

**NARRATING HUMANITY:
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND
GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to explore how children's magic realist fiction contributes to critical Global Citizenship Education (GCE). This study argues that children's magic realist literature can facilitate young readers' knowledge and understanding of human rights issues and promote environmental awareness in a non-didactic manner by representing global issues from non-human perspectives. The thesis comprises four articles.

The first study explores the non-human perspective of an animal-human 'cyborg' protagonist in Peter Dickinson's novel *Eva* (1988). The study shows how the non-human perspective allows the reader to go beyond anthropocentric boundaries in order to explore the issue of treating the other.

The second study investigates an animal perspective on the Roma genocide along with the mistreatment of animals in the Second World War in Sonya Hartnett's *The Midnight Zoo* (2010). The animal perspective shows human intolerance of other humans (the Roma) intertwined with human actions towards animals and encourages the reader in a non-didactic way to adopt an eco-philosophical standpoint.

The third study is concerned with the representation of the Holocaust from the point of view of a supernatural narrator, Death, in Marcus Zusak's *The Book Thief* (2005). Death's inverted magic realist narrative facilitates the young reader's understanding of human rights issues and represents the history of the genocide in a non-didactic manner.

The fourth study examines the relationships between humans and the natural environment shown from the non-human perspective of a tree. Taking the lens of holistic ecology, this study explores the representation of human – nature relationships in Patrick Ness's *A Monster Calls* (2011) and how the novel guides the child-reader towards an awareness of environmental issues.

KEYWORDS: children's literature, critical literacy, eco-philosophy, environmental awareness, global citizenship education, humanism, magic realism.

INTRODUCTION

Global Citizenship Education (GCE) is concerned with the need to prepare learners for the challenges of the twenty-first century. UNESCO – the leading policymaker of GCE – promotes education that facilitates learners’ knowledge, skills, values and attitudes essential for building a democratic and sustainable world. My thesis is concerned with children’s literature in education, in particular the role of children’s literature in GCE. It explores how critical reading of children’s literature may facilitate critical GCE by informing young learners about the humanist values GCE promotes. I examine the texts’ potential to contribute to non-didactic education without denying the importance of children’s literature’s pedagogical function. My focus is on how this pedagogy is realized in a non-didactic manner.

In his discussion of children’s literature potential to encourage young readers to build a socially just society, Lawrence Sipe argues that “literature can help us perceive reality in new and fresh ways, ‘defamiliarizing life’, as Shklovsky (1966) argues, and making us alive to [...] new ways of perceiving the social order [...]” (1999, p. 124). Sipe suggests that “[w]e need more research on how [...] literature can be an agent of social subversion and change” (1999, p. 124). Although he does not refer to children’s literature in the context of GCE, his argument on the role of children’s literature in achieving social justice identifies the need to align educational approaches to children’s literature with sustainable education

and global citizenship. Sipe briefly mentions “defamiliarization”¹ as the approach to reality perception through literature, without referring specifically to magic realist literature where defamiliarization is used as a common literary technique (Hegerfeldt, 2005). My study focuses on magic realist literature for its unique ability to defamiliarize reality and by doing so become, as Sipe suggests, an agent of social subversion and change. Following Sipe’s cue, I maintain that the children’s magic realist literature analyzed in this thesis provides the learners/readers with reflective space that helps them to develop critical thinking.

To understand how magic realism expands narrative possibilities, it is important to understand the relationship between the rational and the irrational. Given that the question of (ir)rationality is of central importance in this mode, it seems crucial to note that magic realism presents reality simultaneously from the “rational” and the “magical” point of view (Spindler, 1993, p. 78), each having equal significance. However, the interaction of these points can be different. Rosenberg suggests that magical realist work is grounded in the desire to express that the world has many aspects that are frequently not perceived or valued by everyone, that people have experiences that cannot be expressed properly in strictly rational terms (2007, p. 81).

Unlike fantasy, magic realism invites the reader to project magical events onto a plane of reality: “Paradoxically, the un-real of these texts simulates the sense or experience of something real” (Langdon, 2011, p. 3). Magic realism “through disruption of categories creates a space beyond authoritative discourse where the unrepresentable can be expressed” (Bowers, 2004, p. 82). These distinctive features of magic realist literary strategies employed in literature for young readers make narratives not just didactically informative, but stimulate readers’ further thinking. I argue that magic realist fiction’s capacity to facilitate the development of critical awareness of global issues without didacticism makes it one of the tools for GCE.

Didactics is a general term that can refer to the theory as well as the practical application of educational methods. The word *didactic* originates from Greek and can be defined as 1) designed or intended to

¹ The term defamiliarization first coined in 1917 by Russian formalist Viktor Shklovsky in his essay “Art as Device.” The term is further discussed on p. 56.

teach 2) intended to convey instruction and information as well as pleasure and entertainment (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Didactic can be associated with a positive (having a clear didactic intention) or negative (overly moralistic and instructional) connotation (Mills, 2014; Hunt, 2006). In my study, I use the term didactic in the context of children's literature to refer to texts that have a simplistic moral message.

The debate around didactic children's literature is based on the two main arguments against didacticism: moralizing fiction for children will not attract readers; the messages in didactic texts "are likely to misfire" (Mills, 2014, p. 2). By *non-didactic children's literature* I mean texts that are educational but not too overtly instructional. Instead, following Sainsbury's definition (2013, p.7), they have a didactic impulse that is liberating. However, I do not try to object to didacticism as necessarily one-dimensional and problematic. Nor do I try to critique specific didactic texts for children; they are not the focus of this study. I am interested in how non-didactic texts written in a magic realist narrative mode provide alternative educational opportunities. I shall discuss in more detail later how my corpus novels are educational without being prescriptive and moralizing.

My thesis comprises four case studies. Each case study is a detailed examination of four Anglophone contemporary magic realist children's texts aimed at older child-readers. Each case study demonstrates how the magic realist children's novels in this study may be used to encourage development of sustainable values of GCE and how they may facilitate learners' deep understanding of human rights and environmental awareness in a non-didactic way.

So far, no study has explored the role of non-human perspectives in children's magic realist and speculative fiction as an effective non-didactic educational means for critical GCE. My thesis explores narratives where the non-human perspectives of an animal, a tree, and a supernatural character, Death, are employed both to non-didactically facilitate children's critical understanding of human rights and environmental issues, and to enhance children's critical literacy – a key competence in GCE as defined by Vanessa Andreotti. In "Soft versus Critical Global Citizenship Education" (2014), Andreotti proposes critical global citizenship as a way to move away from the tendency in GCE to enlighten with the help of Western moral norms and values.

Andreotti's concerns are related to the fallacy of projecting "universal beliefs" dictated by Western supremacy on the rest of the world and "promoting a new 'civilising mission' as the slogan for a generation who takes up the 'burden' of saving/educating/civilising the world" (2014, p. 22). Andreotti calls this "sanctioned ignorance" which disguises the civilizing mission of developing the Other (2014, p. 25-26). Her criticism of Western patronization in "educating the world" reflects the same challenges of children's literature in education: fiction written by adults for children is inevitably patronizing for its goal to 'educate' young readers. Thus, Andreotti's criticism of didacticism in GCE resonates with critical debates around an excessive use of didacticism in children's literature (Sipe, 1999; Mills, 2014). Non-didactic education and critical literacy become the point of intersection between pedagogical approaches to children's literature and GCE. The charge that GCE is too patronizing and didactic in spreading its values may be resolved through children's literature's capacity to develop critical literacy in young readers.

In my study I acknowledge Andreotti's critical literacy as a way of avoiding didacticism in education and apply it to the selected novels. In my choice of the Western magic realist texts for children, I acknowledge that non-Western children's literature written in the mode of magic realism may provide insights into the mode's possibilities in an educational context. However, such texts are beyond the scope of this study. Given that the magic realist mode is not a dominant narrative mode in Western literature for children addressing global issues, I refer to this mode as an *experimental narrative strategy* in Western children's fiction to address environmental and human rights. In discussing a set of prejudices about Western European and non-Western societies and their respective modes of thinking, Liam Connel states that:

the non-Western societies are persistently characterized through a series of indicators which are categorized as primitive—one of which is a residual belief in myth, magic, and the use of ritual. Western nations by contrast are characterized as progressive, developing, *modern*. They then are allowed literary forms called Modernism, where their non-Western counterparts can only write Magic Realism. (1998, p. 95, emphasis original)

At the same time, non-Western non-anglophone magic realist literature has gained higher status due to works by Nobel Prize laureates such as the Colombian novelist Gabriel G. Marquez, the Portuguese author José Saramago and the Polish novelist Olga Tokarczuk, to name a few. For my study, I intentionally selected critically acclaimed magic realist anglophone ‘Western texts’ that may re-evaluate “modes of knowledge production generally rejected within the dominant Western paradigm” (Hegerfeldt, 2006, p. 3). What is more, the selected novels are taught widely across the world (McCulley, 2019; Ostenson, 2018). They also constitute what Rosendahl Thomsen (2008) calls “world literature”, that is, works that have been critically endorsed internationally, and which also address issues of otherness and strangeness. I argue that these novels provide an alternative to realist Western literature, and that they have a potential to non-didactically guide young learners towards GCE values.

Andreotti suggests that critical literacy is an important element of critical global citizenship education, which presupposes reflexivity and dialogue to non-negotiable universalism. She points out that critical literacy is not about ‘unveiling’ the ‘truth’ for the learners, but about providing the space for them to reflect on their context and their own and others’ [...] assumptions (2006, p. 49). While Andreotti focuses on what critical literacy skills should be developed, she does not suggest *how* learners reach the desired level of reading the world critically and reflectively. Thus, I suggest that there is a point of intersection between Andreotti’s conceptualization of critical literacy and critical approaches to children’s literature in education. I argue that the children’s fiction examined in this study provides a space for the reader to develop the skill to read the world critically and reflectively. Following Andreotti, I suggest that the novels in this study have the potential to stimulate learners’/readers’ ability to analyze and interpret the plot critically and, therefore, may be used in education for developing critical literacy.

Many scholars have pointed to the importance of critical literacy in children’s education (Fehring et al., 2001; Janks, 2013; Hendrix-Soto, 2019). Vivian M. Vasquez has studied the use of children’s books in the classroom for developing children’s critical literacy and argues that books should be used as only one of many tools for constructing critical literacies. Vasquez points out the multiple factors that make children’s books social issues texts: “the differences that the discourses or belief-

laden ways of being and talking have on our discussion about those books and the experiences that influence those discussions, along with who is able to participate, in what ways, for what purposes, and to what ends” (p. 19). I acknowledge Vasquez’s approach to children’s texts in examining their role in GCE and argue that the novels I examine in this study can be used in the classroom to unpack social or environmental issues. Furthermore, they may as well become a tool for encouraging the reader’s environmental attitudes and enhance an understanding of justice and human rights issues even while reading outside the classroom. In this study I discuss the use of children’s literature in education in a broader context, outside a specific classroom subject (such as English or literature), focusing on children’s literature as one of the tools for critical literacy as highlighted by Vasquez and Andreotti.

Another point of intersection between critical GCE and children’s literature in education is the active role of the learner/reader. In her discussion of the learner’s role in GCE, Andreotti suggests an alternative responsibility *towards* the other (or to learn with the other) instead of responsibility *for* the other (or to teach the other) (2014, emphasis original). Children’s literature is often characterized as largely didactic. In Sipe’s view it is “intended to instruct as well as to delight” (1999, p. 124). For example, two illustrated texts written mainly for younger children, Jen Green’s *Why Should I Recycle?* (2002), and Chelsea Clinton’s *Don’t Let Them Disappear* (2019) depict global issues such as environmental pollution and killing animals by conveying straightforward and simplistic messages: how to be environmentally friendly, how to preserve nature, how to treat animals. Although such an approach is common in books for young children, its “how to...” instruction-based way of conveying a message stands in contrast to critical GCE’s educational philosophy which approaches learning as the development of critical perspectives and the ability to interpret, analyze and engage with global issues.

In her study *Ethics and Children’s Literature* (2014), Claudia Mills explores the dilemma of didacticism and problematizes the attempts to shape children as moral beings. In her critique of didacticism in children’s literature, Mills defines ethics “broadly, as encompassing more than just some narrow, prescriptive action–guiding code, but rather as dealing with the wide range of values that inform our lives as moral agents” (p. 2).

Mills's focus on values is in line with GCE's value-based approach to education. Her criticism of descriptive children's literature in the context of ethics is central for my argument against didactic instruction-based children's literature in the context of GCE. Following Mills, I argue that non-didactic children's fiction may foster readers' values and attitudes helping them to become critical thinkers. In my discussion of the novels, I advocate a non-didactic approach to children's literature as a source for a wide range of GCE *values* that define a global citizen rather than a prescriptive guide for actions.

In her exploration of ethics in British children's literature, Lisa Sainsbury (2013, p. 7) states that "a didactic impulse can be as liberating as enslaving", suggesting the ambiguity of didacticism." Both Mills's (2014) and Sainsbury's (2013) critical views of didacticism in children's literature suggest the complexity of balancing the necessary educational purpose to inform young readers without patronizing, or, 'enslaving' them (to use Sainsbury's term). I suggest that what Mills calls 'moral agents' is what GCE calls global citizens: active, moral and environmentally aware citizens of the globe.

Mills's (2014) definition of ethical approaches to a wide range of values implicitly addresses the challenges of GCE to guide learners towards environmentally ethical attitudes and a range of humanist values. I argue that my case-study novels inform the reader about ethical relationships with the environment. *A Monster Calls*, *The Midnight Zoo* and *Eva* challenge the traditional didacticism in children's environmental fiction and provide children with the moral grounds of environmental ethics. *The Book Thief* and *The Midnight Zoo* depict genocide beyond explicit didacticism and contribute to young learners' deep understanding of human rights and social justice.

In his article "What's wrong with didacticism?" (2012), Charles Repp explores the issue of didactic fiction through the lens of cognitivism and argues that "not all works that aim to instruct are necessarily guilty of didacticism" (p. 272). Repp defines non-didactic works of literature as fiction that contains "philosophical teachings" that rely on readers' intellectual capacity to draw the lesson from the story for themselves (p. 272). Repp's argument on philosophical teaching is crucial for my interpretation of the role of children's literature in education: non-didacticism does not deny teaching through the text; it denies teaching through

messages articulated *in* the text. I argue that the texts explored in my thesis testify to the readers as active agents in the reading process, who come to their own conclusions and acquire humanist values and attitudes. In my articles, I analyze in detail children's texts that contain philosophical teachings as highlighted by Repp in order to demonstrate how they may guide the reader to acquire eco-philosophical attitudes, environmental awareness and a sense of social justice.

Although many scholars have addressed the value of non-didactic children's literature in different educational contexts, such as ethics (Mills, 2014; Sainsbury, 2013), cognitivism (Repp, 2012), the relationship between critical GCE and critical reading of non-human perspectives in magic realist children's literature has remained underexplored. My focus here is on texts which have the capacity to teach global issues in a non-didactic way or, following Sainsbury's terminology, the way which is didactic but liberating (2013, p. 7). Taking critical GCE and critical approaches to children's literature in its intersection, I explore how the children's texts in my study facilitate readers' reflexive and critical knowledge of global issues.

Aim and research questions

The aim of this thesis is to explore how children's magic realist fiction may contribute to GCE by facilitating young readers' knowledge acquisition and understanding of *human rights issues* and *environmental challenges* in a non-didactic manner by representing global issues from non-human perspectives. The thesis situates magic realist children's novels within the framework of critical GCE and examines children's magic realist literature's potential to create reflective space, as highlighted by Andreotti, for the reader's critical engagement with literature and by doing so become a means for critical global citizenship education. This study explores how magic realist children's novels that represent global issues from non-human perspectives may help young readers to engage with narratives critically and develop their self-perception as members of a global society, understand global challenges and develop a sense of responsibility for other humans and the environment. In other words, the children's novels discussed in this thesis may empower young

learners to become agents of change. In Andreotti's words (2014), they become global citizens, independent critical thinkers who are informed and responsible for their ethical actions.

My choice to undertake a non-empirical study is grounded in my interest in literature as an aesthetic object and its narratives' *affordances* (Gibson, 1977), particularly how texts can invite readers' certain attitudes, develop mindset and suggest action possibilities. I focus on the potential effects of the narratives, independently of readers' individual perceptions of these works. A reader-response analysis may provide insights into real readers' literary experience and investigate their perceptions, but this approach is beyond the scope of this study.

The main research question of this study:

How can magic realist children's fiction encourage children's understanding of human rights, environmental issues, and facilitate critical GCE?

In order to answer the research question, this thesis discusses four case studies each focused on one popular children's novel to demonstrate how these novels encourage young readers to acquire an eco-philosophical standpoint, environmental awareness and a deep understanding of human rights issues by representing global issues from non-human perspectives. Each case study includes an analysis of one of the following novels: Peter Dickinson's *Eva* (1988), Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief* (2005), Sonya Hartnett's *The Midnight Zoo* (2010), and Patrick Ness's *A Monster Calls* (2011).

In order to address the main research question in detail, the following sub-questions have been addressed:

- How does magic realist children's fiction represent genocide beyond didacticism?
- How does magic realist children's fiction represent nature-human relationship without being overly didactic?

Furthermore, each case study is based on the research objectives to explore the role of magic realist children's literature in GCE:

1. How does the non-human perspective of an animal-human cyborg inform the reader about the issue of human rights and environmental issues?
2. How does the non-human perspective of an animal encourage the reader to adopt an eco-philosophical standpoint by representing global issues such as animal and human genocide?
3. How does the non-human perspective facilitate the reader's knowledge acquisition of the history of the Holocaust during the Second World War?
4. How does the non-human perspective of a tree guide the reader to environmental awareness?

Using four case studies to examine the above-mentioned four children's novels, this thesis demonstrates how these books and similar magic realist books employing the same literary techniques may be used in GCE to facilitate in a non-didactic way learners' deep understanding of human rights and environmental awareness and encourage them to embrace sustainable values. In the next section, I will explain my approaches to the reader-text relationship, its alignment with GCE and outline criteria for my four case studies.

APPROACHING NARRATIVE THROUGH THEORIES OF EDUCATION

Theoretical background

In this section, I will discuss the role of constructionist learning and design thinking pedagogy in my approach to the narratives. I will outline the theories I draw on in my narrative analysis as well as the methodology employed. Finally, I will suggest potential practical applications of my research results.

In this study, I take a constructionist approach to teaching and learning based on the following assumptions:

- Knowledge is socially constructed as opposed to knowledge as universal truth or fact;
- Learning is an active rather than passive process of knowledge construction.

The outcome of constructionist learning is the development of analytical and critical skills, and an inquiring mind-set. Harris and Alexander (1998) note that in integrated constructivist education, the central element is an active construction of knowledge by child learners who are perceived as inherently active and self-regulating. They suggest that a “deep, meaningful understanding occurs when children participate fully in their own learning, with previous knowledge and experiences as the starting point for new learning” (1998, p. 116). This approach views the teacher’s role as an assistant in the child’s construction of knowledge rather than the teacher explicitly providing knowledge. Savery and Duffy (1995, p. 31) outline the following principles, which frame constructivist learning:

1. Understanding is in our interaction with the environment;
2. Cognitive conflict or puzzlement is the stimulus for learning;

3. Knowledge evolves through social negotiation and through the evaluation of the viability of individual understandings.

Following Savery and Duffy (1995), I apply these three principles to approach the children's novels in my study:

1. Readers gain understanding through an active interaction with the text;
2. Cognitive conflict or puzzlement created by the narrative stimulates critical evaluation of the story rather than factual learning;
3. Readers negotiate with the texts and construct their knowledge through their individual understanding of the meaning, and drawing their own conclusions.

Another contemporary approach to teaching I make use of in my approach to children's novels in education is design thinking in education. Design thinking pedagogy is not about 'how to teach' learners, but to teach learners 'how to think' (Melles et al., 2012; Johansson-Sköldberg et al., 2013). In this shift of focus, I see the link between GCE that aims at teaching citizens to think critically and independently, and design thinking in education as both approaches strive to promote active learning and active citizenship. It has been suggested that design thinking aims at moving away from convergent (developing in one direction) to divergent (developing in different directions) approaches to education, where teachers should give learners the possibility to interpret the knowledge they share (Müller-Wienbergen et al., 2011; Cruickshank et al., 2012). In my exploration of children's texts, I draw on design thinking principles to argue that a divergent approach to the novels provides a space for readers to interpret knowledge about global issues, and to construct their critical understanding and evaluation of meaning.

I have, furthermore, analyzed the novels' narratives through the lens of different theories in order to draw connections between the narratives' specific topics and broader themes. I have applied the concept of defamiliarization (first coined in 1917 by Russian formalist Viktor Shklovsky in his essay "Art as Device"), following the theory by Anne Hegerfeldt, who defined defamiliarization as the technique of destabilizing the notions of the real and the fantastic in magic realism (2005). Hegerfeldt's way of applying defamiliarization in magic realist texts foregrounds my analysis of *The Book Thief* narrative in order to show how Death's inverted

narrative informs the reader about the Holocaust. I have examined *The Midnight Zoo* through the lens of eco-philosophy - a philosophy of ecological harmony – the concept coined by Arne Naess, an advocate of deep ecology, in “The Shallow and the Deep, Long-range Ecology Movement. A Summary” (1973). I have analyzed *Eva* through Judith Halberstam’s concept of queer failure, a creative liberating act of challenging normative boundaries through the inverted logics of success and failure. In reading *A Monster Calls*, I have applied the lens of holistic ecology – the theory on humanity and the environment interconnectedness, originating from land ethic theorized by Aldo Leopold in *A Sand County Almanac* (1949). I have chosen these theoretical lenses as each of them allows to explore the plot beyond anthropocentrism, in other words decentring the human. Each of the theories challenges the limits of a human centred perception. By destabilizing the conventional boundaries between the seemingly opposing concepts such as failure and success, magic and reality, the human and the non-human, both defamiliarization and queer failure have been applied to investigate the plot beyond a rational human-centred framework. Eco-philosophy and holistic ecology are both eco-centred theories which allowed to explore the human-nature/human-animal relationships in the novels beyond a human perspective.

It should be added that all of the theoretical positions outlined above have been explored through the method of close reading. This has allowed me to interpret the texts’ multiple and implicit dimensions and layers beyond the texts’ immediate and explicit thematic elements. I applied close reading, since it is a method that is “alert to the details of narrative structure and attends to complexities of meaning” (Culler, 1997, p. 52).

Below I will outline practical application of the research results. My investigation is a theoretical exploration of how the narratives in these books facilitate the reader’s knowledge and critical understanding of global issues. Although my research project is limited to theoretical investigations (reader-response research is beyond the scope of this study), I acknowledge the importance of the use of these texts in the classroom, and the teacher’s role in facilitating reading. Classroom-based research (Agee, 2000; Langer, 2001; Bean & Moni, 2003) comprising case studies involving teachers show that the teacher’s role is crucial in providing young readers with opportunities to make personal and intertextual connections with children’s fiction, and to develop critical thinking and

critical literacy. Teachers may guide students to make intertextual and personal connections with literature and encourage them “to go beyond the basic learning experiences in challenging and enriching ways” (Langer, 2001, p. 872). Barkatsas and Bertram suggest that “[t]he deep nuanced reading of well-chosen texts to foster empathy and broaden repertoires is an issue of concern for teacher educators as well as for classroom teachers” (2016, p. 106). Since critical literacy has become a necessary component of all classroom practices (Gregory & Cahill, 2009), my research outcomes may be used by English teachers as well as teacher educators who work with children’s fiction in their classroom. At the same time, my project suggests the educational value of magic realist children’s fiction outside the classroom.

The value of the methodological framework this thesis develops is that it can be applied to other works of magic realist children’s literature where non-human perspectives are featured in order to explore further the possibilities of GCE through children’s fiction where a non-didactic approach and active reading are encouraged. By adopting this methodology, I am not suggesting that it is universal for all works of fiction. I do believe, however, that my four case study texts – Dickinson’s *Eva*, Zusak’s *The Book Thief*, Hartnett’s *The Midnight Zoo*, and Ness’s *A Monster Calls* – provide valuable insights into how children’s magic realist fiction may become an effective means for critical GCE for children.

Approaches to critical reading

The importance of critically “reading the word and the world” has been discussed by Kathy Short (2009) in her examination of pedagogical issues and strategies in integrating children’s literature into the curriculum. She argues that reading children’s literature critically allows young readers to go beyond gaining a surface-level information about the world. Short suggests that through fiction the readers gain insights into others people’s lives and “come to recognize their common humanity as well as to value cultural differences” (2009, p. 1). Although Short’s investigation is not concerned with global citizenship as such, her argument about the value

of critical reading of children's fiction reflects one of critical GCE's educational objectives: critical literacy. In defining critical GCE, Andreotti conceptualizes critical literacy as "reading the word and the world that involves the development of skills of critical engagement and reflexivity" (2006, p. 49). Albeit operating in different educational contexts, both Short and Andreotti outline an essential goal for educators: to encourage critical thinking through critical reading and to develop children's understanding of other cultures and the world. The focus of my research is on *how* children's literature may contribute to this educational goal.

In my research I draw on a reader-centred approach to meaning-making. The relationships between authors and their readership have been discussed in research on literary response. Roland Barthes claimed "the death of the author" (1967), suggesting that readers are free to interpret literary texts regardless of the author's intention. As has been mentioned earlier children's freedom of interpretation of children's literary texts has been considered problematic as children's literature is viewed as always having either a direct or an implied didactic message (Sipe, 1999, p. 124). The complexity of children's multiple interpretations of fiction has been discussed in reader-response research (Martinez & Roser, 1991; Wolf et al., 2011; Wall, 2016). Michael Benton (2005) considers the reader's experience "mysterious" and engagingly calls the subject of the reader's response:

the Loch Ness Monster of literary studies: when we set out to capture it [...] we have to admit that the most sensitive probing with the most sophisticated instruments has so far succeeded only in producing pictures of dubious authenticity. (p. 86)

Acknowledging the complexity of the issue, Benton states that readers are given freedom of interpretation: "reader-response critics have argued that it is readers who make meaning by the activities they perform on the text" (p. 87).

Children's capacity to make multiple interpretations of literary texts, including such that venture beyond the didactic level, has been extensively discussed. Sipe (1999) outlines the importance of exploring "the various ways in which children can learn to not be satisfied with facile

interpretations of literary texts and to probe more deeply” (p. 121). Aidan Chambers (1978) questions the didactic function of children’s texts and refers to children’s literature as a form of a dialogue between an author and an implied reader: literature is a form of communication, “a way of saying something” (p. 1). Referring to Samuel Butler’s observation that it takes two to say a thing, “a sayee as well as a sayer — a hearer as well as a speaker”, Chambers states that, “it requires a reader to complete the work” (1978, pp. 1-19). In *Tell Me* (2011/1991), Chambers talks about child readers as thoughtful and willing readers (p. 19) and states that “all children are (or can be) critics” (p. 126). He problematizes a direct and simplistic way of conveying meaning to the child reader: “An understanding of meaning isn’t arrived at straightaway and all at once. It is discovered, negotiated, made, arrived at organically [...]” (p. 138). The teacher’s role is to encourage readers, but then hold back and let them arrive at an understanding on their own (p. 139). The reader is at the center of knowledge development.

Similarly, learner-centered education is an essential element of GCE. Chamber’s approach to child-readers’ ability of critical meaning making and the teacher’s role as a facilitator of reading processes resonate with critical GCE’s approach to learners as capable of critical thinking facilitated by teachers. In *What Do We Tell the Children?* (2012), a number of children’s literature scholars contrast ‘the didactic’ in children’s fiction with ‘the empowering’ outlining the potential of the latter to develop young readers’ sense of self and agency (Bhroin & Kennon, 2012). The authors of the collection suggest the importance of supporting young readers’ independent meaning-making. While admitting “the didactic impulse of texts for young audiences”, Bhroin and Kennon consider reading as a “dialectic process in which young people construct their own meanings” (2012, p. 7).

A number of empirical studies illustrate the potential of a reader-driven approach to reading fiction from a critical stance where learners contribute to the formation of new knowledge and new meanings, and develop critical literacy (Quintero, 2009). In other words, they learn to make connections between the text and the world and question both the author and the text’s purpose (McLaughlin & DeVogd, 2004). In *Critical Literacy: A Way of Thinking, a Way of Life* (2006), Cynthia McDaniel advocates a way of adopting critical literacy through redefining

conventional teacher-student role models where teachers speak *with* not *for* students (p. 20). McDaniel's empirical study suggests that teachers need new techniques to develop students' critical literacy. While Quintero, McLaughlin and DeVogd approach critical literacy more as an instructional framework for the school curriculum, McDaniel views critical literacy, as her book title suggests, as a way of thinking rather than "a lesson plan or a packaged program" (2006, p. 232). McDaniel's perspective on critical literacy resonates with my approach to children's literature in GCE. I view my selected texts as encouraging a socially just way of thinking and an environmentally conscious mind-set, while informing the reader about the history of the Second World War or global environmental problems. Acknowledging McDaniel's emphasis on the role of educators in teaching literature, I suggest that critical approaches to the magic realist children's fiction exemplified in my case studies helps readers to adopt critical global citizenship attitudes, by reading critically not only in the classroom setting with the help of the teacher, but also through an individual reading experience.

My research aims at showing how children's literature facilitates readers' knowledge of global issues, thus bridging critical reading of the children's texts and critical literacy as an essential skill in critical GCE. I regard the novels explored in my thesis as "empowering" literature for children in the sense suggested by Quintero (2009), Bhroin and Kennon (2012), in the sense that they allow readers to construct new knowledge and their own meanings. I argue that these texts encourage readers to acquire critical attitudes and the values of global citizenship.

Approaches to GCE

As the previous discussion has shown, GCE is a rich and useful term. But the usefulness of the concept also makes it complex and difficult to pin down. Hence, there is a range of different contesting conceptualizations of GCE. The terms *global education*, *citizenship education*, and *development education* are sometimes used interchangeably. In *Contesting and Constructing International Perspectives in Global Education* (2015), Ruth Reynolds et al. explore an international perspective on global education and address the broad and contested concepts associated with

this notion. Reynolds et al. point out different approaches to global education, as well as manifold definitions, and define global education as global citizenship depending on the context of the proponents and a lens (p. 1). Pashby's definition emphasizes critical understanding of global issues and is relevant to my research: "the concept of global citizenship education encourages students to adopt a critical understanding of globalization, to reflect on how they and their nations are implicated in local and global problems, and to engage in intercultural perspectives" (2012, p. 9). Acknowledging the multiplicity of definitions of education aimed at promoting independent thinking, environmental awareness, responsibility for others, and active engagement with global society, the term *global citizenship education* is used in this thesis to emphasize the focus on the young learner as the agent in the educational process to become a global citizen.

GCE has occupied an increasingly important space in education over the past decades. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by 193 United Nations Member States in 2015, presents "an ambitious plan of action for people and the planet on the way to universal prosperity on sustainable levels" (United Nations, 2015). The significance of GCE is represented in Goal 4: Quality Education, Target 4.7: Education for sustainable development and global citizenship:

By 2030, ensure all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development. (United Nations, 2015)

As stated in UNESCO's Education 2030 agenda, the role of education is moving beyond the development of knowledge and cognitive skills to the building of values, soft skills and attitudes among learners (UNESCO, 2014). In other words, GCE promotes a value-based approach in education, which presupposes encouraging learners' attitudes along with creating an informative context for them. Values act as motivators for action and are more likely to influence one's behaviors than instructions

for action. This attitude has been adopted in education where a non-didactic learner-centered approach has replaced a didactic teacher-centered approach (Weimer, 2002; Lea et al., 2003; Bonk and Cunningham, 1998). This shift in educational practice has been given a comprehensive overview by Maryellen Weimer in her book for educators, *Learner-Centered Teaching* (2002), where she discusses how “methods of active learning, cooperative and collaborative learning [...] put students in new relationships with content, their fellow learners, and their teachers” (pp. 19-20). Learner-centered educational methods include problem-based (Boud & Feletti, 2013; Kek & Hujser, 2015), project-based (Blumenfeld et al., 1991), enquiry-based and blended learning (Vaughan et al., 2013). These methods have become increasingly widespread. They testify to the establishment of a learner-centered approach in education. In a similar manner, there has been a shift from an author-centered passive reading to reader-centered active reading where the reader is capable of creative meaning-making outside overt didacticism (Chambers, 1991; Sipe, 1999; Bhroin & Kennon, 2012). Both GCE’s educational philosophy and critical approaches to children’s literature have the same goal: to encourage critical thinking and sustainable attitudes. This is in line with a learner/reader-centered non-didactic educational approach.

Learner-centered non-didactic educational approaches are widely promoted by international agencies and national governments and considered as a foundation for the building of democratic citizenships (Schweisfurth, 2013). In *Globalization and Education* (2014), Stromquist and Monkman identify the new trend in education defined as transnational education that aims at promoting a sense of global citizenship. Such education holds that in the complex interconnected and rapidly changing world, children should be “more knowledgeable about the world and situate themselves within that broader world, understand global phenomena (such as environmental sustainability), and develop a respect for others and a sense of global responsibility” (Stromquist & Monkman, 2014, p. 6). According to the *Global Education Network of Young Europeans*, global education is an active learning process based on the universal values of tolerance, solidarity, equality, justice, inclusion, cooperation and non-violence. The shift in global education from a school-framed pedagogy to a global way of thinking is also evident in a recent

expansion of popular pedagogic movements led by youth. Particularly, Greta Thunberg, an eco-activist from Sweden who boycotted school in order to raise the alarm and call for action to stop global warming. The movement she initiated quickly spread across Europe and has driven hundreds of young people to the streets to support climate protection (Cwienk DW, 2019). Thunberg's influence testifies to the fact that young people with an environmental mind-set and GCE values are empowered to create a change. Critical GCE has a value-based approach in education and advocates a new model of a learner: independent, critical and active.

In "21st Century Skills: Problem Based Learning and the University of the Future" (2015), Kek and Huijser suggest the importance of blurring boundaries in education by making it more interdisciplinary, more oriented at student-teacher collaboration rather than following instructions (Kek & Huijser, 2015, p. 410). Andreotti takes a similar approach in theorizing critical global citizenship education as non-didactic for its ability to "promote change without telling learners what they should think or do", instead providing a reflective space for analysis and experiment (2006, p. 49). Both Andreotti's and Kek and Huijser's points agree that avoiding overt didacticism in education is essential to creating a reflective space for young learners to make their own conclusions and develop critical thinking. I argue that critical approaches to reading children's literature and critical GCE have a common goal, to teach a way of thinking critically and evaluating knowledge. In this pursuit of knowledge as a way of thinking, children's literature in education and critical GCE intersect and develop a common trajectory. Thus, non-didactic approaches to children's literature in education may inform GCE educational practice. Learner-centered approaches in critical GCE may be applied to teaching children's literature to develop in readers the same analytical skills.

The shift in educational philosophy outlined above, from fact-based and normative approaches to a critical approach, is explained by Sandell et al. (2006). Sandell et al. consider education for sustainable development reconstructivist and state that its main goal is to provide students with "the opportunity to learn knowledge and skills so that they can actively and critically evaluate different perspectives on environmental and developmental issues" (2006, p. 164). Just as Sandell et al. view active learners as people with skills to build a sustainable and democratic

society (2006, p. 164), active reading encourages readers to acquire these skills in a similar manner. By reading magic realist children's fiction, young learners can develop, along with other skills, an ability to critically evaluate global issues from different perspectives. In the next section, I explain how critical engagement with magic realist fiction, representing different perspectives, creates for the reader this reflective space, advocated by Andreotti (2006), which may develop critical thinking. I will outline how GCE's active learning and critical reading of children's fiction are linked. I will also define what I mean by non-didactic and magic realist fiction.

Magic realism and non-didacticism

In *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (2010), Wayne Booth defines didactic fiction as "fiction used for propaganda and instruction" (p. xiii), as opposed to non-didactic fiction that Booth views as an "art of communicating with readers" by showing rather than telling (p. 3). Booth makes an important distinction between telling, a direct and less artistic method, and showing, an indirect and artistic method of narration (p. 8). Acknowledging Booth's definitions of narrative methods, I use the term *non-didactic fiction* to refer to children's narratives that communicate with young readers and engage them in reading and interpreting, rather than narratives that communicate direct single-meaning messages to the reader.

However, I do not suggest that I regard all magic realist texts for children as non-didactic. There are many examples of the opposite: for instance, fantasy children's literature authors' determination to teach has been widely acknowledged in children's literature scholarship. Matthew Grenby (2014) explores genre-related didacticism in children's literature and states that "didacticism has consistently remained at the heart of children's fantasy writing" (p. 151). In my study, I explore children's literature in education without denying the importance of its pedagogical function. I am more focused on how this pedagogy is realized in a non-didactic manner. In considering how children's literature can be pedagogical without being didactic, I focus on the magic realist narrative

mode, which has the capacity to teach the child-reader certain values and attitudes without imposing them on the child. I argue that magic realist elements employed in children's fiction may teach children by guiding them to come to a deep understanding of the issues the narrative explores. In order to exemplify this critical pedagogy through children's magic realist texts in relation to critical GCE I refer specifically to four children's magic realist novels that employ magic realist narrative techniques and have the capacity to communicate in a non-didactic way with young readers.

The employment of magic realist narrative techniques is central to my investigation of how non-didactic active reading intersects with critical literacy in GCE. I consider magic realism a reader-centered mode, and I shall elaborate below how its narrative makes demands on its readers to actively engage with the text in order to understand a magic realist narrative. Andreotti argues that critical literacy's main purpose is not "unveiling' the 'truth' for the learners, but about providing the space for them to reflect on their context" (2006, p. 49). This is true for magic realist narratives' capacity to provide the reader with an image of the real disguised by the magical as something that can only be uncovered by the reader. Andreotti emphasizes how crucial it is for learners to be active in the learning process rather than to be passive observers of unveiled truth. I argue that magic realism requires readers to develop the critical literacy skills, and that this narrative mode encodes messages in veiled images which are only unveiled by the reader's acceptance of the alternative world-view suggested by the mode.

In my study, I exemplify the mode's demand for the reader's active intellectual and emotional engagement with the narratives. I do so by exploring the overturned concepts of the real and the magical, where incompatible notions appear to have multiple interpretations. For example, the zoo is implicitly depicted as a concentration camp, or a human is depicted as a ghost. There is no direct indication of the similarity between the concepts in the text, but the narrative encourages the reader to draw implied connections between the two modes of interpretation. This allows readers to identify similarities on their own leads to an alternative non-didactic form of gaining knowledge and meaning-making specific to the mode. This point of intersection between critical reading

of magic realist literature and critical GCE allows us to consider magic realist children's novels as unique educational tools for GCE.

This thesis explores in detail three novels belonging to the mode of magic realism (*The Book Thief*, *The Midnight Zoo*, *A Monster Calls*²), and one novel that may be defined as speculative fiction (*Eva*). My reason to include a speculative text in my study is that *Eva*'s non-didacticism and representation of global issues is similar to the magic realist mode. Moreover, my study is not limited to one specific literary mode although my main focus is on the non-didacticism of magic realist children's literature. I will return later to a detailed discussion on how this speculative novel contributes to critical GCE.

In my interpretation of magic realist fiction, I acknowledge Cuddon's argument that magic realism is "seldom easy to define as a genre" (1998, p. 488), therefore, I consider magic realism as a literary mode of narration as suggested by Warnes (2009, p. 3). In *Genre vs Mode* (2014), Veronica Hollinger states that a genre is a narrative complex of particular themes, motifs and figures, whereas a mode "implies not a kind but a method, a way of getting something done" (p. 140). Following Hollinger's definition, I use the term magic realist as a narrative mode that can be integrated with genres not necessarily defined as magic realist. My focus is on magic realist narrative techniques employed in the case study novels rather than on magic realism as such. In particular, I explore magic realist techniques such as an employment of supernatural perspectives, defamiliarization, and inversion. I do not compare magic realism with realism, but rather draw on the definition suggested by Merivale et al., which I find most illustrative in describing magic realism's potential: "magic realism may be considered *an extension of realism* in its concern with the nature of reality and its representation, at the same time that it resists the basic assumptions of post-enlightenment rationalism and literary realism" (1995, p. 6, my emphasis). In my study, I sometimes contrast magic realist and realist modes in the discussions of the novels. However, I consider magic realist as "*a literature of the real* insofar as it scrutinizes and recreates the experience of living in a complex and frequently confusing world" (Hegerfeldt, 2005, p. 7, emphasis added). My main intention is to

² *A Monster Calls* has been defined as magic realist novel by Carlin (2017) and Poštrak (2018).

examine the possible effects of magic realist techniques on the reader's interpretation of the narrative, acknowledging Merivale's definition that this mode is "an extension to realism" (1995 p. 6) or "an improvement upon realism" (Hegerfeldt, 2005, p. 330). In my examination of the novels, I suggest that *inversion* best characterizes the performance and effects of magic realism in its reliance upon the young reader. I am less focused on such aspects of the magic realist mode as the carnivalesque and the grotesque (Danow, 2015), or mythology and postcoloniality (Cooper, 2012), as such literary elements are beyond the educational focus of my study.

In order to understand the concept of inversion in magic realism I look at the relationships between the real and the magical. In *The Book Thief* it is the inversion of the natural and the supernatural, the rational and the irrational. In *The Midnight Zoo* and *Eva* the inversion is realized in overturning the concepts of human and animal. In *A Monster Calls*, the narrative inverts human-nature power relationships. The inversion is achieved by using different techniques. The common denominator is that the features and components of the real and the magical are overturned, without disturbing their coexistence. The inversion consists in the portrayal of the real as the surreal, the natural as the supernatural, the animal as the human etc. The interaction of these components, all of which are explained in detail in my four studies, show the potential of inversion in magic realism. A detailed discussion of magic realist techniques (inversion, defamiliarization and supernatural perspectives) in my four studies demonstrates this narrative mode's capacity to communicate with the reader in a non-didactic manner that aligns with critical GCE.

A number of scholars have argued that magic realism represents reality by appealing to the reader's emotional engagement with the narrative (Langdon, 2011; Spindler, 1993; Rosenberg, 2007). Teya Rosenberg argues that "fantasy – and particularly magical realism – endeavors to communicate the essence of the experience, the overwhelming sense of two incompatible worlds being yoked together, in terms more general than does realism" (Rosenberg, 2007, p. 81). Rosenberg's view of magic realism's capacity to illuminate various aspects of the world is the key element of this mode in my study. Critical GCE is concerned with the idea that the world does not have a single meaning. An openness to multiplicity of meaning is essential when reading magic realist texts,

since the reader is often required to independently interpret the meaning(s) of the narrative.

One important element of reader's active work in interpreting a magic realist text is the ability to link magic with reality. Importantly, this link is possible only if the reader is emotionally involved in the text. Arva discusses in detail such emotional involvement and suggests that magic realism's hyperreality is a "re-livable kind of reality" (2008, p. 81) that "creates empathy through images that recreate the unrepresentable by simulating the extreme affects that must have blocked representation in the first place" (p. 80). In my research, and in an educational context, magic realism's capacity to simulate reality in such a way that it helps to stimulate the reader's empathy is the most central feature. In my exploration of the selected novels, I argue that this mode-specific effect encourages the reader to become emotionally engaged with themes such as human rights and environmental issues. In this reader-text emotional relationship, the reader plays an active role in knowledge acquisition and becomes non-didactically informed about global issues. Thus, children's magic realist fiction contributes to critical GCE in its pursuit of humanist values and its capacity to foster empathy. Both of these abilities are crucial to education towards citizenship. My articles demonstrate how the magic realist novels help the reader to recapture the real by creating associations between the real and the unreal, while appealing to readers' emotions.

Another important feature of magic realist narratives is the possibility to show the world from both human and non-human perspectives. This creates for the reader a simulated experience, as highlighted by Arva (2008), of interpreting the world from various perspectives, each of which is of equal significance. The engagement of the reader's imagination in 'taking on' these perspectives creates a reflective context for young reader to see the same event from multiple viewpoints and to develop a critical attitude. Thus, the skills developed by the reader of magic realist texts and the skills promoted by critical GCE intertwine. This characteristic makes a magic realist manner of narration non-didactic and allows a space for the reader to create their own interpretation and reflection. Magic realism – through withholding facts by not mentioning them but presenting them indirectly – becomes a non-didactic way to inform the reader. But it is the reader who gives the meaning to the narrative and converts indirect

images into real facts. Such a reader's active role in interpreting a magic realist narrative guides the reader to understanding that there is no single way to experience reality, and that there are multiple ways to interpret the world, an essential ability promoted by GCE.

This thesis explores magic realist children's novels' distinctive ability of representing the world from non-human perspectives. Literary techniques, such as inversion and defamiliarization, are examined in detail to explore magic realism's potential to engage the young reader with global issues through active reading. My study shows how magic realist children's fiction provides the alternative lens of seeing global issues and, I argue, this perspective guides readers towards critical literacy and deep understanding of global challenges such as human rights, sustainability and environmental issues. I show in my study how such children's novels may build a reflective space where readers can acquire crucial GCE competencies such as critical thinking, environmental awareness, and an understanding of global democracy.

THE CASE-STUDIES (ARTICLES)

In this section, I will present the summary of the articles and explain the criteria for selecting the texts. I will specify the magic realist narrative techniques and their role in readers' engagement with the GCE themes. I will also outline the limitations of my study. The following novels are discussed in detail in the four articles that comprise this study: Peter Dickinson's *Eva* (1988), Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief* (2005), Sonya Hartnett's *The Midnight Zoo* (2010), and Patrick Ness's *A Monster Calls* (2011).

The first article, entitled "Beyond Human: Escaping the Maze of Anthropocentrism in Peter Dickinson's *Eva*," examines the interior conflict of the cyborg-protagonist in Peter Dickinson's *Eva* (1988). Eva is subjected to life-saving experimental surgery during which her mind is transplanted into the body of a chimpanzee and she can only communicate by using a keyboard. Eva-the-cyborg explores the limits of human identity. Although she is expected to move beyond her human identity, perspective and body, Eva rejects these expectations. Drawing on Judith Halberstam's notion of "queer failure", this article argues that Eva's failure to achieve a balance between her human and non-human selves is a creative act, which defeats humankind's attempt to control the universe by using scientific and technological achievements.

The second article, entitled "'You Are a Mysterious Animal, You Know': Eco-philosophy in Sonya Hartnett's *The Midnight Zoo*," uncovers the complex animal-human relationships in a manner that allows us to see the animal characters not only as representations of humans, but also as representing real animal issues. In my discussion of the parallels the novel draws between the experiences and lives of the animals and the children, I adopt Naess's eco-philosophical lens, which enables me to examine how Hartnett goes beyond metaphorical animal imagery to challenge speciesist animal-human hierarchies. In Sonya Hartnett's *The Midnight Zoo*, the role of animals is twofold: firstly, animals metaphorically represent human relationships – more specifically

the bigotry towards the Roma as others – and, secondly, the animals directly stand for the actual animals, which are mistreated according to the same principle: for their ‘otherness’ to humans. This article adopts an eco-philosophical perspective to examine how *The Midnight Zoo* effectively intertwines human intolerance of other humans (the Roma) with human actions towards animals to suggest that humans treat the (natural) world as the Nazis treated the Roma during World War II.

The third article, entitled “Haunted by Humans: Inverting the Reality of the Holocaust in Markus Zusak’s *The Book Thief*,” examines how the magic realist strategy of inversion facilitates the representation of the reality of the Holocaust in Markus Zusak’s YA novel *The Book Thief*. An inverted narrative is constructed by representing the events from the perspective of the other-worldly character, Death. Death provides the child reader with a means to unfold historical events by gradually opening up the layers of inverted reality. The layers examined are: “supernatural as natural”, “humans as ghosts”, “the real as surreal”, and finally, on the deepest level of inversion, readers interpret life during the Holocaust as death. It is not the fantastic that causes fear or horror, but the real: war, violence and human hatred. The technique of inversion overturns beliefs about reality, normalcy and humanity. Focusing on the reversal of the real and the magical, this paper explores the ways in which Death’s narrative helps the young reader to discover the humanity of the humans who were dehumanized by the war, while still pointing to the inhumanity of genocide.

The fourth article, entitled “‘I Am the Eternal Green Man’: Holistic Ecology in Reading Patrick Ness’s *A Monster Calls*,” takes the lens of holistic ecology to examine the representation of human–nature relationships in Patrick Ness’s *A Monster Calls* (2011) and explores how the novel guides the child reader to an environmental mind-set without overt didacticism. The article focuses on two aspects of the bond between the magical tree and the human characters in the novel: how the powerful tree empowers humans and how the human characters contribute to the tree’s expressions of power. The eternal Green Man – as the tree introduces itself – embodies this bond by being simultaneously tree-like and human-like, a complex merger of “the Green” (nature) and “the Man” (humanity). The monster-tree fulfils several powerful and empowering roles, as monster and storyteller, destructive force and powerful healer,

savage and philosopher, nightmare and escape. Importantly, it always keeps the shape of a yew tree. The article suggests that *A Monster Calls* can contribute to children's environmental education by illustrating the connection between the natural environment and humans: the eternal bond between *the Green* and *the Man*.

The above-mentioned novels were selected for their capacity to non-didactically engage readers with GCE themes focused on environment and human rights. Below I will explain my selection criteria in detail.

In order to explore the role of children's literature in critical GCE, the following criteria have been used to select the texts for this study:

- 1) Non-didacticism – the capacity of the novels to inform the reader in a way that requires reflection and independent interpretation;
- 2) Non-realism – magic realist/speculative narratives, where magic realist techniques are employed for its capacity to communicate with the reader by showing rather than telling, as highlighted by Booth (2010);
- 3) Non-human perspectives, which allow the reader to see the events from the point of view of the Other, an essential skill required in GCE;
- 4) Critical acclaim – to ensure the novels are recognized and available for the general public;
- 5) Storytelling – GCE promotes the idea that storytelling and social action should come together. The selected novels show this link by illustrating how some stories may be empowering, while others may distort the way we perceive others (detrimental outcomes of Nazi ideological storytelling).

First, we have non-didacticism. The novels analysed in this study address the issues of social justice and environmental awareness in a non-didactic manner engaging the reader with complex issues such as human and animal rights, genocide and environmental issues. In other words, the novels are neither descriptive nor prescriptive (instructional). By descriptive I mean, for instance, a depiction of nature in children's literature that does not require readers to associate personal agency with nature; or, a depiction of injustice where, for instance, the characters are assigned explicit moral traits, rather than implicitly through their just or unjust

actions. By prescriptive I mean books that convey a straightforward message to the reader to care about the environment by avoiding pollution, consume less, respect and empathize with others, not judge people by their age, race, gender etc.

My interpretation of the novels as non-didactic is based on the following characteristic: all the four novels engage the reader with the above-mentioned GCE themes in the way that requires active interpretation of the texts and encourages critical thinking as an essential element of critical GCE. My articles explore in detail how readers' active participation is encouraged by the magic realist narrative techniques, such as inversion and defamiliarization. The inversion of the real and the magical in *The Book Thief*, and the decentering of the human in *Eva*, facilitate the reader's understanding of the complexity of human rights issues. The inversion of animal/human and nature/human hierarchies in *The Midnight Zoo* and *A Monster Calls* help the reader to critically engage with environmental issues. The articles present detailed analysis of such inversions of reality, and demonstrate how the narrative requires the reader engage actively with the text in order to interpret environmental and social justice ideas implied in the narrative. This helps readers to build soft skills and attitudes along with the development of knowledge and cognitive skills, as required by UNESCO's Education agenda 2030.

Two of my articles, "Haunted by Humans..." and "A Mysterious Animal..." discuss the novels depicting the Holocaust, a UNESCO's special theme. According to the UN agenda, teachers of Holocaust education face a daunting task of creating relevance for students of the 21st century (Review 2019, p. 98). My articles suggest how these non-didactic novels may be appealing for young readers as they encourage them to create their own interpretation and reflection. *The Book Thief* and *The Midnight Zoo* contribute to Holocaust education through its non-didactic representation of this complex theme and by creating a space beyond the authoritative discourse common for historical realist novels. For instance, the Roma genocide and animal killing in *The Midnight Zoo* are depicted either as background or via the characters' memories. Only with the power of readers' imaginative action, the veiled surreal images of the genocide are eventually unveiled for the reader and *by* the reader. The educational value of these texts is in their capacity to stimulate the reader's independent critical knowledge formation.

The next criterion is magic realism. The novels in my study employ magic realist narrative techniques, which allow young reader to explore the themes of social justice and environment in a manner that requires the reader's active engagement with the text and its themes. Through inversion and defamiliarization the texts chosen for this study not only inform the reader about environmental issues and human rights, but also encourage the reader to adopt a socially just and an ecologically resilient perspective in a non-didactic way.

The texts represent the events from non-human perspectives such as of a supernatural narrator, an animal, a cyborg, a tree. By non-human perspectives I mean the author's choice to show the events in the novel through the eyes of a non-human character, thus decentering the human. In his discussion of visual art perception in *Ways of Seeing* (2008), Berger suggests how an awareness of who the viewer is transforms the image of what is depicted (in particular, a male or a female viewer). Drawing on Berger's theory, I argue that 'viewing' the events depicted in fiction through the eyes of a non-human character is transformational for the reader's perception of the plot. For example, the Holocaust represented as seen through the eyes of Death is different from the perspective of a human character. Another example is seeing animal extermination depicted from the perspective of animals themselves or seeing environmental degradation through the eyes of a tree character. I examine in detail how these non-human perspectives – intentionally decentering the human – provide a critical lens for the reader and encourage the reader's critical understanding of global issues.

Critical acclaim is another important criterion. All four novels are award-winning books which have received wide critical acclaim. *The Midnight Zoo* is the winner of Children's Book Council of Australia award as Older Reader's Book of the Year 2011.³ *Eva* won, among other awards,⁴ the 2008 Phoenix Award from the Children's Literature Association as the best English-language children's book (twenty years after it was originally published in 1988, which suggests its timeliness

³ *The Midnight Zoo* was also shortlisted for the CILIP Carnegie Medal in 2012.

⁴ *Eva* was a highly commended runner-up for the Carnegie Medal from the British Library Association, recognizing the year's best children's book by a British subject, and an honor book for the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award in the US. In 1992 it won the Senior Division Young Reader's Choice Award from the Pacific Northwest Library Association (US and Canada), which annually recognizes one three-year-old book.

and also timelessness even after the two decades). *The Book Thief* has won Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best Book (2006), Daniel Elliott Peace Award (2006), and Book Sense Book of the Year Award for Children's Literature (2007), just to name a few⁵. *A Monster Calls* is a winner of many prestigious literary awards⁶ such as the Carnegie Medal for the text and the Kate Greenaway Medal for illustrations by Jim Kay.

Finally, we have storytelling. All four novels are concerned with storytelling that result in the characters' facing moral dilemmas. In *The Book Thief* the love for words and storytelling foregrounds the relationships between the main characters. This novel acknowledges the destructive power of the Nazi narrative in *Mein Kampf*. But at the same time, the copy of Hitler's book appears life-saving for the Jewish character Max who, by pretending to read it on a train, avoids being captured. *The Midnight Zoo* represents the power and value of storytelling in a different way: the zoo animals each tell their own story of how they were mistreated by the humans and the Nazi soldiers. *The Midnight Zoo* ends with several optional outcomes for the characters, which the reader has to decide on, but which are ultimately left unresolved. The role of storytelling is crucial in *A Monster Calls* as the plot is built around meta-stories narrated by the monster-tree, which lead to the final culminating story told by the boy protagonist who has to decide how the story will end. In *Eva*, storytelling is not an obvious focus. However, narrative twists related to the representation of the protagonist as a human or a non-human are essential for the plot development.

As my research is conducted for a degree in English and education, the scope of this study is limited to *Anglophone* magic realist children's novels that represent global issues from non-human perspectives. This thesis does not discuss novels written in realist narrative modes, neither does it discuss the novels which openly address specific global issues, such as refugee protagonists, ecological catastrophes, animal rights etc.

⁵ *The Book Thief's* awards also include: School Library Journal Best Book of the Year (2006), Publishers Weekly Best Children's Book of the Year (2006), National Jewish Book Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature (2006), Bulletin Blue Ribbon Book (2006), Michael L. Printz Honor Book (2007).

⁶ *A Monster Calls* also won the British Children's Book of the Year, voted by an "academy of 750 book industry experts"; the Red House Children's Book Award, overall, a national award voted by British children; and the Kitschies Red Tentacle award for speculative fiction, best novel published in the UK. In the U.S., the American Library Association magazine named it the "Top of the List" for 2011 youth fiction.

Instead, the thesis's main focus is on the specific features of magic realist narratives which can guide the young reader to critical engagement with the global issues portrayed. This thesis does not offer a comparison of magic realism with realism, but rather demonstrates through the four case studies how magic realist children's texts can be effectively used in GCE.

The UN 2030 Agenda considers GCE one of the educational goals for sustainable development (SDG 4.7)⁷. The section *Literary Contexts and GCE Themes* that follows comprises two parts that reflect SDG: *Narrating Human Rights* and *Narrating Environment*. Acknowledging that there are many different interpretations of sustainable development, this section is divided according to the two overarching sustainable themes *human rights* and *environment*, as highlighted by Oxfam (2015). According to Oxfam, sustainable development is "a recognition that our relationship with the earth needs to acknowledge the limits of finite resources and the human rights of all" (2015, p. 7). Framing my thesis within these two themes, throughout the discussion I refer to a number of GCE sub-themes: the issue of genocide, justice, environmental ethics, animal rights all of which are under the umbrella of sustainable education. Applying the method of close reading of the texts presented in my articles, I will show how non-human perspectives in the novels in my study facilitate the young reader's understanding of global issues in a non-didactic manner.

⁷ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

NARRATING HUMAN RIGHTS

In this section, *Narrating human rights*, I discuss the role of children's fiction in education about genocide. I outline approaches in magic realist narratives to the representation of genocide in fiction, and trace the emerging magic realist narratives and critical debate around the challenges of the representation of genocides for children in children's literature. I situate the selected novels within this debate and discuss in detail the effect of magic realist literary techniques, which underlies my argument about the role of these novels in GCE.

GCE and Education about Genocide

Under the GCE umbrella, UNESCO lists education about genocide as a special theme defined as “Preventing violent extremism through education and Education about the holocaust and genocide” (United Nations, 2015, 197 EX/Decisions). UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education Agenda 2030, a policy guide to Education about the Holocaust and Preventing Genocide, explains why knowledge about genocide is indispensable for being a global citizen:

Analysing how the Holocaust happened creates multiple opportunities for learners to reflect on their role as global citizens. Thus, strong opportunities also exist for aligning education about the Holocaust with the goals of Global Citizenship Education (GCED). GCED is a pillar of the Education 2030 Agenda and Framework for Action, notably Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals on Education, which seeks to develop students to be informed and critically literate, socially connected, respectful of diversity, and ethically responsible and engaged. (2017, p. 8)

The way UNESCO approaches education about genocide implies that it is not only important to be informed about the history of genocide and the Holocaust, but also to be able to link the history with the present to prevent similar events from happening in the future. In this section, I discuss how genocide is depicted in children's literature, with particular focus on the Holocaust representation in *The Book Thief* and *The Midnight Zoo*. I argue that these two magic realist children's novels facilitate GCE as they encourage young readers' critical engagement with the concept of *human* and the complex theme of the genocide by representing historical events of the Second World War and the Holocaust in a non-didactic manner through non-human perspectives. The articles (II and III respectively) focus on these two novels, and explore in detail how the authors of *The Book Thief* and *The Midnight Zoo* employ the magic realist literary technique of inversion to illustrate fluid and dynamic conceptions of identity, as opposed to the fixed and rigid categories of *human*, *other* and *animal*. In this section, I discuss magic realist children's novels depicting the Holocaust from an educational point of view. I argue that my case study novels have a non-didactic pedagogical capacity. I discuss inversion in magic realism, explain its effect on the reader and exemplify how such inversions open up possibilities, and present to children the complex topic of the genocide in a non-didactic way.

Didactic Children's Literature about the Holocaust

In the first decades after World War II, historical realism was a dominant narrative mode in the representation of the war and the Holocaust in fiction for children. Realist Holocaust fiction for children can be exemplified by novels such as Anne Holm's *I Am David* (1963), Judith Kerr's *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit* (1971), *The Devil in Vienna* (1978) by Doris Orgel, Lois Lowry's *Number the Stars* (1989), *Daniel's Story* (1994) by Carol Matas, *One Yellow Daffodil* (1995) by David Adler. Landmark scholarly publications on realist Holocaust literature for young readers include Hamida Bosmajian's (2002) *Sparing the Child: Grief and the Unspeakable in Youth Literature about the Holocaust*, and Lydia Kokkola's (2003) *Representing the Holocaust in Children's Literature*.

Both books provide detailed and insightful analyses of the representation of the Holocaust in children's literature, and acknowledge the didacticism of the Holocaust novels for children. Kokkola suggests: "Without exception, novels set entirely after the war end with a clearly didactic message to the young reader about how history must not repeat itself" (2003, p. 159). According to Bosmajian, "'never again' constitute[s] the didactic motive of the official text of Holocaust narratives for the young" (2002, p. xv). Both scholars indicate the didactic purpose of Holocaust fiction for children and the importance of maintaining historical accuracy in representing history. A more recent example of a didactic realist Holocaust text for children is John Boyne's widely discussed *The Boy in Striped Pyjamas* (2006). The novel has been criticized for its historical inaccuracies, "distortion of history" (Cesarani, 2008, p. 4) and "problematic oversimplification" (Gilbert, 2010, p. 9). Ruth Gilbert suggests that "the blunt didacticism of Boyne's text might close down possibilities for the child reader's imaginative engagement with the ungraspable nature of the Holocaust" (2010, p. 9). Bosmajian, Kokkola and Gilbert have been concerned with the appropriate form for the representation of the genocide in children's fiction and the degree of exposure to this complex historical period without traumatizing the young reader. But none of the scholars suggests ways to avoid blunt didacticism and encourage the readers' critical engagement with this complex historical event.

The response to this concern is the emergence of alternative magic realist approaches to the representation of the event defined as "unspeakable" (Langer, 1995, p. 67), "incomprehensible" (Russell, 1997, p. 268), and "fundamentally untranslatable" (Brodzki, 2004, p. 130). In the next section, I will discuss the emergence of novels depicting the Holocaust through fantastic elements, "narratives of consolation and escape" as defined by Adams (2011, p. 18) which are considered to provide easier reading experience for their indirect depiction of violence but at the same time remaining informative. I will further discuss the implications of implementing magic realist techniques in Holocaust fiction in children's non-didactic education about genocide.

Magic realist children's literature about the Holocaust

In adult fiction magic realism as a mode for the portrayal of World War II and the Holocaust is prominent. We find such traits in, for example, Günter Grass's *The Tin Drum* (1959/1982), André Schwarz-Bart's *The Last of the Just* (1959), D. M. Thomas's *The White Hotel* (1981), David Grossman's *See Under: Love* (1990), and Jonathan Safran Foer's *Everything Is Illuminated* (2013) to name but a few. Particularly, adult novels such as Jerzy Kosinski's *The Painted Bird* (1965), Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (1986/2003) and Yann Martel's *Beatrice and Virgil* (2010) have expanded the artistic possibilities of Holocaust fiction, in their departure from traditional realistic representations of Nazism in literature, through the choice of alternative literary modes such as magic realism, comics and/or animal allegory. By employing alternatives to realist literary strategies, these novels demonstrate a tendency to experiment with genres and narrative modes that allow different ways of representing this complex historical event.

By contrast, magic realist fiction for children of the Holocaust is a relatively rare phenomenon and is exemplified by only a handful novels, such as Jane Yolen's *Devil's Arithmetic* (1990) and *Briar Rose* (1993), Han Nolan's *If I Should Die Before I Wake* (1994) and Louise Murphy's *The True Story of Hansel and Gretel* (2003). A number of critics argue about the question of what the appropriate language in which to represent the atrocities of Nazism would be. According to Brodzki "the incommensurability of language and traumatic experience is a paradigm of Holocaust writing" (2004, p. 130). Yolan's, Nolan's and Murphy's novels all employ time-travel and a fairy-tale elements in order to represent this difficult topic to the young reader without exposing the readers to representations of violence, distancing the reader from the atrocities of the Holocaust (Lassner & Cohen, 2014). As, for instance, in the time-travel narrative in *Devil's Arithmetic* and *If I Should Die before I Wake* the protagonists are able to shift in time and escape from the concentration camp. However, from the educational perspective such reader-protective escape narratives that distort the Holocaust history (Lassner and Cohen, 2014) may result in misleading representations of history for young learners.

In *Devil's Arithmetic*, the protagonist Hannah, a Jewish girl who lives in New York, mysteriously travels back in time to 1942 Poland, during World War II, where she is imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp. Similarly, a time-travel element is present in *If I Should Die before I Wake* where the protagonist Hilary, a member of a neo-Nazi gang, is magically transformed into a Jewish girl surviving in the concentration camp in Poland. Both novels' protagonists travel between the two worlds. Nolan and Yolen offer the young reader an opportunity to view history from two sides, thus to link past and present. Susan Stewart states that time-travel "helps young readers understand the construction of self and history in historical fiction" (Stewart, 2010, p. 233). Stewart suggests that "spatiotemporal displacement offers a point of identification for readers in that they potentially see themselves in the time traveler" (2010, p. 238). However, there is a potential effect that the protagonist's final 'journey' back to the present reduces readers' fear, and that the relief creates the illusion of a safe place (Lassner & Cohen, 2014). By conveying such a sense of safety, the magical elements in these novels create the impression that the war is only a nightmare rather than a real threat. The case supports Kertzer's view that "something happens when children are exposed to the Holocaust literature, but not always what we intend" (2004, p. 256). Even though both stories aim at raising the reader's awareness of the war through exposure to history from a point in the present, the effect of the link between the present and the past remains weak. This is evidenced in the final episode in *Devil's Arithmetic* where the protagonist is depicted on the way to the gas chamber and then travels in time. The effect is that the realistic horrific outcome is obscured by her time travel. This heroic narrative is criticized by Bosmajian who suggests that "the untutored reader may indeed conclude that the camps brought out the best in the victims" (2002, p. 144). Consequently, Yolen's and Nolan's use of time-shift narrative strategy to represent the Holocaust unintentionally results in the transformation of the protagonists' concentration camp experiences into an adventurous yet dangerous journey that ends in homecoming. As a result, the magic elements reduce the realistic image of the traumatic history.

A similar effect is achieved in Louise Murphy's *The True Story of Hansel and Gretel* and Jane Yolen's *The Briar Rose*, both novels framed in the fairy tale plot. Murphy's story is set in Poland in 1943. A Jewish

family escapes the ghetto and hides from the Nazi soldiers. The father and stepmother decide to save their two children and abandon them in a forest. They are told to never reveal their Jewish names and are given new German names – Hansel and Gretel. The children encounter the witch who hides them in her house in the woods. The story begins with a reference to the Brothers Grimm’s fairy tale. However, it is not the witch who is the evil character but the Nazi soldiers. Nazi officers are represented as more dangerous than a fairy-tale’s common terrifying character, the witch. Thus, Murphy expands the frames of the tale by introducing a greater evil than the witch, suggesting that Nazism is an embodiment of evil. Murphy’s choice of such a framework represents “the needs of young and adult readers to relate to fantastic projections which are connected more to the concrete conditions of their own reality” (Bettelheim, 1991, p. 67). This means that the fairy-tale background makes the reader project the tale plot onto the realities of the war, offering the reader expectations of a positive outcome. The fairy-tale genre expectations are seemingly useful to the author to deal with the difficulty of trauma portrayal:

The utopian potentialities of the fairy tale affect an uncritical reclamation of an impossible and illusory pretraumatic subject, thereby disavowing the constitutive (structural) traumatic core of both subjectivity and disastrous events like the Holocaust. (Khader, 2011, p. 138)

In portraying the Holocaust, the genre expectations may falsify reality. Murphy’s happy ending is the only possible ending according to the fairy tale genre conventions. The reader expects the children to be saved, as were Hansel and Gretel.

Yolen’s *The Briar Rose* is framed by the fairy tale of Sleeping Beauty. Gemma, a Holocaust victim, tells her granddaughters about her experience of the Holocaust. Her memories are narrated as flashbacks. The novel comprises two juxtaposing parts: the home (the present) and the castle (Holocaust memories). Such a dual narrative creates a sense of distance and an illusion of safety (Lassner a& Cohen, 2014). The final episode offers a happy ending expected by the reader: the princess is saved by a kiss. The book ends with the Yolen’s note stating the facts

from the history: “This is a book of fiction. All the characters are made up. Happy-ever-after is a fairy-tale notion, not history. I know of no woman who escaped from Chelmno alive” (1992, p. 203). Yolen’s epilogue suggests that the author was aware of the trauma-reducing effect of the fairy-tale frame.

The authors’ intentions to shield the child-reader from direct exposure to violent history can leave the reader in the emotional state of uncertainty or misunderstanding of the Holocaust, thereby distorting history. In an educational context, when the reader learns about the Holocaust history from the novel, realist Holocaust narratives that represent the atrocities in direct language are too traumatic for young readers. On the other hand, life-affirming or hopeful narratives create an erroneous perception of this historical atrocity. Martin points out that “the Western Holocaust narrative can be seen as existing in a binary relationship: either hope or loss understanding or confusion, but rarely both” (2004, p. 315-28). Bosmajian suggests that:

[L]iterature for young readers [...] must acknowledge in complex and subtle ways the problem of representation of a disastrous reality. [...] the fabric of the text itself can, even for young readers, both hide and reveal the Holocaust and do so without making the official text rhetorically so enabling and authoritative that loss and grief are almost denied. (2002, p. 147)

I argue that the magic realist children’s novels in my study offer an alternative narrative strategy located in between the two extremes as highlighted by Martin and Bosmajian. I suggest that a fine balance between how much to reveal and how much to disguise for the young reader is achieved in my case-study novels, *The Book Thief* and *The Midnight Zoo*, by representing the genocide through storytelling performed by non-human narrators. In the first case, the Holocaust is narrated by Death, and in the second case, by animals. Both narratives defamiliarize the reader and hide traumatic scenes with the help of magic realist inverted tropes. At the same time, magic realist inversion reveals the history of the genocide without traumatizing young readers with depictions of extreme violence.

Although, Adams (2011) categorizes *The Book Thief* as a consolation narrative due to the absence of direct depictions of violence, and because of its trauma-reducing effect, I argue that neither *The Book Thief* nor *The Midnight Zoo* are consolation narratives, that aim at sparing the reader. By using magic realist tropes, the novels portray the most violent scenes in a metaphorical language that is less traumatizing for young readers. At the same time, the indirect narrative does not simplify, romanticize or distort history. These novels suggest reconsideration of the concepts of the real/unreal, when it comes to historical events, such as the Holocaust, an atrocity of such monumental proportions that its representation seems as unreal as any fantastic event presented in a novel.

Magic realism in teaching about genocides

I will now move on to discuss further how *The Book Thief* and *The Midnight Zoo* inform the young reader about the history of the genocide in a way that engages the reader with the plot and encourages readers' critical reflection on history in a non-didactic manner. By doing so, these texts contribute to the GCE's objective to inform learners about the history of the genocide and develop humanistic attitudes, empathy and understanding of human rights issues. Furthermore, drawing on Hegerfeld's concept of defamiliarization, I will also discuss inversion in magic realism.

Published in 2005, *The Book Thief* became an international bestseller and was translated into several languages. It was adapted into a 2013 feature film of the same name. The historical events in this novel are narrated by Death, whose paradoxical benevolence is contrasted to the extreme human violence during the Holocaust in the Second World War. In *The Midnight Zoo*, the Roma Holocaust is represented from the perspectives of the children and the animals appearing in the novels, both representatives of marginalized groups. The humans are represented by the Roma children persecuted in Czechoslovakia during the Roma Holocaust and the animals are represented caged and left to starve in the zoo after the town was bombed. Both novels use non-human perspectives, which represent the history of the genocides beyond a human-centered

point of view. The importance of such multiple narratives for teaching history has been recognized in GCE. In UNESCO's *The International status of education about the Holocaust* (2015), Peter Carrier et al. analyze textbooks and curricula and pay particular attention to the narrative structure and point of view. Carrier identifies an issue with "[t]endency to confine the narrative voice to that of one single, neutral point of view" (p. 179) and propose to avoid it by encouraging enquiry-based learning based on a multiplicity of historical narratives of the Holocaust. My research shows how the employment of magic realist techniques in these historical novels opens new possibilities for the representation of history, one that offers an alternative to the descriptive, single neutral point of view criticized in the UNESCO report. In an eco-philosophical manner, Hartnett establishes a series of parallels between the Roma Holocaust and the captivity of the animals. Hartnett engages with the mistreatment of both humans and animals, giving both equal importance. In *The Book Thief*, the inversion of the roles of a humanized Death (who is also the narrator) and the dehumanized Holocaust victims, inform the young reader – in a non-didactic manner – about the atrocities of the genocide, something that would otherwise be too complex to grasp for the child reader.

The two novels discussed here inform the reader about the atrocities of Nazism in a decidedly different way from that which would be had with a conventional human narrator, and a single neutral point of view. Carrier's (2015) emphasis on multiplicity of historical narratives implies the possibility for the reader to see the events from several perspectives in order to develop their own understanding of the history and to form their own critical views. The unique feature of the multiple storylines in *The Midnight Zoo* is that they are inverted human and non-human narratives. The novel represents the history of two parallel genocides: the children's stories about the extermination of their families and their escape, and the animals' narratives about how they have been mistreated for the same reason – their otherness. These parallel considerations of the animal and human genocides allow the reader to be informed about the Holocaust in ways beyond a linear understanding history. Apart from considering the plot from several perspectives, there is a demand that magic realist mode places on the reader – active emotional engagement with the text is required in order to interpret the narrative.

It has been argued by several scholars that magic realism operates on the reader's emotional level. Arva (2008) explores the capacity of magic realism to simulate the reader's emotions: "One must understand that magic realist universe not as a flight from reality but as a flight simulator, an artificial world within the real world, meant to prepare us for better grasp of it" (p. 11). Simulation is performed through the reader's empathy, associations and magical symbols, which the reader is invited to decode. Langdon defines such an effect as the 'felt' experience:

The deliberately ambiguous nature of magical realist texts means that they can often be read in a multitude of ways, often causing the reader to 'lose the plot' and feel or experience, rather than objectively observe or understand, occurring events. (2011, p. 9)

Both Langdon and Arva suggest that magic realist reading operates on a sensual level. Unlike fantasy, magic realism represents reality by projecting magical events onto the plane of reality while "[p]aradoxically, the un-real of these texts simulates the sense or experience of something real" (Langdon, 2011, p. 3). In an educational context, magic realist fiction informs the reader by creating this simulated experience suggested by Langdon and Arva. In the context of GCE and learning about the Holocaust and other genocides, the role of education is to prevent genocide by promoting the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that can counteract contemporary group-targeted violence. Reading about the Nazi genocide of Jews and the Roma in the magic realist mode is more than becoming informed about the atrocities of this historical event: the sensual level of reading in this mode is where the reader's humanist values and attitudes are formed as a result of the empathy stimulated by felt experience. This catharsis-like engagement with the narrative makes a magic realist manner of narration less didactic and allows more space for the reader to create their own interpretation and reflection, and develop critical literacy skills as defined by Andreotti (2006).

A practical application of reading in this mode within an educational context is in the facilitation of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL). Major international organizations like OECD and UNESCO promotes SEL since it develops in learners soft skills needed to navigate an increasingly complex and globally interconnected world. The effect achieved by a

simulated reading experience resonates with the goals of SEL for children: to teach children emotional literacy and empathy (Webster-Stratton et al., 2004.) The role of SEL, and gaining Social-Emotional Competence has been identified as vital in cultivating Global Citizenship (Donahue-Keegan et al., 2017). Magic realist fiction empathy-stimulating narratives may thus become an educational tool for critical GCE.

Inversion in magic realism

In this section, I will discuss how magic realism can make readers connect emotionally with global issues in a non-didactic manner. I will analyze how readers' emotional engagement with the narrative is achieved, and I will discuss in detail inversion in magic realism, and provide examples of this feature from *The Book Thief* and *The Midnight Zoo*.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez, one of the most influential magic realist writers, emphasizes the mode's unique capacity to capture reality "out of all proportions" (Mendoza & Marquez, 1983, p. 60). From an educational point of view, I argue that magic realism's function seems crucial in depicting the global scale of the historical genocide for the child reader. In *Lies that Tell the Truth* (2005), Hegerfeldt defines magic realism as a new form of mimesis, arguing that reality itself has become more unrealistic and literature recreates the abnormal as a norm. Hegerfeldt uses the example of ghosts in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*: "they [ghosts] were no more incredible than the phenomenon of slavery appears, or ought to appear, from a present day perspective" (2005, p. 321). Similarly, in my case-study novels, Death and the animals telling the history of World War II appear less incredible than the actual stories about the genocides that they depict. The educational value with such a new form of mimesis is the reader's active participation in the knowledge acquisition from a magic realist narrative: the reader has to evaluate and interpret in order to understand, make their own judgments and conclusions. This effect may be compared to observing a surrealist picture. The meaning-making is induced from the spectator's close observation of the unfamiliar objects, things that are then placed in a bigger picture where the objects start to make sense to the spectator.

A characteristic feature of magic realism is *defamiliarization*, an artistic technique used to enhance the perception of the familiar by presenting common things as strange (literally from Russian “ostranenie” – estrangement). The term defamiliarization was coined in 1917 by the Russian formalist Viktor Shklovsky in his essay “Art as Device.” He defined it as an aesthetic technique to make objects appear strange. Defamiliarization is a complex concept and can be applied in a variety of contexts, such as television rhetoric (Woal, 1982), political discourse (Boym, 2005), postcolonial discourse (Caomea, 2003; Herrero, 2011), gender studies (Hollinger, 1999) as well as technology design (Bell et al. 2005) to name a few. In my research I draw on defamiliarization, theorized by Ann Hegerfeldt (2005), as an essential element of magic realist narratives in education about genocides.

According to Hegerfeldt, defamiliarization produced by magic realist fiction is evoked from naturalization of the fantastic (matter-of-fact presentation of the unreal) and supernaturalization of the real (presenting the ordinary as odd). Both have a common function where “the violation of literary conventions fundamentally interrupts the process of reading, drawing attention to the unspoken norms and assumptions by which a reader will judge a fictional world as realistic or fantastic” (2005, p. 200). Such representation of the ordinary as odd is applied by Zusak in *The Book Thief* in the depiction of people in the concentration camp:

I’ll never forget the first day in Auschwitz ... There were broken bodies and dead, sweet hearts ... The smell like a stove, but still so cold. I shiver when I remember—as I try to de-realize it. I blow warm air into my hands, to heat them up. But it’s hard to keep them warm when the souls still shiver. (Zusak 2007, KL 4481)

By contrast, the realist description of people in the concentration camp in *The Boy in Striped Pajamas* does not have the same effect:

[T]here were crowds of people sitting together in groups, staring at the ground, looking horribly sad; they all had one thing in common: they were all terribly skinny and their eyes were sunken and they all had shaved heads. (pp. 207-208)

The latter narrative does not require from the reader any imaginative work to draw a mental picture of the camps. The direct description of people as “looking horribly sad” and “terribly skinny” should evoke the reader’s sympathy, but since the novel avoids any reference to the reality of concentration camps (even Auschwitz is renamed as “Outwith”), the young reader neither realizes *what actually* makes the people look sad and skinny, nor is informed about the unimaginable proportions of the extermination of Jews.

Zusak’s defamiliarized images of the shivering souls and also (paradoxically) shivering Death with its intention to heat these souls creates a more dramatic image of the victims’ suffering, intensified by Death’s empathy, than Boyne’s simplistic description. The sympathy to shivering characters is evoked even before the reader converts the surreal into real and admits that the souls stand for the exterminated people in the camps. Arva explains this effect of inverting the magic into reality as “verbal magic”: “What readers experience in magical realist texts is a linguistic spectacle, a fictional pageant that attempts with every image to conflate the signifier (the word) and the referent (the real)” (2008, p. 79). Zusak’s narrative not only stimulates the reader’s empathy, but also engages the reader to actively ‘watch’ “a linguistic spectacle”, as highlighted by Arva. Unlike Boyne’s descriptive narrative, Zusak’s “verbal magic” requires from the reader to share the emotional charge it brings. I argue, in an educational context, magic realist narratives representing the genocide encourage the young reader to critically engage with historical knowledge: interpret the unreal, recognize the real in the magic elements and then to reconsider its relevance to the present. Magic realist fiction, such as *The Book Thief*, becomes a GCE non-didactic means to raise awareness about the causes, dynamics and consequences of this complex historical event.

In my case-study novels, defamiliarization is realized through inversion achieved as a result of non-human narratives: the supernatural narrator Death and the magical animal narrators. Death as a narrator is the only determinant of magic realism in *The Book Thief* and is employed as a tool for the reversal, which is an example of inversion in magic realism. I suggest that inversion in *The Book Thief* is realized in the four central binaries in Death’s narrative: the portrayal of the supernatural as natural; humans as ghosts; the real as surreal; and life as death. Inversion is

achieved by using different techniques resulting in the real and the magical being overturned, but also coexisting.

In an educational context, the inversion of the generic conventions creates a reflective space for the young reader to actively participate in interpreting the roles of the magical and the real. The value of inversion in education is in this technique's demand on the reader to use her/his intellectual ability to connect the ideas in the text and work across contexts. Such stimulation of the reader's critical intelligence resonates with constructivist educational approaches. Following Savery and Duffy's framework of constructivist learning that suggests that a cognitive conflict or puzzlement is the stimulus for learning (1995, p. 31), magic realist's inversion creates a cognitive conflict for the reader who has to navigate the reversed notions of the magical and the real. The process is like assembling a mental jigsaw puzzle into a picture. The reader 'draws' from the material given by the author. Thus, the reader becomes a co-author of the story, where the author is no longer the only 'authority' but a 'stimulator' of the reader's emotional intensity and imaginative action. The reader takes an active position and recreates the event with the help of their imaginative abilities. By leaving a space for the reader's imagination, the narrative is thus amplified.

As for learning history through reading, such an inversion of the categories – presenting the war and the Holocaust as something completely irrational and abnormal – provides a non-didactic way to inform the reader about the complex event. The narrative both hides and reveals the Holocaust without being authoritative (Bosmajan, 2002). I suggest that the use of inversion may have a particular value in the classroom, where learners may be educated to mentally reverse the inverted magic realist concepts and reflect on how it changes their perception of the narrative.

The non-didacticism of magic realism is that it is informative on an emotional level; the facts are not represented directly but are reconstructed by the reader in the process of making the meaning of the story. This alternative way of knowledge acquisition through the reader's engagement with the book is important in the context of children's education about difficult topics, which the child-learner is not capable to imagine. As Arva suggests, "fantastic representation (imaginative reconstitution) works where realistic representation (descriptive mimesis) has

apparently failed” (2008, p. 5). Arva’s literary exploration of the magic realist mode’s construction of knowledge is essential for understanding how magic realist fiction contributes to education. Following Arva, I would argue that the novels in my selection help teach young learners about the history of the Holocaust through imaginative reconstruction, as opposed to descriptive mimesis based on the facts about the Holocaust. I do not try to diminish the importance of the realistic representation of history; in either case, learners gain knowledge of the Holocaust. However, I believe that when learners emotionally and intellectually participate in the construction of the historical knowledge, they unfold the history beyond facts and form their own attitudes and critical understanding of the events, which reflects a GCE-vision of Holocaust education.

In *The Book Thief* magic realism suggests that there is not just one way to experience reality, but various ways, chosen by the reader. The reader is in a position to convert the indirect image into the real fact, in other words, to invert back the ghosts into humans, the surreal into real, death into life. The reader has to recognize “[t]he deceptive simplicity of magical realist images, their coherence, vividness, and emotional charge”, which leads to the reader’s ability to see and feel “the indescribable horrors of the past” (Arva, 2008, p. 75) and acquire knowledge about history. This catharsis-like emotional engagement is the connecting point between the historical past and the reader’s present. In *The Book Thief*, the inversion is realized when the reader mentally reverses the real and the magical images and discovers that the ghosts are actually the millions of real people exterminated by the Nazi. In *The Midnight Zoo*, the inversion leads the reader to an understanding of the monumental proportions of the genocide through the microcosm of the midnight zoo. The so familiar zoo image reflects all the features of the Nazi concentration camps, which are not mentioned in the book. The defamiliarized reader is informed about the historical event, but in a non-didactic manner.

I argue that the educational value of such readings is that the reader is encouraged to discover the monumental proportions of genocide performed through his/her emotional engagement, rather than by the factual statement of the number of genocide victims. In her article “Using Children’s Literature to Build Concepts of Teaching about Global

Citizenship”, Debbie Bradbery suggests that “[i]t is imperative then that to teach students about human rights and being socially just we must ensure that they understand what it is to be human [...]” (2012, p. 6). Bradbery’s argument suggests that the understanding of the concept of the human is crucial for global citizenship education. In other words, what it means to be a global citizen implies understanding of what it means to be human. In other words, to learn how to be a humane, socially just, and an empathetic human being. In my research, particularly in the context of education about genocide, I discuss the concept the human as the tool for exclusion. The fact that the Nazi exterminated the Jews and the Roma people on the ground of not considering them as humans, is illuminated in the selected novels. *The Book Thief* shows the Holocaust victims not as humans but ghosts, invisible phantoms only seen by Death. *The Midnight Zoo* employs the *animal* concept as a defining point for racism: the Roma people were killed for not being categorized as humans. By subverting the categories, *The Book Thief* and *The Midnight Zoo* allow readers to explore how the definition of human as non-human may foreground the ideology of the genocide. The inverted representation of humans as animals in *The Midnight Zoo* and humans as ghosts in *The Book Thief* show the dehumanization of the Holocaust victims.

The complexity of defining who is a human being has been discussed by many scholars (Nayar, 2018; Fernandez-Armesto, 2005). Because it is difficult to define what it is to be human, this can lead to a situation when people’s status as human beings is questioned, and to the loss of their human rights. According to Nayar, “Critical humanism treats humanism as a politically significant philosophy because it enabled Europeans, upper classes, professionals [...] to categorize some individuals as inhuman or sub-human and confine them or deny them rights” (2018, p. 12). Along with various minority groups that became “the victims of this form of classificatory paradigm” (Ibid), Nayar also includes animals. Nayar’s inclusion of non-human victims of categorization suggests the importance of a non-anthropocentric way of thinking for a deep understanding of human right issues. Nayar discusses his views on dehumanization of individuals and the issue of exclusion in the context of the philosophy of postmodernism. Although an exploration of fictional characters representing such victims is not the focus of his study, his analysis is important for my project. The link Nayar draws between

humans and animals defined as non-humans, is crucial in the education for human rights. Exploring the premises for the exclusion and consequent extermination of the animals represented in children's magic realist literature facilitates an understanding of how similar premises were created by the Nazi regime to justify the Holocaust of Jews and Roma whom they defined as animals. In my study I explore in detail the educational value of *The Midnight Zoo*, particularly the parallels between the animals and the humans, which I suggest inform learners not only about the history of the Roma genocide, but also about animal rights and ideologies that lead to genocide. The concept of what is human (and humane) is central in human rights education and, therefore, this concept is in the focus of my investigation of the case-study novels.

In his provocative book *So You Think You Are Human?* (2005) Fernandez-Armesto also questions the coherence of our understanding of what it means to be human and suggests that, "if the term 'human' is incoherent, what will become of 'human values'? Humanity is in peril [...] from a conceptual threat" (2005, p. 1). Both Nayar and Fernandez-Armesto express similar concerns regarding an insufficient critical approach to the concept human. Their views resonate with the GCE goal to view humans as global citizens regardless of their belonging to a particular nationality, race, gender etc. I suggest, both *The Book Thief* and *The Midnight Zoo* undermine the fixed concept of the human, and show how certain categories of people tend to become marginalized, endangered even.

In order to overcome the misconceptions, GCE promotes viewing humans as citizens of the globe with equal rights and opportunities regardless of gender, race, age and other potentially discriminating criteria. Various anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric approaches have been tried in attempting to define what is human. For example, Antweiler proposes to establish a concept of humanity as "a unit or an entity" (2012, p. 19) and defines it as an "inclusive concept of humanity" (p. 26). According to Antweiler, such an inclusive concept depends on the link between contemporary human beings and other generations. Building on Antweiler's inclusive approach I would like to take it one step further and propose human interconnectedness not only with other human beings but also with non-humans. The novels I discuss in this study point in that direction. The magic realist narratives of *The Book Thief* and *The*

Midnight Zoo challenge the anthropocentric classification and questions the fixed definition of the human.

The magic realist mode's subversive function to undermine the societal power structure has been recognized as the mode giving voice to the politically and culturally disempowered (Bowers, 2004, p. 33). This mode in the children's books I have chosen for this study serves the same purpose: it gives voices to the disempowered animals and the Roma children who were exterminated by the Nazi for their non-human otherness. In these magic realist texts humans and animals are placed on an equal footing by speaking the same language; the supernatural narrator Death tells the story of a friendship between a Jew and a German girl and Death's inverted narrative overturns the concepts of human/non-human. Through the inversion of human/non-human categories, the novels contribute to young readers' understanding of what it means to be human and they become aware of what foregrounds its misconceptions. Consequently, the narratives raise readers' awareness and understanding of the roots of human rights deprivation, exclusion and social injustice, the ultimate goal for exploring the concept human, according to Nayar and Antweiler. Nonetheless, gaining insights into the complexity of the what it means to be human from the magic realist novels require critical work from readers.

The distinctive feature of inversion in the magic realist narrative mode is that it requires from the reader a critical interpretation of the inverted categories as well as speculation on how the novels end. The dream-like open ending of *The Midnight Zoo* depicts the appearance of a mysterious lady in a dark woolen cloak who is a savior for each of the characters: the mother for Thomas, the saint for Andrej, Alice the zookeeper for the animals. The woman has the power to protect the children so that "no soldiers could harm them" (Hartnett, p. 204), and release the animals as "no iron bars would have the strength to resist her will" (p. 205). However, the novel's final episode challenges the happy ending structure considered common in children's Holocaust fiction (Kertzer, 1999) and the narrative of heroism and survival criticized by Bosmajian (2002). Bosmajian states that in children's Holocaust literature the language of liberation and celebrating victory – "the rhetoric of positive thinking" – as well as the employment of happy endings are used to spare and aid the

child, and present the “inevitably reductive content of children’s narratives about history” (2002, p. 145).

The same trauma-reducing happy ending structure is followed by the authors of the fairy tale narratives, *The Briar Rose* and *The True Story of Hensel and Gretel* discussed above. As has been mentioned before, a protective reader strategy leaves no space for the reader’s agency to co-create the text. By contrast, the alternative magic realist narrative in the final scene of *The Midnight Zoo* offers the reader various outcomes: the realist one is that the children are unable to open the cages, the magic realist one is the appearance of Alice who opens the cages. However, even the latter outcome, comprising the rhetoric of survival, leaves the reader hesitant about the capacity of the released animals to survive. The reader is already aware of the animals’ inability to survive in the wilderness, as they are now used to life in captivity. The destiny of the children is not definite either as the opening of the cages may mean they are no longer protected from the wild animals. The reader is encouraged to reflect on and interpret the ending bearing several meanings. I argue that the open ending provides a space for readers to reflect on alternative endings, engage more with the plot, analyze the possible outcomes of the story, and by doing so develop their critical literacy skills.

Both *The Book Thief* and *The Midnight Zoo* are novels that resist reading the history of the Second World War and the Holocaust as linear, instead offering the reader a reflective space for alternative forms of knowledge acquisition.

NARRATING ENVIRONMENT

In this section, *Narrating environment*, I discuss the role of children's fiction in environmental education. I contextualise the novels in my study in the discussion of environmental ethics in children's education and the challenges in approaching the binary concepts of human and nature. I explain how magic realist literary techniques of inversion and the use of non-human perspectives in the novels challenge these fixed binaries and deepen readers' insights into the complexity of nature-human/animal-human interconnected relationships and by doing so foster young readers' environmental mindset in a non-didactic manner.

There are a number of studies investigating the representation of the environmental issues in children's literature. Empirical research on using children's literature in environmental education suggests that environmental fiction for children may be overly focused on presenting facts from one viewpoint without representing all sides of the environmental issue (Meyer, 2002). Environmental children's literature has also been criticized as "too preachy" (Christenson, 2010), or too concerned with evoking emotions, and as a result, encouraging "mindless sentimentalism" without critical understanding of environmental issues (Monhardt et al., 2000).

In "Children's literature and environmental issues: Heart over mind? Reading Horizons" (2000), Monhardt conducts an empirical study to examine the effects of children's fiction on students' existing attitudes toward environmental issues. Monhardt investigates reader responses of children reading *An Owl in the Shower* by Jean Craighead George. The study by Monhardt has shown that the book evokes the readers' emotional responses (aesthetic reading) but does not contribute to the readers' knowledge and understanding of ecological issues depicted in the book (p. 180). Monhardt et al. argue that even though attitudes of caring are beneficial for students to develop, the focus should be on developing critical thinking skills and not solely on emotions. Rule and Atkinson (1994) also focus on the young reader's emotional link with literary texts

and suggests that children's fiction about environmental issues should inform readers that they are part of the solution, but without "overwhelming them with doom and gloom" (p. 587). I argue that children's magic realist literature balances between being informative (but not overly didactic) and emotionally engaging (but not mindlessly sentimental) and that it seems to solve the educational issues highlighted by Rule and Atkinson, Meyer, Monhardt and Christenson.

Environmental discourse in children's literature comprises several themes. Among the central ones are water and air pollution, declining animal species, deforestation etc. The representation of trees is particularly important in my study as a tree-character features in my case study text *A Monster Calls* and is essential for the investigation of nature-human relationships depicted in the novel.

Ecocritical scholarship in children's literature depicting trees focuses predominantly on environmentally oriented picturebooks such as, for example, Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree* (1964), Dana Lyons' *The Tree* (2002), or Dr Seuss's *The Lorax* (1971) examined by Lisa Lebdushka in "Rethinking Human Need: Seuss's *The Lorax*" (1994). Lebdushka discusses the tensions around *The Lorax*' "anti-logging message" and its exclusion by schools. Nathalie op de Beeck in her "Speaking for the Trees: Environmental Ethics in the Rhetoric and Production of Picture Books" (2005) focuses mainly on the issue of materiality of environmental picturebooks and the contradictions between literary and material messages. Albeit in different contexts, both de Beek and Lebdushka note the patronizing adult authority in producing environmental literature for children. Clare Echterling (2016) argues that children's environmental picturebooks over-simplify environmental crises by focusing mainly on depicting deforestation or overconsumption and should instead, according to her view, "inform readers about the larger political and economic issues and place a strong emphasis on environmental justice" (p. 283). Echterling criticizes the common assumption that the reader is "incapable of grasping the temporal, geographical, political, economic, and cultural complexities wrapped up in climate change" (p. 286). Similarly, in "Children's environmental literature: from ecocriticism to ecopedagogy" (2009), Greta Gaard criticizes the simplistic way of conveying environmental messages through children's picturebooks. Gaard's view is illustrated particularly clearly in her detailed discussion

of the final scene in Lyons' *The Tree* where she argues that "[h]and-holding around a tree is a last-ditch strategy for stopping bulldozers, when what is needed is a cultural and economic reevaluation of human-nature interdependence" (p. 330). Both Echterling and Gaard raise the important issue of not underestimating the abilities of the child-reader to acquire an environmental mind-set without overt didacticism.

Different theoretical approaches, such as eco-criticism, eco-feminism, and posthumanism, have been used in studies on the representation of natural environment in children's literature. Karen Welberry's collection of essays *Wild Things: Children's Culture and Eco-Criticism* (2004) takes an eco-critical lens to examine the ways in which literature and media for young people address nature and ecology. Alice Curry's *Environmental Crisis in Young Adult Fiction* (2013) applies an eco-feminist theory to explore dystopian, post-apocalyptic young adult fiction representing environmental crisis and its consequences. Balaka Basu's et al. *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults* (2013) examines how young adult dystopian fiction engages with representing global concerns, dedicating one of the chapters to "eco-dystopias and post-apocalyptic texts" (p. 10). Zoe Jaques's *Children's Literature and the Posthuman* (2015) provides posthumanist readings of children's literature in order to explore the role of children's fiction in the debates about what it means to be human and what human relationships to animals and the natural world are. These studies offer insightful and different explorations of the representation of the environment in children's literature. However, all these scholars take a *human-centered perspective* in their examination of how nature is represented in children's fiction. The educational value of *non-human perspectives* in narrating environmental issues in children's literature and how it may contribute to critical GCE has remained underexplored. I study children's literature in an educational context and apply non-anthropocentric theories such as eco-philosophy and holistic ecology in my exploration of the representation of the natural environment in children's literature.

In eco-dystopian narratives, humans are often portrayed as the cause of environmental degradation, and they try to escape the dangers of natural catastrophes. Such eco-dystopias are exemplified in novels such as Saci Lloyd's *The Carbon Diaries* (2012), Julie Bertagna's *Exodus* (2002), Paolo Bacigalupi's *Ship Breaker* (2010) and share the common feature of

“balance[ing] didacticism with pleasure” (Basu et al., 2013, p. 2). These environmental dystopias envision a world in environmental ruins where young protagonists need to adapt and survive. Nature is portrayed as either controlled by humans or as a source of danger, thus placing humans on the opposite side of nature. The hierarchy in the relationship between the human and the environment are also explored by Jaques who categorizes anthropomorphized trees in children’s fiction as either servants to humans or as aggressors. According to Jaques even sentimental images of the “tree-as-friend” and the “animal-as-pet” (p. 112), “encourage an attitude of stewardship” and consequently naturalize a hierarchy of humanity over nature (p. 115).

Acknowledging the domination of an anthropocentric (human-centric) perspective on environmental issues in children’s environmental narratives, I argue that anthropocentrism always implies didactic messages of how to preserve, protect, treat or escape nature. From a human-centric perspective, nature is always a passive object or an uncontrollable force. I suggest that the non-anthropocentric perspectives employed in the magic realist children’s novels in my study undermine the implied hierarchy of humanity over nature, suggesting instead the interaction, interconnectedness and interdependence of the two. I will now outline in more detail the debates around eco-centric and human-centric worldviews in environmental ethics and its relation to education.

Drawing on eco-centric theories (such as eco-philosophy and holistic ecology which view the human and the natural environment as interdependent and having an equal value), I explore how the magic realist children’s texts *A Monster Calls*, *Eva* and *The Midnight Zoo* represent environmental issues through fictional non-human perspectives of an animal, a tree and an animal-human cyborg. The non-human characters are depicted not only as equal to human characters, but are also interconnected and interdependent. Set in a dystopian future, *Eva* features the hybrid that results from an experimental surgery when a girl’s brain is transplanted into the body of a chimp. Eva is then taken to the research center. Scientific experimentation on animals is shown from the non-human point of view of Eva-the-chimp. Thus, the reader is positioned to see environmental issues from a non-anthropocentric perspective. Similarly, in *The Midnight Zoo*, the stories of the animal genocide are told by the anthropomorphic animals in an abandoned zoo. The reader is

exposed to the mistreatment of the non-human others (in this novel, the Roma children and the animals) from the point of view of the animals. In *A Monster Calls*, the magical tree tells a boy complex philosophical stories about nature-human relationships and the danger of losing contact with nature. These novels allow the reader to adopt a non-human gaze and see environmental issues from a non-human point of view. I will explain later in this section how the narratives employing non-human perspectives are less didactic. I argue that by challenging customary anthropocentric frames of representing the environment, these children's texts encourage the reader to develop environmental thinking and contribute to children's environmental education.

Such an eco-centric holistic approach to environmental education has been suggested by the Swedish International Centre for Sustainable Development (SWEDESD) in *Teacher Education Manual: The Parts and The Whole: A Holistic Approach to Environmental and Sustainability Education* (2012). The argument put forth in this material is that we need "to find new innovative ways to vitalize and deepen the insight of our society's connectedness to nature and its absolute dependency on continuous ecosystem services" (Brunner & Urenje, 2012, p. 7). A transformative model of environmental education has also been outlined by Molina-Motos (2019). However, the most influential environmental philosophies are land ethics (eco-ethics), theorized by Aldo Leopold (1949), and deep ecology (eco-philosophy) developed by Arne Naess (1973). Both of these approaches contain an important pedagogical dimension, which promote responsibility for actions towards the environment and interdependence of human and non-human species. Eco-centric perspective in environmental education resonates with GCE goals to develop a sense of individual ethical responsibility in relation to the environment, encourage active and engaged critical thinking, and introduce a complex ethical dimension in the relationship between humanity and nature. In the section that follows, I introduce the main critical debates concerning eco-centric approaches to environmental issues in education, and explain how the children's novels in my selection contribute to the development of ecological thinking and an environmental mind-set.

Eco-centrism and environmental ethics

The issue of eco-centrism is central to contemporary debates on how to approach global environmental issues. The concept of the Anthropocene – “an epoch of the natural history of the Earth, driven by humankind” (Steffen, et al., 2011, p. 843) – has been challenged by scholars and philosophers whose main concern is an erroneous (according to them) human-centric approach to nature. A Pulitzer Prize-winning author and world-renowned biologist Edward O. Wilson states that “[l]ike most mistaken philosophies, the Anthropocene worldview is largely a product of well-intentioned ignorance” (2016, p. 83). Wilson suggests that we need to see the world as an ecosystem and accept that we remain largely dependent on other non-human organisms (2016, p. 12). In her non-anthropocentric philosophy Donna Haraway goes even further promoting a necessary transition from Anthropocene to *Chthulucene*⁸, the imaginary era of diverse earth-wide “multispecies assemblages” grounded on the ties between the species which will lead to their flourishing and will include more-than-human, other-than-human, inhuman and human (2015, p. 160). Haraway’s philosophy reflects Naess’s eco-philosophy, and aims at diminishing the human ego and integrating the human and the non-human world, defined as “Self-realization” (Naess, 1995, p. 80). Naess’s and Haraway’s environmentally ethical thinking beyond humanity is central to my exploration of *The Midnight Zoo* and *A Monster Calls* as a means for children’s environmental education. The educational value of eco-philosophy for me is its aspiration to encourage environmental consciousness rather than providing an instructional set of actions towards natural environment. Eco-philosophy’s pursuit of environmental values resonates with my argument about value-based non-didactic environmental education. The ethical dimension of an eco-centric worldview however has triggered critical debates in Environmental ethics and has questioned the possibility of going beyond the limits of anthropocentrism.

Environmental ethics is the part of environmental philosophy which considers extending the traditional boundaries of ethics from solely

⁸ The term *Chthulucene* was theorized and coined by Haraway in *Stay with the trouble* (2016).

including humans to including the non-human world. An important contribution about the nature-human relationships can be found in the work of Alasdair Cochrane (2006). Cochrane outlines two main value systems in environmental ethics based on the following theoretical perspectives: an Anthropocentric (human-centered) and an Ecocentric (exemplified in holistic and deep ecology views). He argues that an anthropocentric ethics, despite being dominating in the field, has become the object of critique by many scholars. The critique of anthropocentric ethics is that ethics must be extended beyond humanity, and that moral value should be accorded to the non-human natural world. A number of scholars have argued that in order to understand what it means to be environmentally ethical and moral we need to learn to go beyond our human-centered viewpoint. In *World Ethics* (2007), Nigel Dower explores the moral responsibility in human-nature relationships and argues that “[m]ost ethical theories which have been dominant in the Western tradition have been human-oriented or anthropocentric. They have assumed that morality is about the relationships human beings have with each other, and that it is human beings who are the bearers of moral value” (Dower, 2007, p. 173). Dower identifies the problem with humans’ supposedly caring attitude to nature to the fact that humans see the importance of preserving nature only because nature is useful for humans.

The one-sided relationship of humans with nature makes environmental ethics inevitably human-oriented, a position that has been challenged by a number of critics. In “Mandatory non-anthropocentrism” (2013), for instance, Jason Dockstader argues that being environmentally ethical equals holding the non-anthropocentric view (p. 157) in order to be able to go beyond traditional boundaries of human-centered ethics. Andrew Brennan and Yeuk-Sze Lo also argue against human superiority over other living beings:

When environmental ethics emerged as a new sub-discipline of philosophy in the early 1970s, it did so by posing a challenge to traditional anthropocentrism. In the first place, it questioned the assumed moral superiority of human beings to members of other species on earth. In the second place, it investigated the possibility of rational arguments for assigning intrinsic value to the natural environment and its nonhuman contents. (Brennan & Lo, 2016)

Dockstader (2013) and Brennan and Lo (2016) claim the importance of the alternative to a human-centered perspective for acquiring an environmentally ethical position, but none of them suggests how this alternative perspective can be achieved in environmental education. I suggest that the non-human perspectives employed in magic realist children's literature may become an educational tool for creating such a viewpoint. Naess's eco-philosophy is one of the environmental philosophical approaches which I have chosen as a lens to examine Sonya Hartnett's *The Midnight Zoo*. I adopt Naess's eco-philosophical approach, which enables me to examine how Hartnett goes beyond metaphorical animal imagery to challenge the speciesist, animal-human hierarchies, something that is essential in order to develop environmentally ethical attitudes. Hartnett's novel primarily takes place in a magical setting where the animals and the children share stories about their persecution by the Nazi during the World War II. The magic realist setting is the site where there is power balance in human-animal relationships: neither is dominant or subordinate.

The non-didactic approach to education concerns in the first place the tendency to move away from teaching fixed attitudes based on simplistic binary categories of good and bad, right and wrong. GCE promotes dynamic attitudes to fixed views and promotes a critical assessment of the issues of ethical responsibility (UNESCO, 2015, p. 31). However, in environmental education the binary concepts often take place in discussions on what is good for nature and what is harmful, what is sustainable (right) and unsustainable (not right). Environmental ethics addresses these challenges and asks what is moral and immoral, right and wrong, good and bad in the context of humanity's attitude to the natural environment. In his work, Des Jardins ties together philosophy and environmental ethics, and emphasizes the need to address philosophical questions in developing students' own environmental and ecological positions (2013, p. xiv). His view on the inseparability of fundamental ethical and philosophical issues is even more relevant for children's environmental education where children are often educated about 'the right way' to treat nature.

In children's education, the challenging aspects of environmental ethics is that ethics addresses the binary concepts of what is ethically

acceptable or unacceptable for children. This duality is challenging in the context of contemporary approaches to GCE and an environmental education that aims at developing critical thinking and multiple perspectives in young learners. In *A Theory of Justice* (2009), Rawls defines the two main concepts of ethics as “those of the right and the good” and states that the structure of an ethical theory is “largely determined by how it defines and connects these two basic notions” (p. 21). When it concerns the environmental ethics that studies the moral relation of human beings and the environment, the main concepts identified by Rawls become problematic since what is right or good for humans is not always right or good for the environment, and the other way round. Environmental ethics addresses these challenges by establishing that humans are part of both a human society as well as of a community of all other living creatures (plants and animals).

Given the complexity of the relationships between humans and the environment, namely human domination over the natural environment and other living beings, environmental ethics in children’s environmental education has to deal with a number of problematic questions. One such question is how to present to children – without being heavily didactic – the main ethical concepts of what is right and good in relation to nature (following Rawls’ terminology) or, in other words, a proper way to treat nature. Acknowledging the issue of didacticism, my study explores ways in which an environmentally ethical position can be conveyed to young readers without moralizing. For instance, by showcasing environmental issues from the perspective of a tree character in *A Monster Calls*, the non-anthropocentric narrative challenges the simplistic duality of right and the wrong in human attitudes to nature, and implicitly guides the reader to what Dockstader (2013) and Brennan and Lo (2016) might call an environmentally ethical position.

However, I would not like to suggest that any tree narrator or tree protagonist can be employed for the same purpose. The uniqueness of the tree character in *A Monster Calls* is in its characterization as being powerful and at the same time empowered by the human characters in the novel, whereas many fantasy and magic realist novels depict anthropomorphized trees as either evil or benevolent, despite their relations with human characters.

The examples of such tree characters are the ancient Treebeard and the Ents in J. R. R. Tolkien's fantasy trilogy *The Lord of the Rings* (1954/2012) that are powerful tree-like beings. Another example of a tree with magical powers is the violent whomping willow in J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. The willow guards the secret passage by attacking with its powerful branches. In Frances Hardinge's magic realist children's novel *The Lie Tree* (2015), a supernatural tree has magical powers to make real the human lies. Lyndsay Edgar's *The Hour of the Bees* (2016) also features a magical tree gifting humans with immortality. None of these narratives depict the plot from the perspective of the tree character as central and neither of these trees cooperate with humans. Even the benevolent trees in *The Lord of the Rings* are independent from the human characters. What is more, most of the novels' trees fit into Jaques's categories of trees being either humans' servants or aggressors (2015), which suggest the disconnection between the trees and the humans in such narratives.

The tree in *A Monster Calls* exists outside the simple categories of anthropomorphized trees that are common in children's literature. I argue that the tree represented in the novel is more than a tree; it is depicted as an embodiment of a nature-human bond, something that empowers humans. At the same time, the relationship with humans empowers the tree to express its agency as a monster, a violent destroyer, a magical remedy, and a wise storyteller. An understanding of this interdependence encourages the reader to adopt environmental awareness. I suggest that by representing nature-human interconnectedness and interdependence, this novel guides young learners to the perception of humanity as inseparable from nature and empowered by it.

The interconnectedness of humans and nature is the subject of environmental philosophy and ethics. Des Jardins's (2013) position that environmental ethics should not be separated from environmental philosophy in education is one of the ways to approach the challenges of teaching children complex ethical issues regarding the environment. I argue that children's literature can provide a philosophical as well as an informative context for children to understand these important environmental issues. Acknowledging Des Jardins's argument on the importance of environmental philosophy, I argue that Peter Dickinson's *Eva* is a

perfect example of the environmentally philosophical novel. It is concerned with the natural environment and the human place in it, and addresses complex environmental issues such as human research on animals, body integrity, treatment of otherness, human-animal hierarchies. Importantly all of these issues are shown from the perspective of an animal-human cyborg.

I have defined the protagonist of *Eva* as a cyborg, that is, a hybrid animal-human creature. I draw on Donna Haraway's philosophical concept of a cyborg theorized in *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1985/2006), and propose that *Eva*-the-cyborg goes beyond human boundaries and represents environmental issues from a non-anthropocentric perspective. It is important to note that this novel was published several decades earlier than the two other case-study novels. However, the issues raised in it, such as environmental degradation, ethical concerns regarding research on animals and animal-human relationships, are ahead of its time. Dickinson's contribution was recognized twenty years after the book's initial release. *Eva* won the 2008 Phoenix Award from the Children's Literature Association as the best English-language children's book that did not win a major award when it was originally published twenty years earlier. In his acceptance speech Dickinson noted that after years of speaking to and corresponding with readers, he was astonished to find that it was eligible for the award. *Eva* has been so widely used in children's education about animal rights that Dickinson even published a comment on the use of his novel in the classroom to the effect that he never intended to write a novel in order to teach about animal rights and other deep environmental themes. He published a response to a professor, with 2001 copyright date, "A Letter in Response to an Article About Teaching *Eva*":

In some ways the naïve reader – the one who simply reacts to it as “enjoyable” or “awful” – can seem nearer to me than the sophisticated and thoughtful reader, because he/she is doing no more than experiencing the book by re-imagining my invention, in something like the manner in which I imagined it in the first place. (Dickinson, 2001)

I suggest that the paradox of Dickinson's *unintentional* focus on animal rights followed by critical attention to this novel for *promoting* animal

rights constitutes the non-didactic capacity of the novel to tackle animal rights issues. Dickinson's naïve reader may enjoy or dislike the novel and not be aware of any environmental themes. However, *Eva* informs the reader implicitly about the complexity of an ethical treatment of the other, be it an animal or a human. In my opinion this implicit (unintentional) environmental message – although publicly rejected by Dickinson – is *Eva*'s contribution to children's environmental education beyond didacticism.

By shifting the reader's perspective beyond anthropocentric framings, and focusing on animal issues and the environmental challenges with the help of a non-human lens, the novels in my study encourage the reader's "mandatory non-anthropocentrism" (Dockstader, 2013). By questioning the assumed moral superiority of humans over other species – a crucial question of environmental ethics philosophy highlighted by Brennan and Lo (2016) – these novels assign intrinsic value to the natural environment and animals. Furthermore, the novels construct parallels between the experiences and lives of the animals and the humans, and problematize the notion of human interference with nature beyond anthropocentrism, the novels stimulate a critical understanding of global issues. The child-reader is offered environmental issues from a non-human, fictional: the animal, the tree, and the cyborg. Humans' interaction with the environment is represented through a non-human lens.

It has been argued by children's literature scholars that anthropomorphized animals are often used as a tool to teach the child-reader moral lessons (Cosslett, 2017) and are therefore concerned with the human issues for which animals metaphorically stand (Keen, 2011). In her essay "The Rights and Wrongs of Anthropomorphism in Picture Books" (2014), Lisa Rowe Fraustino explores an ethical spectrum of anthropomorphism in children's literature and how it "affects our relationship with—and impact on—the natural world" (2014, p. 146). Fraustino suggests that "anthropomorphism uses conceptual metaphor in ways that often do obfuscate problematic attitudes toward ourselves and nonhuman Others" (p. 146). Her concern is with the assumption that anthropomorphism is accepted without question as an appropriate and desirable technique for teaching children the correct way to be human (p. 145). She provides a useful starting point for thinking about the various ways

anthropomorphic animals are used to represent ethical dimensions in children's books.

The prime example of such a narrative is Anna Sewell's best-selling novel *Black Beauty* (1877). This story is narrated in the first person as an autobiographical memoir told by a horse. The didactic purpose of this book to teach animal welfare was admitted by Sewell who stated that she wanted "to encourage greater understanding and kindness towards horses" (Chitty, 1971, p. 174). Despite the text's explicit message to improve the treatment of horses, many critics refer to the novel as a slave narrative and examine the similarities in depictions of cruelty towards both animals and slaves (Ferguson, 1994; Cosslett, 2017; Stoneley, 1999; Blossom, 2008). The environmentally ethical dimension in such cases is limited to a human-centered position, even though the animals are given voice. Even empathetic narratives that feature anthropomorphized animals (such as *Black Beauty*) either imply human suffering humans (for which the animals stand), or deliver a straightforward message on how to treat animals properly. Either way the message is didactic.

By contrast, the non-didactic environmental pedagogy of the novels in my study is achieved by shifting the reader's perspective beyond the human-centric position. In *The Midnight Zoo*, non-human characters are placed on equal footing with humans. The children and the anthropomorphized animals suffer from the consequences of the Nazi persecution, they are separated from their families, and both children and animals are victims of war. The fact that the animals and the children speak the same language erases the boundaries between human and animal. This communication creates a shared space between the humans and the animals which is in line with environmental ethics philosophy. The animals in *The Midnight Zoo* differ from anthropomorphized characters theorized by Fraustino as "stand-ins for humans" often employed by authors "to disguise didactic messages" (2014, p. 148).

In *The Midnight Zoo* the reader is encouraged to empathize with both the animals and the children simultaneously. The animals in *The Midnight Zoo* symbolize the victims of the Nazi genocide, and at the same time, the animals inform the reader about the humans' destructive actions towards animals. A recent example of a narrative where animals are used as a lens for representing both animal and human issues is Ceridwen Dovey's experimental novel for adults *Only the Animals* (2014) comprising ten

short stories. Each story is narrated by the soul of a dead animal killed in a certain historic incident of human mass extermination. In one of the stories, a mussel tells the story of its death during the bombings in the Pearl Harbour. Another story is narrated by an elephant, which died in the 1987 Mozambique civil war. A dog shares a story about its life and death in Nazi Germany. A bear recollects its death during the Bosnia-Herzegovina conflict. The animals are (first person) narrators of 20th century human wars and catastrophes, but their perspectives also illuminate the history of human relationships with animals. Each animal's monologue is a tragic story of its life and consequent death by humans: the cat narrates the memories of its owner in Paris and then its death on the Western Front, a dolphin dies in the Iraq conflict, a tortoise remembers being adopted by Leo Tolstoy and then becoming a pet of Virginia Woolf in London.

Dovey explains her choice to retell the history of human catastrophes from the point of view of voiceless animals “to shock readers into radical empathy” (Dovey quoted in Brown 2015, p. 1) because, according to Dovey, reading through the animals guides readers to an understanding of what it means to be a good human being. Dovey's approach to the use of animal metaphors is even more relevant for children's fiction that represent global issues to the young reader. I argue that *The Midnight Zoo* effectively uses animal metaphors in order to depict the unspeakable proportions of World War II and animal extermination and – if not necessarily shocking the reader into radical empathy as *Only the Animals* does – guides the young reader towards an empathetic mind-set.

Unlike *Only the Animals* where the events are shown solely through an animal perspective, *The Midnight Zoo* employs both human and animal perspectives on the war. Just as in Dovey's novel, the zoo is used as a setting paradoxically manifesting both human cruelty and human empathy. The caged bear in *Only the Animals* survives starvation only due to soldiers who feed it. Similarly, *The Midnight Zoo* animals are saved by the children who share food and attempt to open the cages at risk of their own lives. The humans' readiness to sacrifice their lives for the animals suggests that animal lives have equal value. A place of animal imprisonment and suffering, the zoo becomes a setting for an animal-human alliance. At the same time, I suggest in my study that the zoo depicted in the World War II-setting metaphorically stands for

concentration camps where humans were caged and exterminated like animals. By constructing these complex parallels between the animals and the humans, novels such as *Only the Animals* and *The Midnight Zoo* stimulate empathy to animals and humans without separating the two and by doing so guide the reader towards environmental thinking.

Whereas animal perspectives are used to show both animal and human issues in *The Midnight Zoo* and *Only the Animals*, *Eva*'s narrative goes beyond an animal lens and represents the events from a hybrid human-animal perspective. Rather than showing equally important human and non-human perspectives, in *Eva* the two are merged into one. When the girl protagonist is merged with the chimp, the character of Eva may be perceived as an anthropomorphized animal as well as an animalized human. Through a non-human perspective, *Eva* explicitly demonstrates how chimps are treated in research centers as research materials, but at the same time, since the girl's mind has been placed in the chimp, the novel problematizes human-animal relationships. The treatment of Eva as the other occasions an inversion of the animal-human roles. In this novel the human among the animals becomes the other. This problematized ethics of the integrity of a human individual invites the reader to reflect on human relationships with nature and animals.

Crossing boundaries with non-anthropocentric perspectives

Anthropomorphism in *The Midnight Zoo* and *Eva* shifts the status of the animal as *the observed*, passive and powerless (Berger, 2007) to *the observing*. By letting the reader observe along with the animal, it allows the reader to see the world in a new way. The animals in *The Midnight Zoo* watch humans exterminate other humans (and animals) in World War II. The chimp Kelly in *Eva* is anthropomorphized by the human mind implanted inside the body of an animal. In both cases, the (non-human) animal perspective is speculatively applied. In *A Monster Calls*, the future of humanity without nature is narrated by the tree. When the reader observes from a non-human perspective the humans' actions towards animals and other humans, the perception of these actions by the reader

is different from reading about the actions in a descriptive narrative. The moral dimension of these actions is no longer based on human-centered values. The binary categories, where what is human is opposed to everything non-human, are disrupted by the magic realist narratives.

Cooper (2012) discusses how magic realism “strives, with greater or lesser success, to capture the paradox of the unity of opposites; it contests polarities such as history versus magic, [...] life versus death” (p.1). Continuing Cooper’s line of argument, the magic realism of the studied novels contest polarities such as human versus animal, human versus plant, human versus the other, humanity versus nature. Cooper defines the perspective beyond the polarities as “seeing with a third eye” and suggests that “[c]apturing such boundaries between spaces is to exist in a third space” (p. 1). The disruption of seemingly polar concepts, common in magic realist narratives, is also true in speculative fiction. In *Eva* the reader literally sees the events with a “third eye” which is neither human nor animal; rather, it is the hybrid perspective of an animal-human cyborg.

I contend that such inverted perspectives, have educational value. Two magic realist novels *The Midnight Zoo* and *A Monster Calls* and one speculative novel, *Eva*, provide the reader with the possibility to take a non-anthropocentric view on the environment. This is essential for developing environmentally ethical attitudes according to critics such as Dockstader (2013), and Brennan and Lo (2016). This third space, as defined by Cooper, is the space where the reader’s critical reflection is stimulated. This space of disrupted polarities is where the reader is encouraged to empathize with animals by empathizing with human characters, and the other way round, without making a difference between the two. Naess defines this as an eco-philosophical standpoint. I would argue that this implicit quality is what makes the text non-didactic. Such children’s literature can become effective carriers of environmental education. The text becomes a classroom in its own right.

I suggest that experiencing the non-anthropocentric perspective becomes acceptable by the reader when the boundaries between human and non-human are blurred. Animals represent human issues and humans represent animal issues as well as animals stand for actual animals. The novels in my study transgress “easy anthropomorphism” (Mills, 2014, p. 9) in children’s literature when animal characters are used to teach human

issues to children. In *Eva* the human protagonist is “animalized” but not in a metaphorical way as in *The Midnight Zoo*. The girl is physically animalized which offers the young reader a literal shift from a human to a non-human perspective, something that is created by placing a human mind inside a chimp’s body. The protagonist describes herself as “trapped in this strange hairy place” (p. 56). *Eva* speculates about exposing the animal world from the inside of an actual animal. Dickinson’s novel provocatively questions whether the power of over nature and animals really is ethical if the boundaries between humans and nature are not clearly defined. In *A Monster Calls*, the child protagonist merges with the monster tree and both entities become empowered by the synergy.

In *Ethical Literacies and Education for Sustainable Development* (2017), Olof Franck and Christina Osbeck explore education for sustainable development through the lens of ethical literacy. Drawing on Martha Nussbaum’s idea that fiction reading can be a good substitute for experiences that we lack (2008, p. 145), Osbeck discusses the discourses of sustainable lives offered through fiction:

By showing the scenarios that are not present in everyday life, fiction challenges our existential understanding so that new visions, hopes, possibilities and beliefs will take shape and in that sense have an impact on our ongoing re-creation of reality. (2017, p. 58)

Expanding Osbeck’s view, as shown in my case-studies, magic realist fiction engages readers with scenarios which not only are absent in their everyday life, but cannot possibly occur: such as experiencing life beyond the human, or looking at the world through the eyes of an animal or a tree. Such simulated experiences are common in magic realist narratives, however (Arva, 2008). *The Midnight Zoo* and *A Monster Calls* represent the events from the perspectives of non-human characters as well as of human characters and expose the reader to both human issues and environmental issues simultaneously. In *The Midnight Zoo*, it is *the animals* that tell about “burning crops, souring water, barricading roads, destroying firewood” and other horrors of the war (Hartnett, p. 62). In *A Monster Calls* it is *the tree* that narrates the story about how “[t]rees fell, fields were up-ended, rivers blackened. The sky choked on smoke and ash, and the people did, too, spending their days coughing and itching,

their eyes turned forever towards the ground” (Ness, 2011, p. 109). In *Eva*, it is through Eva-the-chimp that the reader’s sees the mistreatment of the animals and the destruction of the natural environment.

In these novels, the non-human characters observe the human destruction of the natural world. In so doing they turn the human-non-human hierarchical order on its head. As John Berger points out in his philosophical essay “Why Look at Animals?” (1980/2007) observation is both about power, knowledge, and separation:

In the accompanying ideology, animals are always the observed. The fact that they can observe us lost all significance. They are the objects of our ever-extending knowledge. What we know about them is an index of our power and thus an index of what separates us from them. The more we know the further away they are. (p. 257)

Berger raises an important point about the subjectivity of looking at the other. The ‘observed’ in Berger’s sense is always a passive disempowered object whereas the ‘observing’ is an empowered and active subject. Berger illustrates his view by a detailed discussion of how the zoo distorts the image of animals turning them into objects: a place where a variety of animal species is collected to “be seen, observed, studied” (p. 260). He draws parallels between the zoo visitors to the ones visiting an art gallery, moving from cage to cage as from painting to painting, looking at marginalized animals as static objects where it is impossible to encounter a reciprocal look of an animal as “the animal’s gaze flickers and passes on. They look sideways. They look blindly beyond. They look sideways” (p. 261). Berger calls the zoo a monument to isolation, and compares zoos with “other sites of enforced marginalisation” (p. 261) such as ghettos, prisons, concentration camps. Berger’s critique of the zoo is central to my discussion of *The Midnight Zoo*. Even though *The Midnight Zoo* uses the same metaphor as Berger uses (the concentration camp), Hartnett depicts a different kind of a zoo from the one Berger describes. In *The Midnight Zoo*, the animals *look back* at the humans; the animal perspective is as important as the human one. For instance, the role of the gaze is crucial in the episode where Andrej overcomes his fear and approaches the lioness, holding his baby sister close to the cage:

He lifted his head, and his gaze circles the iron-bar wall of the zoo. The animals were watching him, tense and unmoving. Andrej stared back at them feeling suddenly mulish, standing his ground [...] [The lioness] watched him step closer, one step, another. A lioness is something distinctly *other* than a boy, but, close now, Andrej saw what it was they shared: a determination to endure. (Hartnett, 2010, p. 174, italics original)

As evidenced in this excerpt, the reciprocal gaze of the child and the animal brings both into proximity with each other. The closeness between the animal and the human is both physical (as Andrej approaches the cage) and mental (as the boy admits shared endurance). By representing the plot from the point of view of a non-human, *The Midnight Zoo* inverts the roles of the powerful (observing) human and the disempowered (observed) nature/animals. In an educational context, this speculative simulation of shifted perspectives also provides the premises for identifying and empathizing with characters representing the other, an unlikely object of empathy otherwise. Research shows that we tend to empathize with someone we identify with and less with the one we consider as other.

In his provocative book *Against Empathy* (2017), Paul Bloom draws on empirical research in psychology and neuroscience and argues that empathy is often directed at someone who is familiar or similar to us rather than different, distant or anonymous. As a consequence, Bloom argues, empathy may become a source of prejudice and the foundation of racism. He illustrates his radical view against empathy in a political context where he explains how empathy may lead to irrational political decisions and makes the case for the value of conscious deliberative reasoning. Bloom's concern of a destructive power of empathy may be addressed in an educational context by providing ways to teach empathy that is non-selective. I contend that the magic realist fiction in my selection develops the reader's ability to empathize with fictional characters that are not necessarily similar or familiar to him/her. In *The Midnight Zoo* the victims of the war are both human children (who the reader supposedly identifies with) and the animals (the other). The shared suffering of both the animals and the children stimulates equal empathy to both. Compassion in relationships between the children and the animals

is illustrated in the episode where Andrej decides to stay in the zoo and take care of the animals: “*Every war is everyone’s war, lioness [...] We’ll stay here and we’ll look after you*” (Hartnett, 2010, p. 191, italics original). The statement “the war is everyone’s” suggests that there is no separation between the human and the animal in the context of war. Similarly, in *Eva* at the beginning of the novel the reader may empathize more with the girl than the chimp, supposedly identifying more with a human character, but when the two merge into one character, the reader’s empathy is expanded. The acquired ability to empathize with someone who is a distant and unfamiliar, fictional other, challenges Bloom’s argument against empathy as something biased and unreliable. I suggest that the novels motivate non-selective empathy, encourage fairness in attitudes. By extension, I question Bloom’s assumption about the impossibility of such empathy.

Non-didactic eco-pedagogy

The non-didacticism of eco-pedagogy has been noted by Misiaszek, the advocate of biocentric approaches to teaching (2016, p. 597). Misiaszek maintains that in eco-pedagogy, the “division between anthropocentric and biocentric framings is not fixed but rather overlapping and interdependent” (2016, p. 602). My case study novels are eco-pedagogical in the sense that they speculate about crossing the human limits and entering the inaccessible non-human. In line with Misiaszek’s definition of eco-pedagogy, the anthropocentric and biocentric perspectives literally overlap in the novels in my study: the fantastical merger of the girl and the chimp in *Eva*, Conor’s physical integration with the tree, the shared space of the children and the animals in *The Midnight Zoo*, and the consequent (even if illusionary) blurring of the boundaries between the two. *Eva* literally removes the division between the anthropocentric (Eva) and the biocentric (Kelly) perspectives. These points of view not only overlap between Eva’s human and non-human selves, but are interdependent to the extent that one cannot exist without the other. The division between these anthropocentric and biocentric perspectives is represented in *The Midnight Zoo* by the physical division of humans and animals by an iron

fence. The cages that separate humans from animals suggest the impossibility of crossing the threshold of anthropocentrism. However, the final scene of magical opening of the cages suggest the possibility of humans' and animals' common space. In *A Monster Calls* the boy protagonist merges with the monster-tree and becomes empowered by its natural forces. All three cases of transgressing the anthropocentric framings (the zoo as shared space, the merger of Eva with the chimp, and Conor with the tree) illustrate Naess's symbiosis of human and non-human species, as well as the principle of nature-human interdependence in holistic ecology.

The novels encourage the reader to reflect on a number of environmental issues: the humans' interference with nature, the issue of the justification of scientific experiments on animals, the philosophical issue of non-human otherness, human domination over nature, and the question of equal value of the human and the non-human. However, none of the novels gives the reader a definitive answer to any of the issues, but instead provides them with dilemmas to reflect upon. In a similar manner magic realist children's novels facilitate education about environment. Open-ended narratives like these provide the reader with a space to develop critical thinking about global issues.

In a classroom setting such novels can be approached with a number of exercises and activities. Students can, for example, create their own alternative endings and share these with the class or predict how the novel would end without reading the final chapter. The educational value of using magic realist novels like these in education is not only dependent on the non-didacticism of open endings (which of course can be found in realist fiction as well), but in a *magic realist* open ending. The magical level of these stories allows the reader to imagine limitless possibilities of how the stories would end. The narratives of the novels in my study provide premises for readers to accept magical endings as well as realist ones. In *A Monster Calls*, the mother's magical existence in afterlife under the protection of the tree is an alternative magic realist ending suggested by the plot. In *The Midnight Zoo*, the miraculous appearance of Alice who opened the cages is as believable as the magical talking animals. However, even Alice's role in the novel as an animals' savior is ambivalent as she was initially the zoo-keeper. The reader has to actively reflect on the characters' ethical dilemmas in order to decide on the

supposedly plausible ending which is not directly suggested by the plot. Interestingly, Hartnett has admitted her deliberate choice to create a plot that involves the reader's active participation:

I write for people who like to think about what they're reading, so I litter the books with falsehoods and unanswered questions and minor suggestions [...] The reader is part of the experience that is a book, and I like the reader to have some input into the creation of the work – to decide what happens in the end, if need be. (*Reading Monthly*, 2009, p. 8)

I suggest that the educational value for GCE of novels like Hartnett's is in the non-didacticism evidenced in stimulating the reader to answer the unanswered questions and contribute to the creation of the story.

In both *Eva* and *The Midnight Zoo* the endings represent moral dilemmas that the characters have to face. For instance, the children encounter zoo animals that they want to release from the cages. But the children's attempt to free them may result in the animals' starvation. The impossibility of the animals to return to their natural environments raises the fundamental ethical point: will human intervention lead to the destruction of nature? The moral dilemma whether the animals should be released from the cages is left unanswered. The children's decision to release the animals from the cages and return them to their natural state, risks killing them since un-adapted animals may not survive in the wilderness. But keeping the animals in the cages in the abandoned zoo will also leave them starving. The novel does not try to suggest any right decision to these complex ethical dilemmas. The open ending suggests that it is the reader who chooses whether the animals and the children will survive or die. In her discussion of environmental dystopias, Elaine Ostry (2013) links the reader's agency with the author's choice of endings: "The amount of despair the books decide to end with depends on where writers place adolescents on the maturity spectrum" (p. 109). Ostry's argument on how endings illustrate the limited (or unlimited) power of readers, reflects, to a certain extent, the issue of learners' agency behind a learner-centered educational philosophy in GCE, which holds that students are active agents of their learning (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking 2000). Ostry suggests that writers' view of adolescent readers as capable to

“handle the despair, but without the assurance of happy ending” implies their limited and undermined agency (p. 109). Hartnett’s choice of an open ending empowers the reader to co-create the plot. As I have argued above, magic realist narrative provides a reflective space for the reader to independently create the meaning, and the reader will decide which outcome to accept.

A similar open choice is given to the reader of *Eva* when the events are seen from the non-human perspective. Eva observes humans, expresses clear judgments about human attitudes to animals, and the cruelty of the experiments. Eva’s perspective reveals the horrors of human research on animals from the point of view of an actual lab animal and at the same time a perspective processed by a human mind. It is up to the reader to choose what is ethically right or wrong in relation to Eva and the chimp. The outcome of the experiment on Eva remains ambivalent to the reader. Much as the reader is encouraged to empathize with a “lonely, frightened and bewildered” Eva (Dickinson, 2008), and criticize the unethical researchers’ actions, the necessity of the intervention with nature is implied. The reader understands that without the experiment the girl’s mind would die. The novel does not suggest a definitive answer to the question whether it is morally right or wrong to interfere with an animal’s body and save Eva at the price of the chimp’s life. Naess, however, has suggested that “[h]umans have no right to interfere destructively with non-human life except for purposes of satisfying vital human needs” (1984, p. 264). Thus, from a non-anthropocentric viewpoint, Kelly’s destruction to maintain Eva’s vital needs is not justified in the novel.

Haraway discusses human interference with nature as an unintentional cooperation and suggests that even an unintentional animal response to human actions makes them active participants of the process:

I (and my machines) use an animal, I am used by an animal (with its attached machine) [...] Nothing is passive to the action of another.
(Haraway, 2007, pp. 262-263)

Haraway’s speculation illuminates the relationship between Eva and Kelly. At first, it may seem that the accident that led to the creation of Eva-the-cyborg and the operation made without Eva’s will make the existence of the new Eva a forced one. However, it becomes apparent that

Eva's 'functionality' would be impossible if any of the parts were unwilling to cooperate. The novel makes vivid ethically complex moral issue of the human domination over animals. At the same time, it suggests an inversion of powers where Kelly's domination over Eva becomes a part of their cooperation. Both of them become equally valuable.

The issue of intrinsic value is explored in *Eva* in the context of the research conducted on animals and whether it can be justified if humans benefit from it. After the surgery, Eva is turned into the research center's property as all other chimps are. Eva's human self is animalized. The result is that her human individuality is diminished, something that justifies treating her as property which can be owned, researched, manipulated and even killed. The novel speculates about the moral issue of Kelly's intrinsic value. At the same time, the novel questions Eva's intrinsic value as she is no longer a human, except as a human mind inside a non-human body. According to Katie McShane, anthropocentrism is the "assumption that human beings and/or their interests matter morally in their own right while everything else matters morally as it affects human beings and/or their interests" (2009, p. 407). Following McShane's definition, Eva's animal self matters morally for the researchers as long as it affects her human self. Brennan and Lo state that from an anthropocentric position, non-human things have no intrinsic value, i.e., value in their own right independently of the prospects for serving others (2016). Eva has no value for the center unless they continue experimenting on her. However, by joining the chimps and escaping in the woods, Eva demonstrates her value as a non-human.

Eva and *The Midnight Zoo* also problematize the view that humanity's first duty is to avoid interference with nature. Michael (2002) challenges the prevailing view "that our primary duty towards environmental wholes is to respect their integrity, stability, and beauty, and that the best way to do that is to leave them alone and not interfere with them" (2002, p. 90). Instead, he suggests that human intervention alternatively can prevent eco-systems from deteriorating and therefore benefit the environment as "[a]ny justification for thinking that interference is always wrong will have to show that it is always harmful" (2002, p. 96). The novels in my study tackle the issue in a non-didactic manner, by speculating about the possibility of humans' interference with nature and the consequences of such actions.

The endings of both *Eva* and *The Midnight Zoo* are ambiguous. Both novels expose the reader to the devastating image of a human world without nature. In the apocalyptic reality of *Eva*, humans' actions have resulted in a self-destroying, suicidal society. The depiction of landscapes intensifies the catastrophic image of the world:

Island off Madagascar. Extinct volcano. Used to be solid forest till it was felled a couple of hundred years ago. Now it's bare rocks, apart from a few pockets of real old trees the loggers couldn't reach. It's no good for tourists, no beaches and hot as hell, with the odd cyclone thrown in in a bad year. (p. 242)

In *The Midnight Zoo*, the annihilated war-torn land is described as “a hard wintry shell of a world, bare of compassion” (p. 173), in which the children and the animals are destined to death. By showing the disastrous consequences of human actions on the environment in *Eva*, and by illustrating the destructive effects of speciesism in *The Midnight Zoo*, these children's texts enable the reader to critically challenge anthropocentrism.

The shared future of humanity and the natural world unite the human and the non-human characters in these two novels. In *The Midnight Zoo* the realistic outcome for both the children and the animals is to remain separated by the iron bars. The narrative suggests that the “[t]hey would not find the keys: the children and the animals knew it” (Hartnett, p. 203). But the magical dimension of the novel allows the reader to see the shared space for both children and the animals surrounded by thriving nature, at “the final edge of life, beyond which there were no walls. The iron bars of the zoo fell away, and in their place forests sighed and sand-dunes shifted, rivers flooded and mighty herd ran” (p. 203). The fall of the iron bars and the walls may be rendered symbolic of the erased boundary between the human and the animal world. Apart from shared suffering, the children and the zoo animals may also share freedom. Describing the paradise with forests, dunes and rivers suggests the global scale of such freedom shared by “the strange party of children and animals” (p. 198). Indicating the strangeness of the children and the animals united suggests the difficulty in achieving a shared sense of unity. And yet this alternative ending encourages the reader to reflect on the possibility of such a unity

between the human and the environment. Whether it was morally right or wrong to open the cages, is a question without an answer, given that the reader is informed about the unpreparedness of the animals to survive in the wild. The ambivalent ending lets the readers decide for themselves. The ambiguity of *Eva*'s narrative provides possibilities for teachers to explore what pupils think might be the ending before they finish reading the whole text, thus encouraging them to co-author the plot. Research on the use of *Eva* in the classroom reveals the potential of engaging students in the prediction of how the text is likely to proceed or conclude, without giving the students correct answers, "but as the text unfolds they [students] will be encouraged to revise those predictions in the light of new evidence" (Dean, 2013, p. 107). The non-didactic dimension of this classroom activity is that in the end the students do not receive the definitive conclusion or the right answer, only information to reflect on.

The educational value of *Eva*, *The Midnight Zoo* and *A Monster Calls*, and similar novels, for critical GCE lies in their non-didactic capacity to encourage the reader to step back and think about how they value their own relationship to nature. It also allows readers to evaluate the reasoning and justification behind human actions towards animals and the environment, rather than imparting to the child-reader a simplistic environmental message of how to treat nature. The novels illuminate environmental issues such as intrinsic value, interference with nature, human responsibility, and moral choices. The narratives problematize the concept of interference by representing both its destructive effects on the environment and, at the same time, the potential for cooperation with nature. *Eva* illustrates the destructive effects of humans' interference with nature, and at the same time speculates about nature-human mutual interference on the deepest level imagined: a human merges with an animal body and tries to control nature from the inside of that body. The failure of *Eva*'s symbiosis with Kelly demonstrates the detrimental effects of such an attempt to control nature, but *Eva*'s acceptance of Kelly demonstrates the other dimension of this interference: cooperation. In *The Midnight Zoo* human interference in nature results in animals' tragic dependence on humans and their inability to return to their natural habitat. But at the same time, the children's interference in the zoo results in (speculative) opening of the cages. In *A Monster Calls*, Conor's interference with the monster-tree helps him explore the powers of nature even

though this exploration leads to the painful realization of the inevitable loss of his mother. The novel reflects a philosophy of holistic ecology, which suggests that humans and nature exist as a whole. It shows nature-human interconnectedness in the relationships between the tree and the human characters outside a structure where humans dominate nature. The characters' interdependence suggests that both humans and non-humans are in equal need of each other, challenging the human-centered position that protects and promotes human interests and well-being at the expense of nature. By illustrating complex relationships between Eva and Kelly, Conor and the monster-tree, the Roma children and the zoo animals, the novels empower the learners to become active and thoughtful critical readers aware of the controversies of environmental issues.

In this section I have demonstrated how my case study novels contribute to environmental education by representing environmental issues from non-human perspectives. In *Global Learning in the 21st Century* (2016), Barkatsas and Bertram suggest that in a century of increasing globalization and diversity “the capacity for empathy and compassion is essential for social cohesion and inclusivity” and that such a capacity may be achieved through thoughtful, purposeful reading of literary texts which provide “insights into lives beyond the reader’s personal experience” (p. 107). I argue that magic realist children’s texts representing environment from non-human perspectives not only stimulate the reader’s empathy and compassion, but also encourage the reader to explore environmental issues, reflect on challenging philosophical perspectives on the issues of otherness, including animal and humans rights. Addressing philosophical questions of what makes a human human and an animal animal, and blurring boundaries between the two, the novels intertwine environmental ethics and eco-philosophy. They expose the child-reader to these questions, but do not answer them and, by doing so, engage the reader with environmental issues instead of simply narrating them. These texts give the child reader an opportunity to investigate in order to develop a personal environmental standpoint and an environmental consciousness. *Eva*, *The Midnight Zoo* and *A Monster Calls* allow the reader to develop an independent thinking outside fixed attitudes, pursuing (explicitly or implicitly) one of the ultimate goals of environmental education according to GCE.

CONCLUSION

From critical reader to global citizen

The overarching aim of this research project has been to explore the capacity of children's literature to non-didactically facilitate readers' critical understanding of global issues and to show the intersections between critical GCE and critical reading of children's literature. The pedagogical goal is to develop in learners/readers the essential skills of critical engagement and reflexivity. My research has demonstrated the educational value of magic realist children's fiction for critical GCE exemplified in the four case-study novels, *The Midnight Zoo*, *The Book Thief*, *Eva* and *A Monster Calls*, which represent human rights and environmental issues from non-human perspectives in a non-didactic manner. I have exemplified how the magic realist narrative techniques employed in the novels serve to encourage the readers to become active agents of the reading process.

The contribution of my case-studies to non-didactic pedagogy in teaching global issues and the implications for critical GCE shows the educational value of:

1. magic realism;
2. non-human storytelling and non-human perspectives in education;
3. open-ended narratives.

First, the study has shown the pedagogical capacity of the magic realist inverted narratives to provide a reflective space for the reader to critically interpret the plot, and emotionally engage with and gain a deep understanding of the global issues portrayed. Death's storytelling in *The Book Thief* comprises the reversal of the real and surreal, of humans as ghosts, and of life as death. My study has shown how inversion of the reversed

categories facilitates readers' intellectual and emotional engagement with the complex history of World War II and encourages their awareness of human rights issues. The non-human storytelling in *The Midnight Zoo* exposes readers to the concept of otherness and how it underpins the ideology of genocide. The educational value of inversion in magic realism depends on the way it affects readers' knowledge acquisition: when readers mentally reverse back the inverted concepts they acquire knowledge on a deeper level since they are intellectually involved in meaning-making and knowledge formation.

Second, the educational value of the non-human perspectives in the case-study novels, is due to these narratives' capacity to stimulate readers' active learning and critical thinking. *The Book Thief* and *The Midnight Zoo* offer the reader a multiplicity of perspectives that exposes the reader to the history of the Roma and Jewish genocides through the stories narrated by omniscient Death, and by magical talking animals. Through these non-human narrators, the novels give voices to storytellers who were silenced during the war: the Roma, the Jews, the children. *Eva* and *A Monster Calls* represent environmental issues from the perspectives of an animal and a tree, giving voice to nature. My thesis has demonstrated a non-didactic capacity of the magic realist narratives in this study to challenge the reader by questioning: what are the roots of environmental degradation? What are the consequences of killing animals? What are the relationships between humanity and nature? *The Book Thief* and *The Midnight Zoo* raise complicated ethical and philosophical questions: What is the other? What is the human? What is the animal? Who has the right to kill the other? Whose interest counts when it comes to saving species? These implied questions are left unresolved by the novels, and encourage readers to come to their own conclusions. In the process, readers are encouraged to reflect on these questions. This approach fosters readers' critical reflection on environmental and human rights issues in a manner that goes beyond didacticism. The novels represent environmental and human rights issues in a decidedly different way from direct, overt attempts to try to shape children as moral beings. Rather than telling readers how to be environmentally friendly and socially just, these novels create opportunities for the readers to independently analyze diverse concepts of right or wrong in human relationships with nature and with

other humans. The novels highlight an ethical dimension of environmental education, addressing vulnerable topics such as humans' experiments on animals, treating animals as other and inferior, depriving animals of any rights and in parallel treating humans as other and inferior, depriving humans of their human rights.

My case-studies have highlighted how the children's texts facilitate environmental education by illuminating the challenges of environmental ethics, particularly the issues of anthropocentric and biocentric framings, the issue of human (non)interference with nature and the treatment of animals. I have argued that the novels' eco-centric representation of nature-human relationship encourage learners' environmental awareness and deepen their insight into the complexity of nature-human (including animal-human) interconnected relationships. By encouraging non-anthropocentric and non-human perspectives on environmental issues, the magic realist children's novels offer unconventional ways of approaching ethical relationships between humanity and nature.

Thirdly, by providing multiple alternative points of closure, the novels in my study (or similar novels with an open-ended structure) provide a starting point for readers' critical thinking and analysis of the narrative. My study has demonstrated the educational value of open-ended narratives for their capacity to facilitate readers' knowledge in non-didactic ways. The case-studies have demonstrated how open-ended texts can lead to a critical understanding of the global issues portrayed. In magical realism, where the real and the imaginary are inseparable and merge, open-ended narratives create for readers unlimited possibilities for the stories' outcomes. In the context of teaching history, open-endings stimulate readers not only to imagine future outcomes of the fictional past, but also to link it with their non-fictional future and tell their own story of how the world will change.

I venture that other magic realist children's novels, outside the scope of this study, featuring inversions, non-human narrators and an open-ending structure, might have a similar capacity to contribute to critical GCE. One of the examples is David Almond's magic realist children's novel *Skellig* (1998). With its inverted image of an angel character it may be a particularly interesting for examining young reader's understanding of otherness and the mistreatment of others. Non-anglophone children's texts written in the mode of magic realism, which were also beyond the

scope of this study, may also provide insights into how children's texts represent global issues for a non-anglophone readership. Isabelle Allende's young adult magic realist novel *City of the Beasts* (2004) deserves particular attention in critical GCE for its focus on ecological themes, and the issue of the exploitation of the vanishing peoples of the world.

A critical GCE's learner-centered approach and its non-didactic constructionist perspective on learning aligns with critical approaches to children's literature, which in a similar manner, promote a reader-centered approach through non-didactic critical reading. Just as critical GCE encourages learners to become active citizens and critically approach global issues, critical approaches to children's literature imply active and thoughtful child-readers capable of critical interpretation of and reflective responses to literary texts. As a result, the reader negotiates with the text and constructs the knowledge through an individual understanding of the plot.

I want to conclude by arguing that young readers educated towards global citizenship non-didactically through active reading of magic realist children's literature may never define themselves as global citizens and may never even encounter the term, but the values they are encouraged to acquire will determine their actions as independent critical thinkers and responsible members of the global society.

Implications for further research

I believe my research is especially timely in this century which has witnessed a global transformation of education and a rethinking of the roles of both learner and teacher. Moving away from teacher-centred teaching to learner-centred facilitation is the shift that has affected all areas of knowledge. A crucial feature of the 21st century education is the inclination to make use of interdisciplinary approaches to teaching. For instance, a history class may not be the only major source for learning history; or, a historical book selected for a literature class may become a history lesson for a reader in its own right. My study acknowledges these trends in my theoretical exploration of children's literature as a powerful

non-didactic tool for interdisciplinary environmental and human rights education.

While my research is a theoretical study based on an interpretative analysis of the texts and an assumed effect on the child-reader empirical research based on reader-response may allow for more insights into how these and other magic realist children's texts actually affect readers' understanding of GCE issues. Thus, further empirical research could focus on readers' critical and emotional engagement with global themes, with magic realist techniques of inversion and defamiliarization, and how they would grapple with open-ended narratives and non-human storytelling.

Another possibility for further research could be the exploration of the teacher's role as a facilitator in teaching environmental and human rights themes. Classroom studies using the novels from my study or similar novels would help to understand how teachers may support learners by providing thought-provoking tasks and facilitating discussions based on the findings in my theoretical study. My findings can be used to develop exercises, which may facilitate the reader's engagement with texts, such as reflecting on the possible realist and magic realist endings of texts, reversing back the inverted categories typical for magic realist narratives, narrating texts' storylines from multiple human/non-human perspectives of fictional characters etc. This will foreground the development of practical resources to develop readers' critical thinking and critical literacy skills.

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