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Temporal and Spatial Dimensions of Home in Children's Picturebooks about the Refugee Experience

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1. Introduction

Every day, we practice the art of belonging. The ultimate craft of building deep emotional connections with people and places alike, of finding holds amid the everlasting current of change. It is a silent labour, short of guidance, driven by questions rather than by answers, faintly illuminated by a word that is as familiar as it is strange, bittersweet and welcoming on our tongues: *home*. No matter how many hours one is willing to spend chasing it past textbooks and dictionaries, this notion stays just out of reach, notorious in its complexity, and even more so in its uncertainty. There are homes that are built and homes that are imagined. Homes that are as big as countries and as small as closets. Homes shared, homes stolen, homes lost, and homes regained. Among this dizzying variety, there is only one unequivocal feature: no home can exist without a story. Some stories just happen to be longer than others.

Home has become a core notion for forced migration studies. Gupta and Ferguson (2007) refer to the concept of "homeland" as "one of the most powerful unifying symbols for mobile and displaced peoples" (39). Taylor (2009) emphasises the centrality of the concept of home for refugee studies scholars as a powerful tool for accessing the complex emotional processes that refugees go through (Taylor 2-3). Duckels and Jacques (2019) view the journey of a refugee as "one of uprooted personal identity that draws attention to the role of home as a place of social, cultural, and physical embedding" (121). The notion of home, so deeply connected to the notions of identity and belonging, provides a space for conversation between individuals of diverse cultural, educational, and social backgrounds. Home becomes a point of comprehension, curiosity, education, empathy. It has the potential to become a point of change.

A large number of misconceptions surrounding the refugee experience stems from the power politics of space. The problematic of place-making and belonging can be located at the intersection of refugee studies, anthropology, human geography, and (im)mobility studies, as

we observe many overlaps in the research conducted by scholars representing the aforementioned fields. For instance, Witteborn (2011) as well as Brun and Fábos (2015) emphasize the dissonance between the way forced migrants spatially position themselves and the way they are forcibly positioned by society "as a discursive location of transience and difference" (Witteborn 1142). Societal expectations of home and homemaking practices do not align with the ones created in the context of forced migration. In the field of cultural media studies, it has been observed that this gap in understanding and systematic misrepresentation leads to refugees being subjected to what Smets (2019) describes as "affective and symbolic immobility" (650). It does not only affect their quality of life, but causes severe psychological distress and hinders the process of integration. Moreover, the lack of attention to the emotional aspect of the refugee experience as well as to the complexity of temporal and spatial relationships in the context of displacement ultimately leads to reductionism and dehumanisation via the negative portrayal of forced migrants in media (Marie 34). This directly contributes to the construction of refugees as a cultural and legal Other: a narrative of the intrinsic liminality of displaced people.

In literature, such narratives are able to persist relying on numerous tropes and expectations, which govern the way home is portrayed. It is especially applicable to children's picturebooks in which home is predominantly depicted as a "privileged place, exempt from the most serious problems of life and civilization – […] where we ought, on the whole, to stay" (Clausen 143). Its presence in the narrative is close to non-negotiable, its absence is acutely apparent. Furthermore, it implicitly structures the narrative, as can be observed in the home-away-home pattern theorised by Perry Nodelman (2008) and representing "a triumphant confirmation of the virtues of childhood as an enclosing and unchanging space" (67). Built upon Joseph Campbell's monomyth (Nodelman and Reimer 228), home-away-home suggests a circular narrative pattern where the protagonists move from "safe but boring" home to "exciting but dangerous" away

and back home again (Nodelman and Reimer 207). In this case, home is important as the restoration of balance. The problem with the application of this pattern to refugee narratives lies in the lack of clear differentiation between the stages of the journey: home becomes "dangerous", the journey is not "exciting" and being "away" is safer than at "home". Furthermore, the pattern does not reach its circular completion as home is never restored. This leads to the questions that constitute the starting point of this research: what makes an effective representation of the refugee experience within the picturebook format possible? How can the emotional complexity of home in the context of displacement be conveyed via multimodal tools? Most importantly, what analytical frameworks can be applied while approaching picturebooks on the refugee experience, and how existing approaches could be modified with the aim of broadening the conventional understanding of home in the context of displacement?

One of the most important qualities of children's literature is its ability to nurture empathy and encourage diversity by providing a glimpse into a multitude of vastly different experiences in an engaging manner (Hope 298, Lathey 9, Cullingford 205). For instance, as visual narratives, picturebooks are able to implicitly communicate subtle changes in characters' emotional state, reproduce or encourage an immediate affective response, or engage readers in critical thinking by creating dissonance between what is said and what is shown (Painter et al. 15). As a result, such stories are able to convey not only sequences of events but also complex emotional processes that accompany them. For some readers, these narratives represent experiences that they can relate to, for others – vastly different from their own. In both cases, children's literature becomes an invaluable tool for raising awareness of the refugee experience and providing children with a vocabulary for discussing forced migration and displacement, which can directly influence their perception of the issue throughout their lives.

This thesis is comprised of three parts. The following two chapters aim to survey the notion of home as a multidimensional phenomenon and contextualise it in the narratives that represent or

engage with the refugee experience. Overall, *home* is approached as a process "involving acts of imagining, creating, unmaking, changing" (Al-Ali and Koser 6). This way, this paper attempts to make a contribution to a deeper understanding of the role places of dwelling play in the narratives of belonging. The second section deals with the multimodal representation of space and time in children's literature. It explores the ways temporal and spatial dimensions of picturebook narratives are conveyed on both verbal and visual level of the text and addresses possible limitations of the picturebook format in that regard. The third section engages with the primary texts, identifies their key characteristics, and analyses the way home is constructed on the story level and on the level of discourse. The observations fall into three main categories: the construction of home as a temporally and spatially (non-)negotiable place, the articulation of temporal and spatial distance from home, and the problematics of the idea of a completed journey and resettlement.

The main objective of this thesis is to survey the ways in which the topics of war and displacement in children's picturebooks restructure temporal and spatial dimensions of the narrative in relation to its construction of home and homemaking. This is achieved via multimodal analysis of selected children's picturebooks about the refugee experience published in English between 2016 and 2020: *The Journey* (Sanna 2016), *The Day The War Came* (Davies and Cobb 2018), *Story Boat* (Maclear and Kheiriyeh 2020), and *My Name is Not Refugee* (Miln 2017). In the course of this paper, the primary texts will be examined through the prism of Helen Taylor's multidimensional approach to home and homemaking (Taylor 5) with a particular focus on the spatial and temporal dimensions. This particular theory was chosen because it was developed in close connection to forced migration studies and it explicitly incorporates the refugee experience in its framework. Thereby, it offers an inclusive perspective on the construction of home. The findings will be structured and summarised in the final chapter as a means to address the key research question of this paper: how the affective power of

domestic spaces in children's picturebooks about the refugee experience can be articulated temporally and spatially.

Behind each text analysed in this paper, there are thousands of stories. No matter how seamlessly they are woven into the fabrics of new narratives, their polyphony is tangible. Lives, experiences, and feelings cannot be melted down to a uniform plot, nor can they be neatly organized into patterns. They can, however, be represented, explored, expressed, and embedded in symbols, put into words, captured in visual elements, strung into narratives.

The journey from a real life occurrence to a piece of literature is long and imperfect one, held back by the limitations and faultiness of semiotic systems. It is especially true for traumatic experiences, often described through the prism of the "rhetoric of the unspeakable" (Mandel 204). It renders survivors as "voiceless" (Duckels and Jaques 124), "speechless" (Lo 646), "mute" (Malkki 2012, 378), thus leaning into strategies of silencing instead of encouraging speaking or validating silence as not a mere absence of information but as a crucial part of the narrative (Ghorashi 117). While discussing the strategies of approaching fictionalized narratives of protracted displacement, Pesonen (2020) problematizes the vocabulary of "voicing" and the power relations it implies (4). This raises the question of who is in a position to 'provide' a voice and whether said voice can be provided at all. It is necessary to shift the focus from the author as a mediator to readers as active meaning-makers. As an alternative to "voicing", Pesonen proposes to assume the position of "listening", which entails "recognising the limits and positions of knowing" (15). For that reason, in this thesis, reader-response theory is regarded as a key approach in picturebook analysis, due to its "central notion of textual gaps" (Nikolajeva and Skott 2). The texts are seen as spaces where meaning is not provided but created, allowing for diverse cognitive and affective responses.

No home can exist without a story. No story can exist without being told. The act of narration is what brings experiences to life, reignites them, and lends them transformative power (Ochs and Capps 20). Somewhere between words and images, between nursery rhymes and news headlines, new paths to understanding can be uncovered. The amount of questions might grow but so does the acceptance of not-quite-knowing. While we might spend our lifetime searching for and rediscovering the ephemeral meaning of home, the most important lesson to be learned is that we are not alone on this journey. Were we ever to forget that, the stories are here to remind us.

2. The notion of home

2.1. Home in space and time

Our perception of the world is reflected in the subtleties of language. Places' names evoke intense emotional responses as they "ignite[…] memory, etiquette, relationships, fondness and sadness" (Kearney and Bradley 88). The reason is that "places", in a broader sense, are not restricted to their physical boundaries. Massey (1995) argues that "places […] can be understood as articulations of social relationships some of which will be to the beyond (the global)" and these global relationships constitute the unique "identity" of the place (186). Thus, the presence of a place can be experienced without the need for spatial proximity and places can be accessed via semiotic systems.

A place we choose to call home is especially prominent in our personal nomenclature. This word carries a number of associations, not only of spatial nature. Blunt and Dowling (2022) define home simultaneously as "a place, as a spatial imaginary, and as an idea that constructs and connects places at a number of geographical scale" (9). The conceptualisation of home as a "spatial imaginary", "a set of intersecting and variable ideas and feelings, which are related to context, and which construct and connect places and extend across co-existing spaces and

scales" (Blunt and Dowling 9), is of especial interest to this research. Although home is, undoubtedly, "a kind of a space" (Douglas 288-289), it is also a collection of emotional processes which connect it to its dwellers. According to Fullilove (1996), home represents "the accumulation of many relationships and much history" (1519). Easthope (2004) refers to homes as "'places' that hold considerable social, psychological and emotive meaning for individuals and for groups" (135). In summary, home is a highly personalised space which serves as a symbolic vessel for memories, values, dreams (Bachelard 15), and ideas (Douglas 290).

Many definitions of home link it to the ideas of safety, privacy, and uncontested identity (Maller 70-71). This results into binary oppositions in which the notion of home is used to represent one side of the spectrum and exclude the other. For instance, Julia Wardhaugh (1999) points out that "an understanding of home as a 'haven in a heartless world' relies on a rigid separation of inside and outside, with safety and security to be found inside, and fear and danger remaining outside" (Wardhaugh 96). The problem with these definitions is that they render home an unambiguous concept, disregarding its complexity. The direct correlation between home and safety is not universally applicable as these notions are not always able to guarantee each other. Under various circumstances, domestic spaces can become contested, unsuitable for living, and even pose a threat to the lives of their dwellers. Furthermore, according to Wardhaugh, "such a definition of home can be said to contribute to the creation of homelessness" (96) as it appropriates home as a fixed category. Perceiving home as a safe haven erases the spectrum of possible relationships that individuals are able to form with their places of dwelling. As a result, it removes the aspect of individual's agency from the processes of home(un)making.

Understanding home as an ongoing process is an important step towards recognising its multidimensionality. The label of "home" can be assigned to a physical space, but conceptually home cannot be contained in four walls: it is perpetually unfolding in front us. In the same way

our sense of belonging does not always correlate with our legal status, the states of possessing a home, homemaking or homelessness cannot be described exclusively in the context of our legal and physical dimensions (Sirriyeh 13, 14) or via "a binary 'here' or 'there'" (Arvanitis and Yelland 536). There is a certain danger in defining home while relying on such markers since this would entail an artificial reproduction of belonging as "a reified fixity, […] a naturalized construction of a particular hegemonic form of power relations" (Yuval-Davis 199). For that reason, I propose to view home as a spectrum represented by a number of factors which can be classified using Helen Taylor's multidimensional approach.

Taylor (2009) differentiates between four perspectives on home: the spatial home, the temporal home, the material home, and the relational home (5). This approach offers an alternative to the search for precise definition and acknowledges home and belonging as complex constructions which incorporate legal (Hartonen et al. 1133), cultural (Arvanitis et al. 136), developmental (Wimark 661) and emotional (O'Reilly 839) aspects. At the same time, it can be seen as a critique on the structuralist approach to narratives of mobility. Taylor's homes are not merely elements of one uniformed entity; they are conceptually different perceptions that can co-exist as extensions of one another, but also as contradictions. They are subjectable to doubt, adaptation, and redefinition.

I chose Taylor's multidimensional approach as a theoretical framework for several reasons. First and foremost, it aligns with this paper's view of home as a spectrum rather than a fixed location or property, while acknowledging its material component. Secondly, it explicitly theorises home as a spatial as well as temporal construction. Additionally, Taylor does not resort to "naïve understandings [sic] of home as sites of safety and stability" (Wimark 650) in her methodology, recognising its fluid and contradictory nature. Finally, as was stated previously, Taylor's conceptualisation of home is firmly positioned in the context of forced migration studies and takes the experiences of displaced people into consideration.

So far, this paper extensively focused on home in the context of its spatial dimension. However, if we look at home as a process, it would be "a process as much concerned with time as it is with space" (Roberts qtd. in Cwerner 2001, 7). Although the qualities of home are usually mapped onto a certain physical place or another type of embodiment, they are also regulated by time as they are "constructed over time" (Taylor 11). Black (2002) emphasizes the importance of assessing the notion of home as a spatio-temporal construction, given that it undergoes both synchronic and diachronic changes over the course of a person's life (Black 127). Cwerner (2001) notes that mobility studies scholars often focus on the spatial movement as the dominant aspect of migration (7). It is always a question of "where" that comes to the forefront, whereas "when" remains reduced to linear surveys of events that add context but scarcely any insight. In the same way, the temporal dimension of homemaking in the context of forced migration is often overlooked, being overshadowed by its spatiality (Grifiths 1991). As will be demonstrated in the following chapters, time and space in refugee narratives are deeply interconnected:

> When looking at the relationship between the past, present and the future for the refugee, it is also important to remember that they cannot be neatly separated but continue to fold in upon each other, as their understanding of the past and hopes for the future change in line with the present reality. (Taylor 13-14)

When we approach a story dealing with the topics of displacement and forced migration, we face the danger of overlooking its unique flow, subjecting the texts to "Aristotelian narrative expectations of the beginning, middle, and end" (Duckels and Jacques 132), viewing narration as "a spatial and temporal ordering of […] elements or events [which] designates and systematizes" (Klein 163). Such approach tangibly persists in the field of children's picturebook studies where places of dwelling are often located at the core of the narrative and the "beginning-middle-end" pattern is reimagined as "home-away-home". Upon surveying the ways in which temporal and spatial dimensions of a picturebook function in relation to domestic spaces, it is possible to note the applicability of multimodal storytelling in exploring the

complexity of home as a multidimensional notion. Visual construction of home allows to access its spatiality and temporality at the same time and examine their interplay as well as the affective responses they elicit.

2.2. Approaching displacement and homemaking

The context of displacement has the potential to fundamentally redefine what is perceived as "place". Previously conducted research on spatiality has been actively revisited, recontextualised, and integrated into the framework of forced migration studies by contemporary scholars. The link between physical places, culture, community, belonging, and identity is becoming increasingly pronounced during this process, highlighting the need to explore the "multiplicity of attachments that people form to places through living in, remembering, and imagining" (Malkki 2008, 38). At the same time, the conceptualisation of "place" as such undergoes significant changes, shifting towards a more flexible and broad understanding of the notion. Influenced by Doreen Massey's contributions to cultural geography (Massey 1991, 1994), Witteborn (2011) as well as Brun and Fábos (2015) approach displacement as an ongoing process of spatial (re)construction (Witteborn 1143, Brun and Fábos 10).

The semantic relationship between the notions of homemaking and home are often perceived as the one between a process and its end result. I would argue that this would imply an inherent fixity of home as a definite point in space and time. Conversely, "home is […] always in the making and not a finished project; it does not have to be a place, although it is often attached to a place. As home spaces are built and created, they also become potential sites of negotiation, struggle and conflict" (Wimark 650). Thus, home *is* a process which is realised via the practice of homemaking.

In the context of forced migration, homemaking is defined by the need to reaffirm and restabilise one's personal and sociocultural identity via its spatial and temporal reconstruction. This can manifest itself in forced migrants discovering ways to connect with their culture and country of origin. Such markers of belonging as language, traditions, religion, values, or behavioural patterns become more conscious practices since "the emotional components of people's constructions of themselves and their identities become more central the more threatened and less secure they feel" (Yuval-Davis 202). For instance, Doraī (2002), while observing homemaking practices that take place in Palestinian refugee camps, notes that they are focused predominantly on the preservation of traditions, values and structures, thus transforming refugee camps into "memory areas" (Doraī 94). In a memory area, time is realised through space and space is realised through time. It can be seen as an attempt to recreate the domestic chronotope, a symbolic construction where "here" and "now" are intrinsically connected and continuously unfolding.

Memory, in the context of forced migration, can be considered one of the main components of homemaking. It is a means to reconstruct the lost home and to simultaneously attach meaning to the new place of dwelling , to reconcile the past with the future in hope of making one's home in the present. As can be seen in the aforementioned example of Palestinian refugee camps, this practice of embodying memories leads to the creation of safe spaces where refugee identities are temporarily secured. However, it has long-lasting destabilising effects on the perception of home and belonging:

> In some sense, the narrative of leaving home produces too many homes and hence no Home, too many places in which memories attach themselves through carving out of inhabitable space, and hence no place in which memory can allow the past to reach the present (in which the "I" could declare itself as having come home). (Ahmed 330)

The image of the past plays an important role in refugee narratives. Zetter (1999) suggests that "the distinctive element of refugee identity is an inherited, but exiled, past which is frequently reconstructed in an idealized form" (Zetter 4). Forced migrants often experience a profound

connection with their lost homes long after having acquired 'new' ones. Warner (1994) explicitly connects the yearning to return to nostalgia and longing for a highly idealised past community and claims that the term "country of origin" would be a more appropriate one to use in the context of refugee studies rather than "home" (Warner 169, 170). A similar idea is introduced by Brah (1996), who refers to "home" as "a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination […] a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of 'origin'" (Brah 188). Although all of the aforementioned observations are warranted, I would argue that in the context of displacement "return" becomes a rather unreliable notion influenced by a number of internal and external factors. The non-linearity of the temporal construction of home implies that the homemaking practices of displaced people can be directed not only at the image of their past, but also at the future. In that regard, I agree with Arvanitis and Yelland (2021) who argue that:

> The continuous production of dreams is intertwined with nostalgia for the place of origin (home) and the place of destination (the reconstruction of new home). Both homes/spatialities are idealized in their imagination. The first one is a purified place where they could not stay. The second is a place of refuge—a place of obligatory settlement where they can reunite with beloved relatives, especially parents. (551)

The ongoing tension between two (or multiple) homes can be tied to the faculties of memory and belonging. The state of missing a place in the context of displacement has a proactive role that reaches beyond the passive experience of nostalgia: while home continues to exist as an object of remembering, the individual's perception of it undergoes complex changes. Baxter and Brickell (2014) introduce the concept of home unmaking as an important part of these processes. It describes the gradual unravelling of domestic spaces during which the "material and/or imaginary components of home are unintentionally or deliberately, temporarily or permanently, divested, damaged or even destroyed" (Baxter and Brickell 134). This encompasses changes in physical surroundings, psychological processes, and social relations. Home unmaking highlights the multidimensionality of home and emphasises the importance of

considering its temporality, relationality and materiality alongside the spatial dimension. Although the term originated as "a critique of the centrality of homemaking in literatures on home", it would be incorrect to juxtapose the two notions (Baxter and Brickell 134). On the contrary, Baxter and Brickell see the processes of homemaking and home unmaking as "mutually constitutive" (139). They are logical continuation of one another and can be employed to illuminate one another. In this paper, the conception of home(un)making will be used to recognise the complexity of home in the context of displacement. It provides an important category of analysis encompassing memory, material components, spatio-temporal relationships, and affective engagement. Furthermore, it allows us to approach home as a process involving not only creation but destruction, discomfort, and chaos, thus resonating with inner conflicts of identity and belonging.

3. Visual chronotope: temporal and spatial dimensions of a picturebook

Picturebooks are multimodal texts, which means that they employ "several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product [...] together with a particular way in which these modes are combined" (Kress and van Leeuwen 20). To create a narrative, picturebooks rely on a combination of verbal and visual elements, which, through mutual interaction, create a system of meaning-making. This dynamic closely resembles that of the spatio-temporal relationship in literary texts. Similar to the way "the parts [of multimodal texts] should be looked upon as interacting with and affecting one another" (Kress and van Leeuwen 177), the notion of literary chronotope views the temporal and spatial dimensions of the narrative as intertwined. The term was introduced by Mikhail Bakhtin in his essay *Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel* (1981) and defined as "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" (Bakhtin 84). Thus, the relationship between different modes of storytelling as well as between different narrative dimensions are governed by similar mechanisms.

The Bakhnitian notion of the literary chronotope was adopted by children literature scholars in the late 1990s, and especially extensively theorised by Maria Nikolajeva in *Children's literature comes of age: toward a new aesthetic* (2015 [1996]). Subsequently, Rosemary Ross Johnston (2002) further contextualised Nikolajeva's findings in the picturebook format, introducing the concept of the "visual chronotope" (145). The analytical framework it provides takes into consideration the aesthetic dimension of a narrative and reconciles it with the articulations of spatiality and temporality. Furthermore, Johnston emphasises the semiotic load of iconic signs in picturebooks, viewing them as more than indications of the setting:

> Just as Bakhtin's original concept of the chronotope recognises its ideological loadings, so does its extension into the idea of a visual chronotope; what is selected to illustrate time-space will reflect personal and social values and attitudes. For example, a clock on the space of a wall is a clear time marker, but its repeated presence with different times (particularly short intervals) and as a central presence may also reflect pressures and stress. (147)

Thus, apart from conveying temporal and spatial order of the narrative, visual chronotope encourages emotional investment. In *Autumn Story* by Jill Barklem (2012 [1980]), the journey of the protagonist, Primrose, begins with light, airy, self-contained spaces, where each detail is meaningful and familiar. As she ventures further into the forest, the spaces she encounters become more and more ambiguous; as the day goes by, the illustrations become denser, devoid of direct sunlight, with sharper shadows, and more complex composition. Similar changes are happening in spatio-temporal dynamics of the story. The opening sequence captures a yearly ritual of harvest in preparation for colder months; the first scenes span days, weeks, and even years as they can be viewed as a part of a cycle. Temporally, they are rather abstract, located in "once upon a time" and "every autumn". It is only after the protagonist's absence is noticed by her parents when the pace of time changes. Spaces begin to be tied to temporally specific occurrences, each lasting only a limited amount of time. In this case, the narrative is slowly

building readers' apprehension, allowing them to explore the picturebook's world at the same pace as the protagonist and share similar feelings, be it excitement, surprise, fear or relief.

It is important to keep in mind that picturebooks work with our idea of what time and space are. Peeren (2006) reminds us that both of these notions are socially constructed (71-72). This entails endless possibilities for enacting spatio-temporal relationships:

> There is no one universal chronotope, but a multitude of chronotopes, each distinguished by its own way of constructing, interpreting, and living time-space. A chronotope may be specific to a historical period, culture, nation, social class, or any other group of individuals – however small and insignificant – as long as they are united within a particular perception and practice of time-space organization. Chronotopes may therefore comprise widely different-sized communities, with the smaller ones influenced by the larger ones (and vice versa), but at the same time separate from them in terms of their internal logic. (Peeren 69).

Peeren's line of argumentation is also applicable to the visual chronotope. Although time and space in picturebooks can be represented via conventional, widely recognisable symbols – a clock, a winding road, trees reflecting the change of seasons – and have similar reception across a wide range of readerships, the picturebook chronotope remains a variable. Keeping this in mind "can help us to read beyond the mechanics of 'setting', and to re-think depictions of narrative time-spaces in ideological terms, as subjective, changeable, and interwoven with the observer's positionality" (Johnston 137). Readers' perception of the spatio-temporal relationship in a literary work is rooted in collective and personal mythologies, philosophies and associations.

Although signifiers of time and space may overlap, they are interpreted independently, which allows for narrative experimentation. For instance, a certain level of temporal tension can be created via recurring signs, which establish emotional connection between past, present, and future. In Shaun Tan's *The Arrival* (2006), the material objects that are featured in the opening scene, such as plates, a teapot, a clock, and an origami bird, become haunting images that

reappear throughout the entirety of the narrative. Implicitly, they invoke the past, portraying the nature of the protagonist's homesickness: all-encompassing, diffused, less reminiscent of a sharp pang and more of an overwhelming, pervasive longing. Furthermore, they create a constant stream of memories flowing through the story without interrupting it, allowing for the steadily intensifying ambience. The objects, in this case, are what Nikolajeva (2015 [1996]) refers to as "artifacts", defining them as "recurrent images which are clearly dated and contribute to the formation of time and space of the novel" and "concrete expressions for chronotope structures" (ch. 5). They are noteworthy means of escalating tension, foreshadowing, and subtle alteration of the affective value.

Although, at first glance, it might seem that the picturebook chronotope consists primarily of dualities – time and space, past and present, visual and textual, presence and absence – I would like to emphasise that it is in the transgression of those dichotomies that its true nature is revealed. The spatio-temporal unity can be analysed in parallel with the unity of various modes of narration and meaning-making. However, it is their possible intersections, reflected in the notion of visual chronotope, that are of particular interest to this thesis. Thus, the aim of the chapters to follow is to survey the multimodal enactment of spatio-temporal relationships in children's picturebooks in the form of the visual chronotope. To subsequently contextualise this theoretical background in children's literature of displacement with a focus on the narrative construction of home, it is necessary to further expand the conceptualisation of chronotope as the relationship between chronos and topos by applying the notions of kairos and non-places.

3.1. Chronos and kairos

Chronotope is a compound word which consists of two lexemes, Greek in the origin: *chronos* and *topos*, their unity mirroring the interconnectedness of time and space. Both of these notions, however, are far more than what can be conveyed in their direct translation; they harbour

philosophies, modes of perception, and ways of navigating the world. In the study of children's literature, chronos enters a dynamic opposition with kairos, each entailing different temporal laws and providing different framings for the narrative. Being aware of their interplay is important for understanding the temporal dimension of the visual chronotope as fluid, multifaceted, and, above all, as highly affective.

While chronos can be imagined as a vector upon which one can easily position oneself, immediately establishing the triad of past, present, and future, kairos can be compared to a photograph. Bending the laws of spatio-temporal expectations, it creates a contained experience, a presence that extends past the present. As defined by Kumagai and Naidu (2020), "kairic time is time folding in on itself to allow access to the past, present, and future in a single moment. In this moment the experience of the spatiality of time changes from the linear to the deep. Time acquires a dimensionality and seems to expand" (Kumagai and Naidu 2020). The focus, in this case, is shifted from the passage of time to the time itself, time as a *happening* which never stops, thereby creating its own nomenclature. Kairic time invariably has a qualitative nature: "while Chronos is a flow of time, a continuity and something that is measured, a quantified time, Kairos is an opportunity, the proper moment, or the right timing" (Weber 7). It embodies the affective dimension of time, the time that is not only lived but *lived in*.

The notion of kairic time was introduced into the field of children's picturebook studies by Maria Nikolajeva (2000 [1991]) who linked the archaic kairic time to the representation of children's worldview in fiction:

> It is generally believed that small children have no sense of linear time. […] children until around age of 5 live entirely in the present. By the age of 7-8 children learn to handle linear time, that is, clocks, days of the week, months and years. Consequently, small children can be compared, in their apprehension of time, to archaic man, while older children and adults have a 'modern' view of time. Adult writers who describe childhood as a cyclical, mythic state are thus reconstructing the archaic form of time, perhaps subconsciously associating children with this form (5-6).

Thus, literary works centred around children adopt the laws of kairos or, at the very least, can be positioned in relation to them. It is this relation that is crucial in Nikolajeva's categorisation of children's literature: how far does the narrative stray from kairic time? In other words, the defining factor in differentiating between various types of children's fiction is not generic features but "the degree of accomplishment of initiation […] through different stages of departure toward either a successful or a failed mission, from childhood to adulthood" (Nikolajeva 2000 [1991], 1). Thus, the traditional "home-away-home" pattern can be interpreted as "kairos-chronos-kairos" one, where introduction of linearity marks the beginning of the rite of passage and the return to idyllic circular time restores the order of childhood.

Circularity is one of the defining characteristics of kairos. Kairic time is embedded in fairytales, myths, and legends, where rebirth follows the sacrifice. It offers an unexpected kindness of repetition, predictability, and revival. In this way, kairos correlates with the logic of childhood. It does not leave space for uncertainty, fear, and instability, following instead a steady and rehearsed flow of an everlasting promise: future is defined by the past reenacted in the present. In this regard, it is possible to view rituals and festivities as brief invocations of kairos amid the flow of *chronos* (Smedman 93). Traditions often reach us as fragmented echoes of myths, and it is no coincidence that kairos is widely referred to as "mythical time" (Morrow 71).

The circularity of kairic time is captured by means of articulating the iterative nature of the depicted events through various linguistic and visual tools (Morrow 75). The latter include, for example: recurring imagery that focuses on the cyclicity of action; scenes of domesticity; self-contained, constant spaces such as gardens and house interiors. For the verbal text, grammatical and lexical signifiers of time are of especial importance. Nikolajeva (2006) highlights the switch from the past to present tense as an implicit reestablishment of idyll, peace, and security (197). Mythic time is "here and now" and, simultaneously, it is temporally omnipresent; it was before

and will be after, erasing the need for the notions of 'before' and 'after' altogether. As a result, it can be denoted by means of iterative expressions such as "always", "every day", "all the time", "still", "to this day" (Nikolajeva, 2006 [2001], 249). "Once upon a time" and "happily ever after" are, perhaps, the most known kairic formulas, which allow readers to enter and re-enter archaic time. Morrow (2003) expands Nikolajeva's theorisation of iterative frequency in picturebooks, adapting it to be used in image analysis (77). According to Morrow's research, it is possible to view "timelessness" and continuity of illustrations as primary indicators of kairos (80). This can be achieved, for instance, via expanding the visual chronotope of the illustration, suggesting the existence of space and time beyond the boundaries of a page, implying endlessness of the depicted action. A similar effect can be achieved by means of depicting activities as a steady cycle, one stage flowing smoothly into another. This allows "to create an illusion of a neverending paradise" (Nikolajeva 2006 [2001], 10). In this regard, composition is a particularly important dimension of visual analysis. The arrangement of characters and objects on the page can explicitly or implicitly indicate the cyclical nature of the scene.

Kairos is intuitive in its imitation of the laws of nature. The nature imagery, in particular the one accentuating cyclicity, permanence, and harmony, can be another signifier of circular time or "idyllic chronotope" in children's picturebooks (Krogstad 3). Overgrown gardens, magical forests, river banks, and mountains are among the most popular kairic settings that emphasise characters' connection to the natural world. For Nikolajeva (2006 [2001]), another possible manifestation of such harmonious co-existence is the protagonist's ability to understand animals and/or plants or even speak their language, "a privilege given to the most innocent and childlike" (24). Anthropomorphic animals or animal-like creatures inhabit idyllic worlds as well. There they lead lives similar to humans, often with an emphasis on abundance, harmony, and community.

The notion of kairos is often used alongside such terms as *Arcadia*, *utopia,* and *idyll.* Each of them has connotations of an idealized world where the utmost harmony between humans and nature is achieved. As noted by Kalogirou, kairos expresses "a deep, profound longing for a state of harmonious life, inseparably bound with feelings and experiences that bring pleasure and well-being" (Kalogirou 179). This ideal is not completely unattainable since it exists alongside the reality as a "memory-time" (Nikolajeva 2000, 105). It is something that we once experienced, where we once belonged:

> This Arcadian mythical time, referred to by writers such as Muir and Clift, provides a kind of ultimate Heimlichkeit, and is associated not only with an apparent endlessness, but also with a special quality of innocence, with exclusion of any knowledge that would interfere with the charmed time of childhood. In other words, the world of kairos, the rural and childhood, has not been intruded upon by the world of chronos, of modern life, capitalism, cities and adulthood. (Morrow 71)

Chronos arrives into the land of kairos as a violation of its laws. It is strange and unfamiliar, similar to many monsters that the protagonists encounter at the peak of their journeys. It brings a sudden change of pace, a disruption which ends the routine and begins the linear journey, taking the protagonists further and further away from the idyll. The world that is waiting for them on the other side, by comparison to the one governed by the laws of kairic time, lacks organisation. It is raw and unpredictable: "every time children's literature uncurls the spiral of kairos [...] by making a departure from the permanence and the encloseness of circular time, dystopia prevails and the fictive world becomes unhappy; at times desolate or chaotic" (Kalogirou 178). The protagonists' departure from domestic utopia begins their initiation: they are compelled to learn navigating the discord of chronos "as opposed to the ordered (structured) universe of the archaic mind" (Nikolajeva 2006 [2001], 8). The chaos prompted by the shift from kairos to chronos is often disorienting and can align with the central conflict of the narrative. Its resolution is necessary for the successful completion of the rite of passage and reintegration of the protagonists into the kairic time.

The transition from domestic utopia to linear journey is not always explicitly marked. In *The Skull: A Tyrolean Folktale* (2023) by Jon Klassen, the story is instantly overwhelming in its linearity: "Otilla ran and ran. She ran through the trees and up hills. She ran for a long time. All through the night. Otilla had grown up in this forest, but after a while the trees began to look different. They were getting closer together. Otilla kept running" (1st-2nd doublespread). An important characteristic of chronos that can be observed in this example is the appearance of clear time markers ("for a long time", "all through the night") and the implication of time passing ("had grown up", "began to look different"). In this case, the scene loses its "timelessness" and starts obeying the laws of linearity. Based on the illustrations, readers can also determine the direction of the protagonist's movement: from left to right. This has a significant impact on the pacing of the story as it urges the narrative forward, encourages us to turn the page as if to help the character get to their goal faster. Even if the scenery on the doublespreads remains the same, the changes in the setting become more and more noticeable as the tension grows. In *From Mythic to Linear: Time in Children's Literature* (2006 [2001]), Maria Nikolajeva summarises the kairos-chronos shift in children's fiction as follows:

> The transformation of cyclical patterns into linear ones necessarily involves a change in narrative discourse. While an archaic narrative presupposes a single subject in unity with the world, in 'contemporary' linear narrative this unity is disturbed, resulting in polyphony (multivoicedness), intersubjectivity, unreliable narrators, multiple plots and endings, etc. (8)

This way, readers are removed from the security of kairic time and are faced with the possibility of various resolutions of the conflict. When Otilla hears an unfamiliar voice calling her name in *The Skull*, we cannot be certain if it belongs to a hostile or friendly creature. Is she being lured into a trap? Should she follow the strange voice or run faster in the opposite direction? Thus, chronos makes suspense possible, positioning the readers at a crossroads of multiple endings.

The Skull reimagines the dynamic between linear and circular time; the narrative does not open with the domestic utopia, it is only found by the protagonist in the middle of the story. The discovery of the domestic becomes the resolution and, at the same time, establishes the new conflict as the idyll is threatened. This illustrates that the relationship between chronos and kairos can be enacted in many ways. In *From Mythic to Linear: Time in Children's Literature*, Nikolajeva uses the example of *The Moomins* series by Tove Jansson to illustrate the spectrum of those variations: from the classic "'there and back' pattern" to novels being dominated by the idyll to the ones where the return to kairic time is never realised (231). The distinction is articulated both on macrostructural and microstructural level of the narrative through setting, sequences of events and their patterns, character archetypes and their interrelations. Apart from bringing implicit structure into the narrative, shifts between kairos and chronos assume situative meanings: they can aid characterisation, alter the general mood of the story, and allow for gradual exploration of spatial and temporal changes. In this way, for instance, the disturbance of the idyll enables a reimagined kairic scene in *Moominsummer Madness* (1954), where the protagonist dives into the flooded kitchen to retrieve supplies for breakfast. Domestic utopia is thus rediscovered within the very event that caused the disturbance. As can be seen, linear and circular time can exist alongside one another in the narrative and interact in many unexpected ways. For that reason, it might be more helpful to see them as not contradicting but enabling one another, kairos being the prerequisite for chronos to enter the story and vice versa.

3.2. Places and non-places

The notion of "non-place", coined by Marc Augé (1995), has been gradually entering our everyday vocabulary during the past decade, moving beyond the academic discourse of anthropology. It resonated with modernity as a tribute to our melancholic urbanised existence, to the crisis of belonging, and the fluctuating boundaries between public and private. Augé describes non-places as "space[s] which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or

concerned with identity" (77-78). These spaces are nowheres and in-betweens, they do not preoccupy our thoughts even as we visit them every day. While places engage in the process of mutual creation with their dwellers, non-places seem to remain unchanged, only containing experiences and never being transformed by them. Thus, non-places have unique affective value, which makes them interesting objects of study not only within the field of anthropology but also in literary studies, especially within the theoretical framework of reader-response criticism.

I chose the dynamic between places and non-places as a point of focus in this analysis for several reasons. First and foremost, the differentiation between places and non-places is concerned with emotions and experiences, which is relevant for this papers' focus on reader's affective engagement. Secondly, non-places are constituted by mobility. We encounter them the most while travelling and they often overlap with places of transition, such as airports, train stations, and highways. In the context of displacement, however, spatiality gains new meaning. For instance, while Augé regards refugee camps as non-places (78), such definition is widely problematised for:

> discursively reproducing – rather than resisting – the depiction of refugees as […] non-agentic bodies that are the subject of diverse forms of governmentality, and for dismissing, *a priori*, the multiple meanings and senses of (be)longing(s) that may be developed, negotiated, resisted and contested by the inhabitants of protracted refugee camps. (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 289)

The discussion that arises from this argument lays the groundwork for reconsidering the way spatialities and temporalities of the refugee experience are represented in media. Additionally, it questions the language of binary oppositions that is often involved in the discourse of displacement: the need to ascribe 'here' and 'there', 'home' and 'away', 'us' and 'them'. Reevaluating the notion of non-place in refugee narratives can be a significant step towards approaching the experience of displacement as consisting of spectrums rather than dichotomies.

This correlates with this thesis' view of home as a process, a concept that can freely move along the axes of making and unmaking, place and non-place.

An important distinction to make is the one between non-places and liminal places. The notion of liminality was coined by Arnold von Gennep (1960 [1909]) and was originally used in the context of the rites of passage. According to Gennep, rites of passage are "ceremonial patterns which accompany a passage from one situation to another or from one cosmic or social world to another" (10) and they encompass "preliminal rites (rites of separation), liminal rites (rites of transition), and postliminal rites (rites of incorporation)" (11). Liminality, in this case, is a transitional stage, during which an individual has exited their previous state of being but has not yet entered the new one: a newborn child or a bride during the wedding preparations. This notion soon entered other disciplines, appearing to be particularly applicable for postcolonial studies and contributing to the concept of cultural hybridity, theorised by Homi Bhabha in *The Locations of Culture* (1994). In refugee studies, the experience of cultural, legal, social, and spatial liminality is widely discussed (Wimark 2021, Arvanitis et al. 2019, O'Reilly 2018, Hartonen et al. 2022). Since it is positioned between the moments of departure/separation and arrival/incorporation, and the displacement does not presuppose the latter, forced migrants are often perceived as perpetually liminal figures, removed from any sense of belonging. This is expressed in their legal status, media representation, societal expectation, and cultural Othering.

In the following chapters, the term 'liminal' will be used to denote an in-between state, "characterized by indeterminacy, ambiguity, hybridity, potential for subversion, and change" and caused by protracted displacement (Arvanitis et al. 2019, 136). 'Non-place', on the other hand, is implemented as a spatial concept. The distinction between non-places and liminal places is summarised by Christian Triebel (2015) as follows:

> Non-place, as liminal space, can be understood as a spatial exploration of liminality. However, non-place differs from liminality in that it is a concrete place that can be shared and experienced with others. Furthermore, while liminality is usually understood to be temporary, non-place as a place remains that can always be revisited. Finally, non-place is much closer related to spatial concepts such as 'home' than liminality. (Triebel 89)

Building upon this, in the following chapters I will distinguish between liminal spaces (as relating to liminal state) and transitional spaces (as spaces of transit). Furthemore, the category of non-places is used to illustrate the spectrum of affective engagement with a place, on the one side of which I would position home as "the accumulation of many relationships and much history" (Fullilove 1519), and on the other – non-place as "non-relational, non-historical, and non-concerned with identity" (Buchanan 395).

Kerry Mallan (2017) in her study of readers' affective engagement with the focus on the spatialities of children's picturebooks positions the notion of non-place in the context of the "geographies of emotions" (131). According to Mallan, "being in the world entails not only moving through space, but also experiencing different emotions that are tied to the geographies of place and non-place as spaces lived, shared, and contested" (143). Children's picturebooks capture these processes through the usage of various literary and artistic strategies. This way, they are able to recreate the emotional link that occurs between spaces and people who inhabit or encounter them.

Mallan's conceptualisation of picturebooks' emotional geographies is evident, for instance, in the notion of "secret spaces". They can be defined as "make-believe dimension[s], […] controlled, reduced-to-size realm[s] that [are] the child's domain[s] of personal power (agency)" (Singer and Singer 43). Secret spaces restructure conventional geography: they provide privacy, seclusion, and the necessary framing for games or creative processes. Additionaly, they carve a pocket into the spatial order which can be filled with new meanings according to the child's needs. Secret spaces can exist out of spite, driven and sustained by

affect. Most importantly, they can overlap with non-places. Furthermore, Mallan emphasizes that the transformative power of imaginative play applies to every space with which a child engages creatively: "while not all of children's playspaces are 'secret', they nevertheless embody secrecy in terms of the meanings and imaginative interpretations children bring to them" (Mallan 171). It is important to keep in mind that the notion of playspace is rather broad and can encompass airports, trains, shopping malls, gas stations, hotels, and other places and non-places, blurring the boundaries between them even further. In this way, children's picturebooks create a world where:

> one reality is replaced by another – an imagined other reality from a subjective position – the cardboard house becomes a shared utopia, mundane life is imaginatively transformed, compassion and empathy replace hatred and fear, a hole in the ground becomes a temporary refuge. (Mallan 143)

Thus, playspaces blur the boundary between 'strange' and 'familiar', 'private' and 'public'. A child's imagination assigns places meaningful qualities and functions, beyond their original design.

These unique modes of engagement with spatiality in children's fiction require unique approaches. We cannot forget that such narratives often portray a child's first interactions with the world, including first instances of mobility and first encounters with certain non-places. For example, there is a number of picturebooks focusing on the experience of the first flight, such as *The Airport Book* (2017) by Lisa Brown. On its pages, the airport and the plane become more than mere points of transition during the journey. They are transformed into self-contained destinations, complex systems that overflow with meaning. As the protagonist is going through the routine steps preceding the boarding, it is easy to lose sight of her in the sea of strangers, each of them with a unique appearance and engaged in a unique activity. The snippets of conversations imply dozens of stories unfolding parallel to the main plot line. The combination of these aspects subverts the expectation of an impersonal space, detached from history.

As can be seen, non-places in children's fiction, as opposed to Augé's original definition, are highly relational: they are perceived through the prism of places that are already familiar, simple, and comprehensible. The encounter with a non-place can be exciting and highly anticipated, evoke curiosity, and prompt imaginative play. Originally devoid of any affective connotations, they acquire situational meaning. They may evoke feelings of attachment, excitement, novelty, or, on the contrary, desolation, fear, anxiety. In the latter case, the emphasis is on the 'otherness' of the non-place, as it can be juxtaposed with, for instance, the child's bedroom, garden, school; with places that are emotionally charged and familiar. At times, the presence of a parent, guardian or companion might play a decisive role in children's perception of non-places as well as their ability to navigate their emotions in a new context.

As was discussed previously, spatialities of a picturebook can be characterised by constantly fluctuating boundaries between what constitutes a particular space. One of the greatest questions in this regard is which spaces would constitute the 'real' world in the narrative and which would belong to the realm of 'imaginary'. According to Meunier,

> the iconotextual narrative goes beyond a very simple dualism between 'dreamt space' and 'real space'. In the universe of perceptions and representations, these two spaces are not separated […] In our mental representations, these two spaces are linked together. And that is also the case in picturebooks. Narratives build spaces fed by different perceptions and action. (Meunier 2014)

Therefore, the strict division between 'real' and 'imaginary' in children's books is often problematised. For the purpose of this paper, I will be focusing on imaginary spaces as a result of children's creative and affective engagement with their environment and exploring their role in mediating the protagonist's transitional state. In the study of children's literature from the perspective of psychology, a strong connection between imaginary play and transitory processes was established (Grandy and Tuber 275). I believe that such interdisciplinary approach is of particular relevance for the study of children's literature representing the refugee experience.

Thus, children's literature can be characterised by a polyphony of non-places, playspaces, secret spaces, domestic spaces as well as spaces real and imaginary. Understanding their interplay and overlaps is important for surveying the affective power of narratively constructed spaces, since "emotions are spatially, temporally, and socially situated through the relationship between the geographies of place and non-place" (Bullen et al. 12). In the subsequent sections, I would like to attempt locating the notion of home in the context of emotional spatialities of a picturebook as well as trace its development throughout the narrative.

4. 'Before' and 'after' of domestic spaces

The presence of home in children's picturebooks is panoramic, multifaceted, and uncompromisingly tangible. It affects the narrative as a whole, sweeping far beyond the iconic representation on the page. It provides framing for the story: as we think, move, and feel alongside the characters, home remains an anchor. From that arises the question: how do we navigate the semantic complexity of home? How do we trace its nomenclature in the context of displacement? Most importantly, where do we begin? The answer to the latter question, at the very least, becomes obvious if we allow ourselves to briefly assume the candid logic of fairy tales and bedtime stories. We must "begin at the beginning" (Caroll 89).

Home in refugee narratives is more than just a starting point of the journey. Home becomes a symbol suspended between the past, present, and future, between 'here' and 'there'. I would argue that the omnipresence of home in refugee narratives is enabled by its precise temporal and spatial placement, which, contrasting with the disrupted order in the narrative chronotope, turns home into the semantic anchor of the story. In the words of Mavis Reimer, "'Home' is an auratic term in children's texts generally. The primary setting of children's books typically is the dwelling in which the protagonist lives, usually with members of her or his family" (Reimer 13). Reimer discovers the interpretation of home as "auratic" in *The politics of home:*

Postcolonial relocations and twentieth-century fiction (1996) by Rosemary George. George, in turn, borrows the terminology from Walter Benjamin (2018 [1935]), who theorised aura as a "a strange weave of space and time: the unique appearance or semblance of distance, no matter how close it may be" (112). A concept that is "auratic" deconstructs the notion of mobility by unsettling the dual oppositions of moving/stationary, mobile/immobile. Similarly, it cannot be placed on either side of such binaries as "the visible and the invisible, the material and the ethereal, the political and the imaginary" and instead can be found "at [their] productive intersection" (Billé 2). Being an auratic notion, "'home' moves along several axes, and yet it is usually represented as fixed, rooted, stable – the very antithesis of travel" (George 2).

The Day War Came (2018), written by Nicola Davies and illustrated by Rebecca Cobb, opens with a recognisable scene of peace and domesticity: a family sitting at the kitchen table. The illustration is concise in its rendition of the space as domestic. It is composed of only a few elements, each with a considerable semantic load. Such artistic selectivity ensures that the readers perceive the scene as a whole, as a unit of meaning. We witness home right before its unravelling, at the peak of its uniformity. Its elements are almost indiscernible; they are continuations of one another. This is additionally emphasized in the verbal text, which places the presence of flowers on the windowsill and the act of the protagonist's father singing her brother to sleep in the same semantic row. The setting and the action, the artifact and the routine become nearly synonymous as they are both employed to denote domestic space.

Fig. 1 *The Day War Came,* 1st doublespread.

On this doublespread, we catch a glimpse of mythical time, an idyll that is constituted by circularity and repetitiveness. The text on the recto describes a sequence of events that imply an established routine, an everyday ritual that unfolds both in time and space: "The day war came there were flowers on the window sill and my father sang my baby brother back to sleep. My mother made my breakfast, kissed my nose and walked with me to school." (1st doublespread, *The Day War Came*). However, the distinct temporal signifier "the day war came" immediately connects the scene to the context of war. This can be interpreted as a seemingly circular sequence becoming temporally unique. However, I would argue that in this case the mention of war does not remove the scene from the cyclical pattern. On the contrary, the traumatic event appropriates the routine by being incorporated into it. The continuity is not interrupted: "the day war came" does not fundamentally differ from other days in the protagonist's life. For a brief moment, it can even be located in the kairic 'before', immediately transforming it into 'after'. The phrase "the day war came" frames the domestic scene as a memory, describing what the characters on the illustration cannot yet know or recognise. This gap between the verbal and visual elements reflects the gap between temporal and spatial dimension of the narrative, communicating to the readers that the story is told retrospectively.

The beginning of war and its destructive intrusion into the domestic idyll is foreshadowed throughout the narrative via the symbol of orange flowers. In the opening scene, they are focalised both in the verbal text ("The day war came there were *flowers* on the window sill", 1st doublespread, emphasis added) and in the illustration, where they are placed in the centre, behind the protagonist, in sharp contrast with the dominant colour scheme. This way, they constitute a meaningful "splash in ambience" (Painter et al. 40), which is recreated on the subsequent doublespread in the form of fire erupting from volcanoes in the children's drawings. This analogy is completed on the fifth doublespread, where the shattered pot of bright orange flowers is placed against the backdrops of a city on fire. Here the flowers play a role of an artifact that keeps repeatedly invoking the imagery of the domestic idyll. The orange splash in ambience implicitly outlines the boundary between war and peaceful life in parallel to the verbal signifier "the day war came". At the same time, it emphasises the uncertainty of such a boundary. It communicates the ease with which symbols of safety and domesticity can be transformed into the symbols of loss and destruction, similar to the way the borders between 'before' and 'after' can fluctuate.

Similarly to *The Day War Came*, the first doublespread of *The Journey* depicts a scene which can be considered Arcadian in Nikolajeva's categorisation. It depicts a self-contained, harmonious place with emphasised proximity to nature: "a city close to the sea" is recreated as a sand castle. The family is engaged in a "timeless" activity without a distinct beginning or end. Home is dominating both physical and semantic space on the page. On the recto, the waves meeting the shore create a black splash of colour positioned in contrast with pastel colour scheme of the illustration. This is another example of what Painter et al. (2013) refer to as a "splash in ambience": "a contrast between the enveloping ambience and some smaller element, whether a character, object, light source, or part of the environment" in a "fully contextualised picture" (40). Upon turning the page, we can see that the dark "splash" now occupies almost

the entirety of the recto, extending into the verso. This transformation is reflected in the verbal text as follows: "The war began. Every day bad things started happening around us and soon there was nothing but chaos" (2nd doublespread, see Fig. 2). The system of sand castles in this scene can be seen not only as a symbolic representation of the family's hometown, but also as an expression of the interconnectedness between the dwellers and their place of dwelling as they engage in the mutual creative processes. In other words, it is a manifestation of homemaking practices as a neverending cycle of transforming and being transformed, aligning the time and space of one's existence.

Fig. 2 *The Journey,* 2nd doublespread, verso

The shift from the idyllic chronotope of the first doublespread to chaotic, linear time can also be observed in the verbal components of the text. Within three sentences, a change from iterative present tense ("I live", "every summer") to iterative past ("we used to") to a sudden break in cyclicity and a shift to linear language ("But we never go there anymore, because *last year*, our lives changed forever…" (1st doublespread, emphasis added) is realised. This is a quick but tangible transformation. In the beginning, "the narrative present creates an illusion of an infinite, indeed mythical time" (Nikolajeva 2006 [2001], 44), which is subsequently

transitioned into the past. The frequency brought to a halt by "never", which marks the presumable split between cyclical and linear.

Certain parallels could be drawn between the depiction of home in *The Journey* and *The Day War Came.* Both narratives open with a stereotypical scene of domestic idyll, which implies routine and repetitiveness. In both cases, the implications of war and displacement are already woven into the domestic, transforming it from within into an estranged space. This way, although the beginning of war is depicted as a split between 'before' and 'after', it does not evoke a conventional for children's narratives transition from "home" into the "away". Instead, it renders the initial home impossible and unreachable. For that reason, the beginning of war is not depicted as a change, but as an intrusion. 'Before' home becomes uncertain and removed from safety.

Within the opening scenes, the unsettled before/after dichotomy subverts the construction of home as a temporally and spatially non-negotiable place. In both *The Journey* and *The Day War Came*, war is depicted as slowly overtaking the space. For instance, the first three doublespreads of *The Journey* are gradually overtaken by dark waves. In *The Day War Came*, smoke plays a similar role: an intangible substance which slowly permeates and absorbs the familiar.

Through this intrusion, kairic time is disrupted, however, it is not ended: there is a clear lack of proper transition into coherent and steady chronos. Instead, chaos permeates iteration; moreover, it become iterative in itself: "The war began. *Every day* bad things started happening around us and soon there was nothing but chaos" (*The Journey*, 2nd doublespread, emphasis added). The entirety of the third doublespread is pitch-black, signifying both the loss of a family member, as stated in the verbal text, and the loss of the world as the protagonists knew it: "And *one day* the war took my father" (*The Journey,* 3rd doublespread, emphasis added). The only objects depicted against the solid black background are the symbols that could be found in the very first illustration: plants, growing on the beach, shards of the sand castle towers, and, most

importantly, a pair of glasses that were previously worn by the father. The topic of grieving the loss of a loved one is not explicitly explored in *The Journey.* Rather, it becomes a part of the all-encompassing grief The past is reconstructed in the focalised objects as familiar and safe, whereas the present is depicted as a dark backdrop evoking a sense of chaos and estrangement.

This way, although the factual setting remains the same, the spatio-temporal relationship within it undergo significant changes. Time and space become disconnected, misaligned. The narrative abandons "here and now" and acquires temporal and spatial uncertainty. It is particularly evident on the foruth doublespread of the picturebook. The interior, while preserving some signifiers of a domestic space – a window, a flower pot, a patterned wallpaper, framed pictures on the wall – is intruded upon and dominated by the outside. Enormous hands are reaching in, reminiscent of the all-consuming waves on the previous doublespreads. Suddenly, a fundamental law of children's picturebook narratives is broken: home is no longer invincible. Closed doors and barred windows are not enough to protect from what is trying to break in; and for children, the outside in this case is incomprehensible, inscrutable, devoid of any meaning, and thus terrifying. The boundary between home and non-place is growing dangerously thin. Through this sharp dissonance, an intense feeling of *wrongness* is established, making it possible for the narrative to represent the spectrum of possible affective responses to war-related imagery, even without readers necessarily having developed a sufficient vocabulary for their expression.

Fig. 3 *The Journey*, 4th doublespread, recto

In the scene depicted on the fourth doublespread, three empty frames on the wall are juxtaposed with a framed picture on the table, the latter depicting a family portrait against a light pastel background. The composition of the picture mirrors the positioning of the protagonists on the left side of the page: the mother protectively hugging her two children. As a result, the fundamental differences between the two contexts are emphasised: the father is absent, the expressions of the family members are sad and disturbed instead of happy and relaxed. The colour scheme of the portrait background does not only juxtapose it with the overall ambience of the doublespread via the higher value of familiarity (Painter et al. 39), but also references the very first illustration, (1st doublespread), which uses the same hues in its portrayal of the domestic idyll. This way, the scene is dominated by a temporal gap between 'now' and 'then', both of which are spatially positioned in 'here', contained in a single room. This effect is completed by the empty frames, which create an illusion of a reduced, impersonal setting. At the same time, they render the illustration as temporally isolated, focalising 'before' as the only meaningful time.

Although the family portrait is depicted as a part of the interior, it is visually and semantically removed from it. It has a distinct spatiality and temporality of its own. In its evocation of the idyll, it establishes the "chronotope of memory". This notion is theorized by Robbe et al. (2021) as "temporal-spatial frameworks of recall involved in imagining and narrating" (52) and it is of especial relevance in approaching the conception of home in refugee narratives. According to Robbe et al.,

> memory is key to understanding the temporal-spatial coordinates of producing 'crisis' and acting in it. By reshaping infrastructures of past, present, and future, and interlinking places and spaces of crisis, memory often appears to be instrumental for proclaiming, experiencing, and responding to states of emergency. (51)

This perspective on memory assigns it a central role in the context of displacement as a means to effectively process traumatic experiences and restore active agency over the narrative. In children's picturebooks, memory has a similar purpose: to create a space where meaning would be temporally ordered. This enables young readers to recognise and critically assess the spectrum of emotions that a particular scene elicits. In the example of *The Journey,* an evocation of "memory-time" (Nikolajeva, 2000 [1991], 105) makes it possible for the narrative to communicate the emotional experiences of change, grief, and unsafety by affectively contrasting the domestic chronotope with the chronotope of memory, briefly reconstructing the latter within the former.

In some cases, the representation of domestic spaces in children's refugee literature is not as straightforward as in the aforementioned examples. Sometimes the lack of conventional depiction of home allows the reader to see it not as a mere physical surrounding but as a complex notion that is able to evoke complex emotional responses. We encounter an example of such a narrative is *Story Boat*. Although home is the central motif of this picturebook, it is never present as a physical space. The story opens *in media res*, which allows for an alternative way of showcasing the characters' view of home and attachment to their past lives. Spatial and

temporal dimensions of the narrative are uncertain and the manner of their depiction is rather abstract. This allows the concept of home to re-enter the narrative at any given point: 'before' has the potential to become 'now'; 'there' is always 'here'. "Here we are" is a recurring formula in the verbal text, which opens and concludes the story. It has immediate grounding effect on readers, allowing them to survey the scene at their own pace. While the act of characters' departure from home is not portrayed, it can be reconstructed. This way, the narrative implicitly communicates the role of home in the refugee experience as an invisible anchor, affecting the lives of its former dwellers even past the act of initial departure. Home here is omnipresent, "auratic".

Fig. 4 *Story Boat*, 1st doublespread

Story Boat conveys the experience of protracted displacement through symbols which challenge our understanding of the temporal and spatial construction of home in the narrative. Space and time are closely interconnected, which is also reflected in the verbal text: "*Here* isn't always the same. Sometimes it's *here* just for a moment" (8th-9th doublespread). As was mentioned above, the use of abstract spatial markers "here" and "there" deepens the sense of uncertainty, but also leaves space for imagination and emotional engagement. Readers are free to create their own interpretation of "here", thus participating in the process of place-making. "Here" in the narrative has endless potential, which is reinstated every time the word appears on the page:

"*Here* is a lamp" (10th doublespread), "*Here* is a song that everyone can sing" (12th doublespread), "*Here* is a flower" (13th doublespread), "*Here* is our journey" (15th doublespread). The most important semantic connection is made in the very first analogy: "*Here* is a cup" (4th doublespread), "And this cup is a home" (5th doublespread). This invokes the kairic view of home, located in the structured chronotope of "here and now" (McAdam et al 11), "in the gap between the realities and the idealizations" (George 2). This way, the idea of home in *Story Boat* is detached from a specific location and belongs to the "memory-time", once experienced and constantly unfolding.

Interestingly, the only time the word "home" is mentioned in *My Name is Not Refugee*, it is used in the context of memory: "What things would remind you of your old home?" (11th doublespread). Prior to this mention, the protagonists' former place of dwelling is referred to as "this town", a detached term, lacking any identification even in the form of possessive pronouns: not "my hometown" or "our town". While in *The Journey* and *The Day War Came* the mythical domestic idyll, albeit intruded upon by the context of war, is visually and verbally outlined, in *My Name is Not Refugee* it never makes an appearance on the page. Home is physically present in the first several scenes but temporally removed. What is supposed to be the eternal present is now located in the past, and thus unattainable. This is further emphasised by the verbal text grammatically and semantically focalising the future as a linear sequence of events, instead of retrospectively engaging with the construction of home in the past. This allows the narrative to take a step back from conventional imagery of an idealised 'before' home and explore alternative modes of engagement with the refugee experience. Furthermore, this leaves readers a significant amount of space to process the text and engage with it creatively.

Thus, I would argue that we never truly encounter 'before' home in any of the picturebooks considered in this paper. Domestic utopia is never complete even prior to the moment of departure. It is either absent altogether (*Story Boat),* or a sense of intrusion is created, unsettling

the idyll and bringing disarray into the domestic (*The Journey*, *My Name is Not Refugee*, *The Day War Came*). This has several functions in the narrative. First and foremost, it portrays the loss of home as an emotionally complex process which is not defined exclusively by the act of departure. In each case, we can observe home being gradually unmade, both as a physical location and as a "spatial imaginary" (Blunt and Dowling 9). Secondly, such an approach to the construction of domestic spaces allows to establish the multidimensionality of home. It uncovers the relationship between spatiality and temporality as highly negotiable and, as a result, introduces memory as an important affective dimension of the narrative.

5. Articulations of temporal and spatial distance from home

Reconciling the picturebook format with the idea of displacement is a challenging task for artists, writers, readers, educators, and researchers alike. Depicting the loss of home entails expressing complex psychological processes, such as grief, crisis of identity, trauma, and survivor's guilt. To facilitate cognitive and affective engagement, picturebooks often implement concepts familiar to the children of the target age group. This allows readers to access their previous knowledge and gradually connect it to the new context, effectively interpreting the events of the narrative. For instance, while young readers might already be familiar with the concept of linear time, they may still find it hard to comprehend the events of the story as having long-lasting consequences, extending far into the future of the protagonists. Furthermore, in refugee narratives, home and its former dwellers are engaged in a complex spatio-temporal relationship. As a result, a deeper understanding of the passage of time and the spectrum of its emotional consequences is required from the readers. For this reason, such stories aim to enhance readers' awareness of the narrative temporality via its multimodal representation. Illustrated action sequences, page turn pacing, doublespread composition, and escalating tension between the verbal and visual elements are among the most common means used for

this purpose. In the sub-chapters to follow, these narrative devices will be approached as expressing temporal and spatial distance from home in the analysed texts: from portraying the expanse of displacement to constructing a complex dynamic between the transitional and the domestic. Additionally, the affective dimension of spatio-temporal distance from home will be discussed through the lens of the protagonists' limited perspective.

5.1 Out of space and time: tension between transitional and domestic spaces

For picturebooks dealing with topics of displacement and forced migration, transitional spaces are the primary setting: train and bus stations, highways, waiting rooms, or simply abstract "in-betweens", removed from the flow of time and from the logic of space. If in most pieces of children's fiction the stay in these places is strictly temporary, in texts reflecting the refugee experience it is indefinite. In relation to domestic spaces, they no longer serve as a link between the points of departure and arrival, nor they constitute a transitional "away" that is bound to lead back home. In the absence of home, they fill the vacant space with their own ambiguous meanings. Transitional spaces can provide refuge and become sites of homemaking practices, they can manifest as a continuation of the distress experienced during traumatic events, they can offer brief comfort, be reimagined and rescripted. Understanding these processes is a key aspect in understanding the perception of home in the context of displacement, as engagement with transitional spaces plays an important role in temporally and spatially (re)structuring the idea of domestic spaces in narratives.

5.1.1. The use of blank space

Multimodal discourse analysis acknowledges the importance of all elements of the text. Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (2006 [1996]) suggest that the parts of multimodal texts "should be looked upon as interacting with and affecting one another" (177). In picturebook analysis, this means that it is important to consider the way verbal and visual elements are

positioned in relation to each other as well as the gaps filled – or created – by their interaction. In some instances, illustrations occupy an entire page or doublespread, absorbing the text or omitting it altogether. In other cases, we are left with a considerable amount of unoccupied space, filled in a solid colour. In this chapter, this will be referred to as blank space and it will be approached as a meaningful component of the illustration. On the one hand, the absence of the background focuses the readers' attention on selected figures or objects, as it brings their size, colour, line thickness, and other individual visual characteristics to the forefront (Painter et al. 80). Nikolajeva and Skott (2006) refer to this visual choice as "minimal or reduced setting" and note the implied timelessness and universality of the narratives in which:

> the objects are isolated, almost like those in an exhibit book. No backgrounds or other objects suggest the social status of the characters, the historical epoch, and so on. The stories are deliberately lifted out of place and time. One of the assets of this is that they do not become outdated, as books with more distinct realistic settings often do. (Nikolajeva and Skott 64)

This mode of engagement with temporality evokes Augé's (1996) definition of non-places, which are dominated by "actuality, the urgency of the presence moment [...] as if space had been trapped by time [;] as if each individual history were drawing its motives, its words and images, from the inexhaustible stock of an unending history in the present" (104). In non-places, time and space provide each other with meaning and, at the same time, restrict and decontextualise each other. Mallan (2017) makes a similar connection, noting that "the use of white space and sparse objects and figures on the landscape […] references the idea of 'no man's land'—a geographical non-place that is located between particularisation and generalisation" (138). Such scenes, in which there is decidedly "no room [...] for history" (Augé 103), allow to focalise the characters and facilitate readers' identification with them. According to Painter et al., "the removal of the setting draws our attention to the emotion and/or behaviour of the character, thereby evoking affect (and sometimes judgement) in us" (40). This renders

blank space a valuable category of multimodal analysis in approaching the affective construction of spatialities and temporalities of children's picturebooks.

Blank space is a prominent tool for spatial construction in *My Name is Not Refugee*. In addition to focalising the central figures of the narrative – the boy and his mother – the white background fragments the space around them, creating a sense of unfamiliarity, anxiety, disarray, and chaos. The characters and objects are 'suspended' in the air, temporally and spatially decontextualised. Moreover, this effect comes into play from the very first page of the picturebook, before the characters' departure from the domestic setting (see Fig.5). This way, via the visual choice of reduced setting, home in the narrative looses its corporeality, threatening to become a non-place.

Fig. 5 *My Name is Not Refugee,* 1st doublespread, verso

The closest we come to seeing a fully visually constructed space in *My Name is Not Refugee,* is on the verso of the eleventh doublespread (see Fig.6). It is filled with light blue colour, the rectangular shape denotes the room separating the characters from the outside world. Characters' belongings are placed in the room, creating an impression of order and domesticity. The space, now having a certain level of organisation and structure, provides comfort, which is

ensured by the walls and the blanket that are meant to protect the characters from the outside world. Additionality, there is a sense of familiarity provided by the objects that they brought from home. This stands in stark contrast to the previous pages, which were filled with white space, leaving the characters exposed to the world around them. For the first time, the narrative clearly positions the protagonists spatially, which creates a sense of security and safety.

The blue colour, which is used to construct the space on the eleventh doublespread, has already been introduced to us throughout the narrative. It appears as a backdrop for the questions addressed to the child reader that accompany each doublespread: an interactive element which bridges the story to the readers, engages them in a dialogue, and offers guidance. Now filling an entire page, this colour has the same grounding effect; it creates a sense of comfort and familiarity, which is reinstated by the accompanying question: "What things would remind you of your old home?".

This scene can be juxtaposed with the eighth doublespread of the picturebook, which portrays the protagonists sleeping against a white background. They are surrounded by unidentifiable people and objects, turned away from one another, and disconnected spatially. Blue hues of this illustration are considerably darkened by means of cross-hatching, as opposed to the solid light blue of the eleventh doublespread. This renders the scene impersonal, reminiscent of the waiting room on the fifth doublespread or the refugee camp on the 6th. Each one of those settings is "non-relational, non-historical, and non-concerned with identity" (Buchanan 395), and thus falling under Augé's definition of a non-place. It is only the presence of the child's personal belongings – a teddy bear and backpack, both focalised by means of colour – that continuously disturbs the non-relationality. Among the imagery of uncertainty and detachment, it acts as a manifestation of memories, dreams, values, and ideas connecting the protagonists to their home. Prior to the eleventh doublespread, the personal items constitute a "splash in ambience" (Painter

et al. 40) as their warm colour scheme contrasts with much colder tones of the setting. On the aforementioned page, however, they become part of the interior and participate in spatial organisation. The floor, the blanket, the portrait frame, and the protagonist's shoes assume the same warm hues as the backpack and the teddy bear, rendering the scene welcoming and almost idyllic. The appearance of patterns, such as flowers on the blanket and diagonal lines on the wall, additionally contributes to the imagery of domesticity and comfort. It is a recurring motif in all four analysed picturebooks that patterns are associated with the domestic realm, where everything is highly personalised, whereas solid colours are connected to novelty, unfamiliarity, and the outside world. On the eleventh doublespread of *My Name is Not Refugee*, this creates tension between the interior and the solid blue space surrounding it. On the one hand, the blank space restricts the domestic scene; moreover, it absorbs it, nearly reminiscent of the way the protagonist's home is gradually absorbed by the white space in the beginning of the story (3rd doublespread). The room seems to extend past the visible part of the illustration and our inability to see the entirety of it could establish the same feeling of uncertainty as an ambiguous door on the fifth doublespread. However, it is this restriction that enables the personal to come to the forefront, occupy space, and render the place "concerned with identity" (Augé 77). Here the blank space as a signifier of a non-place is paradoxically employed for the "concrete and symbolic construction of space" (Augé 51), for making sense. Thus, we can observe another example of domestic places and non-places forming a spectrum in children's refugee books rather than a dichotomy, mediated by the blank space and colour scheme.
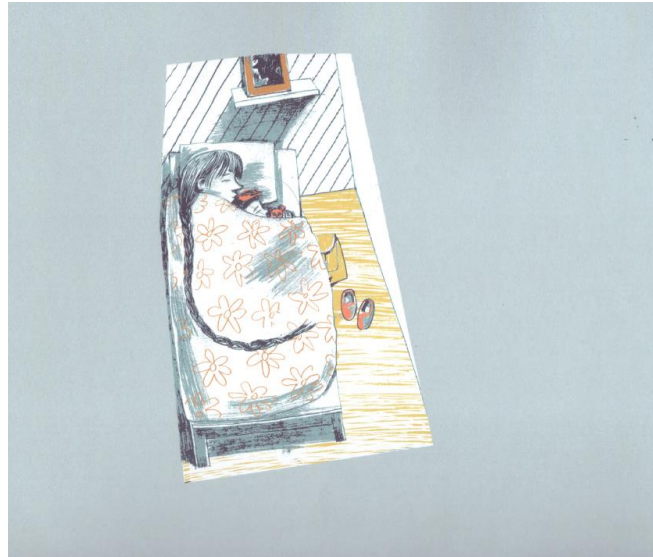
Fig. 6 *My Name is Not Refugee,* 11th doublespread, verso

So far, I have focused on the interpretation of blank space as an absence, however, it can also be perceived as presence. Similar to the way the distance or emptiness can be affectively charged, spaces on the page that are intentionally left blank can carry agency and transformative power in relation to the 'visible' part of the illustration as they "denote the passage of time, create emotion, and ask for participation in an emotional experience" (Holt 8). On the third doublespread of *My Name is Not Refugee*, for example, the white space forms the shape of a car around the child and his mother. The car, in this case, is also a non-place, its outline separating the characters from their home. The house is likewise depicted as fragmented, incomplete, not emerging from the surrounding white space but rather being gradually absorbed by it. This creates an illusion of memory, a hazy image of a once-familiar scene with only the elements evoking the strongest affective response still coming into focus: broken windows, abandoned rooms, streets cluttered with rubbish. This is further emphasised by the verbal text below the illustration on the recto: "Do you think you could live in a place where there is no water in the taps and no one to pick up the rubbish?" (3rd doublespread). In this last impression,

domestic spaces are depicted as unsuitable for living, deserted and dangerous, crossing into the realm of non-places.

Fig. 7 *My Name is Not Refugee,* 3rd doublespread, recto

The white space can be compared to the darkness in *The Journey,* which has connotations of war. These narratives offer two different interpretations of the refugee experience: the protagonists of *The Journey* are depicted as cornered, haunted, and overwhelmed by their surroundings; the spaces in the picturebook are stuffed and cluttered, always densely filled in with colours and textures permitting no vacant space in the image. Conversely, *My Name is Not Refugee* portrays the feeling of being lost, vulnerable, and tetherless. White space constructs "an environment devoid of nourishment and care" (Mallan 138), it renders the characters defenceless in the face of their future. In both cases, time and space become detached and incomprehensible. Such different approaches to the construction of non-places create different ideas of desired domestic idyll. In *The Journey*, the ideal home embodies vastness, freedom, curiosity, light-heartedness, and unity with nature – these criteria apply to the first doublespread and are subsequently reversed as the protagonists enter the "away". *My Name is Not Refugee*, on the other hand, depicts domesticity as synonymous with safety, privacy, boundaries, and stability. These values are subverted by means of blank white space from the very beginning of

the picturebook, however, they are briefly reestablished on the eleventh doublespread. As can be seen, solid colour spaces in picturebooks can be employed to restructure the visual chronotope, as they negotiate transitional spaces and establish affective spatial boundaries.

The usage of blank space as a means of focalisation is remarkably effective in *The Journey* because of its stark contrast with the highly detailed, vibrant illustrations of the picutrebook. This visual choice, in relation to domestic spaces, is evident on the seventh doublespread. On the verso, a room in a style typical for the picturebook is portrayed. This is the same room that is depicted on the sixth doublespread, however, it is now spatially and temporally transformed. The bookshelves, previously depicted as filled with books and elements of décor are partially emptied out, and a significant part of the image is taken up by a mountain of suitcases. The amount and size of the suitcases are positioned in an absurd contrast with the protagonists via the visual choice of upscaling (Painter et al. 37). The amount of space dedicated to the luggage also communicates the necessity of fitting your entire previous life in a suitcase, a more implicit variation of "What would you take?" question posed in *My Name is Not Refugee*. *My Name is Not Refugee,* in this case, assumes a realistic approach, attempting to convey the situation in a straightforward manner: "You can pack you own bag, but remember, only take what you can carry" (2nd doublespread, recto). *The Journey,* on the other hand, elicits young readers' cognitive and affective responses via imaginative play. The rational "take what you can carry" is substituted with the imagery of attempting to bring your entire previous life with you since it is impossible to decide which objects carry practical or emotional significance: "We don't want to leave but our mother tells us it will be a great adventure. *We put everything we have in suitcases* and say goodbye to everyone we know." (7th doublespread, recto, emphasis added). The spatial transformation that is happening to the domestic space on this doublespread can be described as compression. It is especially striking if we were to consider the way protagonists' place of dwelling was depicted on the first doublespread of the picturebook: as an entire city.

This way, home undergoes a transformation of city – house – room – suitcase – object – memory.

Fig. 8 *The Journey,* 7th doublespread, verso

The spatial dimension of the illustration also undergoes temporal changes. On the left side of the verso, animals can be seen spilling into the room, occupying the remaining space of the illustration. Readers can recognise the animals from the previous page, where the protagonists are depicted reading a book about the "safe place" where they are heading: "She [mother] shows us pictures of strange cities, strange forests and strange animals until she finally sighs, "We will go there and not be frightened anymore" (6th doublespread, recto). The characters are positioned at the centre of the image while around them an imaginary space is unfolding. This illustration is extremely engaging in its vibrancy, amount of details, and the portrayal of friendly-looking animals, who are watching the protagonists with curiosity. Thus, we can observe the children imagining their future life in a new place as an exciting one, full of adventures and discoveries. The colour palette of the illustration creates a sense of familiarity, using the same green and orange hues that are present in the house interior on the verso of same doublespread. A narrative of an idealised future is created on the image, of hopeful vision that the "away" will ultimately bring back towards "home". On the verso of the seventh doublespread, we can see the future

"intruding" on the present in the form of imaginary animals appearing in the room, transforming the space from familiar into strange. This is also the first example of imaginative play being used in the narrative as a means of reframing the events and rendering them more comprehensible. From now on, the fairytale-like elements will be a frequent motif in the picturebook.

On the recto, the verbal text is positioned in the middle of the white space, with only two figures present on the page: a cat on the left side and one of the children peeking out from the right, waving goodbye to the cat (see Fig. 9). Because of how cluttered and detailed illustrations in *The Journey* generally are, the amount of white space and the lack of details on this doublespread is overwhelming. It creates a vast distance between the two figures.
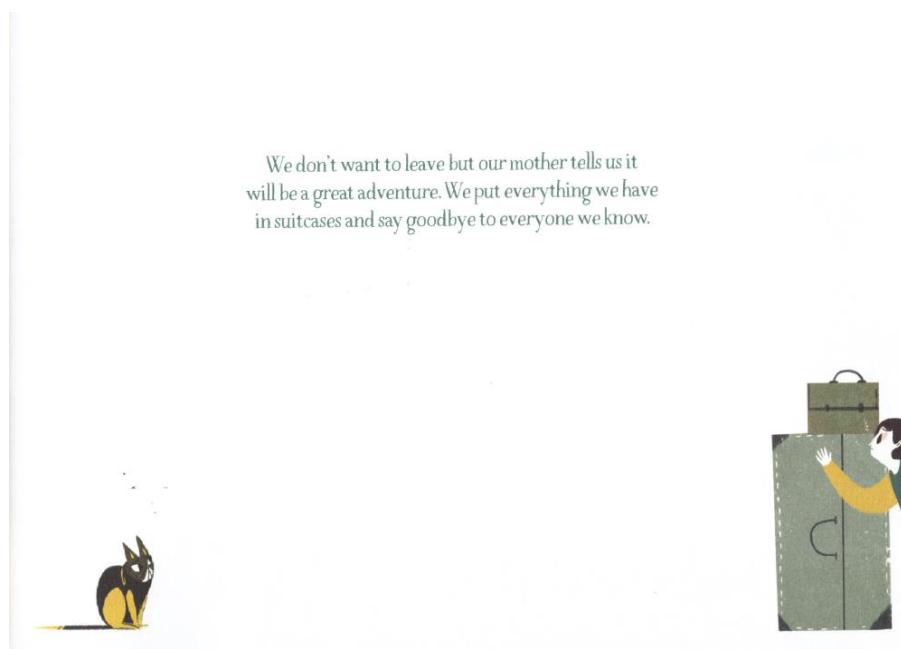

We don't want to leave but our mother tells us it will be a great adventure. We put everything we have in suitcases and say goodbye to everyone we know.

Fig. 9 *The Journey,* 7th doublespread, recto

The white space also focalises the cat, a family member who has to be left behind. Previously the cat was depicted as an integral part of domestic spaces, almost indiscernible from the interior. On this doublespread, its silhouette and colour palette stand out against the white backdrop. Similar to the way the context of displacement brings the notion of home into sharp

focus, this page functions as a sudden acknowledgement of the departure, of its finality and undeniability. Leaving home becomes an unambiguous fact, a completed action that has long-lasting consequences. Additionally, the image of the cat can be interpreted as the last embodiment of the kairic home on the page, as opposed to another focalised shape in the bottom right corner, a suitcase. The cat and the suitcase enter a semantic opposition with one another, which parallels the tension between the domestic chronotope and the chronotope of memory:

> The travel suitcase symbolizes the lack of belonging of the latest fugitives from the war, it is a conceptual container of everything that has been saved and preserved in memory of the home, a place, where everything is cozy and understandable. (Havrylenko-Rusak 114)

Here the blank space constructs a narrative non-place. It removes both images from the previous context and briefly suspends them at the transitional stage, depicting the pre-departure home as reduced to only two symbols. The two sides of this doublespread create a sequence, which captures the process of home unmaking. If homemaking "consolidates itself with each event of significance that adds to the sense of home by overcoming the obstacles which might diminish it" (Kellet 66 qtd. in Baxter and Brickell 135), home unmaking "casts a spotlight on these diminishing forces" (Baxter and Brickell 135). In this case, home is broken down to its simplest elements: the ones that can be brought along on the journey and the ones that cannot, both briefly facing each other before being separated by the act of departure.

Interestingly enough, the cat is a recurring symbol in three of the four analysed picturebooks. *My Name is not Refugee* features a rather similar scene, where a cat can be spotted looking inside the packed bags on the verso of the first doublespread (see Fig. 5) against the white background. Additionally, in both picturebooks cats appear on the doublespread dedicated to the scene of departure, which involves saying goodbyes to family members. This aligns with Nikolajeva's (2009) idea that cats in children's narratives mediate between "home" and "away",

similar to the way how "in Alice's imagination Dinah is a liminal figure, both cat and human, and a most tangible link between the strange Wonderland and the secure home" (257). Both *The Journey* and *My Name is Not Refugee* portray the act of parting with the family cat in parallel with the pivotal moment of the protagonists' entrance into the realm of non-places. Conversely, in *Story Boat*, the cat is constantly present in the illustrations, accompanying the protagonists on their journey. This can be connected to the narrative's underlying motif of bridging transitional and domestic contexts via homemaking practices.

Fig. 10 *Story Boat,* 7th doublespread

Similarly to *My Name is Not Refugee*, *Story Boat* is set predominantly in non-places, which are conveyed through the usage of blank space. Although the illustrations sometimes resemble a particular location, such as a forest on the first doublespread or a settlement on the ninth, they are generally decontextualised. Textures play a more important role in the visual text than shapes: the environment resembles a patchwork of various materials, patterns, sensations. It does not focus on a uniform plot but, rather, attempts to capture a spectrum of possible experiences, portray not only the expanse of the narrative, but also its depth. In this sense, the "story boat" carries multiple stories unfolding at home, away from it, and everywhere in between. If in *My Name is Not Refuge*, *The Day War Came*, and *The Journey* home in the

context of displacement assumes characteristics of a non-place, *Story Boat* constructs non-places as partially domestic. Whereas blank white space evokes a feeling of isolation and uncertainty in other picturebooks, S*tory Boat*'s blue background has an opposite effect: it renders the image cohesive and familiar. In this picturebook, space is mouldable, it can be transformed according to the needs and desires of the protagonists – a site of adventure, a temporary refuge, a memory.

5.1.2. Temporal construction of transitional spaces

Starting from the fifth doublespread of *The Journey*, the illustrations begin to follow a clear line of movement from left to right. This is first established by the silhouettes that we encounter on the recto of the fifth doublespread, which is the first mention of refugees in the story (see Fig 11) Later on, the same direction of movement is represented by birds, which are the reoccurring symbol of the picturebook, This parallel is firmly articulated on the last three doublespreads ("From the train I look up to the birds that seem to be following us…")

The other day, one of my mother's friends told her that many people are leaving. They are trying to escape to another country. A country far away with high mountains.

Fig. 11 *The Journey*, 5th doublespread, recto

The progression from the verso of the eighth doublespread to the recto of the ninth is the most temporally and spatially dynamic sequence in *The Journey*. It is emphasised in the verbal

narrative: "We leave at night to avoid being seen… and *keep moving for many days*." (8th doublespread, emphasis added), which creates continuity between the two sides of the doublespread. At the same time, the distance between the two parts of the text separated by an ellipsis emphasises the vastness of the distance covered by the protagonists. The scenery changes from dark blue trees to green fields, and this transformation of colour reflects the changes in time. The verso of the ninth doublespread uses bright shades of orange, green, and yellow to drastically change the setting and emphasise the diversity of locations passed by the characters. The variety of plants and animals in the illustrations has a similar effect. None of the used colour palettes, however, resembles the palette of the domestic space depicted in the beginning of the book. Thus, even the bright colours do not evoke a sense of happiness, peace, or security. Moreover, the limited range of used hues contributes to reducing the sense of familiarity (Painter et al. 39).

The importance of this sequence lies in its depiction of movement as an action unfolding both spatially and temporally. This allows for the visual representation of events spanning extensive periods of time, which is an uncommon element in childrens' picturebooks due to the limitations of the format. As Nikolajeva and Skott observe,

> various deviations from straight, chronological order, the so-called anachronies, are traditionally regarded as unsuitable for children, and have only recently become prominent in children's novels. Complex temporality is often limited in picturebooks because of their compact nature, which excludes long time spans. The vast majority of picturebooks have a short story time, often just one day or less. (165)

In this case, the emphasis is heavily put on the temporal dimension of the narrative. Not only is the passage of time acknowledged in the verbal text, but also it can be experienced by the readers alongside the characters, becoming more tangible.

Narratives of displacement are bound to be temporally complex. Moreover, shifts in the visual chonotope can always be positioned in relation to the domestic. The verbal text on the ninth doublespread of *The Journey* contextualises the spatio-temporal movement as the one separating the protagonists from home: "The further we go… the more we leave behind." This is visually emphasised by decreasing the amount of luggage that accompanies the characters on their journey. In this case, the artist combines the spatial, temporal, and material dimension of home to depict the process of home being unmade. Moreover, with each page the protagonists become progressively more exposed to the outside world: if on the verso of the eighth doublespread they can be seen in a car containing their belongings, the recto of the ninth doublespread portrays the entire family travelling by bicycle. Their path is taking them further and further away from home, from the source of safety and security which is no longer able to provide either. This sequence gradually transitions readers into the main conflict of refugee narratives: the conflict of safety and domestic spaces, where one cannot be provided by the other.

By incorporating fairytale-like elements in the world she creates, Francesca Sanna expresses the feeling of uncertainty and unfamiliarity in a way that would be suitable for the picturebook format and accessible to young readers. Vast natural environments, such as forests and oceans in *The Journey,* represent the expansive timeline of the way towards safety and, simultaneously, convey the idea of transitional non-places. Forests, mountains, and bodies of water often play the role of transitional, "threshold" spaces in folk tales: the hut of Baba Yaga, a mediator character, is located in the depths of the woods; rivers connect the realms of the living and the dead, humans and non-humans. According to Mary-Anne Potter (2018), forests preserve this function in written forms of literature as well: "trees are possessed of a liminal quality and this constitutes [...] their primary function within fantasy narratives" (12). It is important to keep in mind that in *The Journey* transitional spaces do not only embody mobility, but also continuously

broaden the spatial and temporal gap between the protagonists and their home. As observed by Manolessou and Salisbury (2011), each picturebook environment forms a unique relationship with the protagonists; for instance, "a visually complex and expansive environment, such as a forest or jungle, when combined with an inquisitive or adventurous character could generate a specific range of possible picturebook plots: playing, getting lost, an exploration or an adventure" (388). The narrative of *The Journey* explores forced migration as a process full of contradictions: although the spaces through which the story guides the readers look captivating and evoke a sense of wonder and fascination, the dominant emotions of the characters convey fear, uncertainty, and fatigue. This dissonance hinders readers' affective engagement with the setting as the focus shifts to the gaps in the narrative: "the journey" becomes introspective. Emotions come to the forefront of the narrative, whereas the setting remains secondary. This escalates the tension and accelerates the pace of the story, implicitly urging the turn of the page. The passage of time is disproportionate to the flow of space: intricate landscapes fly by in a blur of motion. Readers and characters share a sense of apprehension before the unknow, which slowly takes over the narrative, contrasting the structure and familiarity of domestic spaces.

Unlike *The Journey*, which adapts the narrative to the picturebook format, *The Day War Came* attempts to push the boundaries of multimodal storytelling. Page layout is an important component of the visual text in this picturebook as it affects both microstructure and macrostructure of the narrative. For the first time, the page layout drastically shifts on the sixth doublespread, which, instead of a full spread illustration, contains three parallel horizontal images, each crossing the gutter (see Fig. 11).
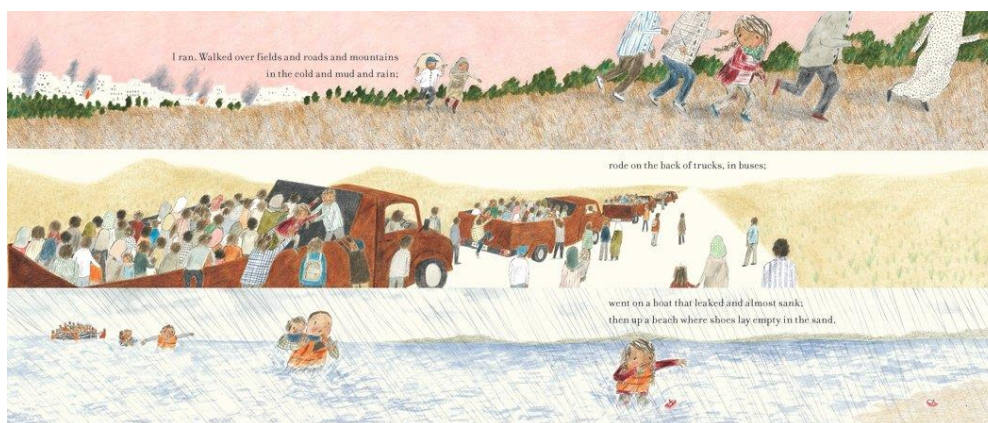
Fig. 12 *The Day War Came,* 6th doublespread

Verbal text accompanies each image, placed within its designated space on the page: "I ran. Walked over fields and roads and mountains in the cold mud and rain; rode on the back of trucks, in buses; went on a boat that leaked and almost sank; then up a beach where shoes lay empty in the sand." Parts of the text referring to different panels are separated by semicolons instead of full stops, which creates a sense of continuity: a sentence spanning days and countries. This effect is further intensified by the sentence structure, which mirrors the visual sequence, alternating between verbs ("ran", "walked", "rode", "went"), vehicles ("trucks", "buses", "boat"), locations ("fields", "roads", "mountains", "beach") in its reflection of mobility. In this case, the verbal text is not isolated; on the contrary, it is an integral part of the images, overlapping with certain visual elements, such as the rain on the third panel. In contrast to a similar sequence in *The Journey*, where readers are distanced from the illustrations due to the fast pace of the narrative encouraging them to turn the page, the sixth doublespread of *The Day War Came* enables readers' cognitive and affective engagement with both verbal and visual text. This is achieved by the usage of panels, which allow to depict several considerably temporally and spatially distant scenes as a part of the same illustration and concentrate readers' attention on the doublespread (Lambert 29). Moreover, the lack of frames separating the panels draws them closer together and "invites the reader into the picture" (Nikolajeva, Skott 62), furthering the coherence of the three images. This way, the layout of the page creates a sense

of an endless journey. Readers are faced with vast, sweeping sceneries that restructure the narrative chronotope, rendering time as just as boundless:

> art that crosses the gutter creates the perception of expanding a given moment in time as it invites the reader to linger on the larger picture. If space equals time, it is as though the picture is taking a long time (occupying a lot of space) to convey what it needs to say. (Lambert 29)

This stands in contrast to the realm of domestic, where time and space are contained and comprehensible. The scenes portrayed on the doublespread are tetherless, with no visible goal in sight. The panel in the middle, for instance, depicts a long winding road surrounded by fields, which eventually disappears over the horizon. An interesting aspect of this illustration is that its visual construction overlaps with the one of a kairic scene in view of implied "timelessness" and boundlessness of the image (Morrow 80). This way it places kairic spatio-temporal laws into a different context, employs them to elicit a completely different set of emotional responses while translating them into a language understandable for a children's picturebook.

Along the road, there is a line of people and cars. We can clearly see the first four cars, but the image is abruptly discontinued, interrupted by another two panels from the top and bottom. This leaves it up to readers' imagination to decide how long the road is, how many people are moving along it, and how much time will pass until they reach their next stop. This applies to the relationship between the individual panels as well, since "pictures are always discontinuous. From the visual text alone there is no way to judge how much time has passed between the two pictures" (Nikolajeva 2006 [2001], 157). The only signifiers of the passage of time on this doublespread are drastic differences in the colour of the sky and changing weather.

The states of waiting and boredom are familiar to children as contesting the usual temporality. The experience of displacement entails various forms of waiting: crossing borders, travelling for days, staying at temporary lodgings; waiting for documents to be checked, waiting for

transport to arrive, waiting for the opportunity to come back home. In each of these examples, the picturebook chronotope can be found unsettled, space remaining still while time is expanding, constrained only by the limits of readers' imagination. Under such circumstances, the passage of time becomes affectively charged, connected to such experiences as boredom, homesickness, loneliness, or even fear. Children are able to conceptualise these emotional responses via drawing on equivalent experiences intrinsic for their daily lives, be it spending hours in a hospital waiting room, expecting a parent or a guardian to pick them up from school, or being alone at a playground. Thus, children are provided with necessary tools to proceed with the following step in their engagement with the narrative: recontextualization of familiar spatio-temporal conditions and formation of an empathetic response.

The depiction of waiting begins after the moment of departure. In this way, two modes of perceiving time are immediately contrasted: kairic qualitative time of domestic spaces and the chronotope of displacement, where time retains the characteristics of cyclicity but becomes removed from the source of meaning, empty. On its fourth doublespread, *My Name is Not Refugee* drastically changes the mode of narration. Prior to that, each doublespread constituted an independent illustration, however, the fourth one depicts a sequence of actions performed by the same character. Each action is reiterated in the verbal text on the page: "We'll march and dance and skate and run and walk and walk and walk and wait and wait and wait and get up again and walk and walk…" (*My Name is Not Refugee*, 4th doublespread). This way, the scene seems to be playing on a loop with no explicit beginning or end. Repetitions emphasise the length and continuity of a particular action: "march", "dance", "skate", and "run" appear only once and create a dynamic sequence, whereas "wait" is verbally and visually protracted. Walking is depicted as the most time-consuming action; this is further accentuated in the interactive part of the page, a question addressed to the readers: "How far could you walk?" At

this point, time is instantly converted into space: "how long" becomes "how far", both elusive and indefinite but spreading wide across the picturebook's world.

The structure of the fourth doublespread in *My Name is Not Refugee* is implied by the invisible panels which separate one stage of the sequence from another. This layout establishes a clear vector of movement: from left to right. It begins with the image of the car on the recto of the previous doublespread and continues to affect the flow of the narrative until the very last page. The image of the protagonist reaching towards the outstretched hand of his mother completes the sequence on the fourth doublespread, however, it implies its further continuity. While the usage of implicit panels "allows the art to compress the depicted temporal space of a narrative [...] by showing a series of moments over time" (Lambert 29), the last unfinished action visually extends the compressed picturebook chronotope, permits it to pour out of the doubrespread, altering the way readers interpret the spatio-temporal relationship throughout the rest of the narrative.

The following doublespread achieves a similar effect via reversed dynamics between time and space. Time is suspended on the verso, where the protagonist and his mother can be seen seated in what resembles a waiting room. The characters, the chairs, the backpack, and the teddy bear constitute a uniform shape, which is highlighted by means of dramatic shadows and intense pencil strokes with stronger applied pressure. The scene appears heavy, static, as if "space had been trapped by time" (Augé 104). The verbal text introduces the feeling of boredom as another connotation of waiting: "Sometimes we will be by ourselves. It might get a bit boring." This way, this doublespread continues reimagining the passage of time as tangible. As noted by Vitus (2010), "while under normal circumstances, time is often phenomenologically and existentially implicit, when it is 'problematic' it seems to become visible: only then do we feel time and its implications" (33). For that reason, introducing alternative ways of engaging with time is

important for ensuring reader's awareness of it and their ability to put time into spatial perspective. This makes it possible for the narrative to articulate the distance separating the characters from their home within the picturebook constrains.

Story Boat approaches waiting as a dynamic state which has the ability to transform spatio-temporal relationships and provide individuals with agency. Waiting is not depicted as "empty" time, synonymous with boredom, nor does it suspend the temporality of the narrative. On the contrary, it is integrated into it as a meaningful and influential component: "Every week, We dream and draw, / Make and play, / Search for treasure, / Find our way / And grow, / And wait / And wait / And wait / Adding words to this story." (*Story Boat*, 16th doublespread). This way, waiting becomes meaningful, allowing for growth and development happen even in the periods of transition. Opening the verse with the kairic formula "every week" blurs the boundaries between transitional and domestic spaces, between the temporary and eternal. Waiting becomes a repetitive, circular action, incorporated into the routine. This illustrates the indefinite nature of protracted displacement, the temporal gap between forced migrants and their home growing not only in the past but also extending into the future; displacement is becoming cyclical, with no foreseeable end or beginning. The entirety of the narrative in *Story Boat* is set in the "in-between" state, however, we do not encounter the protagonists' previous place of dwelling nor the new one. This renders the notion of "in-between" irrelevant since it is not positioned as a threshold state in relation to 'before' and 'after' home, as required by the conventional narrative model of children's literature:

> 'Home' needs 'away' to define its meaning, and 'away' means nothing in particular if there is no 'home' to read it against. The ways in which these texts organize landscapes of home and away, and the way in which those organizations of space mirror other binary pairs such as child and adult, innocence and knowledge, and so on, imply a world held in stasis, its meanings always suspended between the two opposing poles and unable ever actually to move beyond them without ceasing to be children's literature. (Nodelman 2008, 65)

Instead, 'away' functions in *Story Boat* as an independent mode of being, bearing the characteristics of chronos and kairos, the transitional and domestic, place and non-place. Linear, dynamic illustrations with a clear direction of movement, such as the sequence of the first three doublespreads, alternate with static, contained images depicting scenes of domesticity. This dynamic is additionally emphasised in the verbal text: "*Here* isn't always the same. Sometimes it's *here* just for a moment." (*Story Boat*, 8th-9th doublespreads). This way, the story counteracts the idea of displacement as an inherently liminal state and portrays it as a complex experience that encompasses a number of ways in which one's relationship with home can be enacted. The protagonists' journey has unique temporality, which can be reconstructed by the readers along the spatial and affective dimension of the story. In *Story Boat*, precise spatial positioning of characters is unimportant, it is focalised as an abstract 'here', which has characteristics of home, transitional space, non-place, and memory at the same time. Temporally, however, it is always located in the present, which can be observed in the usage of the iterative present tense: "Every morning, / As things keep changing, / We sit wherever we are / And sip, sip, sip, / Sippy, sip, sip / Ahhhh / From this cup," (*Story Boat*, 4th doublespread) as well as the diegetic announcement "Here we are!" (1st doublespread, 19th doublespread) as the framing of the story. This discrepancy between temporality and spatiality is often reversed in the conventional representation of forced migration. Forced migrants are primarily defined by their spatial positioning, constructed as the spatial Other, always belonging elsewhere:

> A forced migrant comes into being as a marked location of difference, which arrests the body not only in movement but also in positioning itself spatially and relationally. The topos of difference is a topos of distrust and pity but hardly acceptance. The spatial location is always a 'there.' (Witteborn 1154-1155)

At the same time, the experience of forced migrants in 'here and now' is often discredited as they are discursively immobilised, confined to their country of origin and to their past:

protracted displacement is equated with perpetual liminality. For that reason, to subvert the stereotypical view of displacement in children's refugee narratives it is crucial to reframe not only the category of 'home' but also the one of 'away' in view of their inextricable interconnectedness. In *Story Boat*, it is done by means of distancing the narrative from precise spatial organisation and relying on the dimension of time as a way of organising the story.

5.2. Limited perspective

As a means of heightening spatio-temporal tensions in the narrative, picturebook authors implicitly remind the readers of the protagonists' limited perspective. The child protagonist, who is often the narrator, maintains a certain level of distance from the surrounding events, which is predetermined by their previous experience or lack thereof. Maria Nikolajeva argues that for that reason "any child narrator is by definition unreliable" (Nikolajeva 1998, 228) and it is important for researchers to be aware of the fact that children's literature is "presented from the viewpoint of innocence" (Nodelman qtd. in Nikolajeva 1998, 229). At the same time, scholars' opinions on the likelihood of encountering an unreliable narrator in children's literature are rather conflicting, ranging from it being an extremely rare rhetorical device (McGillis 30) to an extremely common one. While approaching children's picturebooks on the refugee experience, I would agree with Nikolajeva and assume general unreliability of any child narrator. In this section, I would like to briefly consult several examples of the narrator's unreliability and the ways in which they transform the picturebook chronotope in its expression of the protagonists' temporal and spatial distance from home.

Fig. 13 *The Journey,* 13th doublespread.

The thirteenth doublespread of *The Journey* is an interesting example of picturebook storytelling engaging temporal and spatial dimensions as well as the narrator's unreliability to achieve strong affective investment. Two images are shown side-by-side, juxtaposing their identical composition and drastically different ambience. The mother figure is focalised in both illustrations. If we compare her character design in this doublespread with her other appearances in the book, we can see that the length of her hair has suddenly changed. On the one hand, such adjustments in the protagonists' design could signify the passage of time, however, I would argue that this particular artistic choice has spatial rather than temporal connotations. As the mother's hair reaches all the way down to her feet and encompasses her entire body, the silhouette it creates forms an enclosed space within the page which contains the children and separates them from the outer world. This briefly provides a sense of safety and comfort as the protagonists are rendered untouchable.

The affective component of this scene can be compared to the one of the eleventh doublespread in *My Name is Not Refugee,* where the protagonist and his mother are able to peacefully fall asleep, as they reach the safety of four walls. Interestingly enough, the mother's hair in this illustration is also arranged in the manner that creates an additional enclosed space around the

child. In both narratives, the lost sense of home, safety, stability, and belonging is briefly reconstructed via the spatial positioning of characters in relation to the external world. This is linked to the view of home as "a haven or refuge […] a confined space […] In contrast, the outside is perceived as an imposing, if not threatening or dangerous space. It is more diffuse, less defined" (Mallet 70-71). Although the interpretation of domestic spaces as a "haven" is a rather problematic one, as it perpetuates a uniform, highly idealised reading of home, it is often employed in children's picturebooks, where home is almost synonymous with the world. In refugee narratives, however, the direct association of home with safety assumes a different meaning as the danger coming from the external world becomes literal, tangible. Each space becomes a threshold between threat and security, and while the material home cannot provide refuge anymore, it remains a symbol of it. The mother figure in *The Journey* in this scene embodies the idealised, comforting notion of home by constituting an alternative space which retains properties of a safe haven.

The role of a parent in children's refugee narratives fluctuates, however, parent figures are always inextricably connected to domestic spaces. Reimer points out "the metaphorical equivalence between the house and the mother" (Reimer 106) as they are "both literal and figurative sites for young people to mother or nurture themselves in children's books" (Reimer 106). This tendency is expressed linguistically as well, for example, in the interchangeable usage of terms "homeland" and "motherland" or "fatherland". It equates one's home and parental figure semantically as they both link a person to the place of their origin. The association between parental and domestic is also established by psychoanalysis (Reimer 106). Both mother figure and domestic spaces are seminal for the formation of one's identity since the essence of our birth is the transition from one to the other: from mother to home, which remain semantically inseparable.

The thirteenth doublespread of *The Journey* provides a challenge for young readers in its sudden switch from one storytelling mode to another. If previously the protagonists' movement and actions were urging the turn of the page, this scene briefly suspends the time to introduce a more advanced characterisation. So far, the illustrations depicting the protagonists' journey spanned days, which was emphasised both by the text and the implied passage of time reflected in the setting. The thirteenth doublespread, however, focuses on a smaller time frame, two illustrations being, perhaps, a few hours apart. The passage of time here carries more affective value. It is done by showcasing the transformative power that the temporal dimension has over spatial. The more time passes, the darker the night gets, the more unrecognisable the space around the protagonists becomes. The image on the verso depicts a whimsical forest with warm-coloured leaves, fireflies as the source of light, and a curious fox which was introduced earlier in the narrative. On the recto, however, the same image appears to have a darker, colder colour scheme, with most plants fading into the pitch-black background. This affects the way readers are able to relate to the image as "the more different colours are present in the image, the greater the sense of the familiar, since we usually experience the world day to day in all its variety of colour" (Painter et al. 39). The familiarity of the left image is juxtaposed with the obscurity of the right one, and this transformation aligns with the temporal changes that take place. The silhouettes of the protagonists are framed by the hands reaching out of the darkness and red eyes. This mirrors the war swallowing the town where main characters used to live in the beginning of the story. The most striking transformation, however, happens to the mother. Her eyes are wide open, with a recognisable expression of fear signified by the positioning of her eyebrows and mouth, tears streaming from her eyes. This creates a strong dissonance with the verbal elements of the image: "But mother is with us and she is *never scared*. We close our eyes and fall asleep" (*The Journey*, 12th doublespread, emphasis added). The text does not contradict the visual narration, as it only reveals what the children cannot see. In this case, Francesca

Sanna introduces a more complex relationship of the reader and the unreliable narrator. It deals with multiple levels of the story and "in order to grasp these different levels, readers need both broad world knowledge and theory of mind to decode the unreliable narrator's strategies, which they use to reveal or conceal their individual perspectives and attitudes" (Kümmerling-Meibauer 119). Implementing the narrator's unreliability in children' picturebooks proves to be effective in engaging children in a dialogue, asking questions and attempting to answer them, allowing for confusion to ensue. In this example, the protagonists' limited perspective is employed to communicate the affective implications of spatio-temporal distance from home.

At times, cognitive and affective responses of readers are provoked by what remains off the page rather than what is depicted. In *My Name is Not Refugee*, for example, it is done via the removal of the setting which, as was discussed in the previous chapters, enables the construction of transitional spaces. However, another important function of the reduced setting is reflecting "the child's limited experience of the world" (Nikolajeva, Skott 63). In the context of war and displacement, children find themselves separated from everything they know, from the sparse landmarks that formed the foundation of their world. *My Name is Not Refugee* recreates this deeply confusing, devoid of guidelines or beaten paths experience. Similarly to the protagonist, readers are stranded amidst the white space without any explicit spatial or temporal signifiers. Precise 'where' or 'when' suddenly become unimportant, secondary, fading into the background while the emotional journey comes to the forefront. Sometimes, we can encounter hints of places, such as a door on the fifth doublespread which fills an entirety of the recto; however, they are left unidentified, meaningless in their obscurity. Each place is implicitly juxtaposed to home, where everything is tangible, familiar, and organised into a coherent universe of meanings.

Whereas in *Story Boat, The Journey*, and *My Name is Not Refugee* the parental figures are shown to be accompanying children*, The Day the War Came* depicts the child protagonist travelling alone. The family members are present in the opening scene, embodying not only the child's sense of security and protection but also her sense of belonging. The presence of parents is an intrinsic component of the domestic scene since "children's ideas and feelings of home are largely constituted through affective relationships of connectedness with family members" (Walker 213). The opening sequence of the picturebook captures this by portraying a series of routine activities rooted in familial relations: "[...] my father sang my baby brother back to sleep. My mother made my breakfast, kissed my nose and walked with me to school" (1st doublespread). The sequence is framed by the imagery of flowers on the windowsill, which opens the verbal text of the picturebook: "The day war came there were flowers on the windowsill" (1st doublespread). As was discussed in the previous chapters, the flowers play an important role in the story as a symbol of home unmaking, of the disturbed domestic idyll. However, they can also be discussed as communicating more subtle processes, such as loss of or separation from one's family. As Walker (2022) points out, "children's family relationships are produced, communicated and undermined through the 'stuff' within their homes, creating feelings of inclusion and exclusion from their new domestic environments" (211). While the book touches upon the topics of death and violence, the loss of parents is not discussed explicitly. It is only on the fifth doublespread when we see the protagonist addressing her loss: "I can't say the words that tell you / about the blackened hole / that had been my home. / All I can say is this: / war took everything. / war took everyone. / I was ragged, bloody and alone." Positioned underneath the words, the very same flower pot, now broken, as a final confirmation of everything that the protagonist knew as home being gone, the final step in home unmaking. In this case, our perspective as readers is limited by the protagonist herself: "I can't say the words". The picturebook suggests that we try to listen to the silence, sit with unknowing,

acknowledge our own limited perspective. We are only able to reconstruct the events via the image of flowers: the material link to domestic spaces. This represents "the entanglement of family and material home(un) making practices" while engaging with "domestic materialities [as] a significant means through which the (re)-and-(un)making of children's familial relationships in post-separation is performed" (Walker 211).

On the first doublespread of *The Day War Came*, a tangible dissonance between the protagonist's and reader's perspective is established. It is reflected in the gap between the verbal and visual text encompassed by the phrase "the day war came". First and foremost, this remark transports the scene into a different context and alters readers' spatial perception of it. For example, they might be compelled to look for signs of war in the image, or the scene might seem fleeting and insignificant against the backdrop of the first line's immensity. Furthermore, opening the narrative with "the day war came" temporally relocates the depicted scene in the past. The protagonist's unawareness about the beginning of the war in the visual text as opposed to the framing of the verbal text suggests that the domestic scene depicted on the doublespread belongs to the realm of memory. As was already mentioned, this realisation makes the implications of kairic, eternal time impossible, since 'home' as a starting point of the journey is already transformed by the context of war. The visual chronotope of the picturebook becomes the chronotope of memory, which transforms the reading experience into an experience of remembering and reconstructing. This is further intensified on the second doublespread (see Fig.13): "That morning I learned about volcanoes. I sang a song about how tadpoles turn at last to frogs. I drew a picture of a bird. Then, *just after lunch*, war came." (*The Day War Came*, 2nd doublespread, emphasis added).

Fig.13. *The Day War Came*. 2ⁿᵈ doublespread (verso)

Here, war is placed by the protagonist within her daily routine via the temporal marker "just after lunch", uncomfortably connecting the two contexts: of war and peaceful life, and, at the same time, emphasising the suddenness of the events in the eyes of a child. The visual elements of this doublespread contribute to constructing the protagonist's perspective as limited. The implications of war escalate as they begin to appear in the visual text: out of the school window, it is possible to see approaching helicopters, which are out of sight of the protagonist. She has a happy expression and looks up dreamily while her classmates are absorbed in their drawings. The scene inside the classroom is removed from the context of war, but the verbal text transforms it. It intensifies the image and makes the readers pay attention to the helicopters, to the slightly darker colour of the sky, and even to the volcano drawings displayed on the windowsill, their eruptions now looking ominous against the cityscape.

By making us aware of the limitations of our own point of view, refugee narratives remind us that "only by recognising the limits and positions of knowing, can the diverse experiences of refugees be heard" (Pesonen 15). Similarly to the protagonists, we are left spatially and temporally disoriented, removed from the structure provided by the familiar and domestic; having no other choice than to create our own meanings in the world of contradictions.

Additionally, it positions the visual chronotope within the dimension of memory, allowing the readers to follow the narrative along several temporal axes: the past as depicted events, the present as the voice of the narrator, and memory as a space of reassessing the story through the prism of new experience.

6. Old home / new home? The problematics of finished journey

It does not always feel right, for stories to have an ending. Should they not lead to more stories, with hundreds of new voices emerging on every turn, all tangled together in the whirlpool of intertextuality? Should they not grow, and struggle, and smoulder, only to be set ablaze by a simple need to be heard? We rejoice at question marks staring back at us from the final lines, because they remind us of the boundlessness of the story. However, in the realm of picturebooks, there is always the last page: where dinner is waiting on the table, lessons are learnt, and if you caught a cold somewhere along the journey, you will be tucked into bed, bitter camomile tea or acorn coffee warming your hands. As Nikolajeva (2018) points out, "the consonant closure, or the conventional happy ending, is something that many adults immediately associate with children's literature, and that many scholars put forward as an essential requirement in a good children's book" (171). The satisfactory finale functions as a way to bring children back to reality (Gilead 277), make the story relatable and accessible, reinstate didactic elements by promising a potential reward (Pape 184), and create a sense of stability (Rovan 105). Home plays a central role in the achievement of these objectives, being a link between the past, present, and future, a place to rest, to reflect on the journey and the changes it prompted.

Most importantly, coming back home signifies the final phase of character's initiation, a crucial stepping stone in yet another curve of identity development. The sight of the familiar space on the last pages ensures us that the adventure was successful. This internalised anticipation of

return follows us into the realm of children's literature from the ancient lines of fairytales, ballads, myths, and rituals. As a result, home and ending in children's literature often appear synonymous with one another:

> Narrative adventures and misadventures that take a child away from home often are resolved with the child's return to it, so that theorists of children's literature sometimes use 'home' to describe the full narrative closure of conventional texts for children, a sense analogous to its use in the language of games and computers. (Reimer 13)

Home is the ultimate destination, the most grandiose discovery. No matter how much time has passed or how vast the distance grew, it is an unchanging objective in children's picturebooks. It is possible to endlessly discuss the presence of home in such narratives. However, what can be said about its absence?

In the same way the context of displacement reshapes the notion of home in children picturebooks' narratives, it reshapes the notion of the ending. The pattern home-away-home is no longer applicable and can take on many variations. A common interpretation of the narratives dealing with the refugee experience claims that instead they follow the underlying structure of "home-away-new home" (Warnqvist 62), however, as this analysis will demonstrate, it is not always an appropriate conclusion. However tempting it might be to suggest that for every 'old' home that is left behind, a 'new' one is waiting somewhere out there, one has to be mindful of the binary opposition that it is at work. In reality, the old and new places of dwelling are not interchangeable, they form a complex relationship, which leaves an everlasting impact on the identity of the displaced person.

If we were to juxtapose home and 'new home' in the context of displacement, I would once again refer to Marc Augé's definition of the relationship between place and non-place which captures a similar type of tension: "the first is never completely erased, the second never totally completed; they are like palimpsests on which the scrambled game of identity and relations is

ceaselessly rewritten" (Augé 79). Thus, these concepts are not interchangeable or mutually exclusive. Furthermore, they have transformative power over each other, which can unfold in each of the dimensions of home. Surveying their complex interrelations is crucial for understanding the spatio-temporal organisation of refugee narratives with regard to the idea of home.

6.1. Linearity and circularity in refugee narratives

The concepts of journey and displacement are often used in parallel with one another or even interchangeably, as can be seen in the title of one of the picturebooks discussed in this paper: *The Journey*. However, it is important to make a clear semantic distinction between these two notions. Each time the word "journey" is used, there is an implication of "towards". In this case, mobility is a vector with a determined direction, a movement between "here" and "there". We do not necessarily come back to where we started, but we always reach a particular destination. In the case of displacement, the destination is absent. The spatio-temporal "journey" of a displaced person assumes a direction not "towards" but "away from". The anchor of such movement would be located in the past, not in the future, thus, such narratives have to be approached retrospectively, reconstructed as memories rather than traced chronologically.

 The problematisation of referring to the experience of displacement as a "journey" also challenges the notion of a "new home" as a goal or destination. As was discussed in the previous chapters, the conventional narrative model of a children's picturebook is not applicable for picturebooks dealing with the refugee experience, where "away" and "home" appear to be semantically merged.

The refugee experience is intertwined with memory and practices of remembering. This can manifest itself in many ways: encountering reminders of home, or, on the contrary, noticing gaps and inconsistencies between the current and former places of dwelling; having to relive

the initial trauma through leaving behind locations made familiar via homemaking practices; facing discrimination and experiencing social, legal, and psychological consequences of displacement long after reaching safety; dealing with complex grief. In the narrative of *The Day War Came*, some of these dimensions are explored through the multimodal representation of the protagonist's complex temporal relationship with home and belonging. For her, reaching safety does not erase the tangible presence of war in people's lives: "But war had followed me. It was underneath my skin, behind my eyes, and in my dreams. It had taken possession of my heart." (*The Day War Came*, 7th doublespread). After the temporal and spatial expansiveness of the previous doublespread, the scene of the protagonist's arrival to a temporary settlement is overwhelmingly static. In sharp contrast to the three panels depicting three different locations, the layout of the seventh doublespread briefly returns to the full spread illustration. Two thirds of the image are comprised of the sky and vague outlines of the city, and only the bottom third is crowded by small grey huts. The illustration can be characterised by "removed" ambience due to its limited palette of soft, muted colours, the lack of sharp shadows or contrasting shapes (Painter et al. 39). The focus is diffused, uncertain: for the first time, the readers' eyes are not purposefully guided across the pages. This creates an unexpected change of pace, allots some time for emotional processing of the narrative. At the same time, the imagery has a similar effect to the white space in *My Name is Not Refugee* – it unsettles the picturebook chronotope, rendering the spatial and temporal positioning of characters ambiguous, indeterminate.

The location the protagonist arrives at – where the presumable end of the journey is reached – is overtly depicted as a non-place, non-home. Its description in the verbal text emphasises the lack of comfort: "a corner with a dirty blanket and a door that rattled in the wind" (*The Day War Came*, 7th doublespread). This place might provide the refuge from war, but it does not protect from the outside world. It is contested in many ways: it has to be shared with strangers, it exposes its dwellers, it rejects subjectivity. The human figures that can be spotted on the

doublespread are rendered impersonal, unimportant; they are barely distinguishable from the background andswallowed by the buildings. Space and its dwellers are no longer in harmony; space is dominating, refusing to change or be changed. The most striking detail on this doublespread are the two washing lines that are visible both on the verso and recto of the image, the colour of each clothing item causes it to stand out against the grey walls of the houses. Despite the fact that the environment is explicitly juxtaposed with the idyll of the opening scene, this singular shared element reminds us about its function as a place of dwelling. For readers, it is an opportunity to critically approach the notion of home and distinguish it from other possible spatial constructs.

Similar to the way domestic spaces cannot always guarantee security, reaching safety in refugee narratives does not equate to the conclusion of the journey and the return home. The dissonance between the "narrative expectation of the beginning, middle, and end" (Duckels and Jacques 132) results in the subversion of the concluded narrative model (home-away-home). The aforementioned example of the seventh doublespread dealt with the enactment of this dissonance on microstructural level of *The Day War Came,* within the constraints of a singular doublespread. However, it is also important to recognise the role of macrostructure.

The first two doublespreads of *The Day War Came* follow the same composition: an illustration on the left-hand side taking up three fourth of the space, ending abruptly with a clear frame separating the text and the image. In this case, the visual text and the verbal text act as independent units that can be accessed at the pace determined by the reader. This doublespread establishes a clear and coherent structure, which is reinstated on the subsequent illustration (2nd doublespread). This contributes to the formation of reader expectations: the act of turning the page becomes somewhat predictable as readers adjust to their eyes being guided by the doublespread layout. However, the third doublespread, following the line "Then, just after lunch, war came", differs from the previous ones significantly. The boundary between the text

and the visual elements disappears, and the illustration begins to take up the entire doublespread, swallowing the composition. It becomes impossible to read the words without facing the image. This type of composition is continued up until the eighth doublespread, where we can observe, once again, the clear fragmentation of visual and textual elements. The eighth doublespread coincides with the protagonist reaching a temporary place of dwelling and becoming aware of its safety. As a result, the doublespread acquires the semblance of structure which was characteristic for domestic spaces in the beginning of the picturebook. The text and the image are once more separated by means of blank space, allowing the readers to perceive them as independent elements. The most significant difference between the layouts of the first and the eighth doublespread is the usage of panels in the latter. The only other instance of *The Day War Came* implementing panels for page composition can be seen on the sixth doublespread (see Fig. 11), which encompassed the most temporally and spatially expansive part of the narrative. Vertical panels of the eighth doublespread, combined with iterations in the verbal text ("I walked and walked"), have a similar effect of compressing the visual chronotope and enabling the narrative to portray several temporally and spatially distant scenes. At the same time, the usage of frames and the visual choice of downscaling (Painter et al. 44) of the protagonist in relation to the setting renders the scene emotionally distant. This way, the spaces in the narrative continue to bear the characteristic of non-places even past the protagonist reaching a new place of dwelling.

Finally, the ninth doublespread references the second both via mirroring its composition and repeating the phrasing of the verbal text: "I came to a school. I looked in through the window. They were learning all about volcanoes, singing and drawing birds." However, now the protagonist is positioned outside of the classroom, witnessing children engaging in the same activities that she used to do during the peaceful times. This way, the opportunity for the story coming full circle appears: the potential for home-away-(new) home, as implied by the parallels

in two scenes. An expectation is set for the readers, that upon the turn of the page, a reinvented domestic scene could be found, bearing the same connotation of comfort, routine, and safety as the opening scenes of the picturebook.

However, the following doublespread subverts this expectation: "I went inside. My footsteps echoed in the hall. I pushed the door and faces turned towards me but the teacher didn't smile. She said, 'There is no room for you, you see. There is no chair for you to sit on. You have to go away.' *And then I understood that war had got here too.*" (*The Day War Came*, 10th doublespread, emphasis added). The final sentence of the verbal text on the tenth doublespread is a pivotal moment of the picturebook. It precedes the darkest doublespread of the story, where the boundary between verbal and visual text once again disappears, and now the mirrored scene is not one of peace and domesticity but one of loss and fear. The eleventh doublespread recreates the affective value of the fourth via the spatial positioning of the protagonist and inverted colours of the verbal text: white on black, instead of black on white.

The Day War Came overtly questions the notion of a 'completed' refugee journey and portrays it as a rather gradual process of placemaking and rediscovering the meaning of one's belonging. Similar motifs can be observed in *My Name is Not Refugee*. The protagonists reach their new place of dwelling on the eleventh doublespread: "a place where we are safe and we can unpack", however, the story does not end there. Instead, the 'new' home and 'old' home are juxtaposed via the realm memory: "What things would remind you of your new home?" (*My Name is Not Refugee*, 11th doublespread). On the same doublespread, the image of a cat reappears, drawing a parallel between the current scene and the scene of departure. This way, 'new' home is not yet fully discovered, however, the 'old' one is not entirely left behind. The latter fills the former with meaning, closes the gap of unfamiliarity. Similar to *The Day War Came* and *Story Boat*, the narrative coming full circle does not have a finalising effect on the story: instead, it implies continuity, inherent circularity of one's relationship with the notion of home in the context of

the trauma of displacement. Taking the multidimensionality of home into consideration is crucial for understanding its construction as a destination in refugee narratives: its spatial and temporal coordinates form a complex relationship with its relationality. As can be seen in the aforementioned scene, memory plays an important role in organising the dimensions of home and reestablishing their correlation. It is the experience of reenacting the domestic that is focalised in refugee narratives, as opposed to the experience of rediscovering it, common for children's literature. The image of the child protagonist interacting with a cat in a new context of safety evokes the scene of the family members parting in the beginning of the story: one memory is created and defined by another.

Although the protagonists' journey in children's picturebooks that engage with the topic of displacement is rarely brought to a close, the last pages offer young readers a glimpse of hope which is sometimes enclosed in the elusive notion of "new home". The final doublespread of *The Journey* highlights the parallel between refugees and migrating birds drawn by the narrator and introduces the idea of a new home as a bittersweet and distant concept: "I hope, one day, like these birds, we will find a new home. A home where we can be safe and begin our story again." (*The Journey*, 21st doublespread). Both homes, 'old' and 'new' are temporally removed, one located in the past and the other in the future, beyond the final page of the story, beyond the endpaper, and even the back cover. At the same time, they are one and the same, the omnipresent, auratic home, which is continuously reinstated by homemaking practices stemming from one's idea of belonging.

Alongside the hope for a new life in a safe, comfortable place, there is another hope: for the war to end. This way, although the journey might have a clear goal, we realise that the story will not end there. The lives of the protagonists will keep being affected by the aftermath of the war that drove them out of their homeland, and the actual destination would not be a new home but peace. In *The Journey*, this idea is articulated on the seventeenth doublespread. While the

imagery of *The Journey* tends to have fantasy-like elements and explore the role of imaginative play in children's processing of the traumatic events, the illustration of the seventeenth doublespread is the most detached one from the reality, focusing on the inner state of the characters. The individual hope of each character is depicted as an abstract creature resembling a falling star, standing out starkly against the dark background. Once again, the "splash in ambience" is employed to articulate crucial changes in the narrative, however, now it is done in a reversed manner: light on dark instead of dark overtaking light (Painter et al. 40). Their size and quantity is upscaled in relation to the protagonists, who are barely visible, the outline of a boat lost in the background. This way, hope is brought to a forefront, and once again, it is closely linked to children's ability to engage with their surroundings in a creative manner, to dream.

The notions of new home and new hope can be united by the idea of belonging. The desire to belong fulfils not only the fundamental needs of safety and stability, but also emotional needs for the community who is ready to not only accept, but understand, process, and bear witness:

> Diaspora [...] is characterized by the way in which dispersed communities connect themselves to each other and to the homeland by forging relationships across space and time through a shared performative (habitual and mnemonic) construction of time-space: a shared chronotope. (Peeren 73)

The role of community is emphasised in each of the analysed picturebooks. For instance, *Story Boat* explores the idea of the shared chronotope via community practices of enacting traditions and storytelling: "*Here* is a song that everyone can sing" (12th doublespread). *My Name is Not Refugee*, on the other hand, focuses on building relationships within a new community, primarily through language acquisition: "And soon those strange words will start to make sense" (12th doublespread). In both cases, however, hope, community, and belonging are closely entwined as fundamental components of homemaking.

6.2. Home(un)making

Home is a process. If one is forced to leave the space they identify as such, does the process ever stop? The practices of homemaking are deeply rooted in our ability to adapt, but even more so – in our ability to hope and to remember. Surveying the multimodal construction of home in the context of homemaking has the potential to provide valuable insights into children's picturebooks dealing with the refugee experience, as it provides an alternative to approaching them as reaching their resolution at the point of 'new' home. In this thesis, processes of homemaking and unmaking are viewed as intrinsically interconnected, enabling one another (Baxter and Brickell 135). This is captured in the term home(un)making, introduced by Joshua Paul (2022) to describe a "constantly shifting, precarious balance between homemaking and home-unmaking" (151). The aim of this subchapter is to answer the question of how the domestic chronotope can be reestablished in the narrative and what can the process of home(un)making reveal about the fundamental components of home as a spatio-temporal category.

Home(un)making practices and resilience are the main motifs of *Story Boat*. This is emphasized in the verbal text which reflects constant transformation, both temporal and spatial: "*Here* isn't always the same. Sometimes it's *here* just for a moment" (*Story Boat*, 8th-9th doublespreads). "Here", italicised in the verbal text of the picturebook, is the focal point of the narrative. The story has a grounding effect on its readers while seamlessly balancing the chronotope of memory with the one of "here and now", both enacting the domestic under the circumstances of displacement. The narrative's emphasis on the *present* and on *presence* enables emotional engagement with the notion of home, which reaches beyond the linear temporality and can be "simultaneously made and unmade" (Baxter and Brickell 140). Home is portrayed as a result of creative processes, an imaginative play where rules, goals, and limitations are established by the children themselves. Readers are invited to abandon their role as observers and to actively

participate in the playful storytelling. This facilitates their identification with characters and processing of the story. As Nikolajeva (2014) emphasises,

> the words 'here' and 'now' are deictic shifters, and unless they are unequivocal, as they inevitably become in a present-tense narrative, they account for the complexity of narrative that demands reader's attention and imagination—that is, cognitive activity. From the cognitive point of view, it implies that present-tense narratives offer less resistance to readers. (88)

In the context of refugee narratives, this means that the present tense and the spatial positioning of "here" can be used as a chronotope shared between readers and fictional characters, which serves as a starting point of discussing, negotiating, establishing, and understanding home.

In *Story Boat*, the protagonists focus on specific material objects, symbols through which they are able to invoke the domestic: a cup, a blanket, a paper boat. In Nikolajeva's (2015 [1996]) terminology, they can be considered artifacts (ch.5), which represent a certain time and space without necessarily belonging to it. They restore, for a brief period of time, kairic momentum: "*Here* is a cup. / Old and fine, warm as hug. / Every morning, / As things keep changing, / We sit wherever we are / And sip, sip, sip […] / From this cup" (4th doublespread). In this example, the spatial signifier "here" is constructed as a particular moment in time, an experience which would otherwise be spatially decontextualised: drinking from an old cup. The adjective "old" locates the artifact in the distant past, connecting the process of homemaking to the acts of revisiting, remembering, retelling. Thus, the spatial and temporal dimension of the narrative become briefly reunited, resulting in an idyllic scene, which is firmly defined on the subsequent doublespread: "And this cup is a home" (5th doublespread). This is the only time the word "home" is used in this picturebook, concluding the first sequence of imaginative play and setting the tone for the ones to follow. The interplay between visual and verbal text on this doublespread is particularly interesting: the dynamic scene of the protagonists flying across the ocean creates a dissonance with the invoked imagery of the domestic. The two contexts – of

home and displacement, stability and mobility – are bridged with the symbol of a cup which, in the illustration, carries the children and their cat across the waves. The artifact linking the protagonists to their home becomes a chosen imaginary vehicle, a pre-condition to their mobility. While the journey continues, it is underpinned by the idea of home, as a memory, a presence, and a hope.

Both the macrostructure and microstructure of *Story Boat* follow a circular pattern. The narrative unfolds between two identical declarations of spatial positioning: "Here we are". On the first doublespread, the formula becomes diegetic as the protagonists announce their presence to people waiting for them on the land. The scene lacks context, it is virtually impossible to tell if the protagonists returned to their original place of dwelling or reached an entirely different place far away; if the people expecting them are their families, friends, or strangers; if this is their final destination or merely a stop beyond which a new journey awaits. Here, the readers' imagination is once again put in a privileged position where the distinction between 'old' home and 'new' home becomes irrelevant: both are possible at the same time, in the shared chronotope of "here and now".

The structure of each individual doublespread is also based on iterations: the seemingly "linear" journey of the protagonists in actuality consists of kairic scenes that cannot be chronologically identified. The opening formulas of "every morning", "every night", "every evening", "every day" establish a sense of routine. At the same time, each of them is set side by side with the experience of displacement and instability: "as things keep changing", "when the world feels not quite cozy, / and everyone seems weary / from hoping and hurrying", "as the sky grows dark", "when the weather is nice, / or gray and stormy". The two contexts, however, are not depicted to be mutually exclusive; one chronotope is created within/despite another.

In *The Day War Came,* the image of a chair is a recurring motif: it is featured on the front cover, the title page, and the dedication page. Additionally, it constitutes the pattern on the endpaper which puts it in a "privileged position before and after the story" (Duran and Bosch 123). Before the first page is turned, empty chairs are focalised as a meaningful symbol. Their significance for the narrative revealed on the two final doublespreads and foreshadowed on the tenth doublespread: "I pushed the door and faces turned towards me but the teacher didn't smile. She said, 'There is no room for you, you see. There is no chair for you to sit on. You have to go away.' And then I understood that war had got here too." This way, readers are introduced to the central conflict of the story: the conflict of making place and belonging.

A chair is an interesting symbol: being a piece of furniture, it can be connected to the domestic, however, an image of a chair is also quite impersonal, as it can also be found in non-places; in waiting rooms, offices, cinemas, airports, and even vehicles. This way, a chair can be a place of waiting and transition, however, it can also constitute a constant: a desk chair, a chair at a kitchen table. Thus, a chair can have connotations of domestic space and a non-place at the same time.

The front and back endpaper, according to Chesner (2019), often function as "a preface and epilogue" and thus "emphasize change that took place from the beginning of the story to the end" (21). Empty chairs, featured on the front endpaper, are occupied by children on the back endpaper, capturing the solution of the central conflict of the narrative: the conflict of placemaking and belonging. The image of an empty chair gains meaning after the tenth doublespread, where the school teacher in a new country refuses to let the protagonist into the classroom because "there is no chair for [her] to sit on". This way, spatial politics is focalised as the cause of the imposed placelessness. Refugees are often excluded from spatial discourses as individuals detached from a place, confined to liminality. Occupying a chair in this case is

synonymous with having a place, experiencing belonging, and being provided space for self-identification.

In the beginning of the story, the role of a chair is not focalised, however, it implicitly accompanies the reader throughout the first pages. On the first doublespread, the protagonist and her family are portrayed sitting on chairs around the kitchen table. Each student is sitting on a chair in the classroom on the second doublespread. On the third doublespread, when the context of war is introduced in the narrative, we can see chairs scattered around the empty space, detached and empty of meaning. From now on, the protagonist's sense of home and belonging is disturbed, unmade, as she struggles to not only reach safety, but also find inner peace, to lead a life unaffected by the consequences of war. The transition from the inner conflict ("But war had followed me" (7th doublespread) to the outer one ("And then I understood that war had got here too" (10th doublespread) is marked by the protagonist being denied the right for space. Similarly, the resolution of the conflicts stems from the act of placemaking:

> The door banged. I thought it was the wind – but a child's voice spoke. 'I brought you this,' he said, 'so you can come to school.' It was a chair. A chair for me to sit on and learn about volcanoes, sing and draw birds. And drive the war out of my heart. He smiled and said, 'My friends have brought theirs too, so all the children here can come to school.' (12th doublespread)

Thus, I would argue that the image of a chair in *The Day War Came* is the central symbol of home(un)making. It focalises belonging and spatial politics as important components of (de)constructing home in the context of displacement and highlights the interconnectedness of the spatial and relational dimensions of home.

7. Conclusion

To discuss the meaning of home, it is important to reconcile time, space, and affect and survey the ways in which they predetermine and transform one another. This thesis sought to expand the understanding of domestic spaces and their spatio-temporal construction in children's

literature, in particular, in visual narratives addressing the themes of war and displacement. Children's picturebooks proved to be a helpful medium for this purpose, owing to their multimodal representation of time and space, combined with the narrative strategies employed to communicate the topics of war and displacement to young readers. In turn, the unique means of visualising such concepts as home, displacement, and homemaking in children's picturebooks dealing with the refugee experience have the potential to provide new insights into the picturebook format, revealing its hidden potential as well as its possible limitations.

The approach to home and homemaking adopted in this paper is built upon Nikolajeva's theorisations of the construction of time in relation to the domestic in children's literature as well as Kerry Mallan's notion of emotional geographies, both connected via Bakhtinian conceptualisation of chronotope and placed in the context of displacement. The combination of multimodal analysis with reader response theory allowed to survey the interplay between visual and verbal components of the text through the prism of young readers' cognitive and affective engagement. Throughout this thesis, the applicability of the classic home-away-(new) home pattern to refugee narratives was questioned. The notion of home in refugee naratives is found to be incompatible with the narrative model as it transcends conventional dichotomies, such as here/there, place/non-place, past/future. Close analysis of the multimodal representation of domestic spaces before and after the protagonists' departure demonstrated that domestic chronotope is placed within the realm of memory, creating a new dimension of the narrative: the chronotope of memory. This notion highlights the retrospective nature of the representation of domestic spaces in refugee narratives: 'before' homes are already influenced by the context of war and irreversibly changed for the protagonists. At the same time, they are preserved by memory. The chronotope of memory is what makes kairic, non-negotiable, idyllic home possible in children's picturebooks on refugee experience. It bridges the contexts of refugee

and non-refugee experience, allowing for the heightening understanding and empathy in readers.

Transitional and domestic spaces in refugee narratives do not constitute separate realms. Instead, they are actively transformed by one another and influenced by the chronotope of memory. This is predominantly expressed via visual elements, such as the usage of blank space, page layout, composition, and character design. The conflict of mutual intrusion of domestic spaces and non-places – of the former being rendered unliveable and the latter becoming sites of dwelling, enacting traditions, and homemaking – unsettles the traditional organisation of children's narratives. This is further intensified by overlapping non-places with the "timelessness" of kairos or domestic spaces with the urgent linearity of chronos. As a result, a dissonance necessary for capturing inner conflicts accompanying the refugee experience is created.

As this thesis has demonstrated, the domestic chronotope in refugee narratives is affectively constructed via the dimension of memory, which enables its omnipresence throughout the entirety of the story. This prevents the gradual transition from kairos to chronos, from domestic spaces to non-places and vice versa. Space and time in narratives of displacement are in conflict: the end goal of the "journey" is located in the past, not in the future, and, as a result, it cannot be reached spatially or temporally. However, it can be accessed via the practices of remembering, recreating, and reconstructing.

The conventional framework of analysis of picturebooks should be modified with regards to the unique conception of home in the narratives of the refugee experience. The categories of chronos and kairos in relation to the domestic cannot be used to denote different stages of the narrative, as they are in a constant dialogue – linear time in refugee picturebooks has cyclical characterics in relation to the notion of home. In that regard ,the study of children's literature

can benefit from the interdisciplinary approach which would incorporate theoretical framework of memory studies. In refugee narratives, the domestic chronotope takes on the form of the chronotope of memory: from the very beginning, it is shaped by the protagonists experience, and its presence in the narrative is defined by cyclical motions of remembering. While not accessible spatially, it becomes a temporally independent construction which can be recovered.

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List of figures

Abstract (English)

Home is one of the most significant concepts in children's literature. In children's books dealing with refugee narratives, home assumes various meanings, both as a structural unit and as a multidimensional, affectively charged notion. This thesis reassesses the notion of home from the perspective of its spatiality and temporality in the narratives of displacement. Through the close analysis of the representation of domestic spaces as well as transitional spaces and home(un)making practices in four multimodal texts, it seeks possibilities of engaging with domestic spaces as falling beyond precise dichotomies, such as past/present, place/non-place, here/there. The result of the analysis demonstrates the spectrum of possible affective engagement with the concept of home in children's picturebooks and possibilities for alternative approaches to children's refugee narratives which provide a more inclusive view of home and home(un)making practices.

Zusammenfassung (Deutsch)

Das Zuhause ist einer der wichtigsten Begriffe in der Kinderliteratur. In Kinderbüchern, die sich mit Flüchtlingserzählungen befassen, nimmt das Zuhause, sowohl als strukturelle Einheit als auch als multidimensionaler, affektiv geladener Begriff, verschiedene Bedeutungen an. In dieser Arbeit wird der Begriff des Zuhauses unter dem Gesichtspunkt seiner Räumlichkeit und Zeitlichkeit innerhalb von Erzählungen der Vertreibung neu bewertet. Durch die eingehende Analyse der Darstellung häuslicher Räume sowie Übergangsräumen und Praktiken der (De)Konstruktion des Zuhauses in vier multimodalen Texten wird nach Möglichkeiten gesucht, sich mit häuslichen Räumen jenseits präziser Dichotomien wie Vergangenheit/Gegenwart, Ort/Nicht-Ort, hier/dort auseinanderzusetzen. Das Ergebnis der Analyse zeigt das Spektrum möglicher affektiver Auseinandersetzungen mit dem Konzept von Zuhause in Kinderbilderbüchern und Möglichkeiten für alternative Ansätze für Kindergeschichten über die Flucht, die einen umfassenderen Blick auf das Zuhause und die Praktiken der (De)Konstruktion des Zuhauses ermöglichen.