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Exploring Children's Literature for Freirean Themes of Dialogue and Humanization

A Narrative and Multimodal Discourse Analysis

Faculty of Education
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Abstract

Children's literature has been acknowledged to have the capability to critically challenge the status quo by incorporating counter-narratives that critically question mainstream representations of dominant groups. Freirean critical pedagogy connects this questioning of privilege with an orientation towards action from the reader through reading the word and the world. The concepts of dialogue and humanization provide a structure for analyzing the potential for the use of children's books as a point of departure for a critical pedagogy. The purpose of this study is to analyze children's books to determine whether and how they are characterized by these concepts of Freirean critical pedagogy. This study examines the questions of how relationships are constructed in the selected books through the interpersonal metafunction of discourse and how these relationships characterized Freirean concepts of horizontal relationships and humanization. In this study, the analysis is done on selected Newbery award winning children's books. The study employed narrative discourse analysis for analyzing books predominantly in textual mode and multimodal discourse analysis for texts that included texts and images equally. Findings indicate that the books were characterized by Freirean concepts of dialogue through representations of horizontal relationships between friends and family. The relationship between the readers and the characters was also generally equal, which ensured that readers engaged with the issues the characters faced. The books characterized humanization through positioning the antagonist within structural inequalities, highlighting the problems rather than the oppressors or the victims. Praxis is highlighted through the centering of problems in the narratives, contextual solutions to which are arrived at through the agency of the characters involved. This research indicates that children's books can offer multiple points of entry into critical pedagogy including problem-posing education, peace education and multicultural education by advocating for connecting the reading of the book to actions of social justice within their communities.

Key words: Children's Literature, Critical pedagogy, dialogue, humanization, praxis

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1 Introduction

Stories have been ever-present in all cultures at all times as a means of educating and entertaining children (Leland et al., 2022). Reading storybooks has the capacity to impact young children, preparing them for a future in their culture through shaping their identity and social role (Walkins, 2003; Kim et al., 2006; McCallum & Stephens, 2011; Leland et al., 2022). Children's literature is a crucial source of learning for children, and there is potential to introduce new concepts to children through this medium. Exposure to these books has an influence on the worldview that the children develop and eventually their own identities (Walkins, 2003).

Books, by providing the potential for children to connect at with texts at a personal level, give them a way through which they can see themselves (Mantei & Kervin, 2014; Braden & Rodriguez, 2016). At the same time, they also provide opportunities for the children to see others, other traditions, other backgrounds and cultural heritages other than their own (Boutte et al., 2008 ; Braden & Rodriguez, 2016). To understand this duality, Bishop (1990) uses the metaphor of books as mirrors where she says that every child wants to see themselves in the stories that they read as a way to reaffirm their worldview and their place in the society, while at another instance she uses the metaphor of windows, where she argues that books are an opportunity for the children of the dominant groups to acquaint themselves to the worldview of different social groups (Bishop, 1990).

Historically, children's literature themes have been religious, folklore or themes that implied children to follow gender norms, messages of sacrifice and valor (Steiner, 2008). Books with these themes can lead to social reproduction with gendering (Baker-Sperry & Grauerholz, 2003) , racism (Banks, 1993), and militarism (MacCallum-Stewart, 2007) as a norm in society by further reinforcing the stereotypes (Gultekin & May, 2020). Children's literature also has an issue of representation, which typically leans towards that of privileged sections of the society (Nurenberg, 2011).

In contrast, children's books have also been acknowledged to have the capability to critically challenge the status quo by incorporating the themes of multiculturalism and diversity within them. These counter narratives challenge the dominant themes of injustices because the perceptions that the readers make have a direct influence on their relationships with people

(Lowery, 2000). To incorporate these counter-narratives, children's literature must depict pathways for children to ask questions and challenge the ways in which certain cultural groups are presented within their stories (Braden & Rodriguez, 2016). These challenges are essential today in a multicultural setting considering social problems such as bullying, sexism, racism and poverty are constantly in the foreground in schools (Banks & Banks, 2010).

For children's literature to be able to depict social issues authentically, Bishop (2016) articulates the importance of the critical stance afforded by a book. This means that the children can possibly contest the text and its assumptions or perspectives to make their own conclusions (Leland et al., 2022). This critical reading of children's literature is prominent in contemporary research into children's literature where the analysis and teaching of children's literature through a critical lens is becoming an important agenda for research (H. Johnson et al., 2017). The themes of multiculturalism, social justice, decolonization, which are being explored in contemporary scholarship on children's literature, can all be linked to Paulo Freire's concepts of consciousness raising, problem posing and critical pedagogy (Morrell & Morrell, 2023)

Thus, it is pertinent that a critical analysis of children's literature might use concepts originating from Freire. However, a contemporary synthesis of recent scholarship on critical studies on children's literature does not mention Freire or directly use his conceptions in analyzing current trends (R. Rogers & Villarreal, 2022). Though a recent book, 'Freire and Children's Literature' by Ernest and Jodene Morrell has focused on applying the Freirean approach while using children's literature as teaching material, analyzing children's literature through a Freirean lens is a missing area of research (Morrell & Morrell, 2023). Using Freirean concepts can be an especially useful tool in the critical analysis of texts used for children, as Freire's concepts overlaps the boundaries between analysis and practice, and thus, can help educators with understanding how to view and use texts in their classrooms.

Freire's work shows that the critical teaching of literature allows students to participate in problem-posing and manifest the power of literature by becoming agents of change (Morrell & Morrell, 2023). A critical understanding of the books that children read, what is the message, implicit and explicit, that the book gives out, whose point of view is being promoted by the book, and other questions that can be asked from this perspective make such an approach relevant to the current scholarship in children's literature studies.

Freire's concepts of critical pedagogy connect well with the themes of critically reading the text of a book to advocate against oppression and inequality (Naiditch, 2016). They also help in understanding dialogue, humanization and praxis, which is important from a critical reading stance of Bishop (2016), since they allow us to conceptualize how we can remake the world by reading and understanding the word (Freire, 2000). Therefore, this Freirean concept of critical pedagogy will be used in this study.

An important aspect of a Freirean critical pedagogy is the notion of dialogue. As Freire points out, dialogue promotes critical thinking in students, which the basis for a critical education (Morrow, 2022). Dialogue, according to Freire, creates horizontal relationships, which can empower individuals to become agents of change (Amestoy et al., 2017). To enable dialogue between people, Freire proposes six attributes that must exist: love, humility, faith, mutual trust, hope, and critical thinking. These enablers of dialogue are a precondition for the existence of dialogue, and thus, for the empowerment of individuals to seek for peace in their relationship (Gursel-Bilgin, 2020).

Dialogue is in turn a pre-condition to humanization (S. Gill & Niens, 2014). The authors argue that humanization can help people be more accepting of each other and is at the core of building solidarity with others. They further state that the ultimate aim of liberation, for Freire, is the humanization of both the oppressed and the oppressors. It is here that critical pedagogy plays an important role as it is underpinned by Freirean concepts of dialogue and humanization (S. Gill & Niens, 2014). Thus, humanization and dialogue co-exist together within a critical pedagogy as the humanization can happen only through critical dialogue.

In this context, this study investigates how children's books align with and reflect Freire's theories. In particular, this study analyzes selected works of award-winning children's literature to check their alignment with Freirean concepts of humanization and dialogue within critical pedagogy.

Award-winning works of children's literature were chosen for this study since they represent the mainstream, which makes it interesting to consider whether they also have the potential to enhance critical consciousness and challenge the dominant social notions (Taber, 2015). Taber (2015) elaborates that the credibility that these awards build amongst the community is such that these titles are highly recommended and sought after. In some cases, this award-

winning literature is also used as supplementary teaching material in the classrooms (Dyches et al., 2006).

I intend to analyze books with a focus on determining whether and how the stories are characterized by Freirean concepts of humanization, dialogue and praxis. Analyzing the stories to check if they offer themes of love, humility, faith, mutual trust, hope, and critical thinking will enable us to understand if this book offers the possibility of a dialogue that can be used as a point of departure for a critical pedagogy.

2 Critical potential of children's literature and reading

Children's literature, to many people, is a source of delight in the sense that these books encourage them to engage and interact with the stories in ways that provoke intense emotions in them (Hogan, 2011). Hunt (2003) argues that while it might be hard to gauge the impact of children's literature based on this sense of delight that they provide readers with their cultural, social and historical impact on the society has been immense.

Defining children's literature is a challenge since one needs to define the terms children, literature and the degree of their assimilation that amounts to children's literature (Gubar, 2011). Defining who a child is, is not an easy task since the idea of who constitutes as one has been ever evolving. The literature in 18th century, novels predominantly, that aimed for children then, would now be considered as literature for adults in the contemporary times (Stevenson, 2010). Nodelman (2008) states that the idea of what constitutes literature adds a layer of complexity in terms of the type of text (finely written or popular), genre (fiction or nonfiction) and the intended purpose (educational or pleasure) of the said literature. And then there is the issue of bringing them together and then defining what constitutes children's literature (Nodelman, 2008). In this study, children's literature is loosely understood as literature that has been categorized as children's literature.

Even within a nebulously defined state, these children's books are marginalized (Thacker, 2000; Hunt, 2003; Shavit, 2009). Hunt (2003) theorizes that this may be so because all the aspects of children's books, from writing to illustrating to publishing are predominantly led by women, who are themselves marginalized. According to Hunt, this marginalization has become the reason for the increased mystery that children's literature has currently created across the students of wide sections of disciplines ranging from literature, education, psychology, art, the sciences, students of care disciplines and so on. Children's literature has this unique multidisciplinary nature, both in terms of the text that it is and as a muse for study where it has the power to merge boundaries between disciplines and varied audiences (Ewers, 2009). This duality exists in the form of children's literature being the site of one, exploratory and expressive art and second, being the profit generating commercial venture (Hunt, 2003).

These arguments make the case for why the children's literature does not exist in a state of void, these books have real, practical users that consist of logical, perceptive readers. This in

theory, makes children's literature a meeting point of the books and the readers (Sipe, 1999). This idea of children's books is what makes them complex and can be studied in varied ways. People who follow through on their intrigue of children's literature discover this complexity and understand that things are more complicated than what they seem to be (Gamble & Yates, 2008).

Hunt (2003) argues that this idea that children's literature is complex is often met with doubt or skepticism in the form of comments like one is reading too much into it or that children will not pick up on it. But this does not hold much ground since the act of communication is known to be immensely intricate and these books are dealing with the crucial questions of communication and understanding between adults and children (Hunt, 2003).

This complexity becomes more enhanced when the children's literature is placed at the intersection of multiple stakeholders like critics, readers, educators, adult writers, child readers and practitioners. At this point, one must confront one's predisposed notions. Hunt (2003) points out that there is a two-faced notion about children's literature that is often expressed while discussing the effect of children's literature on children. One, is that of rejection of impact when they deny any impact that these books had on them, along the lines of 'having read *abc* and turning out fine'. Second, the idea that childhood is a crucial phase of one's life and that children are vulnerable, impressionable and need to be guarded from manipulation. There is a sense of giving importance to children's literature while also dismissing its impact (Hunt, 2003).

The discussion above summarizes the relative lack of serious analysis of children's literature through the years. But as H. Johnson et al. (2017) points out, it is being ameliorated through the reading of children's literature through a critical lens. This study tries to focus on a lacuna within the contemporary critical analysis of children's literature, where critical analysis of Freirean concepts within children's literature is missing.

One of the essential objectives in school is to teach children to become readers which is usually done through engaging stories for children (Lapp et al., 2013). Morrell and Morrell (2023) argue that it is through this exposure to the written word that the children are exposed to the world, diverse ideas and their place in the world. They argue that literature lays out a choice of values to children, a mixed bag of some good and some not so good that they might

grapple with. Literature has the potential to excite the minds of the children, provide tools using which they can tell stories of their own hopes and ambitions (Thomas, 2016). He further emphasizes that it is this act of reading that helps in developing an informed and active member of the community.

This idea of developing an engaged member of the community often translates to including more multicultural children's literature into their reading selection (Botelho & Rudman, 2009). This exposure to diverse literature introduces the children to other voices, helps in reducing conflicts and envisioning themselves as a part of the larger collective. This process aids in humanizing all sections of society, encourages critical questioning and kindles cultural confidence (Morrell & Morrell, 2023).

Reading children's literature concerns itself with generating feelings of agency within the children through engagement and a call for action (Mickenberg & Nel, 2011; Mathis, 2016). Most children's literature offers a value choice, say in the form of bullying or feelings of being weak or small in society and these texts often consist of an appeal for action towards the end of the books that they want the children to take (Morrell & Morrell, 2023). This combination of paused reflection and informed action is what Freire (1970) calls praxis. He considers this praxis to be an ideal mode of being that sets up the mood for learning. This learning could be in the form of reflection on the ideas of the book that might further be translated into action in the community. This action could be that of creating art, engaging in conversations and other innumerable, assorted manners. This link of reading literature to the sense of social justice and an engaged citizen is a crucial component of the pedagogy (C. A. Torres, 2014).

3 Theoretical Background

3.1 Freire on critical reading

For Freire, critical reading means reading literature in the wider social, political, cultural and economic context (Freire, 2000). He further elaborates that a reader should perform both the roles of challenging the literature as well as being challenged by it. A critical reader he argues need the virtues of patience and persistence and must strive to steer away from being passive (Freire, 2000). Freire (2000) recommends reading a text twice, the first time to understand the contents and the second time to critically analyze the said content. He elaborates that reading is a two-way process where critical readers ask questions of the literature they are reading while at the same time also allow the writer's words to pose questions for them.

In this process of reading, Freire (2000) asserts that there is a risk of people having to confront and, in some cases, overturn their worldview. According to Freire (2000), reading is a dialogical process though it might appear to be an individual activity when one person reads on their own. He argues that a reader is involved in a meaningful conversation with the writer of the book. The writer of the book, in turn was engaged in such deliberate conversations that would have shaped their outlook in life (Freire, 2000). Freire (2000) nudges the readers to contextualize the literature written by the writers as well as make connections between the ideas of these writers to the context that they are in. These connections could be in the form of reflective links between the themes of the literature and their own problems and opportunities or those around them. This is what Freire describes as linking of the 'word' to the 'world'.

Reading has a relaxing aspect attached to it as well, but Freire argues that reading also needs to be unsettling and troubling (C. A. Torres, 2014). This characteristic of reading literature is constructive as it can prompt the reader towards taking an action and could be transformative in the way a problem is approached. Reading as an act helps in better understanding ourselves and the society that we are part of, thus aiding the process of humanization (C. A. Torres, 2014).

3.2 Freirean concept of humanization

For a reader to pause, reflect on act on issues identified in a text, the reader must be first aware that oppression acts on the basis of dehumanization of the oppressor and the oppressed

(S. Gill & Niens, 2014). Thus, as a basis for critical pedagogy is the idea of humanization, as Freire positions his idea of humanization in the form of a response to dehumanization. His description of dehumanization is that of distortion of one's urge to become fully human (Freire, 2000). The context of Northern Brazil, where he carried out his field work was one where the workers were owned by landlords and the workers experienced severe working lives. He elaborates that dehumanization is not a natural way of being and that it is the product of an unjust order that provokes violence in oppressors. This violence in turn results in the dehumanization of the oppressed (Freire, 2000). One of the prominent tools of dehumanization is the 'banking concept of education' that is characterized by the mechanical transaction through transferring and memorizing. In this arrangement, students are reduced to the idea of containers that need to be filled by the teachers (Freire, 2000). This leads to students being seen as objects that need to be managed which puts them into a constant state of dehumanization.

In view of this, Freire's concept of humanization is intended to create new structures and find liberation from the oppression. The preferred outcome of this process is the humanization of all human beings which he views to be their 'ontological vocation' (Freire, 2000). To be fully human is to fight against the objection of beings as objects that need to be known and acted on. It is the shift towards becoming beings that know and act.

According to Freire (2000), to be fully human requires conscientization which is the emergence of critical consciousness that creates a possibility for people to interact with historical society as subjects. Conscientization is a process of self-affirmation that liberates a person so that they can perceive reality, history and their individual roles in it differently and critically (Freire, 2000). This process of conscientization is ongoing where human beings are led by curiosity, assuming the role of the investigators and are invested in the 'why' of the way things and life operate (Freire, 2000).

The process of becoming fully human rejects the idea of the 'banking concept of education' and replaced by a 'problem-posing' approach that was proposed by Freire. In this approach, the students overcome authoritarianism and a false sense of reality. The students are not perceived as passive objects that need to be manipulated but are seen as critical co-investigators (Freire, 2000). Problem-posing education is based on dialogue between the teacher and the students where there is co-creation of knowledge. Here, the knowledge is

created dialectically where teaching and learning become knowing and reknowing. This means that the students learn something that they might not have known yet and the teachers re-learn something they might have known earlier (Freire, 2000).

The process of co-creation of knowledge starts when the teachers 're-present' the reality that the student is aware of, in the form of a problem. Freire (2000) argues that in this problem situation, the human beings are likely to adopt a resigned outlook. In such a situation, the objective of the students is to examine their existing perception of reality and themselves. The oppressed person must reject the oppressor's perception of the oppressed as insignificant and meaningless (Freire, 2000). This path to humanization is driven by critical analysis and delegitimization of the narratives fed to the oppressed by their oppressors.

The content referred in the problem-posing approach contrasts with that of the banking approach (Freire, 2000). The latter depends on materials that are completely disconnected to the students' lived realities and are firmly on the teacher's discretion. In comparison, the content for the problem-solving approach is selected and organized by the students' own sense of the world. Freire (2000) cites an example to depict this where he says that in the banking concept of education, an educator gives a peasant to read an academic text from which she learns that the water is in the well whereas in the problem posing approach the peasant might confront the issues of work in the fields as a problem. This could lead to a demand of increase in wages and formation of a union to safeguard their rights. Thus, critical pedagogy needs to be based on problems posed which are connected to the lived realities of the children and not based on abstract academic notions. It is through the process of humanization that status quo can be critically understood and challenged. This can lead to action that is based on reflection which results in real change in the world. Thus, humanization involves the concepts of problem-posing and conscientization based on the lived realities of the people involved.

3.3 Freirean concept of dialogue

One of the pre-conditions for humanization is dialogue (S. Gill & Niens, 2014). Thus, for an understanding of how critical pedagogy must be transacted, we need to understand the concept of dialogue as developed by Freire. Freire emphasizes on the idea of dialogue as an essential human phenomenon that helps in the process of transforming the world through a process of humanization (Darder et al., 2018). He elaborates that *the word* is the essence of

dialogue and that within this word, there are two dimensions- action and reflection. He says that any word that is devoid of action becomes empty chat because any word that does not consist of action cannot contribute towards denunciation of the world. This is because any denunciation of the world is not a possibility without a pledge of action in it.

Freire emphasizes that human existence is nurtured only by true words, silence or false words cannot nourish the human existence (Freire, 2000). He claims that to exist is to name the world and eventually to change it. In this process of naming the world, the world re-appears to the same people as transformed and thus requires a new *naming*. He states that this phenomenon of naming the world is the process of transformation of the world, that this process of naming the world is not the privilege of the few but a right of all. He says that nobody can undergo the process of naming the world alone nor can they do it on the behalf of others. In doing so, one robs the other of the right of naming the words.

Dialogue, he states, is the interface between people that is facilitated by the world to *name* the world (Freire, 2000). He points that this dialogue cannot occur between people who want to participate in the *naming* of the world and those who do not want this to happen, or between those who deny others their right to speak and those whose rights to speak were denied to them. He urges those whose crucial right of speaking their word has been denied to first reclaim this right from them and ensure that this does not fall back into old patterns to prevent the continuation of this dehumanizing aspect. It is through this process of naming the world, that transformation occurs mediated by dialogue, due to which the people achieve significance (Freire, 2000). In this sense, dialogue is an existential necessity, and this is the reason why this phenomenon of dialogue cannot be a narrow process of putting ideas in another, nor can it be an exchange of ideas that is meant to be consumed by people taking part in it.

Since dialogue is an interface between people who want to transform the world through the naming phenomenon, it cannot be a situation where some people name on behalf of the others (Freire, 2000). This process is an act of creation and thus cannot be a way of asserting domination on others. For Freire, individuals can engage in dialogue by establishing a horizontal relationship; he strongly contrasts dialogue with anti-dialogue, a vertical, unloving, acritical relationship as he associates anti-dialogue with the suppression of the other and its reduction to the status of an object. This Freirean concept of dialogical education is a foundation for understanding what peace constitutes of (Gursel-Bilgin, 2020). Dialogue,

according to Freire (2000), is rooted in horizontal relationships among people who share the pre-conditions of love, humility, faith, mutual trust, hope and critical thinking, which are briefly explained below.

Horizontal relationships

To obtain dialogue that is genuine, Freire asserts on transforming vertical relationships that are founded in authoritarianism (Darder et al., 2018). This he recommends can be attained through disassembling of the colonizing ideology of domination for more horizontal relationships within the learning environment, between educators, parents, students and the community. This, he elaborates, can only be built on the foundations of dialogue and humanization – humility, love, faith, critical thinking and trust. This is the combination of essential qualities that he argues serve as the foundation for more genuine dialogue and horizontal relationships.

Freire on Love

Freire argues that dialogues cannot occur in the void of profound love for people and for the world around us (Freire, 2000). He argues that this act of naming the world that occurs through the phenomenon of dialogue, cannot occur in the absence of love. He states that *naming the world* is an act of creation and re-creation and love is a necessary pre-condition for this act. He further claims that love is both the foundation of the dialogue and dialogue itself (Freire, 2000).

Domination as a concept reveals the structures of love- sadism in the oppressor and masochism in the oppressed because love, he says is an act of courage, an act of commitment, not that of the fear (Freire, 2000). This act of love is the commitment that the oppressed have on their cause of liberation. A similar argument is put forth by bell hooks where she argues that love grants strength for transformation and the struggle against the oppressed (Biana, 2021; hooks, 2000). This argument is extended to say that love and kindness that accompanies it forms the foundation for a type of cultural revision required in the fight against the oppressed (Biana, 2021; hooks, 2000).

Freire (2000) states that this form of love is also dialogical in nature, where as an act of bravery, love cannot be sentimental while as an act of freedom, it does not become an excuse for manipulation. This love must enable various forms of freedoms, and it is possible to restore this love only by eliminating the situation of oppression. He says that unless one does not love the world, if one does not love life, if one does not love people, one cannot enter into dialogue (Freire, 2000).

Freire on Humility

The phenomenon of *naming* of the world, which leads to the re-creation of the world cannot take place from the place of arrogance (Darder et al., 2018). Freire furthers his argument that dialogue does not exist without humility. Dialogue as a process which is meant to further learning and action will only be successful if the stakeholders taking part had humility (Darder et al., 2018). Freire ponders as to how can one dialogue if one projects ignorance onto others and never recognize one's own ignorance. He argues that one cannot dialogue if they regard themselves as different from others, thinking of others as 'its' and not as 'other I's'. There is no scope for dialogue when one considers oneself as a member of owners of knowledge, holders of truth where all the non-members are those people (Darder et al., 2018).

Dialogue cannot occur when the idea of *naming the world* is regarded as the task of the elite and the involvement of people in this process is viewed as deterioration, something to be avoided (Freire, 2000). The process of dialogue is hard to accomplish when one sees the contribution of others in this process as threatening to one's own displacement. He argues that without humility, there cannot be a process of *naming* the world since it requires a genuine partnership between people. There has to be a sense of self-realization of humility that everyone involved in the dialogue are only people that are attempting to learn and transform more than they know (Freire, 2000). This self-realization can come from being aware of the social reality that one is part of and the ways in which their relationship with those around them is constructed (Park & Bae, 2023). Park and Bae (2023) further argue that this sense of humility can emerge from reducing the sense of biases and trust in one's own lived reality.

Freire on Faith

Dialogue requires a deep faith in humankind, in one's power to create and re-create, learn and re-learn, in the urge to fully human (Freire, 2000). For dialogue to be fully actualized, it needs

to be based on faith in others who are engaged in this process of dialogue. As McKaughan (2017) argues, the most valuable aspect of relational faith is a characteristic perseverance which helps relationships sustain even through significant challenges, including and periods of grave doubts, especially when the relationship is under pinned by trust and loyalty. A person engaged in dialogue understands that human beings have the power to create and transform their reality but sometimes people might be alienated to use this power (Freire, 2000). However, in situations like these it becomes crucial to have faith in people, in the idea that this imbalance can be corrected through true struggle for liberation. Freire (2000) claims that without this faith in people, the process of dialogue becomes fake which inevitably disintegrates into manipulation.

Freire on Mutual Trust

The values of love, humility and faith lead the way for the next step for dialogue, where it becomes a horizontal relationship where the mutual trust between dialoguers is crucial (Freire, 2000). Freire (2000) argues that if the process of dialogue based on love, humility and faith does not produce an environment of mutual trust, it is not genuine. It is this environment of mutual trust that enables the dialoguers to engage in genuine partnerships that lead to transformation. According to Hupcey et al, (2001) who conceptually analyzed it, trust includes the sense of risk that a person places themselves in with respect to another person. This element of risk presupposes the fact that the outcome of the conversation between the two is not known beforehand, but both the parties in a dialogue are willing to undergo this risk with the expectation that the other will behave in a way that validates their trust. Freire (2000) stresses that mutual trust emerges when everyone involved in the process of dialogue are genuine and follow through on their words with action. If one fails in doing so, it is hard to inspire the feelings of trust in everyone involved in the process of dialogue.

Freire on Hope

The fifth value on which dialogue is rooted is that of hope which is situated in one's incompleteness (Freire, 2000). This hope can only be generated when one is on a constant search for partnership. Freire (2000) argues that hopelessness arises from the feeling of being silenced due to which the oppressed might deny their surroundings and try to escape it. He argues that this dehumanization that is emerging as a result of unjust order is not a reason for

anguish. On the contrary, he sees it as a cause for hope that leads to the relentless pursuit of humanity that is denied in the systemic injustice (Freire, 2000) .

However, being hopeful does not mean waiting for things to happen. In other words, hope does not mean that one puts on rose-tinted glasses and stops thinking about difficulties (te Riele, 2010). Rather, it is the journey of fighting for liberation that one finds hope and it is through this feeling of hopefulness that one can wait (Freire, 2000). In the process of being fully human, dialogue between people cannot take place in a climate of hopelessness. If the process of dialogue occurs in the state of hopelessness, then the outcomes of this dialogue will be bureaucratic and tedious. Thus, sound hope, as theorized by te Riele (2010), is a tool for exploring possibilities within education for marginalized communities, which critiques practices but also imagines genuine alternatives for the future.

Freire on Critical Thinking

Finally, Freire (2000) describes the aspect of critical thinking in attaining true dialogue. He elaborates that in this way of thinking, reality is seen as a process, as a dynamic transformative phenomenon instead of a static unit. According to him, critical thinking is an action that spreads across time- the past, present and the future of people's existence and struggle. This also includes an openness to any challenges that might occur in through time and this where it differs from the *naïve* thought. *Naïve* thinking, willingly or unwillingly adapts to the normalized order of things, turning a blind eye to the injustices that are reproduced through the system (Freire, 2000). This argument is supported by hooks (2009) where she argues that children are naturally critical thinkers and this passion for thinking is actively put to an end by most conventional forms of schooling.

On the other hand, thinking is a form of action, a space where theory and the act of praxis blend together in the form of posing questions and seeking answers to them (hooks, 2009). This is similar to Freire (2000) where he argues that critical thinkers are actively engaging with these challenges to lead transformation in the struggle to be fully human.

Freire (2000) elaborates that dialogue creates an environment for developing critical thinking by encouraging interactions that explore the challenges and limitations of the world. He

argues that education or communication cannot compensate for the absence of this aspect of true dialogue in developing critical thinking.

4 Research questions and methodology

4.1 Aim and Research questions

In this study, four Newbery medal winning children's books were read through a Freirean lens. The perspectives highlighted by award-winning books are important to be viewed critically to identify the implicit and explicit messages given out by these books and whose point of view is being promoted. This critical reading of the books through a Freirean lens will help in contextualizing the use of these storybooks in classroom practice by teachers and educators. Analyzing the books from a standpoint of Freire through the themes of dialogue and humanization will support a critical teaching of literature. This will aid in readers becoming agents of change by allowing them to remake the world by reading the word (Freire, 2000).

The study uses narrative and multimodal discourse analysis to analyze the selected books, focusing on the concepts of dialogue and humanization from Freire's critical pedagogy. This will be investigated through the lens of the following research questions.

This study focusses on answering one main question, divided into two sub-questions as follows:

Research question 1 - Whether and how the selected books are characterized by the Freirean theory of dialogue as praxis of liberation and humanization?

Research question 1(a) - How are social relations constructed in the selected books using discursive resources?

Research question 1(b)- How do the social relations in the selected books align with the Freirean pre-conditions of dialogue and humanization?

The purpose of the first sub-question is to determine how the different types of social relations are constructed in the books. This is required since the Freirean concepts of dialogue and humanization are characterized as relationships between people. Here, in this study this would mean analyzing the relationships amongst characters in the stories as well the relationship between the reader and the characters of the story.

The objective of the second sub-question is to examine how these social relations characterize Freirean concepts of humanization and dialogue. Here, in this study this would mean examining instances where the relationships display values of six preconditions of dialogue and instances of humanization.

4.2 Data Collection

For this study, four Newbery medal winning books were chosen for analysis. Every year, the John Newbery Medal, a literary award is administered by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association. This medal has been awarded since 1922 to the ‘most distinguished contribution to American literature for children’ (ALSC, n.d.). The purpose behind the award was ‘to emphasize to the public that contributions to the literature for children deserve similar recognition to poetry, plays or novels.’

The Newbery awards are not based on popularity but on the seeming literacy excellence of the book which are decided on the basis of three main criteria. First, (1a) “the interpretation of the theme or concept; presentation of information including accuracy, clarity, and organization; development of plot, delineation of characters and settings, appropriateness of style”; (1b) “excellence of presentation for a child audience”; (2) “a contribution to American literature...primarily on text...other components of the such as illustrations etc. maybe considered when they make the book less effective” (3) “the book must be a self-contained entity” (ALSC, n.d.).

Newbery medal has had a deep impact on the market where it is observed that the Newbery medal winners hardly go out of print due to which they have are seen favorably by publishers (Clark, 2003). These books are always in demand and hence readily available, which is the prestige of winning the Newbery medal (Maughan, 2011). They further state that the economic impact that the Newbery and Caldecott awards have on book sales is significant in comparison to any other literary awards.

One of the criteria for choosing the Newbery medal winners was the idea of the status and credibility that it carries as being one of the first children’s book award in the world and given its long history, makes it also the most known and discussed awards (Kidd, 2007). Educators and libraries usually rely on literary awards to choose quality books. This often leads to the

case that these award-winning literature is part of the curriculum and included in schools and school libraries for easy access and frequent engagement with these books (Yokota, 2011).

As Baker-Bell et al. (2017) argue, the mainstream media, including literature, often pushes marginalized people away from their coverage and treat them as others. The Newbery medal, being awarded for a hundred years and used by most schools represent a part of the mainstream of children's literature. Thus, it is interesting to see if these books offer a possibility of critical reading which challenges the status quo and the dominant narratives, from within the mainstream. The idea for this study is to critically analyze the discourses in the framework to the selected few titles to situate the stories and the narratives in the possibility of critical pedagogy.

The titles selected for this study from the Newbery medal corpus was based on convenience sampling. Four Newbery medal winners were available in the local library during a search in October 2024 and a first reading of these books helped me realize that these books have the potential to be read from a Freirean lens. In this initial reading, the Freirean ideas of critical pedagogy either presented its glimpses at some instances either in the form of illustrations, plot or the text/dialogues of these stories. Hence, these four books were selected as the sample for this study.

These four titles are – *Last stop on market street* (2015), *New kid* (2019), *Hello, Universe* (2021), *The Eyes and the Impossible* (2023). Out of the four books selected, two are heavy on the illustrations (*Last Stop on Market Street*, *New kid*). *Last Stop on Market Street* is an illustrated book written with less text and more illustrations in a way that young children who have just started reading can engage with. *New Kid* is a graphic novel with more complex drawing styles and dialogues.

The other two books are predominantly textual in nature with a few illustrations (*The Eyes and the Impossible* and *Hello, Universe*). These two books rely on text to deliver the story and the plot while the illustrations are fewer. Although, text is used as the main mode of delivery in these books, they are simple and easy to read.

This mix of books that range across in their styles of drawing, text and the themes they cover made for a relevant sample to analyze the discourses from a Freirean perspective. The basic information and the plot summaries of the books are presented below.

The Eyes and the Impossible

The Eyes and the Impossible was published in 2023 written by Eggers and illustrated by Shawn Harris and won the Newbery Medal in 2024. In their award citation, Newbery Medal Committee Chair Amber Creger mentioned that the book explored themes of freedom, friendship and beauty while being a joyful read (*Dave Eggers, Vashti Harrison Win Newbery, Caldecott Medals* | ALA, n.d.). The book is targeted for an age range of 8–12-year-olds.

Summary of the plot

This book's central character is a dog named Johannes and is set in a park on an island. Johannes is the only free dog, and he runs so fast that catching him is a tough task, he seems to be everywhere at once. He is the 'Eyes' for three Bisons of the park whose task is to update them with all the events that occur in the park. Johannes is supported by other animals who help in gathering this information and these friends include a squirrel, a pelican and a raccoon. The Bisons then use this information to analyze the happenings and help in maintaining the equilibrium of the park. While things have stayed the same for a long time, there are some changes happening in the park off late. Some of these changes are erecting new buildings in the park, strange rectangles that hypnotize Johannes and hold him captivated. There are also some new animals that descend into the park and eat everything in sight. The story's plot is about a wild idea that Johannes and his friends have concocted to free the three Bisons from capture and help them escape.

Hello, Universe

Hello, Universe was published in 2017, a third novel by Filipino-American author Erin Entrada Kelly and this book won the 2018 Newbery Medal. In their award citation, Newbery committee chair Cecilia P. McGowan stated that the characters in the book typify agency, while the story brought out authentic emotion (*Hello, Universe* | ALA, n.d.). The book is targeted for an age range of 8–12-year-olds.

Summary of the plot

This novel is set in a contemporary town in the USA that focuses on a shy Filipino boy Virgil. Virgil is best friends with his grandmother and his pet guinea pig. Kaori is confident, kind and a self-proclaimed psychic. Chet is a bully who goes to the same school as Virgil and never misses a chance to bully him. Virgil wants to befriend Valencia because he has a crush on her but is unable to approach her. In an attempt to make this a reality, he consults a psychic, a twelve-year-old Kaori to help him in fulfilling this goal. On the other hand, Valencia also books an appointment with Kaori to help her unpack her recurring bad dreams.

When Virgil was on the way for his appointment with Kaori, he runs into Chet who steals Virgil's backpack into a well which has his pet guinea pig, Gulliver. From here, a series of coincidental events that occur through the rest of the book. In the concluding adventurous episode, four children in the woods share an experience that causes the group to analyze the ideas communication issues, what constitutes a hero and cosmic mediation. The books end with a beginning of the friendship between Virgil and Valencia.

Last Stop on Market Street

Last stop on Market Street is a children's book authored by American author Matt de la Peña and illustrated by Christian Robinson. This book was published in 2015 and won the Newbery Medal in 2016. This title's Newbery win was surprising as it is extremely rare for picture books to be given this award (Barron, 2016). Newbery Medal Committee Chair Ernie J. Cox mentioned the beautiful use of language to elicit questions and to spark the imagination as a reason for this award in ALA's award citation (*Last Stop on Market Street* | ALA, n.d.). The book is targeted for an age range of 3–5-year-olds.

Summary of the plot

Last Stop on Market Street is a story about a boy named CJ and his Nana. They spend the day together on a public bus, riding through the town before arriving at their destination, which is the soup kitchen. Through the entire bus ride, CJ is wishing that he had a different life. He wonders why he cannot be like his friend Colby, who has a car or like the two boys on the bus, who have an iPod. He wonders why he has to get wet in the rain and why do they need to go at all. The book describes the different characters that they meet on the bus and the things that CJ observes on this journey. He compares his situation to that of the people he sees and notices. Nana reminds him of the beautiful things around him and shows him different ways of appreciating the things that they have. Nana shows CJ the joy and value of helping people and others around them.

New Kid

New Kid is a graphic novel by Jerry Craft that was published in 2019 and won the Newbery Medal in 2020. This was the first graphic novel to be awarded the Newbery Medal. Since then, two titles were released in the series. The awards and the critical acclaim that this book achieved was considered a significant step for graphic novels (Flood, 2020). In their award citation, Newbery committee chair Krishna Grady mentioned that the story explored themes such as friendship, race, class and bullying while being distinct and timely (Flood, 2020). The book is targeted for an age range of 8–12-year-olds.

Summary of the plot

New Kid follows the story of a seventh-grade kid Jordan Banks who loves drawing cartoons about life. He wants to go to art school while his parents want him to go to an upscale private school. This book focusses on Jordan's first year at this private school, his transition from public school to the private, his navigation of the new environment, challenges of making new friends and dealing with bullies. Jordan faces a few difficulties getting used his new school ranging from trying to choose a place to sit for lunch, meeting old friends from public school to the time when he finds that a teacher constantly misnames him and other black friends at the school. The academic and social ups and downs of Jordan's life are depicted through various such episodes that concentrate on recurring characters. The book ends with Jordan making good friends at his new school, doing well at school and spending the next summer with his neighborhood friends.

The selected sample of four books offer a rich possibility for analysis as they all contained Freirean themes as seen in the initial reading. This showed that an in-depth analysis of these four books, as done in this study, would yield sufficient data for subsequent analysis. The books also included a number of characters, whose relationships could be explored in depth to be able to see whether and how these relationships characterize the Freirean concepts of humanization and dialogue. Also, since two illustrated books and two novels were taken up for analysis, this would allow sufficient data for multimodal analysis to be carried out as well.

4.3 Data Analysis

4.3.1 Discourse Analysis

The concept of ‘discourse analysis’ is a disputed one since it is not a single definitional idea but one that consists of multiple viewpoints that derive from a variety of disciplines (R. Gill, 2000). At the same time, the idea that remains constant between all the variants of discourse analysis is the rejection of the pragmatist notion that language is a neutral medium of describing and reflecting about the world that we live in and a commitment to the importance of discourse in the construction of the social world (R. Gill, 2000).

The steep increase of interest in discourse analysis (DA) in the recent past has been the result of the ‘turn to language’ phenomenon that has materialized in the humanities and social sciences where the ideas of the traditional social sciences were critiqued by the post-modernists and post-structuralists’ ideas (R. Gill, 2000). This foundation of discourse analysis in the critique of traditional social sciences means that it has different epistemological foundations when compared to other methodologies. This notion is called social constructivism and there is no simple definition to this idea but some core feature of this way of thinking are -

- a) an acknowledgment that the ways in which the world is made sense of, are specific to the history and the culture from where it is perceived and is specific to that focal point
- b) a belief that knowledge is socially constructed- the ways in which the world is perceived is determined by the social processes and not by the nature of the world
- c) a conviction to investigating the ways in which knowledge (the socially constructed notions of people and processes) are related to their actions and practices
- d) a critical viewpoint towards the normalized knowledge and a skeptical stance towards the daily unfolding of life’s true nature

As there is no single definitional idea of discourse analysis, it involves multiple sets of arguments borrowed from a variety of disciplines and theories of analysis (R. Gill, 2000). In such a situation, one way to understand this myriad idea is by thinking about the broad theoretical traditions. Gill (2000) explains three of these broad varieties of discourse analysis. This categorizing of varieties of discourse analysis will be helpful in contextualizing the methodology used in this study.

First, there is a variety of broad theory called the critical language studies (Fairclough, 1989). Here, discourse is described as a way of developing knowledge along with social practices and power relations through the creative use of language. It consists of different mediums that convey ways of understanding, experiencing and valuing the world (McGregor, 2004). Compared to the other types of discourse analysis this variety has close ties with that of linguistics and structuralist analysis. This tradition of DA can take different forms of media like talk, policies and written texts such as letters or textbooks, speeches multimedia and film (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

Analytical tools from the fields of pragmatics, speech theory and linguistics are often used in the DA framework since these tools accommodate for the discovery of subtle or hidden beliefs in the language. These might be camouflaged under the language structures in the forms of metaphors, analogies or common expressions (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). This variety of DA also considers linguistic concepts such as time, actors, tense, modulation, coherence, pauses, laughter, hesitations and voice (Luke, 1997).

Second, there is a variety that is based on the speech-act theory and conversation analysis. This way of thinking focusses on the result and action orientation of discourse (R. Gill, 2000). This school of thought is interested in studying what the descriptions are designed to achieve instead of how these descriptions connect to the world. This tradition highlights the details on which the social interactions are organized and how these interactions lead to an action in the world.

Third, this variety of DA is associated with poststructuralism where one of the notable contributors is Michel Foucault who advocates the genealogies of discipline and sexuality as discourse analysis (Gill, 2000). This tradition of DA is keen on studying the discourses historically rather than the point of views of spoken or written texts.

This study leans on the first variety of analysis of discourses discussed above. This study will look at the grammar and the language structures as resources of discourse as developed in critical language studies. This study utilized the verbal realizations of meaning potentials as elaborated in Painter et al. (2013) as the basis for the analysis of grammatical and linguistic

structures. This study will then analyze whether and how the discourse resources are used to construct Freirean themes in the selected sections of the sample books.

Having discussed the various traditions, the theoretical foundations for each of these DA, it is useful to dissect the themes within any of these traditions of DA. Gill (2000) thinks of DA consisting of four main themes that derive from ideas from all the three varieties explained above. Gill (2000) elaborates that these are the characteristics of a typical DA. These four themes are – 1) a focus on the discourse itself, 2) a notion that language is constructive and constructed 3) a stress on discourse as a form of action and 4) a commitment to the rhetorical organization of discourse

First theme of discourse analysis is the one where discourse itself is taken as a topic, where the word ‘discourse’ is used to describe any mode of communication in the form of a conversation, talk, text or interview (Gill, 2000). Here, the texts are interesting to the analysts in its own right instead of viewing them as a means to get to know the reality that is hidden behind the discourse. In this case, the focus is on the content and the way in which it is organized (Gill, 2000). In this study, this would mean that the stories are themselves considered as discourses. The text along with the images are analyzed on their own as credible sources of discourse.

The second theme is the idea that language is constructive where Potter and Wetherell (1994) argue that this metaphor of construction emphasizes three aspects of the approach. First, the idea that discourse is assembled using the pre-existing linguistic resources. Second, this metaphor illustrates that this ‘assembly’ of an account consists of an act of selection from a number of possibilities (Potter & Wetherell, 1994). An account can be described in multiple ways and this description of the account depends on the writer or the narrator. Lastly, the metaphor of construction describes the way in which we interact with the world in a concrete manner- texts in multiple formats construct the world that we live in (Gill, 2000). That is why, we can say that the constructive use of language is normalized in our social life. This study will analyze how linguistic resources are used to construct inter-personal relationships in the stories through specific realizations of meaning potentials.

The third theme of discourse analysis is the notion of action orientation of discourse where the analysts view all discourse as social practice (Gill, 2000). Here, language is not viewed as a

by-product, but language itself is seen as practice. Discourse in this case, is used to do things- to explain themselves, to find faults with others, to present themselves positively (Gill, 2000). This shows that discourse does not take place in vacuum but is ever-changing through social beings that are continuously adapting to the interpretive context that they are in. Thus, discourse is frequently constructed and modified to fit the context that we are in. This is somewhat easily visible in formal contexts like offices or courtrooms, but it can be seen in casual and informal settings as well.

The crucial idea of interpretive context is not a narrow or mechanistic that limits itself to parameters like who is speaking about what in which location (Gill, 2000). The idea is to pick up on the nuanced and subtle features of the interaction that include the type of actions being performed by the character and the orientation of the participants. The role of the discourse analyst includes simultaneously analyzing the discourse and the interpretive context (Gill, 2000). A neutral, balanced and straightforward account can be seen as participating in a whole range of activities depending on the interpretive context. In this study, this theme of discourse analysis is present in the way in which Freirean themes are interpreted within the interpersonal relationships found in the selected books. This interpretation will involve analyzing concepts of Freire both in the form of linguistic resources used in the stories and the holistic dynamics that emerged from the interpersonal relationships.

The final theme of discourse analysis is to treat the talks, and the texts as organized rhetorically (Gill, 2000). In this theme, discourse analysis looks at social life as being depicted by conflicts of various kinds. Further, a lot of discourse is set in instituting one form of social reality in the face of competing forms. This can be seen in real life in many forms for example, in advertisements where people attempt to sell products or politicians trying to get popular support. This theme of rhetorical nature of texts in discourse analysis emphasizes on the fact that most discourse is developed to make itself persuasive (Gill, 2000). While this study does not investigate the rhetorical nature of the books, it makes a case for the possible implications that can emerge from using these books in a pedagogical setting.

4.3.2 Narrative Discourse Analysis

Narrative approach builds on the idea that human beings perceive their lives in form of stories that connect different events through a beginning, middle and end points (Sarbin, 1986).

These stories then are situated in the same contexts, societies and cultures that intersect with other stories (Josselson, 2011). Thus, these stories through which people inform about their lives represent the meaning-making in the ways in which they connect and assimilate with their internal and external lives. This includes the ways in which people select what needs to be shared in which structure of flow that best describes their experience of life. This

The meaning of these shared stories are legitimized through the social discourse around it and not the mere experience or the act of it (Bruner, 1990). This meaning is created through the connections made between various events of the lived life, through both the act of experiencing it and explicit linkages made by the researcher through the process of understanding and interpretation.

These narratives are usually accessed in the form of interviews but the narrative approach can be applied to written documents (Josselson, 2011). In these written texts, narratives are explained within a context, as a result of the circumstances it is based in. Narratives also consider the readers for whom the texts were created and the objective with which the author has structured the narrative in a particular manner (Josselson, 2011). In this study, narratives within storybooks as the written documents are being analyzed.

Narrative analysis highlights the content and its meanings, which can be noticed in the structures (Josselson, 2011). Narrative form of telling is not procedural, it may not be an accurate representation of things that occurred but rather one specific construction of events created in a given setting, intended for a specific audience, for specific purposes from a particular point of view (Mishler, 2004).

Narrative materials are generally analyzed in two ways- holistic versus categorical approaches (Lieblich et al., 1998). Holistic analysis focuses on a whole text as a narrative and a portion of this text is interpreted with reference to the other parts of the text (Lieblich et al., 1998). In categorical analysis, portions of texts that fall in a category through coding strategies which are then compared to other such similar narratives (Lieblich et al., 1998). In this study, the holistic analysis of the narrative approach is used to read the storybooks from a Freirean theoretical approach.

Josselson (2011) argues that the uniqueness of the narrative research is that this approach explores the discourses of accounts of text in entirety rather than portioning them into chunks of text events. In this sense, this approach argues that it is not the parts in themselves that are significant in the meaning-making process but the ways in which these sections relate to the big picture that counts (Josselson, 2011).

Further, the ways in which the meaning-making gains further nuance is the way in which the idea of self is constructed with reference to others, that could be another person, or another culture (Bakhtin et al., 1981). Bakhtin et al (1981) argue that this idea of self is not static but as unfinished self that recognize that the self keeps changing and evolving. Narrative analysis then, highlights this entity of self with respect to others through the relationships they form within the events described in these texts (Josselson, 2011).

The narrative approach first highlights the subjects within each narrative, the ways in which these subjects are positioned, their interactions and continuities (Josselson, 2011). The analysis process also pays attention to the things that are being said or unsaid which can be observed from the structure of the narrative and discourse (A. Rogers et al., 1999). That is why, a narrative analysis represents the narrative of the subjects while it may also take an authoritative view that goes into investigating beyond the conscious meanings (Chase, 2008). The aim of this analysis to answer the questions that the researcher seeks out by bringing out stories that are structured around a theme staying true to the context where the text originated. This process is grounded in the cultural and literary contexts, both in its immediate and larger surroundings that it is set in (Josselson, 2011).

4.3.3 Multimodal Discourse Analysis

Modes are an integral part of communication that are formed through a range of meaning-making systems to make sense of the social situations (Kress, 2011). All modes have different ways of forming meanings and these meanings are not always available to or understood by the audience (Kress, 2011). This theory is formed on the basic idea that the visual communication, action and gesture have transformed into a semiotic systems comparable to a language (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2007). In that sense, what constitutes a mode in communication is not definitive since the meanings are fluid and the new modes of communication are created with time and the old ones are transformed.

Among diverse options of modes, language and visuals play a central role in meaning-making process while maintaining their own distinct characteristics (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1997). Kress (2011) further elaborates the ways in which knowledge is produced in this process of meaning-making through different modes. He lays an emphasis on the ways in which these modes are structured which could be the signifiers of the discourses and the power relations in the process of communication. This could help in uncovering the imbalances of power and discourses generally remain hidden and paving the way for the critical pedagogy.

Picture books as bimodal texts

Picture books are intriguing sources of multimodal texts since in this mode of communication, the meaning-making occurs simultaneously in text and in image (Svensson, 2020). Picture books, similar to other narrative sources of texts play a fundamental role in introducing social life and literacy to children (Arizpe & Styles, 2015). This is usually achieved through a focus on character depictions, interactions between the characters, their actions and text. Therefore, there is a need to analyze and understand how images affect in making meaning and conveying the story.

Many scholars have tried to analyze this relationship between images and text through various typologies. Multimodal discourse analysis is one such framework that is fast-growing area of research that tries to analyze the contemporary texts (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1997). It functions on the idea that the contemporary text consists of multiple modes and that any analysis that accounts only for the text can account for a narrow part of the meaning-making process.

In functional linguistics, language is seen as a semiotic system that is used for meaning-making (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1997). This is achieved through a set of three metafunctions- the ideational level (the content of the text), the interpersonal level (interaction between the characters) and the textual level (the way in which the text is structured). In the context of picture books, Painter, Martin and Unsworth (2013) have expanded on the previously articulated semiotic studies of images in their book *Reading visual narratives*.

Painter et al. (2013) have developed a comprehensive multimodal model for the discourse analysis of picture books in a systematic and nuanced manner. This approach accounts for the visual constructions and their linkages with the verbal modality. Similar to the other models, this approach also consists of three meta functions in the systemic functional linguistics. This study will use the interpersonal metafunction of their model to investigate the ways in which themes of Freirean critical pedagogy are enacted visually as well as constructed verbally. This study will only use the interpersonal level of the model since it is the most relevant to investigate Freirean concepts of dialogue, humanization and praxis since these concepts can be investigated through the interaction between the characters. This study explores the relationship between the author and reader while also investigating the relationship between the characters of a book as a way to analyze Freirean themes present.

The interpersonal meaning-making in MDA

This study uses the meaning systems developed by Painter et al. (2013), for analyzing the text and images through the interpersonal metafunction. The following discussion summarizes the main meaning potentials used in the study and their explanation from Painter et al. (2013).

According to Painter et al. (2013), the interpersonal meaning-making is divided into two main systems. First, is affiliation which consists of (a) orientation-involvement that talks about the ways in which the characters are linked to each other and also how the reader is linked to the book and (b) proximity-distance that highlights the distance between the characters in the book and also the distance between the reader and the characters of the book.

Orientation, involvement

Orientation can be spotted through the images in the bodily position of these characters (facing each other, turning their backs to one another), that is in the horizontal angle between the characters. In text different orientations are achieved by the choice of words that elaborate on characters position and perception. Orientation in words can also be inferred by the naming choices used by the characters between themselves (Painter et al., 2013). Endearing naming choices indicate solidarity among the characters. Similarly, with respect to readers and the book, greater involvement is achieved through the use of front-on horizontal angle whereas lesser involvement is achieved through the use of oblique horizontal angle. Verbally, the system of involvement depends on the choice of words used by the narrator focused on the

reader. Greater involvement is achieved through the use of endearing naming choices (Painter et al., 2013).

Proximity and distance

The second affiliation, proximity, highlights if the characters in the image are placed close to each other or if they are far apart (Painter et al., 2013). In text, this notion of continuum can be observed through the names of the characters, the tones (formal or informal) of speech the characters use with each other. Distance in terms of shot size can be an indication of the closeness of the readers to the characters (Ledin & Machin, 2019). In text, closer distance between the readers and the characters is seen through the use of endearing naming choices used by the narrator.

Power

Power, as shown through vertical angle, informs the ways in which superiority/inferiority or strength/vulnerability is experienced amongst characters in an image (Ledin & Machin, 2019). This can be observed in images when a character is portrayed in a downward angle, it could mean that they are placed lower in hierarchy of the social structures. This aspect of angle also depicts power. Within images, power can be illustrated through the positioning of the images, high or low in relation to each other. Verbally, power is realized through the use of equality or otherwise of linguistic choices used by the characters. Power between reader and the book depends upon the linguistic choices used by the narrator.

Focalisation

Painter et al. (2013) use focalization in two ways and the first way is where it views a character's point of view. This means that the narrative follows through the character that experiences the events being described. In a bimodal method of analysis, in text it might be examined through use of inner speech and in image in the way in which the character is depicted and positioned. Second, focalisation applies to the extent to which the reader is encouraged to engage in the story (Painter et al., 2013). This can be described as the levels of engagement from the reader from being an observe to being in touch with the actions of the character.

Focalisation can also be depicted by gaze in images when the subject is looking at the readers directly or other subjects in the image (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1997). They argue that this helps in gauging or establishing a contact between the reader and the subject.

Feeling: Affect, Ambience and Graduation

The second major interpersonal system is that of feeling, that is divided into three main aspects - affect, ambience and graduation (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1997). The first aspect is that of (a) affect that refers to the posture and the facial expressions of the character expressed in the image. In the text, it might emerge in the form of choice of certain words like adjectives (happy, angry) and behavioral features (laughed, slept).

The second aspect of feeling is that of (b) ambience that is highlighted through the choice and use of colors in the images depicting the characters (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1997). Ambience plays a major role in this interpersonal system of analysis in the form of the emotional impact that the colors have on the viewers. Colors maybe used to depict create a certain atmosphere (friendly or hostile environment) or to set a certain rhythm in the story (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1997). The aspect of ambience also includes the familiarity/ non-familiarity of colors through the variety of colors used in the sense that if a lot of diverse and wide range of colors are used then it creates a sense of familiarity in the readers. This helps readers associate this image with the real life, where they are already engaging with complex and diverse colors.

The third aspect of feeling is (c) graduation which refers to the scale of emotional meaning attributed through image and text and the intensity in which it was depicted (Painter et al, 2013). For example, upscaling in text can be seen in the underlined adverb: She was a very happy cat.

Pathos

Painter et al (2013) apply pathos in reference to the drawing style that is implemented in the visuals where the naturalistic style, the kind that is the most realistic has a higher degree of impact on the reader. The more generic drawing style where the portrayal of the characters is of a layman type, might derive a detached, observed from a distance, not take it to heart kind of a response (Painter et al., 2013).

The interpersonal meaning systems as elaborated above are summarized in table 1. The table includes the name of the meaning potential as described by Painter et. al (2013) as well as the visual and verbal realizations of these meaning potentials. This study uses the framework shown in the table in the process of coding as shown in appendix 2.

Table 1. Interpersonal meaning systems across visual and verbal realization; from Painter et al. (2013)

Meaning potential	Visual realization	Verbal realization
Affiliation		
focalisation	gaze and alignment (or not) of the character with the reader's gaze	via sourcing of perceptions and thoughts
power	vertical angle of viewing	reciprocal v/s inequal linguistic choices between characters
distance	size of the shot	type of naming choices, endearments by narrator
proximity	relative proximity/touch of the depicted characters	type of naming choices, endearments between characters
involvement	horizontal viewing angle of reader	solidarity through specialized vocabulary, slang or range of topics by narrator
orientation	horizontal viewing angle between characters	solidarity through specialized vocabulary, slang or range of topics between characters
pathos	drawing style- minimalist, generic, naturalistic	varied descriptive and attitudinal linguistic resources
Feeling		
ambience	choice of colors depicting relative warmth, vibrancy etc.	mood created through tone and elaborate description
affect	emotion on faces+ stance of body	attitude through evaluative language
graduation	exaggerated size or angle, repetitions, proportion of frame filled etc.	intensification, repetition etc.

The entire range of meaning potentials and their realizations as given by Painter et al. (2013) for focalisation, pathos and ambience are included in Appendix 1. The other meaning potentials do not have a definitive list of options and are more flexible to be interpreted (Painter et al., 2013).

Commitment

Painter et al (2013) use the concepts of commitment and coupling to help understand the ways in which visual and verbal modalities work cohesively to create meaning. Commitment as a concept refers to the level to a system of meaning is used. In terms of images, the extent of commitment might be a result of the drawing style. For example, a naturalistic style of drawing with an expansive portrayal of facial expressions of the characters ‘commits’ stronger meaning compared to that of the minimalistic style of drawing.

In a similar way, the use of saturated colors ‘commits’ a stronger meaning than shades of muted colors (Painter et al, 2013). In terms of texts, commitment can be observed through the use of nominal structure. For instance, in the two following sentences, the nominal phrases are underlined: (a) The fox chased the rabbit. (b) The hungry fox chased the highly terrified cat. In the sentence (a) it can be seen that the nominal structure consists of only one word whereas in sentence (b) it can be observed that there are two words in the nominal structure – the epithets (hungry, terrified) and one intensifying adverb (highly) that captures the intensity. From this, it can be seen that the sentence (b) commits a stronger meaning than sentence (a).

Coupling

Coupling is used to explain the co-patterns created between two or more meaning-making systems (Painter et al, 2013). Coupling can be observed both within a single modal text and across modalities in bi-modal literature. Coupling can be observed in the visual modality through simultaneous use of various factors for instance, like affect, orientation and ambience. Coupling translates itself in the verbal systems through the choice of names and words describing emotions. However, it must be noted that all modalities have their own limitations and constraints (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996) and it is not always the case that these modalities complement each other with regards to the meaning-making system.

4.3.4 Practical Implementation of the Analysis

In the first phase of the analysis, the books were read in their entirety. In this initial reading, notes were made regarding the areas and the ways in which Freirean ideas of critical pedagogy were present or absent in the books. The sections where Freirean themes and concepts were identified was selected for closer analysis. The analysis was targeted on the sections where the Freirean ideas were present or instances where there could be an opportunity for the discussion of his ideas. This sectional analysis is conducted for all the

books except *Last Stop on Market street*. For *Last street on Market Street*, all the pages were analyzed since it is a small book and its heavy reliance on illustrations makes it unique to inspect for ideas of Freire.

In order to investigate how the social relations are constructed in these books using discursive resources which is the first research question, these sections were analyzed using two methods. One, discourse analysis for two books that are mainly textual (*Hello, Universe* and *The Eyes and the Impossible*) and second, multimodal discourse analysis for the books that rely on illustrations (*Last stop on Market Street* and *New Kid*). A coding chart was developed that derived based on the theory of multimodal discourse analysis by Painter et al. (2013) and Gill (2000). This coding chart was used as a guide for reading and analysis of the books (see Appendix 2). The coding of the selected sections of the books was done and the interpretations were derived from the patterns that emerged from the coded data.

These interpretations form the key to answering the ways in which the social relations are developed in these books through discursive practices. For example, in *Last Street on Market Stop*, from the coding of the data, it was seen that the readers and the characters of the book shared equal power most of the time. This pattern may be interpreted to mean that the readers are on equal footing as that of the characters in the book. In this way, using the general patterns that emerge from all the different meaning potentials like ambience, focalisation, proximity etc., an interpretation of the depiction of social relations in these books are formulated.

For the second research question, the interpretations from the discourse analysis above are combined with the Freirean concepts of dialogue, praxis and humanization (Freire, 2000) to guide the analysis to reconstruct the ways in which these ideas of critical pedagogy are present in these books. Instances of relationships were analyzed to check if they fulfilled the pre-conditions for dialogue and if the relationship was horizontal. The meaning potential of affect from the coding chart (Appendix 2) was used as a reference. The affects were color coded into green for positive affect and red for negative affect. The patterns in the meaning potential of affect were analyzed to see if the relationship showed affects such as mutual trust, hope, love, faith or humility. This was done by interpreting the social relations constructed through a Freirean lens. For example, the relationship between CJ and Nana in *Last Stop on Market Street* was indicated as showing affects of love, mutual trust and hope through

patterns of equal power, side-by-side orientation and the endearing terms and vocabulary used by them towards each other. This relationship was also interpreted to showcase critical thinking as Nana calmly answers CJs queries.

The meaning potential of affiliation from the coding chart (Appendix 2) was analyzed to check if the relationships were horizontal and for possible dehumanization. Many such instances were analyzed for the potential of these texts to enable critical consciousness of the reader. The relationship generated between readers and the characters of the books were also investigated to check how they aligned with Freirean critical pedagogy. The results of this local analysis were then reconnected to the larger societal and systemic discourses, such as bullying, othering and racism. For example, in *New Kid*, dehumanization of Black people in a predominantly white school can be seen in the social relations amongst characters in various instances where the white people consistently call the black people by wrong names even after multiple clarifications. This could be seen in the illustrations using cool tones, gaze and graduation (exaggeration where black people were shown to be significantly smaller in size compared to their white counterparts). This aspect of dehumanization was present in the text through the lack of intimacy between the characters, where they did not use any endearing names for each other or specialized vocabulary between them. The overall affect of the combination of the text and the illustration was interpreted to determine the impact on the readers, which in this case would be that of dehumanization and feelings of hopelessness. Since the study analyzed the sections which aligned with Freirean critical pedagogy, it did not focus on elements which may be in contradiction to Freire's concepts.

4.4 Quality Criteria

The aim of discussing the quality criteria is to provide a justification to the idea that the findings of the study are worthwhile (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To maintain a standardized and consistent understanding of this, a set of evaluation criteria were developed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). With respect to this study, the relevant criteria of credibility, dependability and transferability will be discussed.

Credibility

Polit & Beck (2013) state that the credibility criteria ensures that the data used to arrive at the findings is representative of the participants' worldview rather than that of the researcher's

notions. This criteria also increases the confidence of the researcher in the objectivity of the findings of the study and their objective representation of the participants' viewpoints (Elo et al., 2014). In this study, credibility was maintained through clarity and transparency in defining the research question and the sample. In addition to this, there is transparency and authenticity in the interpretation of the findings.

Transferability

Drisko (2025) states that the objective of transferability is to allow the meaningful application of the results across similar settings. For this study, it would mean that the finding of research on books selected in a similar manner as that of the sample, would yield similar results. In this study, the criteria of transferability were maintained, in the sense that the research design and the process of analysis can be replicated to different set of literature. The description of the research design, the process of analysis and the interpretation process of the findings presented in this study could be replicated, that could amount to the transferability of this study.

Dependability

The idea of dependability ensures the stability of the findings over time and over varied conditions. For this study, dependability was ensured through transparency in the process of selection of the sample and the method of analysis. Double coding could have further strengthened the dependability criterion of the study, but the coding sheet has been shared with the readers in the appendix for clarity. The findings of the study are clearly reported with ample evidence to support the findings which could add to the dependability of the study.

Researcher positionality

Researcher's subjectivity becomes a crucial aspect since it takes into account the researcher's own position in the society, their experiences and the worldview that can shape their interpretations (Mruck & Breuer, 2003). They argue that awareness of one's own subjectivity and being critical of it can improve the credibility of their study. In this case, the study has emerged from the researcher's strong interest in the idea of social justice and peace education which was the guiding factor in pursuing this study. In spite of the attempt in maintaining objectivity, it is likely that the researcher's own beliefs, worldview and experiences could

have affected the various stages of the research process. Identifying and reflecting on these aspects could help in maintaining the subjectivity and validity of the research study.

Kalu (2019) explains the idea of ‘subjective Is’ and the ways in which they could potentially influence the research qualitatively. This idea essentially explores the values and the ideology that the researcher brings to the research practice. Kalu (2019) further elaborates that asking self-reflective questions could help in identifying one’s subjective Is. Some of the recommended questions are- who am I, what factors have informed my worldview and how this worldview might have affected the research practice (Kalu, 2019). In this section, some of these potential viewpoints of the researcher’s subjectivity is explored.

Social Justice and I - The researcher’s own social location of being a woman growing up in a highly unequal Indian society has had an impact in her approach to looking at the world from a social justice lens. Exposure to inequality in various forms as well as the resistance to these inequalities in diverse ways could have been the reason why Freirean critical theory was selected as a theoretical framework for this study.

Storybooks and I - The researcher’s interest in reading fiction from an early age and the ways in which the storybooks have been used in classrooms informed the selection of storybooks as the subject of analysis. Researcher’s experience with using storybooks in classrooms shows that they can be effective teaching material to introduce and expand on themes of social justice with students of diverse age groups.

5 Findings

This chapter will present the results of the analysis from the selected books for the research question 1 - Whether and how the selected books are characterized by the Freirean theory of dialogue as praxis of liberation and humanization?

This was done through answering the following:

Research question 1(a) - How are social relations constructed in the selected books using discursive resources?

Research question 1(b)- How do the social relations in the selected books align with the Freirean pre-conditions of dialogue and humanization?

The findings to these two sub-questions will be presented in their respective sections. In the first section, the findings related to how the social relations were constructed in the selected books are organized. Within this section, the relationship between readers and characters of the book and the relationship amongst the characters in the books are elaborated. The purpose of the first sub-question was to determine how the different types of social relations are constructed in the books. This was required to be answered since the Freirean concepts of dialogue and humanization are characterized as relationships between people.

In the second section, the findings related to how the constructed social relations align with the Freirean pre-conditions of dialogue and humanization are detailed. The objective of the second sub-question is to examine how these social relations characterize Freirean concepts of humanization and dialogue. Here, in this study, this meant examining instances where the relationships displayed values of six preconditions of dialogue and instances of humanization. The instances presented in the study are representative examples of each theme selected to bring out these specific Freirean concepts strongly.

Taken together, these findings elaborate the main research question: Whether and how the selected books are characterized by the Freirean theory of dialogue as praxis of liberation and humanization?

5.1 Constructions of social relations in the analyzed books

From the analysis, many types of social relations were found to be constructed both, between the readers and the characters, as well as amongst the characters within the selected books. Between readers and characters, four diverse types of relationship were seen ranging from equal and close to unequal and distant. Amongst the characters within a book, the most prominent type of relationship found to be constructed was equal and close. Other relationships found ranged from equal and involved to unequal and detached. One distinct relationship found was the one which progressed from unequal to equal through the book. The instances presented in this section are representative in nature and not exhaustive.

The following sections details the findings more elaborately with relevant examples and illustrations.

5.1.1 Relationship between readers and characters of the book

Equal and close: Last stop on Market Street

The readers and the character are almost always in a relationship of equality which can interpreted from the lack of vertical angle of viewing. This equal relationship is enhanced through the sense of proximity created by the use of endearing names (CJ, Nana), choice of language and the relative proximity of the characters.

But at the same time, it can be seen that the readers are always kept as an observer, which can be seen through unmediated focalisation where the reader is not actively involved in the story. This disengagement is accentuated by the use of third person narrator and the use of long shots in the illustrations and the text. Thus, the book commits different levels of meaning through text and images. This divergent coupling also introduces a sense of distance between the readers and the book. This sense of distancing the reader can be seen through the element of power in some pages where the reader is at the higher position looking down upon the bus that CJ and Nana are getting on. Here, the readers are put in a position where they sympathize with the characters rather than say feeling empathetic towards them.

The readers are left with the feelings of happiness and curiosity which are visible through the conversations of CJ - Nana and the questions that CJ asks Nana. CJ is also shown to be

grateful towards the end where he is shown to be in a state of absolute joy when he hears the man on the bus sing.

Equal but detached: Hello Universe

This book uses a mix of first person and third person narrator in the telling of the story. The story progresses in the first-person form when it is being told from Valencia's point of view. But when the story follows the plot of other characters, it is written in a third person narrator format. This strategy seems to create a sense of engagement where the readers are made to relate with Valencia's point of view more than that of other characters. This is interesting, especially considering that the readers are following Virgil's story but might empathize more with Valencia. This first-person narration of Valencia's point of view might create a sense of solidarity with her character as she goes on the journey of making new friends, approaching challenges with a critical mindset and eventually saving Virgil from the well with the help of her new friends.

Readers seem to be placed at equal footing as that of the characters in the book which might mean that the readers are neither at the position of being judgmental to the characters nor are the characters talking down to the readers. Along with this, the readers also seem to be engaged in the plot through maximum involvement into the world of the characters for instance through use of slang words. However, a sense of distance seems to persist throughout where the readers, despite the involvement seem to be kept at bay and a limited sense of intimacy is generated. This sense of intimacy seems to be closer in instances that involve bullying almost as if to show the readers the instance of bullying from closer quarters. This was achieved through narrator using specialized terms for Virgil (Retardo).

The atmosphere that is created in the book is vibrant, rich and nuanced through the use of descriptive words, phrases and specialized vocabulary. For example, when Chet throws Virgil's backpack into the well, the narrator sets the scene vibrantly using descriptive words and phrases, like flushed cheeks, glistening hairline and using the analogy of feeding Gulliver to the Lions. This creates a world that is closer to the one that is already familiar to the readers which makes it easier for them to relate to. However, the feelings that are upscaled or exaggerated for effect are the generally unpleasant emotions (bullying, othering, hopelessness, desperation) towards the beginning of the book while the emotions that are upscaled towards

the end are the generally pleasant ones (love, mutual trust, hope, bravery). Also, most of these unpleasant emotions induced in the readers seem to occur when Chet is bullying Virgil while the other characters mostly leave a pleasant emotion.

Progressing from distant to close: New Kid

The relationship between the readers and the characters of the book is that of equality. The narration of the book both visually and textually varies between first person and third person narrator. This switch from a third person narrator to first person narrator and the drawings of Jordan in his journal helps the reader understand Jordan's point of view. For example, in the earlier chapters we see what Jordan feels about subjects like Math where he draws them like demons chasing students.

There is an overall distance can be observed through lack of endearing terms used by the narrator for the characters and the shots being placed at a distance from the viewer in order to create the distance. This can be observed in the earlier chapters like the long shots of his new school Riverdale Academy and of the new characters being introduced. This detachment can be seen textually for example, in the lack of use of slang or specialized vocabulary. This convergent coupling enhances the effect of distance for the readers.

However, this distance with the readers gets closer as the book progresses, which might be indicative of Jordan's own increasing intimacy with his new friends. The shots start getting closer and zoom in on the characters for example, the close shot between Jordan and Drew in the locker room, portraying the growing intimacy between them. This also complements the affiliation of involvement where the world building is nuanced and detailed that is close to the real-world portrayal. This is done visually through a horizontal angle of viewing across the book which encourages the readers to be engaged while textually the readers are detached from the world of the story.

The feelings that are generated among the readers is through the mix two types of drawing styles. One, that of non-ambient outline figures that Jordan uses to express his feelings in the journals that are black and white where the figures are somewhat outlandish. The other is the use of character comic style drawings where the characters are expressive and colors are used generously to depict the world of characters and their interactions between each other. The

use of black and white images over colored pages at places may force the reader to take a step back and respond to the images with thought instead of reacting to them emotionally. These pages might compel the reader to relate to the content at an ideational level instead of only engaging with the plot.

The use of colors in the initial parts of the book are cool, muted and removed as if to create a restrained meaning and might highlight the feelings of coldness, otherness and distance felt by the characters. For example, to accentuate the feelings of insecurity and otherness that Jordan's father feels when he sees Liam's palatial towering mansion, blues and greys were used. A similar color palette was used when Drew and Jordan share their experience of being black in a suburban private school that is predominantly white. This use of colors shifts to warm palette towards the end of the book mirroring the Jordan's journey that is now blossomed into friendship with most of his peers. This switch helps the readers to focus on the warmth and closeness that the characters feel with each other. This case of divergent coupling within different phases of the book helps with highlighting the shift in the relationship between the readers and the characters in the book from one of detachment to one of closeness.

Unequal and distant with narrator power: The Eyes and the impossible

Readers are aligned with Johannes as the narrator and expected to relate with Johannes since the focalisation is that of first person which means that the readers are looking at the world from Johannes's point of view. This serves as a means of achieving narrator power over the reader. Johannes is placed in a position as someone with power and authority when he is shown to be looking down on humans in places. For example:

‘And here I should say that of all the horrible things that humans have created, the most maniacal and wrong of them all is this, this intermittent screaming sound as their vehicles go backward.’ (pg. 85)

Reader is expected to agree with Johannes' opinion. This is subversion as a dog-hyena hybrid character is given voice to be outspoken about humans and their actions. This can be seen in the instance where Johannes is critical to the ways in which humans are interfering with the

equilibrium of the park by constructing new buildings and catching stray dogs as it can be seen below:

‘If the Parks People cut a new path across the width of the park, that means more people will come where the animals had been alone and undisturbed, and that might upset the balance. If there are new buildings, that upsets the Equilibrium. New roads, new rules. All affect the Equilibrium.’ (pg.18)

Distance is generally far from the reader, that discourages the readers from forming a close personal relationship with the characters. The reader is not immersed in the story world and is detached from it. This might have been the case because the story is from a unique point of view from what the readers might know, and a detached distance might help in making sense of Johannes’s world. This distance can also help in empathizing with the animals without any sense of guilt or judgement especially since Johannes seems to be othering humans in his experience of life. Having a narrator who is not too close to the readers and one who holds more power, seems a logical choice for a story where children have to negotiate a different world where the readers have to agree with Johannes about what is good. In this context, using appropriate discursive resources, the book builds an alternate world where Johannes is correct and humans have to be seen as somewhat stupid.

The story uses lots of vibrant and familiar language to keep it engaging to the readers. For example, the narrator provides a detailed description about the types of news that Johannes and the assistant eyes bring to the Bison in a way which is colorful. This can be seen when humans are categorized into types like Concerteers, Campers and the Troubled Travelers. The language used to describe this world is very descriptive and yet simple that helps the reader in visualizing these events. Johannes has a general disposition of skepticism and curiosity towards life which translates to the reader through his sense of humor and keen observations. This mix of humor and nuanced observations mostly invoke pleasant feelings in the reader. Johannes, as a stray dog that grows up in the park and in his role as the Eyes to the bison has a strong sense of community. He places immense value on friendship and solidarity which can be seen in his actions for example, when he creates an action plan for the Bisons to escape from the park. Overall, the story also invokes positive affect of feelings like contentment, joy and belonging.

5.1.2 Relationship amongst the characters of the book

Equal and close: Relationship between CJ and Nana (Last stop on Market Street)

First, one of the most prominent qualitative types of social relation amongst characters of the books is that of equal and close type. This could be seen for instance, in the relationship between CJ and Nana in *Last stop on Market Street* where it was constructed in the story through the use of both verbal and visual discursive resources. This could be observed through images when CJ and Nana were depicted side-by-side with an equal vertical angle of viewing between them. CJ and Nana have an equal relationship which can be seen through the linguistic choice of reciprocity between them. This can be seen in instances where CJ feels comfortable to ask questions of emotions ranging from insecurity to shame. “Nana, how come we don’t got a car?” (p.5). and Nana answers all of his questions with empathy and sometimes humor. This is also supported in their portrayal as they are not shown looking down or up at each other which may indicate that there is equal power between them.

CJ and Nana’s close relationship is visible through the proximity that they share where they are almost always side-by-side with each other and the endearing names that they call each other with. There is mostly convergent coupling seen in the way text and images heighten the sense of closeness in this relationship.

Unequal but close: Between Chet and Virgil (Hello, Universe)

Chet and Virgil have an unequal relationship where Chet has more power and exerts this power in the form of bullying Virgil. This display of power can be seen through tone (“Hey, RETARD! Don’t you know your own name?” (p. 37)) or use of name-calling (Retard, pansy). The imbalance in power can also be seen from the emotions of fear and tension that are evoked in Virgil. This can be seen from the repetition of certain words to emphasize this feeling (Walk, walk, walk) or using some words in bold (THUMP or RETARD).

The orientation between these characters is detached since there seems to be no solidarity depicted between them in form of words or tone used but there is a close sense of proximity between them. This closeness or their proximity is visible in the episodes where Chet bullies Virgil. In that sense, this relationship that rides on bullying seems to be a close one but with

no sense of solidarity between them. This is a case of committing meaning differentially through the resources of proximity and orientation. Through orientation, we see the characters lacking solidarity with each other, but through proximity of language use there is a sense of closeness. This divergent coupling within the same mode but using different meaning potentials creates a sense of dichotomy which might have been used to depict the complexity of this relationship. This relationship undergoes a transformation towards the end where Virgil takes his power back when Chet tries to bully him and states clearly that he cannot bully him anymore. (“Call me that again, and you’ll regret it” (p. 301)).

Equal and involved: Between Valencia and Kaori (Hello, Universe)

Valencia and Kaori share an equal relationship in their interaction with each other. They are respectful and take each other’s recommendations seriously. (“If your sister says we need to find a rock with scales, I guess we need to find a rock with scales” (p.240)). They have an equal and involved relationship from the start where they have a range of topics that they talk about (astrology, interpretation of dreams, their relationship with parents). But their relationship progresses from an acquaintance to that of friends over the course of the book. (“.....That’s probably why fate brought us together as friends.” (p.262)) This friendship is that of friendship between the opposites; for example, Kaori is someone that believes in the existence of fate whereas Valencia views world in a logical manner where she explains some incidents through coincidence.

Unequal and detached: Between Chet and Mr. Bullens (Hello, Universe)

Chet and Mr. Bullens have an unequal power that appears detached and separated in their interactions with each other. This can be seen through the lack of endearing terms and the range of topics discussed between them. Chet does not seem to call Mr. Bullens as dad, nor does Mr. Bullen use any terms of endearment to address Chet. This lack of proximity between characters extends to the fact that the range of topics discussed between them is limited and there seems to be no scope of extending this from both the people involved (‘Respect came in two flavors, Mr. Bullens said: fear or admiration. Sometimes both.....’ (p.73)).

Equal and close: Between Drew and Jordan (New Kid)

Drew and Jordan share an equal relationship that is depicted both in the text as well as the images which can be seen from the equal vertical angle of viewing between them. They are empathetic with each other which can be inferred from their proximity with each other. They are almost always depicted side by side to each other and they share a close proximity in the frame for example, they are shown fist bumping each other. This equal relationship can be observed in the detailed expressions that the characters are shown to be expressing to each other. Their expressions range from ecstatic joy (“Yeah, Congrats! (p.234)) to sadness (“So what’s up with Ms. Rawle always calling me De Andre?” (p.87)).

The proximity of their relationship can be seen in their choice of endearments where Drew calls Jordan as dawg, a common nickname among the Black community. A similar pattern can be observed in the text where these two characters share their feelings of class-based othering, racial bullying and the difficulty in making deep friendships that they both face in the school. This wide range of topics they share can be evidence of their proximity. This convergent coupling between different modes and within modes too serves to enhance the closeness of their relationship further. Their relationship is portrayed as equal in both text and images which heightens the effect on readers.

Equal and close: Between Jordan and Alexandra (New Kid)

Jordan and Alexandra have an equal relationship where both of them are new to the private school. There is equal vertical angle of viewing between them which means they are at each other’s eye level. They are at close proximity with each other where they are depicted side by side. These modal characteristics reflect the relationship that they share which is founded upon equality. There is a sense that Alex can share her deep secret of why she wears gloves even though it emerges from a heroic act where she saves her younger brother from getting hurt as shown below:

“.....Promise not to tell?”

“But why? You saved your little brother. You’re a hero!!!” (p.187)

Alex displays a sense of humility even when Jordan notices and praises her act of sacrifice. These feelings are reflected in the use of warm color palette and nuanced details of

expressions on their faces. Even though, Jordan is not very excited about this friendship initially when he expresses his disappointment on realizing that his parents have spoken to Alexandra's parents instead of Alex's parents. However, it can be seen towards the end of the book he is shown to appreciate and value this friendship.

Progression from unequal to equal relationship: Between Jordan and Andy (New Kid)

This relationship starts off by being unequal where Andy, as a white student has power over Jordan, a black student who has just started at the new school. This can be seen both verbally where they insult one another that they indulge in and visually through their face-to-face depictions and the upscaled images of one another. Jordan and Andy have an unequal relationship for a major part of the book. In the initial sections even though the proximity between them is close, Andy wields more power. This can be inferred in the initial sections where he introduces his peers to Jordan, a newcomer in a judgmental and labelled fashion. Andy is cautioning Jordan to stay away from groups based on superficial 'group features' like computer geeks, show-off etc. as shown below:

“Anime dork...Keep Away!, Show-off!....Keep Away!, Computer Geeks....Keep Away!”
(p.28)

Though it is inferred through text, this power dynamic is not reflected in the images where there is equal vertical angle of viewing between them. Thus, the text and images are divergently coupled and commit differential meaning through these modes. Jordan and Andy also have a sense of intimacy where they call each other names and understand one another's aspirations. Through the middle of the book, Jordan gains more power over Andy which can be inferred in their interactions when Jordan replaces Andy as the Quarter back in the football team. This see-saw of the power dynamic stabilizes when towards the end for example, when Andy brings Jordan a gift when his artwork is selected as the cover for the school magazine.

Equal but detached: Johannes and the Assistant Eyes (The Eyes and the Impossible)

Johannes and all the Assistant Eyes share an equal relationship that is based on equal power between all the characters. Despite the fact that they are from different species, Bertrand (a seagull), Sonja (a squirrel), Yolanda (a pelican), Angus (a raccoon) and Johannes (a dog-hyena hybrid), they share a strong bond. This can be seen through the events in the story for

example, all the assistant eyes develop an elaborate plan that requires synchronous action between them to ensure that Johannes can enter the building of the exhibition and look at the rectangles (paintings) that seem to mesmerize him. However, the characters are not intimate with each other as there is a lack of proximity between the characters in terms of use of endearing names between the characters or use of specialized slang between them. Hence, these characters remain separated and detached from one another.

Equal and close: Johannes and the Bisons (The Eyes and the Impossible)

Johannes and the Bisons share an equal relationship even though the Bisons have more power in the park and are considered the general guardians of the park. The Bison and Johannes share an equal and an intimate relationship where they trust each other's opinions. The Bisons trust Johannes's observation and sensitivity to the extent that they trust him with the role of the Eyes. This trust can be seen from Johannes's point of view when he only believes the fact that they are live on an island only when the Bisons confirm it.

'I looked into the slate-blue night and felt a simmering rage within me. The Bison knew all about this but hadn't told me.' (p. 148)

The intimacy between them can be observed in the endearing way in which The Bisons refer to Johannes by calling him son while he sometimes calls them with their individual names (Freya, Sam and Meredith).

5.2 Alignment of social relations in the selected books with the Freirean pre-conditions of dialogue and humanization

From the analysis, it is seen that the relationships constructed in the selected books aligned with the Freirean concepts of dialogue and humanization. This was seen through the various embodiments of the pre-conditions of dialogues, like critical thinking, love, humility, mutual trust and hope. The aspect of humanization was visible through instances of praxis and horizontal relationships. The instances presented in the following sections are representative in nature and not exhaustive. These instances were picked to be elaborated on due to their close and nuanced alignment with specific concepts of Freire as detailed.

The following section details the findings more elaborately with relevant examples and illustrations.

5.2.1 Alignment with the Freirean preconditions of dialogue

Instance of horizontal relationship: CJ and Colby (Last Stop on Market Street)

The book has a scene where CJ's friend Colby gets into his car and waves CJ goodbye. All the central characters in the picture, Nana, CJ, Colby and Colby's father are shown smiling. It is worth noting that Colby is shown to be a white person while CJ and Nana are black. The text also emphasizes the class differences between the two friends when CJ asks Nana about why they don't get a car.

The depiction of silent friendship and solidarity between friends gives a glimpse of what Freire argues to be a horizontal relationship. This scene can be contextualized in the larger racial history of oppression and can be seen as a starting point of the process dialogue between the oppressed and the oppressor. It may also be seen as an instance that provides hope that calls for praxis- a call for action.

Instance of critical thinking, love and hope: Nana and CJ (Last Stop on Market Street)

Throughout the story, Nana repeatedly embodies the preconditions for dialogue in the form of critical thinking and hope. She responds to the curiosity and insecurity of CJ in ways that makes him look at the world differently and question the status quo. For example, when CJ asks why he has to wait for the bus in the rain. Then, Nana quips that the trees also get thirsty and points to a tree asking if CJ can see the tree drinking water through a straw. At another instance, when CJ asks why the blind man cannot see, Nana responds:

“Some people watch the world with their ears.” (p. 13)

In these instances, it can be seen that Nana carries a sense of hope and critical thinking that Freire argues are crucial preconditions for the process of dialogue and humanization. And she does this with an unwavering sense of love towards CJ where she does not get annoyed or judge him for the kind of observations he seems to be making.

Instance of horizontal relationship: Virgil and Lola (Hello, Universe)

Virgil and Lola have an equal relationship that is founded in mutual trust and love. The equal positioning of these two characters, invites possibilities of dialogue to occur. This can be seen

from the equal power they share between them that is depicted through the ease with which Virgil can ask any questions that he has to Lola. Lola also patiently answers his questions in without judgement and in a way that expands his imagination.

“Lola, do you know anything about hands?”

“I know that they have five fingers each, most of the time.”

“What do you mean, most of the time?”

“I once knew a girl in my village who was born with an extra thumb.” (p.21)

The stories that Lola shares with Virgil engage him and stay connected with him to the extent the characters from these stories (the Girl who did not know her destiny) talk to him when he is stuck in the well with Gulliver. It is these stories that help him find his voice both literally and metaphorically where he learns to rely on his friends. The characters in these stories fill him with a sense of hope and bravery that get him through the time he is stuck in the well. This shows that Virgil had a deep bond with her that is also expressed through the third person narrator. (She (Lola) noticed everything about him (Virgil), and He (Virgil) could trust Lola.)

The relationship between Lola and Virgil is the one relationship in the family where Virgil feels close and safe enough to share his apprehensions and insecurities. This is the relationship that instils him with the stories of bravery and hope which help him get through the time when he is stuck in a deep, dark well alone. The stories that Lola tells him are of the people who were shunned by the society due to some shortcomings or deficiencies that they allegedly had like the girl who did not know her fate or Pah, the god of darkness. But these are the characters that come to him in times of distress and make him aware of his voice and courage to stand up to his bully Chet and his parents.

Instance of critical thinking and mutual trust: Valencia and Kaori (Hello, Universe)

Valencia and Kaori’s relationship embodies the pre-conditions for dialogue in the form of critical thinking and mutual trust. This relationship is rooted in equality where there is ground for possibilities of dialogue to occur between the two. Valencia maintains a journal with observations from daily life and makes note of questions that she would want to look up answers to later (5 detailed points on how to avoid bitten by a snake). Kaori is someone who

believes in the idea of fate and astrology when she tries to find out the kind of person that Valencia could be based on her sign (Adventurous and courageous! Enthusiastic and confident! - when told she is a Scorpio). The trajectory of this relationship evolves into that of genuine friendship and the possible business partnership since Kaori understands the spiritual world and Valencia knows the Natural world.

Instance of mutual trust: Johannes and Helene (The Eyes and the Impossible)

Johannes and Helene shared an equal relationship that was based on mutual trust and humility. Helene is driven by curiosity of life and was someone who sought logic to answer her curious mind. She thinks about things in a critical manner before accepting anything just on the face value. This can be seen in the instance when she explains empathetically about how the Sun might not be a god but just another thing in the universe and that all other organisms of the universe are just as important.

“Not that it’s not important. It is! But the rest of all we know and see is important, too. The ocean. The air. The land. The trees and sand and stones. Even the worms! All things equal and equally important.” (p.169)

Textually, Johannes and Helene do not share a close or attached relationship because there is no use of slang words or endearing names that they have for each other. But a sense of closeness can be observed in the way in which Helene influences Johannes in thinking critically and relying on logic which he credits to Helene later in the book.

Instance of mutual trust and love: Bertrand leaves the island with Johannes (The Eyes and the Impossible)

The relationship between Bertrand and Johannes is rooted in care and love that they harbor for each other to the extent that Bertrand defies tradition and takes an important decision like that of moving away from the park to the city on the insistence of Johannes. Traditionally, seagulls take a plunge from the sky to the ground when they get old or when they cannot fly. When Bertrand severely hurts his wings from an accident and is unable to fly, he defies the traditional practice of taking the plunge. Instead, he agrees to get on the ship with Johannes.

“You’re not old,” I said. “You’re only changed. Before, you could fly, and now, you can walk. Hold on to me as we run together and see. See the sea, see the mainland. See everything that can be seen.”

“So I’d ride on your back?” he asked.

“Sometimes,” I said. “And sometimes you can walk.”

An impish smile overtook him. “That would be pretty slow,” he said, and I laughed. (p. 245)

This aspect of exploring marginalization through dialogue and sharing with people within horizontal relationships is present in all the books in this study. In the *Eyes and the Impossible*, it can be seen that Johannes and the Bisons share an equal and close relationship. Here, the Bisons portray the values of love and mutual trust with Johannes. In these equal and close relationships, that embodied the Freirean pre-conditions were most likely seen to initiate and execute praxis. For instance, Johannes planned and executed release of the Bisons from captivity which was an action executed on a solid foundation of reflection and dialogue. The equality between their relationship was depicted through the equality in their conservation with each other where nobody is spoke down to with authority despite there being a hierarchy in the positions they hold as the Eyes and the Assistant Eyes to the Bisons. Further, they are detached, which is observed through their lack of intimacy between each other where they may not call each other with endearing names or share personal nicknames for each other. Despite the fact that they are detached with each other, the assistant Eyes represent the pre-conditions of mutual trust and love with Johannes.

5.2.2 Alignment with the idea of humanization

Instance of dehumanization: Chet bullies Virgil (Hello, Universe)

The relationship between Chet and Virgil is one that is founded in an unequal power dynamic, one that is built on a kind of oppression - bullying. Chet called Virgil by the name retard, pansy because Chet thinks of Virgil as a weird boy, who does not have anything to say. On the other hand, Virgil refers to Chet in his mind by the name Bull not a short form of his last name Bullens but because he was really like a bull, always ready to attack him. This relationship generated the feelings of fear and anxiety in Virgil. In this process, both Virgil and Chet are dehumanized where Virgil is dehumanized in being stripped away from his feeling of being human by redacting him to a false identity of a ‘retard’. Chet, on the other

hand, is being dehumanized when he is doing the act of taking away Virgil's act of being fully human by ridiculing and terrorizing him.

The issue of bullying in *Hello, Universe* is presented as a 'problem' set in the context and world of Virgil. The book does a good job in creating the atmosphere and setting up the descriptions of the after-effects of how the characters are feeling when it happens. This creates a full impact and understanding the nuanced issues of the problem of bullying in readers. The book also presents multiple alternative solutions in form of imagined scenarios in the protagonist's mind before the final action that Virgil takes by standing up to his bully. This relationship, in part is emancipated when the Alternate Virgil realizes in reality after his rescue from the well, when he firmly stands up to Chet against his bullying.

On the other hand, the relationship between Chet and Mr. Bullens is one of unbalanced power dynamics where Mr. Bullens bullies Chet to behave in a manner that he wants him to. Chet seems to agree with Mr. Bullens way of thinking because he is seeking his approval. This can be seen from the detached nature of their relationship that is devoid of intimacy through endearing names or use of slang language between them.

Both these unequal relationships consist of instances of dehumanization, bullying at the core and yet, there are different. This difference can be seen in the relationship between Chet and Virgil that inspires hope when compared to the relationship between Chet and Mr. Bullens which is detached and has a lack of intimacy between them. This sense of hope transpiring from intimacy between Chet and Virgil could initiate the process of dialogue between them, a hint of which occurs towards the end of the book where Virgil stands up to Chet.

Instances of dehumanization: Racial and classist othering of Black students (New Kid)

The book discusses multiple episodes of racial othering of Black students and the subtle ways in which it operates. For example, Maury is called Maury-o by some of the senior peers whose meaning is understood only by Jordan. Jordan explains to the readers that Maury-o sounds like Oreo which is a euphemism used to refer to people who are white on the inside and black on the outside. This is an instance that shows how Maury was discriminated on an intersection of two identities- of being a black person who is rich. Maury's struggles as a

black student are not taken as seriously because he is seen as a rich person whose problems are not seen as important as other black students.

Another instance of the racial othering that is described is that the black community's literature is stereotypical depicted to be that of struggle or poverty and these are the kind of books that the black students are also expected to buy and engage in. This can be seen in the instance when Maury expresses an interest in buying a book from the adventure genre, his friends still gift him a book that is a story about escape of black slaves from Europe to the US.

Instances of classist othering is also a recurring form of dehumanizing effects that the black students who are on the financial aid undergo. For example, there is an instance where the class is to go on an excursion and the names of the students who are on financial aid were read out loud by the teacher and the amount of funds that were covered on their behalf was also announced. This leads to a sense of shame that the students felt and a sense of othering started creeping in. This othering can be seen in an instance when Liam, a white rich student offers to pay for any books that Drew might want to buy which makes him feel awkward and shamed.

Instance of praxis: Nana volunteering at the soup kitchen (Last Stop on Market Street)

Nana is not just a character who embodies the preconditions in her attitude and words but is an agent of action. In the beginning of the story, it is shown that CJ and Nana are travelling from the church in a bus to an unknown destination, but it is revealed at the end that they volunteer at the soup kitchen. It is established that Nana belongs to a humble background through the course of the story, just comfortable enough. And yet she takes time and effort to volunteer at the soup kitchen and ensures that CJ comes along as well. Here, it can be seen that while Nana constantly displays the traits of hope with various characters in conversation, she is also an agent of praxis.

Last Stop on Market Street as a whole also emphasizes on the problem-posing aspects of humanization. In the book, the issues emerging at the intersection of class and race inequality are placed at the center. The protagonists are shown to be dealing with the 'problem' as actors who are experiencing the discrimination emerging from this intersection between class and race. Throughout the bus journey, there are multiple interactions that place this problem at the

center and towards the end, action emerges from reflection that is portrayed through Nana's character. This action is not suggested to be a solution for the problem in general but something that makes sense in the context of this particular character.

Instance of praxis: Jordan stands up against Andy and the teacher (New Kid)

One of the pivotal instances of praxis is depicted in the book in an episode where the class teacher, yet again, wrongly assumes that Drew starts a verbal fight with Andy, a rich white student. In reality, it was the other way round and the teacher does not believe Drew when presents his defense. Having seen this instance of teacher not believing his friend, Jordan stood up for his friend and provided his testimony as to how the fight was started by Andy. Following his suite, many of their friends added their voices of this as well as other instances that occurred earlier. This episode depicts the Freirean idea of action that emerges from reflection and solidarity with the oppressed. This instance also aligns with the Freirean idea that praxis can occur once there is a sense of solidarity, mutual trust and love between people fighting against oppression. The relationship between Jordan and Andy also has elements of hope. It seems that there is a sense of intimacy between them due to which this relationship progresses away from the instance of dehumanization, towards a process of dialogue which is traced through the book. Towards the end of the book, this relationship becomes more equal and one founded on mutual trust.

Instance of praxis: The group rescues Johannes from captivity (The Eyes and the Impossible)

The group (Assistant Eyes) and Johannes share a relationship that is founded on deep respect for each other and a shared sense of responsibility of maintaining the equilibrium of the park through a process of continuous observation. Although the friendship starts on the basis of their roles as the Eyes and the Assistant Eyes, it blossoms into a deep relationship through the book. This can be seen when everyone acts together to rescue Johannes from the captivity of a group of people who want to use him as a distraction in their ploy of robbery in the city. All the assistant eyes plan and execute the plan with precision that requires mutual trust between them. This is an instance that connects to the Freirean concept of praxis that can only emerge from a point of dialogue and trust between the revolutionaries.

Instance of praxis: Execution of Bison's escape plan (The Eyes and the Impossible)

The Bisons are the center of attraction and one of the largest animals at the park. Imagining freeing of these animals and executing on this plan successfully requires collaboration and mutual trust between all members involved. It requires working as a team and reliance on one another to achieve this. This aspect of working together towards a concrete action is what Freire calls praxis – an intentional action based on reflection. The pre-condition of mutual trust and humility can be observed in this instance that leads to the successful implementation of the plan. It can be said that Johannes could even imagine this near impossible task since he could sense the fulfilment of these pre-conditions of dialogue.

An aspect of humanization that the books portray is that they all humanize the villains and the 'bad guys'. This is done in a two-fold manner where firstly, the problem posing method is used through which the problem or the issue is placed at the center and not a particular individual who might be an agent that escalates the problem. This strategy helps in looking at the problem as the disruptor or the cause of conflict and not the individual that percolates it. This strategy helps in humanizing the 'antagonist' as a person who is also affected by the problem even though it might not seem so. Freire explains the similar idea when he says that any kind of oppression not only dehumanizes the oppressed but also the oppressor. By shifting the focus to the problem, the dehumanization of the oppressors can be reduced to an extent. This can be seen for instance, in *Last Stop on Market Street* where the emphasis is on the issues of race and poverty without highlighting any individual that might be a perpetrator. This strategy of making the problem itself an antagonist humanizes an oppressor to some extent in their act of oppression.

Secondly, the antagonists of these books are presented with a certain fullness that presents them as whole beings on their own with their own insecurities, hopes and dreams. This does not seem as a justification for their behavior as a perpetrator of oppression but this aspect of presenting their humanity gives hope and a possibility of dialogue with them. This can be observed in *Hello, Universe* where we see Chet bully Virgil on multiple occasions but at the same time, we also get a glimpse of his relationship with his father. In their interaction, we see Chet's father bully Chet for not being able to make it into the basketball team and the way in which Mr. Bullens passes judgement on a stranger for their eating choices at the supermarket in the presence of Chet. These instances give us an insight into the type of

relationship the father-son share and why Chet might be bullying Virgil for being shy. This strategy of providing an insight into the life and personality of the antagonists helps in further humanizing them. This strategy is also helpful in centering the problem and solving that problem at a structural level.

5.2.3 Relationship between the reader and character from a Freirean perspective

In *Last Stop on Market Street*, There is a sense of disengagement between the readers and the characters of the book which can be seen for example in the text where the bus is described as old and that CJ does not like taking the bus. Here, the readers are ‘othered’ almost as if to say that they belong to a higher class than that of CJ and Nana. This seems to emphasize the idea that the readers might not necessarily relate to the life situation that CJ and Nana are in since it seems to put the reader in higher power.

There is an overall effect of hope and focus on praxis through the book where Nana is seen to embody these values consistently. By the time the book ends, it seems like the readers are invited to call for action where they are nudged to participate in their community as seen here: “.....Now, come on.” (p.27)

This can be seen in the nuanced and vibrant last page of the soup kitchen. Here, both Nana and CJ are seen in action, greeting and serving soup at their local soup kitchen.

Throughout the book, *Hello, Universe*, the readers seemed to be kept at a distance from the characters however in the instances of dehumanization like that of bullying there is a sense of intimacy. This puts the act of dehumanization in focus for the readers, which seems to be similar to the problem-posing technique suggested by Freire. By putting the problem in the center, it seems to make the readers take note of it and think of ways in which they can solve or engage with the problem. The book presents with a solution of sorts where the character being bullied takes an assertive stand against the bully towards the end. This leaves the reader with a feeling of possibility and hope towards the end.

In addition to this, the overall narrative of the book seems to start off with a world with conflicts and instance of dehumanization in the form of bullying and an unequal power dynamic between characters. But as the book ends, the readers are shown a trajectory where most of these issues were resolved through a series of reflective thinking and action. The book

seems to highlight the fact that these issues require deliberate action for any kind of resolution to occur. This can be seen from the fact that Virgil has a conversation with his mother about why he does not like being called Turtle and would prefer being called Virgilio as seen below:

“I wish you wouldn’t call me Turtle,” he said to his mother. “You can call me Virgil. Or Virgilio. Or Bayani. But don’t call me Turtle.” (p. 305)

This action creates a more equal relationship between them whereas Chet still has unequal relationship with his father.

The overall relationship between the readers and the characters in *New Kid* is equal and this sense of horizontality remains throughout the book. At the same time, this relationship progresses from being detached at the beginning to being closer to the characters towards the end. This progression seems to mirror the journey of the central character Jordan in his new school. As the book progresses, the readers are trusted with the stories of the characters. This sense of growing trust can be perceived by the readers when they are frequently being acquainted with feelings of trust and hope through the story and the characters.

While the sense of trust is developed with the reader, they are still not fully involved in the action and are kept at a distance. When the characters of Jordan and Drew confront their teacher and the classmates regarding their racist behavior towards them, the readers are not talked down to or preached to. The equal and horizontal relationship between the characters and the readers remained and yet, it seems like the readers are not invited to a call of action since they are still kept at a distance. This sense of distance makes the readers not get involved too emotionally with the action but engage with it as a story.

In *The Eyes and the Impossible*, The relationship between the reader and the narrator is that of inequality where the narrator has the power over readers. This can be observed through instances where the narrator (a dog-hyena hybrid) looks down upon the actions committed by humans. This could be a way in which a distance is created between the readers and the characters. This inequality and the distance in the relationship could be a way for the readers to engage with the text while maintaining enough space to reflect on one’s own contribution as a human being in the plot of the story. For example, when Johannes describes the actions of humans, it may seem like this inequality and the distance might be helpful in being reflective as can be seen below:

‘But then there are Trouble Travelers. These humans are not so good. They eat and drink smelly things and are sick and loud. They fight and they steal. They leave bottles and papers and feces. They attack strangers and mistreat animals. They make the woods perilous and they make them smell. Usually, they travel through the park in big and loud vehicles. They are passing through, on their way from and to other places. They do not care about our home.’
(p.20)

This could be a foundational step in the process of Freirean dialogue which requires reflection that leads to solidarity between those taking action against conflict. The reading experience of this book is subversive in the sense that the narrator and all the characters are animals where the world is viewed from their point of view. In this sense, the reader is subjected to a position of one with lesser power and is often questioned through the book which requires the reader to don a critical thinking mindset. The reader may be in the position of humility since the characters of the book embody the Freirean values of bravery, mutual trust and solidarity amongst each other and achieve the impossible task of freeing the Bisons.

6 Conclusion and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to analyze children's books with a focus on determining whether the stories are characterized by Freirean concepts of humanization, dialogue and praxis. This was done in two stages. First, the study investigated how social relations were constructed in the books using discursive resources. Then, the social relations were examined to see how they aligned with the Freirean pre-conditions of dialogue, praxis and humanization.

The results showed that many social relations in the selected books were characterized by Freirean concepts of humanization, dialogue and praxis in the different types of relationships constructed through the use of discursive resources. One main finding was that equal and close relationships were constructed using discursive resources of equal power and solidarity between the depicted characters. These relationships were likely to be aligned with Freirean pre-conditions of dialogue. It was also found that these equal and close relationships were also more likely to initiate praxis through the foundation of critical thinking and dialogue.

Other relationships in which the characters were detached but equal in power also were mostly characterized by Freirean conceptions of mutual trust and humility. The important relationship between readers and the characters was also detached but equal, which might make it more amenable to the final call for action from the books to be one of reflection and action, that is praxis, and not just a direct emotional response from the readers.

Relationships with unequal power dynamics were often constructed as a form of bullying or othering which were dehumanizing. One interesting finding was that when the unequal relationship was close due to use of intimate language there was possibility of hope, humanizing both the bully and the bullied, which was absent when the unequal relationship was distant. This is similar to the finding that the books humanized the antagonist as well, even if they were the oppressor. The underlying power dynamic was mainly portrayed as the cause of any conflicts and not the individual. By shifting the focus to the problem, the books let the action of praxis available to both the oppressor and the oppressed, as visualized by Freire.

Another finding was that some relationships evolved through the course of the books. In cases where the evolution was towards a more equal power dynamic from an unequal one, there was an underlying theme of hope and humanizations, transforming the relationship through the process of dialogue. Such relationships characterized the Freirean theory of dialogue as praxis, which is highly relevant for educators interested in critical pedagogy.

The theme of horizontal relations permeated through most of the relationships. Horizontal relationships between friends, of similar or different backgrounds, and between family highlighted Freirean ideals of mutual trust and faith while serving as role models in the process of dialoguing. The books generally created a sense of friendships as being a source of liberation and emancipation which indicates the role of friendships in praxis and humanization.

The books were also found to lend themselves well to the idea of problem posing. By centering issues such as bullying, othering, class inequality and unfreedom, the books raised important problems for the readers to contend with. By generally not talking down to the readers, maintain an equal power relationship between the reader and the book, the books also let the readers think on their own without forcing solutions, all of which are a hallmark of problem posing education as conceptualized by Freire.

Finally, by enabling the reading of them pedagogically in various diverse settings like multicultural education, peace education and problem-posing education, these books create the possibility of giving voice to children through the act of partnerships between the reader and the book. Connecting the reading of these books to actions of social justice in their communities is the ultimate aim of Freirean critical pedagogy, which these books advocate commendably.

There are many instances in the data where there are chances to explore the 'windows' and 'mirrors' (Bishop, 1990) that provide the insight to understand the instances of Freirean concepts. First, one of the most prominent qualitative types of social relation between characters is that of equal and close type. This type of relationship characterizes childhood friendships according to (Crawford & Calabria, 2018). According to them, childhood friendships are close relationships in which the participants are equal in terms of power.

It can be seen that these characters that share an equal and close relationship particularly display some of the pre-conditions necessary for the process of dialogue. These equal and close relationships in *New Kid* provide a counter-narrative in the words of Wiseman et al., (2019). In this study, it was found that when children in the stories affected by racism and discrimination share their counternarratives to allies, by reflecting how they are affected, the inequality is made visible in their eyes which may lead to better understanding or even action to remedy the situation.

These examples of equal and close peer relationships are important in literature. As found by Reichenberg (2021) in their study of storybook portrayals of relationships featuring young people with intellectual disabilities in Sweden, peer relationships which were equal, enriched the lives of the people in the storybooks. The author argues that equal relationships with peers make young people feel wanted and feelings of success and belonging mapped onto equal peer relationships.

As found in this study, the interpersonal relationships in these books highlight elements like, love, hope, friendship and mutual trust while being horizontal in nature. Dialogue and the pre-conditions for dialogue can empower individuals to seek for peace in their relationship with others (Gursel Bilgin, 2020). Since the books offer children a means of understanding Freirean conceptions of agency, hope, voice and praxis, these books can act as a framework through which peace education can be introduced through literature. Hope as one of the pre-conditions for dialogue has been explored previously in terms of children's literature. Massey et al. (2022) argue that educators can instill hope by intentionally selecting literature that supports this cultivation as well as by making students understand their own hopes and dreams.

Gursel Bilgin (2020) discusses Freirean dialogue and his six preconditions (i.e., love, humility, faith, hope, trust, and critical thinking) as fundamental constructs for critical peace education. For her, Freirean dialogue can be used to formulate a critical peace education that educators can use. She argues that the values that underpin the process of dialogue; namely, love, humility, faith, mutual trust, hope, and critical thinking underpin the concept of peace education and are essential in peace educators and in materials dealing with peace.

Secondly, equal and detached relationship was also found in the social relationship between the readers and the characters in the books. As per Crawford and Calabria (2018) children's literature provides a space for reflection that invites readers to look at their own life experiences and perspectives, while also shifting their perspectives to align with that of others. This perspective-taking mechanism is similar to that found in picture books in Australia by Barton et al., (2019). In that article, the authors found that picture books help children in moving their perspectives away from themselves towards other people in different situations which aids in the development of compassion and empathy. A similar process can be attributed to the relationship built between readers and the book in this study, where detached reflection is supported while at the same time the reader is equally powerful in participating with the issues the characters are facing, which may lead to the development of compassion and empathy. Similarly, Alavala, (2024) found that positive bonds formed between readers and books facilitate open-mindedness in readers, who are then able to realize their biases and are willing to diverge from their pre-conceived viewpoints, leading to a reduction in prejudice.

In contrast, the last promising social relation that this study discovered between the characters was that of unequal relationships. These are the relationships where one of the characters wields power over the other. Depiction of such relationships can trigger in the readers, what H. J. Torres, (2019) calls 'imaginative engagement'. By affording the readers the possibility of empathizing with Chet, the book offers a way of imagining a dialogue with problematic characters who they may disagree with. By engaging in this dialogue readers can use deliberation as a means of attempting to understand other perspectives (H. J. Torres, 2019).

Similar to Massey et al. (2022), readers interact with the characters in the text to explore the pre-conditions of dialogue. These elements can be used to introduce the notion of peaceful relationships or even contest problematic aspects of certain relationships that inhibit dialogue. Further, since the books present an equal relationship of the characters with the readers, they can be used to engage in dialogue with the text itself. This can be important with respect to actions of the characters in the stories which are problematic, like bullying, which can help students engage with the text with a critical eye.

Unequal and detached social relations can be observed between the readers and the characters in the book *The Eyes and the Impossible* as well. The readers are not fully involved into the

story as they are exploring the world of this book from a subversive (animals') point of view. This can help in creating a space for the reader to reflect on their own actions and their impact on this world. This is strikingly similar to Burke et al.'s, (2004) argument in their study on stories that use animals as people. The authors argue that the intellectual and emotional distance created by stories that use animals allows children space to reflect and critically think about life experiences and issues. By detaching the readers and preventing them from forming too close a bond with the characters, the book positions itself as a space for reflecting on the issues faced by Johannes and other animals in this wholly different world, which ultimately can be connected to the familiar world of humans by the readers.

Finally, another type of social relation was the one that starts off as an unequal relationship but progresses towards an equal relationship that is seen in the social relation between Andy and Jordan. This relationship stands in contrast to the study on portrayals of main characters in storybooks by Monoyiou & Symeonidou (2016). In that study, it was found that a recurring theme in the books analyzed by them showed that a different (othered) figure can only be accepted and be treated as equal through the intervention of a remarkable incident or a person who is already accepted as 'normal'. Thus, the evolution of Jordan and Andy's friendship breaks the mold of such relationships in children's books, by foregrounding the agency of the people involved along with the process of dialogue as the starting point for the change in the relationship rather than any external mechanisms which take away agency from the depicted character.

As Crawford and Calabria (2018) state, children learn about friendship in many ways, including portrayals of friendships presented in storybooks and picture books. The books analyzed in this study did a good job in describing and highlighting friendships as core relationships. The types of friendships that were discussed are diverse in the way they developed, the way they behaved, the kind of situations they were set in and between living beings of varied mindsets. This focus on friendship as a strong bond acts as a reinforcement of the idea that community and support for an individual occurs in many forms be it family or friends. As found in N. J. Johnson & Giorgis' (2002) study, friendships in children's books are important because friends accept who we are and choose to be with us, even under trying circumstances.

This idea of centering friendships is a subtle subversion to the popular notion that families are the closest and the most reliable form of community. This idea emerges prominently in the books analyzed, where it was depicted through mutual trust and solidarity between people belonging to completely different backgrounds. Here, friendship between diverse people and some unlikely friendships seem to be portrayed as relationships that thrive on an equal ground. This is similar to the friendships found in de Bruijn et al. (2021) in their study of 18 popular children's books in Netherlands. In this study, the authors found that in terms of power relations, both parties of interethnic friendships were generally portrayed as equal. These friendships embody the concept of horizontal relationships Freire (2000) elaborates where the relationships are devoid of any power dynamics which creates a possibility of dialogue amongst the participants. That is why this focus on friendships between living beings is a valuable theme to be explored in context of social justice and oppression.

These books also do the job of highlighting horizontal relationships within family and the impact that these relationships can have on the possibility of dialogue between actors in the process of humanization and praxis. All the three books that have human beings as the central characters have one kin, a grandparent in all the cases, who has a horizontal relationship with the protagonist that is based on love and mutual trust. This is similar to the finding in N. J. Johnson & Giorgis (2002) where the authors found that intergenerational loving relationships are often found between grandparents and grandchildren.

The presence of one such grandparent highlights the benefits of cultivating equal and horizontal relationships within families, especially considering that family is usually the first structure that a child interacts with and is typically considered to be authoritative in nature. This can be seen in the relationships between CJ - Nana in *Last Stop on Market Street* and Grandpa - Jordan in *New Kid*. This intentional inclusion of a horizontal relationship within the family structure is also a subtle subversion of the idea of family and the kind of support that it can offer. Shier et al.'s (2014) finding that overcoming the barrier of "adultism", where adults automatically assume hierarchical power roles in their relationships with children, is important for the agency of children becomes worth noting in this context. Portrayals of family relationships that subvert expectations of adultism might give children reading the books space to reflect on adultism in their own lives leading to advocacy for their beliefs, which is praxis in the sense envisaged by Freire.

The selected books also utilize the problem-posing idea of Freire where the dialogue between the actors takes place on the proposition of presenting the problem and the praxis emerging from it (Freire, 2000). Freire argues that developing critical thinking is an important part of dialogue and he recommends problem-posing education as a way to achieve this. In this method, students understand the world around them by challenging the status quo and other issues they see around them. Freire suggests that the problem-posing education is rooted in the realities and life situations of students that engage the students to raise questions.

In *Last Stop on Market Street*, towards the end, there is an action emerging from reflection that is portrayed through Nana's character. This action is not suggested to be a solution for the problem in general but something that makes sense in the context of this particular character. This could be taken as an example of everyday activism as described in Fletcher & Holyoke (2023). In their study they found that picture books depict stories that show modest daily actions as a means of resistance to structural inequality. The identification of Nana's and CJ's praxis in volunteering in a soup kitchen could be one way in which the story shows the possibility of resisting the inequality in race in the context of America. This is the kind of critical pedagogy that Freire is suggesting where education does not present a one-size-fits-all solution to conflicts but critically engages with the problem and creates a praxis relevant to that particular context (Freire, 2000).

This similar feature can be noticed in the problem of bullying in *Hello, Universe* where the readers are presented with the 'problem' set in the context and world of Virgil. Virgil's action against his bully in *Hello Universe* can be equated to Fletcher and Holyoake's (2023) description of transformative activism, where characters in a story actualize newer alternatives around new norms by defying unjust practices. Further, multiple solutions to the problems are discussed as possibilities which ensures that the readers can be critical of these by the time the protagonist takes an action.

In *New Kid*, the idea of othering and racial discrimination is placed as the problem that the protagonist faces in the new school. This is presented in a form where the readers see that it is not just the protagonist that is dealing with these issues but other students who share these experiences also face this problem. In this sense, this problem is situated in the broader context in a systematic manner. In this book, the praxis emerges in the form of shared solidarity between various actors where they make their voices heard as a collective unit. This

stands in contrast to the findings of R. Rogers and Christian (2007), where the authors found that focus of multicultural children's literature falls too often on victimization rather than emancipation. Here, in *New Kid*, the shared praxis through horizontal relationships and dialogue characterizes a story with Freirean underpinnings in its objective of deconstructing racial inequality. Thus, *New Kid* acts as a counter-narrative to the books studied in R. Rogers and Christian (2007) by 'paying attention to the discursive and material realities of racism' (p.40) that affect the characters in the story.

In *The Eyes and the impossible*, the problem placed at the center is that of captivity and longing for freedom. This problem has been presented in an interesting manner where the protagonist is shown to be thinking about the problem of captivity through his friend's perspective. Through this description, the problem of captivity and what it means to be free is discussed that provides an opportunity to reflect on these problems. Since this book is written from the point of view of animals, it creates enough space for the readers to reflect on these issues (Burke et al., 2004). The book also highlights the role of excessive meddling of human beings in this sense of captivity and the overall shift in patterns of 'equilibrium' of animals. While the praxis occurs in the form of freedom for the protagonist, the readers are left to critically examine their role in any possibility of dialogue to address the problem of captivity of animals in particular or the climate change in a broader perspective. Similar to *Hello, Universe*, the action in this book too can be equated to transformative activism according to Fletcher and Holyoake (2023). Thus, the books in this study show us variations in the possible approaches to praxis that changes according to the particular context of the story, which is important in Freirean problem-posing.

From these four books it can be seen that the problems discussed here like that of bullying and othering are somewhat typical to the problems that the students might face in their surroundings. This also resonates with Zembylas' (2013) notion of pedagogic discomfort. These books, by challenging students to go beyond their comfort zone, begin to push them to unlearn some ways of seeing and acting in stereotypical fashion and help in reconstructing the students' ideas of others in ways amenable to social justice and anti-racist thinking.

The examples of antagonists being humanized in the selected books also relate to what Sciarba et al. (2021) call shared journeys in their analysis of picture books humanizing the Mexico-US border crossings. The webs of relationships that the characters in the stories

interact with are depicted without losing context, which helps the readers identify and empathize to the journey of characters as a whole rather than of snippets that accentuate only certain negative aspects of their story.

As argued by Fletcher and Holyoake (2023), children can experience and wonder about actions that can change the world through activism in the books they read. If teachers can explore these texts along with children through critical literacy perspectives it may allow children to recognize the possibilities of making change in the world around them by inviting them to see beyond what is to see big and envision potential for praxis.

This method of teaching requires a partnership between teachers and students. This partnership can be made more equal and democratic by using these storybooks as a medium of introducing the problems that are contextual and relevant to the students. One factor that the teacher has to keep in mind is the appropriateness of the literature used, which is where Newbery award winning literature can be useful, since the award-winning books have clarity and appropriateness of these books for children as one of their selection criteria.

Since these books are Newbery medal award winners, more educators have access to these books (Broemmel et al., 2014). This is important since these books are already available for students in libraries for example. Educators also will have access to more resources that help in teaching of these books for various learning objectives (Broemmel et al., 2014). Thus, incorporating teaching of Freirean concepts using these books will not come with added content to be taught, rather, it will be an addition on top of reading and study the students are already doing in their school. This makes it easier on educators as well as students to delve deeper into the pedagogical aspects highlighted previously in this section.

In teaching children through literature, it is important that there is a call for action in the real world (Morell and Morell, 2023). The analyzed books have instances of how characters affect their world and change their material realities through the use of agency. This might be useful for educators to foreground when reading these books with students. The books also equalize the relationship between the characters and the readers thereby making it easier for the readers to dialogue with the text and be critical of the ideas they espouse.

Schutz et al. (2019) describe a humanizing pedagogy to be one where the central goal is to attempt resistance to oppression and dehumanization through a focus on love, praxis and dialogue. The authors suggest that using literature to support conversations about social justice is one way in which humanizing pedagogies can be actualized in classrooms. The books in this study, by centering problem posing and being characterized by pre-conditions of dialogue, offer a way to foreground humanizing pedagogy while learning about literature.

Thus, student ideas on how they can take action in their own communities, engage in dialogue with others and connect reading of these books to social justice, is important while using these books to teach (Morell and Morell, 2023). By promoting dialogue, horizontal relationships and hope, these books can also provide opportunities for students to be heard while engaging with literature that affirms their identity but also understanding how relationships with others is important to be actionable and agentic in the world around them (Morrell & Morrell, 2023). As elaborated by Crawford and Calabria (2018), storybooks and thoughtful pedagogical experiences that can be structured around them, can help children by providing models of action and serving as sources of information about the power of relationships.

7 Limitations and scope for further research

The results of this study should be interpreted with caution due to limitations related to context, research design and sample.

Firstly, the findings of this study may not be generalizable to all the Newbery medal winners since the sample was purposively selected based on the criteria that they contain some Freirean themes within them. The findings of this study are specific to the sample of these four books and this study presents a case for analyzing Freirean themes in award-winning literature. Future research can be built on the research design of this study to analyze more Newbery award-winning books to see if the findings from this study are present in other books. One particular area of future research can be to see whether and how Freirean themes are incorporated within different types of award-winning children's books.

Secondly, the study approached the text and images only through the interpersonal metafunction, the tenor variable, of language and multimodal discourse. Even though this metafunction is the most important in establishing relationships in narratives, the other metafunctions, ideational and textual, might also be useful in analyzing how relationships are constructed in narratives (citation). Also, these metafunctions might enable a richer analysis of Freirean themes, since the affordances within these metafunctions might give rise to different alignments with Freirean concepts than the ones found in this study. This limitation of the current study might be overcome by studying the books through the ideational and textual metafunctions too, making it an area of further research that can be explored. It might also be interesting for future studies to check if there are discrepancies and divergent couplings within these different metafunctions for the books analyzed in this study.

The books were also not analyzed in full and only the portions of the books that were found to be important were taken up for detailed analysis. This might have caused the exaggeration or understating of certain themes that emerged during the analysis. Though care was taken to ensure that the portions of the books taken up for analysis were representative of the book as a whole, there is always room for these portions might not fully be representative of the book. This limitation can be resolved in future research by analyzing the books in their entirety.

Another limitation of this study is due to the qualitative nature of the research. Since the interpretations and coding on the multimodal analysis as well as the Freirean theories were conducted by only one coder, an element of bias might be present in the analysis. Though transparency in the data collection, analysis and coding procedure might have reduced this bias, having at least two coders could have helped further decrease the bias. Having a team to work on qualitative study like this can enhance the nuances and help in incorporating diverse viewpoints while clarifying ambiguous codes. Thus, future research in this area might benefit from being conducted in teams as opposed to by a single person.

Also, since the coding was done deductively, there is a chance that the researcher might have found what they were looking for, instead of looking at the data and interpreting it without this bias due to theoretical lens. Still, the transparency in data collection, analysis and coding procedure and the extensive use of examples and illustrations provided makes the framework used for the analysis valid.

Since the present research is exploratory in nature, more quantitative measures of how relationships were constructed in the books were not included in the research design. Future studies might investigate quantitative measures such as the proportion of different types of interpersonal relationships constructed in the narratives, the different types of discursive resources used to construct similar types of relationships in different books or the proportions of relationships that characterize Freirean concepts positively. These quantitative measures might provide different insights into how discursive resources are used in books and the effect they might have on narratives by making them more or less aligned with Freirean concepts.

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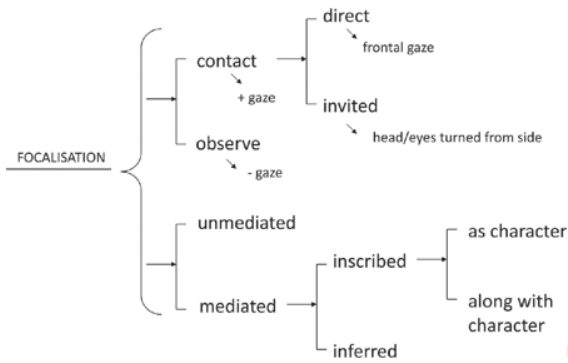
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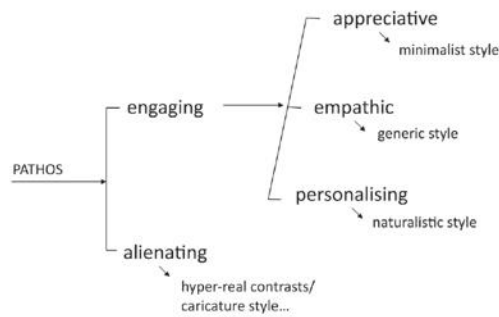
Appendices

Appendix 1 Meaning systems in multimodal discourse analysis (Painter et al., 2013)

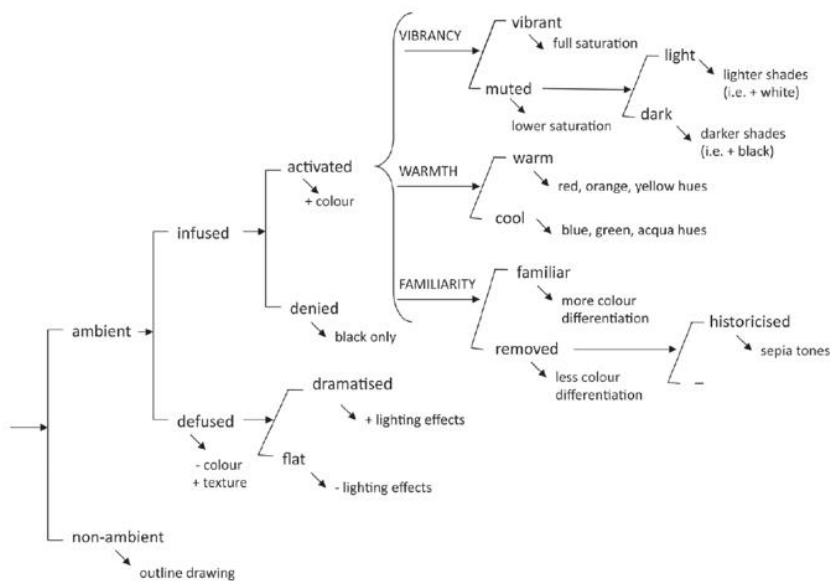
Focalisation



Pathos



Ambience



Appendix 2 Coding charts

Last Stop on Market Street - Visuals

Pages	Visual									
	With Reader							Within characters		
	Focalisation	Power	Distance	Involvement	Ambience	Affect	Force	Power	Proximity	Orientation
Page 1 and 2	unmediated; observe	equal	very far	involved	vibrant, mixed, familiar	happy	-	-	separated	side by side
Page 3 and 4	unmediated; observe	equal	far	detached	vibrant, mixed, familiar	happy	-	equal	close	side by side
Page 5 and 6	unmediated; observe	equal	far	involved	vibrant, mixed, familiar	happy	-	equal	close	side by side
Page 7 and 8	unmediated; observe	reader power	very far	detached	vibrant, mixed, familiar	neutral	-	equal	separated	back to back
Page 9	unmediated; observe	equal	close	involved	vibrant, cool, removed	happy	-	equal	v.close	side by side
Page 10	unmediated; observe	reader power	far	involved	vibrant, cool, familiar	happy	-	equal	close	side by side
Page 11 and 12	unmediated; observe	equal	close	involved	vibrant, mixed, familiar	happy	-	equal	close	side by side
Page 13 and 14	unmediated; observe	equal	far	involved	vibrant, mixed, familiar	happy	-	equal	v.close	face to face
Page 15	unmediated; observe	equal	far	involved	vibrant, mixed, familiar	sad (CJ)	-	power(boys)	separated	face to back
Page 16	unmediated; observe	equal	close	involved	vibrant, mixed, familiar	happy	-	equal	close	side by side
Page 17 and 18	unmediated; observe	equal	close	involved	vibrant, mixed, familiar	joy	upscaled extent	-	-	-
Page 19	unmediated; observe	equal	far	involved	vibrant, mixed, familiar	happy	-	equal	separated	face to face
Page 20	unmediated; observe	equal	far	involved	vibrant, mixed, removed	happy	-	equal	separated	face to face
Page 21 and 22	unmediated; observe	equal	very far	involved	vibrant, mixed, familiar	-	-	equal	v.close	side by side
Page 23 and 24	unmediated; observe	equal	very far	involved	vibrant, mixed, familiar	-	-	equal	v.close	side by side
Page 25 and 26	unmediated; observe	equal	far	involved	vibrant, mixed, familiar	happy	-	equal	v.close	side by side
Page 27 and 28	unmediated; observe	reader power	very far	detached	vibrant, cool, familiar	happy	-	equal	close	side by side

Last Stop on Market Street – Verbal

Pages	Verbal										
	With Reader							Within characters			
	Focalisation	Power	Distance	Involvement	Ambience	Affect	Force	Power	Proximity	Orientation	
Page 1 and 2	third person narrator	equal	close	detached	vibrant, familiar	happy	-	-	-	-	
Page 3 and 4	third person narrator	equal	close	detached	vibrant, familiar	curious (CJ)	-	equal	separated	involved	
Page 5 and 6	third person narrator	equal	very close	involved	vibrant, familiar	curious (CJ)	-	equal	v. close	involved	
Page 7 and 8	third person narrator	equal	far	detached	vibrant, familiar	grateful (nana)	upscaled number (descriptors for bus)	equal	v.close	involved	
Page 9	third person narrator	equal	close	detached	vibrant, familiar	happy	-	equal	close	involved	
Page 10	third person narrator	equal	very close	detached	vibrant, familiar	happy	upscaled number (descriptors for smile)	-	-	-	
Page 11 and 12	third person narrator	equal	close	detached	vibrant, familiar	sorry (CJ)	upscaled number (descriptors for bus)	equal	close	involved	
Page 13 and 14	third person narrator	equal	close	detached	vibrant, familiar	happy	-	equal	v. close	detached	
Page 15	third person narrator	equal	close	detached	vibrant, familiar	sorry (CJ)	-	Nana power	close	detached	
Page 16	third person narrator	equal	close	detached	vibrant, familiar	joy	-	equal	-	-	
Page 17 and 18	third person narrator	equal	close	involved	vibrant, familiar	ecstasy	upscaled intensity	-	-	-	
Page 19	third person narrator	equal	close	detached	vibrant, familiar	joy	upscaled intensity	-	-	-	
Page 20	third person narrator	equal	far	detached	non-ambient	neutral	-	equal	separated	detached	
Page 21 and 22	third person narrator	equal	close	detached	vibrant, familiar	seeking assurance(CJ)	upscaled number (descriptors for neighbourhood)	equal	close	detached	
Page 23 and 24	third person narrator	equal	close	detached	vibrant, familiar	wonder (CJ)	upscaled intensity	-	-	-	
Page 25 and 26	third person narrator	equal	far	detached	vibrant, familiar	happy	-	equal	close	detached	
Page 27 and 28	third person narrator	equal	close	detached	vibrant, familiar	affection	upscaled intensity	equal	v. close	detac	

New Kid – Visuals

		Visual										
		With Reader							Within characters			
Key instances	Pages	Focalisation	Power	Distance	Involvement	Ambience	Affect	Force	Power	Proximity	Orientation	
Chapter 1	4-5	mediated; observe	equal	far	involved	non ambient	horror, nervous	upscaled (descriptor)	subjects power	separated	side by side	
	8-9	mediated; observed	equal	far	involved	non ambient	sarcastic, funny	upscaled (descriptor)	equal	close	side by side	
Chapter 2	26	unmediated; observe	equal	far	involved	vibrant, warm, unfamiliar	dehumanised, othered	upscaled (descriptor)	Bully power	close	side by side	
	28	unmediated; observe	equal	far	involved	vibrant, cool, familiar	othering, judgemental	-	Andy power	close	side by side	
Chapter 3	38	unmediated; observe	equal	far	involved	vibrant, cool, familiar	dehumanised, othered	downscaled (descriptor)	Peer power	separated	side by side	
	40-41	mediated; observed	equal	far	involved	non ambient	dehumanised, judged	-	Peer power	separated	side by side	
Chapter 4	56-57	mediated; observe	equal	v.far	involved	non ambient	trying to fit in, belong	-	Passengers power	separated	side by side	
	62-64	unmediated; observe	equal	far	involved	vibrant, cool, familiar	dehumanised, othered	upscaled (descriptor)	Maury power	close	face to face	
Chapter 5	70-71	mediated; observe	equal	close	involved	non ambient	accomplished, honest	-	equal	close	side by side	
	73	unmediated; observe	equal	far	involved	muted, cool, removed	accomplished, fitting in	upscaled (descriptor)	Jordon power	close	side by side	
Chapter 6	85-90	unmediated; observe	equal	far	involved	muted, cool, removed	distant, othered	-	equal	close	side by side	
	102-3	unmediated; observe	equal	Far, close	involved	vibrant, cool, familiar	mutual trust, solidarity	-	equal	close	side by side	
Chapter 7	111	unmediated; observe	equal	far	involved	vibrant, warm, familiar	love, mutual trust	upscaled (descriptor)	equal	close	face to face	
	116-8	mediated; observe	equal	far	involved	non ambient	annoyed, happy	-	equal	close	side by side	
Chapter 8	130-31	mediated; observe	equal	close	involved	non ambient	dehumanised, othered	-	-	-	-	
	134-37	unmediated; observe	equal	close	involved	muted, cool, removed	mutual trust, humility	upscaled (descriptor)	equal	close	side by side	
Chapter 9	147	mediated; observe	equal	close	involved	muted, cool, removed	astonished, wonder	upscaled (descriptor)	equal	close	side by side	
	158-59	mediated; observe	equal	close	involved	non ambient	joy, love	-	equal	close	side by side	
Chapter 10	163	unmediated; observe	equal	far	involved	muted, cool, removed	othered, dehumanised	-	equal	close	side by side	
	166-68	mediated; observe	equal	far	involved	non ambient	humility, solidarity	-	equal	close	side by side	
Chapter 11	184-87	unmediated; observe	equal	far	involved	vibrant, warm, familiar	humility, mutual trust	-	equal	close	side by side	
	194-95	mediated; observe	equal	close	involved	non ambient	othering, judgemental	-	Donor power	close	side by side	
Chapter 12	196-209	unmediated; observe	equal	far	involved	muted, cool, removed	solidarity, mutual trust	upscaled (descriptor)	Jordon power	close	face to face	
Chapter 13	216-23	mediated; observe	equal	far	involved	non ambient	dehumanised, othered	upscaled (descriptor)	Teacher power	detached	side by side	
Chapter 14	234	unmediated; observe	equal	far	involved	muted, cool, removed	mutual trust, love	upscaled (descriptor)	equal	close	side by side	
	245	unmediated; observe	equal	far	involved	vibrant, warm, familiar	accomplished, love	-	equal	close	side by side	
	249	unmediated; observe	equal	far	involved	muted, cool, removed	mutual trust, love	upscaled (descriptor)	equal	close	side by side	

New Kid – Verbal

		Verbal									
		With Reader							Within characters		
Key instances	Pages	Focalisation	Power	Distance	Involvement	Ambience	Affect	Force	Power	Proximity	Orientation
Chapter 1	4-5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	8-9	third person narrator	equal	far	involved	-	sarcastic, funny	upscaling(descriptor)	-	-	-
Chapter 2	26	third person narrator	equal	far	detached	vibrant, warm, familiar	dehumanising, othered	upscaling(descriptor)	Bully power	close	detached
	28	third person narrator	equal	far	detached	vibrant, warm, familiar	judging, othering	upscaling(repeatition)	Andy power	close	involved
Chapter 3	38	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	40-41	first person narrator	equal	close	involved	muted, cool, removed	self depreciating	downscaled(descriptor)	-	-	-
Chapter 4	56-57	first person narrator	equal	close	detached	muted, cool, removed	blending in	-	-	-	-
	62-64	third person narrator	equal	-	-	muted, cool, removed	othered	upscaling(descriptor)	Maury power	separated	detached
Chapter 5	70- 71	first person narrator	equal	close	detached	vibrant, warm, familiar	accomplished,	-	-	-	-
	73	third person narrator	equal	-	-	vibrant, warm, familiar	accomplished, compassion	upscaling(descriptor)	Jordon power	close	detached
Chapter 6	85-90	third person narrator	equal	-	-	vibrant, warm, familiar	solidarity, mutual trust	upscaling(descriptor)	equal	close	involved
	102-3	third person narrator	equal	-	-	vibrant, warm, familiar	solidarity, mutual trust	-	equal	close	involved
Chapter 7	111	third person narrator	equal	-	-	vibrant, warm, familiar	solidarity, mutual trust	upscaling(descriptor)	equal	close	involved
	116-8	first person narrator	equal	close	involved	vibrant, warm, familiar	love, happy	-	equal	close	involved
Chapter 8	130-31	first person narrator	equal	close	involved	muted, cool, removed	dehumanised, othered	-	-	-	-
	134-37	third person narrator	equal	-	-	vibrant, warm, familiar	solidarity, humility	-	equal	close	involved
Chapter 9	147	third person narrator	equal	close	detached	muted, cool, removed	insecurity, othered	upscaling(descriptor)	equal	close	involved
	158-59	first person narrator	equal	close	involved	muted, cool, removed	joy, loved	-	equal	close	involved
	163	third person narrator	equal	-	-	muted, cool, removed	othered,dehumanised	-	equal	close	involved
Chapter 10	166-68	first person narrator	equal	close	detached	muted, cool, removed	humility, solidarity	-	equal	close	involved
	184-87	third person narrator	equal	far	detached	vibrant, warm, familiar	humility, love	-	equal	separated	detached
Chapter 11	194-95	first person narrator	equal	far	detached	muted, cool, removed	othered, judgemental	-	Donor power	separated	detached
Chapter 12	196-209	third person narrator	equal	close	detached	muted, cool, removed	solidarity, mutual trust	upscaling(descriptor)	Jordon power	separated	detached
Chapter 13	216-23	first person narrator	equal	close	detached	muted, cool, removed	dehumanised, othered	upscaling(descriptor)	Teacher power	close	detached
Chapter 14	234	third person narrator	equal	far	detached	muted, cool, removed	mutual trust, happy	upscaling(descriptor)	equal	close	involved
	245	third person narrator	equal	close	involved	vibrant, warm, familiar	love, happy	-	equal	close	involved
	249	third person narrator	equal	-	-	vibrant, warm, familiar	love, happy	-	equal	close	involved

Hello, Universe – Verbal

		Verbal										
Chapters		With Reader							Within characters			
Key incidents		Focalisation	Power	Distance	Involvement	Ambience	Affect	Force	Power	Proximity	Orientation	
First bullying incident	Chapter 6	third person narrator	equal	far	involved	vibrant, familiar	fear, tension	upscaled (descriptors and numbers)	Chet power	close	detached	
The physic session	Chapter 7	third person narrator	equal	far	involved	vibrant, familiar	happy, embarrassed	Upscaled (descriptors)	equal	close	involved	
The supermarket incident	Chapter 8	third person narrator	equal	close	involved	vibrant, familiar	coincidental, anticipation	Upscaled (descriptors)	Chet power	close	involved	
Chet's relationship with his dad	Chapter 10	third person narrator	equal	far	involved	vibrant, familiar	bullying, othering	-	Mr Bullens power	separated	detached	
The bullying in the forest	Chapter 16	third person narrator	equal	far	involved	vibrant, familiar	empathy, anxiety	-	Chet power	close	detached	
Saving Gulliver	Chapter 17	third person narrator	equal	far	involved	vibrant, familiar	love, action, bravery	upscaled (repetition)	equal	v.close	involved	
Chet meeting Valencia in forest	Chapter 18	third person narrator	equal	far	detached	vibrant, familiar	brave, untrusting	-	equal	separated	detached	
Valencia closes lid on the well	Chapter 21	first person narrator- Valencia	equal	far	involved	vibrant, familiar	critical thinking, unrest	-	-	-	-	
Nothing is ever hopeless	Chapter 25	third person narrator	equal	far	involved	vibrant, familiar	desperation, hopelessness	upscaled (repetition)	equal	close	involved	
Valencia becoming part of the group	Chapter 27	first person narrator- Valencia	equal	far	involved	vibrant, familiar	mutual trust, comraderie	-	equal	separated	involved	
Chet faces the snake	Chapter 30	third person narrator	equal	far	involved	vibrant, familiar	tension, bravery	-	-	-	-	
Girls bonding in the forest	Chapter 31	third person narrator	equal	close	involved	vibrant, familiar	mutual trust, comraderie	-	equal	close	involved	
Virgil feels hopeful	Chapter 32	third person narrator	equal	far	involved	vibrant, familiar	hopelessness, exhaustion	Upscaled (descriptors)	equal	close	involved	
Valencia and Tanaka are friends	Chapter 34	first person narrator- Valencia	equal	far	involved	vibrant, familiar	love, mutual trust	Upscaled (descriptors)	equal	separated	involved	
VS is found	Chapter 35	third person narrator	equal	far	involved	vibrant, familiar	mutual trust, hope	-	equal	separated	involved	
Virgil is found	Chapter 38	third person narrator	equal	far	involved	vibrant, familiar	happy, relief	-	equal	close	involved	
No hope for you, Virgil	Chapter 40	third person narrator	equal	far	involved	vibrant, familiar	disappointed, love	Upscaled (descriptors)	equal	close	involved	
A different Virgil	Chapter 41	third person narrator	equal	far	involved	vibrant, familiar	humanisation, brave, critical	Upscaled (descriptors)	Virgil power	close	involved	
The Messages	Chapter 42	first person narrator- Valencia	equal	close	involved	vibrant, familiar	love, mutual trust	Upscaled (descriptors)	equal	close	involved	

The eyes and the impossible – Verbal

		Verbal									
Chapters		With Reader							Within characters		
Key incidents		Focalisation	Power	Distance	Involvement	Ambience	Affect	Force	Power	Proximity	Orientation
How Johannes became the eyes?	2	first person narrator	Narrator power	close	involved	vibrant, familiar	freedom, accomplishment	upscaled (repetition)	Bison power	close	detached
Johannes is enamored by the rectangles	4	first person narrator	Narrator power	far	involved	vibrant, familiar	pride, curiosity	-	Grandfather power	separated	detached
Johannes is caught	6	first person narrator	equal	far	involved	vibrant, familiar	curious, cheated	-	Twisty power	close	detached
Johannes is rescued	8	first person narrator	equal	close	detached	vibrant, familiar	mutual trust, freedom	-	Pamela power	separated	detached
Johannes shares the idea of freeing the bulls	11	first person narrator	equal	far	detached	vibrant, familiar	mutual trust, love	-	equal	separated	detached
Johannes saves the drowning girl	14	first person narrator	Narrator power	far	detached	vibrant, familiar	bravery, concern	-	equal	separated	detached
Johannes gets a costume	17	first person narrator	equal	far	detached	vibrant, familiar	critical thinking, mutual trust	-	equal	separated	detached
Johannes is making the plan of freeing the bulls	20	first person narrator	equal	far	detached	vibrant, familiar	freedom, solidarity	-	-	-	-
Introduction to the new animals	22	first person narrator	equal	far	detached	vibrant, familiar	curious, surprise	upscaled (repetition)	equal	separated	detached
Realisation that they lived on an island	24	first person narrator	equal	far	detached	vibrant, familiar	hopeless, disbelief	-	equal	separated	detached
Johannes makes a new friend and loses his home	26	first person narrator	Narrator power	far	detached	vibrant, familiar	mutual trust, critical thinking	-	equal	separated	detached
The plan is made	28	first person narrator	Narrator power	far	involved	vibrant, familiar	mutual trust, critical thinking	-	equal	separated	detached
Johannes real identity is revealed	29	first person narrator	equal	far	detached	vibrant, familiar	mutual trust, love	-	equal	separated	involved
Bertrand is hurt	31	first person narrator	equal	far	detached	vibrant, familiar	love, embarassement	-	equal	separated	detached
The plan is in action	33	first person narrator	Narrator power	far	detached	vibrant, familiar	mutual trust, praxis	-	equal	separated	detached
The bulls aint going	35	first person narrator	equal	far	detached	vibrant, familiar	mutual trust, love	-	equal	separated	detached
I could go	36	first person narrator	equal	far	detached	vibrant, familiar	freedom, solidarity	upscaled (repetition)	equal	separated	detached
Bertrand and the eyes leave	38	third / first person narrator	equal	far	involved	vibrant, familiar	freedom, accomplishment	-	equal	separated	detached
Last chapter		first person narrator	equal	far	detached	vibrant, familiar	freedom, solidarity	-	equal	separated	detached