

SHEME MARY P. U. "GLOBALIZATION OF CULTURE: A STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOKS ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF CULTURE IN THE GLOBAL AGE". THESIS. RESEARCH CENTRE, DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, ST. THOMAS' COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT, 2019.

CHAPTER 4

The 'Otherness' Revisited: The Re-interpretation of the Picture Books through Ethno-Cultural Analysis

The broad aim of this study as stated earlier in the introductory chapter is to look into the multicultural aspects of globalization of culture through picture books and which is actualised by investigating the narrative techniques along with illustrations in the selected picture books published during different periods of time. The study also focuses on how the ethno cultural contents in the picture books influence children aesthetically and culturally. A picture is worth thousand words is true especially to children. Barbara Bader notes that each story is an experience for children. She defined picture book as, "text, illustrations, total design; an item of manufacture and a commercial product; a social, cultural, historical document; and, foremost, an experience for a child" (1). A book for children is not merely a work of art; it includes an economical perspective along with social and historical values to set forth the cultural milieu. The books should primarily provide experiences that enrich and enhance children's lives. It is viewed that a deeper understanding of picture books, which includes pictures and text, could help to manifest meanings to promote and enliven the discourse that surrounds it. The following paragraphs will analyse the various objectives identified in the picture books selected for this study.

“Children’s literature can be defined as literature specifically written, adapted, or formulated by adults for children, based on the domain of cultural practices, with the purpose of socialising the target audience, according to the social, cultural and educational norms inscribed” (Sullivan 12). A picture book is not just an extension of children’s literature; in fact, a unique genre where the pictures interact and interferes strongly with the text. Arnheim states that, “visual learning enhances the cognitive understanding of abstract concepts to children. A child’s perception of ideas . . . can be radically enriched by a visual example. This understanding leads to excellence in perceptual thinking” (94). “Art, when it’s really good, doesn’t imitate or mirror the text. Rather, it adds a new dimension that goes way beyond the words” (Raymond 64). A good illustration does not imitate what is written in the text but rather supplements and thus bridges the gap. It adds to the visual imagination of the target reader. This is the case in picture books, where words and images reinforce each other without necessarily offering the same information. As stated in *Words About Pictures: The Narrative Art of Children’s Picture Books*, good picture books are a richer experience than the simple sum of their independent components (Nodelman 199).

Character focalization is yet another factor to be considered in the visual mode, which analyzes the eyes through which the narrative world is seen. The reader cum viewer of the picture book can contemplate the actions or thoughts of

the characters that make up the narration vicariously through the point of view of a character, be it main or secondary, and not through his own eyes. "Central to the picture book is the notion of gap the readerly that imaginative space that lies hidden somewhere between the words and the pictures" (Styles and Watson 2). The imaginative space between the words and pictures allows the readers to place the work on the due comprehensive and cognitive level; the readers interact to make out the meaning with the pictures. Over the years the genre of children's picture books has undergone vital changes in terms of the subjects discussed and tone of narration. These books were formerly meant to be bedtime stories intended to initiate children in lieu of binary opposites like good and evil, giving and taking, needs or wants, to the societal patterns which has lost prevalence and got replaced with realistic portrayals of actual happenings of the life around. Instead of the inculcation of ideals, only a familiarization of the real is taking place.

The picture books under analysis in this study belong to different period of time. They all bear a cultural significance by creating the cultural milieu for children. These books were selected on the parameters of how they exhibit or inhibit the cultural difference causing an emphatic response among children through the theme, characterization, cultural back ground, settings and a multiple similar factors. To be specific with the objectives the analysis should fetch deeper understanding on how culture is reflected in the picture books

especially those books which are produced and illustrated by artist from a different culture. It should also be analyzed to see whether the books develop cultural consciousness among children about the other cultures. "When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when images they see are distorted, negative or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part" (Bishop, 557). The exclusion of realistic experience pertaining to their identities and culture, the readers are left invalidated. "False portrayals of race and culture, and persistent invisibility continue to negatively impact racial attitudes and identities in children today" (Wilson 12). Acting as a mirror the books should reflect on the lives of children bearing the significant truth. This vivifies a character along with the culture. Discovering a work's "significant truth" provides much pleasure to the reader, and this act often provides enlightenment about a particular character trait or cultural detail (Lukens 130). In picture books, the illustrations being the essential component of the storytelling, they provide absorbing access to characters as well as their specific cultural details. Ultimately the pictures may transform into dynamic mental images that remain in the reader's repertoire of experience, anchoring ideas, concepts and feelings along with new language - increasing retention of both the language and the message (Bland 26). The otherness in the texts stretches over to the marginalisation of individuals, their cultures and sub-cultures. The representation of the world, the misrepresentation of specific

categories of people and the consequences of both poses challenges to cultural globalization.

Under representation of the racial communities is to be discussed in comparison with the over representation of the whites. Most often a picture book revolves around a white dominated community with characters and situations that can easily be assimilated by whites alone. The under representation of racial communities is followed with misrepresentations too. Those representations of ethnic minorities offer idealised views of cultural heritage, focus on dissimilarities rather than similarities, and there continues to be a underrepresentation for people of colour (Wilson 12). The cultural diffusion is taken over with mainstream culture embedded with western values. The literary establishment and publishing industry canons further present obstacles to the visibility of minority communities. Sandra Yamate comments that, in the reviewing process, ethnic children's literature is often viewed by editors and reviewers without looking into the multicultural issues involved; Asian American literature suffers in particular because of the lack of familiarity with the many cultures in question, and while reviewing with mono cultural criteria that are supposedly universal standards (101). The proliferation of folktales meant to teach Americans about Asian cultures instead reinforces and perpetuates the stereotype of Asians as exotic foreigners (96). The focus of the study acknowledges the problems of under representation of racial communities,

misrepresentations, assimilation to white supremacy, commodification, and stereotyping along with cultural globalisation in the selected picture books listed below. The books selected for study are grouped as classical fairy tales for children, popular picture books, multicultural picture books and picture books from Indian Culture.

The picture books cum fairy tales which forms the store house of English classics analysed include *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Cinderella*. *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter and *A Cat in the Hat*, by Dr. Seuss; *The Story of Babar, the Little Elephant* by Jean De Brunhoff are selected from popular picture book genre. *Five Chinese Brothers* by Clare Huchet Bishop, *The Story of Little Black Sambo* by Helen Bannerman, *Brother Eagle Sister Sky* by Susan Jeffers, *Smoky Night* by Eve Bunting, *Snowy Day* Ezra Jack Keats, *Grand Father's Journey* by Allen Say, and *Yo! Yes?* by Chris Raschka are the multicultural picture books for the study. These books have at least one minority or multicultural character and contexts which construct a supposition about race, ethnicity or adaptations. Though the characters are multicultural, the writers and illustrators are mostly from mainstream cultures leaving a hint as how other cultures view the minority cultures. Hence the representation of minority cultures is not always authentic in its cultural details. The last of the section is picture books from India consisting the Gita series comprises of three stories namely, *A Gift for Gita*, *Roses for Gita* and *Lights for Gita* written by Rachana Gilmore, *The Toy Horse* by Deepa Agarwal and

Raju's Ride by Pratima Mitchell produced by Indians reflecting the Indian culture authentically.

The classical picture books lack an exact date of origin and are usually adapted from folk tales or other similar sources. *Little Red Riding Hood*, written by Perrault in the 17th century, is a famous folktale turned fairy tale about a young girl's encounter with a cross-dressing wolf. The little girl with her mother lived at the edge of a wood. One day, mother sends her to Grandma's with a basket of eateries, as Grandma isn't feeling well. Mother tells Little Red Riding Hood to be very careful and she mustn't talk to strangers or leave the path. Little Red Riding Hood puts on her red gown, took the basket and left for Grandma's. While walking through the woods she meets a wolf who asks her to pick some flowers too for Grandma while the wolf runs straight to Grandma's cottage. When the wolf arrives at the cottage he pretends he's Little Red Riding Hood and locks the grandma in a closet. He waits for Little Red Riding Hood in Grandma's clothes. Little Red Riding Hood arrives and notices the changes and identifies the wolf. She screams for help and a woodcutter saves her from the wolf and unlocked the Grandma.

This popular fairy tale has nearly 50 different versions designed to suite the demands from time to time. These versions also bear cultural subjectivity according to the languages and ethnicity they were positioned. Of these various versions, the three multicultural variants deviate on multiple levels but remain

equally powerful in communicating the message rooted strongly in their ethnic culture. *Lon Po Po: A Red-Riding Hood Story from China*, by Ed Young is the most popular among them securing Caldecott medal of 1990. This story is different than the versions we mostly find. The major difference is that the protagonist is not alone but has company of her two sisters. *Pretty Salma: A Little Red Riding Hood Story from Africa*, by Niki Daly, changes the locale of the story to urban Ghana. In this version, the woods are replaced with market place and the wolf with a sly dog. The cultural authenticity of *Pretty Salma* is achieved by diverting from its European inspiration. The illustrations for *Pretty Salma* communicate urban aspects and at the same time traditional cultural settings of Ghana, and it also depict various aspects of the culture, including masks and fabric patterns authentic to the culture. Apart from cultural details Niki Daly has modified the story from the classic *Little Red Riding Hood* as *Pretty Salma* and her grandfather tricks the dog and forces it to leave granny's house. The characters involved in the story are also unlike from the classic version. *Petit Rouge: A Cajun Red Riding Hood*, by Mike Artell is a funny version of the classical old tale. Set in the bayous of Louisiana, a duck named Cajun Little Red sets off to bring some gumbo to her sick grandmother and the wolf is replaced by an alligator. This version of the book reinforces the French cultural elements in terms of language, food and situations.

The importance for these multicultural versions were necessitated as the classic version of the story cannot be related by children from different cultures in many ways. The story has often been criticized for carrying the negative cultural stereotypes; the wine bottle in Little Red Riding Hood's basket is one such example. Children need to learn and understand other cultures and diversity positively instead of negatively. *Little Red Riding Hood* by Jerry Pinkney shows characters in a different way than the other versions. The characters in this book are not white instead has darker skin. Little Red Riding Hood's brown curly hair is different from the other adaptations as well. This can have a positive effect on children because it is teaching them about diversity and how all stories and characters need not look exactly the same; because children who are not white and are from a different race might be able to relate to this book more. The books for children should not always have white characters. It is vital children should be exposed to books that include different kinds of characters who belong to different cultures and have different values and beliefs.

The change in image of Little Red Riding Hood's over time, adapting itself to different nationalities and culture needs special mention. Change is inevitable; moving forward to reaffirm or backward to reclaim. Mostly the changes in the new adaptations are brought on outer level alone; and the inner conflicts of the characters resulted from their interactions with other characters remain the same. This would generate a discordant feeling in readers. The language and motifs of

the tales are to be internalised within the culture. When fairy tales are rendered it should follow lifestyle choices and gender models of the target culture.

The story Little Red Riding Hood is embedded in our cultural unconscious, and its survival till day signifies its relevance and interest to children, artists, critics and audiences of popular culture. "The way in which people school their children is culturally diagnostic" (Akenson 9). This truth bears the significance since the socialization of children take place indirectly with various mediums including picture books. If at all this takes place the cultural diagnosis as suggested by Akenson will be Western. Following the track we have many stories rooted strongly in western culture they remain alien to the children from the name of the characters, back ground of the story, context, situations dealt with, the language employed , the food suggested, the manners followed all together make children westernised rather than socialized. The story of *Cinderella or The Little Glass Slipper*, the next story to be discussed, too have many instances of this sort.

Cinderella is again a folk tale turned fairy tale when Perrault made this tenth century Chinese folk tale to one of the most loved, read and adapted story for children of all time. The story is so popular that need not be mentioned further. The story was believed to produced some time around tenth century. Realizing the scope of the story or the fascinating element to attract the children all over it was reproduced in numerous versions. Still the variation by Perrault

continues to hold an important position and receive attention that it became an inseparable part of childhood. No child ever missed their childhood without being listened to this story at least once. The popularity that the story gained, inspired many, to bring about different version and adaptations and these too were welcomed unconditionally. The adaptations to different forms such as picture books, cartoon, film, and rendering into different languages show the unquestionable popularity the story enjoyed. But all these adaptations were based on the version Charles Perrault brought about in the fifteenth century, which clearly manifested western culture in characterisation, setting, background, and cultural patterns communicated. The little girls dreamt to be a princess like Cinderella with all minutiae.

The book is filled with the western subtleties in the natural and supernatural details alike. The motifs like the chariot, the glass slipper everything stamped the same. When the book was adapted to various languages including Chinese, it was these features which got apparently translated along with the language. As we introduce the book to the toddlers, it is easy to believe that it is a supernatural story just meant to convey the message of how virtue rewarded. But a deeper level understanding evolves for a child who is hardly unaware of the hidden cultural patterns of the book. Furthermore, the conflict of the story is how Cinderella gets united with the 'prince charming' is accentuated with the ball at the palace. The idea of groom hunting is set as a major goal

which stamps culturally in the minds of the children. The details of these would surely enthrall the children that they tend to focus on the colours, the riches, the royal, all equate with beauty. The child who faces this belongs to one of the three categories; first, the child leads a life amidst the same scenario, second, the child who is totally outside this scenario, and third, the child who knows about the scene discussed, but cannot relate to the situations discussed in either way possible. The influences that a child undergoes, as previously suggested, manipulates the life and dreams and leaves an everlasting impression in their minds.

The increased popularity and glaring cultural subjectivity is the reason that this story got adapted in to different versions the most. The story has been told and retold in different countries in varying fashions for centuries. The French man Perrault's version of *Cinderella* strongly resonates with children of American and European birth (Megis 9). Each of the retellings has even shifted the focus of the story. It varied from the supernatural elements to menacing step sisters or the idea of beauty in order to suit the preferences of the time and culture. For example in the new Chinese version *Yeh Shen*, inspired from the classic version of the Perrault keeps the size of the glass slipper small, as small feet were considered to be the symbol of beauty in China at a previous time. In that sense, each version is complete in its own way remaining truthful to the culture they represent.

The classic version failed at certain levels and remained foreign which caused the construction of the retold versions. It was in terms of culture that these variations with specific cultural contents were attempted. Shirley Climo in collaboration with different illustrators ventured many cultural variations of the story. *The Egyptian Cinderella* illustrated in 1989 by Ruth Heller is in tune with African culture especially the colour of the skin. The story was developed partly on fact and partly on folk legends of the land. This story is remarkable for its details of life of people in ancient Egypt and for the Egyptian-style illustrations proving the authenticity. *The Persian Cinderella* by the same writer illustrated by Robert Florczak makes the female characters suit to the engaging cultural values of their land by confining the women and girls to a certain section of the houses. Unlike the other adaptations, they were picturised to cover their faces when they move out. The cultural differences other than the details of illustrations are present in the values expressed through the narrative. The French and European versions have forgiveness and reconciliation as the value embedded while the Chinese version strongly recommends punishment. Cinderella establishes a universal archetypal structure that is familiar deep down hence it charms us in spite of our multiple intellectual and cultural issues such as fairy godmothers, princes and glass slippers.

These adaptations challenge the notion that the works produced can be understood from the white stand point alone. The lingering imaginations of the

world are trapped in whiteness, towards which literature considerably contribute. The gazes are predominantly white and one overlooks the otherness if exhibited. Though the adaptations proclaim the ethnicities and cultural standpoint, it should also be noted that these works never gained the momentum as that of the classic tale that the world cherishes. Approaching *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, the story presents a conflict within between the oppressed and the oppressor. But again the popularity of the story speaks the white predominance.

Beatrix Potter best known for her imaginative children's books featuring animals such as those in *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, which celebrated the British landscape and country life. Beatrix Potter is an English author, illustrator, natural scientist, and conservationist; she showed keen interest in pets and found herself happy in their company. She also showed special interest in sketching the landscape later in her life after the production of her first work *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*; she owned a farm namely Hill Top Farm where she spent her time in close contact with Nature. Her strong taste for animals was further developed in close acquaintance with Nature. She used the farm as background material for the illustrations in many of her books. She wrote *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* in the form of a letter, to a five year old child, Noel Moore, the son of Beatrix's governess, Annie Carter, and later in 1902, Frederick Warne and Co. brought this delightful story to the public. "It is much more satisfactory to address a real live child; I often think that that was the secret of

the success of Peter Rabbit, it was written to a child – not made to order” (Linder 110).

The tale has remained in print in order to satisfy children’s and adults’ demands since its first publication in 1902. In this timeless children’s classic, Peter Rabbit comes to life as a mischievous and curious young bunny. He ignores his mother’s warning to stay away from Mr. McGregor’s vegetable garden despite her stern reminder that his father was baked into a pie by Mr. McGregor. Peter satisfies himself with variety vegetables, and goes looking for parsley leaves to calm his queasy tummy. Alas, conflict comes in the form of Mr. McGregor, who chases Peter through the garden waving a rake, almost catches him when he gets caught in a gooseberry net, but he manages to escape McGregor with the help of good spirited sparrows. Again in the tool shed he encounters the misfortune, Peter escapes the shed, manages to avoid the cat, and finds the gate again. Finally, when poor Peter gets home completely worn out after a day’s chaos, he was put to bed with a dose of chamomile tea as a result of disobedience, while, his sisters get a rewarding meal of bread, milk and blackberries.

The story makes the animal world as a cross section of the society; with due representation of commons, victims, oppressors, good spirited, ambiguous, indifferent set of beings. The very powerful idea of the “world outside” is well created and added horror to the situations. The cosy and safe home and the

troublesome world outside are contrasted in Peter's day-out experience. It warns one about the crisis waiting outside the houses' comforts. The awaiting threats like Mc Gregor, and the situations of terror, the unexpected help, and unexplainable indifference and to face these situations alone, taking decisions by oneself completes the idea of the "world outside". From the sociological point of view, the story unveils with a simple plot following the usual home-away-home pattern of children's literature. A well ordered society has been recreated by Potter with definite set of laws, rules and regulations. Those rules are forcefully abided by the members of the society as the violation of which causes to be perishable. "Mc Gregor's garden is a vivid coherent analogue for the world beyond the young child's home: the world of huge, all powerful, hostile, ambivalent or patronizing adults, and of the confusing laws of who can have what" (Kennedy 55). Transgression of boundaries has been kept a major design as the story strives to the culmination of action from there on.

The superficial characteristics of its deceptively simple plot should not be allowed to blind the reader to the more substantial fabric of its deeper motivation. The sociological and colonial reading takes the readers to a new realm of experience. The mischievous "good bunny" acts as the representative of the oppressed, victimised layman. The current study offers an innovative approach with regard to the previous methods of analysing the children's stories which remained cluttered on the moral and vocabulary perspective alone.

Apart from the surface level reading, the work takes the readers to the understanding of realistic portrayal of the world where they all would like escape to. The multiple deeper level implications of the work are interwoven artistically with the help of the illustrations. The illustrations give a thorough understanding of the mischievous character of Peter, his sisters as Good bunnies, expressions on the face of animals like that of humans, details of gender, dressing, realistic setting, landscape, attitudes and characteristics. Illustrations further provide a narrative space for the imagination of children. Nowhere in the text has the author mentioned the gender of the bunnies. Peter obviously with his name, represents masculinity; but his sibling's gender are revealed through the illustrations. The girls in pink and boys in blue are clearly communicated to the targeted readers/viewers. A careful reading of the illustrations and verbal text immediately reveals a counterpoint between the two: the illustration depicts a realistic scene of a group of wild rabbits under a tree, while the verbal narrative immediately fictionalizes the rabbits by naming them. The verbal text also clears the ambiguity of the number of rabbits in the illustration by overtly stating that there are "four little Rabbits" (Potter n.p.). The recent approaches with regard to these elements contrast to the previous methods of analysing the children's stories which remained cluttered on the moral and vocabulary perspective alone.

The illustrations in the book, celebrate Beatrix Potter's interest for nature. Nature in all beauty is well expressed. The Nature in perfect harmony with all

blending elements has been effectively communicated. Nature not only for aesthetic but also for kinaesthetic pleasure is provided herewith. It includes the birds, animals, humans, plants, trees, fruits, water, roads, and boundaries. The landscape painted and gleam in colours natural to nature enhance the visual fiesta of the story. As in language, visual images also possess degrees of modality ranging from high to low levels of credibility. In the case of naturalistic modality, the more an image resembles whatever it is in the real world in a specific setting, the higher degree of modality it is likely to have (Kress and Van Leeuwen 252). The “good bunnies” in pink is plucking the blue berries; the white cat watching the gold fish in the mirror like pond; the neat and tidy household, the luxury of the vegetable garden, all extravaganza of nature comes together to an unforgettable ride on nature. The illustrations supplement and augment the text and thereby make it equally verbal and visual contributing each other.

The illustrations communicate the slightest to the sublime expressions in a finer way. The happy joy family on the opening page introduces all the major characters including Peter with his mischievous expression while, other bunnies are engaged in the usual play. The inceptive illustration helps the readers to register the setting of story and also to understand the distinctive quality of the protagonist which trigger off the action. “The rabbits are located near the tree trunk where they live. Mrs Rabbit, the mother of the litter, directs her gaze directly at the viewer, inviting him into the story and introducing her children as

the verbiage also does through a 'there'-construction: 'ONCE UPON A TIME there were four little Rabbits, and their names were -Flopsy, Mopsy, Cotton-tail and Peter.' In this scene, although both the verbiage and the illustration are essential to the creation of the story, the illustration conveys more relevant information about Peter's personality than do the words. Peter is represented through a visual metonymy (Forceville 61), one part (his tail) for his whole, attracting the reader's attention in a special way. The illustration in the next page of a neat and tidy house hold help the children to identify with their own situations. The gender of the bunnies is clearly established by following the conventions where the females are given pink outfits whereas the only male member of the family Peter is in blue. Later on Mc Gregor also appears in blue dress. Further on exploring the expressions, the sickness of Peter, by over eating the vegetables, is sublimely portrayed. The illustrations vividly describe the different tools and surroundings and enhance the vocabulary supplied by the text. The swiftness of action and the rhythm of movement too are set with illustrations.

Colonialism is another major theme lay latent without notice. Peter represents the oppressed class, where Mc Gregor, the powerful deals with them autocratically. As Nature said to be the natural habitat for all creatures, the boundaries set by Mc Gregor against the natural law must be looked at seriously. His attitude to suppress all who questions his authority is typical of colonialism.

The helplessness of the commons is vividly taken to the limelight through Peter and with the reference of his father. By disobeying his mother's words, despite the accident of his father, Peter proves his natural instinct to challenge the authority. The attitude of the oppressor remains the same as he uses the dress left by Peter in his garden as a scare-crow; an interminable warning for all those who might challenge him. The strongest tool of a capitalist is the all pervading fear established among the oppressed has been suggested by Potter. Potter's fiction of rabbits should not be read as mere fables or didactic moral parables. Rather, their representation of animals and landscape contribute to early twentieth century discourses of nation, gender and national identity (Nyman 20).

The Tale of Peter Rabbit is one such work where the child, the targeted reader of the work, never misses out the realistic portrayals of environment. The modality of the illustrations is high with its specific thrust on details as well as clarity. The children acquaint the different aspects like the natural habitat of animals, organised method of farming and natural instincts expressed in normal environment. The story remains appealing to children from every part of the world since the work transcends all boundaries as the setting of the story can be related by all. The book invariably attracts multivalent application and it meets varied interests. Infusing the verbal and visual, Potter creates an embedded text with diverse reading. Peter, the protagonist leaves the traces of a mischievous bunny in the first reading and later as the prey of the situation, who further

grows as an agent of the oppressed community. He acts well within the frame of a limited society of animals and at the same time suits to the larger than life frame.

Fantasy makes the most of a conventional children's picture book *The Cat in the Hat* by Dr. Seuss that follows a direct and simple story line to be an unforgettable experience for all. Sally and her brother, who narrates the story, forms the human characters, while the mysterious black cat that makes his appearance in a boring rainy day during the absence of their mother completes the triptych. The Seussian magic with the cat takes the readers on a tour to the world of fantasy. While the Cat proposes to entertain the children with some tricks the pet fish at home refuses, and insisted the Cat to leave. In response, the Cat balanced the fish on the tip of his umbrella forms the first revolting action against the convention. The game grew worse and got a mess at home with each trick by the cat. The fish warned him again, but the Cat suggested another game and brings in a big red box from outside, and he released two identical creatures. This caused more trouble. All this comes to an end when the fish noticed that the mother returned. Soon the Cat appears with a machine and cleaned the house, delighting the fish and the children who were bewildered in the unmanageable situation. Then the Cat left just before their mother arrived, and the fish and the children were back to the position, as they were at the beginning of the story. As mother steps in, she asked the children what they did and did they have any fun,

but the children are hesitant and do not answer. The story ends with the question to the readers, "What would you do if your mother asked you?"

Dr. Seuss' *The Cat in the Hat* sparked a children's literary revolution. In just 223 words, Dr. Seuss created a text packed with rich themes and ideas. The cat in the book, share a black lineage as could be observed from the illustrations and is all set to upset the conventional white social order. Nel writes, "the Cat's minstrel ancestry reveals Seuss's racial unconscious, indicating how his imagination resuscitated and revised early twentieth-century stereotypes" (41). In addition Ishizuka and Stephens noticed how people of colour are portrayed in Dr Seuss' children's book through Orientalist and anti-Black stereotypes and caricatures. They assert that the characters are presented as subservient, and peripheral to, the white characters (14). She points out that the Cat in the hat, perhaps Seuss' most famous character, is based on minstrel stereotypes. The Cat's physical appearance, including its costumes like the oversized top hat, floppy bow tie, white gloves, and his appearance with frequently open mouth, mirrors actual subservient performers and does the role as an entertainer to the white family – in whose house he doesn't belong. Phillip Nel recently published a book *Was the Cat in the Hat Black? The Hidden Racism in Children's Literature, and the Need for Diverse Books*, which examines *The Cat in the Hat's* roots in blackface minstrelsy.

The Cat was also influenced by actual blackface performers and minstrelsy, which is seen in both the Cat's physical appearance and the role he plays in the book. Physical attributes mirroring actual blackface performers include: "The Cat's umbrella (which he uses as a cane) and outrageous fashion sense link him to Zip Coon, that floppish "northern dandy negro". His bright red floppy tie recalls the polka-dotted ties of blackfaced Fred Astaire in *Swing Time* and of blackfaced Mickey Rooney in *Babes in Arms*. His red-and-white-striped hat brings to mind Rooney's hat in the same film or the hats on the minstrel clowns in the silent picture *Off to Bloomingdale Asylum*" (Nel 40).

Dr. Seuss partook in minstrelsy and blackface performance himself. He wrote and acted in a minstrel show for his high school called "Chicopee Surprised", and performed in blackface (Nel 34). Minstrel shows exploited Black stereotypes for profit and mocked African Americans and Black culture. They mimicked white perceptions of the attributes and function of Blacks as: "subservient", "ignorant", "buffoonish", and serving/performing at the pleasure (and profit) of Whites. The role the Cat "performs" in *The Cat in the Hat* mimics the role of blackface performers in minstrel shows. The "black" Cat's purpose is to entertain and perform "tricks" for the White children: "I know some new tricks, A lot of good tricks. I will show them to you. Your mother Will not mind at all if I do" (Seuss 8). Although he is there for entertainment value, it is made clear that he does not belong in the white family's home: "Tell that Cat in the Hat

You do NOT want to play. He should not be here. He should not be about” (11).

These words spoken by the fish in the story reflects the segregation on part of the family.

The Story of Babar the Little Elephant by Jean de Brunhoff was published in 1931. Babar the young elephant escapes from the hunter who killed his mother. He runs away from the jungle to a big city. There he meets an old lady who gets him new clothing and engages a teacher to educate him. He lives with her for a while and gets acquainted with western ways of life. His cousins Arthur and Celeste come to meet him who also joins Babar and adapts new ways of life. The story takes a turn when Babar decides to return to the forest along with his relatives. He marries Celeste and was crowned the King of Elephants.

The story of Babar is quite a loved one among the children as it is with teachers and parents. On the peripheral level the book discusses those elements of refinement and manners. But at the same time the story is notorious with the cultural assimilation towards West. The originality and the ethnicity of the community are stripped off from Babar and forced him to adjust with the foreign situation; further, the story uses Babar as a puppet to condition his fellow folks in the same ways of life. Those who didn't get changed were not accommodated as we see in the journey by car in the last pages of the book. They have to run behind. The parents are forced to follow their refashioned children without

realising that they are denounced. Power has been transferred to the young Europeanized generation.

Ever since Babar left his jungle home for city life and wore human clothes he has remained a favourite with children. His pleasures are multiple, including going up and down on his first trip in a lift so often that he has to be cautioned by a shop employee that this is not a plaything. The book is flooded with the symbols of colonialism and imperialism. By enthronement of Babar, it is further ensured that the colonization is sure to continue. Kohl in his book *Should We Burn Babar* states that, "what is read in childhood not only leaves an impression behind but also influences the values, and shapes the dreams, of children" (61). When there are no examples of stories for young people that fundamentally question the world as it is and dream it as it might be; he writes, "resignation, defiance, or the quest for personal success become the only imaginable option unless the young have other sources for generating hope" (63). Who has power and how power is distributed remain a critical state in Babar. Kohl dissects the text bit by bit. The hunter, dressed in "full colonial regalia" is a faceless, impersonal force that is difficult to identify with the other, more benevolent humans in the book. When Babar meets the Rich Lady, whose wealth is never explained, he eagerly, without resistance begins to lose his elephant nature. The affluent lady dresses Babar like a human; teaches him table manners and bathing habits; and educates him like a human being. The story also sets a distinction

that the rich are good and one should assimilate like rich and blindly follow forgetting oneself. The mind of the readers too moves with the character and starts admiring the rich unconsciously at a small age. Yet another hidden feature of the story is how the protagonist of the story, Babar acts as an agent for humans conditioning other elephants to blindly follow the practices of the imperialists and find happiness in their servitude and enjoy power in reward. Though it is easy to conclude that children would see and enjoy the company of an elephant in green suit unlike the adults reality is different. Children even without realizing would imbibe and follow what is being practised in these sort of literature, where they see life got mirrored in their way. Paulo Freire once said that, "to study is not to consume ideas, but to create and re-create them" (4).

Other races and cultures appears to be objectified that they present a characteristic worth to be analysed and not as an extension of humanity. For example, the authors Jennifer and Meeker discuss the book *Nina Bonita*, in which a white bunny is "intrigued with the beauty of a young Black girl" and decides to marry a black rabbit so they can have an attractive black daughter like the Black girl (274). In this way, the young Black girl is objectified as a distinct one, and not a rounded of character. In their words in multicultural picture books the race representations are often positioned from the white point of view, thereby objectifying the people of colour at the same time implicitly "otherizing" racial minorities (272). Commodifying takes place from the perspective of the producer

of culture, ignoring the quintessence of the minority culture forcing them to be the 'other'. It ends up as a process of making a culture a commodity. It is often identified that the view that the world shares is primarily white. The perspective of the Western or the mainstream culture is projected as the world ought to be alienating the rest of the communities as exotic. This projected perspective condition the mental status of both the majority and minority culture; the majority view as the other while compelling the minority see themselves to be irrelevant. The following paragraphs will analyse a few books in this regard. Modern day picture books fail at a point, where the representations of the minority culture remains as part of commodification or objectification. They are still detached from the collective human experiences of a given culture.

Originally written in 1899 by Helen Bannerman, the wife of a British colonial agent in Madras, *Little Black Sambo* tells the story of a South Indian boy. In 1898 there "came into her head, evolved by the moving of a train," the entertaining story of a little black boy, beautifully clothed, who outwits a succession of tigers, and not only saves his own life but gets a stack of tiger-striped pancakes (Bader 536). The boy who encounters with four tigers in the jungle one day and unwittingly outwits the hungry predators with his flashy new cloths. Sambo eventually tricks the tigers into chasing one another to exhaustion, when they all melt into a giant pool of ghee, or Indian-style clarified butter. Sambo scoops up the tigers-turned-butter; takes them home, and gives his

mother to make a feast of pancakes and celebrate with the neighbourhood.

Though the story was written nearly a century ago the book is still in reference and which makes the study of it relevant even today.

The idea of 'black sambo' was employed as 1) cultural identifier and 2) a racial descriptor. And thereby, racial and cultural stereotype has been evidenced here. It is assumed that the time when the book was published it was not intentional, but natural way to address the group. But the primitive way in which Indians are illustrated invites criticism. It generates in the mind of the readers the idea that India is a land of primitivism and where humans and animals interact normally. Furthermore, the entire community is simply confined and generalised to the single notion of 'black sambo' stripped of their individual social and national identity. These deviated projections are sure to create biased vision about a land with distinct culture and identity. Even though the story was conceived after continuing in the country for a considerable period of time it has to be agreed that the book couldn't grasp the culture completely and left it distorted. This Book leaves create an impression in the minds of people that the blacks are people with no dignity or culture.

The Story of Little Black Sambo was deeply rooted and entrenched in the society which causes anxiety and emotional insecurity. The demand to remove the book from the list of books given to children was declined stating that the book has got a wider appeal among students and there is nothing mentioned

about racial conflicts. But such a statement hardly inculcates the hard feelings of the black. Though the racial conflicts are not evident in the book cultural stereotyping is notoriously present in the book. For example, the parents and the neighbours are presented as just an extension of 'Little Black Sambo'. Though the book consider how the boy plays trick over the tigers, the concentration of the book is more on the exotic life and food which is far away from reality.

So these types of cultural distortions present in children's picture book must be warned against in the accelerated pace of cultural globalizations. Painting the minority group of different skin colour as an exoticized caricature and racialized community might be feasible for only white consumes; the Indian and African American context surely loathe it. When Sambo was retold due to the outcry from the public it still maintained the characters as black and not white which clearly shows the white dichotomy that existed in the society at that time. But though we have travelled so far and move hand in hand with the globalization of culture the representations of black positively does not appear in the same proportion with room for racial politics.

The book was a huge success with the primary and the subsequent publications. It remained close to the public for a considerable period of time until many racist under tones were identified. From a cultural perspective, the reworked versions of the book *Sambo and the Tigers* and *The Story of Little Babaji* proves the arguments raised against the initial work. The book still enjoys a

wider circulation. White readers accentuates on Bannerman's non-racist design and the unfairness of judging yesterday's "classics" by today's standards of race and culture while blacks find the book's title and the illustrations obnoxious. In 1932 Langston Hughes said *Little Black Sambo* exemplified the "pickaninny variety" of storybook, "amusing undoubtedly to the white child, but like an unkind word to one who has known too many hurts to enjoy the additional pain of being laughed at" (Woodson 248).

The detailed study of the picture books uncovers how misrepresentations of culture creep in picture books leading to varying levels of consequences. The investigation of the stories like *Five Chinese Brothers* and *Brother Eagle Sister Sky* float on multiple misrepresentations. The misrepresentations appear in terms of cultural inaccuracies; the characters for example in *Five Chinese Brothers* share nothing of Chinese appearance except that of the slanted eye, the dialogues bear no cultural reference to make it authentic, on the other hand, in *Brother Eagle Sister Sky* the Squamish appearance of the chief Seattle and the horses in the illustrations make them more of a plain culture than the original. Cultural reinforcement would help the readers gain a better understanding about the rich and variedness of cultures. As observed, " in *How My Parents Learned to Eat* by Friedman, the pictures depicting in detail the way Japanese eat and the way Westerners eat, reinforce the text and help the readers gain a better understanding of the

differences between oriental and occidental cultures" (Fang 136). While the racist overtones dominates in *If I Ran the Zoo*

Claire Huchet Bishop in collaboration with Kurt Wiese published *Five Chinese Brothers* in 1938. The book is a retelling of a Chinese folk tale. The five look alike Chinese brothers trump up the law and the society by their extra ordinary individual qualities. The first brother has the ability of swallowing the sea. One day, a little boy asks to go fishing with him. As they fish, the first Chinese brother swallows the sea. The little boy gets delighted and runs into the dry ocean and gathers up beautiful things but when called back, he didn't obey and returned to the shore. When the sea leaves the Chinese brother's throat and covers the ocean floor, the boy disappears. As a result, the first Chinese brother is condemned to be executed. He asks permission for one last visit with his mother and permission was granted. The second Chinese brother, whose neck made of iron, returns in his place. Since his head cannot be cut off, he was ordered to be drowned. The second brother too plays the same trick and returns home to say good-bye to his mother and the third one, who can stretch his legs, was sent in his place. He could not be drowned and this pattern of new punishments and the brothers overcoming them with their special traits continues. At the end people agreed with the judge who said that the first brother must be innocent because he has overcome all abandonment.

Though often considered a classic of children's literature, *The Five Chinese Brothers* has been denounced for ethnicity portrayed in stereotypes, especially through its caricatured illustrations where Chinese element is fulfilled with the yellow faces. The book bears a dedication line to his father whom he says, made him love China and develop a fondness for their culture and looks. Apart from the title and the source, the book miserably fails to be authentic towards the Chinese culture; the story has nothing to do with the Chinese life, to surprise the readers. The only reason it takes such a title is that it is a retelling of a Chinese folk tale and apparently it came to be known as a children's classic. But a child who approaches the book with the expectation to get acquainted with a foreign culture will be greatly disappointed. Taking note of the illustrations the book is notorious for racial stereotyping where almost all the characters share the similar appearance along with the five look alike brothers. And most strikingly the Chinese appearance was attempted by the colour of the skin and the slanted eye. The controversy is treated both by supporting and declining the argument. But a crucial question to be answered in this scenario is that of the absence of culture from the story. The embedded cultural traits are transferred on second hand information where the yellow faces with absolutely no identity were brought into play. When a retold version of the same story appeared with a title *Seven Chinese Brothers* by Margaret Mahy, a writer from New Zealand, a stark contrast was hinted at with the illustrations giving the brothers a character with their faces even though they were look alike. The negative stereo typing in *Five Chinese*

Brothers would definitely produce negative indication shedding no light to the culture of the land. A child from the Chinese culture can never appreciate the transfigured folk tale of their culture with themselves being caricatured and creating no impressionable score in front of the world about the values and identities of their culture. The issue is treated in better light in *Seven Chinese Brothers*. Mahy deliberately de-stereotyped the tale with a radical reworking of the plot, characters and settings. Though extended in number the characters are lookalike brothers with some spectacular power to support each other. While the story moves along the same note she has carefully interwoven certain patches or instances which make the story abide by the Chinese culture. That is to say, Second Brother's amazing eyes could look right across the hundred miles and see the fly sitting on the Great Wall of China, "sneezing and feeling very sorry for itself" (4). Mahy has purposely related the Han dynasty legend. It was Emperor Chin Shih Huang's who planned and began construction of the Great Wall to consolidate his power. And these details could take the readers to the land and culture of China with historical relevance. The story could also bring in the emotional subtlety with the unusual power of the seventh brother who should always be kept happy whose tears elsewhere would drown the village; which children could happily assimilate. Thus in a thoughtful approach the book meets those elements which were lacking in the precursor.

The two renditions of the Chinese folk tale present the simple message of collaborative brotherhood on two different planes. The *Five Chinese Brothers* only attempted to recapitulate the traditional folk tale devoid of its cultural settings. The caricature of the Chinese men through the illustrations made the work a mistaken appropriation of the folk tale lacking the legitimacy. Whereas, in *Seven Chinese Brothers* the same situation was evolved naturally keeping it firm on the cultural background familiarising and enhancing the cultural elements. The folk tale of a culture that remained in a limited sphere was adapted in a way more feasible to the mainstream onlooker and was accepted and loved by all.

Jennifer Willis-Rivera and Melissa Meeker emphasized that diverse populations are observed from an objectified position (274). Similar views are stated by Bogum Yoon, Anne Simpson, and Claudia Haag who argued that there is obvious assimilationist ideology deep seated within modern multicultural literature, especially picture books. In both the arguments, the position of children demands to forgo their native cultural values and traditions so that they can assimilate and become part of American society (110). Modern multicultural literature deviates from international literature as they include a major or minor minority cultural character but the themes generally don't sound to be in terms with the life and situations common to them. The themes found in the book bound to be assimilationist because the truest experiences are not discussed in these books.

The “Rodney King riots” 1990’s in the South Central forms to be the background for this picture book *Smoky Night* by Eve Bunting published in 1994. A black man named Rodney King was beaten to death by four white police officers who were acquitted later. This caused a massive violent riot, at a predominantly Black and Latino neighbourhood, which lasted several days and resulted in tolling the casualties and much destruction. Though the violence has been brought into focus in the book the causes were ignored. The episode set in motion the issues related as racism, lack of educational opportunities, poverty, unemployment etc. The boiling issues never got to the depth in the book. The story intends to discuss the boy’s anxiety as the mother and her son Daniel were forced to move out of their apartment due to some unfavourable incidents from the rioters. The boy looks for his cat Jasmine which went missing in the mishap. Daniel, his mother, and the other apartment tenants including Mrs. Kim, an Asian neighbour were taken to a local shelter. Daniel and his mother do not get along with Mrs. Kim because their cats fight often and also due to the fact that they belonged to different nationalities. Daniel and Mrs. Kim’s cats were rescued by a fire fighter who said that the cats survived by staying together in the building. Daniel makes a comment that the cats are good friends now because they got to know each other better. This subtle statement made Daniel’s mom to introduce herself to Mrs. Kim and start to build a familiarity regardless of her race.

Although the story looks simple direct and straight forward the character delineation in comparison to the backdrop create the contrast. The mother in the story explains to her son Daniel about the south central rebellion as “People get angry, they want to smash and destroy. They don’t care anymore what’s right and wrong. . . After a while it’s like a game.” (n.p.) A Black woman can never discuss the rebellion with such words as they share nearly the same feeling as that of the rioters. Thus the notions of a white woman fit into that of a black woman’s tongue. The book could make a child reader to estimate something unpleasant in Daniel’s neighbourhood. The real demand of the riot has been masked and misinterprets the perspective to be developed among the young readers. The triviality with which the social issue is discussed in the book would ultimately lead young readers who are not black to conclude that it is a bad neighbourhood.

The book also discusses, being a multicultural story, the topic of race relations through the eyes of a young boy. Daniel and his mother do not intermingle with Mrs. Kim because she is Asian and they are Hispanic. By the end of the story with the help of two little cats, Daniel and his mother observe that one cannot judge someone based on their race, nationality, culture, language, or appearance. The text does not specifically go in depth into either Mrs. Kim or Daniel’s cultures but rather revolves around the relations between the two.

By using the narrative voice of a young child, Daniel who doesn't understand why his neighborhood is exploding, Bunting tries to fend off complex social issues in any depth. In reality, this young boy would definitely know what's going on; he would have experienced, in ways large and small, the anger and disillusionment of his community. Children begin to learn about their surroundings at a very young age. They quickly imbibe and internalize the values and cultural elements of their family and society. If the marginalized children continually see themselves reflected in books such as *Smoky Night*, they are likely to develop socio-emotional problems. And the non marginalized main stream children continually see children who are marginalized as "other," developing a lasting impression which might lead to further racial tensions.

Picture book genre of literature educates and entertains the targeted group. *Brother Eagle Sister Sky* is recommended for the education and awareness among children about the environment. The book is a recollection of a speech that, Chief Seattle made during the negotiations process with the American Government, forms the soul of this book. The speech speaks of the connection the Native Americans hold towards the land and it also asserts the Chief's concern for protecting the environment. "The Earth does not belong to us. We belong to the Earth" (20), his message to respect the Earth and every creature on it has stood the test of time and is inculcated with sentiments born of love of the land and the environment. Illustrated by Susan Jeffers, the drawings in this book

attempt to depict the life of Native Americans while capturing the beauty of land and environment. Elevated in theme, message and dialogues the book holds a special position among those books which are meant to convey a serious thought on nature preservation. But the inaccuracies and stereotypical presentation would definitely leave a distorted view of the Squamish chief and his life. The illustration's research is not in tune with the solemnity the chief has to offer.

There are all together 16 paintings out of which 8 of them figures horses prominently. The truth that Seattle and his tribe were not from a horse culture proves these illustrations to be the greatest inaccuracy in the work. The Suquamish and Duwamish homeland is the northwest coast of America, and their traditional clothing, homes, and means of transport needs to reflect that location. However, Jeffers's illustrations mostly represent plains cultures. Without a note in the text explaining which cultures are portrayed in each picture, however, young readers have no way to know that Seattle's people did not wear large feathered headdresses and fringed buckskin, live in tipis, and spend a lot of time on horseback. Long-standing stereotypes about native dress and life ways are thus reinforced (Reese and Caldwell-Wood 155).

In most of the illustrations, native people are shown as partially transparent, ghost-like figures. In combination with the fact that all Native people are represented in historical traditional rather than contemporary clothing, this portrayal suggests that Native Americans, no longer exist as a

reasonable people. They are nowhere to be found and are only reminiscences or spirits. Thus *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky* fails on two major grounds that is to say inaccurate rendering of Chief Seattle's words and depicting the Native Americans as visual stereotypes. The deviation of Chief Seattle's actual words was justified by Jeffers by noting in the afterword of the book. She claims "the origins of Chief Seattle's words are partly obscured by the mists of time" (32). This justification remains unaccountable by looking at the great commercial success it has made unlike the other versions. The popularity of the work demands the authenticity the author should have observed with regard to the message and the setting of the work. Naomi Cladwell- Wood has noted that, the book tries to "illuminate the strong relationships the Indian people have with the environment and how this relationship must be respected and maintained" (MacCann and Olga 31). But "the lack of sensitivity for the accurate portrayal of the Squamish people" as "ghostlike" images "dressed in Sioux regalia dismays anyone. This flaw presses the misconception that all native people dress alike". The target readers of the work, especially, the young readers would be misinformed without realizing the true spirit of Chief Seattle's words. Though the claims of the book were to transcend the inspiring words of Chief Seattle's, it deviates at the representation of the folk with the lack of attention paid to the details of folk culture. The message might inspire the readers, but the shortcomings intruded in to the portrayals of the Native Americans questions the

authorial responsibility in folk materials leaving an invalid impression about the folk amidst the readers.

Snowy Day analyses and investigates how the illustrations in this picture book helps to float the strong undercurrents of sub plots to appear and vanish time to time. Along with bringing clarity to the surface meaning, illustrations through many stylistic devices analyses the deep implicit layers of meaning. *Snowy Day*, written and illustrated by Ezra Jack Keats was published in 1962. This story won the Caldecott Award in 1963. The book unravels the experience of a young boy Peter, who is an African American, in the beauty and wonder of a lovely snowfall. As we watch young Peter explore and enjoy the snow, we get to see the perspective and excitement of a child. As the story progresses, Peter finds new ways to enjoy the snow that has mounded all over the city streets. As Peter returns home at the end of the story, we find him sad because the snowball he has brought in his pocket has disappeared. However, the next morning, when Peter awakes he discovers that the snow outdoors has also disappeared, and he calls to his friend across the hall to join him for another day of fun in the snow. The main character Peter is appealing to every child as they could relate to him easily and the situations he is involved. The big snowy city forms the background of the story. The adventure Peter goes on as he wakes up and find snow piled high outside his bedroom window invites the readers to

move along with the character. The creativity and imaginative skills that children possess is illustrated by the way Peter plays with snow.

What separates this book from the multitude of other children's books written about similar situations is that Peter, the story's protagonist, is black. As Ezra Jack Keats, himself said that "None of the manuscripts I'd been illustrating featured any black kids—except for token African Americans/Blacks in the background. My book would have him there simply because he should have been there all along" (Allyn 44). Though the book has an African American boy as the central figure, what makes the story different from other stories is that while other stories attempt to highlight the child's race or make it a central to the story, *Snowy Day* does not. Peter is portrayed as a child without adding any additional label of his community. His race is though represented not celebrated because the plot focuses more on the snow, the beauty that Peter finds through his experience, the carefree nature of his happiness, and these experiences that all children can easily relate to. Thus *Snowy Day* breaks down the barriers of race produced a timeless story enjoyed by children of all ethnicities. This book captured a child's innocence in all essence. Keats does an excellent job with his illustrations and takes the reader along on the journey, with Peter. His images are full of life and he attempts to blend bold colors and simple shapes, with mixed texture.

The vivid images of the book and the adventure of Peter are complete in itself that the book doesn't have any latent messages, or underlying tones. It is meant to inspire the young readers to use their creativity and explore the universe we live in. Award winning illustrator and author Bryan Collier, shared his view that when he found a boy of his folk was depicted in the book it turned to be a life changing moment for him (Bailey 257). Similarly, Nina Mikkelsen also recollected how her son's teacher commented "she wished there were more stories about black children . . . more stories about children from interracial homes" (608). But *Snowy Day* is often criticised on grounds that the white author created a black character, the young boy Peter who moves out in a snowy day, as to cater an award. Though the book is filled with the action of two main characters that is the boy who is obviously black and the snow, the embarking features remain absent. The snow performs in full vitality and vigour, while, the playful black boy had not left any specific aspects particular to his group except employed to produce a colour contrast with the snow. The wilful, active and enthusiastic boy allures the attention, but fails to leave any comments about his community.

The immigrant experience and the love torn between two nations is created with artistic subtlety in Allen Say's *Grandfather's Journey*. The story proves to be a powerful and unforgettable portrayal of the Japanese American immigrant experience. The story is on personal note, almost autobiographic, and

discusses about three generations. Say narrates the experience of his grandfather as a traveler, he crosses the Pacific on a steam engine and reaches to the “new world” as Say has said in the text. He explores the land and settles down there after marriage. But he turned reminiscent about his homeland in Japan, watching the childhood of his own daughter. He yearns for the feel of the homeland and returns to settle down in Japan. Grandfather spent his later years in Japan though he wished to visit California once again which he could not fulfill. The story reaches to the culmination when Say himself, inspired by the stories of grandfather decides to take up the journey to cross the sea. Say explored the land and spent and loved the land his grandfather loved; but he too grew homesick like his grandfather at the time he experienced the childhood of his daughter; and he decides to return to Japan. The story concludes with the words, “the moment I am in one country, I am homesick for the other”. This nonfiction book *Grandfather's Journey* evokes in words in the story of three generations in a family and how they come to terms with the love and try to balance what they feel for both America and Japan.

The cultural themes discussed in the book, located mostly on extended family connections, especially, the attachment Say developed with the grandfather to follow his suit, structure the powerful groundwork of the story. Voyages and travel make *Grandfather's Journey* a moving spectrum where the message of the book reinforced with the careful intervention of the artist. “The

artist's careful choices of the elements and principles of design can deepen the power of a book's written message" (Kiefer 130). The Grandfather's journey between two countries turns to be the journey between the cultures of East and West. "The themes of the book," as commented by Kiefer, "centre on two places, two worlds, and two people" (130). The twin existence of the grandfather is synonymous with the crisis of creating an identity in the new environment which may indirectly strengthened the homesickness and an urge to return to the motherland. This homesickness is experienced by Say's mother too who was forced to move to Japan. The children exposed to this book would certainly realize though a sharp contrast exists between these two countries and races, the characters in the story displays value for both cultures and appreciate both equally. The grandfather left the strong impressions in the mind of Say as a young boy that he decided to travel overseas and explore. The book reveals for children how can one appreciate the landscape, culture, values, mores, and life of a different country and ultimately remain connected to one's motherland. How world war interfered with the life and aspirations of people is also hinted at unconsciously, as Say remembers how his grandfather passed away without actually fulfilling his dream to visit California once again.

Illustrations in the book astonishingly invite us to hang around on the details of landscape and emotions. The balance of the pictures shifting from past to present is dealt with subtlety. The first illustration of the book is where the

grandfather appears in Japanese costumes and the same illustration is carried to the last page smaller in proportion to suggest the closure indicating the return to the motherland as aspired by Say too. This culturally sensitive book with poignant human experience is deepened with the artistic illustrations.

Yo! Yes? is an innovative picture book in 34 simple words. Chris Raschka in this story aims to explore the temperament of friendship in minimum number of words. *Yo! Yes?* gains magnitude as the two boys, each very different, in most aspects consider the possibility of friendship. By exchanging few words, they slowly choose and accept the idea of spending time together over the impression that their differences are so great they should remain apart. As reading through the story, we see the boys one black, outgoing, and street smart, while the other one white, shy, and nerdy, make briefest exchanges which helps the story develop. Both decide to take a chance on friendship. With no scenery provided just like a two-character play and minimal dialogue, the story is experimental and challenging side by side. The story grows solely on the expressiveness of the actors and the excellence of the artwork and perception of the readers to hook the meaning. Raschka the author and illustrator uses the watercolour and charcoal pencil illustrations to portray a vigorous range of emotion; they are offbeat and witty at once. In the small space of this bold picture book, less is definitely more.

The text controls throughout the story to communicate emotions, volume of dialogues, and energy of the characters along with the body language. Each

page has a single character and speaks just a few words creating a feeling of interaction with the readers. The text, with just thirty four words, the dexterous use of facial expressions, and body language convey an array of emotions. It clearly transmits the outward brashness of the African American and inward consciousness of the white boy. The story thus proves to be the celebration of friendship that looks at movement in terms of body language and facial expressions. Nature not for aesthetic but for kinaesthetic pleasure is the concept provided here. The scope of the work is that it gives an imaginative space to provide anew recent reading every time attempted.

The minimalism in the words used was on purpose as the author himself noted at the back of the text that, the first eight lines of the text were conceived while he was en route to the post office. Out of the thirty four words used a few of them are repeated hence making a total nineteen different words to tell a story with a cultural, racist, and national undertone. The book is identifiable to children since it resembles their way of communication. Character consciousness reveals that Chris Raschka captures the spirit of the boys true to their age and ethnicity. He maintained the balance that both the boys receive equal weightage and stand on their own.

Linguistic and cultural diversity analysis of the book project a positive attitude developed towards cultural differences The most noticeable about culture in this book is the first word, "yo!" Being American slang, it is normally

not used openly, yet the daring use of the word is meant to indicate the culture and attitude. Slang of a language is a good way to explore a child's background and differences that create their identity. The diversity is also brought about in the way of dressing style of the boys; the Afro American casual style contrasts with the formal style of the White American. Children will identify both and could possibly relate to their reality. Bold language presentation is accompanied by the exact body language. Children will explore to consider new possibilities without making judgments. The representation of the minority with authentic details in an equally important position makes *Yo! Yes?* a culturally diverse literature.

Indian Picture Books

The children's picture book arena in India keeps a comparatively slow pace. Most of the books are adaptations and retellings from storehouse of stories like *Panchthantra kathakal* or *Jatahka Tales* or *Kathasarithsagara*. In comparison to the proportion of picture books produced all over the world the number of books on independent themes with realistic portrayal is comparatively lesser in India. In addition, the books published are mostly in English than in local languages. These factors critically interfered with the circulation and availability of books. The absence of multiple factors made many generation of Indian childhood to blindly accept Western classics, German fairytales, and Greek mythologies. For long, the imagination and creativity were channelled in tune with these

westernised conditioning. They found the midnight feast and the white skin absorbing. Today, Indian works attempt to rethink stereotypes. The stories with relevant story lines and realistic themes with the local colouring; and inclusion of words from regional languages and scenes set in the Indian locale became more common. To effectuate these changes require availability and increased circulation with a deliberate and increased demand for these books.

Gita series by Rachna Gilmore and illustrated by Alice Priestley is the story of an Indian girl but who lives as an immigrant in a foreign land. The series include three picture books all of which revolves around the life of Gita and how she manages to settle in a new land with reminiscences about India. *Lights for Gita* is the first of the series followed by *Roses for Gita* and the series was concluded with *A Gift for Gita*. This trilogy stand apart from other picture books as it strongly stamps the cultural motifs of India even at a foreign land. Though the stories partially speak on the issues of immigrant life, it is filled with Indianness.

The first of the group is *Lights for Gita*. As Gita arrives home from school, she is excited to celebrate her first Diwali at Canada. She fondly recollects her Diwali memories at New Delhi. She remembers large family celebrations that included lit diyas glowing in the darkness, delicious sweets and brilliant fireworks. For her celebrations at Canada, Gita has invited five friends from her class but a sudden ice storm breaks and most of her friends cannot make it

possible to attend the celebrations. Though desperate a little, Gita joins her mother to light the *diyas* just before the electricity in the apartment fails. Darkness creeps in the street and the apartment building except for the shining *diyas*. Gita is overjoyed at the arrival of one of her friends and makes her celebrations complete. If the first book idolizes the loneliness of Gita and her wish to return to the homeland, the second book of the series discusses how Gita is trying to get along in the new land. The story reveals how Gita manages to develop relationship in the neighborhood and understand the people in new light. In *Roses for Gita*, the girl is set to plant some rose bushes in company of Mr. Flinch, an old man in her neighborhood. On the third book, *Gift for Gita* the family, torn with a dilemma in between the visit of Naniji, tries to reach a solution with resilience. Unlike the first story, full of reminiscences about India the third story is filled with wonderment and awe for their new milieu.

Away from the warmth and ease of her native place New Delhi, Gita anticipates celebrating the Indian festival Diwali at her new home in the West. The story reinforces the Indianness in every aspect of Gita's life. Right from the festival to the sweets that her mother prepared, the costumes that they appear in all declare the stamp of Indianness. The way they plan to celebrate Diwali with fireworks and *diyas* lit with mustard oil "the warm fragrance of the mustard oil filled the room" (n.p.), further enhances the spirit of India. Through the words of her mother, the author tries to transcend the culture and values of the land to

which they belong, Mummy reminds her, "Diwali is really about filling the darkness with light. Fireworks can't do it for us. We must do it ourselves" (n.p.). Being in new land does generate a kind of cultural shock, but it is accepted with excitement than with resistance as normally occurs. The cultural adaptations are taking place on both sides as we could see Gita's friends in Canada joins her in the Diwali Celebrations and in the counterpart of the story *Roses for Gita*, Gita is joining Mr. Flinch to plant the roses. This second story unfolds the relationship developed between Gita and their neighbour old man Mr. Flinch. Despite the dissimilarities of nationality and age, fraternization develops between the two. Their common interest in music and gardening help them get along and spend time together. Gita is able to understand the queer neighbour around in a new light and develops a new perspective to look at the people.

The disorientation in an alien place gives way to fascination in the third book of the trilogy when Gita and the family realize that they have developed roots in the new land. The baffling and unsettling cultural differences have incorporated to their lives. The family carry a longing retention for the remembrance and culture of the homeland. But at the point when they had to make a choice between the two, amidst the love for the homeland and expectation of the Naniji, the family decides to continue in the immigrant land. The cultural markers in the first book stands out with Indianness ; they include the festival of Diwali, the sweets made on the occasion, the fireworks, the stories

of Prince Ram and Sita, the clothing and the candid spirit of the book is Indian. In *Lights for Gita*, Diwali emerges to be the most important symbol while coming to the third book *Gift for Gita* the maple tree replaces it. The cultural transfer takes place without resistance by not turning away from the roots.

The children's literature scenario in India is a slow spreading area and hence the research in the genre is comparatively limited. Though lesser in the number when compared to other countries, the works produced are strong enough to proclaim the spirit and mores of the land. Deepa Agarwal's *The Toy Horse* is one such book. The book is a rich rendering of the life of commons; culturally bound to the soul of the country. The book discusses the life and aspirations of the little girl Rami who lives with her parents. The family in *The Toy Horse* is typical gypsy family who live by the side of the road. The family survives meagre and while the father makes the living by making all sorts of things with metal, mother supports him by making the toy horses with colourful clothes. Their only child Rami yearn to play with one of the toy horse but her mother says that they are for sale. Disheartened Rami makes a toy horse of her own and plays with it. But when a customer with their child approaches to purchase the toy horse from the mother the accompanying child demands Rami's toy horse, Rami was almost on tears, but soon the scene changes as the child hands over Rami her expensive doll. The story ends on a happy note as both the children were happy with what they have secured.

The book stands apart from the group with the genuine portrayal of gypsy life of India. The writer has kept the details to the finest and minute level without any overdo. The authentic appearance of the characters is reinforced with the costumes, accessories and expressions. The family had a meager existence which we identify from the words of the mother when she says, “if you play with them, they will get dirty. If they are dirty, I cannot sell them. If I do not sell them, there will not be enough money. Then how will we buy flour and *dal* and vegetables to eat?” (7). The story portrays the life of those people of which children are hardly familiar with. The illustrations in the book make the life of Rami vivid; her heights of imagination is expressed with the same excitement and innocence as that of Rami while she imagines to move on the toy horse. The horse is culturally and historically significant since most children from India want to have one of their own. The book would definitely enlighten the children as they realize the life and aspirations of children in such situations. The children from India would associate with the cultural proximity in the book while children from outside the country would accept the country in terms of the people, their life, existence, costumes and the values stamped. The value of sharing with one another and thereby caring for each other is a value inculcated which is reinforced in the story.

Even though Children’s Book Trust has brought out this book in 1997, the reach of the book has remained limited both in India and abroad which narrows

down the scope of the work thereby the chances of getting to know more about the land. Literature shapes the cultural identity of the nation and helps to develop the perspective for readers both inside and outside the country. In the case of *the Toy Horse* even the children in India were not provided a chance to read this book as the book neither claims a good circulation nor the book was included in the curriculum to develop the obligatory outlook among them about others.

Raju's Ride by Pratima Mitchell illustrated by Stephen Waterhouse forms a part of Oxford reading Tree Project. The focus on *Raju's Ride* is how expressions, landscape, sounds of nature, details of gender, dressing, realistic setting, attitudes and characteristics, and sociological reading are treated vividly interposing with the main plot. The book is an example for how the author/illustrator convincingly communicated to the reader/viewer. This simple story filled with Indianness is a feast for children in terms of events, colours and theme. Children can easily identify and relate oneself with the theme and situations employed. The book discusses the events of a single day; Raju with his little sister and parents starts the day by going to the mango tree on a scooter. Later, Raju attends school while his parents get clothes from nearby houses for ironing. They find a living by ironing the clothes whole day. When Raju returns from school, he helps them by looking after the sister, by distributing the clothes and by sending away the birds on the mango tree which sometimes create a mess

with the clothes. Raju, the little boy always wants to play with the other children of the locality, but they never takes him to the company saying that he is too small to play with them instead asking him to play with his little sister. The people around offered Raju some sort of presents as he met them; but he loses each one; he feels desperate and right at that time he was offered a ride on the elephant making him the happiest. Raju returns home on the elephant with feeling special.

Reviewing the themes, the family is placed as an inherent feature as generally with Indian tradition. Far and wide in the story Raju's family supports each other in all aspects. His parents always stood by him as they couldn't give Raju a normal childhood to meet his expectation. They strive together for the little bundle of happiness they could provide to Raju and his sister as parents.. Family bonding is explicit at multiple instances; the baby sister was attended by Raju by all means, "Raju's sister started to cry so he gave her the third pink biscuits" (9). The struggling and bonding of the family is expressed directly and indirectly. The disparity between the rich and the poor is hinted marginally, "The children who lived in the big houses on the street didn't let Raju play with them" (6). The illustrations artfully contrast Raju's clothes as he goes to the customers, to return the ironed clothes, to evidence the distinction between the rich and poor.

The story stands out as a contemporary realistic one with cultural subjectivity, narrating details about Indian heritage and conveys information about customs and practices rooted in India. A few picture books are limited to focus on distinct notions like festivals or traditional customs; while *Raju's Ride* is different as it discusses a realistic normal routine of a below middle class family, their struggles, and the aspirations of a young child in the midst of the hue and cry of a busy Indian city. The ordinariness of everyday experiences of life exhibited makes the book extra ordinarily Indian. The everyday experiences include the daily commotion, the working routine of the parents, Raju attending school, people moving by, and the different games children engaged in after the school and many more. The illustrations are imprinted with colours of Indian culture bringing into life the streets of India. A cross section of the Indian society with the vivacity of people, events, and colours is presented. The elephant, the crows and parrots on the mango tree, the cow that ate orange, the performing monkeys together emphasize the usual street view in India. The vehicles in the illustrations comprise of autorikshaws, scooters and bicycles other than cars and buses help children to relate their daily life with that of the story immediately. A distant student would be familiarized with Indian scene on how a busy day like. The book is successful in giving life to the streets of a city in summer time in minimal text and lively illustrations. The reader senses a welcoming atmosphere from the initial page itself to a busy summer day.

The analysis of three books from India is conducted for the purpose of this study chosen from different groups. The first one is the discussion of trilogy Gita series by Rachna Gilmore. The book shares an immigrant experience of Indians and how the cultural adaptations are brought in. The second book for discussion is *The Toy Horse*. Indian in spirit and rendering, the book helps to familiarize an ethnic community and validate the cultural authenticity observed in the book. The third book under discussion is *Raju's Ride*, where the ordinariness of Indian life is expressed with details. These three books though a minimal in representation of the entire genre daringly gives a contrasting view about India to that of prevalent around. The cultural contents of the books make it Indian but the acceptance of the book is still a farfetched dream. The inclusion of these books into global phase is necessary to make it a multicultural field, encouraging understanding and respect for differences. It also enables to accept that in addition to similarities, there are differences too; and it is necessary to acknowledge both similarities and differences for a healthy multicultural society.

The books selected and studied in this research belong to a period when the books were produced solely keeping in terms with white lineage; but now a days the books produced does include characters from different communities. We also have to note that the recently published books cater vernacular experiences which go against globalization and transformation; instead they celebrate ethnicity. Moreover, these books are not much in circulation to reach

the masses of the world to bring about the revolution. Majority of the children manage their childhood still with the old texts which are cheaper and readily available.