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"I saw my other self at the Zoo": Internal Focalizers and Illustrative Spaces in Zoo Narratives

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Abstract: Utopian spaces have the ability to open possibilities for humans to interact with animals in desired spaces. However, one space that can reflect a positive and negative desire for humans and animals is the zoo. Zoos can be seen as a space where humans can experience different wildlife and examine a variety of species of animals. While this is one of many illustrations we see of zoos, Anthony Browne's *Zoo* and Katherine Applegate's *The One and Only Ivan* demonstrate instances where both humans and animals use the zoo as a space to narrate their social problems to the implied reader as a type of double address. Both narrators, a little boy going to the zoo, and Ivan the gorilla, display characteristics of internal focalizers who invite their readers to interpret the illustrations provided by the picture book and novel to demonstrate a side of their life that can be interpreted as their other. With the little boy, the reader has a glimpse of possible family abuse and mental health issues, and with Ivan, a sort of representation of how life would be if not born and trapped in a small mall zoo. In addition, both literary works show the zoo as a space to feel empathy for the implied reader as a type of internal focalization to voice their perspectives represented through the physical space of the zoo. Scholars such as McCloud, op de Beeck, and Leah Anderst agree on how illustrations can evoke empathy towards the implied reader as these provide an opportunity to analyse the illustrations as a form of hidden narrative. This research paper will explain how Chatman's focalization of narrative voices in texts highlights characteristics of empathy, and voices of human and non-human animals in zoos through written text and illustrations.

Keywords: *Children's literature; Zoo narratives; Internal focalization; Spaces; Animal studies.*

Zoo narratives have been described by scholars such as Aaron Santesso and Catherine Elick, as a space where the wild animal world is brought in and compounded into manmade spaces. Animal stories in literature provide the space for "animals and humans [to] cooperate, trick each other, fight with each other, talk to each other… we can say that in the cultures in which the tales were created, the boundary separating humans from (other) animals may not be hard and fast" (DeMello 2). In other words, the fluid boundaries between humans and animals in literature, emphasize how animal stories create a space for complex interactions and relationships. Moreover, Maria Nikolajeva articulates three types of animal stories, "animals in their natural environment with humanlike thoughts; animal fantasy, in which anthropomorphized animals are human stand-ins, living in humanlike communities; and finally, anthropomorphized animals" (Cunningham et al. 17). This provides a clear framework for understanding the different types of animal stories in literature, where there is a focus on the realistic depiction of animals in their habitats while attributing human thoughts and emotions to them. In the case of zoo narratives in children's literature, this approach allows readers to empathize with animals by bridging the cognitive and emotional gap between humans and animals, thus fostering a deeper connection to and understanding of the animal world.

However, in zoo narratives and zoo spaces, there is human authority and power involved when it comes to capturing, taming, and using animals for human entertainment. The zoo space within literature, zoo narratives, provides a "panoramic replication of the displayed animal's actual environment [as] part of our story" (Santesso 449) while also reminding the audience of the dangers and risks zoos can pose for animals. Such zoo spaces are a physical representation of animals being removed from their natural habitat, and without proper care, "many such animals also die, reminding readers of the trenchant critique of institutions like zoos" (Elick 212). Furthermore, zoo narratives invite readers to reflect on the duality present in zoo literature and real-life zoos: the effort to educate and entertain juxtaposed with the

ethical implications of confining and exploiting animals. It calls into question the justifications for zoos and urges a deeper consideration of the impact on the animals themselves, thus promoting a more informed and empathetic understanding of the issues at play.

Another perspective on animals in children's literature is the relationship between children and nature. Dobrin and Kidd in their book, *Wild Things: Children's Culture and Ecocriticism,* acknowledge how children are involved with nature given the legacy of romantic and Victorian literature, but children are also protected from nature due to the potential dangers this environment has in literature, including the description of wild animals. Both Dobrin and Kidd agree that many children "have limited opportunities for such experiences. Many of the activities that occupy the time of young children take place in settings that isolate them from the natural world or present only simulations of that world" (7). These simulated experiences, while valuable, can never fully replace the profound impact of firsthand interaction with nature. Literature, therefore, serves as a crucial medium through which children can explore and understand the natural world, bridging the gap between isolation and engagement with nature.

Literature offers a space for conversation where humans and animals are not treated as enemies, rather as individual beings with a voice to speak and interact with the readers of their respective books. A reminder of this can be seen in Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* (2001) where it is possible for a tiger and a young man to survive days in the ocean without one eliminating the other. In children's literature, including picture books, comics, magazines, poems, and novels, zoos serve as a nexus where humans and animals converge. These texts depict zoos as curated spaces offering visitors a glimpse of wildlife within a controlled, human-designed environment. Animals inhabit artificial habitats meant to replicate their natural ecosystems, allowing young readers to experience a sanitized version of the wild world. This representation introduces children to the concept of human-animal interaction while raising subtle questions

about the authenticity of such encounters and the ethics of keeping animals in captivity for human education and entertainment. The text offers two different perspectives in terms of what the voice of the main protagonist is telling the reader and how animals and humans are used as points of reference in the narrative. In other words, it is the idea that the zoo, as an institution built to keep wildlife safe and for human entertainment, is a space entrapped where the voice of the child-protagonist in *Zoo* and Ivan from *The One and Only Ivan* engage with the other characters of their stories and demonstrates acts of empathy and a need for social action.

Therefore, the illustrations of the picture book *Zoo* (2008) by Anthony Browne and Katherine Applegate's novel *The One and Only Ivan* (2012) demonstrate instances where both humans and animals use the zoo as a space to narrate directly or indirectly positive and negative experiences to the implied reader as a type of internal focalization to voice their perspectives through the experience of going to the zoo. Here, levels of empathy are important to understand the way the characters from these books interact with other characters to demonstrate the need to act. In this case, I am using empathy to explain how the reader can feel emotion towards the narrator's lived experiences and experiencing self. Although there are different ways to define what empathy is and how readers can react towards it when a character is describing moments of vulnerability or emotional pain. In the article titled "Feeling with Real Others: Narrative Empathy," Leah Anderst explains how empathy allows the audience to understand the mind of the narrator as she or he shares their feelings, experiences, and imaginative moments. Since *Zoo* and *The One and Only Ivan* touch upon social problems, such as family abuse, animal cruelty, and lack of human empathy, Anderst's article contributes to the idea of how the narrator hints at how his relationship with their family or other characters in the story affect their way of thinking or acting in the story.

Furthermore, according to Anderst's explanation of empathy, she argues that situations presented in stories serve as a space for readers to explore not only how characters

react to actions of injustice, but also how these characters have the opportunity to display empathy, yet sometimes fail to do so. This allows readers to reflect on their own capacity for empathy and understand the complexities of human responses to injustice, ultimately fostering a deeper comprehension of moral and ethical behavior. Therefore, "the empathy of a reader for a fictional character, the reader's feeling with a character, imaginatively taking her perspective over the course of an engaging novel, functions as a training ground of sorts for increased empathy and altruistic behaviors in the real world" (Anderst 272). Anderst agrees that literature provides a space where the reader can see how characters handle real-world situations in an attempt to prepare the reader for similar situations they may face in real life. While the characters and the spaces they walk in are fictional, the situations they are presented with are accurate to what its implied readers may experience. Of course, this will also depend on the time period the book is representing and the target audience the author is writing for. In zoo narratives like *Zoo* and The *One and Only Ivan*, animals serve as catalysts for empathy development. *Zoo* illustrates this through the family's interactions with animals and the animals' responses, while *The One and Only Ivan* explores empathy through Ivan's attempts to communicate with humans from his mall enclosure. These stories align with Dobrin and Kidd's assertion that early exposure to nature, despite potential risks, is crucial for children's development. They argue, "close contact with nature can be dangerous, but so, too, can our evasion and denial of it. Perhaps if children are encouraged to explore nature from the beginning, they will not need the encouragement of nature writers or seek 'extreme' experiences" (2). By presenting animal perspectives and human-animal interactions, these narratives foster empathy and environmental awareness, potentially mitigating the need for more drastic measures to reconnect with nature later in life. William Nelles explores the idea of how it is possible for an animal to be the narrator if by nature animals cannot speak. Thus, it forms an inquiry where different perspectives of narratology, such as internal focalization and homodiegetic narratives, would answer and explain how animals can

voice their experiencing self in the story. As a response to this, Powell suggests the idea of a free pre-focalization in which the knowledge of the narrating self exceeds the experiencing self, thus the narrator is able to have a command of the human language. Moreover, a dual mode of focalization is suggested as a way to explain how human and animal speech are parallel with each other during narration. For my own paper, Powell's suggestions will be used to think further into the focalization of the animal narration within a zoo narrative and how that comes into play when the animal narration is focused solely on the animal's experiencing self and not any other character.

Edmiston provides a historical and cultural overview of key theories and terms within the field of narratology at the time. Edmiston points out specifically how Chatman challenges Genette's view on focalization saying how it is possible to consider point of view and character perspective if that same character is the one narrating the story. Therefore, based on these arguments and sharing of ideas of focalization and whether the first-person narration is a valid point of interest in the field, Edmiston offers other innovations in the theory by describing how it is possible for the narrator to be the main character of the story or simply an observer by defining these actions as internal focalization and external focalization. Edmiston's work also identifies the perspectives and narrative positions displayed in the sequence of action found in *Zoo* and *The One and Only Ivan*. Moreover, the focus on how an internal focalization works hand in hand with the relationship between images and text in multimodal genres such as picture books and children's novels with illustrations in specific chapters.

Yannicopoulou's work also explains how focalization is used in children's picture books, and why it is important for readers to learn how to read a picture book as a multimodal genre. The paper offers the idea that for a person to understand and grasp the full meaning a picture book is portraying, a person must read the picture book in three different modes: reading the narrated text; looking at the illustrations of the

picture book; and finally make connections between the text and the images and explore if the two complement each other in any shape or form. With this last statement, there is also the possibility that the illustrations are telling the reader a completely different story than the written text, thus providing a different form of focalization to the narrative of the story.

To understand the different perspectives narratology can offer on how protagonists express their experiences in their stories, a few key terms are introduced to explore how internal focalization is used with both human and animal protagonists. The book *Keywords for Children's Literature* edited by Philip Nel and Lissa Paul offers various entries of terms found within the field of children's literature and how have these terms evolved. The term "voice" can be used in diverse ways, especially to identify the way a character and narrator is representing their person in a story. Therefore, voice can be defined as "the set of signs characterizing the narrator and, more generally, the narrating instances, and governing the relations between narrating and narrative text as well as between narrating and narrated" (Cadden 225). By examining how these characters use the first-person, readers have a sense of how the narrators are addressing themselves to the narratee when the narrator wants to focus the reader's attention to the narrator as an individual or the narrator as part of the family unit, such as the unnamed child narrator talks about his family trip to the zoo and how he felt about it after the family returns home. In the case of *The One and Only Ivan*, Ivan always uses the first person "I" to refer to himself and the activities he does in the mall zoo, and how he sees and thinks about other gorillas that he sees on his T.V. and humans looking at him from the glass display window.

The choice of narrative voice in different genres can significantly impact how protagonists connect with readers. When a character uses first-person singular ("I" or "me"), it creates a sense of individual experience and intimate perspective. Conversely, the use of the first-person plural ("we") suggests a collective identity or shared experience. These shifts in self-reference can reflect the character's evolving sense of

self, their relationship to their community, or their attempt to engage readers in different ways. An example of why it is important to notice the singular and collective use of the first-person is because the narrators are demonstrating key moments of their social selves in their stories and what the power dynamics with the other characters are like. The child narrator in *Zoo* begins by telling the reader that "last Sunday, we all went to the zoo. Me and my brother were really excited" (Browne 3). Although this narration is presented as a past memory, the illustrations and detailed storytelling of the narrator imply the accuracy of the story, suggesting that these events happened recently. Moreover, since this is a story of a family outing, these could also serve as an example of an emotional moment that represents good and/or bad memories for the child narrator, which could also be another example of how real this experience is to not only the narrator, but how it is also received by the implied and real reader. On the next page of the picture book, the narrator describes how he had a fight with his brother out of boredom from the long car ride to the zoo. The child narrator caused his brother Harry to cry, which then caused the dad to tell "me off" and how the dad implies that it is always the child narrator's fault this event happens with the italicized "my" (Browne 3). The pronoun "my" emphasized by the narrator in *Zoo* points out how he is blaming himself for what happens, especially since the father is quick to blame the narrator. Furthermore, after the dad expresses his anger about the traffic jam, where the child narrator responds, "everyone laughed except Mum and Harry and me" (Browne 4). In other words, this is a moment where only the father is laughing due to the situation in the traffic jam. It seems the child narrator wants to tell the reader some information about his family or relationship with the father, but something is stopping him. If the reader reads this section of the picture book from the viewpoint of the child narrator, the reader might understand how the narrator is hesitant to give specific information because we have a character that has a more authoritative voice than the narrator, which in this case is the father. Furthermore, the child narrator demonstrates a different point of view in the narrative where the reader has a space to understand

the power dynamics within the family unit. Since "point of view is the physical place or ideological situation or practical life-orientation to which narratives events stand in relation" (Chatman 153), then the dimensions of the illustrations suggest how different information is being said even if it is not from the narrator of the story.

Similarly, in *The One and Only Ivan*, the animal narrator offers moments where he is representing his identity to the reader. There are certain moments in the novel where Ivan expresses his identity as how he sees himself and how people, specifically the people who are in charge of the mall zoo, see him as a dangerous silverback gorilla. In other words, he is the one and only Ivan, as in Ivan of the Big Top Mall Zoo, "the Freeway Gorilla. The Ape at Exit 8. The One and Only Ivan, Mighty Silverback" (Applegate 2), where his identity is based on how the mall zoo uses his him as a marketing tool to attract people to go to the mall and see him as the chief entertainment that the mall zoo has to offer. In another instance during Ivan's narration, he tells the reader how he understands his identity as not only the sole gorilla in the mall zoo but how he understands his own existence as Ivan. It is at this moment where Ivan expresses that, "sometimes I press my nose against the glass. My noseprint, like your fingerprint, is the first and the last and only one. The man wipes the glass and then I am gone" (Applegate 14). It is interesting how Ivan's words demonstrate his awareness of life, as in, he knows that each person and animal in existence is never the exact same being as stated by Ivan mentioning fingerprints as an example of identification. In addition, this part of the novel represents another side of voice as defined by Chatman as "the speech or other overt means through which events and existents are communicated to the audience" (153). Therefore, the narrator's voice, in this case, Ivan's, is addressing the readers by demonstrating his awareness of his own identity as a gorilla in a mall zoo, but also his awareness of life outside the zoo and the humans who visit the Big Top Mall Zoo to see the one and only Ivan. However, voice is not the only tool being used in the narration of the child and animal protagonist, internal focalization is also put into practice to place the reader's attention on the narrator as a

character, and the actions that follow along with the type of genre being read (as in reading a picture book and a children's novel).

Chatman's theory of focalization and how this led towards internal focalization as "to designate the vantage point of the narrating self and that of the experiencing self" (Edmiston 738). However, focalization has been debated by Chatman, who argues for a different perspective from the original use of the term, which imposes restrictions on how narration and characters are perceived, "if we accept Genette's definition of focalization" (Edmiston 738). Chatman suggests viewing focalization as the perception of the "human who… participated in his story" (Edmiston 738). It should be noted, that Chatman is suggesting a way where the narrator can be the main character expressing her or his voice and social experiences. Hence, internal focalization is when the narrator of the story and the character doing the action in the plot sequence are the same person. However, the definition best describing what is happening in both "Zoo" and *The One and Only Ivan* is when the "narrator can place the focus in [her or] his experiencing self, a participant inside the story, and allow the latter to focalize characters and events just as [she or] he perceived them at the time of the events" (Edmiston 739). Furthermore, with internal focalization, since it is narrated as the narrator perceives what is happening around her or him, I argue that the protagonist in both stories have the ability to point out how the actions of other characters affect them since it influences their experiences and perceptions of going to the zoo as a family activity, and life being born in a mall zoo and being labeled another identity where Ivan the gorilla did not choose to be.

In *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Regression in Adolescent Literature*, Trites defines power as "the possibility of imposing one's will upon the behavior of other persons" and acknowledges that "all individuals hold a certain amount of power" (4). This concept of power extends beyond physical strength, focusing on power dynamics and structures among characters. In adolescent literature, adults often occupy a higher power position due to their authority. This manifests in adults

withholding information from adolescents and expecting respect regardless of their own flaws or mistreatment of others. However, adolescent characters in these narratives frequently develop their own power, finding their voice and agency. This process also allows secondary characters to bond with them, serving as models for the protagonists to become autonomous individuals. Through these interactions and power negotiations, adolescent characters navigate their place within complex social structures and develop their own sense of identity and agency. Returning to *Zoo*, as the family enjoys what seems to be a peaceful and fun day at the zoo, there are some signifiers from the focalizing perspective of the child narrator that hint at how the child is being treated by his father. This is clearly evident in the lack of care and interest the father presents to the kids, the language he uses through the picture book, and the way he is illustrated. In the text, the child narrator informs the readers that his mother brought chocolates for him and his brother. We know the father had the chocolates because the child narrator was asking him for it because he and his brother were hungry. The father refused to give him the chocolates "'because I say so,' said Dad. It seemed he was in one of his moods" (Browne 8). Here, the tone of the narrator shifts slightly as he reacts to his father's words. Despite his brother's whining for the chocolate, which was probably caused by his hungry state as information provided to the reader by the narrator, it seems the father is demonstrating his authority and dominance by not giving his children the chocolate. Moreover, with the illustrations of the picture book, the reader can see more of the gestural mode of the father that highlights his attitude and behavior towards his kids. In the following pages, the father throws away the chocolates to the ground, and prior to that, the father was looking down on the child narrator, where the clouds took the shape of horns on the father's head. Both the narration and illustrations combined represented some sort of change in the position of the child narrator, which becomes "notable for what they [in this case, the authorial relationship between the narrator and his father] indicate about shifts in social priorities, that is, for what they reveal about alterations in the desires and

behaviors of adults" (Sanchez-Eppler 35). The child narrator's perspective shifts between interactions with his father and observations of the zoo animals. This contrast highlights a parallel: the child's relationship with his authoritative father mirrors the animals' confinement for human entertainment. Both the child and the animals experience restrictions imposed by more powerful figures, suggesting themes of control and limited freedom. Thus, it can be argued that since *Zoo* is 'told' to the implied reader through a child's viewpoint and *The One and Only Ivan* is narrated by an animal, the reader will only receive information that is accessible to the child and animal narrator. As Chatman describes the different ways the narrator can describe what is happening in the story, "[she or he] may be restricted to the contemporary story moment… speaking of events of long duration or iteration in only a sentence or two, or, contrarily, expanding events in such a way that it takes longer to read about them than it took them to occur" (212). Both *Zoo* and *The One and Only Ivan* provide illustrations to show the audience information that is not available to the narrator. Either the narrator is not aware of the information outside his internal focalization or the illustrations in both the picture book and novel add a different lived experience that the narrator does not want to talk about. Moreover, this would also suggest that the reader would then have to read the picture book in three ways: following the narration of the child protagonist, the reader paying attention to the illustrations, and finally the implied reader internalizing the information received by both modes of storytelling. The reason why the reader would have to engage in a picture book at different levels of reading would be to understand the different levels of narration that are happening on the multimodal practices of a picture book as a genre, and the novel containing key illustrations to understand Ivan's voice. In other words, this would suggest a "word-and-picture combination, a captioned illustration, or a graphic sequence- presented to the reader via some physical medium, whether a book, a canvas, or a living body- helps the active reader generate the image" (op de Beeck 118) where the implied and real reader would also have to "possess these elementary skills of visual literacy before we

can start speaking about meaning-making" (Nikolajeva 28). In the following sections of both stories, illustrations demonstrate how the visual space and facial expressions of characters give perspective on a way for the reader to understand how each narrator and character is being represented by a version of their experiencing self.

Maria Nikolajeva explains in her chapter "Interpretative Codes and Implied Readers of Children's Picturebooks" that since picture books do not follow the same literary structure as other written genres for children, such as children's short stories and novels, picture books are considered to be "simple" since readers won't have a full engagement with the plot. However, for this same reason, Nikolajeva addresses this idea and argues that "the alleged simplicity, however, is only manifest on the most elementary plot level and often without taking text/image interaction into consideration" (29). In other words, although picture books are written in a simpler way compared to other written genres in children's literature, picture books offer the space to read them in different ways that are not available in short stories or novels, which is the space where the written text tells a story, and the illustration may represent the story in the same or different way. *The One and Only* Ivan's illustrations offer additional information of the story where the text fails to tell the reader. Ivan explains how he draws *X*s on the wall to mark how many days have passed. On page 145, there is an illustration of multiple *X*s, representing how long Ivan has been trapped in the mall zoo. Nikolajeva also states that "images can range within a broad continuum of representation modes, from photography to abstraction. Visual literacy demands understanding of the connection between the signifier (iconic sign) and the signified" (28). This also explains the importance of distinguishing how the implied narrator speaks in picture books and how the implied reader gives importance to the text or the illustrations when engaging in this form of multimodal genre. Unlike novels or short stories, where the implied reader and narrator would engage in a conversation within the detailed description provided by the text, and the different viewpoints provided by the plot, the reader would have to learn to adopt her or his understanding of the plot or

structure of the story by reading both the text provided and the illustration in the picture book.

Additional examples of how images can add information to the plot and illustrate different multimodal aspects that help the reader understand the narration are images in both *Zoo* and *The One and Only Ivan* where the characters look directly at their "other experiencing selves" or parallels to their situations. On pages 18 and 22, while the child protagonist is the one narrating and playing with his younger brother, the illustration focuses on the mother as she sees gorillas and monkeys at the zoo. The moment when she is viewing the monkey exhibit on pages 18 and 19, her children are fighting, the same way as the monkeys are also fighting inside their cage at the zoo. The mother then comments that ""They remind me of someone," said Mum. 'I can't think who."" (Browne 18). This moment is particularly revealing as it illustrates a stark disconnect between the mother's attention and her immediate surroundings. While her children are engaged in a squabble, the mother's focus shifts entirely to the animals in the zoo. Powell, using Kafka's animal fables as examples, claims that animals in literature can "evoke an overwhelming sense of entrapment experience by their protagonist [and other characters]" (132). It is possible that the mother does feel entrapped in her own home and life situation and is using the zoo as a space to escape from her family problems. Another example that hints at this is on pages 20-21, where a crowd of people are trying to get an orangutan to move and entertain them. The people are "shouting and banging on the glass, but it just ignores us. Miserable thing" (Browne 20). In the illustrations, the picture book *Zoo* is structured in a way where the reader can see what the family is experiencing at the zoo. The family is seen in the left panel, while the animals are at the right. In this panel, the dad, the child protagonist, and his brother disturb the orangutan, but the mom looks at it with concern, almost as if she feels sorry for the animal. This could represent how the mom is reacting towards the animal's isolation and confinement, by "self-understanding and one's sense of others, self-identity and others' identities" as a way to "define the relationship between

individuals and the socio-historical structure that traps them" (Powell 132). While there is no direct way for the child narrator or the characters to convey to the reader their problems at home, the interactions with the family and the animals show the possibility that there are problems within the family, enough for the reader to think and reflect upon the possible situation the family is going through. In addition, there is also the claim that the mom is displaying acts of empathy towards the animals trapped in the zoo since in the illustrations she is the only member of the family with no intention to bother the animals and the one who feels a connection towards them.

Moreover, Powell examines Kafka's animal fables to find connections between the self and the other in the narrations of the animals' point of view. Powell argues that Kafka expresses otherness in the sense that these animals define themselves in different identities in their stories. Although these animal narrators don't define themselves as another type of being, rather Powell analyzes what aspect of the animal narration defines them as "the self" and "not the self" as signifiers that highlight the space of identity and notions of it during the story and narration of these non-human characters. Although Powell's paper primarily addresses the wild and protesting nature of animals, as represented by Kafka's animal stories, Powell adds an interesting conversation on how the ontology of otherness and the notions of identity are portrayed in animal and human narrations. This is explained as the "relationships between external sociological constructs and internal psychological constructs [which] define the existential condition of self and other in terms of obsessive need to maintain those constructs as a sole source of safety and solace" (132). Powell adds the possibility that *Zoo* represents how humans represent their psychological state and communicate this through the journey of going to the zoo, where the zoo is both an entrapped space for the animals, but a space away from the human's problem and entrapped space, which would be represented as their own home.

Further into the picture book *Zoo,* the mom expressed that "a zoo is not for animals, rather it is for people" (Browne 22). With this information alone, the reader

cannot be sure what the mother is referring to, since the reader can see her words in the position of the child narrator's voice. The text is making a claim that the family trip to the zoo is an escape from the problems the family is suffering in their home and using the zoo as a space to escape what is happening in their home. Another aspect to think about is how "the face itself, the line between the visible and invisible worlds become even less clear…but when such images begin to drift out of their visual context they drift into the invisible world of symbols" (McCloud 130). Throughout "Zoo," the illustrations skillfully use the mother's facial expressions to convey her inner state and concerns. Each animal encounter seems to mirror an aspect of her family life, creating a poignant parallel between her domestic world and the zoo's inhabitants. The monkeys' squabbles reflect her sons' constant bickering, visually representing the chaos she manages daily. As she observes the primates' conflicts, her expression subtly shifts, revealing a mix of recognition and weariness. In other scenes, the mother's face betrays a sense of isolation, mirroring the solitary animals in their enclosures. This visual metaphor powerfully communicates her emotional distance from her family, despite their physical proximity. The most striking moment occurs when the mother locks eyes with a gorilla. The illustration captures a profound moment of mutual understanding. Her expression conveys a complex blend of empathy and resignation, suggesting she feels as trapped in her role as the gorilla in its cage. Empathy demands that individuals transcend their personal boundaries and imaginatively inhabit the experiences of others. This process requires one to step beyond their own perspective, envisioning the circumstances and emotional landscape of another person or animal. By projecting themselves into different realities, people can recognize and relate to feelings that may be unfamiliar to them, appreciating the nuances of situations outside their immediate experience. Batson's "These Things Called Empathy: Eight Related but Distinct Phenomena," explains how asking questions could lead a person to start creating a space where she or he can imagine possibilities of how another person feels with the goal to "form [an] action: action by one person that effectively addresses the

need of another" (4). Therefore, as a tool, empathy is used to answer questions individuals have about the possibilities of what another person is feeling or going through. In other words, empathy uses "feelings for the other – feelings of sympathy, compassion, tenderness, and the like – to produce motivation to relieve the suffering of the person for whom empathy is felt" (4). Taking into consideration the information received from the child narrator and the internal focalization provided by the narration and the illustration, one can argue that *Zoo* represents an escape from possible family abuse by the father, interpreted by how the animal illustrations correlate with the child's narration, and how at the end, the illustration shown to the audience is the child narrator sitting on the floor, sad, and the shadow of cage bars covering his person.

Consequentially, *Ivan* also remarks how his experiencing self is represented at the mall zoo when he talks about how silverback gorillas are supposed to use anger as a way to protect others from predators. However, as Ivan expresses, this cannot be possible for him since he cannot protect anyone in his current space, referring that he is a gorilla trapped in a mall zoo. In *The One and Only Ivan*, his experiencing self is demonstrated in a scene where he is describing how gorillas born in the wild act and behave in their natural habitat. In the chapter called "tv," Ivan tells the reader how he enjoys watching the different colors displayed on the TV and how he is "fond of cartoons, with their bright jungle colors" (Applegate 23). While it seems that the animal narrator is not providing any insightful information to the reader, as the text demonstrates little information about the scene itself, there is one illustration found on the next page of the chapter. The TV Ivan talks about in this chapter can be seen by humans outside Ivan's domain. What humans see is how Ivan is viewing other people on the TV, but Ivan also says that the TV is old, and Ivan says that the zookeepers would forget to turn the TV on for Ivan, meaning that this device is functional only when the zookeeper turns it on for Ivan. The illustration is an image of Ivan watching the TV. With the evidence presented by the text itself, the reader can determine that Ivan is indeed seeing a reflection of himself on the TV and not other gorillas in a nature

channel. However, since the illustration is in black and white, we are unsure if Ivan is watching the nature show and seeing other gorillas in their natural habitat, as a way for the novel to demonstrate Ivan's understanding of his other identity in another space outside the zoo. At the same time, this could also show Ivan staring at his own reflection on the TV screen where he is looking directly at himself. In this case, the image can be more complex than it actually is, regardless of what the text is presenting. This could also be an example of how images can become symbols as stated by McCloud, for the chapter "tv" gives us the idea that Ivan is watching his reflection on the device, but the following chapter "the nature show" does show Ivan seeing other gorillas and observing the environment they are living in, and Ivan comparing his current space to those of gorillas outside of the zoo.

Through a narratological perspective, the voices of the child protagonist in *Zoo* by Anthony Browne and the animal protagonist in *The One and Only Ivan* by Katherine Applegate were used to express each narrator's experienced self. Therefore, examining the space from a more cultural and historical perspective could challenge the idea of seeing the space of a zoo as more of a facility where people keep animals, take care of them, and allow others to see them and experience a sense of wildlife and more in terms of how the space of the zoo represents conservation to animal life and/or entertainment for humans. As previously discussed, empathy plays an important role where readers can view situations in works of literature and learn from the actions taken by the characters or by the actions done to them. Empathy, in a way, represents a gateway where characters can reflect on their own image and reflect on their lived experience within the entrapped space of the zoo. This is the case in *Zoo* where the boys and their mom find a sense of self as they observe the animals being locked in their cages and away from their environment. In a way, the boy from *Zoo* does feel trapped at home due to the way his father is treating their family. In *The One and Only Ivan,* Ivan presents his image of self by explaining the ways he is being presented to the public. As a mighty and dangerous silverback gorilla, Ivan entertains the people

who visit the mall zoo. Trapped in the closed environment of the zoo, he recalls his memories of being a free animal in the zoo space. What is interesting about the use of voice in *Zoo* and *The One and Only Ivan,* is how the narrator changes focalization during their individual zoo narratives and how they address the implied reader as they describe their social experiences taking a trip to the zoo or living in a mall zoo.

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