: Some Theoretical Thoughts*, «Storytelling World», 9 (1996), p. 7.

Storytelling also offers a dynamic, multi-sensory way to familiarize young learners with the rich tradition of children's literature in English by considering various narrative genres (fairy tales, folktales, myths, legends, fables) as well as informal narratives, and by examining how stories circulate in every culture as a means of entertainment, cultural preservation and moral education. By analyzing the structural elements of stories (characters, plot, setting, narrative point of view), children learn how narrative technique is used in making meaning. Narrative literacy, the ability to «read between the lines» of a story and understand its subtext and context, is a vital complement to functional literacy, the ability to read and write. It relies on an understanding of the pragmatic function of language, which generally evolves from ages 6 to 10 years. The ways in which new forms of media are enhancing our ability to record, express, consume and share stories make an understanding of narrative a key component of the primary curriculum.

Narrative literacy is key to cultivating cultural understanding. Stories reflect cultural information (values, customs) which helps children understand their own and different realities and construct an identity. Bruno Bettelheim¹⁵ and other scholars who research identity formation point to the value of stories not only in reflecting identities, but also in helping shape them.¹⁶ Since stories transmit cultural information, they are ways for children to understand what makes them the same as or different from others encountered in storyworlds. Narratives and story-

¹⁵ See B. Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment. The Meaning and Importance of Fairytales*, Vintage Books, New York 1989.

¹⁶ See also: J. Bennett, *The Enchantment of Modern Life*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 2001; A. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Polity Press, Cambridge 1991; A. Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1998; M.C. Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature*, Oxford University Press, New York 1990; C. Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1989.

telling are, in fact, part of a «hidden curriculum» in primary education since they nurture children's psychosocial and emotional development through the transmission of values related to self-definition, empathy for and connection with others, intercultural awareness, and respect for diversity.¹⁷ Martha Nussbaum signals the ethical force of stories which help to cultivate a «narrative imagination»: through imaginary encounters with difference, readers can develop an ethical orientation by thinking about «what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story, and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires that someone so placed might have».¹⁸

The imaginary encounters which take place through the telling and receiving of stories facilitate an engagement with other perspectives from the horizon of one's own positions and experiences, making self-awareness and critical distance an integral part of self-other narrative encounters. Edward Said reminds us that identities are dialogically constructed through difference: one defines oneself based on the recognition of what one is not in relation to others; thus «the Other» acts as «a source and resource for a better, more critical understanding of the Self».¹⁹

Perspective-taking tasks through reading and imaginary encounters with others can help develop empathy by enabling readers to project themselves into a character, to see the world through different eyes, and vicariously experience a spectrum of emotions. Goleman claims that «fundamental ethical stances in

¹⁷ A hidden curriculum refers to the unspoken or implicit values, behaviours, procedures, and norms that exist in an educational setting. While such expectations are not explicitly written, 'hidden curriculum' is the unstated promotion and enforcement of certain behavioural patterns, professional standards, and social beliefs while navigating a learning environment. See J.P. Miller, W. Seller, *Curriculum: Perspectives and Practice*, Copp Clark Pitman, Toronto 1990.

¹⁸ M.C. Nussbaum, *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 2010, pp. 95-96.

¹⁹ W.E. Said, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, Columbia University Press, New York 2004, p. XI.

life stem from underlying emotional capacities» which constitute what he calls «emotional intelligence».²⁰ These capacities, as defined by Mayer *et al.*, include emotional perception (ability to identify emotions), emotional understanding (knowledge about emotions through experience or through empathy), emotional facilitation (ability to relate one's feelings and state of mind to emotions) and emotional management (ability to choose appropriate responses to emotions). By enabling children to explore their emotions at many levels, stories can help them develop all these capacities.²¹

Recent studies in psychology and behavioural science point to the value of indirect contact with diverse outgroups (immigrants, homosexuals, refugees) in educational settings as a strategy to reduce prejudice and lead to improved intergroup attitudes. Vezzali *et al.*'s²² research with adolescents shows that indirect contact through book reading on intercultural topics can help foster an open mindset and more flexibility in perspective-taking: those who read a book with an intercultural theme showed a reduction in stereotyping, improved intergroup attitudes and intentions, and a willingness to engage in future contact with immigrants.²³ Furthermore, the effects of indirect contact were mediated by an increased inclusion of the other in conceptualizations of the self.²⁴

²⁰ D. Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence*, Bantam Books, New York 1995, p. XII.

²¹ For a further analysis of literature and the development of emotional intelligence, see: B. Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*; I.-K. Ghosn, *Story-bridge to Second Language Literacy*; D. Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence*; J. Mayer, D. Caruso, P. Salovey, *Emotional Intelligence Meets Standards for a Traditional Intelligence*, «Intelligence», 27 (1999), pp. 267-298.

²² See L. Vezzali, S. Stathi, D. Giovannini, *Indirect Contact through Book Reading: Improving Adolescents' Attitudes and Behavioural Intentions towards Immigrants*, «Psychology in the Schools», 49/2 (2012), pp. 148-162, and L. Vezzali *et al.*, *The Greatest Magic of Harry Potter: Reducing Prejudice*, «Journal of Applied Social Psychology», 45 (2015), pp. 105-121.

²³ L. Vezzali *et al.*, *The Greatest Magic of Harry Potter*, p. 148.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 158.

In this way, storybooks and storytelling practices can help teachers and pupils navigate the multilingual and multicultural dynamics of today's classrooms that are increasingly defined by diversity, offering strategies to ensure that each person has a voice, is recognized, and feels a sense of belonging.²⁵ A guided analysis of how identity and inclusion are represented in storybooks can provide a gateway for teachers to discuss racial, gender, ethnic and social diversity with children, as we shall see below. In the section that follows, I refer to a recent storybook by the Canadian author Maxine Trottier which offers rich opportunities for work on multiliteracies with young learners through a story that engages them in various modes, guiding their discovery and learning about difference through being told, being shown and interacting with the selected text and its peritextual features.

Diversity in Migrant

Maxine Trottier's picture book *Migrant*,²⁶ illustrated by Isabelle Arsenault, addresses the theme of diversity in a direct way in seeking to raise social awareness about a marginalized group of Mexican migrants who work as seasonal farm labourers in Canada. It is a «social conscience book» in Amina Chaudhri's sense of a book that explicitly presents the problem of racial, ethnic or class invisibility, or of a character's struggle with marginalization from mainstream society.²⁷ *Migrant* is told from the perspective of Anna, the child protagonist and narrator, who describes her family's seasonal migration, their work picking fruit in the fields, and their lives lived on the edges of society.

²⁵ See L. Mastellotto, *Developing Young Learners' Multiliteracies through Multimodal Storytelling*, in S. Bratož, A. Kocbek, A. Pririh (eds.), *Pathways to Plurilingual Education*, University of Primorska Press, Koper 2020, pp. 253-267.

²⁶ M. Trottier, *Migrant*, Groundwood Books, Toronto 2011.

²⁷ A. Chaudhri, *Multiracial Identity in Children's Literature*, Routledge, New York-London 2017, p. IX.

In an afterword to the story, Trottier introduces specific historical details contextualizing the real lives of these migrants, descendants from a group of Mennonites who migrated to Canada in the early 1900s then moved to Mexico in the 1920s hoping to become landowners there while finding religious freedom through withdrawal from the modern world. These dreams were, however, never realized due to economic hardships in Mexico and, having held onto their Canadian citizenship from the first stage of their migration, the Mennonites were able to find seasonal work as fruit and vegetable pickers on Canadian farms, returning to their homes in Mexico after the annual harvest.

As a group, the Mennonites are highly visible – standing out by virtue of their old-fashioned style of dress and their Low German dialect or *Plautdietsch* – yet simultaneously invisible, living on the margins of a rural community in Southwestern Ontario. Inspired by the author's encounters with the Mennonites from Mexico through summers spent in Leamington, Ontario, the book is an adaptation of historical events through an imaginative re-telling of the migrant story, pondering what it might be like to be a child in a migrant family. As the protagonist Anna wonders: «What would it be like to stay in one place – to have your own bed, to ride your own bicycle? [...] Now that would be something», readers can measure the distance between themselves and Anna through these everyday objects, which for her are only aspirational. Her opening question presents a hypothetical musing, a «what if», that is sadly thwarted by the intervening pages of the story which provide glimpses into the precarious conditions of her life. The book does not offer false hope that her situation will change; the final double-page spread gently confirms this: «But fall is here, and the geese are flying away. And with them goes Anna, like a monarch, like a robin, like a feather in the wind».

Trottier's rhythmic narrative is ripe with metaphor as Anna's reality is interpreted through her imaginative associations: she sees herself alternately as a butterfly, a bird, a rabbit and a feather; too young to work herself, she sees her family «like a hive

of worker bees». This poetic language offers an opportunity for readers to explore what Lazar calls the «literary metalanguage» of stories through the use of metaphor, simile, personification, paradox, and alliteration.²⁸ Metaphoric language is the language of approximation, and through Anna's use of metaphor, Trottier seeks to render her displacement in terms that are more recognizable and more readily grasped by young readers.

Arsenault's illustration of a solid tree with an empty swing on one page, with Anna depicted among the caravan of departing migrants on the facing page, makes it clear that rootedness to place is not part of her story. As the reader follows Anna's head tilted upwards, her gaze fixed on a flock of birds flying away in V-formation, the final image leaves little doubt about the rootlessness of her situation and the inevitable repetition of the seasonal migration cycle for her. Young readers identify with Anna as they too are small people in a world full of adults and feel, at times, powerless. These images are a vital component of Trottier's tale, providing details about the main character and her world, details that render the storyscape more realistic and believable and, consequently, more likely to rouse readers' identification and empathy. As noted by Krashen and Bland,²⁹ empathizing with characters in compelling stories is important for initiating young readers to the pleasure of literature.

Other juxtapositions of imagery and text subtly suggest Anna's social isolation and economic hardship. We see her looking over at a local boy, dressed in modern clothes and a cap, being pulled away on the street by a parent, ostensibly to prevent contact with the Mennonite girl. The image supports the text's articulation of Anna's discomfort: «When they shop for food at the cheap store, Anna is shy because people often stare». Similarly, when Anna

²⁸ G. Lazar, *Literature and Language Teaching: A Guide for Teachers and Trainers*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1993, p. 43.

²⁹ S. Krashen, J. Bland, *Compelling Comprehensible Input*, *Academic Language and School Libraries*, «Children's Literature in English Language Education Journal», 2/2 (2014), p. 8.

describes her brothers «burrowing together like puppies» in their single bed under a single, worn blanket, a blanket too small to cover them all, the reader appreciates the scarcity of resources available to Anna's family. The illustrations are always tender and wistful, here depicting a joyous ruckus of playful puppies, but the text reveals a more sober truth than may be apparent in the images at first glance.

As Bland reminds us, multimodal texts contribute to narrative meaning through multiple modes – including pictures, words, design, and peritext – but these «do not reiterate identical messages in each mode» since the messages can «overlap, complement, amplify or contradict each other», thus telling stories «from differing perspectives».³⁰ Understanding how meaning is created in stories through the intersemiosis of verbal and visual elements is key to developing narrative literacy. Bland³¹ notes that authentic picture books are powerful in early learning since the pictures transform into dynamic mental images that remain in the young reader's repertoire of experience, anchoring ideas, concepts and feelings along with new language. She states: «The sensory anchoring supplied through the pictures in children's literature constitutes one of the most supportive features for comprehension of the text: the illustrations simplify the understanding of the verbal text both for L1 and L2 readers».³² Ellis and Brewster³³ also note that using authentic storybooks can be motivating for second-language learners and can provide a greater sense of achievement than conventional ELT materials.

Yet, the rich language of Trottier's story could present obstacles for second-language speakers since expressions like «burrowing», «rolling off their tongues as sweetly as sugar», «of

³⁰ J. Bland, *Pictures, Images and Deep Reading*, «Children's Literature in English Language Education Journal», 3/2 (2015), p. 25.

³¹ See *ibidem*.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 25.

³³ G. Ellis, J. Brewster, *Tell it Again! The Storytelling Handbook for Primary English Language Teachers*, British Council, London 2014, p. 14.

yet another», «words as spicy as the hottest chilis», «the rooms filled with the ghosts of last year's workers», «slow and rich as dark molasses» are beyond the minimal language of L2 learners in the 6-10 age range. Mastellotto and Burton³⁴ suggest that language difficulties associated with using authentic storybooks that provide input beyond the minimal language of young learners can be overcome by fully exploiting illustrations as visual support and by using dialogic readings with scaffolded gestures and prosody to aid comprehension. Arsenault's images can help provide effective disambiguation if teachers draw children's attention to the emotional cues suggested in her depictions of characters and place.

The illustrations in *Migrant* help contextualize Anna's situation as the story unfolds, making the linguistic input more readily comprehensible. The images not only reinforce the story's message by offering visual scaffolding to support textual meaning, but also force a reconsideration of readers' preconceptions, most notably regarding «home». Arsenault's illustrations challenge the reader by presenting glimpses into Anna's life that are not quite what they seem at first glance, thereby subverting readerly expectations. An image of Anna sitting at the kitchen table wearing fluffy rabbit ears, for example, seems initially to suggest that she, like all children, enjoys wearing costumes and playing dress up; however, the text contradicts such a conventional reading, forcing the reader to look again: «There are moments when she [Anna] feels like a rabbit. Not the sort with the white fluff of tail, but a jack rabbit. Those rabbits live in abandoned burrows, her father has told her». Looking more closely, the image is not of a fluffy cottontail but of a tough and sinewy hare. With intertextual echoes of Alice in Wonderland following a white rabbit into a surreal world, Trottier's protagonist navigates a world that is surreal to most young readers whose realities may be distant from such a peripatetic lifestyle.

³⁴ See L. Mastellotto, G. Burton, *Storytelling*.

On another page, we see a mother washing dishes in the kitchen as a rabbit hops out the window; the image is accompanied by the following lines of text: «When her mother works hard to make a home of yet another empty farmhouse, the rooms filled with the ghosts of last year's workers, Anna feels like a jack rabbit». The text provides a filter to accurately interpret the domestic scene; this is not an idyll of 'home sweet home', as underlined by Anna's association with a jack rabbit escaping through an open window. Similarly, the figure of the mother is bent over a sink, suggesting domestic labour that does not idealize homemaking. This portrayal of parental disempowerment is unexpected and disturbing since young readers are invited to see the all-powerful parental figure here subjected to social and economic forces beyond her control.

The combination of text and image to create a layering of messages is suitable for capturing the conflicting feelings – optimism, longing, isolation, togetherness, frustration – of the immigrant experience. At times, the word-image juxtaposition lacks correspondence, what Barthes terms «relay»,³⁵ whereas at other times these elements correspond in an instance of «elaboration». Word-image interactions can change in the course of one picture book, creating different types of textual-visual interanimations across a book. A thorough intermodal analysis of *Migrant* would require a detailed and systematic description of how each image coheres with the verbal text accompanying it, which is beyond the scope of this article. However, teachers considering using this picture book with young learners ought to pay attention to symmetries and asymmetries in the intermodal messages conveyed. Moya-Guijarro³⁶ explains that concurrence between image and text requires less inference since the intermodal input has a «sym-

³⁵ R. Barthes, *Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives: Image-Music-Text*, Fontana, London 1977.

³⁶ See A.J. Moya-Guijarro, *A Multimodal Analysis of Picture Books for Children: A Systemic Functional Approach*, Equinox, Sheffield 2014.

metrical relationship», which in turns lightens the cognitive load of the reader. In several instances in *Migrant*, however, the verbiage and image do not fully concur, making scaffolding necessary to help support young readers' understanding of the story.

Overall, Trottier's picture book lends itself to rich language and literacy work with children, first through verbal and non-verbal warm-ups, then dialogic readings – pausing for clarification, sign-posting key actions and events, drawing attention to the images and graphic elements of the book. In the post-reading phase, the story can be revisited through dramatized storytelling which draws on different media (music, rhyme, raps, masks, puppets, scenery, mini-books, props) to enhance storytelling and re-telling. Empathy building through perspective-taking tasks in the classroom might involve having children adopt a character's perspective in post-reading activities, such as a writing a journal entry from Anna's point of view or engaging in a roleplay based on characters and settings, for instance an imagined encounter between Anna and the little boy outside the supermarket. Extended interactive activities might include inviting children to imagine what they would bring with them on an uncertain journey, using Anna's little suitcase from the story as an object of realia in class; naming each object placed in the suitcase presents an opportunity to recycle related lexis from the text. These types of activities stimulate children's physical interaction with the story, albeit in a different way than through gamification and digital media as described by Hutcheon.

By adapting the real story of Mennonite migrants from Mexico to a fictional narrative presented in a children's picture book, Trottier hopes to draw wider attention to the precarious working conditions of migrants, their living conditions in shabby homes with high rents, and to the dreams and aspirations of children like Anna who imagine a more stable life. In Nussbaum's words, the story seeks to put the reader «in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story, and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires that

someone so placed might have».³⁷ Trottier's book clearly serves an explicitly didactic purpose of educating young readers (and the adults who read with them) about those who live at the margins of society.

Conclusion

Drawing on Bruner's³⁸ understanding of the key role narrative plays in the construction of meaning, it is widely acknowledged that stories function as a powerful tool to pass on knowledge and values in a social context. Recent studies in psychology and cognitive science show that the human brain is predisposed to understand, remember and tell stories: humans think in, remember facts according to, and shape their personal and group identities along narrative structures.³⁹ Philosophers such as Alasdair McIntyre⁴⁰ suggest that storytelling is so central to human nature that *Homo sapiens*, the thinking person, could more aptly be called *Homo narrans*, the storytelling person, given our propensity to organize and interpret the world in terms of narrative plots that shape our lives. Stories and storytelling thus occupy a privileged status in human cognition and cultural expression, offering a power-

³⁷ M.C. Nussbaum, *Not for Profit*, pp. 95-96.

³⁸ See J. Bruner, *The Narrative Construction of Reality*, «Critical Inquiry», 18/1 (1991), pp. 1-21, and J. Bruner, *The Culture of Education*, Harvard University Press, Boston 1997.

³⁹ See, for example: J. Bruner, *The Narrative Construction of Reality*; A.C. Graesser, V. Ottati, *Why Stories? Some Evidence, Questions, and Challenges*, in R.S. Wyer (ed.), *Knowledge and Memory: The Real Story*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale 1995, pp. 121-132; M. Glaser, B. Garsoffky, S. Schwan, *Narrative-Based Learning: Possible Benefits and Problems*, «Communications - European Journal of Communication Research», 34/4 (2009), pp. 429-447; D.C. Rubin, *Memory in Oral Traditions: The Cognitive Psychology of Epic, Ballads, and Counting-out-Rhymes*, Oxford University Press, New York 1995; R.C. Schank, R. Abelson, *Knowledge and Memory: The Real Story*, in R.S. Wyer (ed.), *Knowledge and Memory: The Real Story*, pp. 1-86.

⁴⁰ A. McIntyre, *After Virtue*, Bloomsbury Academic, London 1981, p. 216.

ful pedagogical tool when harnessed in early learning. Learning theorists and educators point to the benefits of using stories as a strategy for designing meaningful and anchored learning experiences for young learners.⁴¹

In terms of educating children for inclusion, stories can be a powerful pedagogical tool for navigating issues of identity and inclusion in the primary classroom. This, however, requires books that present diversity in affirming contexts and that elicit intercultural reflection and discussion. A recent report on ethnic representation in children's literature issued by the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) and funded by the Arts Council England grimly found that only 1% of British children's books featured a main character who was black or minority ethnic (BAME) compared to the 32.1% of schoolchildren of minority ethnic origins in England identified by the Department of Education in 2017.⁴²

A longstanding study on diversity in American children's literature carried out by the Cooperative Children's Book Centre (CCBC) at the Faculty of Education, University of Madison-Wisconsin, similarly seeks to document the number of books received annually that are by and about people of colour and from First/Native Nations. The 2017 statistics on multicultural representation are somewhat better: of the approximately 3,700 books received in 2017, mostly from US publishers, 9% (340 books) had significant African or African American content/characters;

⁴¹ See, for example: S. Järvelä, K.A. Renninger, *Designing for Learning: Interest, Motivation, and Engagement*, in K. Sawyer (ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of the Learning Sciences* (2nd edition), Cambridge University Press, New York 2014, pp. 668-685; M. Glaser, B. Garsoffky, S. Schwan, *Narrative-Based Learning*; R.E. Mayer, *Applying the Science of Learning*, Pearson-Allyn & Bacon, Boston 2011.

⁴² The CLPE study (2018) administered a survey to UK publishers in which they were asked to identify books featuring BAME (Black, Asian, minority ethnic) characters. CLPE found that a total of just 391 (4%) of the 9115 children's books published in 2017 had BAME characters and that only 1% had a BAME main character.

2% (72 books) had significant American Indian/First Nations content/characters; 8% (310 books) had significant Asian/Pacific or Asian/Pacific American content/characters; 6% (216 books) had significant Latinx content/characters.⁴³

By signalling an overall dearth of multicultural representation in contemporary children's literature, the UK and US studies raise important questions about the impact of cultural invisibility on children's psychosocial development: what happens when children fail to see themselves and their realities reflected in the books they read? Rudine Sims Bishop⁴⁴ warns that the effects of cultural marginalization or erasure can be debilitating since picture books function as *windows* that offer views on different realities, *mirrors* which reflect the reader's own reality, and *sliding glass doors* which act as thresholds between storyworlds and real worlds.

Bishop further states: «When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when images they see are distorted, negative or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part».⁴⁵ Bland argues that those who are misrepresented, marginalized, hidden or absent from texts must be made visible through an inclusive pedagogy in language education: teachers must be aware of ideological issues underpinning cultural representation and misrepresentation/erasure in children's literature and carefully select texts that metonymically represent a full spectrum of diversity.⁴⁶

⁴³ For a summary of the 2017 CCBC findings, please see: <http://ccbblogc.blogspot.com/2018/02/ccbc-2017-multicultural-statistics.html>. For information on CCBC's expanded analysis of diversity that looks at other dimensions of representation, including gender, religion, (dis)ability, and LGBTQ, see findings reported at the previous link.

⁴⁴ R.S. Bishop, *Mirrors, Windows and Sliding Glass Doors*, «Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom», 6/3 (1990), p. IX.

⁴⁵ J. Bland, *Picturebooks and Diversity*, «Children's Literature in English Language Education Journal», 4/2 (2016), p. 44.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 43.

Trottier's picture book reflects diversity in an authentic context through a compelling story that can move young readers to be open, flexible, and kind toward others. More research is needed to map out the ways in which Canadian children's literature, as distinct from the US and UK traditions, is making a unique contribution to the positive representation of diversity and inclusion in stories for young readers.

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