The Night Dad Went to Jail: Thematic Narrative Analysis of Children's Picturebooks on Parental Incarceration and Substance Use

Aislinn Paige Gallivan

Thesis submitted to the University of Ottawa, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Criminology.

Department of Criminology

Faculty of Social Sciences

University of Ottawa

Acknowledgements

I am extremely thankful for my supervisor, Jennifer Kilty, for helping me see this project through. Jen has helped build my confidence as a researcher and writer, and she has taught me the importance of work that is good enough. Without her guidance, my tendency towards perfectionism may have won out, and this thesis may have remained unfinished. Jen has been a valuable mentor to me, and I am so grateful for the opportunity to work with her. My deepest thanks also go to my evaluators, Sandra Lehalle and Sylvie Frigon. I am very grateful for their thoughtful comments and desire to collaborate with me on this project.

To the professors who have challenged me to think differently about criminalization and punishment throughout my years as an undergraduate and graduate student in this department, thank you. A special thank you to Dominique Robert, whose research seminar somehow made the task of thesis writing feel less daunting, and—dare I say—fun. Her passion for research and commitment to demystifying the process of thesis writing for her students is so appreciated. And thank you to Justin Piché, who offered me many opportunities through coursework, research assistantships, and advocacy with the Criminalization and Punishment Education Project to practice knowledge mobilization in research and connect theory with practice.

Thank you, Kelsey, Liz, Danika and Farnaz for all the life talks and thesis-related vent-sessions in the graduate study room. Our chats reminded me of the importance of taking breaks to rest and laugh. Although the pandemic has made it hard for us to keep in touch, I could not have made it through the first year of course work without you. Tolga and Julia, thank you for always listening and giving me space to air my frustrations in the moments when this project felt impossible to complete. I am thankful that you both help me take time to feel proud of myself for completing this thesis and remind me to celebrate this accomplishment.

Finally, to my mom, sisters, and grandma, thank you. For everything. For the sacrifices you made to help me get here. For the constant love and support you offer me as I choose to take on work that feels so close to home. And to my dad; thank you. For all that you taught me about the world. I wish you were here to celebrate this with me, too.

Abstract

Many caregivers for children of incarcerated parents report that they struggle to speak with children about their parent's incarceration or substance use (Manby et al., 2015; Smyke, Bailey & Zeanah, 2017). Children's picturebooks are promising tools to aid caregivers in this regard (Colomer et al., 2010; Lowe, 2009: p. 3; Wolf, 2017). However, research that explores the content of children's picturebooks as effective communication tools on the topics of parental incarceration and substance use is limited.

This thesis uses arts-based methods including thematic narrative analysis, techniques of visual criminology, and autoethnography to explore the textual and visual narratives that are present in a series of picturebooks for children under the age of ten on the topic of parental incarceration and substance use. It also explores how these narratives resonate with my lived experience as the daughter of a former drug user and prisoner. Mobilizing a theoretical framework based on the sociology of emotions literature and picturebook studies (Hochschild, 1980; McCarthy, 1994), I conceptualize the role of specific emotions, including hope, in children's literature. While the picturebooks accurately depict children's emotional experiences when their parent lives with addiction or experiences incarceration, they fail to manage children's expectations about the barriers their family may face when their loved one is released, such as barriers relating to poverty, mental illness, and relapse. The picturebooks in this study present young children with fairy tale endings and risk providing them with a false sense of hope regarding their parent's release. Authors of picturebooks for children under the age of ten must consider how to balance truth-telling with age-appropriateness and the desire to provide young children with hope in these circumstances.

Keywords: Children, parental incarceration, substance use, picturebooks, emotions, hope

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Chapter 1. Introduction

An average of 38, 786 adults were in provincial or federal custody per day in Canada in 2017/2018 (Statistics Canada, 2019). It is well-documented that Canada's high rates of imprisonment are related to policies and practices that disproportionately criminalize and imprison people along the intersections of race, gender, and class, including the anti-drug policies of the 'war on drugs' and a broader neoliberal politics that has pulled back the welfare state at the same time as it has criminalized conditions related to poverty (Boyd, 2018: p. 110; Kouyoumdjian et al., 2014: p. 198; Rose, 2000). Allard (2012) considers that current laws, policies, and practices that sentence people to lengthy prison terms for low-level, relatively minor offenses, including drug offences, inflate the incarceration rate and national budget, but they also create an "intergenerational malaise" (p. 49). Indeed, mass incarceration rates in Canada and the United States produce collateral damage, particularly for prisoners' children and their families.

Estimates suggest that during any given year there may be as many as 460,000 children living in Canada whose parents are incarcerated (Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver, 2019; Withers & Folsom, 2007). Many of these children experience multiple forms of trauma and deprivation, such as poverty and family violence. They experience great instability at a young age, and these experiences put them at higher risk for mental and physical health issues (Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver, 2019. 5, 26). The Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver (2019) goes so far as to suggest that without support, the impact of losing a parent to incarceration can be greater than the death of a parent (p. 4). Still, children of prisoners remain a largely unidentified population in Canada, so it is challenging to provide age-appropriate resources and support to help children cope with the loss of their parent to addiction and/or imprisonment.

Scholars suggest that aiding parents in combating their addiction outside of prison is the most sensible criminal justice policy to address the needs of children caught in the crossfire of the war on drugs (Allard, 2012: p. 49; Lloyd, 2015: p. 127). However, while the use of community-based forms of accountability and alternatives to incarceration have the potential to mitigate more risks to children than punitive drug policy (Lloyd, 2015: p. 129; McCormick et al., 2014: p. 42), until alternatives to incarceration are more available, picturebooks may represent promising tools to aid caregivers in communicating with children about the challenges they may face when their parent use substances or experiences incarceration. In this study, my research questions are twofold as I explore what textual and visual narratives are used in picturebooks to introduce children to the experience of parental incarceration or substance use, and as I ask myself how the narratives resonate with my lived experience as the daughter of a former drug user and prisoner.

A significant body of literature has explored the potential for children's literature to aid children in developing understanding and empathy on topics including homelessness (Dever, et al., 2005), adoption (Fitzpatrick & Kostina-Ritchey, 2013), and residential schools (Wolf, 2017), yet limited studies analyze children's picturebooks on the topic of parental incarceration. To my knowledge, Reimer (2019) is the only researcher in Canada to have taken this focus. In the context of the scarcity of children's picturebooks on parental incarceration that have been published in Canada, and on the specific experience of maternal incarceration, Reimer (2019) wrote and published a picturebook about a child who visits her mother in jail, *Sammy's Visit* (2017). After writing *Sammy's Visit*, Reimer (2019) read the book to groups of children in the grade 3-5 range to explore how the children respond to the text and images in the books. Upon reading the book to the children in her study, Reimer (2019) led a group discussion which revealed that the story elicited empathetic responses from all students, suggesting the benefits of this approach (p. 98).

Reimer's (2019) study demonstrates how the construction of narrative through image and text can bring awareness to complex concepts such as imprisonment in a way that the mere delivery of facts may fail to do. Indeed, resources and supports such as picturebooks for children whose parents experience addiction or imprisonment must offer them varied ways to move through the complex and confusing emotions they might feel in these circumstances. They should also aim to provide children with a realistic degree of hope. This study adds to the literature on picturebook research as I explore how picturebooks written for children under the age of ten construct narratives about parental substance use and imprisonment. I analyze and respond to the images and text in the books, seeking to develop a deeper understanding of how children are encouraged to make sense of the complicated experiences and emotions they might encounter when their parent experiences addiction or incarceration, such as sadness, shame, guilt, anger, and love. The objective of this research is to influence how future picturebooks are written so that children, caregivers, educators, and social workers can have access to tools and resources that are capable of fostering effective and meaningful communication on these difficult issues.

In chapter two, I offer a review of the literature that outlines the connections between mass incarceration in Canada and the United States and a neoliberal politics of responsibilization that stresses a need for individuals and communities to take responsibility for their actions (Rose, 2000). I describe how this politics shapes the criminalization of drug use and poverty and I explain how an emphasis on personal choice and responsibility limits access to harm reduction measures and contributes to shaping the barriers that impact criminalized people's ability to successfully re-enter their communities. I then review key studies that outline the negative impacts of incarceration on children and families. Finally, I explore the potential for children's picturebooks to serve as communication tools and educational resources that can offer children age-appropriate

opportunities for dialogue on difficult topics, such as when their parent experiences addiction or incarceration, which can inspire a sense of hope and help children cope in these circumstances.

Chapter three outlines the theoretical framework that informs and shapes this study. This chapter is divided into four sections. First, I outline perspectives in the sociology of emotions literature (Hochschild, 1983) to consider how emotions structure and are mobilized to inform children's engagement with picturebooks. Second, I explore perspectives in cultural studies literature, particularly with respect to picturebook research (McCarthy, 1994). This literature draws on semiotics (Kappeler, 2008; Manning, 1987) as a conceptual framework that offers useful analytical tools to examine picturebooks as a site of knowledge production related to jails and prisons and as a set of communication tools that educate children about the pains of imprisonment and substance use. Third, I review how emotions and cultural studies scholars conceptualize the emotions that are common to the experience of losing a parent to incarceration or substance use, including sadness, shame, guilt, anger, and love. Fourth, I explore how scholars conceptualize different models of hope and the importance of hope for children.

Chapter four describes the materials and methodological approach I used to conduct this study. I explain how I collected the data and I explore how I mobilized different methods to conduct the analysis, including thematic narrative analysis, techniques from visual criminology and autoethnography. I consider the ontological and epistemological similarities and differences between these analytical approaches and outline how they work together to support my analysis of the textual and visual content in the current sample of children's picturebooks. In section 4.4, I address the implications of my methodological approach in terms of research rigour and ethics, and I conclude by reviewing the limitations associated with this study.

Chapter five provides an analysis of the dataset. It explores what narratives in picturebooks may aid children in moving through complicated thoughts, emotions, and feelings associated with parental substance use and incarceration while considering how these narratives resonate with my lived experience as the daughter of a drug user and prisoner. I also consider how certain narratives may reproduce dominant and harmful ideas about these topics. I identified two overarching narratives within the combined textual and visual content, which I describe as responsibilizing and hopeful narratives, and which each carry subthemes that help constitute those narratives.

Section 5.1 includes three subsections that explore themes related to responsibilization narratives, such as how the books represent expected ways that children will cope with their parent's substance use or incarceration, what the child can do to ensure they do not end up criminalized like their parent, and a process of parentification whereby the child assumes the role of emotional caretaker for their siblings or parents. Section 5.2 includes three subsections related to hopeful narratives, including narratives that jails and prisons "work", narratives that use literary devices such as anthropomorphism to illustrate difference, but which flatten specific experiences on the basis of gender, race, and class, and narratives that resemble fairy tale endings. I suggest that despite accurately representing the difficult emotional experiences children may go through when their parent uses substances or experiences incarceration, the overarching responsibilizing and hopeful narratives function together to promote a general sense of faith and trust in the criminal justice system to produce favourable outcomes for families.

I conclude by outlining the contributions this thesis makes to the criminological and cultural studies literature and I situate my findings within a broader sociopolitical context that demands attention to the structural factors that impact access to resources for children whose parents use substances or experience incarceration. I suggest that while picturebooks have the

potential to serve as helpful communication tools, they remain limited in terms of the larger impact they can have on children of incarcerated parents as an at-risk population, and I draw attention to the need for policy changes that can support families in the community and keep them together in the first place. I offer ideas for future directions in picturebook research and provide considerations based on my lived experience for authors of picturebooks as they might seek to balance narratives of hope with the notion of age-appropriateness and truth-telling when crafting narratives to help children make sense of the experience of parental incarceration and/or addiction.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

In this literature review, I demonstrate how current policies and practices disproportionately criminalize and imprison people along the intersections of race, gender, and class. I describe the rise of a neoliberal politics of responsibilization and consider how this politics exists alongside the criminalization of drug use and poverty, resulting in the mass incarceration of many poor and racialized people in Canada and the United States. I consider the collateral damages of the war on drugs and mass incarceration of poor and racialized people, particularly as prisoners' children experience harm due to punitive criminal justice policies. I explore how parental substance use and incarceration are experienced by children as loss, placing them at risk of adverse experiences and poor psychosocial outcomes. Finally, I conceptualize children's picturebooks as educational resources that can offer children age-appropriate opportunities for dialogue on difficult topics, such as when a child's parent experiences addiction or incarceration, and which can inspire a sense of hope in children living in these circumstances.

2.2. Mass Incarceration, Neoliberalism and Responsibilization

Punitive criminal justice policies are largely responsible for the high rates of incarceration in the west, which have increased since the 1980s (Rose, 2000: p. 322). Notably, such practices have emerged alongside a neoliberal politics that stresses the need for individuals and communities to take responsibility for their actions (p. 322). According to Rose (2000), a neoliberal politics values the notions of personal responsibility, choice, control over one's fate and self-government (p. 329). Within this logic, the criminal is understood as a self-interested rational agent who makes poor decisions and chooses to commit crime after weighing the potential benefits and costs (Rose, 2000: p. 322; Saunders & McArthur, 2020: p. 126). Crime is seen as a matter of personal choice

and criminalized people are responsibilized for their actions despite the influence of structural factors and barriers, such as poverty, which may force people to make choices within constrained conditions. Indeed, the ways that a neoliberal politics and responsibilization strategies have led to mass incarceration is illustrated by the criminalization of drug use and poverty.

Prohibitionist discourse has characterized Canadian drug policy for decades (Boyd, 2019: p. 114). Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, antinarcotics laws have carried harsh sentences, including life imprisonment in the United States and whipping in Canada (Alexander et al., 1996: p. 258; Riley, 1998). In the 1950s, medical professionals began to conceptualize addiction as a disease, viewing drug users as needing treatment over imprisonment (Dias, 2003: p. 12). Although, as Boyd (2007) notes, this model carries its own limitations as those working within this framework risk mistaking the effects of poverty for the effects of drugs (p. 328). The Canadian federal government ultimately rejected the disease model for understanding addiction and drug use when it passed the highly punitive *Narcotic Control Act* in 1961 (Dias, 2003: p. 11).

In the 1960s and 1970s, an emerging public health movement led mostly by young middle-class recreational drug users began to challenge the criminalization of certain drugs—particularly marijuana (Dias, 2003: p. 11). The Canadian government's response was to push back against this movement. By the 1980s, anti-drug laws reached their heights of severity in the United States and Canada (p. 260). Following the United States' lead, Canada declared a war on drugs by the late 1980s and ushered in the harshest era of drug prohibition and law enforcement to date (p. 12).

By 1996, Canada repealed the *Narcotic Control Ac*t and passed the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*. Notably, the *Narcotic Control Act* gave police officers a more extensive range of enforcement powers for minor drug cases than it did for rape, murder, and arson (Solomon, 1988: p. 263). While the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* was passed as a 'health bill', Maynard

(2017: p. 97) suggests it is merely a repackaged version of the *Narcotic Control Act* as it takes a prohibitionist approach and relies on punitive sanctions (Dias, 2003: p. 12). The *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* reaffirmed the harsh penalties and extensive police powers found in the *Narcotic Control Act* while adding resources to aid in the arrest and prosecution of illicit drug users and sellers (Gordon, 2006: p. 67). New powers afforded to police under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* included the ability to sell drugs in reverse sting operations and the expansion of seizure provisions (Erickson, 1998: p. 271).

In 2000, the Conservative Ontario government released a drug treatment consultation plan that outlined conditions of receiving welfare benefits, which included mandated drug testing and abstinence (Boyd, 2019: p. 114). This was a part of a broader move towards ensuring that clear lines were drawn between the so-called "deserving" and "undeserving" poor (Chunn & Gavigan, 2014: p. 206). Notably, those considered "deserving" were those who could provide evidence of their search for paid work and those who could prove they were not using substances. Such conditions aimed to responsibilize individuals to conform to the capitalist social order in order to receive state financial assistance. In 2005, the Liberal federal Government sought to renew Canada's National Drug Strategy according to harm reduction principles. However, this was quickly abandoned in favour of a national *Anti*-Drug Strategy when the Conservative Harper Government assumed power in 2006 (Wood et al., 2012: p. 38). The Harper Government removed harm reduction as a principle of the new strategy and instead prioritized "enforcement, prevention, and treatment" in drug policy (Ling, 2019: p. 5).

Lysyk (2019) notes that Ontario spent $3.8 billion on criminal justice costs in 2014 related to substance use (p. 132) while the federal government spent almost $9 billion (Stockwell et al., 2018: p. 3). Unfortunately, governments make such large-scale investments in law enforcement at

the expense of funding for community-based services that can provide compassionate care to drug users and their families (Maynard, 2017: p. 112). Indeed, the costs of drug use—both social and economic—remain high while the costs of criminalizing drug use continue to rise (Riley, 1998). The politics of prohibition forms a barrier to public health efforts to stem the spread of HIV, hepatitis and other illnesses as jails and prisons are filled with drug users and routinely violate their human rights (Riley, 1998). It also leaves drug users at risk of fatal overdoses.

It is well-documented that prohibitionist drug policies, characteristic of the war on drugs, do more harm than good (Haden, 2002: p. 433). Canada's anti-drug policies have led to criminal records for hundreds of thousands of Canadians convicted of drug possession under the old *Narcotic Control Act* and the new *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* (Dias, 2003: p. 20; Riley, 1998;). Criminalization creates a black market that spawns social problems, including unemployment, difficulties securing housing, the increased transmission of HIV/AIDS, the criminalization of youth, and family breakdown (Maynard, 2017: p. 100; Haden, 2002: p. 432). The isolation, segregation, and marginalization of drug users that occurs through punitive drug policy are known to exacerbate the cycle of addiction for the individual as well as intergenerationally (Haden, 2002: p. 432). Ironically, anti-drug policy exacerbates the very social problems it aims to solve (Riley, 1998).

Rather than waging a war on drugs, anti-drug policies wage a war on drug users, their families, and their communities (Riley, 1998; Maynard, 2017: p. 112). Indeed, criminalizing drug use impacts and victimizes prisoners' families and leads to intangible costs of crime such as fear, pain and emotional anguish (Field et al., 2013: p. 236). Field et al. (2013) consider how this may lead to further indirect costs, including medical costs, costs for therapy, and the loss of income incurred due to the psychological repercussions of harm (p. 236). Many scholars thus consider the

real drug "problem" in Canada to be the underlying poverty, unemployment, social dislocation and racism that is so often connected to substance use (Maynard, 2017: p. 100; Boyd, 2007: p. 439; Riley, 1998; Dias, 2003: p. 20).

It is important to note, however, that drug policy is not applied equally to all Canadians, and racial issues are central to the emergence of drug policy in Canada (Agozino, 2000: p. 361; Alexander et al., 1996: p. 256; Boyd, 2007: p. 333; Dias, 2003: p. 10; Maynard, 2017: p. 92). Flawed, culturally bound theories, moral discourses, white supremacy, and even scientific evidence have long underpinned punitive state policies that regulate the poor and racialized people's bodies (Boyd, 2010: p. 115). Boyd (2010) notes that this is especially true for poor, racialized women as maternal drug use is disproportionately used by the state as a justification for separating women from their children. The history and effects of punitive drug policy are linked to Canada's history of structural, racial, and gendered violence (Boyd, 2010: p. 115).

In the early 20th century, the Canadian federal government began to crack down on the Chinese opium industry. This industry existed quietly for decades, yet the federal government chose to act when there was a desire to drive Chinese labourers out of mainstream Canada upon the decline of railroad construction and the gold rush (Dias, 2003: p. 10). The report to Parliament that led to the 1908 *Opium Act* emphasized the need for prohibition on the grounds of the perception that whites, particularly young women, were frequenting the opium dens and that Canada, as a Christian nation, should be a leader in the global campaign against opium (Alexander et al., 1996: p. 256). This act banned the importation, manufacture, and sale of opium for nonmedical purposes (p. 256). Enforcement of the new drug laws targeted Chinese men, who accounted for only a fraction of Canada's population at the time but who made up a majority of those convicted of drug violations in every year but one between 1922 and 1935 (p. 258).

While opium smoking was seen as a deviant activity by Chinese labourers who were conceptualized as foreign 'Others' in Canada, Agozino (2000) notes that in Canada and the U.S., there was a similar perception that Black people were more prone to criminalized behaviours than white people (p. 333). Canadian drug policy constructed Black and Chinese men as foreign 'Others', and fears about mixing races, white women's sexual (im)morality, economic concerns, and the breakdown of the family and nation led to the criminalization of specific drugs associated with racialized groups (p. 333).

In the 1980s, the U.S. and Canada introduced mandatory minimum sentences for various drug offences (Agozino, 2000: p. 373; Department of Justice, 2002). The U.S. specifically introduced harsher sentences attached to the possession and use of crack cocaine compared to powder cocaine, penalties that disproportionately impacted Black communities (Department of Justice, 2002)[1]. It is not that Black people are more prone to using drugs than white people. Rather, due to histories of structural and racialized violence, Black people are more likely to use cheaper drugs such as crack cocaine in lower-income neighbourhoods where they are vulnerable to heightened police surveillance. In contrast, white people are more likely to use more expensive forms of powder cocaine in their home or workplace and out of sight of law enforcement (Agozino, 2000: p. 373; Department of Justice, 2002; Lloyd, 2015: p. 116).

Maynard (2017) notes that the anti-crime rhetoric of the last several decades has been, in part, a reactionary response to racial and social justice movements (p. 93). The large-scale

[1]Penalties for crack cocaine compared to powder cocaine were applied at a 100:1 ration under the Federal Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 and 1988 in the United States. Under this law, possession of one gram of crack cocaine would mandate the same mandatory minimum sentence as 100 grams of powder cocaine (American Civil Liberties Union, 2007). On August 3, 2010, the Obama administration changed this aspect of US sentencing law by passing the Fair Sentencing Act. This law eliminated the five-year mandatory minimum prison sentence that federal law previously carried upon a conviction for possession of five grams or more of crack cocaine. It also increased the amount, in weight, of crack cocaine that must be implicated for either a five-or a ten-year mandatory minimum sentence upon conviction of any federal drug trafficking crimes. This law significantly reduces sentencing disparities, although it does not eliminate them. The statutory ratio now stands at 18:1 (Graham, 2010: p. 765).

conservative push in the 1980s toward “crime prevention” came as a response to the civil rights movement, growing Black political power, and other emergent racial and social justice movements to exert control over racialized communities (p. 94). This push also came at the same time as an increasingly neoliberal politics of responsibilization aimed to reduce the number of those perceived to be state dependents (the “undeserving poor”) and which were overwhelmingly single mothers and people of colour (Chunn & Gavigan, 2014: p. 206).

Politicians often claim that drugs tear a hole in the moral fabric of society. Instead, Maynard (2017) suggests that punitive drug policy has torn an even greater hole within families and communities of colour (p. 95). In 1993, Canada incarcerated Black men at a rate five times higher than their white counterparts. In the same year, Black women’s rate of imprisonment was seven times that of their white counterparts (Maynard, 2017: p. 96). Drug laws were the primary source of this spike, and the number of prison admissions for Black persons for drug trafficking increased by 1164%, compared to an increase of 151% for white admission (p. 96). These rates have not changed much over the years. In 2010, Owusu-Bempah et al. (2020) found that Black men were five times more likely to be incarcerated than white men in Ontario, while Black women were almost three times more likely to be incarcerated than white women (p. 6). In 2015, Black and Indigenous people were overrepresented in cannabis possession arrests, with Indigenous people in Vancouver being 6.3 times more likely to be arrested for cannabis possession that the general population (Owusu-Bempah & Luscombe, 2021). These statistics illustrate how the overrepresentation of racialized bodies within the criminal justice system due to the war on drugs signifies the deep relationship between imprisonment and imperialism in North America.

Other scholars also consider how punitive drug policy targets people along the intersections of gender, race, and class (Dell & Kilty, 2012: p. 52; Boyd, 2019: p. 110). In Canada and the

United States, women drug users are often punished harshly for transgressing traditional ideals of womanhood (Boyd, 2007: p. 328; Dell & Kilty, 2012: p. 52). Drug policy portrays women as victimizing their children through drug use, reinforcing idealized notions of motherhood (Kilty & Dej, 2012: p. 7; Dell & Kilty, 2012: p. 56). In Canada, Dell and Kilty (2012) contend that Aboriginal women drug users are especially stigmatized and constructed as drug "offenders" to the exclusion of other aspects of their identities through processes of criminalization. For example, Canadian drug policy negates Aboriginal women from being accepted as victims despite lengthy histories of victimization and trauma that may lead them to use drugs in the first place (p. 54).

Boyd (2019) argues that drug use, not ongoing structural violence, is constructed as "the problem" by child protection services in Canada (p. 110). Based on the assumption that the drive to use drugs supersedes the parenting role, drug policy equates abstinence with "good parenting", which simultaneously equates drug use with child abuse (Boyd, 2007: p. 344; 2019: p. 111; Kilty & Dej, 2012). As a result, poor women, women of colour, and women on social assistance who are suspected or charged with using drugs during pregnancy and/or when parenting are now routinely subjected to drug testing when they give birth (Boyd, 2007: p. 345). The institutional policies and practices that stem from drug prohibition, including child protection and drug testing, are punitive legal and social tools that seek to responsibilize women for their "choice" to use drugs and have devastating consequences for families. Prohibitionist laws, policies, and practices about drugs, risk, and parenting reproduce historical traumas, including forms of state violence, effectively tearing families apart (p. 114).

Indeed, it is poverty, not drugs, that presents the greatest risk to infants and children (Boyd, 2019). Still, drug use and individual behaviour, rather than structural violence or racial injustice, is constituted as the main problem by child protection agencies in Canada (p. 114). North American

governments assume that punitive drug policies will encourage healthier pregnancies and maternal and paternal outcomes. However, outcomes show the opposite as punitive policies deter parents from accessing services, making them and their children more vulnerable to adverse health outcomes (Boyd, 2007: p. 347). Criminalizing drug use has devastating consequences on individual health outcomes and familial relationships and often exacerbates the root causes of addiction, including alienation and isolation (Boyd, 2007, 2019; Dell & Kilty, 2012). The following section considers common barriers associated with re-entry that make it difficult for families to rebuild and experience wellness following their incarcerated loved one's release.

2.3. Harm Reduction and Barriers Associated with Re-Entry

The John Howard Society of Ontario (2016a) notes that incarcerated populations have a higher prevalence of acute and chronic health conditions than the general population and that healthcare services in correctional facilities are delivered by a parallel yet unequal health system. The cyclical movement of staff, visitors, and incarcerated populations continuously entering and exiting correctional institutions has severe implications for public health (p. 7-15). For example, Hepatitis C is prevalent in Canada's jails and prisons due to the lack of harm reduction technologies and continued injection drug use in correctional facilities, and staffing vacancies in health care positions within correctional institutions mean that prison staff resort to isolating prisoners with physical or mental health concerns in segregation cells rather than an infirmary (Marin, 2015: p. 34; The John Howard Society of Ontario, 2016a: p. 12, 15; Thompson, Zakaria & Jarvis, 2010; Thompson, Zakaria & Grant, 2011). Kouyoumdjian et al. (2014) consider that the stable, albeit high prevalence of drug use brings into question whether Canada has invested adequate resources in addressing drug use and its consequences among incarcerated populations (p. 200). The authors suggest that current policies must be updated to reflect best practices for the treatment and

management of drug use, such as by furthering harm reduction measures such as opiate substitution therapy in provincial correctional facilities (p. 200).

Harm reduction is a goal of service delivery and the philosophy that underpins it (Dias, 2003: p. 17; The Canadian Harm Reduction Network & Canadian AIDS Society, 2008: p. 6). It aims to meet people where they are and seeks to increase the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities. It also aims to cultivate a climate that allows service providers and drug users to work together in mutual respect (The Canadian Harm Reduction Network & Canadian AIDS Society, 2008: p. 6-7). It addresses issues of individual and public health, and the key determinants of health, such as income, social support networks, education and literacy, employment and working conditions, social and physical environments, personal health practices and coping skills, healthy child development, biology, health services, gender, and culture (p. 7).

By framing incarceration as an opportunity for a marginalized population to access health care and social services, Kouyoumdjian et al. (2014) suggest that it may be possible to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with drug use in this population (p. 200). However, the authors also note that this idea fails to consider the social determinants of health and the root causes of drug use (p. 200). The idea that imprisonment is an opportunity for marginalized people to access health care illustrates that access to health care in the community remains grossly under-resourced. In 2014, the Canadian federal government spent more on criminal justice costs related to the growing opioid crisis than health care costs. Criminal justice costs such as policing, courts, and corrections totaled over $1.1 billion while health care costs including inpatient hospitalizations, day surgery, emergency department visits, specialized substance use treatment, physician time, and prescription drugs totaled $313.1 million (Stockwell et al. 2018: p. 10).

Despite the introduction of some harm reduction measures in Canadian jails and prisons, including drug treatment programming, a pilot needle exchange program in the federal system, and opioid substitution therapy, these services are often inaccessible due to the dehumanizing perceptions of prisoners held by jail and prison staff (van der Meulen, Reece & Chu, 2018: p. 300). Through interviews with former prisoners in Ontario, along with medical and community professionals from across the country who provide support to incarcerated populations, van der Meulen, Reece and Chu (2018) found that correctional officers and the union that represents them remain a barrier to the implementation of prison needle and syringe programs (p. 300). Correctional officers are trained to understand drug use as a security issue and moral failure rather than a health concern. As such, jail and prison staff tend to see abstinence as the only goal of drug treatment programs, and they may view infection as the outcome of breaking the rules (p. 304).

The attitudes that limit access to harm reduction services reflect outdated understandings of drug use and fail to reflect scientific research demonstrating the success of harm reduction policies (van der Meulen, Reece & Chu, 2018; Vogel, 2014;). Limited access to adequate health care services in Canada's jails and prisons comes at a great cost to the health outcomes of prisoners, as well as the families and communities they inevitably return to (The John Howard Society of Ontario, 2016a: p. 22). The threat of prosecution often drives drug users away from prevention and into environments with increased risk of injury, disease, and harm (Vogel, 2014). Vogel (2014) advocates for public-health-focused approaches to manage the production, sale, and distribution of drugs. Such an approach, she argues, can address the social determinants of substance use while moderating consumer demand, reducing harm, and improving the health of individual users, communities, and populations.

In 2001, Portugal decriminalized the use, possession, and acquisition of all drugs, which led to an increase in treatment and decreased drug-related illness and death[2] (Whitelaw, 2017: p. 90). By diverting people who use drugs away from the criminal justice system, this policy alleviated Portugal's human and monetary costs related to drug use and imprisonment (p. 82). As the Portugal experiment shows, harm reduction practices and policies offer a framework for addressing drug use that can produce better results at a lower cost than law enforcement.

Prison abolition scholars challenge the idea that jails or prisons can serve as spaces to access meaningful forms of healthcare (Davis, 2003; Gilmore, 2007; Maynard, 2017; Sudbury, 2010). These scholars advocate for increased access to prison healthcare as a harm reduction strategy, but they ultimately push for funding to be redirected towards community-based services to address drug use, addiction and mental illness (Davis, 2003: p. 104; Maynard, 2017: p. 112). As Davis (2003: p. 16) notes, strategies of criminalization and imprisonment relieve society of the responsibility to think about the issues that afflict the communities from which prisoners are drawn. When it comes to drug use, strategies of criminalization and imprisonment prohibit opportunities to view drug use as a public health crisis requiring public funding of treatment centres, education programs, and supportive living arrangements (Sudbury, 2010: p. 14). It is essential to consider how governments can divest from policing, jails, and prisons, and alternatively invest in community services based on harm reduction models, such as supervised injection sites, needle exchange programs, mental health services, and opioid substitution therapy.

The poor state of health care in Ontario's correctional institutions means that individuals often leave institutions with unresolved and untreated physical and mental health concerns,

[2] Other countries have also taken steps towards decriminalizing drug use and possession for personal use while investing in harm reduction programmes. These countries include Uruguay in 1974, the Czech Republic and Argentina in 2009, and Colombia in 2012 (Drug Policy Alliance, 2015: p.2).

including substance use, and are likely to face challenges re-entering their communities (The John Howard Society of Ontario, 2016a: p. 15). For example, a longitudinal study in the U.S. found that individuals with health problems upon release from prison were less likely to secure stable housing, be involved in raising their children, find and maintain employment, or have adequate income levels. Individuals were also more likely to require public assistance programs than those re-entering the community without health problems (Visher & Mallik-Kane, 2007: p. 448-453).

The children and family members of those who are incarcerated suffer from a lack of resources and supports, too (Bülow, 2013: p. 776; Lloyd, 2015: p. 120). The John Howard Society of Ontario (2016a) notes that family members of imprisoned people frequently report chronic physical health conditions and mental health issues (p. 16). This is alarming considering that more children in North America are now living in poverty and with imprisoned parents than thirty years ago (Boyd, 2007: p. 342). If the goal of public health policy and practice is to prevent disease and positively affect group health status and social functioning (Johnson, 2012: p. 47), and if successful re-entry is related to overall community wellbeing, then intervening with children of prisoners constitutes a harm reduction strategy and prevention response to a growing public health concern.

2.4. Collateral Damage of Incarceration

Scholars conceptualize children's experiences of parental substance use and imprisonment as a form of loss or absence similar to others, such as divorce or death (Allard, 2012: p. 50; Bocknek et al., 2009: p. 324; Murphy et al., 2010: p. 1336; Taylor, 2020). Allard (2012) notes that children deserve the same level of understanding, support and resources regardless of how they lose a parent. Nevertheless, stigma and shame surrounding incarceration tend to limit opportunities for dialogue with children about their experiences as incarcerated parents are generally excluded from culturally bound understandings of what constitutes valid parenthood (p. 50).

In the literature on fatherhood, Dennison and Smallbone (2015) note that imprisoned fathers rarely receive mention because they are not widely understood nor accepted as legitimate fathers (p. 66). Moreover, Johnson (2012) notes that studies on childhood bereavement show that the impact of sudden parental loss, even if temporary, may be as traumatic as that of a permanent loss (p. 49). Still, the public rarely identifies parental incarceration as a serious loss or traumatic incident for the child (p. 49). The more commonly held belief is that children derive benefit from the removal of the parent from their life (Turanovic et al., 2012: p. 921). As Knudsen (2016) explains, children's experiences are not heterogenous and while some may benefit from their parent's absence as the result of incarceration, this is not always the case.

Dennison and Smallbone (2015) maintain that the quality and quantity of father involvement shape children's development and wellbeing. Compared to children with low levels of father involvement, high levels of father involvement are associated with a range of positive outcomes. Such outcomes include cognition and language development, social and emotional development, better psychosocial adjustment in children, better mental health in adulthood, increased cognitive and social competence, increased capacity for self-control, positive self-esteem, social maturity and empathy, as well as better educational and occupational outcomes (p. 64). The study found that fathers' residential status appears to be less important in the context of children's wellbeing than the capacity for the father to be positively involved in parental duties (p. 66). Kopak and Smith-Ruiz (2016) also consider the risks associated with maternal incarceration for children. They find that maternal incarceration is associated with several criminal justice–related outcomes for children, including a greater likelihood of being arrested, a higher number of arrests, and arrest at an earlier age (p. 107).

While many parents and their children wish to maintain contact during periods of imprisonment, visitation is often irregular and of poor quality (Lloyd, 2015: p. 66; Saunders, 2017: p. 69; Withers & Folsom, 2007: p. 7). Particularly, for families who visit a loved one incarcerated on drug charges, they are often denied access as a consequence of false positive hits on an ion scanner (Garneau & Lehalle, 2021). Lloyd (2015) notes that repairing the familial bonds that are harmed by substance use and incarceration is the best way to improve parent and child outcomes and to stop intergenerational cycles of addiction, trauma, and violence (p. 134). Similarly, Manby et al. (2015) found that the key predictors of children's adjustment and resilience when they lose a parent to prison are the quality of the parent-child relationship and the child's relationships with extended family and informal social networks (p. 232).

The loss that children experience through a parent's incarceration, and through limited opportunities for contact, can lead to negative psychosocial functioning in children which can create obstacles in their relationships and academic endeavours[3] (Bocknek et al., 2009: p. 324; Reimer, 2019: p. 98). The pain, shame and guilt that many children experience when their parent is incarcerated only further stigmatizes and isolates them and is intensified when caregivers expect them to keep their parent's incarceration secret (Saunders, 2017: p. 67; Reimer, 2019: p. 100). A child is not at fault when their parent experiences incarceration, yet isolation and stigmatization often add to the suffering that the child experiences through such loss (Reimer, 2019: p. 100). Researchers, policymakers, caregivers, social workers and healthcare practitioners should consider the complex emotional and psychological impact of parental incarceration on young children and take meaningful steps to support children's wellbeing and healthy growth. Children experiencing

[3] This includes internalizing and externalizing emotions and feelings such as guilt, rage, sadness, depression, anxiety, as well as symptoms associated with posttraumatic stress disorder (Bocknek, Sanderson & Bitner, 2009: p. 324).

parental incarceration deserve the support and positive expectations accorded to children who experience the trauma of losing their parents under different conditions (Allard, 2012: p. 51).

Goffman (1963) defines stigma as a discrediting mark that sets individuals apart and as a social process that connects individuals to a set of negative characteristics that result in discrimination and devaluation (p. 3). According to Saunders (2018), the stigma associated with parental incarceration manifests in children's lives in different and distinct ways (p. 21). Two themes emerged in Saunders's (2018) study relating to stigma in the context of parental incarceration. First, children expressed an internalization of stigma through altered perceptions of self, anticipating judgement from others, and feeling different from peers (p. 23-24). Second, children recounted external experiences of stigma and reported discrimination and bullying from peers and adults, including teachers (p. 24). As a way to cope with the stigma, children reported keeping secrets and withholding information about their imprisoned parent, withdrawing from social settings and managing relationships by keeping friends at arms-length (p. 25).

It seems that children's coping strategies to manage the stigma associated with parental incarceration further contribute to their isolation (Saunders, 2018: p. 26). There is a need for holistic interventions to be available to children, and for children to be empowered to access interventions that respond to their needs as children and not necessarily as children of prisoners (Saunders, 2018: p. 26). Saunders's (2018) research emphasizes the important role that friendships and informal supports have for children when their parent is incarcerated (p. 26). Teachers are well placed to support children; however, teachers often require education about the impact of parental incarceration on children to better prepare them to offer support (Saunders, 2018: p. 26).

Allard (2012) notes that research pays limited attention to the trauma that children experience due to the loss of a parent to jail or prison (p. 50). Parental imprisonment is likely to

exacerbate the problems caused by a dysfunctional parent, compounding, rather than mitigating family problems that may pre-exist a period of imprisonment (Allard, 2012: p. 52; Bockneck et al., 2009: p. 325). Further, Allard (2012) notes that parental substance use and imprisonment undermine children's sense of stability and safety. Children can become preoccupied with the disintegration of their families, worry about their parents' whereabouts, and can find it difficult to connect with siblings or other family members (p. 51). Children may also take responsibility for the parent's substance use, even blaming themselves for their parent's sudden absence (p. 51). Older children may have to take responsibility for the care of younger siblings or feel pressured to drop out of school to find ways to supplement household income (p. 52). As parents may cycle in and out of jail or prison, Allard (2012) notes that children can become apprehensive about bonding with their parents, fearing what they perceive as another inevitable separation (p. 52). Children of incarcerated parents may monitor every move that other adults in their lives make and cling to others by asking them questions such as "where are you going?" and "when will you return?" They may perpetually fear further loss, asking themselves, "If you lose one parent, why not someone else close to you?" (Allard, 2012: p. 55).

Parental connection helps children develop a sense of personal worth (Allard, 2012: p. 53). Parental substance use and imprisonment can thus compromise children's sense of connectedness and worthiness by creating a loss of attachment and the ability to trust others (Allard, 2012: p. 54; Murphy et al., 2010: p. 1329; Saunders, 2018: p. 25). Low self-worth may result in children who feel neglected or misunderstood and they may feel an overwhelming need to be accepted and loved by others (Allard, 2012: p. 53). Prisoners' children commonly report being ostracized by extended family or being treated like the black sheep of the family which also contributes to feelings of low-self-worth (Murphy et al., 2010: p. 1342). Into adulthood, Allard (2012) suggests that children of

prisoners may struggle to trust whether a relationship is healthy because past experiences may have shown them that when something feels good, it can be disrupted (p. 54). As young adults, children of prisoners can experience trust issues with workplace supervisors and colleagues. They may have difficulty trusting that they are performing well, and they may feel a need to prove themselves because of their history. Having had to grow up very fast, Allard (2012) argues that in the workplace, they might overachieve to camouflage their past (p. 54).

It is also common for children of incarcerated parents to experience parentification, a process of role reversal that occurs in family systems whereby parents or adult caregivers relinquish their functional or emotional roles in the family which the children then take up (Hooper et al., 2014: p. 45; Taylor, 2020: p. 12). Functional roles may include taking on housekeeping tasks, acting as the household's financial manager or financial provider, or otherwise caregiving for one's parents or siblings such as providing meals or medications (Hooper et al., 2014: p. 45). Emotional roles may include acting as a confidant, secret keeper or emotional substitute for the remaining parent, a family mediator, and providing emotional support to the remaining parent or siblings (Hooper et al., 2014: p. 45).

Parentification is particularly likely to happen when a parent lives with a serious physical and mental health condition, when there is substance use and dependence in the household, and when environmental and contextual factors are present, such as low resources and poverty, or criminalization and imprisonment (Hooper et al., 2014: p. 45). Taylor (2020) notes that many children of parents with substance abuse issues will try to manage their substance-using parents to protect themselves and to prevent conflict between their parents and other family members (Järvinen, 2015; Werner & Malterud, 2016). Sometimes, there is a complete process of role reversal whereby the child takes on parental responsibilities while their parents engage in childlike

dependency (Mechling et al., 2018). Other times, a partial process occurs whereby the child provides emotional caregiving for their non-incarcerated parent and instrumental support to younger siblings (Knudsen, 2016; Taylor, 2020: p. 13).

Empirical research suggests that parentified roles and responsibilities exceed that which is developmentally, emotionally, and age-appropriate for a child (Hooper et al., 2014: p. 38). Children can experience negative consequences that stem from parentification, such as shame and guilt when they cannot live up to these expectations, as well as a lack of personal boundaries and autonomy, insecure attachments and poor functioning in adult relationships (p. 38). However, parentification can also lead to resiliency in children by conceptualizing the process of parentification within a framework of post-traumatic growth (p. 40). That is, if children can adapt the skills developed through parentified responsibilities to successfully transition into adulthood (p. 40). Regardless of the negative outcomes that are commonly reported in the parentification literature, Hooper et al. (2014) suggests that the process of parentification is sometimes the glue that holds a family together during times of difficulty and stress (p. 49). This dynamic may serve a purpose at a specific point in time for a family, but it is important for children, parents and families to receive external support so that they can recognize when these roles are no longer functional for individuals or the family, and to help each family member clarify their roles (p. 50).

Recent studies are also beginning to draw connections between trauma, such as parental incarceration in childhood, and poor physical health outcomes in adulthood (Comfort, 2016: p. 64; Harris, 2018). Comfort (2016) suggests this is particularly evident among women and notes that experiencing familial incarceration and chronic exposure to stress in childhood may contribute to the development of conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, and obesity (p. 64). Comfort (2016) also suggests that caring for family members involved in the criminal justice system may be a

significant factor in shaping women's health and could be linked to disparities in the health of Black women compared with white women (p. 76).

Still, children are not a homogenous group (Brookes, 2018: p. 273; Knudsen, 2016: p. 363). Some children may react to their parent's incarceration with sadness, confusion, worry, anger, and fear, while others may react with indifference. Allard (2012) suggests, however, that displays of indifference may operate as a protective mask of false detachment rather than a genuine lack of reaction (p. 55). Manby et al. (2015) consider that boys may be more likely to demonstrate externalizing behaviours and girls to demonstrate internalizing behaviours, although the evidence about the differential impacts of imprisonment on boys and girls requires further study (p. 233). Other scholars acknowledge that children may sometimes benefit from their parent's absence, for instance, those who were harmed by the parent's domestic violence, criminal involvement, or substance use (Knudsen, 2016: p. 365; Saunders, 2017: p. 69). Where safety issues exist for families and where contact with an incarcerated parent is contrary to the best interests of the child, it is crucial that adults provide children with age-appropriate information and supports to understand and manage this loss (Saunders, 2017: p. 70).

Among the children of incarcerated parents interviewed by Bockneck et al. (2019), children uniformly struggled to make sense of their families. They did not feel they had figures in their lives who could support them in coping with grief, stress and trauma (p. 330). This finding demonstrates a need for increased access to resources for children experiencing parental incarceration as they are likely to suffer from stigma and grow up under a cloud of expectation that they, like their parent, will resort to a life of crime or succumb to a life of drug addiction.

Traditionally, criminological research has focused on how parental imprisonment may increase a child's risk of future criminal justice involvement (Allard, 2012: p. 50; Johnson, 2012:

p. 49). While these children are vulnerable to a variety of risk factors, including high poverty rates and parental substance use, the relationship between parental incarceration and adverse outcomes is complicated (Knudsen, 2016: p. 363). Allard (2012) argues that a parent who engages in criminal acts may nonetheless steer children away from that life, prodding them toward more pro-social goals and activities (p. 54). Substance use and imprisonment do not necessarily preclude parents from acting as a positive role model for their children and teaching them good behaviours and everyday life skills (Boyd, 2007: p. 344; Dennison & Smallbone, 2015: p. 77).

The assumption that having a parent involved in the criminal justice system breeds future criminals reproduces expectations that children of prisoners are somehow genetically more crime-prone (Johnson, 2012: p. 49). This assumption sustains further assumptions that children of prisoners are less deserving of assistance than young people exhibiting problems caused by more "acceptable" forms of parent-child separation such as divorce, war or death (Johnson, 2012: p. 49). A child's grief, combined with trauma and stigma, can lead to poor engagement in classroom settings and a mistrust of authority, which can increase their potential for at-risk behaviours and later criminal justice involvement (Brookes, 2018: p. 271). Adults must validate a child's experience when they lose a parent to jail or prison and should avoid lecturing them that they are better off without their parent (Brookes, 2018: p. 273; Saunders, 2017: p. 68). Instead, children need patient and compassionate support through the grief and trauma they experience.

Developing relationships with consistently available adults can ease the adverse effects of parental loss and facilitate interpersonal resilience, whereas experiencing frequent shifts in caregivers can undermine this process (Allard, 2012: p. 55). Bocknek et al. (2009) interviewed children with an incarcerated parent and found that they expressed feeling isolated and different from others (p. 328). Children demonstrated coping by way of avoiding their feelings and limiting

opportunities for emotional expression with others (p. 328). This kind of internalizing behaviour is a common reaction to emotional stress for children (p. 330). This finding demonstrates that children need support for the grief and loss they experience when a parent is incarcerated, and they need resources to help them process and externalize confusing thoughts and emotions (p. 330).

However, it is challenging to connect children of incarcerated parents with resources when this population remains largely unidentified. Despite the United Nation's recognition of the children of prisoners as one of the world's most vulnerable groups of children, governments, courts and local services in Canada do not routinely ask about them (McCormick et al., 2014: p. 15). There is a lack of awareness about these children's experiences, let alone funding to support them, which is mirrored across the globe (Brookes, 2018: p. 271; Dennison & Smallbone, 2015: p. 62; McCormick et al., 2014: p. 15; Reimer, 2019: p. 99; Saunders, 2017: p. 70; Saunders & McArthur, 2020: p. 119). As a result, many children remain unsupported while being responsible for negotiating dysfunctional family relationships on their own (Saunders, 2017: p. 70).

Limited research exists in Canada that explores how children understand and experience parental substance use that leads to incarceration. Due to ethical protections that aim to prevent young children from becoming objects of research, children's experiences of parental imprisonment are rarely the explicit subject of research (Saunders, 2017: p. 63). Instead, scholars consider children's experiences by speaking with social workers, caregivers, and family members (Johnson, 2012: p. 48; Manby et al., 2015: p. 230). As such, decisions are often made "for" these children rather than "with" them (Brookes, 2018: p. 272).

Knudsen (2016) notes that targeting services for the children of prisoners on the assumption that they are 'at risk' of future criminal behaviour may have unintended negative consequences. Notably, this can happen if interventions affect their self-concept or if minor delinquency is more

likely to be captured by official labelling processes (p. 366). For this reason, it seems that picturebooks may offer a promising intervention strategy as children are free to engage with these materials in their own space and at their own pace. Boyd (2019) suggests that future research, including feminist and critical drug research, would benefit by further investigating the social and cultural construction of drug categories and concepts such as drug use, addiction, parenting, and risk (p. 115). This research thus explores the social and cultural constructions of parental substance use and imprisonment as they are represented in picturebooks for young children, considering how these resources may help children to make sense of their experiences and feelings related to their parent's imprisonment and addiction.

2.5. Helping Children Cope through Picturebooks

Saunders and McArthur (2020) explore how children of prisoners are constructed and responded to by the systems that surround them. Specifically, they explore how publicly available documents discuss, frame, and identify the needs of children of prisoners and consider how constructions of prisoners' children affect policy responses (p. 119). They suggest that social policies typically construct children in four ways: as appendages of parents, as 'at risk', as rights holders, and as future adults (p. 120). They also contend that there is a systemic predisposition to ignore children within the adult criminal justice system. The children in their study reported feeling like there was no one to support them or inform them of what was going on and that there was a need to rely on family members, friends and media to access information and support (p. 125).

In the U.S., most children left behind during a parent's incarceration are under the age of ten (Johnson, 2012: p. 48). Despite this, Saunders and McArthur (2020, p. 126) note that the criminal justice system does not see itself as responsible for them, which creates a kind of blindness to the effects of incarceration on children. Effectively, the neoliberal emphasis on seeing criminals

as individuals making poor decisions, alongside a tough on crime approach, promotes a powerful discourse that overshadows children's needs (p. 126). When the criminal justice system does recognize children, Saunders and McArthur (2020) suggest that it reduces them to appendages of their parent. From this perspective, children may or may not have their needs met as they are included in interventions that focus primarily on their incarcerated parent (p. 127).

Uprichard (2008) also considers the limitations to constructing children in social policy as 'adults in the making' and viewing them as 'at risk' of future law-breaking behaviour (p. 304). These constructions distinguish children as 'beings' with material needs in the present, versus their 'becoming', which places greater importance on who we suspect the child may be in the future (p. 304). This focus may omit or neglect children's current needs. Saunders and McArthur (2020) argue that it is only when adults see children as active agents in their own lives and as connected yet separate from their incarcerated parent, that institutional and family systems can begin to respond collaboratively to support children more effectively (p. 127). When children are provided with early interventions that can meet their present needs, Saunders and McArthur (2020) suggest that experiences of intergenerational trauma and imprisonment can be reduced (p. 127).

Manby et al. (2015) find that children's resilience in coping with parental incarceration is partly manifested through communication and dialogue (p. 229). The presence or lack of communication and dialogue about their parent's incarceration can either help children or lead to further conflict (p. 230). Children need information, although providing it can be difficult for parents and other authority figures (p. 235). When a parent has been imprisoned, the remaining caregiver(s) has to reappraise their view of the incarcerated person and decide their future role in the family; such reappraisals clearly affect children (p. 236). Stigma and shame are often present in the reappraisal process and children may need help disentangling their views about the

incarcerated parent from those of other family members who may assess and be experiencing the parent's incarceration differently (p. 236-240). McCormick et al. (2014) suggest that primary school children are more likely to suppress their emotions to hide their secret of having a parent who is incarcerated and to avoid being stigmatized by peers and teachers (p. 8). Resources capable of working through stigma and complicated emotions are needed for young children who may not have adults in their lives capable of fostering dialogue around their parent's substance use and incarceration. Picturebooks can be helpful tools in this regard.

It is worth mentioning that many genres exist within the realm of children's literature that deliver messages to children. These include picturebooks, but also fairy tales, fantasy fiction, and historical fiction, among others. My desire to focus on picturebooks in this study stems from my experience as a young child who often felt left in the dark about my father's addiction and whereabouts during his periods of incarceration. Since my family faced barriers to open communication about these things, I often turned to books as a child to help me try to understand. I am also motivated to explore picturebook content on the topic of parental incarceration and substance use given that such books may be a child reader's first exposure to these topics, and as such, these messages are informational and educational tools for young readers that can help to facilitate communication and dialogue between children and their parents about these issues.

As a new field of study, the landscape of picturebook research is rapidly changing. Early picturebook research in the twentieth century was dominated by historical perspectives that sought to trace the emergence and development of picturebooks. In the 1980s, scholars began to view picturebooks as an art form and educational tool for language acquisition, regarding them as resources capable of offering children an introduction to literature and visual literacy (Colomer et al., 2010: p. 1). Picturebooks are now beginning to receive critical attention as resources that are

used to introduce children to complex topics. (p. 1). Picturebooks now deal with sensitive topics such as loss, divorce, bullying, parental incarceration, immigration, displacement to the child welfare system, residential schools, and military deployment (Lowe, 2009: p. 3; Wolf, 2017).

Fitzpatrick and Kostina-Ritchey (2013) explore how international children's adoption books present family formation processes (p. 58). The authors argue that fictional books provide persuasive social messages about identity, relationships, and family membership (p. 60). Given that children have limited life experience, the authors suggest that these types of books can be sources of information that will help children to better understand themselves and others. They suggest that picturebooks for young children can function as sources of information about law by the ways they outline and define what kinds of behaviours are proper (p. 60).

Other scholars conceptualize how children use picturebooks as tools to learn about social justice issues and develop empathy on sensitive topics such as homelessness, bullying, and poverty, as well as forms of loss including death, divorce, and incarceration (Dever et al., 2005; Reimer, 2019). Research has shown that some young children are unable to conceptualize and internalize death as irreversible and final (Lowe, 2009: p. 4). Since they cannot cognitively process death, the impact of separation is experienced similarly despite the circumstances (p. 4). Adults cannot take away the pain and anguish a child feels when dealing with this loss; however, they can offer outlets to pave the road to healing and coping (Lowe, 2009: p. 3). Since young children tend to lack the emotional vocabulary to express themselves, picturebooks can offer them an opportunity to communicate (Lowe, 2009: p. 5).

Some scholars argue that the arts and literature can help readers see and understand the lives of others with sympathy and interpret events from a different perspective (Nussbaum, 1997: p. 85; Bullen et al., 2017: p. 9; Koopman and Hakemulder, 2015: p. 81). Mallan (2013) uses the

concept of “similarity bias” to explain the reader’s empathetic response. This concept encapsulates the view that has emerged from psychological studies that show we are more inclined to empathize with people who are more like ourselves than those who are more distant and unlike ourselves (p. 105). However, this empathic viewpoint has been challenged by postcolonial, feminist and queer scholars who argue that such an assumption of being able to know what it is like to be ‘Other’ oversimplifies understandings of social and cultural relationships (p. 107).

Mallan (2013) finds that issues of cultural otherness are thematized through children’s literature in various ways, but predominantly as a means to affirm positive models of cultural harmony and tolerance, thereby serving as exemplars of human rights and social justice (p. 107). In fiction, empathy can be the basis of compassionate behaviour between characters; however, it can also be used as a cultural tool for reinforcing existing dominant hierarchies and exclusions (Mallan, 2013). Mallan (2013) writes that to consider ourselves empathetic makes us feel good about ourselves, but often in a simplistic way that requires and upholds binaries such as victim and saviour, superior and inferior, and that acknowledges individual and often one-off acts of empathy while failing to address institutional, corporate, systemic abuses of power that are more toxic, powerful, and oppressive than anything an individual can commit or, conversely, repair (p. 113).

In picturebooks that represent cultural ‘Others’, the Western reader is generally implied and remains the privileged subject (Mallan, 2013: p. 110). The textual ‘Other’ is typically rendered into a figure of relative sameness to the imagined Western self so that they can be better understood by the Western reader. However, this rendering comes at the expense of overlooking and underestimating the place of the ‘Other’ within their specific historical and national contexts (p. 110, 113). The macro social and political forces that shape characters and their experiences—

particularly characters taking on the role of the 'Other'—are often simplified down to a simple choice between empathy or not, self or other, good or bad, right or wrong (p. 113).

In analyzing a series of children's picturebooks on residential schools, Wolf (2017) explores the role they might play in reconciliatory work in Canada. Wolf (2017) finds that picturebooks can hold the potential to help fuel discursive shifts in historical narratives as well as current understandings of what reconciliation can mean for all Canadians (p. 156). Through emotional narratives, residential school picturebooks can create a language for communities to address the colonial past by insisting on a retelling of history that can be felt as well as intellectualized (p. 150). Although Wolf's (2017) sample of picturebooks provide relatively few details of the past, through word and picture they create a powerful sense of what it felt like to be an Indigenous child in a residential school (p. 150). It is by insisting on emotion as an embodied form of knowledge, that the picturebooks create a shared language that holds the potential for appreciation and change by differently located readers (p. 150).

While the potential for residential school picturebooks by Indigenous Canadian authors to participate in educating young Canadians is significant, it is complicated (Wolf, 2017: p. 148). Children's picturebooks are often impacted by the "split agenda of children's literature of atrocity" (p. 148). That is, by adults' competing desires to expose children to the past for the purposes of education but at the same time to protect them from the worst of those pasts so as to avert the possibility of secondary traumatization (p. 148). Through softening strategies, picturebooks evacuate the worst details of the abuses that occurred at residential schools while failing to overtly address the significant intergenerational consequences of the residential school system and the complex colonial apparatuses in which they are embedded (p. 149). Notably, Wolf (2017) teaches her sample of picturebooks to university students enrolled in education programs, and she often

encounters disappointment over the softening strategies that her students identify and that are designed to protect child readers. Wolf (2017) also finds that her students were influenced, as she was, by a desire to read these texts in the tradition of protest literature. While Wolf and her students are trained to question the ideologies of protection and innocence that shape children's experiences and normative ideas of childhood in children's books, they had hoped the books would be written through a critical lens of protest and resistance that challenges these ideologies and trusts children with the full truth of the past (p. 149). Wolf (2017) concludes that it is essential to remember that the past's full story cannot be understood or felt through any one book.

Other scholars suggest that picturebooks provide a sense of safety for children experiencing parental imprisonment. They allow children to focus on fictional accounts of their experiences and deflect attention from the self (Dever et al., 2005: p. 19; Reimer, 2019: p. 104). However, there are a limited number of picturebooks for young children on this topic. There are even fewer picturebooks written by Canadian authors or written from the perspective of maternal incarceration, although two examples stand out. Sylvie Frigon published two books in Canada on maternal substance use and incarceration: *Ariane et son secret* (2010) and *C'est où chez nous?* (2016), which were both published in French. Val Plett Reimer also published *Sammy's Visit* (2017), a story about a child who visits her mother in jail, which she read to children in the grade 3-5 range as a part of her research to explore how children respond to the books. After Reimer (2019) read the text to the children, she led a group discussion which revealed that the story elicited empathetic responses from all students, suggesting the benefits of this approach (p. 98).

Based on her research, Reimer (2019) suggests that picturebooks can support and nurture peer awareness, which can encourage children to express understanding, empathy, care and compassion towards others who have an incarcerated parent (p. 109). Children benefit from

reading literature that reflects authentic situations in life, meaning situations that they can relate to (p. 103). The construction of narrative through image and text can bring awareness to complex concepts such as imprisonment in a way that the mere delivery of facts may fail to do. Through images and text that humanize social justice issues, children can develop knowledge, empathy and social imagination in relation to those complex issues.

Dever et al. (2005) also contend that children's books represent a bridge for children to experience social justice situations (p. 19). These authors note that for children to think about social justice, they must first acquire a level of moral development that enables them to feel empathy for others (p. 18). Unfortunately, children may base their views of substance use and incarceration in fear and misinformation as their perspectives are often shaped by images and messages in the mass media, for example, through cartoons that depict hero/villain dichotomies (Reimer, 2019: p. 104). Through picturebooks with alternative narratives, children can learn to identify and challenge stereotypes and misconceptions as they can provide examples to help children challenge what they take for granted and to and develop empathetic responses.

The children in Dever et al.'s (2005) study elicited empathy by reading stories about children experiencing homelessness and racism. They expressed a desire to befriend the children in the stories and to speak out against the injustice they experienced (p. 20). Children in Reimer's (2019) study elicited similar responses upon reading about a young girl with an incarcerated mother. These studies show how picturebooks can shape the way that children think and demonstrates how the visual component can help children develop greater understandings of complex social justice issues like substance use.

Children are not one-way recipients of knowledge, however. Reimer (2019) acknowledges the importance of encouraging children to read texts and respond to them by identifying the

thoughts and emotions that the texts inspire (p. 119). When children respond to texts, they gain a deeper sense of their own emotions, which can help them develop the ability to reflect and know themselves better (p. 119). Still, Reimer (2019) cautions that adults should not use picturebooks as a platform to moralize. Parents, caregivers, social workers and teachers should not get in the way or short circuit the process of students trying to understand their emotions. Only when students have a sense of understanding their own emotions, can we help them move forward (p. 119).

Stories that focus on the experiences of marginalized children not only authenticate their material realities, but they can develop greater awareness among those who are not personally impacted by parental incarceration (Dever et al., 2005: p. 20; Reimer, 2019: p. 119). Analyses of children's books should thus aim to draw connections between representation and narrative empathy, or emotion and ethics, to explore how picturebooks can represent tools for emotional socialization, political persuasion and ethical education (Bullen et al., 2017: p. 2). For example, Baker-Sperry and Grauerholz (2003) find that fairy tales maintain normative feminine beauty ideals and legitimize the dominant gender system (p. 711). Fairy tales written during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries taught girls how to become domesticated, respectable, and attractive to a future husband, while teaching both boys and girls gendered values and attitudes (p. 714).

Fairy tales are perhaps best defined by their narrative structure as they provide children with a happy ending and aim to inspire a sense of belonging or hope. The literature on hope shows that it impacts children's psychosocial and behavioural outcomes and affirms the importance of support and guidance for children who are faced with difficult life circumstances, notably because stressors may influence children's basic assumptions about life (Hagen et al., 2005: p. 212). Snyder (2002; 2005) suggests that hope is set by the age of two years and that levels of hope are expected

to remain stable as children age. However, negative events in children's lives such as neglect, physical abuse and/or loss of a parent can dampen their hopeful thinking (Synder, 2002; 2005).

Valle, Huebner and Suldo (2006) also find that changes in levels of hope can occur over time through sustained interventions such as counselling and education (p. 394). Here, picturebooks can serve as a small yet meaningful type of hopeful intervention. Maintaining a sense of hope is a psychological strength and a protective factor in the face of adverse life events (p. 403). It is a moderator in the relationship between stressful life events and wellbeing (p. 403). Similarly, Merkaš and Brajša-Žganec (2011) find that feelings of hope impact self-esteem, family cohesion and social support (p. 510). Children with high hope were generally more satisfied with their life and had higher self-esteem when compared to the low hope group of children (p. 511). High-hope children also reported having greater support from others as well as greater family cohesion (p. 511). The authors conclude that hope functions as a survival skill.

Hagen et al. (2005) interviewed 65 children of incarcerated women and found that children with low levels of hope, such as those who felt they had less social support demonstrated more externalizing behaviours, while children who experienced more life stressors reported more internalizing behaviours (p. 214). Children who reported high levels of hope exhibited more adaptive behaviour and reported fewer internalizing and externalizing behaviours (p. 214). The authors suggest that being hopeful can promote a child's optimism about themselves and the future, which helps facilitate the identification of pathways to reach these desired outcomes (p. 211). For Hagen et al. (2005), hope is a dispositional or intrapersonal characteristic that shows a person's approach to life (p. 211). No age or gender trends emerged from Hagen et al.'s (2005) or Merkaš and Brajša-Žganec's (2011) findings.

According to Hagen et al. (2005), being hopeful is predictive of adaptive functioning (p. 214). However, it is important to consider that hope functions in the appraisal of challenging events and not in response to the severity or number of stressors. In Hagen et al.'s (2005) study, objective measures of stress (like the number of stressful events) did not affect the level of hope that the children reported (p. 214). The authors conclude that hope may affect children's appraisal of how big the problem is that they are facing. Children who are less hopeful may appraise their problems as too big and their abilities to solve them as deficient (p. 216). As such, a child who develops hope when their parent is incarcerated or lives with addiction may be someone who can trust that their family will survive and persist throughout the challenges they face. However, adults vary in how well they cope, meaning some children have excellent models to learn from whereas others receive either little guidance or inappropriate lessons (p. 212). When children lack access to close adults who can provide guidance and positive role modelling, picturebooks may serve as especially useful tools to help children cope.

For McAdams et al. (2020), children's literature that aims to provide a source of hope invites them to engage in future-oriented reflections about their senses of self and their environments (p. 382). Children's literature has the potential to generate a desire for children to explore, question and learn how to adapt and grow beyond their present circumstances (p. 382). However, McAdams et al. (2020) make clear that hope is more than a happy ending (p. 382). Children should not be presented with false or directionless hopes. Particularly, those depictions that are located in an impossible future and which give rise to an unfounded optimism that all will be well, and which are commonly located in shallow narratives of equal opportunities and individual success (Webb, 2007; Duncan-Andrade, 2009; and Beauvais, 2015).

There are dangers associated with false hope, which can be described as an overconfident probability estimate similar to wishful thinking, as it can lead to frustration, disappointment and despair (Webb, 2013: p. 404). Hopeful endings need to be encountered alongside an element of realism, including an examination of the root causes of injustice and possible solutions (McAdams et al. 2020: p. 382). This calls for a more nuanced and radical understanding of what is meant by hope and the ways in which it can be evoked and directed towards transformation (p. 382).

2.6. Conclusion

My research explores how picturebooks written for children under the age of ten construct narratives about children's experiences of parental addiction and imprisonment. I analyze and respond to the images and text in the books, seeking to develop a deeper understanding of how children are encouraged to make sense of complicated experiences and emotions. Resources and supports must offer children the space and time to move through complex and confusing emotions at their own pace as they process feelings of grief, loss, anger, confusion, resentment, or relief. Moreover, they should provide a realistic degree of hope. Picturebooks offer a promising avenue to achieve this. The ensuing analysis thus explores what narratives may aid children in moving through complicated thoughts, emotions and feelings while also considering how certain narratives may reproduce dominant and harmful ideas about parental addiction and incarceration. The following chapter outlines the theoretical framework assembled for this research project.

Chapter 3. Theoretical Framework

3.1. Introduction

To guide my analysis of the content of a series of picturebooks dedicated to teaching children about parental incarceration and substance use and explore how my analysis is informed by my lived experience as the daughter of a former drug user and prisoner, I consider how emotions structure and are mobilized to inform engagement with picturebooks. I examine this material as a site of knowledge production related to jails and prisons and as a set of communication tools that educate children about the pains of imprisonment and substance use. As emotions research developed during the 20th century, scholars in various fields including psychology and cognitive science, biology and neuroscience, cultural studies, and sociology began to explore different aspects of emotion and thus produced different interpretations, definitions, and understandings of emotions (Turner, 2009: p. 341). This study considers the perspectives that emerged within the sociology of emotion literature, with some attention paid to cultural studies work.

This chapter bridges Hochschild's (1983) work in the sociology of emotion with frameworks emerging from children's picturebook research. I draw from McCarthy (1994) to explore perspectives in the sociology of emotion and to situate this project within cultural studies research that uses semiotics to explore the textual and visual messaging in children's picturebooks. I define key terms within this field of study, before reviewing how emotions and picturebook scholars conceptualize the emotions common to children's picturebooks on parental incarceration and substance use. These emotions include sadness, shame, guilt, anger, and love. This chapter outlines the theoretical constructs that inform and shape my analysis of the textual and visual content in the current sample of picturebooks and that allow me to explore how incarceration and

substance use are described and represented in the sample, while also considering important content that might be absent in the books' messaging informed by my lived experience.

3.2. Sociology of Emotion

Turner (2009) considers that early sociology was decidedly macro in its focus on societies as a whole. He notes that a focus on micro-processes, such as emotion, was mostly absent from sociological theorizing until the 1970s (p. 340). Seminal works in the sociology of emotion literature include Arlie Hochschild (1983), who moves away from "organismic" conceptions of emotion and towards questions that explore how we come to assess, label, and manage emotion in everyday life and social interactions (p. 27). Bullen et al. (2017) also consider the affective turn that began in the 1990s. This shift emphasized the differences between emotion, affect, and feeling in academic debate. For this study, it is essential to note the differences between these terms.

According to Bullen et al. (2017), affect is considered as the biological portion of emotion, which differs from emotion and refers to physiological reactions (p. 3). While affect is sometimes referred to as "basic emotions" such as fear, anger, and disgust, the authors note that it remains different from "social emotions" such as hatred, pride, and envy (p. 8). Bullen et al. (2017) consider 'feeling' as a useful term to describe our awareness that an affect has been triggered. On the other hand, they use 'emotion' to describe the combination of the affect that has been triggered as it is co-assembled with our memory of previous experiences associated with that affect (p. 3).

Bullen et al. (2017) note that the affective turn acted as a catalyst for new ways of thinking about the body, cognition, subjectivity, society, ideology, and texts, opening conversations between the arts and sciences (p. 2). The authors contend that affect refers equally to the body and the mind and involves both reason and passion. It illuminates our power to affect the world and be affected by it, along with the relationship between these powers (p. 2). The affective turn refuses

the mind/body duality and situates itself as a counterpoint to critical theories preoccupied with discourse and power (p. 2-4). Theories of affect position the individual with "a degree of control over their future, rather than as raw material responding rather passively to cognitive or learned phenomena" (p. 4). Bullen et al. (2017) conclude that affects may be innate and subconscious, but they can be also be corralled and repressed, encouraged and manipulated (p. 5).

Notably, how individuals experience, interpret and act on their feelings and affective experiences is shaped by the emotional scripts they learn and acquire (Bullen et al., 2017: p. 5). Hochschild (1983) similarly suggests that feeling is not entirely bound to biology, but something we do by attending to, defining and managing inner sensations in a given way (p. 27). Hochschild (1983) thus aligns with interactionists who assume that culture can impinge on emotion in ways that influence what we identify when referring to 'emotion' (p. 28). Turner (2009) also highlights the propensity that symbolic interactionists have to explore individual efforts to sustain a self-conception or identity of themselves in situations. For example, symbolic interactionists view people as experiencing positive emotions such as pride when the self is validated or verified, and negative emotions such as shame, distress, anxiety, anger, and perhaps guilt when inconsistencies in someone's behaviours and cognitions challenge their self-conception or identity (Turner, 2009: p. 344). As symbolic interactionists turned to the study of emotions in the 1970s, Turner (2009) contends that the emotional responses of persons to their success or failure in verifying the self, became a key point of social theorizing (p. 344).

Hochschild (1983) also suggests that feelings carry a "signal function." This function offers clues that signal the often-unconscious perspective that people apply when they go about seeing and experiencing the world. Put otherwise, this function connects people to their inner feelings and perspectives about different things. This can be understood as a connection to one's

experiences and the feelings associated with those experiences, including, for example, our own emotional scripts for different situations (p. 28-30). Hochschild (1983) considers feelings and emotions as a sense, similar to hearing or sight, and contends that the signal function allows emotion to communicate information (p. 17). For Hochschild, to name a feeling is to name our way of seeing something, to label our perception (p. 233). When we do not feel emotion or disclaim an emotion, we lose touch with how we link our emotional scripts to our experiences and outer realities (p. 233). Thus, the names we give emotions refer to the way we apprehend a situation and what our prior expectations about it are (p. 233), which suggests that emotions tell us how our experiences are relevant to us in different contexts (p. 236).

Hochschild (1983) further considers that since culture directs our seeing and expectations, it directs our feelings and naming of feelings (p. 233). For the most part, we see and expect in ways that we do not actively direct and in ways that are often unconscious (p. 234). Although we can label specific emotions such as happiness, sadness, anger, and love, Hochschild (1983) notes that we do not have words for all the possible combinations of primary and background emotional forces. No one culture has a monopoly on emotions and each culture may offer its own unique interpretation and naming of feelings, which means that some words and concepts may not translate cross culturally (p. 237).

Hochschild (1983: p. 18) also writes of “feeling rules”, which she bases in Goffman’s (1974) dramaturgical theory that suggests individuals engage and play “roles” that are directed by cultural scripts. According to Hochschild (1983), we develop feeling rules by how others react to what they think we are feeling (p. 58) and in relation to the socio-environmental context. Feeling rules operate as standards in emotional conversation to determine what is rightly owed in the currency of feeling (p. 18). Hochschild describes this phenomenon within the psychiatric tradition

as practitioners identify and label "inappropriate affect" as the absence of *expected* affect, effectively inferring that a patient is reacting to an event in an unexpected way (p. 59). Hochschild (1983) argues that there are varying cultural rules or norms that are taken for granted in this process and embedded assumptions as to which feelings can be judged appropriate to an event (p. 59).

Hochschild (1983) suggests that we can easily offend against a feeling rule. For example, when we grieve too much or too little, when we overmanage or undermanage grief, or when we grieve in ways that defy the cultural script for how we should express grief (p. 64). Similarly, Barthes (2009) contends that all judicious societies have "prescribed and codified the externalization of mourning" (p. 155). Hochschild further suggests that the emotional obligations imposed in the parent-child relationship exemplify the imposition of feeling rules (p. 69). She considers that children hold a certain expectation that they should receive love and sympathy from parents, while parents similarly expect love and sympathy from their children. Hochschild (1983) problematizes what happens when these needs are not met for the child and the parent, highlighting that anger can emerge. As a result of anger, Hochschild (1983) contends that a child or their parent must work through expectations for forgiveness or feelings of shame and resentment (p. 70). Guilt, then, functions as a sign of a broken internalized rule (p. 228).

From an awareness of feeling rules, Hochschild (1983) suggests that individuals must engage in "emotion work," sometimes presenting emotions to others that they do not feel. Hochschild (1983) argues that women are more likely to engage in emotion work as they are expected to control expressions of anger and aggression in the service of "being nice" (p. 163). Thus, there is a gendered aspect to emotion work (p. 164), and there are human costs of emotional labour, including burnout, overidentification, and feeling inauthentic (p. 188).

Therefore, research must continue to explore how feelings present to us and how we are encouraged (or not) to engage with them. Turner (2009) considers that scholars writing on emotions tend to gravitate towards two extreme theoretical positions, that is, by taking a purely constructivist or biological determinist stance on emotions (p. 343). He highlights a concern that there is a tendency for sociologists—and specifically, social constructivists—to ignore the biological foundation of emotions (p. 343). Further, Turner (2009) considers that there is a problematic tendency for scholars to construct emotions as being in opposition to rationality (p. 343), which he relates to scientism and a desire to strive for pure objectivism in academic research. Here, scientism refers to a tendency of researchers to mimic the natural sciences in social scientific enquiry while overly valuing positivist, quantitative, formulaic and recipe-driven approaches to the study of social life (Sayer, 1992: p. 4; Frauley, 2015: p. 620).

In academic traditions that value scientism, objectivity is often defined as "free from personal feelings", yet Hochschild (1983: p. 31) argues that we need feelings and emotions to reflect on the objective world. In her view, we must take feelings into account as clues and then correct for them as our best shot at objectivity. Damasio (1994) similarly debunks the assumption that emotion and rationality are opposites by highlighting the role of emotion in rational decision making, finding that emotion is a crucial component of cognition. Other studies also confirm this, as Bullen et al. (2017: p. 6) write that humans cannot reason or think without emotion or narratives, and as Nikolajeva (2012a) considers that the emotional part of the brain responds to a visual stimulus before it is processed by the rational part of the brain (p. 278).

According to Nikolajeva (2012a), the visual cortex is hard-wired in our brain, while language is not (p. 279). This logically implies that reading images comes naturally to us while understanding verbal statements, whether oral or written, is a learned process (p. 279). Nikolajeva

(2012a) concludes that there is extensive anecdotal evidence of young children responding adequately to visual images of emotions long before they can talk, thus supporting the importance of analyzing both text and images in children's picturebooks (p. 280).

3.3. Cultural Studies and Picturebooks

While early constructionist and interactionist approaches explored how *much* culture matters in the study of emotion, contemporary perspectives take leads from literary studies, cultural anthropology, and studies of popular culture to explore *how* culture matters (McCarthy, 1994: p. 269-270). Today's attitude in the interactionist tradition is increasingly interpretive and conversational (p. 270). Scholars now pull from semiotics to explore emotions as neither strictly personal features of individuals nor universal natural objects. Semiotics scholars consider emotions as pre-eminently cultural and, therefore, subject to social and political forces that render them natural (McCarthy, 1994: p. 277). Newer ventures into cultural studies have thus moved emotion scholars to examine structuralism and semiotic conceptual implications. In so doing, increasing attention is given to the study of forms of signifying—via institutions, texts, images, and ideologies (McCarthy, 1994: p. 270).

Kappeler (2008) defines semiotics as the study of the production and interpretation of signs and codes and how they convey meaning in a given context (p. 441; Manning, 1987: p. 25). A sign, including any act, object, or symbol that conveys meaning, is composed of a signifier and a signified, referring to the representative symbol or expression and the intended idea or meaning (Kappeler, 2008: p. 442; Manning, 1987: p. 34). The word 'crime', for example, acts as a signifier for illegal behaviour which is the signified idea (Kappeler, 2008: p. 442). Kappeler (2008) also considers that each sign carries a denotative or literal meaning, along with a connotative or ideological meaning (p. 442). When we think of crime, he notes that it is often the connotative

meaning, or fear of violence, danger, and risk to the individual, that we think of despite the fact that, historically, the majority of criminalized acts remain petty and nonviolent in nature (Kappeler, 2008: p. 442; Mathiesen, 2006: p. 77).

When a group of signs are integrated into a singular system, they become codes (Manning, 1987: p. 27). For example, the disciplines of biology, sociology and criminology, can be understood to operate as codes as they represent broad interpretive frameworks used to encode and decode messages about social life. A biologist will use different linguistic and visual signs to convey meaning about social life than the sociologist or criminologist, yet all three may be able to understand each other's codes at times. Languages operate as codes and discipline-specific terms and conventions can make it difficult for those outside of the respective field to understand the meanings their interpretations produce.

Semiotics assumes that our understandings of the world are symbolic, that words and language are how our experiences become a reality, and that words are representations and abstractions of reality (Kappeler, 2008: p. 441). The form and content of words presented in texts are significant, as is the positioning of words—or signs—within a text, as both determine the meaning of a communication (p. 442). Semiotics adopts a structural approach and works to deconstruct assumptions that there can be an objective reality to objects apart from human interpretations of them (p. 442). The value of semiotics, then, lies in its' capability to help uncover the power relations that are embedded in language and symbols (Kappeler, 2008: p. 442).

Semiotics thus works as a form of cultural and sociological analysis capable of identifying principles and rules that account for a known pattern (Manning, 1987: p. 29), which is advantageous because social conventions, like language, are formally constituted systems that can reveal discourses and narratives about social life (p. 40). As an analytic technique, semiotics

possesses a certain level of generality that can be applied as a tool in everyday life and across many fields and disciplines (Manning, 1987: p. 42).

Van Leeuwen (2017) demonstrates how semiotic analyses can extend beyond written language in his discussion of iconography and the visual semiotics of Roland Barthes as analytic techniques that seek to answer questions of representational and ideological meaning embedded in images (p. 2). Similar to traditional semiotics, these approaches rest on the idea of layered meaning and context (p. 2). Like language, an image carries both denotative and connotative meanings, which may be altered by its form and context. Photography, for example, denotes and connotes meaning through the use of techniques such as framing, distance, lighting, or focus (p. 3, 8). Van Leeuwen (2017) considers that photographs are good vehicles for conveying connotative or ideological meanings that serve to legitimate the status quo as they convert a 3D world into a 2D one, neutralizing many of the complexities inherent to our social world in the process (p. 7). Van Leeuwen (2017) advocates for adopting an iconographical mode of analysis as it seeks to understand images by analyzing the context in which they were produced (p. 14, 29). Such contextual analyses leave room for symbolism, whether open or disguised, to be discovered in images as cultural objects (p. 29). Ultimately, studying images as symbolic, cultural constructs—in the same way as language—offers much promise for producing more holistic analyses that can challenge assumptions embedded within both text and images (Van Leeuwen, 2017: p. 29-30).

Indeed, the semiotic study of culture is directed toward the study of symbolic and signifying systems through which social order is communicated and reproduced (McCarthy, 1994: p. 270). The age of structuralism and semiotics has shown that society is an assemblage of signs to be deciphered (McCarthy, 1994: p. 270). In this view, nothing exists outside of these signifying systems—neither material life, forces of production, nor the social sciences themselves and their

objects, cultural forms and forces (McCarthy, 1994: p. 270). Emotions are cultural objects, and they are understood to carry meaning within systems of relations. Thus, according to semiotics, emotions unfold within a world already symbolized (McCarthy, 1994: p. 271).

McCarthy (1994) notes that new directions in emotion research are considering the discursive operations that constitute our emotional lives, the cultural practices through which emotions are known, controlled, released, cultivated, and worked on. Studies of popular culture take on greater importance since culture is no longer construed universally but as a series of variegated cultural practices (p. 272). While the concept of culture previously implied a shared universe of meaning, cultural practices are now understood to reveal a collective sense of difference and various social realities (p. 272). Cultural practices manifest in signifying systems from written texts of popular press and journalism to film, television, videos, and photographs, and within the discursive fields that structure institutions and regimes of business, police work, and medicine, for example (p. 272). Since emotion studies gather data within such cultural sites, McCarthy (1994: p. 273) suggests that Hochschild's (1983) concept of "emotional cultures" is examinable through advice columns, support groups, and I offer, through children's picturebooks.

Nikolajeva and Scott (2000) define picturebooks or picture storybooks as narratives in which text and pictures are equally important (p. 6). They choose to spell picturebooks as one word as this spelling aims to honour the interplay between text and image, and it also differentiates picturebooks from exhibit books that include pictures with no narrative, picture narratives which represents a wordless narrative or with very few words and illustrated books which contains text that is supported by images, but which can exist independently from the images (p. 6). The authors also consider that approaches to the study of children's picturebooks are varied. The dominant focus involves the consideration of picturebooks as educational vehicles, including aspects of

socialization and language acquisition (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2000: p. 2). Another line of inquiry examines picturebooks as objects for art history and discusses topics such as design and technique (p. 3). Other times, critics employ a literary approach, discussing themes, issues, ideology, or gender structures within picturebooks as a part of the broader category of children's fiction (p. 3). However, Nikolajeva and Scott (2000) consider that literary approaches often neglect the visual aspect or treat pictures as secondary to text (p. 3). This study seeks to address this limitation and tension by interrogating the visual as well as textual content of the sampled material.

From a semiotic perspective, picturebooks communicate through iconic and conventional signs (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2000: p. 1). Iconic or representational signs are those in which the signifier and the signified are related by common qualities. The sign is a direct representation of its signified (p. 1). Take, for example, the picture of a printer on computer command menus. The icon of the printer is a direct representation of the computer's print function. Conventional signs have no direct relationship with the object signified. They are based on assumptions about meaning that are often culturally dependent (p. 1). The word 'print' in a computer command menu only carries meaning if we possess the code. That is, if we have knowledge of the English language that allows us to know what the letters stand for and how to interpret what the word stands for (p. 1). Nikolajeva and Scott (2000) demonstrate that conventional and iconic signs have existed in human culture from its beginning and have given rise to two parallel communication types: the visual and the verbal. The function of pictures as iconic signs is thus to describe or represent, while the function of words as conventional signs is primarily to narrate.

The tension between the two functions of iconic and conventional signs creates unlimited possibilities for interaction between word and image in a picturebook (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2000: p. 2). Both words and images leave room for the readers to interpret according to their previous

knowledge, experience, and expectations. We may find infinite possibilities for word–image interaction (p. 2). Nikolajeva and Scott (2000) suggest that a hermeneutic circle may represent the process of reading a picturebook. The reader turns from verbal to visual and back again, in an ever-expanding "concatenation of understanding" (p. 2). Presumably, children intuitively know this when they ask that a book be re-read to them multiple times. In fact, they do not read the book in the same way. With each reading, they go more deeply into the book's meaning (p. 2). Nikolajeva and Scott (2000) consider that adults often fail to read picturebooks in this way as they largely regard the illustrations as decorative, indicating that they effectively ignore the book's whole meaning and messaging (p. 2).

In a later study, Nikolajeva (2012a) explored how emotions are conveyed through word and image interaction in picturebooks. She considers how fiction promotes affective responses in child readers. She suggests that reading a literary text activates the long-term memory and the emotions connected with it. To make sense of fiction, readers will relate fictional events to personal experience and understand characters' emotions by connecting them to relevant, emotionally charged memories (p. 276). Cognitive theory refers to this process as "misattribution" as we attribute our own emotions to and project our emotions onto fictive characters (p. 276). The following section reviews some of the emotions that children's picturebooks on parental incarceration and substance use commonly explore and represent and which I explore analytically in this research. These emotions include sadness, shame, guilt, anger, and love.

3.4. Emotion in Children's Picturebooks

Many scholars consider that fiction's impact is primarily related to its ability to elicit emotions in the reader (Bal & Veltkamp, 2013: p. 2; Oatley, 2002; Bullen et al. 2017). Oatley (2002) considers that emotion is to fiction as truth is to science, as the emphasis in fiction is placed

on coherence truths as the elements of a story interact with each other, and on personal truths as elements of the story relate to the concerns of readers (p. 2). As someone reads, they absorb narrative events, phrases, and movements of a story, assimilating them into a schema of what they already know (p. 8) Schema, here, refers to a framework of understanding, an organized system of beliefs, based on personal experience including memories, thoughts and feelings (p. 15). Stephens (2011) considers that schemas shape our knowledge of all concepts, including objects, situation, genres in film and fiction, and cultural forms and ideologies (p. 13-14). As such, fiction impacts how people construct schematic understandings of a story through the process of reading, reflecting and relating (Oatley, 2002: p. 8). Importantly, emotions in fiction can be experienced at different distances. Fiction thus gives readers the possibility of reliving or experiencing emotions while also reflecting on them from a safe distance (p. 19).

Bullen et al. (2017) consider that children's literature appeals to emotions rather than reason as it aims to stimulate the reader's affective responses (p. 1). During childhood, individuals learn how to manage their feelings and how to express emotion. In the home, the school, and on the playground, children are taught a series of feeling rules – namely, what they should feel and when, where, and for whom particular feelings and expressions thereof are appropriate (p. 5). Affects including shame, humiliation, and fear, but also interest, joy, and surprise, thus operate as tools for socialization, education, and social control in these contexts (p. 5). Bullen et al. (2017) assert that children's picturebooks mobilize emotions to articulate intimate relationships and identity (p. 12). Texts for young people teach child readers how to feel about specific events and experiences and thus have the potential to induct them into ideological viewpoints. This extends to how child readers are positioned to respond to other people and the world around them as well as the impact of their affective potential on others (p. 13). Bullen et al. (2017) thus consider the

relationship between affect, ideology, and children's texts to have real significance in terms of how child readers understand and respond to issues of power and identity (p. 13).

Readers may therefore respond differently to a given text. The timing and context of the reading matters, not only in terms of a young person's reading expertise, but also because how and for whom individuals feel empathy, for example, may be contingent on the particular historical, economic, cultural, or social circumstances in which a text is both written and read (Bullen et al., 2017: p. 9). Since the concepts of 'childhood' and 'emotions' are both shaped by norms and practices according to specific social and cultural interpretations, some historians are now examining the history of emotions as a methodological framework in which to better understand histories of childhood (Bullen et al., 2017: p. 9-10). As such, Bullen et al. (2017) argue that the turn to emotions in picturebook research allows us to explore how childhood emotional formation is tied to the making of social identities. They regard children's literature as an important tool for developing children's ethical and empathic understandings of a society and its people.

However, Nikolajeva (2012a) considers that emotions are not always as clearly delineated as the linguistic labels make them seem (p. 277). There are degrees of happiness and sorrow, and there are nuances between happy and glad, sad and upset, angry and furious (p. 277). Nikolajeva (2012a) maintains that language cannot adequately convey an emotion as emotions are largely non-verbal, noting that metaphors are a powerful device to circumvent the limitations of language, although visual images carry a stronger potential. In this way, images can substantially enhance the meaning expressed by the words chosen to approximate what can be vague and difficult to define emotions (Nikolajeva, 2012a: p. 298). Indeed, a visual image can evoke a wide range of emotions that circumvents the relative precision of words.

For a child still grasping language, visual experiences are invaluable (Nikolajeva, 2012a: p. 278). Images are sub- or pre-verbal, and they can take over in instances when words are ineffective (p. 289). In comparison to the conventional narrative approaches to novels and film that rely on action and dialogue to evoke emotion, Mallan (2017) suggests that picturebooks offer a different emotional arena, or affect, as they mobilize minimal dialogue or description, aesthetics, and stylistic inventiveness (p. 129). Paradoxically, picturebooks can draw on and break away from literary and filmic conventions in their renderings of emotion and space as they are more likely to rely on the visualization of affect to evoke emotional atmosphere, or to evoke emotion in the reader than conventional literature or film, which rely on linguistic description and dialogue (p. 129). Still, picturebooks also rely on artistic and filmic devices such as colouring, depth, and gesture to evoke emotion in the reader vis-à-vis the images presented in the story (p. 129-130).

Mallan (2017) suggests that picturebooks offer children a "visual epistemology," which she defines as a way of seeing and knowing about the world that resonates with how readers find themselves in the world (p. 134). While the aesthetic emotion conveyed in a picturebook is not the same as experiencing an emotion in real life and a reader's emotional response remains subjective, literature still contains the capacity to arouse emotions in a meaningful way (p. 135). In a picturebook, the setting can be conveyed by words, pictures or both (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2000: p. 61). The setting communicates a sense of time and place for the actions depicted. However, it can go beyond this by providing an affective climate that sets up a readers' emotional response in a particular way (p. 61). The visual text is well suited to the description of spatial dimensions, including indoor scenes and landscape, the mutual spatial relations of figures and objects, and their relative size and position (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2000: p. 61).

Like characterization, the setting demonstrates the difference between diegesis (telling) and mimesis (showing). While words can effectively describe space, pictures can show it (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2000: p. 61). For stories with a historical dimension, the correct and careful delineation of setting is necessary and educational (p. 63). The details of the setting can offer information about places and historical epochs that go beyond the young reader's experience and may do so in subtle, non-intrusive ways that provide an understanding of unfamiliar manners and morals and the cultural environment in which the story takes place (p. 63).

While most research documents four primary emotions, namely, anger, fear, sadness and happiness (Turner, 2009: p. 342), Ratcliffe (2012: p. 23) contends that there is a tendency in academic literature to examine emotion from this "fairly standard inventory" while neglecting other emotional states that arise from being or finding ourselves in the world. For Mallan (2017), taking a phenomenological perspective of emotion does not preclude using so-called basic emotions to describe how one feels, but it also considers what Ratcliffe calls "existential emotions," including anxiety, lethargy, estrangement, and isolation that constitute a more nuanced understanding of how we find ourselves in the world and our grasp of reality (p. 129). As Turner (2009) writes, "this effort to understand how complex emotions are built from primary emotions represents one response to the fact that the expression of emotions between persons is nuanced and complex" (p. 342). Basic and complex emotions are both a biological and sociological process, and emotions like shame, guilt, jealousy, wonder, envy, and yearning operate as a form of embodied experience and understanding, critical to human behaviour, interaction, and organization (p. 342). As this study explores picturebooks that address emotional themes concerning parental incarceration and substance use, I consider how emotions scholars conceptualize emotions common to these experiences, including sadness, shame, guilt, anger, and love.

Hochschild (1983) defines sadness as a focus on what one likes, loves, or wants, and on the fact that it is not available to them (p. 235). Sadness focuses not on what has caused the loss or absence nor the person's relation to the cause of loss. It is a specific focus on one's lack of a relationship to the loved object or person. Subsequently, Hochschild (1983) defines frustration as the act of dwelling on the immediate fact that a tragedy has happened, not on the cause of the loss nor its object (p. 235). She contends that anger results from focusing on the cause of loss or absence (p. 235). Structural and semiotic theorist Roland Barthes understands the root of sadness similar to Hochschild. In *Mourning Diary*, Barthes (2009) writes that abstraction is characterized by absence and pain, and he concludes that "the pain of absence" is perhaps what defines love (p. 42). Similarly, Nikolajeva (2012a) considers that loneliness is a social emotion caused by separation from the object of our love (p. 288). However, Barthes (2009) considers his anxiety in grief not as a lack but a wound, "something that has harmed love's very heart" (p. 65). Indeed, he often refers to his experience of mourning as a "sickness" and "nauseous sadness," referring to the visceral, affective and embodied aspects of emotion (p. 97).

Kitsner (2015) highlights a debate in viewing trauma, such as the loss of a loved one, as an event or as an emotional response to an event (p. 2). Traditional understandings of trauma come from the medical world and operate on the assumption that emotional trauma is akin to physical trauma, that it can be observed, diagnosed and treated (p. 1). Kitsner (2015) aligns with the view that trauma refers to unresolved or unprocessed emotions that disrupt functioning as a result of an unexpected event (p. 2). It is a sad and challenging experience for which the person is not prepared and has not developed coping mechanisms. Trauma reflects a mix of circumstances that leave a person vulnerable, without solutions, and often feeling shaken or broken, forcing them to become new in a way that others may struggle to understand (p. 3). Kitsner (2015) highlights that an

individual tragedy is never just that. It is the result of a complex set of interactions between the personal and the collective, between the individual and their social context. It can also be a series of events shaped by economic and political imbalances of power (p. 2).

Like Kitsner, Barthes (2009) does not consider trauma a singular event. He views grief as existing in duration (p. 50). Barthes (2009) explores his experience in mourning through the concept of place, and he describes mourning as "a cruel country where I am no longer afraid." He explores the concept of place as an embodied, emotional experience (p. 54). Like Nikolajeva (2012a: p. 289), Barthes (2009) maintains that words are insufficient to describe his experience and emotions (p. 87). Although he considers his suffering inexpressible, he writes that it is, at the same time, utterable and speakable (p. 175). In Barthes' (2009) words, "the very fact that language affords [him] the word 'intolerable' immediately achieves a certain tolerance" (p. 175).

According to psychoanalytic perspectives in symbolic interactionist theorizing, the emotions of shame, guilt, and alienation are mixes of three primary emotions—anger, fear, and sadness, albeit in different proportions (Turner, 2009: p. 345). Shame attacks the integrity and worth of the self. It is considered a painful emotion, and Turner (2009) considers that individuals employ defense mechanisms to protect themselves from it (p. 345). Since it is a painful emotion, Turner (2009) considers that shame is likely to be repressed (p. 345). As a result of repression, he considers that shame can turn to anger. Alternatively, if shame is experienced with a high degree of fear, people can experience anxiety. Due to a high proportion of sadness in shame, they may also experience depression (Turner, 2009: p. 345).

Brown (2012) and Sedgwick and Frank (1995) consider shame as an emotion that deeply hurts the one who experiences it. Sedgwick and Frank (1995) describe it as an "inner torment, a sickness of the soul" that leaves someone feeling "naked, defeated, alienated, lacking in dignity or

worth" (p. 133). In fact, Brown (2012) highlights neuroscientific findings that show how shame can cause real, tangible pain (p. 71). A study funded by the American National Institute of Mental Health and the National Institute on Drug Abuse finds that physical pain and intense experiences of social rejection hurt in the same way, at least as far as the brain is concerned (Kross, Berman, Mischel, Smith & Wager, 2011). Our brain chemistry reinforces the importance of social acceptance and connection, causing us to experience shame as a literal painful experience (Brown, 2012: p. 71; Kross, Berman, Mischel, Smith & Wager, 2011).

Further, Brown (2012) defines shame as the fear of disconnection—the fear that we are unlovable and do not belong (p. 109). In the body, shame can look like a dropped gaze, a bowed head, a covered face, or other forms of reduced connection between oneself and another (Sedgwick & Frank, 1995: p. 134). The theory behind such responses is that by reducing eye contact, the shamed person can maintain a degree of control over how the connection is severed between themselves and another in order to avoid feeling further alienated by the shamer. It is a means to reduce further self-exposure and vulnerability (Sedgwick & Frank, 1995: p. 134-135).

Sedgwick and Frank (1995) identify that the relationship between shame, humiliation and guilt is intimately linked to love and identification, particularly in parent-child relationships, friendships, and other interpersonal relationships (p. 139, 152). Parents provide multiple sources of shame for their children, for example, when a parent scolds a child for poor behaviour and the child hangs their head in acknowledgement of their suggested deviancy or immorality, or, when a child internalizes shame and experiences a sense of fear and dread if their parent was to discover an unfavourable act they have performed (p. 142, 153). Sedgwick and Frank (1995) consider that another source of shame in close relationships occurs through the loss of someone as a love object through separation or death (p. 153). This shame can be felt in various ways, such as alienation,

abandonment, rejection, defeat, loneliness, or longing (p. 153). Children desperately wish to identify with their parents, and any barriers to a child's ability to identify with their parent—including through separation or death—makes them vulnerable to shame (p. 155).

Nikolajeva (2012b) suggests that children tend to feel unreasonably guilty about the behaviour of the adults in their lives. Children's guilt often includes blaming themselves for their parents' divorce or believing that a relative's death occurred as punishment for something they have done wrong (p. 2). This understanding aligns with Hochschild's (1983) definition of guilt, which she characterizes as seeing oneself as the author of an unwanted event (p. 236). Nikolajeva (2012a) considers guilt a social emotion that stems from the primary emotion of unhappiness (p. 287). In picturebooks, Nikolajeva (2012b) notes that a simple statement, whether authorial (such as "he felt guilty") or figural ("I feel guilty"), is inadequate to convey the complexity of the emotion (p. 2). Nikolajeva (2012b) also contends that direct statements and actions can sometimes contradict each other (p. 3). For example, a narrator can claim that the character feels guilty while their actions show no clear expression of guilt, remorse, or repentance. Still, certain types of information pulled from fiction can have stronger authority. Notably, a statement from an omniscient narrative voice is often more persuasive than a character's discourse or actions (p. 3).

Nikolajeva (2012b) contends that the depiction of guilt in children's literature is often presented as a moral issue (p. 3). In assessing what she calls "guilt ekphrasis," understood as the combination of linguistic and visual signs to depict guilt, young readers are confronted with fundamental philosophical questions. One of the basic narrative elements of all stories is breaking the rules (p. 3). Frequently, moral dilemmas are spelled out and delivered either by a didactic narrative voice or an adult character who confirms that a specific action was right or wrong (p. 3). Nikolajeva (2012b) argues that the complexity in the literary representation of guilt puts high

demands on the reader's maturity, especially in terms of empathy, as readers are expected to be able to empathize with characters who are guilty (p. 13). Indeed, sharing extreme sensations of guilt is one of those vicarious experiences that literature can offer us as readers (p. 13).

The textual and visual representation of guilt thus enables the discussion of profound ethical and metaphysical issues in children's books (Nikolajeva, 2012b: p. 13). In children's books that explore parental incarceration, young readers will inevitably grapple with notions of guilt or innocence. However, Barthes (2009) speaks to the nuances and complexities inherent to what we feel, for example, he writes that the thing that allows him to endure his mother's death "resembles a certain possession of freedom" (p. 98). For children who lose a parent to imprisonment, there is often a similar internal tension between missing their parent but, perhaps, feeling relieved or finding a newfound sense of safety, security, or freedom in their parent's absence. This is particularly true in cases where the parent's criminal involvement harms the child due to domestic violence or substance use (Knudsen, 2016: p. 365; Saunders, 2017: p. 69).

While Barthes (2009) writes of emotions including guilt, fear, loneliness, desperation, depression, anxiety, and embarrassment in his experience of grief (p. 43, 65), he ultimately locates the source of his mourning in love as he writes, "[his] mourning is that of the loving relation…it occurs in the words [of love] that come to mind" (p. 39). Although language helps him achieve a certain tolerance in his grief, he suggests that true mourning "is not susceptible to any narrative dialectic" (p. 50). Indeed, Hochschild (1983) defines love as the feeling that arises when one focuses on the desirable qualities of a person or thing and their closeness to her, him, or it (p. 236).

By noting that love is irreducible to language, Barthes alludes to the complex and social nature of love. Brown (2012) writes that love is not something that we give or get. Instead, love is something that we nurture and grow (p. 106). She considers that we cultivate love "when we allow

our most vulnerable and powerful selves to be deeply seen and known, and when we honor the spiritual connection that grows from that offering with trust, respect, kindness, and affection." (p. 105). As such, Brown (2012) contends that shame, blame, disrespect, betrayal, and the withholding of affection damage the roots from which love grows; love only survives these experiences and injuries if they are "acknowledged, healed, and rare" (p. 106).

Like Brown (2012), Nikolajeva (2012b) understands love as a complex and dynamic emotion that emerges and grows between people. Nikolajeva (2012b) defines love as a social emotion in which two people's personal goals interact and must be reconciled based on the basic emotion of happiness (p. 4). In her view, love demands that happiness be shared by two agents, which means that one wishes for the object of their affection to be happy, but also that the object of their affection wishes for them to be happy as well (p. 286). To love someone implies a willingness and ability to sacrifice some of your own happiness to achieve happiness for the object of one's love. According to this understanding, love demands empathy as it requires an understanding of other people's emotions and goals. Empathy allows a person to judge what actions will be beneficial or harmful to the other party, a process that involves a form of mind-reading by stepping outside of oneself and into the circumstances and position of another (p. 4).

Kitsner (2015) also affords importance to the language of healing by questioning what healing or recovery means in the context of trauma, noting that trauma cannot be sanitized by medical jargon, psychotherapeutic mystification, or popular sentimentality (p. 5). Despite medical perspectives that assume there can be an endpoint to healing, Kitsner (2015) contends that healing is an elusive concept and an ongoing process (p. 5). More important than the pursuit of words in the interest of healing is the power of presence, and a specific presence that is fully aware of both the self and the other (p. 5). As such, Kitsner (2015) suggests that any framework for

reconceptualizing trauma needs to integrate the recognition that in a globalized capitalist world, bad things often happen to good people, and since trauma is mainly human made in this context, presence needs to be transformative regarding the intimacy of caring relationships and in the pursuit of social justice (p. 5). Thus, well-written and illustrated picturebooks that examine the topic of parental incarceration or substance use should remain sensitive to the complex circumstances and traumas that lead people to become criminalized. As they aim to help children cope with the experience of losing their parent to addiction and the criminal justice system, they should also aim to provide a realistic degree of hope.

3.5. Hope in Children's Picturebooks

Webb (2013) notes that understandings of hope are varied and definitions of it are contested (p. 398). Some scholars conceptualize hope as a cognitive process (Waterworth, 2004), an existential stance (Crapanzano, 2003), a state of being (Fromm, 1968), a disposition (Day, 1969), an attitude (Dauenhauer, 2005), a state of mind (Pettit, 2004), an emotion which resembles a state of mind (Bar-Tal, 2001), an instinct (Mandel, 2002), an impulse (Ricoeur, 1970), an intuition (Polkinghorne, 2002), a socio-hormone (Tiger, 1979) or a subliminal 'sense' (Taussig, 2002). Yet, for Webb (2013), hope is best understood as a "socially mediated human capacity with varying affective, cognitive and behavioural dimensions" (p. 398). Indeed, how hope is experienced depends on time, place, and factors relating to race, class and gender (p. 398).

Webb (2013) outlines five models of hope, including patient, critical, sound, resolute and transformative hope. Two of these models (sound and resolute) are relevant to this study as they provide frameworks for thinking about the narratives of hope presented in the current sample of picturebooks. Sound hope is that which is directed toward a significant future good involving a probability calculation that is based on an assessment of the evidence regarding the likelihood of

that hope being achieved (Webb, 2013: p. 405). Educators are called on to embrace and nurture a kind of sound hope that offers children no illusions and which is grounded in a realistic grasp of structural constraints (p. 405). However, the sound model of hope is criticized for limiting the possibilities that may stem from exercises in imagining alternative states or societies (p. 406).

Resolute hope refers to instances when we hope against the evidence. Snyder (2002, 2003, 2005) has developed the most complete model of this interpretation of hope, which he defines in relation to a perceived ability to achieve desired goals. Hope in this model assumes that "one has the freedom to initiate events on the basis of goals that one sets [for] oneself" and that "the world is fluid, plastic and capable of being moulded by one's agency as it moves along the pathways one has identified" (Webb, 2013: p. 407). While sound hope takes the world as a given and makes calculations based on the evidence (e.g., by asking "what are the chances? to what extent am I in control?"), the resolute hoper strives to take control and create the chances (p. 408). Resolute hope is regarded as a learned thinking pattern that can be taught through instruction and practice.

Importantly, Webb (2013) argues that there is nothing inherently radical or subversive about a pedagogy of hope, despite arguments put forward by scholars like Freire (1994). Webb (2013) maintains that while pedagogies of hope can serve to transform social relations, they can also reproduce them (p. 399). As such, this study explores how narratives within the current sample of picturebooks, including narratives of hope, may challenge or reproduce certain ideas relating to the experience of parental incarceration and substance use.

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined various perspectives that have emerged from the sociology of emotions literature and it has described the theoretical perspectives and constructs that act as the framework to guide the analysis of the children's picturebooks chosen for this study. Further, it

has provided an overview of semiotics as a conceptual framework that offers useful analytical tools to uncover implicit messages embedded within the text and images in picturebooks. It has provided a theoretical discussion of the specific emotions that are commonly represented within children's picturebooks on parental incarceration and substance use, including the concepts of shame, guilt, sadness, love, and empathy. It has also considered the theoretical relevance of hope in the context of education and children's literature. As this chapter has outlined the importance of considering both the textual and visual content in picturebooks, it provides a foundation for the following chapter, which will justify the use of thematic narrative analysis, the techniques of visual criminology, and autoethnography to analyze the present sample of children's picturebooks.

Chapter 4. Methodology

4.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews the materials and methodological approach I used to conduct this research. I outline the gathering and production strategy that I used to identify the dataset, including the sampling strategy chosen to identify the children's books for this study. Next, I explore how I mobilized a plurality of methodological approaches to conduct the analysis. I outline the origins of the narrative tradition in social science and the beginnings of a narrative criminology. I situate myself in this field and describe how thematic analysis can be bridged with narrative analysis (Esin, 2011; Riessman, 2005; 2008) to explore how children's picturebooks construct narratives about children's experiences of parental substance use and imprisonment. I then consider how the visual narrative analysis outlined by Riessman (2008) can be used alongside techniques of visual criminology (Brown, 2014; 2017; Brown & Carrabine, 2017; Carrabine, 2012; Young, 2010) to holistically interrogate themes that emerge from the combination of textual and visual narratives in the children's picturebooks. Third, I explore how the autoethnographic tradition (Bochner, 2001, 2012a; Ellis, 1991, 1999, 2007, 2009, 2017; Wakeman, 2014, 2019) informs my analysis as the daughter of a former drug user and prisoner. I consider the role of positionality and reflexivity in shaping my analysis, and I address the implications of my methodological approaches on understandings of rigour, ethics and power. I conclude by reviewing potential limitations associated with this study.

4.2. Materials and Data Collection

This study relies on fictional picturebooks that tell stories about parental substance use and imprisonment as empirical material. Esin (2011) considers that the characteristics of the empirical material chosen for research should be relevant to the research questions and aims, noting that the

appropriate size of the dataset varies depending on the research topic (p. 98). In this study, my research questions are twofold as I explore what textual and visual narratives are used in picturebooks to introduce children to the experience of parental incarceration and substance use, and as I ask myself how the narratives resonate with my lived experience. Moreover, my research objective is to influence how future picturebooks are written so that children, caregivers, educators, and social workers can have access to tools and resources that are capable of fostering effective and meaningful communication on these difficult issues. As such, mobilizing picturebooks as empirical material is consistent with both my research questions and research aims.

Luborsky and Rubinstein (1995) define purposive sampling as a practice where empirical material is intentionally selected to represent certain predefined traits or conditions (p. 104). Since my research questions and aims involve exploring what narratives are textually and artistically represented in picturebooks to introduce children to the concept of parental imprisonment and/or substance use, I included only those picturebooks that are written for children ages three to ten as these books might serve as a child's first stories about parental incarceration or substance use.

Additionally, since my research question aims to explore how the narratives in the children's picturebooks resonate with my lived experience, I included only those picturebooks published in English (as I am unilingual) during my lifetime (1995-present). As I was seeking to identify books that could be read by children and their caregivers, I used publicly accessible online platforms and reading lists to search for books including *Google, Amazon,* and *Goodreads* to identify as many picturebooks as possible that are marketed as resources for young children when they have a parent who uses drugs or experiences incarceration. As I was in the data collection stage during the COVID-19 pandemic, I was unable to conduct searches in person at bookstores.

This study did not examine all of the books on parental incarceration and addiction that exist as there are a variety of texts written at the adolescent and adult level, including books in various genres, such as fairy tales, fantasy fiction, and historical fiction, among others. I included books that met Nikolajeva and Scott's (2000: p. 6) definition of 'picturebooks' as narratives in which text and pictures are given equal weight and which are geared towards an audience under the age of ten. The picturebooks included in the sample ranged from 24-46 pages. Unfortunately, while Frigon's children's books (2010; 2016) fit topically with my research question, they did not meet my inclusion criteria as they are published in French and geared towards more developed young readers. They are over 60 pages and interspersed with images every few pages, with a primary focus on textual content. Her books fit more within the category of early chapter books, and I encourage future researchers interested in this topic—and who are more comfortable working in French—to explore them as promising resources for preteens and teenagers who have a parent who uses substances or experiences incarceration.

Seven children's picturebooks met my inclusion criteria. As a case-based tradition, narrative methods are not appropriate for large sample sizes. The construction of rich, detailed narratives within the research context is the key to a good narrative analysis. Thus, the number of books selected for this study does not pose a threat to validity (Esin, 2011: p. 98). Six of the picturebooks included in the dataset tell stories about children whose father or mother is incarcerated, and one tells a story about parental substance use and addiction. All of the picturebooks in the dataset were published between 2010-2017. Book titles, authors, year of publication and details regarding topical focus and use of pictures are included in Table 1 on the following page. All books were purchased online.

Table 1

Children's Fictional Picturebooks

Author	Author Details	Book Title	Publication Date	Topical Focus	Use of Images
Richard Dyches	Dyches is a psychologist and former university professor. He is co-founder of the family bridge network, a non-profit that advocates for those suffering the loss of a loved one through incarceration or other causes. The network provides educational resources to such children and their families.	Doogie's Dad	2016	A young boy feels fear and frustration surrounding his father's incarceration. He faces challenges as his family struggles to speak about it and as he visits his father in prison.	Colourful illustrations complement textual narrative.
		Kofi's Mom	2010	A young Black boy experiences loss and confusion about his mother's imprisonment.	Child-like illustrations complement textual narrative.
Anthony Curcio	Curcio wrote two books while he was incarcerated for his children. Upon his release, he became a motivational speaker in the field of drug use and crime prevention, particularly for students and athletes in the US.	Critters Cry Too: Explaining Addiction to Children	2015	Fictional creatures live with addiction in their family and explain their feelings associated with this experience.	Black and white illustrations construct a fictional universe in which the story takes place.
		My Daddy's in Jail	2015	Two bears struggle to cope with paternal incarceration and a cockroach narrator shows them what the jail is like.	Child-like illustrations illustrate a fictional world in which the story takes place.

Melissa Higgins	Higgins has published 100+ fiction and nonfiction children's books. Before becoming a full-time writer, she worked as a private and school counselor.	The Night Dad Went to Jail: What to Expect When Someone You Love Goes to Jail	2013	A young rabbit learns to cope with his father's incarceration using art and the help of a school counsellor.	Colourful illustrations depict a fictional world in which the story takes place.
Val Plett Reimer	Reimer wrote *Sammy's Visit* for her MA thesis and read it to young children to explore if a story can develop empathy about incarceration.	Sammy's Visit	2017	A young girl struggles with maternal incarceration. She lives with her grandmother and learns to appreciate visitations.	Hand drawn and child-like illustrations complement textual narrative.
Liz Weir	Weir began writing for children in the 1970s in Northern Ireland. She advocates for the healing power of stories and works with children of prisoners, children from Palestine, and Alzheimer's patients.	When Dad was Away	2013	A young girl feels anger and confusion surrounding her father's imprisonment. She faces challenges as she visits her father in prison.	Colourful illustrations depict a fictional world in which the story takes place.

I hoped to use more children's books published or set in a Canadian context, but these resources are limited, with the exception of *Sammy's Visit* (2017), *Ariane et son secret* (2010) and *C'est où chez nous?* (2016), of which the latter two did not fit my inclusion criteria. Few children's picturebooks exist on these topics, and those that do are typically published in the United States. However, most picturebooks are set in ambiguous contexts and aim to resonate with children living in the western world. As such, the children's picturebooks that were selected and published in the United States contain relevant empirical material that allow me to ground the autoethnographic component of the analysis that aims to reflexively consider how my lived experience as a child of a former drug user and prisoner informs my analysis.

4.3. Blending Qualitative Approaches

This study uses a plurality of analytical techniques, including thematic and visual analysis, to go beyond traditional forms of narrative analysis that focus mainly on textual materials. This study bridges the thematic and narrative analysis traditions (Esin, 2011; Riessman, 2008, 2005), while mobilizing analytical techniques from the fields of visual narrative analysis (Riessman, 2008), visual criminology (Brown, 2017, 2014; Brown & Carrabine, 2017; Carrabine, 2012; Kilty, 2018; Young, 2010) and autoethnography (Bochner, 2018, 2012a, 2012b, 2008, 2001; Ellis, 2017, 2009, 2007, 1999, 1991; Jewkes, 2011; Wakeman, 2014, 2019). The following sections explore each tradition in detail, and I outline their epistemological and ontological assumptions, making clear how these approaches work together in the current study. I outline my coding process and discuss possible methodological limitations at the end of this chapter.

4.3.1. The narrative tradition

Narrative analysis is understood by many scholars as an umbrella term that encompasses various methods and traditions (Esin, 2011: p. 92; Riessman, 2008: p. 11; Robert & Shenhav, 2014: p. 2). For Riessman (2008), data analysis is only one component of narrative inquiry, which represents a way of conducting case-centred analysis (p. 11). Narrative analysis has its origins in linguistics, social and literary theory, history and discourse theory (Pierce, 2008: p. 21; Robert & Shenhav, 2014: p. 2). Yet, more broadly, Esin (2011) considers that the roots of narrative analysis trace back to the humanist and post-structural traditions that aim to make sense of narratives both through linguistic structure and content as well as through the act of storytelling and construction of narratives through interaction (p. 92-93). As a part of the narrative turn that began during the 1960s and saw the gradual shift away from realism, narrative analysis is also deeply connected to

the turn away from positivism and the master narratives of science and politics (Bochner, 2012a: p. 157; Riessman, 2005: p. 1; Riessman, 2008: p. 14).

Since narrative analysis encompasses a wide range of methodological approaches, how researchers understand and use narrative can differ. Each discipline has different ontological positions when it comes to approaching narrative (Esin, 2011: p. 93). In social history and anthropology, narrative is often understood in terms of a life story approach, while in psychology and sociology, narrative is often defined as large sections of talk that are produced in interviews and that include the interaction between the teller and the interviewer (Larsson & Sjöblom, 2010: p. 274). However, Riessman (2008) asserts that many kinds of texts can be viewed narratively, including spoken, written and visual materials such as memoir, autobiography, diaries, archival documents, social service and health records, organizational documents, scientific theories, photos, and artworks, such as picturebooks (p. 4).

While various understandings exist among researchers in different disciplines on what narrative entails, it is generally agreed that a key feature includes contingency and sequential order, meaning that events in a story must be connected in a meaningful way (Larsson & Sjöblom, 2010: p. 274; Riessman, 2008: p. 5). Riessman (2005) considers narrative analysis as a family of analytic approaches to diverse kinds of text which share a common storied form; she notes, however, that not all stories are narratives, which are storied ways of knowing and communicating, defined by their sequence and consequence (p. 1). Riessman (2008) also demonstrates that narratives are strategic, functional, and purposeful as they are employed to communicate action(s) (p. 8). She suggests that individuals can use narrative to argue, justify, persuade, engage, entertain, and mislead an audience, while groups can use them as a form of political work to mobilize others and

to foster a sense of belonging. The social role of stories, including how they are connected to power, is an important facet of narrative theory, and must therefore be contextually considered.

Approaches in narrative analysis differ based on the questions of why and how certain stories are constructed, told, and interpreted (Esin, 2011: p. 95). Understanding the differences between epistemological approaches is the first step in narrative analysis and guides researchers to choose the questions to ask the data (p. 95). Robert and Shenhav (2014) conducted a meta-analysis of studies using narrative analysis and found that dominant trends in narrative analysis originate in the way researchers answer two questions: whether narrative is defined as the fabric of human existence or as one representational device among others, and whether narrative is defined as the characteristic of an approach, as an object of investigation, or as both (p. 2).

Esin (2011) also identifies two epistemological approaches to narrative analysis (p. 95). The first is the naturalist tradition, which uses rich descriptions of people in their natural habitats. This tradition understands the social world as a clearly defined external reality and asks ‘what’ questions that explore the content of stories and narratives (p. 96). The second is the constructivist tradition which focuses on how a sense of social order is created through talk and interactions (p. 95). This tradition understands the social world as something that is constantly in the making and asks ‘how’ questions to explore how stories are constructed and told, and to explore how they operate to produce certain outcomes (p. 96). This distinction is similar to how Riessman (2005) understands thematic versus structural narrative analysis. She notes that a thematic approach to narrative analysis views language as a resource rather than the topic of investigation and focuses on narrative content over structure (p. 3). On the other hand, structural narrative analysis explores how a story is told by viewing language as an object for investigation beyond its content (p. 3).

Indeed, both Esin (2011: p. 108) and Riessman (2008: p. 54) consider that thematic narrative analysis focuses on the content of a narrative: that is, on 'what' is said more than 'how' it is said, and what is 'told' rather than the aspects of 'telling'. As such, Esin (2011) notes that this model is useful for studies that explore a wide range of narrative text, including those produced in interviews and written documents, such as picturebooks (p. 108). Such an approach is useful for theorizing across several cases and finding common and different thematic elements between the narratives located within a dataset (Esin, 2011: p. 109).

Using a thematic approach to narrative analysis, I inductively created conceptual categories from the picturebooks chosen for the dataset. In qualitative research, the analyst can start the thematic analysis by the open coding of data in order to detect emergent themes (Fitzpatrick, 2013: p. 62; Esin, 2011: p. 108). That is, by building a set of themes while looking for patterns and meaning produced in the data, as well as labelling and grouping them in connection with the theoretical framework of the research (Esin, 2011: p. 108). Researchers may not be looking for specific themes, per se, but rather pursuing an unfiltered analysis of the topics or issues (Fitzpatrick, 2013: p. 62). As such, my first step in coding involved conducting a first pass reading of the books and coding for my initial impressions regarding narrative content.

Riessman (2008) suggests that when working with documents, researchers can circle and highlight words and phrases that strike them as a preliminary step toward identifying themes (p. 64). During my first pass reading of the texts, I used sticky notes to identify key phrases and images that stood out as fitting within the parameters of my research questions and theoretical framework. Initial codes were largely related to the emotional experiences of the children in the books and that resonated with me, including the frustration I felt regarding what I perceived as fairy tale endings and the fact that there was no representation of mental illness or poverty as factors that shape

substance use and criminalization. My inner child that experienced parental incarceration and substance use felt angry as that experience was not accurately represented. This preliminary finding shaped my second pass reading of the books as I thought further about the purpose of this narrative structure, which I describe in my analysis as 'hopeful narratives'. During my second pass reading, I also identified key blocks of text that reflected the theoretical constructs, including the concept of parentification and specific emotions (e.g., sadness, shame, guilt, anger, and love).

Presser and Sandberg (2015) define narrative criminology as an "emergent perspective that explains criminal and other harmful actions in terms of the stories that we tell about ourselves" (p. 85). This perspective rests on the specific assumption that stories can be used to motivate and legitimate harm. Cases of mass harm are an example of the power of narrative, for example, as one considers the power of propaganda during WWII (p. 86). Like all narrative analysts, narrative criminologists are interested both in what is said and what is absent from the narrative, as well as how the narrative or story is narrated (Presser & Sandberg, 2015: p. 86). As such, during the coding process, I aimed to consider both the narrative content in the picturebooks as well as important content that was absent from the books' messaging.

Presser and Sandberg (2015) conclude that the crime-related effects of stories can be read from both their structure and content (p. 97). Moreover, they write that the basic structure of the narrative is fundamental to understanding the meaning of a story (p. 89). This includes the abstract or summary, orientation or context, complicating action, and a coda or cue that the story has ended (p. 89). In order to find relationships among codes, I used these elements of narrative structure to organize and code my data during my second pass reading of the books. Presser and Sandberg (2015) also note that different narrative elements enable and constrain meaning-making, which includes the use of metaphor, characters, and symbolic boundary work to shape narratives (p. 91).

As such, I created columns while coding to identify when and how metaphors, symbolic boundaries and characterization were used in the books, and to consider how these factors shape the overarching narrative in each book.

Notably, metaphors can amplify the impression that a narrative makes, while characters and boundary work are essential to understanding narrative plots (Presser & Sandberg, 2015). It is important to note that in narrative criminology, characters are not always people and may also represent objects. Drugs, for example, are often depicted in criminological stories as the villain (p. 91). Symbolic boundary work is also important for dramatic storytelling, particularly in crime narratives, as boundaries are drawn between characters to construct people or groups in opposition to others. Importantly, symbolic boundaries between people and groups can be used to justify harm and to construct notions of ideal or harm-worthy (deserving versus undeserving) victims. For these reasons, Presser and Sandberg (2015) conclude that analytically interrogating these narrative processes can be a useful way to reframe critical criminological perspectives.

It is important to note that thematic narrative analysis differs from traditional thematic analysis in that scholars must keep a story "intact" by theorizing from the case rather than the component themes or categories that may be identified across cases (Riessman, 2008: p. 53). Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as "a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (p. 79). They suggest that this method requires the researcher to search across a dataset to find repeated patterns of meaning (p. 86). Braun and Clarke (2006) claim that thematic analysis is a foundational method for qualitative analysis as it provides the core skills that are useful for conducting many other forms of qualitative analysis. This claim rests on the idea that one of the main benefits of this approach is its flexibility, since thematic analysis can be applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological frameworks and approaches (Braun &

Clarke, 2006: p. 78). In this way, thematic analysis is not bound to any pre-existing theoretical framework, and it can be used as an essentialist, realist, constructionist, or contextualist method (p. 81) and can be easily adopted to fit within the narrative analysis tradition. Although thematic analysis is theoretically flexible, it is important that the researcher clarify their theoretical position (Braun & Clarke, 2006: p. 81). As a methodology, narrative analysis is a form of enacted philosophy and it carries deeply embedded assumptions about the nature of reality along with how we come to know and understand the world (Robert & Shenhav, 2014: p. 13). As such, there are conceptual and pragmatic implications of the positions taken by narrative analysts.

Riessman (2005) cautions that researchers working in the thematic narrative tradition can risk mimicking objectivist modes of inquiry if they fail to contextualize themes as they emerge according to their theoretical perspectives and interests (p. 3). Analysis is influenced by the analyst's knowledge of prior and emergent theory, the purpose of an investigation, the data materials, and the analyst's political commitments, among other factors (Riessman, 2008: p. 54). Thus, claims of themes simply "emerging" from the data passively and inadequately describes the analysis process, as they fail to consider the active role of the researcher in identifying patterns or themes and defining those which are deemed important enough to report them to readers (Braun & Clarke, 2006: p. 80). Like Robert and Shenhav (2014), Braun and Clarke (2006: p. 81) assert that any theoretical framework carries assumptions about the nature of the data and what they represent, and a good thematic analysis will make these assumptions transparent.

A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and it represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the dataset. Still, a level of personal judgement is needed to determine what a theme is within a dataset and researchers must retain flexibility in how they identify themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006: p. 82). While prevalence

within a dataset may signify themes, Braun and Clarke (2006) caution that the importance of a theme is not only dependent on quantifiable measures, but rather on whether it captures something important in relation to the research question. Esin (2011) also warns researchers using thematic narrative analysis to remember that there are always different possible interpretations of the data, and that it is not possible to know that all the participants in a research context mean the same thing (p. 109). In narrative analysis, there are no findings to be "discovered", only interpretations that are shaped by the analyst. To account for my own positioning and history, I mobilized autoethnography (discussed further, below) as a reflexive lens through which I interrogated how my lived experience as a child of a drug user and prisoner shaped my analysis.

According to Riessman (2008), we understand narratives not only through language but also through images. She considers the narrative analysis tradition known as visual narrative analysis, which aims to explore images, like text, as a form of narrative (p. 141). Like spoken or written narratives, images contain theoretical ideas of the imagemaker's understanding of the content and messaging (p. 143). As in word-based methods, reading an image closely and responding to details is essential to visual narrative analysis (p. 144). Visual narrative analysis also involves asking what images are missing from a story, thus, the analyst must pay attention to the context of production, including to the dominant message that surrounds the production of images, possible constraints on the artist, and the biographical positioning of the artist (p. 153).

Riessman (2008) demonstrates that working with images can thicken social scientific interpretations, which is a common goal of interpretive research. Following Riessman's (2008) understanding of the role that both text and images play in narrative construction, this study uses a combination of thematic and visual narrative analysis techniques to more holistically interrogate the narratives presented within the text and images in the series of children's picturebooks included

in the sample for this study. I also incorporate techniques of autoethnography to attend to structural and subjective elements of images and text, and to help contextualize the themes that I identify within the picturebooks.

4.3.2. Visual criminology

Visual criminology is an example of arts-based research in social science, similar to narrative analysis. Proponents of visual criminology contend that we learn about the world through representational forms including language and images. This approach echoes the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the interpretive tradition and considers how visuality and the visual, relating to sight and ways of seeing, represents and reproduces the social world (Brown, 2017: p. 7). Brown (2017) considers visual criminology as an alternative academic space that encourages us to interrogate the power of crime and punishment beyond the written and numeric forms of traditional reports, studies, and research that are common to the discipline. She notes that this approach focuses on the structure and operations of visual regimes, their coercive and normalizing effects, as well as their contestations. Visual criminology has roots in various disciplines, including cultural and media studies, art history, and critical feminist, race and legal studies, and it considers what we see as more than representation and as intricately bound to experience (Brown, 2014; Brown & Carrabine, 2017: p. 6).

Brown (2014) writes that visual criminology shares similarities with critical theory as it considers images, like politics and philosophy, as spaces to imagine and persuade beyond existing conditions and structures (p. 181). Specifically, visual criminology shares a concern with critical theory as it seeks to deepen understandings of the relationship between crime, law and the state, as well as the role of power, control, and resistance, as they are framed within a desire for social justice and transformation (Brown & Carrabine, 2019: p. 193). Indeed, visual criminology builds

upon various analytical approaches that are attuned to the complicated relationship between words, images and power (Brown, 2017: p. 2). Such cross-fertilization is why Carrabine (2012) suggests that visual criminology provokes a set of "creative tensions" that should inform criminology's engagement with the image and the visual (p. 486). Pulling from various fields, visual criminology offers a framework that can enhance and expand the scope of traditional criminological analyses.

Visual criminology's ontological and epistemological assumptions situate this study to consider how visual representation shapes and constrains what understandings are possible in the social world. Specifically, this approach allows me to explore how images are used in picturebooks to construct specific narratives about parental substance use and imprisonment. Pulling from studies in visual culture, visual criminology mobilizes notions of 'visuality', 'scopic regimes', and 'countervisuality' as terms that create new ways of conceptualizing, explaining and understanding the optics of criminology and criminal justice (Brown & Carrabine, 2017: p. 5-6).

Visuality is understood as a formation of social power which produces specific visions of social hierarchies and systems (such as those organized by race, gender and class) as well as regimes of capitalism or colonialism, and institutions such as the criminal justice system (Brown, 2017: p. 10). According to Brown (2017), it is a term that "names the authoritative mobilization of specific forms of seeing and ordering the world [as] practices that police through other forms of seeing and visualizing difference" (p. 11). The concept of visuality thus captures how vision is essential to the national projects of empire and state building. I mobilize this concept to consider how culturally produced images facilitate ways of seeing and not seeing categories of people located along the intersections of marginalization, criminalization, and imprisonment. It also allows me to consider which hierarchies and systems certain images and narratives may reproduce.

The dominant ways of practicing seeing that are encapsulated in the notion of visuality produce what Brown (2017) terms "scopic regimes", understood as regimes or systems that appear as historical inevitabilities such as jails, prisons or the police (p. 11). Scopic regimes are understood to represent macro-ways of seeing that are embedded in power relations. Notably, scopic regimes can reveal and explain how ways of seeing assume a sense of historical inevitability, leaving room for only certain social effects, problems and categories to be recognized (Brown & Carrabine, 2017: p. 5). According to Brown (2017), it is through scopic regimes that the "violence underwriting authority is made illegible and un-seeable" (p. 11). In other words, as the state operates through scopic regimes to mask inherently violent systems and processes by mobilizing a visual vocabulary "that leaves intact the very logics, infrastructures and institutions necessary for the violence to occur in the first place" (p. 11). For example, images relating to police, jails and prisons are taken for granted as staples in modern society and are typically left unquestioned by viewers as to how these systems serve to reproduce forms of violence.

The concept of countervisuality aims to bring this question into focus. Working in tandem with the concepts of visuality and scopic regimes, countervisuality is a useful conceptual tool to contest an authority's right to conceal images from sight as it considers how specific images and ways of seeing are naturalized and made to seem invisible (Brown, 2017: p. 12). Countervisuality, for example, creates space to consider and contest how prisoners and their families are rendered invisible or one-dimensional social beings (p. 13). As such, this concept can also raise the sense of political urgency that is necessary for making sure prisoners and their families become visible (p. 13). In this way, recognizing and exposing scopic regimes and mobilizing notions of visuality and countervisuality are political acts as these conceptual tools intend to highlight and challenge dominant power relations.

Indeed, an awareness of these regimes creates space for their contestation. Strategies of transgression and resistance can be fostered in the way one looks or resists the gaze of others (Brown & Carrabine, 2017: p. 5). Visual criminology is thus about 'unseeing' as much as it is about 'seeing' (Brown, 2017: p. 13; Brown & Carrabine, 2017: p. 6). A countervisual criminology has the potential to facilitate the "unimagining of the prison" through analysing the prison's symbolic and material productions by employing visual and analytic perspectives to reveal what has been naturalized (Brown, 2017: p. 13; Brown & Carrabine, 2017: p. 6). Through this process, a countervisual criminology can deploy a politics of visibility for change and transformation (Brown, 2017: p. 14; Brown & Carrabine, 2017: p. 6). As Brown and Carrabine (2017) assert, the power to make strange what has been naturalized into the landscapes and logics that surround crime and control is one of visual criminology's key contributions (p. 6).

Importantly, visual criminology also links images and emotion. Echoing Stuart Hall (1997), Brown (2013) postulates that images and emotion are intimately connected and considers that acts of representation, as examples of 'the visual', are vital forms of social engagement (p. 182). Young (2010) also asserts that visual criminology privileges the emotive and affective life of crime-images, including the combination of visual and sensory elements that give meanings to crime and control and their relations to spectacle, power, transgression and resistance (p. 2).

Crime and punishment are dominant media presences in modern societies that are largely structured through the visual. While shock value tends to drive the events that are deemed newsworthy ("if it bleeds, it leads"), children are also inundated with crime-images and crime narratives through television shows or books, such as Scooby-Doo and Batman which depict hero-villain dichotomies and reify a system of retribution (Brown, 2017: p. 8). Young (2010) thus

considers how crime, as a mainstay of popular culture, necessitates analysis of how we identify "with, in, and as the illicit and the legitimate" (p. 2).

A critically engaged visual criminology thus allows me to consider how images and media are used to communicate and share knowledge about substance use and imprisonment. By mobilizing notions of 'visuality', 'scopic regimes', and 'countervisuality', my project considers how picturebooks may reproduce or counter the experience and logics of imprisonment and punishment, in addition to narratives about children's experiences of parental imprisonment. Visual criminology offers a set of theoretical and methodological tools that allow me to link images and emotion, and to explore children's picturebooks in ways that go beyond traditional written and numeric content analyses. As a theory and method, visual criminology enables me to explore the picturebooks as examples of 'the visual' while considering the power of and in images to reaffirm or challenge social and structural inequalities.

In terms of mobilizing these concepts for analysis, I specifically coded for them during my third and fourth rounds of coding. During my third pass reading of the books, I identified key blocks of text and images that relate to the concepts. This included coding for scenes that rely on both language and text to help the reader visualize the jail or the prison. For example, in the book entitled *Kofi's Mom*, the prison is described as a "big castle", yet it is barely visualized beyond an empty room where Kofi visits his mom (Dyches, 2011b: p. 14). During my fourth pass reading of the texts, I paid specific attention to the images in the books and coded for visual content. I found this process useful as there are limits to the mind and it can be difficult to keep all of the concepts present in the mind at once. Indeed, coding is an iterative process, and, despite our best efforts, it is not always neat and linear. The next section outlines how I used autoethnography as a reflexive lens to contextualize my analysis.

4.3.3. Autoethnography

The autoethnographic tradition represents another form of arts-based research in social science. Like narrative analysis and visual criminology, this approach is a part of the narrative turn that breaks down presumed differences between the humanities, social sciences and the arts (Adams & Manning, 2015: p. 351; Bochner, 2018: p. 359). Adams and Manning (2015) state that autoethnography foregrounds a researcher's personal experience (*auto-*) in an attempt to represent *(--graphy*) cultural experiences (*ethno-)* (p. 352). It is thus consistent with the social constructionist assumption that culture flows through the self, and that we cannot live apart from cultural influences and representations such as language. Autoethnographers thus view writing about the self as part of their efforts to interpret and write about cultural values, practices and experiences (Adams & Manning, 2015: p. 352). Indeed, Bochner (2012a) suggests that autoethnography can be understood as a form of narrative inquiry of the self (p. 158), while Ellis (1999) considers it a kind of ethnographic research involving one's vulnerable self (p. 669).

Scholars often distinguish between two forms of autoethnography: evocative and analytic. Evocative autoethnography foregrounds the writer's personal stories and is used more frequently in the humanities and arts (Adams & Manning, 2015: p. 352). Evocative autoethnographies typically focus on topics related to emotionally troubling experiences such as illness, death, or victimization, and they are best represented by the work of Carolyn Ellis (1991, 1999, 2007, 2009, 2017). In this tradition, the goal is emotional resonance above other analytic utility (Wakeman, 2014: p. 4). On the other hand, analytic autoethnography retains a commitment to emotional resonance but prioritizes a commitment to the critical and analytical spirit of ethnography (Wakeman, 2014: p. 4). Analytical autoethnography connects the writer's experience to some broader set of social phenomena than those provided by the data (Denshire, 2014: p. 835). As such,

Wakeman (2014) considers this approach as not only a method of self-investigation, but "a technique of social investigation conducted through the self" (p. 4). Here, the goal is to capture a sense of evocativeness as well as developing a critical analysis of some social phenomenon (p. 4).

This study follows the analytic style of autoethnography. First, I borrow from the interpretive-humanistic tradition that emphasizes cultural analysis by interrogating perception and sense-making. This tradition seeks to describe and facilitate an understanding of cultural experiences through personal experience (Adams & Manning, 2015: p. 353). Second, I draw on the critical autoethnographic tradition that uses personal experience to critique unjust cultural values, practices, and experiences (p. 353). As I explore how the narratives in the picturebooks represent children's experiences and as they may reaffirm or challenge social and structural inequalities, I use autoethnography as a reflexive lens to consider how my analysis is shaped by my lived experience as a child of a former drug use and prisoner. In this study, it felt important to not only acknowledge that I am not free of personal experiences that shape my research decisions, for example, how I analyze the data and write and report on the findings, but also to incorporate and honour how my personal experience informs my analysis. The autoethnographic tradition provides a useful framework to do just that.

While criminology has traditionally sought to mimic the objective methods of the natural sciences, Jewkes (2011: p. 65) and Wakeman (2019: p. 190) remind us that emotions can act as intellectual resources for researchers and they adamantly encourage criminologists to write 'the self' back into their work. Wakeman (2019) writes that there are two ways emotions can be used in research: instrumentally, as we harness excitement, fear, and tensions to guide how our research is done, and intellectually, as our feelings help us learn new things about the world, what we do, see, and hear, as well as how our feelings can be used to critically interrogate and interpret the data

we collect (p. 192). My analysis mobilizes and examines emotion in both ways as the tensions that I felt as a child with a criminal justice-involved parent motivated me to pursue this study, and as I used my feelings in relation to this experience to critically interrogate and interpret the data.

Ellis (1991) advocates for introspection as a sociological technique of self-awareness and examination that allows researchers to examine emotion as a product of individual meaning-making and socially shared cognition (p. 23). As a methodological technique, it generates interpretive material from the self and others to understand the lived experience of emotion (p. 23). Ellis (1991) notes that a model of introspection as an autoethnographic method of data-gathering can be represented in the form of field notes or narratives, or by reading and analyzing journals (p. 32). Introspection can occur through emotional recall and involves situating oneself in past experiences while tapping into how it felt emotionally and physically (p. 32). Although sometimes, reliving past experiences can evoke intense feelings, including isolation and loneliness, making it difficult to analyze it from a cultural perspective (Ellis, 1999: p. 675).

Ellis (1999) suggests that researchers record their experience of emotional recall to analyze later when feelings are less intense as this can prevent tunnel vision and allow one to consider different interpretive angles on an experience (p. 675). This process is best represented as narrative text or recorded in a way that captures how the thoughts and feelings emerged (p. 45). Based on this model of introspection, I have kept a thesis memo where I recorded my experiences of emotional recall related to this project. I have also referred back to childhood journals that include reflections on my father's drug use and incarceration. This has helped me to explore the feelings and emotions I have in relation to the dataset, while providing me with enough distance from my emotions that I was able to analyze how they informed and shaped my engagement with the dataset. Notably, I made the research decision not to code my journals as hard data in the same

way as the picturebooks. I was more interested in reviewing my childhood journals as sensitizing documents within an introspective approach that would help to jog my memories of the times I wrote about my father and to remember how I was thinking about those experiences a child. I reviewed two key journals that I kept between grades 3-8 and which total 100 pages. I talked about many things in these journals meaning that much of the content was irrelevant to the topic of parental incarceration or substance use, which is also why coding them as hard data did not make sense for the current study. Instead, re-reading the journals was a way to prime myself to read and code the picturebook data on these topics. It allowed me to better recall the feelings and thoughts I had at the time, which helped me to reconnect with my childhood views and feelings. In the next section, I explore the implications of these methods on research rigour and ethics.

4.4. Research Rigour and Ethics

Presser and Sandberg (2015) note that narrative analysis, as a form of interpretation, may call for a different approach to rigour than is typical for most criminologists (p. 97). Since this tradition accepts that there is no single correct interpretation of data, but rather multiple possible interpretations, the authors argue that rigour involves systematic and intellectually honest engagement with the data (p. 98). For Larsson and Sjöblom (2010), validity in narrative research is established by considering the rich data in narrative descriptions, and that interpretations need to be comprehensive, coherent and grounded in empirical material (p. 277). It includes acknowledging that interpretations need to be meaningful to participants and peers, that interpretations must be consistent with the data, and that interpretations need to be theoretically sophisticated (p. 277). Finally, Larsson and Sjöblom (2010) note that the validity, meaningfulness and insights of qualitative inquiry have more to do with the richness of information and the thick description of the cases selected than with sample (277).

The autoethnographic and introspective component of this research that shares my story and, subsequently, the stories of others, implies a need for relational ethics (Eisenbach, 2016: p. 606; Ellis, 2007: p. 3). For Ellis (2007), relational ethics is related to an ethics of care, which recognizes and values mutual respect, dignity, and connectedness (p. 4). Relational ethics requires researchers to act from their hearts and minds, acknowledging interpersonal bonds to others and a responsibility to initiate and maintain a conversation on research decisions that implicate them (p. 4). Relational ethics involves considering how to write about the self and others while respecting others and their right to privacy and confidentiality (Ellis, 2007: p. 14; 2009: p. 375). Eisenbach (2016) considers how autoethnographers can respect the privacy and confidentiality of others by fictionalizing accounts, using pseudonyms, or generating composite characters (p. 606).

In autoethnography, Ellis (2007) suggests that ethical considerations are personal and contextual, and that grey areas can sometimes exist when facing ethical dilemmas (p. 19). Relationships can change throughout research, and ethical considerations can change as well (p. 23). Autoethnographic research is emergent, and Ellis (2007) urges autoethnographers to seek "process consent" with those they write about by continuously checking in with them (p. 23). It is important to engage those you write about by respecting their wishes to select pseudonyms and honouring their suggestions and revisions where appropriate. However, engaging those that you write about is not always possible. Indeed, there are specific challenges that autoethnographers face as they write about those who have died, or when they write about complex, long-term relationships (p. 15). Indeed, my father is no longer alive, and he is not able to respond to my representations of him in this study. Ellis (2007) notes that tension can exist between our implicit trust provisions with those who have died and saying what is necessary for our own healing (p.

25). Deciding what to tell thus requires that I attempt to balance the constraints of telling and the possibilities of healing (Ellis, 2007: p. 16).

Bochner (2008) reminds his readers that while death ends life, it does not end relationships (p. 1323). Narrative work offers a way of continuing a relationship with those who have died as it can heal and help one remake, revise, and re-story their experiences, linking the past to the future, giving our lives a sense of continuity and integrity (p. 1321-1324). While autoethnography presents many ethical considerations, it also offers opportunities to heal relationships marked by death. It can lead to personal transformation and growth as researchers who engage intellectually and emotionally with complex ethical considerations that touch them and those implicated in and by their stories (Bochner, 2012b: p. 172). Indeed, my father died from a drug overdose in 2018, and I have found the process of autoethnographically analyzing the dataset for this study to be healing in many ways. I have struggled to process his death, and I have learned by engaging with the picturebooks in this study that this is likely because I was not equipped with the resources that I needed to first process the grief of losing him to substance use and incarceration in my childhood.

Wakeman (2019) concludes that an emotionally attuned criminology has the potential to help shift knowledge and theory in innovative directions by encouraging alternative readings of the data, although he also notes that it has the potential to cause distress, isolation, loneliness, and over-identification with research (p. 193-195). Ethics for autoethnographers therefore also includes self-care and support. Researchers must conduct their research by affording themselves the same level of compassion and empathy they would provide to other research participants, as well as ensuring that they have proper supervision throughout the research process (Ellis, 1999: p. 677; 2009: p. 375; Wakeman, 2019: p. 195). By grounding the autoethnographic component of this study within an analysis of picturebooks, I sought to ensure that I did not overly emotionally

identify with this study. It was non-negotiable for me to engage in self-care throughout the research process by setting boundaries that defined how I engaged with the picturebooks and documents, such as my personal journals, that might cause distress. To protect my nervous system throughout this process, I often read and coded while wrapped in a blanket and with a cup of tea. I also ensured that I had regular access to support from a psychotherapist and guidance from my thesis supervisor.

Alcoff (2009) considers the importance of positionality in writing as an attempt by researchers to acknowledge their own social location and views in relation to those of others. Research is not separate from politics and truth is always embedded in structures of power (p. 29). As such, researchers must continually reflect on the structures they are a part of and which they might reproduce (p. 29). Esin (2011) echoes Alcoff, affirming the importance of reflexivity as a practice that aims to continually examine research decisions – including theoretical assumptions, selection of participants, interview schedules, interviewing, data analysis and presentation, as well as the relationship between the researcher and participants (p. 103). The researcher must consider their subjective and emotional experiences along with those they are writing for and about.

In this study, I write about children's experiences of parental substance use and imprisonment. I write about people who use drugs and experience imprisonment, and I also write about family members. Further, I write for the children of those caught in the criminal justice system. In this way, I also write for a past version of myself. As Ellis (1999) notes, therapy is not the primary objective of autoethnographic research but is often a useful result of good autoethnographic writing (p. 677). By supplementing my analysis with autoethnography, I am not using my experiences to speak for other children of substance users and prisoners in a way that privileges myself as the one who correctly understands a universal truth about what it means to be a child in these circumstances. Instead, I aim to acknowledge how my lived experience influences

my structured and empirically supported analysis of the messages that picturebooks present to children of incarcerated or addicted parents as resources to help them cope with these experiences.

Since autoethnography foregrounds the researcher's private experience of emotion, this approach is criticized by some as compromising validity and falls subject to charges of narcissism (Hammersley, 2005). Yet, autoethnographic scholars maintain that this approach transcends these charges by including social and cultural analyses of power and structure through an analysis of the self (Denshire, 2014: p. 834; Ellis, 1991: p. 26; Ellis, 1999: p. 673). Bochner (2001) suggests that charges of narcissism rest on an idealized theory of inquiry that carries a positivist characterization of social science. These charges reveal resistance to the moral, political, existential and therapeutic goals of autoethnography, and Ellis (2009) reminds us that the goals of autoethnography and arts-based inquiry are not the same as those of positivism and empiricism (p. 374). The goal of autoethnography is to achieve a balance between emotional attunement to one's subjective feelings and the objective outer world (Wakeman, 2019: p. 196). Researchers must remember that they are 'ethnographers' before they are 'autoethnographers' (p. 196).

Indeed, arts-based critical research cannot meet the validity criteria defined by a positivist paradigm (Johnston, 2012: p. 73). Researchers demonstrate validity by providing rich descriptions of sights, sounds, feelings and voices and providing readers with a trustworthy yet broad understanding of the issue at hand (p. 73). Working in this tradition, language is not transparent and there is no single standard of truth (Ellis, 1999: p. 674). It is not about what the narrative conveys but how it does so, what consequences it has, and what uses it serves (Bochner, 2001: p. 154). Bochner (2012a) maintains that facts are important to an autoethnographic storyteller and they should be verified by speaking with others who may have shared the experience a researcher is recalling (p. 161). Still, it is not the transmission of facts that give the autoethnographic story its

significance and evocative power. We create personal narratives from a situated location, and Ellis (1999) argues there is no single standard for reliability in autoethnography (p. 674). Autoethnographers can do reliability checks with others, giving them a chance to comment and offer interpretations, but the goal of autoethnography is not to portray what happened insofar as it is about conveying the meaning that is attached to the experience (p. 674). The rule of rigour should be pragmatic and literary as it encourages researchers to investigate what it means to be human and to work towards the creation of a more just society (Bochner, 2018: p. 359).

Surely, there will be some doubts about the absence of hard data as I rely on introspection to supplement accounts that went unrecorded in my childhood journals. In such instances, Bochner (2008) notes that validity relies partially on the skills of the autoethnographer as a writer (p. 1324). Bochner (2008) and Weber (2012) state that autoethnographic writers need to strive for coherent, believable accounts. Bochner (2008) suggests that it is best to write in a style that invites readers to reflect and react from the perspectives of their own lives, interests and experiences (p. 1327). In this way, Ellis (1999) conceptualizes autoethnographic writing as a part of method (p. 671). Arts-based autoethnographic writing needs to connect to the reader's emotional sensibilities, inviting them to consider the feelings, memories, contradictions, issues and desires that our research depicts (Bochner, 2012a: p. 158; Weber, 2012: p. 47).

Readers, then, must tap into their emotional selves and appeal to the emotional truth of the story (Bochner, 2018: p. 1326; Eisenbach, 2016: p. 605). Narrative scholars aim to construct an account of events and emotional reactions to those events that is coherent and consistent (Larsson & Sjöblom, 2010: p. 277). Narratives give us the truth of experiences that are neither open to proof nor self-evident, and can only be understood through interpretation, by paying careful attention to the context that shapes them (p. 277). Generalizability, then, is tested as readers ask if the study

speaks to them about their experience, the lives of others they know, or if it tells them about unfamiliar people and their lives (Ellis, 1999: p. 675).

Autoethnographies are not intended to be received but encountered and appreciated (Bochner, 2012a: p. 161). The concern is with better living and seeking a truth that represents an increased capacity to deal with life's challenges and contingencies (p. 161). From this point of view, Ellis (2009) suggests that her purpose as an autoethnographer is to open hearts and minds through stories, perhaps raising more questions than she can answer (p. 374). Wakeman (2014) concludes that an increased consideration of the self through biography and emotion both "permits and facilitates the presentation of analytic yet stylized data" in the form of a 'lyrical criminology' (p. 2). It is worth reiterating Bochner's (2001) claim that making different epistemological and ontological decisions should not turn researchers into enemies. The goals should be to live and work in harmony with each other, conversing through processes of reception, interpretation and dialogue, regardless of our diverse and divergent research goals and desires (p. 154).

4.5. Limitations

Since autoethnography is based on personal reflection and analysis, this component foregrounds my experience as a white woman making sense of my father's drug use and imprisonment. As such, my lived experience may not always match the experiences of children who experience racialization and/or maternal incarceration. I address this limitation by including in my sample of picturebooks those that attend to specific experiences of maternal incarceration in addition to emphasizing race. I engage with scholarly literature on these experiences to take the analysis beyond my lived experience and to ground it in research.

Although autoethnography has the potential to invite readers to reflect on their lives and empathize with the author's narrative, the connections that readers will have to a text cannot be

predicted and there remains a risk that readers will experience difficult feelings and emotions (Méndez, 2013: p. 282). Autoethnography is also partly limited by the frailties of human memory. Although I am relying on my past and present journaling practice to ground the autoethnographic component of this study, many events, thoughts, and feelings I have experienced went unrecorded. It is important to recognize that memories may change over time and that memory is often stunted by trauma. Thus, at times, I also rely on reflections gained through trauma processing in the therapeutic setting as it relates to my father's imprisonment and drug use. Since autoethnography strives for narrative truth, I do my best to present my emotional truths when they are relevant.

It is also important to address the unequal content focus in the data sample, as six books contain themes related to parental incarceration while only one book addresses the topic of parental substance use. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of picturebooks on this topic for young children, which may represent the tendency to avoid discussing substance use with young children, thus perpetuating the assumption that they are incapable of understanding these experiences.

A final limitation exists as thematic narrative analysis limits my focus to narrative content and risks losing attention to the syntactic and structural complexities of language (Riessman, 2005: p. 3). Since there has been limited attention to the study of children's picturebooks dealing with the topic of parental incarceration and substance use, it felt important to begin with a thematic narrative analysis to get a sense of what messages and stories are presented to children on these topics. Once this terrain is mapped, future studies should consider using structural narrative analysis so as to undertake a deeper analysis of the same picturebooks, where scholars would be better positioned to explore how the narratives and stories presented in these books are crafted. By combining thematic and structural approaches in future studies, researchers can move towards a

more holistic understanding of the narrative strategies that shape children's literature on the topics of parental substance use and imprisonment.

4.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have reviewed the methodological approaches that I use in this study, including narrative analysis, techniques of visual criminology and the autoethnographic tradition. I have considered the implications of this approach on research rigour and ethics, and I have outlined possible limitations impacting the findings in this study. The following chapter focuses on my analysis, describing key findings from this study and outlining two overarching narratives that shape how children's experiences related to parental incarceration and substance use are represented in the current sample of picturebooks.

Chapter 5. Analysis

5.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of the children's picturebooks selected for the dataset on the topics of parental incarceration and addiction. I identified two overarching narratives within the combined textual and visual content in the picturebooks, which I describe as responsibilizing and hopeful narratives. This chapter is organized around presenting these two narratives, which I further clarify by identifying the narrative threads that represent the various thematic findings regarding how these structuring narratives were (re)presented in the books.

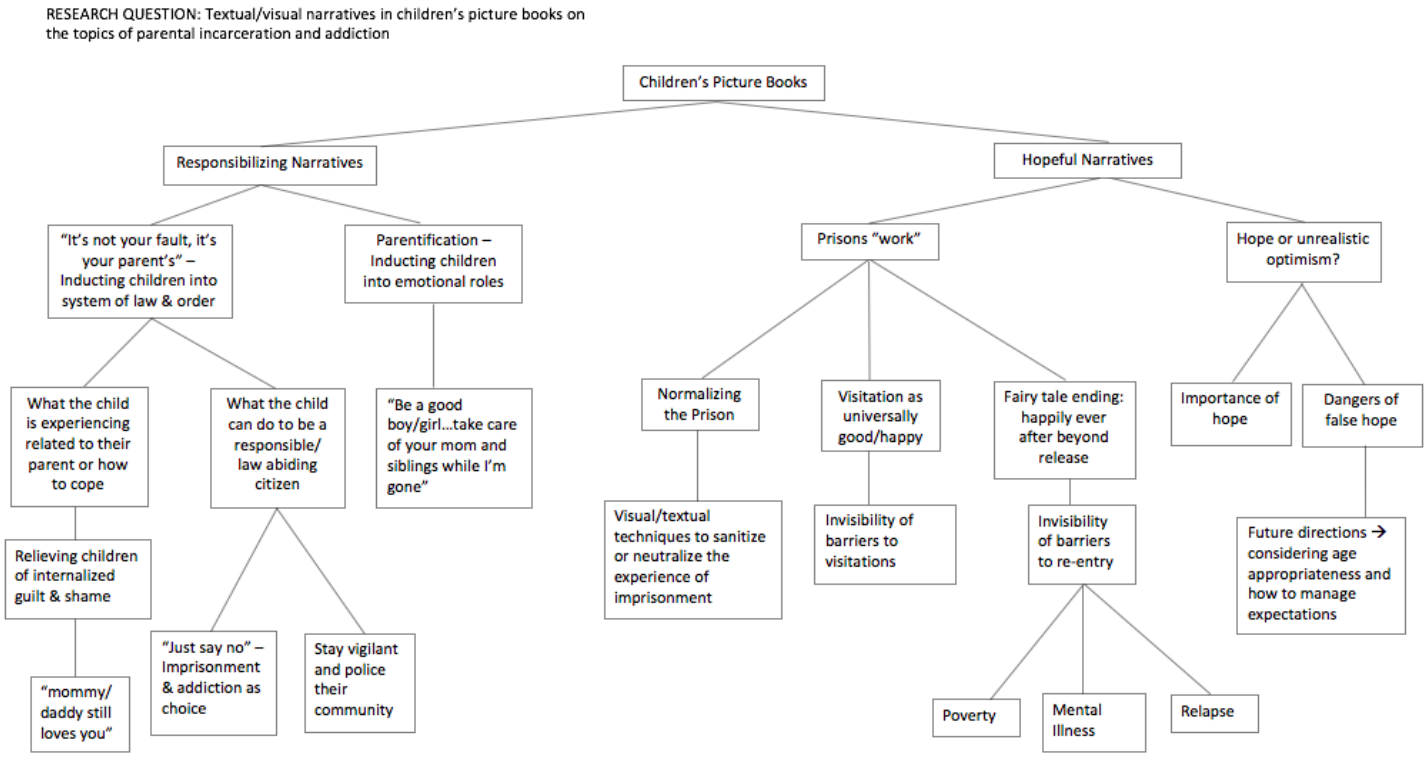
I found two key thematic findings within the responsibilization narrative. The first considers how the textual and visual content in the books introduces children to a specific form of neoliberal citizenship, reminding children that their parent's circumstances are a matter of choice and that they have a responsibility to "say no" to drugs and crime. The second finding has to do with how children are depicted in the books as feeling and being responsible for minimizing their emotional experience in front of their parents, or otherwise feeling responsible to act as the family's caregiver when their parent experiences incarceration or addiction. While the books normalize certain emotional experiences that children may have when their parent experiences incarceration or addiction (e.g., sadness, confusion, frustration and anger), there were limits as to when and how the child characters could express these emotions safely as many experienced a process of role-reversal known as parentification (Hooper et al., 2014: p. 37).

Hopeful narratives functioned alongside responsibilizing narratives to provide children with hope that their situation will get better, and to promote a sense of faith and trust in the criminal justice system to produce favourable outcomes for families. A key thematic finding within the hopeful narrative was the idea that prisons "work"; in fact, out of the six books that represent

parental incarceration, two books end with the parent successfully reintegrating post-incarceration. In the other four books, the ending remains ambiguous or the parent remains incarcerated. Still, even when the parent remains incarcerated, the books send a message that they will soon be released and that all will be well. By emphasizing narratives of hope, I found that the books fail to try to manage children's expectations regarding successful re-entry and desistance, experiences of which are likely to be marked by mental illness, poverty and racialization.

Figure 1 reflects the conceptual map I crafted to illustrate the structure of my analysis. It provides a visual framework of the two narratives and the subthemes, or narrative threads, that help constitute those narratives. I conclude this chapter by considering future directions for research on children's literature on this topic; specifically, by asking how children's literature can balance narratives of hope while managing expectations for children when they have a parent that experiences incarceration and/or lives with mental illness and addiction.

Figure 1



5.2. Responsibilizing Narratives

The first key thematic finding within the narrative of responsibilization contains two subthemes that function together as narrative threads to send the message to children: “it’s not your fault, it’s your parents.” I organize these findings into two subthemes: what the child is experiencing related to their parent or how to cope, and what the child can do to be a responsible and law-abiding citizen. The first subtheme reflects the idea that children are not at fault for their parent’s incarceration or addiction and that is normal form them to move through the range of emotions that comes with such a traumatic experience. While all of the books appropriately normalize the difficult emotional experiences associated with the loss of a parent to incarceration or addiction, many of them go beyond seeking to relieve children of the guilt and shame they often feel under these circumstances. For example, the books remind child readers that they are not to blame for their parent’s experience and that their parent still loves them (Allard, 2012; Manby et al., 2015; Saunders, 2017; Reimer, 2019). The second subtheme reflects how the books also send textual and visual messages, which I describe in greater detail below, to remind children of their responsibility to “say no” to drugs and crime. In fact, in some cases, the books even remind children of their responsibility to stay vigilant and police rule-breaking behaviours on the playground and crime in their communities.

The second key thematic finding within the narrative of responsibilization reflects a process of parentification whereby children are responsibilized to take on the role of emotional manager or caretaker for themselves, their siblings or their parents when their loved one experiences incarceration or uses substances. I review each of these thematic findings in turn, in the next three subsections.

5.2.1. What the child is experiencing related to their parent or how to cope

Many studies show that children experience parental incarceration and addiction as a form of complex trauma that can lead to poor psychosocial outcomes. This includes increased feelings of depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and difficulty trusting adults and authority figures (Allard, 2012; Bockneck et al., 2009; Murphy et al., 2010; Saunders, 2018). All of the books in this study appropriately remind children that it is okay and normal to feel the complicated emotions that go hand in hand with the experience of losing a parent to imprisonment or addiction, including feelings of sadness, shame, guilt, love, anger, and confusion, among others.

The main character in *The Night Dad Went to Jail*, a young rabbit named Sketch, named so because he loved drawing before his father went to jail (Higgins & Kirwan, 2011 p. 2), experiences a deep sense of sadness and abandonment when his father is imprisoned, at which point, he becomes too sad to draw (p. 8). Similarly, Sammy, the young girl in *Sammy's Visit*, experiences sadness due to her mother's incarceration. She is depicted at the beginning of the story wearing a look of deep sadness and defeat. Reflecting the disjuncture between life before and after her mother's incarceration, Sammy is pictured slouching with her head bowed to the ground and wearing a large frown, while a photo of she and her mother smiling hangs on the wall behind her (Reimer, 2017: p. 4). The two young bears depicted in *My Daddy's in Jail* also feel sad and alone when their dad is in jail, despite sending letters and talking on the phone with him (Curcio, 2015b: p. 11). In *Kofi's Mom*, Kofi loses his mother to incarceration and he feels a deep sense of loss and confusion as he wonders whether his mother still thinks about him (Dyches, 2011b: p. 2). Similarly, the main character in *When Dad Was Away*, a young girl named Milly, feels a combination of confusion and anger when she learns about her father's imprisonment (Weir, 2012: p. 6). Like Kofi, Milly experiences anxiety and fears that her father has forgotten about her and

their family. Prior to visiting her father in prison, Milly expresses worry and concern that he does not actually want to see her (Weir, 2012: p. 11).

The main character in *Doogie's Dad*—a young boy named Doogie—also experiences fear associated with his father's imprisonment, although it manifests as anxiety and recurring nightmares about losing his remaining parent (Dyches, 2011a: p. 8). Doogie also experiences anger and frustration in relation to information being withheld about his incarcerated father's whereabouts. Doogie stomps and shouts when he is told by his older sister that he is "too little" to learn about the family secret (Dyches, 2011a: p. 3). *When Dad Was Away* also addresses how shame ripples out from family members to the child as Milly's mother was unsure how to tell Milly where her dad was due to her shame about her husband's imprisonment (Weir, 2012: p. 4).

For many characters, their experience of anger is tied to the shame they also feel as the result of the bullying they experience from classmates about their parent's imprisonment (Saunders, 2018: p. 24). For example, Sketch is shamed in *The Night Dad Went to Jail* after a child in his class saw his father's arrest and makes fun of him (Higgins, 2011: p. 10). Sketch describes his face feeling hot and wishes he could "erase himself" (p. 11). Sketch's shame is then projected onto his father when he eventually goes to visit him in jail as Sketch cannot bring himself to look at his father or maintain eye contact with him (p. 16).

While Sketch's anger represents the tendency for children to externalize their pain, other characters like Kofi and Milly display internalizing behaviours in efforts to manage potentially stigmatizing reactions to their parent's imprisonment. For example, as Milly's face turns down towards her desk, she averts her gaze from her classmates and teacher and her face is described as feeling hot due to the shame and embarrassment she feels when her teacher reminds the class not to bully or tease one another, and she is described as feeling all of her classmates looking at her

(Weir, 2012: p. 8). Kofi, on the other hand, keeps his mother's incarceration a secret from his friends and teachers so as to avoid the possibility of negative reactions from his peers (Dyches, 2011b: p. 8; Saunders, 2017: p. 67; Reimer, 2019: p. 100).

Interestingly, *Critters Cry Too* nuances how the experience of sadness can manifest as outward expressions of anger by introducing the concept of "madsad" as an instance when someone acts mad when they are actually sad (Curcio, 2015a: p. 16). This conceptual framework can help children understand how different emotions can bleed into one another and it resonates with me as I often saw my father act "madsad". When I was twelve, my mother informed my father on my behalf that I no longer wanted to visit him due to the lack of safety I felt when he was using drugs around me. My father left my grandmother's house screaming that he never loved me. This experience has impacted my psychosocial development and led to significant struggles with self-esteem and difficulty feeling and developing a sense of trust in my relationships with authority figures, close friends and intimate partners. When I first read *Critters Cry Too*, I thought that if someone had explained this concept to me when I was a child, perhaps I would not have internalized my father's statement to the degree that I did. I recognize that "what if" statements are impossible to verify; however, it is hard not to wonder how my relationship with my father may have looked different in the years that followed as they were marked by estrangement.

My experience speaks to the importance of providing children with reassurance that their parents still love them when experiencing addiction or incarceration. Importantly, all of the books in the dataset remind children that they are not alone and that their parents still love them, despite the separation. For both Kofi and Sketch, hearing this reminder from a social worker and from the remaining parent at home seems to relieve some of their experiences of guilt, shame, sadness and anger, which provides a positive outlook on social support workers for child readers (Dyches,

2011b: p. 12; Higgins, 2011: p. 8). For Doogie and Milly, hearing this reminder from their incarcerated father brings them relief (Dyches, 2011a: 10; Weir, 2012: p. 16). In *My Daddy's in Jail*, Bella and Lyla Bear's incarcerated father is depicted as encouraging his daughters to remember that he loves them when they are sad and feel alone (Curcio, 2015b: p. 12). However, the two young bears are not visualized in the scene (p. 12), which shows the father bear speaking on the phone, and it remains unclear whether their father's words felt soothing to them or not.

Notably, *Sammy's Visit* does not use dialogue to tell children that their parent still loves them, as the other books in this sample do. Rather, love and support are demonstrated through the actions of Sammy's grandma. For example, Sammy's grandma tells her jokes to cheer her up, prepares her favourite sandwich, hugs her and tenderly tells Sammy that she hopes she is giving her a good home while her mother is incarcerated (Reimer, 2017: p. 10, 25, 28). It is important to remember that not every caregiver will have the words to tell children that they are loved as much as they may need to hear it, perhaps due to their own trauma. When verbal affirmations of love are difficult, it is important that caregivers ensure children feel loved and supported in other ways.

Despite how accurately most of the books depict the difficult emotional experiences that children go through when their parent experiences incarceration or lives with addiction, more than half of the books still send messages to children that their incarcerated parent is inherently to blame for their circumstances, flattening the experience of structural factors that shape experiences of criminalization and addiction, such as poverty and mental illness (Boyd, 2019: p. 114-115; Haden, 2002: p. 433; Murphy et al., 2010: p. 1329). The overarching narrative tells children that their parent is not a bad person, but that they made a bad choice and that children have a responsibility not to make those same choices. This finding is explored further in the following section.

5.2.2. What the child can do to be a responsible citizen

Four out of seven books in the dataset present children with a narrative that crime, addiction and imprisonment are a matter of individual choice. They use textual and visual devices, including metaphor, to induct children into a system of law and order that emphasizes the neoliberal values of personal responsibility, choice, control over one's own fate and self-government (Rose, 2000: p. 329). In these books, the narrative is transformed from one about what emotions the child is experiencing related to their parent or how to cope, to one about what the child can do to be responsible, so they are not criminalized themselves. The narrative tells children not to end up like their parent and seems aimed at discontinuing intergenerational cycles of criminalization.

Sketch's mother seeks to assure him that his father's imprisonment is not his fault, although she attempts to provide him with reassurance by stating that his dad "just made a bad choice" (Higgins, 2011: p. 8). Similarly, *My Daddy's in Jail* ends with a reminder that imprisonment is a matter of choice. Once Rhymer Roach is released after a short, one-day sentence, he declares that "after making a mistake it is clear to see, that breaking the rules just isn't for me" (Curcio, 2015b: p. 32). *Critters Cry Too* also sends the message that substance use is a matter of choice as readers are presented with a metaphor for addiction that uses a cookie—referred to as "Whateveritwas"—to represent an addictive substance.

When "Whateveritwas" comes from the fictional land of Zapatos, it is described as tasting "really, really good", although it makes the critters sick (Curcio, 2015a: p. 12-15). The book describes that the "only way to get better is to stop eating the cookies" (p. 19). Another reference to food is made later in the book as the family's experience is compared to a dog begging for chocolate (p. 17, 30). Rogers (2017) shows there are similarities between food addiction and drug addiction as conditioned environmental cues can trigger food and drug seeking behaviours, and as

addictive drugs tap into the same processes and systems that motivate and control adaptive behaviours, such as eating (p. 182). However, key differences exist as drugs have stronger effects than food and as they are deeply intertwined with the politics of the war on drugs and increased policing of racialized and impoverished communities (Boyd, 2019: p. 115). This metaphor thus presents an overly simplified version of what it means to live with addiction in your family and undermines children's capacity to make sense of difficult subject matter.

After the critters were introduced to Whateveritwas, they no longer engaged in their usual activities. There was "no more play, [and] they were not themselves" (Curcio, 2015a: p. 15). The narrator—the great Roach doctor—exclaims, "These critters think they need more of the cookie but the cookie is the very thing that is making them madsad. This makes no sense! Not even to a great Roach doctor like me!" (p. 17). From the beginning of the book, the great Roach doctor is positioned as the all-knower in relation to addiction, giving credibility and authority to the medical profession on this topic. The title page even depicts the doctor pointing at the title with a smile on his face (Curcio, 2015a: p. 1). Once the child in the story, Calvin, can no longer bear the weight of his family's addiction, he climbs out of Zapatos, which is depicted as a shoebox, where he finds the great Roach doctor looking down on him and his family as if he is a saviour waiting to pull them from the depths of their addiction (Curcio, 2015a: p. 23).

Brownscombe (2004) reminds us that the medical model has certain advantages as a framework for understanding addiction for those who may benefit from a diagnostic label to increase their understanding, normalize their experience, and provide them with hope for the future, while for others, it can be depersonalizing and stigmatizing (p. 90). Medicalizing addiction can overly simplify and provide an incomplete understanding of addiction as it fails to consider it in context with other social factors such as mental illness and poverty (p. 90). At one point, the

roach doctor in *Critters Cry Too* informs readers that "some of the critters were very sick, but they just didn't know it" (Curcio, 2015a: p. 18). Such medicalizing language denies people living with addiction agency by assuming they cannot comprehend their experience. Additionally, the medical model largely promotes abstinence, which neglects to consider when substance use may not be a significant problem, and fails to consider the strengths of a harm reduction approach. Many perspectives, including user advocacy groups and welfare agencies, add to our understanding of addiction by promoting more holistic and culturally based understandings of addiction, and these voices should be heard, at the very least, alongside doctors (Brownscombe, 2004: p. 90).

Critters Cry Too medicalizes addiction and responsibilizes substance users to "just say no". In my experience, being told that my father's addiction and imprisonment were a matter of choice was often the opposite of reassuring. Such reminders still left me wondering, "but why would my dad make such a bad choice? He must not love me if he would make a choice that neglects my wellbeing or leaves me behind". Unlike the children in the books, since my father had previously denied me his love, statements from other family members that sought to remind me of his affection often felt difficult to trust. I believe I would have benefited as a child from a nuanced conversation around what it means to live with mental illness and addiction and experience criminalization. I wish someone could have explained to me that choices are not always black and white, and that people make choices in constrained conditions. I believe that growing up in constrained conditions, including poverty and surrounded by mental illness and drug use, prepared me to understand complex circumstances more than most adults were willing to give me credit for.

The *Night Dad Went to Jail* is the only book in the sample that depicts children who witness their parent's arrest and provides a clear definition of law, although this definition, too, is overly simplified. On the page depicting the arrest, the author includes a text box that is separate from

Sketch's narrative as he witnesses these events, and which provides readers with information about the law and the consequences for breaking it. Higgins (2011) writes that "laws are rules that tell people how they should behave. When people break a law, they may be put in jail or prison. They have to stay there for a period of time. How long depends upon what law they broke" (p. 5). This definition implies that the law is applied equally to all and that it is impartial, neutral and objective. This definition presents what sociolegal scholars refer to as the "official version of law" (Comack, 2014: p. 7; Hunt, 1993: p. 37), as law is presented as a discrete entity rather than existing in an interdependent relationship with social and political forces. Future books should consider how to introduce children to the idea that law is socially constructed and as it may reflect biases related to gender, race and class in terms of how it is written or practiced.

My Daddy's in Jail goes beyond sending the message to children to "just say no" to drugs and crime by suggesting that children have a responsibility to stop crime from happening in the community. On page one, children are tasked with locating images throughout the book of a wanted ant who has escaped from the fictional maximum security Honeytown Jail (Curcio, 2015b: p. 1). A cartoon police officer is depicted holding up a poster with an image of the ant in a black and white jumpsuit, while the police bug asks readers, "Have you seen this ant? He is hiding on every page. Can you help us find him?" (p. 1). Child readers are mobilized to take on the role of community watchdog as they read. On page two, readers are asked to identify children who are breaking the rules within an image of a playground (p. 2). This activity reproduces the idea that law is universal and objective while also illustrating the arbitrary nature of the law as there is no answer key provided that describes the rule breaking behaviours that children are asked to identify. For example, a young beaver is shown chewing on a wooden beam that supports a play structure where other children are playing, while another young animal is shown lighting a fire, and another

young animal pees off the top of the play structure (p. 2). Children are expected to intuitively know the rules and laws of the playground without being told, which seems particularly confusing in the case of the young beaver, as chewing down wood to construct dams is key to their survival.

While a definition of law must be simplified to some degree when it is presented to child readers, there is room in future books for alternative definitions that nuance the conversation and introduce children to different interpretations of the relationship between law and society (Comack, 2014: p. 1; Hunt, 1993: p. 37). I am curious about filling this gap in children's picturebooks as my experience relating to my father's addiction and criminalization was not represented in the dataset, particularly as I do not consider my father's crimes to be a simple matter of choice. Notably, my father was criminalized in relation to his mental illness. After undergoing 30 unsuccessful rounds of electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) to treat a diagnosis of "Culture Shock" upon immigrating to Canada from Ireland in the early 1980s, my father eventually received numerous other diagnoses, including Major Depression, Manic Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Paranoid Schizophrenia, and Narcissistic Personality Disorder. Self-medicating became his norm, and he was criminalized for forging prescriptions in a desperate attempt to escape his pain.

Research shows that low-income people are more likely to receive biological treatments for mental illness such as psychotropic drugs and ECT rather than psychotherapy (White, 2018: p. 27). Research also shows that biological treatments work by impeding and damaging the brain (Breggin, 2008; White, 2018: p. 34). As such, given that my father lived in poverty and could not access more empowering and humane forms of care in the community, I can understand why his decision-making processes may have been impeded and I empathize with why he made the "choice" to forge prescriptions. I hope that future picturebooks can find creative ways to represent such instances when people break the law as a matter of perceived necessity for their wellbeing,

or when the law is applied unequally to groups of people, including those who live with mental illness or addiction, in poverty, or who experience systemic racism.

It is important to note that two of the books that fit the code for this narrative thread—*Critters Cry Too* and *My Daddy's in Jail*—are written by the same author, Anthony Curcio, who is one of two authors in this dataset with lived experience of criminalization and drug use. This likely shapes the narratives Curcio mobilized in his books, although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider the biographical positioning of the authors in depth. I plan to analyze this finding in future studies. This section has shown how the picturebooks included in this dataset send messages to children that tell them their parent is to blame for their circumstances, and that children have a responsibility not to make the same choices as their parents. As a second thematic finding, I found that the books also responsibilize children to assume emotional roles in their parent's absence. This finding is explored in the following section through the lens of parentification.

5.2.3. Parentification

The second thematic finding within the responsibilization narrative relates to the concept of parentification, which refers to a process of role reversal that unfolds within families whereby children assume the functional or emotional roles and responsibilities that are usually reserved for adults (Hooper, et al., 2014: p. 37). In all but one of the books, children were depicted as assuming responsibility for their incarcerated parent's emotional experience on the inside or their remaining parent's emotional experience on the outside, particularly by having a responsibility to caretake for the family in the incarcerated parent's absence, and even as carrying the burden of trying to help lift the family member out of their addiction.

In *Doogie's Dad*, Doogie experiences a deep sense of guilt for upsetting his mother after he demands to know the truth about his father's whereabouts and his mother begins to cry (Dyches,

2011a: p. 4). Doogie's older sister shames him for asking questions by exclaiming with her arms crossed in anger, "Now look what you've done!" (p. 4). Common among older children who experience the loss of their parent to incarceration, Doogie's sister feels an increased sense of pressure to manage her mother's emotional experience as she seeks to ensure that she and Doogie cause their mother no more stress than she is already experiencing as the result of their father's incarceration (Allard, 2012: p. 52). Like Doogie, other children depicted in the books were portrayed as feeling unsafe to show their emotions. For example, it was common for the child characters to withhold tears or to try not to cry. Milly, for instance, was described as working hard to withhold her tears when visiting her imprisoned father so as not to upset him and make his experience in prison worse (Weir, 2012: p. 16).

Sammy's Visit begins by showing the reader that Sammy is very sad and that she does not want to visit her mother the next day (Reimer, 2017: p. 4-5). Sammy keeps her head bowed to the ground and finds herself struggling to respond to her grandmother's attempts to cheer her up. She can only reply with a mumbled "hmm" (p. 11). The morning of the visit, Sammy hardly touches her breakfast cereal (p. 12-13). Despite her externalized sadness, Sammy's grandmother simply says, "Let's go, Sammy. Your mom is looking forward to seeing you." (p. 16). Sammy reluctantly agrees and is described as walking slowly and with heavy footsteps towards the door (p. 17). Rather than talking with Sammy about the sadness she feels and why she may not want to go visit her mother that day, Sammy's grandmother puts the needs of the incarcerated mother before the child and forces Sammy to go for the visit without any further discussion.

In *The Night Dad Went to Jail*, the responsibility to act as the family caregiver is directly placed on the child by the incarcerated parent. For example, an image is included of a letter to Sketch received from his father while he is in jail that tells him to "take care of [his] mom and

brother" (Higgins, 2011: p. 20). In *Critters Cry Too*, although no adult directly imposes this responsibility onto the child, Calvin still feels that it is his responsibility to get his family out of the fictional land, Zapatos, where they are all living with addiction (Curcio, 2015a: p. 23-25). After Calvin feels madsad himself and realizes that he can feel better after talking to someone, Calvin assumes the role of family counsellor to nurture his family out of their addiction and back to good health (p. 21-23). Calvin packs his bags and climbs out of Zapatos, searching for someone or something that can help his critter family feel better too (p. 22). Here, he finds the great Roach doctor who gives a speech about being strong, making the right choice, and "just saying no" to something that you like, but which hurts you and makes you sick (p. 28). The doctor then narrates to readers that Calvin continues his speech after the doctor leaves the scene (p. 28). A few Critters are moved by Calvin repeating this message and they decide they are ready to climb out of Zapatos and away from Whateveritwas (p. 28).

It is important to note that the books in this dataset only represent the process of parentification in relation to emotional roles. There are no instances in the books where children are tasked with providing meals or medications for family members or assisting with family finances or household management. Instead, children are depicted as acting as the family secret keeper, emotional adult substitute, and emotional supporter (Hooper et al., 2014: p. 45). Children can experience negative consequences that stem from parentification, including shame and guilt when they cannot live up to these expectations, as well as a lack of personal boundaries and autonomy, insecure attachments and poor functioning in adult relationships (p. 38). Children of incarcerated parents require physical and psychological safety as well as reassurance and security (Smyke, Bailey & Zeanah, 2017). It is important for children to realize that they are not responsible for "being strong" or "holding the family together" (p. 423). While the books accurately represent

the process of parentification as a common occurrence among children with incarcerated parents, they fail to remind children that it is not their job to take on adult responsibilities.

My Daddy's in Jail does not neatly fit this code. This is likely because the story aims to show children what the parent's experience in jail is like rather than narrating what the child's experience on the outside is like. The children are only mentioned or visualized in 13 of 38 pages, or roughly 34% of the book (Curcio, 2015b). However, due to the book's focus on the challenges that the incarcerated parent faces behind bars, reading this book attuned me to the ways in which I still internalize parentified roles and feel a sense of guilt for failing to maintain contact with my father during his imprisonment and thus for contributing to the isolation he experienced. The narrator tells us that "Bella and Lyla Bear's Daddy only thinks about one thing. Going home to his special girls – just the thought makes him sing!" (p. 22). Instead of feelings of happiness that this passage is supposed to inspire in children as they are reminded of their parent's love, affection, and desire to be reunited with them, this passage made me feel sad and guilty. It reminds me that I still hold the belief that I was responsible for my father's emotional experience during his time behind bars. It remains hard for me to let go of this guilt and remember that my choice to maintain distance was valid based on the tools and (lack of) access to support I had at the time.

This previous two sections reviewed the two key thematic findings that constituted the overarching narrative of responsibilization. This included considering how children are relieved of guilt and responsibility for their parent's criminalization and imprisonment at the same time they are told that addiction and imprisonment are a simple matter of choice. It also included how children are responsibilized to assume emotional caregiving roles when their parent experiences addiction, criminalization and incarceration. The next section considers the second overarching narrative, which is related to the notion of hope and is likewise constituted by two key subthemes.

These include the hope that prisons "work" to produce favourable outcomes for individuals and families, and the importance of providing sound hope that can help to realistically manage expectations for children with incarcerated parents.

5.3. Hopeful Narratives

Within the books that depict a jail or prison (5 of 7), there is an overarching narrative that accepts the existing system of punishment and imprisonment as it is. The function of the jail and prison is left unquestioned and it is depicted as an historical inevitability. *Critters Cry Too* tells the story of addiction, but it does not directly associate it with criminalization or imprisonment. Instead, there is a narrative that accepts substance use and addiction as a disease and illness to be treated and cured by medical professionals. Like the jail or the prison, the medical framework for understanding substance use and addiction is left unquestioned.

This section mobilizes the concepts of visuality and scopic regimes to consider how the combination of textual and visual imagery in the books neutralize the landscape of the prison and realities of living behind bars or with addiction while also erasing inequalities and reinforcing existing systems and structures. It is important to note that there was a dearth of codes related to the concept of countervisuality across the books. An important finding is thus related to what the books fail to represent, particularly as they flatten the common challenges and barriers associated with visiting an incarcerated parent, addiction, mental illness and re-entry. The books also assume that going to jail or prison equals accountability, yet they make no attempt to show what accountability looks like when the incarcerated parent's behaviours harm the child or family. The books present children with a fairy tale ending and "happily ever after" which research shows is the exception rather than the rule for individuals and families who experience criminalization and imprisonment (John Howard Society of Ontario, 2016b: p. 15; Visher & Mallik-Kane, 2007: p.

448-453). Most individuals exiting jail or prison will experience significant health problems and barriers to successful re-entry, including a lack of access to employment and housing.

5.3.1. Jails and prisons "work"

Four of seven books that depict the jail or the prison do so in a way that offers limited visualization of these spaces. In *Kofi's Mom*, there are only two images that depict the inside of the prison. One shows Kofi's mom smiling, looking at pictures on the wall that Kofi has presumably drawn for her (Dyches, 2011b: p. 5). Another shows Kofi visiting his mom, sitting on her lap in a room where the walls are blue and there is nothing but a clock on the wall and a small window with bars (p. 13). The images are devoid of guards, cells and other prisoners. When Kofi visits his mom, he describes the prison as looking like a "big castle" where his mom is "just the same as she has always been" (p. 14). It is noted that Kofi's mom tells Kofi about her life in prison, but no further details are given as to what her life in prison is actually like (p. 13).

Similarly, in *Sammy's Visit*, only 12% of the book, which is about prison visitation, contains pages that depict images of the prison itself. The first image to depict the prison shows Sammy and her grandmother arriving at the prison in a yellow taxi (Reimer, 2017: p. 30-31). The brightly coloured taxi appears in stark contrast to the large grey building that it sits idle in front of, and which is labelled "Correctional Centre." Barbed wire is visible along the fence behind the building and in the following image which depicts Sammy and her grandmother walking from the taxi towards the main gates (p. 32-33). Once inside the prison, a female guard is shown smiling with one hand outstretched while the other holds a baton on her hip (p. 37). Sammy and her grandmother are not shown in this scene, although the guard is described as friendly and cheerful as she searches Grandma's bag (p. 36). When Sammy and her grandmother make it to the visiting room, Sammy and her mother are shown embracing. However, like *Kofi's Mom*, the image of the

visiting room is devoid of identifying features of the prison, including metal furniture that is bolted to the ground, visiting rooms where there is glass between visitors and incarcerated people who must speak to one another through a phone, CCTV surveillance cameras, guards, cells and other prisoners (p. 38). In fact, by looking at the images of the visit without the accompanying text, it is impossible to identify that Sammy and her mother are in a prison at all.

In *Doogie's Dad*, there is only one image that represents the prison. Doogie's dad is foregrounded against a grey prison wall where there is a door, which presumably leads to a cell as there is a small window and bars on it and a guard standing next to it (Dyches, 2011a: p. 6). Doogie's dad is shown wearing an orange jumpsuit with the number '24176' written on the breast pocket (p. 6). However, like *Kofi's Mom* and *Sammy's Visit*, no further details are given to show readers what life on the inside is actually like. The text that accompanies the image describes Doogie's mom explaining to Doogie that his dad was being looked after by prison officers, who wear a uniform like Officer Pete, the police officer who sometimes visits his school (p. 6). Through the combination of image and text in *Sammy's Visit* and *Doogie's Dad*, prison guards and the police are constructed as friendly, which does not accurately reflect the interactional experiences of most Black, Indigenous and other people of colour when confronted by police. Maynard (2017) shows that Black, Indigenous and people of colour in Canada are more than five times as likely as white citizens to experience dehumanizing and violent encounters with the police (p. 103).

The Night Dad Went to Jail also shows only two images that depict the jail when Sketch and his family visit his dad. The first image shows a closed visitation where Sketch and his family speak to his dad on an orange phone behind a glass wall (Higgins, 2011: p. 16-17). The second image shows an open visitation where Sketch hugs his dad who is wearing a denim jumpsuit (p. 18-19). The visitation room is big and empty. It appears to be a private visitation with no other

prisoners or their families sharing the space. The walls are bright green and there is art on the walls. A guard stands smiling near an open door (p. 18-19). While Sketch describes the jail as "really scary", there do not appear to be visual cues in the image intended to signify fear (p. 18).

Unlike the aforementioned books, significant visual cues are provided in *When Dad Was Away* to signify the scarier aspects of the prison. The first image of the prison shows Milly, her mother and brother arriving to the prison for a visit. The image of prison extends onto two pages, demonstrating how overwhelmingly large and intimidating it can appear (Weir, 2012: p. 11-12). Two security cameras are pictured pointing down on Milly and her family as they stand in front of the prison door and are made to look small in front of it (p. 11). Milly and her family wear jackets of slightly brighter blue, green and red while greys, browns are dark blues are used to shade the prison, suggesting that the prison is not a colourful nor bright environment (p. 11-12). During the visitation, the room remains empty of other prisoners and their families like in *The Night Dad Went to Jail*. Only a guard sits in the room, although he is made to look more intimidating than in *The Night Dad Went to Jail.* The guard is foregrounded and made to look large as he is shown from behind keeping a close watch on Milly and her family (Weir, 2012: p. 14).

On the following page, an image of Milly and her father hugging is shown while a guard stands directly beside them, scowling with his arms crossed (Weir, 2012: p. 16). In the final scene, Milly and her family visit their father inside for Christmas. Again, two guards are shown hovering over the celebrations where a Christmas tree and food have been put out for the prisoners and their families. The guards appear unfriendly and displeased as they scowl and cross their arms, and they are not wearing Christmas crowns like Milly and her family (p. 18). Still, like the other books, there is a lack of detail showing what Milly's father experiences on the inside is like beyond what the child witnesses during visitation.

These books demonstrate the benefits of visitation for both children and parents, showing that they can help them foster and maintain a sense of connection despite the separation they are experiencing due to the parent's incarceration (Smyke, Bailey & Zeanah, 2017: p. 423). However, they insufficiently address the barriers that children and families often face with respect to visitations, such as lengthy distances between a family's home and the jail or prison where their loved one is incarcerated, costs associated with travel, and when the child does not want to go to the carceral space (p. 423). Although Sketch describes feeling awkward during the first visit with his father (Higgins, 2011: p. 17) and Milly and Doogie both describe the visitation as scary (Weir, 2012: p. 11; Dyches, 2011a: p. 7), these books still assume that the children want to visit their incarcerated parent. *Sammy's Visit* is the only book to represent when a child does not want to visit their incarcerated parent, however, Sammy's caregiver makes no attempt to discuss this with her and forces her to go. Smyke, Bailey and Zeanah (2017) remind us that it is important for children to have a choice in visitation decisions (p. 423). The books in this dataset fail to adequately represent instances where children are afforded agency in this decision-making process.

My Daddy's in Jail is the only book to depict aspects of the jail beyond the visitation scenario. In that sense, *My Daddy's in Jail* presents children with the most accurate depiction contained in the dataset in terms of what life on the inside is like, including the poor conditions of confinement that characterize North American jails and prisons (Edgemon & Clay-Warner, 2019). The first image of the jail depicts conditions of overcrowding as fourteen prisoners share a cell (Curcio, 2015b: p. 9-10). Some prisoners are crying, while others sit with their heads in their laps or hang off the cell bars, trying to escape (p. 9-10). The walls are visibly cracking and crumbling (p. 9-10). Two guards stand outside of the jail cell smiling and waving at the reader, seeming to ignore the distressing scene taking place behind them (p. 9-10). Notably, this is the only scene

across all of the books that fits the code for countervisuality. A character named Greenie the Ant stands on the side of the page holding a small house in the palm of his hand overlooking the scene inside the jail cell as he sarcastically asks, “they call *this* the big house?” (p. 9).

My Daddy’s in Jail then shows readers what other spaces in the jail looks like. Another cell is visualized, showing two prisoners sharing a bunk bed next to a toilet while a third prisoner sleeps on the ground at the foot of the bed (Curcio, 2015b: p. 18). The accompanying text describes the food as not being very good and the beds as “very, very hard” (p. 18). These conditions are consistent with the environment that prisoners at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre describe (Speight, Benslimane, Doyle & Piché, 2019). To further help children contextualize the dismal reality of life behind bars, the scene inside the jail is contrasted with vignettes that show Bella and Lyla Bear at home enjoying their comfortable beds and generous meals of pizza, burgers, spaghetti and ice cream splits (Curcio, 2015b: p. 18).

My Daddy’s in Jail also uses metaphor to illustrate the use of solitary confinement. It depicts a shoe to represent the SHU (special handing unit) as a way to provide prisoners with protection from other prisoners when there is a threat of violence (Curcio, 2015b: p. 9-10, 26-27). This is the only book to depict solitary confinement in any capacity although it sanitizes the reality of how solitary confinement is used. Rhymer Roach is the one who asks to be sent to the SHU, and he presumably only stays there for a few hours since his sentence only lasts a day. This book fails to represent instances where prisoners are placed in solitary confinement as a form of punishment or when prisoners are confined for weeks or months, which Sprott and Doob (2021) find still occurs in Canada despite the United Nations defining the extended use of solitary confinement as a form of torture (United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of

Prisoners, 2015), and the recent Supreme Court of Canada ruling that declared prolonged solitary confinement unconstitutional (*Canadian Civil Liberties Association v. Canada*, 2019).

All of the books in this dataset, with the exception of *My Daddy's in Jail*, engage in softening strategies to protect the child reader from the atrocities of day-to-day life in prison, much like those identified by Wolf (2017) in her study of residential school picturebooks. However, like Wolf (2017: p. 149), as I read and analyzed the books, I noticed that I was influenced by a desire to read the texts in the tradition of protest literature. As a critical criminologist, I hoped that the books would be more critical of the prison system and its impact on individuals and families. I hoped the storylines would allude to some of the structural reasons why a parent may end up incarcerated, and I hoped the storylines would nuance the dominant discourse that incarcerated people are solely to blame for their circumstances. Moreover, as an abolitionist, I craved a storyline that rejected the legitimacy of the prison system altogether.

I have had to manage the expectations that I had for these books, particularly as they are meant to introduce children to the types of experiences they can expect when their parent is incarcerated or uses substances rather than sensitize them to the politics of prison abolition. It has been important to remind myself that the complex reality of life inside a jail or prison cannot be understood or felt through any one book (Wolf, 2017: p. 156). Indeed, as the books focus on the emotional experience of young children, it has been important to remind myself that the stories are hyper focused on an individualized narrative. As Wolf (2017) notes, reliance on a hyper-individualizing logic can disassociate the experiences of harm from structured and broader forms of inequity (p. 149). Instead of engaging in structural critiques of social systems, I found that the picturebooks in this dataset focus on individual children and their internal, emotional experience when their parent goes to jail or uses substances.

This section outlined how the books in the dataset present the jail and the prison as a historical inevitability and scopic regime, and as they tend to visualize the jail and the prison in a way that sanitizes the day-to-day realities of life on the inside. The next section uses the concept of symbolic boundaries to explore how the books depict specific groups of people in relation to substance use, criminalization and imprisonment. I consider the narrative devices that are used to render visible or invisible key differences in experience that exist between groups of people along the lines of race and class in these circumstances.

5.3.2. Symbolic boundaries

Four out of the seven books use anthropomorphism as a narrative device; this involves presenting the characters as animals with human-like capabilities and qualities. Anthropomorphism functions to provide emotional distance for the child reader when the story is personal and painful (Burke & Copenhaver, 2004: p. 213). For example, as Sammy envisions her mother and herself flying away from the correctional centre as butterflies (Reimer, 2017: p. 42-43). However, it also functions as a form of symbolic boundary work to illustrate difference and construct people or groups in opposition to others (Presser, & Sandberg, 2015: p. 91). *My Daddy's in Jail*, for example, represents the main characters, including prisoners, as bugs and bears. The narrator, a cockroach named Rhymer Roach, follows his friends Bella and Lyla Bear to the local jail where their father is imprisoned. Rhymer makes his assumptions about prisoners clear as he refers to them as "bad animals in this jail of a zoo", although his opinions change after he finds himself criminalized and imprisoned for flying a blimp within city limits which is against one of Honeytown's laws (Curcio, 2015b: 13-16, 20).

While imprisoned, Rhymer finds himself chased by a fellow prisoner depicted as a cat. Wearing a sign that reads "NO CATS" and carrying a sign with a crossed-out picture of a cat on

it, Rhymer declares, “all cats are bad! They’re just no good! Lock me in that safe shoe please, if you could?!” (Curcio, 2015b: p. 25). A fellow prisoner, referred to as “the Jail-Bird”—denoting someone that has been in jail repeatedly—corrects Rhymer. He states that “These animals are good for goodness sakes! Sometimes good animals just make bad mistakes” (p. 28). Rhymer thinks about Jail-Bird’s message, looks around at those animals, and changes his thought (p. 29). He admits that he was wrong, which demonstrates the importance of abandoning stigmatizing assumptions about prisoners that sustain an ‘us versus them’ mentality (p. 29).

The Night Dad Went to Jail alternatively tells the story of a family of rabbits whose father goes to jail. Boundaries are drawn between Sketch’s family and other characters who are depicted as different animals such as police officers who are shown as cats and mice, and a schoolyard bully who is visualized as a rat (Higgins, 2011: p. 4-5, 10). It seems important to consider that rabbits are often prey to animals such as cats. They also do not carry an association with dirt, disease and pollution like rats do. *Critters Cry Too* creates fictional ‘critters’ as the main characters in the story. The critters are black and white, and they resemble pieces of popcorn with eyes, hands and feet (Curcio, 2015a). Like *My Daddy’s in Jail*, a cockroach—the great Roach doctor—narrates this story. The doctor is the only character in the story that is not a critter, apart from a dog that is used briefly in an example to explain addiction to the critters (p. 26-27). This boundary seems to function as a narrative device to distinguish and elevate the voice of the doctor above the critters and present the doctor’s voice as a source of authority on the topic of addiction.

Among the four books that depict human experiences, only *Kofi’s Mom* depicts a Black child’s experience. *Doogie’s Dad* is written by the same author, Richard Dyches, and the story lines are relatively similar as the children miss their incarcerated parent and find comfort in a friend at school who shares their experience. While there is a visual acknowledgement of race in *Kofi’s*

Mom, there is no acknowledgement of how systemic racism can lead to differential experiences of criminalization and imprisonment. Kofi's experience is depicted in the same way as it is for the white children in *Doogie's Dad* and *When Dad Was Away;* all of the children in these books feel similar emotions and receive support from a social worker or other children. However, a key difference exists in the fact that Kofi's mother is incarcerated instead of his father, who is absent from the storyline altogether. In all of the other books that depict parental incarceration, there is a remaining parent at home with the child. In *Kofi's Mom*, it remains unclear who Kofi resides with during his mom's incarceration. Notably, only *Sammy's Visit* depicts an instance where a child loses their mother to incarceration and their grandparent becomes their caregiver.

Kofi's Mom fails to represent how experiencing maternal incarceration as a Black child may differ from a white child's experiences of paternal incarceration. Kopak and Smith-Ruiz (2016) find that maternal incarceration is associated with several criminal justice–related outcomes for children, including a greater likelihood of being arrested, a higher number of arrests, and arrest at an earlier age (p. 107). This may be due to the importance of a mother-child bond, in addition to the fact that many Black American women are the sole parent in the household and that children are more likely to be living with their single mothers prior to her imprisonment (p. 107-108). While it is not helpful to depict to a child the likelihood that they will experience criminal-justice involvement in a picturebook, it may be helpful to expand on the unique challenges that children may face when they live in a single-parent household and that parent is incarcerated.

While Kofi's dad is absent from the storyline and it seems that he was living in a single parent household, there is room to elaborate on this experience and how it affected him. For example, the story could have addressed if a grandparent came to live with him, like in *Sammy's Visit*, or if he entered the foster care system. *Kofi's Mom* leaves such questions unanswered.

Furthermore, all characters in *Kofi's Mom* besides Kofi and his mom are depicted as white, including Kofi's teacher, friend, and social worker. While this could reflect the disproportionate representation of racial minorities among criminal justice staff and the fact that staff are more likely to be white (Bennett, Crewe & Wahidin, 2008: p. 96), this point was not elaborated upon.

There are real differences in terms of how Black and white communities are criminalized and which are more commonly marked by poverty, and there should there be some representation of these realities in books. America's prison boom began in the 1970s and led to nearly half of America's prison population being made up of Black citizens (Kopak & Smith-Ruiz, 2016: p. 90; Miller, 2007: p. 26). Approximately one in five Black American men between the ages of 25 and 44 have been incarcerated at some point in their lives, and one of every four Black children born in 1990 had an imprisoned father (Kopak & Smith-Ruiz, 2016: p. 90). Risks for maternal imprisonment also rose during this period, with those born in 1990 experiencing twice the risk of having an incarcerated mother compared to those born in 1978 (p. 90). Black American children make up over 50% of the total number of children with incarcerated parents and are nearly nine times more likely to have a parent in state or federal prison than white children (Miller, 2007: p. 26). Research examining the impact of parental incarceration on children has largely overlooked the fact that so many Black youth have these experiences (Kopak & Smith-Ruiz, 2016: p. 90). Indeed, the books in this study lack attention to the unique experiences of Black youth who lose a parent to incarceration and leave this demographic underrepresented.

There is also little variation in how the books depict experiences of criminalization and imprisonment along the intersection of class. Notably, five of seven books in the dataset depict a somewhat ambiguous middle-class experience. In *When Dad Was Away*, the home is barely visualized except for a scene depicting the family sitting in a large kitchen and another scene where

Milly's mom tucks her into bed (Weir, 2012: p. 3-6). The same is true for *Doogie's Dad*, where most scenes are devoid of background characteristics and fail to provide social context. In one scene, however, Doogie and his sister are shown wearing school uniforms, which may suggest the family can afford private education (Dyches, 2011a: p. 4). In *Kofi's Mom*, Kofi is shown to live in a big house with a backyard covered in trees and grass and surrounded by a picket fence (Dyches, 2011b: p. 1). In *My Daddy's in Jail*, Daddy Bear is depicted upon his return from prison laughing and playing with his two daughters while Mother Bear smiles next to them in front of a house with a large garage, picket fence and vibrant front garden (Curcio, 2015b: p. 33-34). In *The Night Dad Went to Jail*, Sketch has his own bedroom despite having two siblings, suggesting the family can afford a three to four bedroom home (Higgins, 2011: p. 9). For the many children who experience poverty and inner-city living prior to or during their parent's incarceration, images of having a private backyard or bedroom as a safe space to process their emotions in are unlikely to resonate.

Considering that minority status is one of the key determinant factors of income, it is interesting that the only book to depict a Black child's experience (*Kofi's Mom*) is also one of the few books that signifies material resources and wealth. In the early 2000s, Miller (2007) found that 20.7% of Black Americans versus 5.7% of white families lived in poverty (p. 28). The author posits that Black communities encounter situations where they are exposed to social structures that reduces peoples' abilities to meet basic needs for themselves and their families, including food, clothing and shelter (p. 28). As a result, poverty and crime become high correlated.

Sammy's Visit and *Critters Cry Too* are the only books that begin to describe and visualize a lack of community resources, although they only begin to scratch the surface on this topic. At the beginning of *Sammy's Visit*, Sammy declares that she does not want to visit her mom in prison, and she is described as shuffling barefoot into the kitchen of her tiny apartment (Reimer, 2017: p.

5). On the way to visit her mother, Sammy shares a tuna sandwich with her grandmother, which she picked up from the local food bank (p. 25). On the other hand, *Critters Cry Too* explains that "there wasn't much to do in Zapatos except play critterball and talk" (Curcio, 2015a: p. 4-5). While the latter statement may suggest poverty, lack of resources and opportunity, there is certainly more room to elaborate on how this experience can impact children. Furthermore, while *My Daddy's in Jail* suggests that the children in the story experience parental incarceration from a somewhat middle-class position, the story also presents a degree of social disorganization and breakdown through an image of protest with accompanying text that reads "no sharing or caring…everywhere a frown" (p. 8). However, like the previous examples, there is much room for this aspect of the story to be expanded, for example, by providing concrete reasons for the protest.

Many children with parents in the correctional system are often exposed to cumulative environmental risks. This is particularly true for children of colour (Miller, 2007: p. 27). Exposure to poverty and its inextricable connection to discrimination, community violence, inadequate health care, marginal education, and other community or family stressors significantly influence interpersonal functioning (Miller, 2007: p. 27). Despite this reality, all of the books in this dataset provide children with a rather one-dimensional story related to parental substance use and incarceration. Moreover, they present children with fairy tale endings where the incarcerated parent returns home and the family lives happily ever after without experiencing any significant challenges related to the parent's release and re-entry. Barriers to re-entry remain invisible, including stigmatization, poverty, mental illness and the likelihood of relapse when the parent has a history of substance use (John Howard Society of Ontario, 2016b: p. 30).

5.3.3. The family lives happily ever after

Four out of seven books in the dataset present children with hopeful endings that aim to reassure them that once they get through the challenges related to their parent's incarceration or substance use, their lives will return to normal. In *My Daddy's in Jail*, the parent returns home "ready to play" (Curcio, 2015b: p. 34). Rhymer Roach states that "It's a perfect ending for this story – a great Honeytown day!" (p. 34). Bella and Lyla Bear reflect on their father's return, sharing their happiness about the fact that there will be "No more jails, no more visiting rooms, or feeling all alone. It was sad and it was hard but now our Daddy is home" (p. 35). This statement seems to suggest that their father will never return to jail. It also suggests that their father's incarceration was the sole reason the daughters felt alone. Upon my first reading of *My Daddy's in Jail*, I felt frustrated by the ending as I thought of the many times where I felt hopeful when my father was released only for him to be criminalized again shortly thereafter. I also thought of the many times where I felt alone despite my father being at home, particularly when his struggles with mental illness and addiction prevented him from being able to attend to my emotional needs.

On the final page of *My Daddy's in Jail,* it is revealed that the story is true and is based on the author's experiences of criminalization and imprisonment (Curcio, 2015b: p .36). A photo of the Bear family is shown next to a real family photo of author Anthony Curcio with his wife and two daughters (p. 36). While I believe this comparative representation stems from good intentions and a desire to inspire hope in children that their situations will get better when their parent returns home, the image elevates the author's lived experience above the statistical realities of other families who experience significant barriers to re-entry (John Howard Society of Ontario, 2016b: p. 15; Visher & Mallik-Kane, 2007: p. 448). It inflates the likelihood of Curcio's story playing out

for other families and may set children up with unrealistic expectations for their parent's release. Unfortunately, Curcio's (2015b) redemption story may be an exception rather than the rule.

Similarly, *When Dad Was Away* ends with Milly receiving the "best birthday present ever"—her father's return home (Weir. 2013: p. 25). The final pages show Milly and her little brother embracing their father, surrounded by balloons (p. 26-27). Milly declares that she knows this birthday would be her best ever (p. 27), and the story ends without any further indications of what her father's transition back into the home looks like for the family. While *Doogie's Dad* does not depict the experience of successful release and re-entry, it still presents children with a happy ending. Doogie does not experience any significant challenges related to visiting his father, and he promises his dad at the end of the story that he will visit him again soon. He is shown drawing photos of his family and declaring that he "can't wait to see Dad again!" (Dyches, 2011a: p. 15-17). Notably, these books focus on providing children with the hope that their family can return to the "normal" that was familiar to them prior to their parent's incarceration, despite the fact that these "normal" conditions were conducive to their criminalization in the first place.

I was disappointed that the books failed to depict instances where attempts to repair broken bonds are made by the incarcerated parent when their actions or absence have harmed the child or the family. All of the books presume that going to jail or prison equals accountability. *The Night Dad Went to Jail* depicts the incarcerated parent offering an apology but leaves much to be desired as the harm remains unnamed and the incarcerated parent simply asks for their child's forgiveness, which the child grants without question (Higgins, 2011: p. 17). Indeed, the harm or crime remains unnamed altogether in *Sammy's Visit*, *Doogie's Dad*, and *Kofi's Mom*. The crime is named in *When Dad Was Away*, although it is only vaguely stated that the parent stole something that did not belong to them and it remains unclear who the theft harmed (p. 4).

My Daddy's in Jail is the only book to directly identify the harm in question, as Rhymer Roach crashes his Blimp into Greenie the Ant, leaving him with minor injuries (Curcio, 2015b: p. 13). Rhymer Roach is shown after his release from the jail crying and apologizing to Greenie the Ant, who responds, "it's okay" and begins to comfort Rhymer, patting him on the head (p. 37). *Critters Cry Too* is the only book to represent an instance where the parents' actions directly harm the child—namely, through neglect, as they struggle with addiction. However, the parents are not criminalized for their substance use and any sense of accountability for how their addiction has impacted their children is entirely absent from the books messaging.

Given the lack of representation of repair and accountability, I question the message the books in this dataset send to children about the importance of repairing harm when there are no clues as to what harm was caused. I have criticized the tendency for these books to responsibilize criminalized people for their actions without considering the role of systems and structures that limit freedom of choice, but it is an oversimplification to say that all criminalized and incarcerated people are victims of the system (Smyke, Bailey & Zeanah, 2017: p. 423). There is often a degree of responsibility that someone can take when their actions have harmed others, and there is room in the books to further this discussion and illustrate meaningful forms of accountability.

Unfortunately, the reality of relapse, mental illness and the various barriers to re-entry challenge depictions that promise children that their parent's criminal justice involvement is a one-time thing (John Howard Society of Ontario, 2016b: p. 15; Visher & Mallik-Kane, 2007: p. 448-453). These material realities threaten, or at the very least complicate, images of happy endings to a family's story of criminalization and imprisonment as fairy tales leave no room for failure or missteps. In *Sammy's Visit*, fairy tales are even used as a source of comfort and escape for Sammy and her mother. During their visit, Sammy struggles to speak to her mother. So, her mother opens

a book, and it is narrated that “they were ready to be swept into fairyland where everything was happy endings” (Reimer, 2017: p. 39). Despite how much we may wish that every parent, child and family experiences a “happily ever after” beyond the incarcerated parent’s release, research shows that this is the exception rather than the rule (John Howard Society of Ontario, 2016b: p. 15; Visher & Mallik-Kane, 2007: p. 448-453).

Given the lack of codes I found relating to the concept of countervisuality, the narratives in these books are overwhelmingly concentrated on accepting the criminal justice system as it is without challenging its problematic history, structures and processes. While we must manage children’s expectations about their parent’s circumstances, I agree that it is still important to present children with a message of hope. The final section in this chapter examines the importance of the notion of sound hope for children of incarcerated or addicted parents and suggests that future picturebooks should aim to strike a balance between providing hope and managing realistic expectations for children in these circumstances.

5.3.4. Providing sound hope and managing expectations

As the previous section explains, how individuals and families experience criminalization and imprisonment is largely shaped by the intersections of gender, race, and class. Unfortunately, how most people move through the criminal justice system is more complicated than the books in the dataset make this process seem. While I recognize that children may experience difficult emotions if they are presented with the reality of criminal justice outcomes in a picturebook that is intended to help them cope when their parent goes to jail or uses drugs, they will also experience difficult emotions if their parent is released and re-criminalized. This may be particularly true if they expected a fairy tale ending and happily ever after.

Presenting children in these circumstances with hopeful narratives is not inherently problematic, but there is room to nuance the existing narratives in the books to depict instances when a child experiences disappointment as their parent is released and lives with addiction or otherwise struggles with re-entry. The books appropriately remind children that they are not alone and that things will get better; however, they can do a better job at distinguishing how things will get better for children and the difficulties that may encumber this process. Instead of promising children that their parents will return home healthy and happy, future children's books on these topics should strive to provide a degree of sound hope that seeks to manage children's expectations when their family member's lives are affected by specific socioeconomic constraints. For example, future picturebooks can aim to sensitize children to the unique challenges associated with substance use, imprisonment, release and re-entry that their parent and their family may encounter as these experiences are impacted by the intersections of gender, race and class.

As Snyder et al. (2003) and Merkaš and Brajša-Žganec (2011: p. 510) remind us, it is important to help youth set goals and develop pathways for thinking hopefully and enhancing their agency, but these goals need to be age-appropriate as well as meaningful and concrete. It is important to teach youth how they can replace their guilt and self-criticism with more realistic and productive thoughts. Still, there are limits to the model of resolute hope that is put forward by these authors. It is a hope that risks being overly individualistic and which is separated from considerations of the wider social, economic and policy context (Webb, 2013: p. 408).

Webb (2013) considers that both sound and resolute hope risk functioning as "a pedagogy of the American Dream"; a pedagogy premised on the idea that equality of opportunity for the realisation of our hopes can be established within society as it is presently structured and that tells us that we can attain the objectives of our hopes by way of existing pathways and developing more

agency in our thinking (p. 408). What is needed is a more transformative model of hope, understood as a mode of hoping rooted in shared experiences, and which demands instrumental goal-directed social praxis (p. 409). While I am curious to know what a children's book written to introduce children to the prison abolition movement may look like, I have been unable to find any and considering how that content *should* be written is beyond the scope of this thesis.

5.4. Conclusion

The books in this dataset have encouraged me to question when attempts to provide children with hope risk providing them with unrealistic expectations and a misguided sense of faith in the criminal justice system to produce favourable outcomes for their family. As I have previously stated, there are emotional risks associated with telling children the truth and there are emotional risks in setting children up for something that may not happen. Indeed, it remains a difficult task to balance providing children with hope while also realistically managing their expectations when a parent goes to jail or lives with addiction. I do not claim to have the answer on how to best do this. My suggestion, based on this research and my lived experience, is that the authors of children's books must trust in children's capacity to make sense of difficult things and seek a balanced approach to developing picturebook content that provides hope while also aiming to realistically manage children's expectations.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

6.1. Overview

Criminological literature shows that the criminal justice system negatively impacts children and their families when a loved one experiences incarceration. Moreover, this literature also shows that caregivers often struggle to speak with children about the experience of parental incarceration or substance use (Manby et al., 2015; Smyke, Bailey & Zeanah, 2017). While cultural studies literature outlines the potential for picturebooks to act as one of children's first sources of knowledge about these topics and experiences, no research to my knowledge other than Reimer's study (2019) has explored the role of children's picturebooks on the topic of parental incarceration or substance use. This thesis has helped to fill this gap in research and builds upon the existing knowledge related to the content that is presented to young children in picturebooks and which is intended to help them cope when their parent uses substances or experiences incarceration.

Using a combination of methodological approaches, including thematic narrative analysis, techniques of visual criminology and autoethnography, I found that the picturebooks in the present dataset contain two overarching narratives, which I have described as responsibilizing and hopeful narratives. Within each narrative, I found multiple subthemes or narrative threads which further represent how the textual and visual content in the books function together to provide children with hope that their situation will get better, and to promote a general sense of faith and trust in the criminal justice system to produce favourable outcomes for families.

Within the narrative of responsibilization, I found two key thematic findings. The first thematic finding contains two subthemes which function together as narrative threads to send the message to children: "it's not your fault, it's your parents." Notably, the subthemes represented in this thematic finding send the message to children that they are not at fault for their parent's

incarceration or addiction and they deserve to move through the range of emotions that come with such a traumatic experience. However, the books also send textual and visual messages to remind children of their responsibility to "say no" to drugs and crime, and in some cases, the books even remind children of their responsibility to stay vigilant and police rule-breaking behaviours on the playground and crime in their communities. A final thematic finding relates to the concept of parentification as in all but one of the books, children were depicted as assuming responsibility for their incarcerated parent's emotional experience on the inside or their remaining parent's emotional experience on the outside, as having a responsibility to caretake for the family in the incarcerated parent's absence, and even as carrying the burden of trying to help lift the family member out of their addiction.

By emphasizing a narrative of hope, including the idea that prisons "work", I found that the books in the dataset fail to adequately manage children's expectations when their parent experiences addiction or incarceration and that this narrative problematically accepts the existing system of punishment and imprisonment as it is. Particularly, the books in this dataset fail to manage children's expectations when their experiences related to parental addiction and incarceration are marked by mental illness, poverty and systemic racism. There is no representation of mental illness as a factor that affects criminalization in the books, and the text and images remain generally ambiguous with regard to class. While one book depicts the experience of a young Black boy whose mother is incarcerated, the book fails to expand on the unique experiences that Black children may face in these circumstances. Four of the seven books (57%) present an explicit fairy tale-like ending that aims to reassure children that once they get through the challenges related to their parent's incarceration or substance use, their lives can return to normal. The reality of relapse, mental illness and the various barriers to re-entry remain unrepresented among the narratives

included in the dataset. Future picturebooks should aim to strike a balance between providing hope and managing realistic expectations for children in these circumstances.

It is important to note that some concepts discussed in Chapter 3 were not mobilized to their full extent in the analysis. This includes, for example, the concept of affects, feeling rules, and otherness. There were many concepts I grew interested in as I read for the literature review and theoretical framework for this study, and while I was initially very interested in many different concepts including Hochschild's concept of feeling rules, this became less important to the current study as I engaged with the data and other concepts such as anthropomorphism, visuality, and countervisuality felt more relevant to my research questions. Some of these concepts, including feeling rules, may be better mobilized in a study that explores how children respond to these books and which considers how they seek to manage the experience of parental incarceration.

6.2. Research Contributions and Limitations

This thesis contributes to the literature in public criminology and cultural studies as it explores how picturebooks function as communication tools to introduce and sensitize children to the concepts of criminalization, imprisonment and substance use. Importantly, the picturebooks included in this study, along with other genres of children's literature, are not just about communicating with children who experience parental incarceration or substance use. Such books are also useful communication tools for a wider audience, including children with very different life experiences and no direct or personal connection to the topic of parental incarceration or substance use. Indeed, as Reimer's (2019) research shows, picturebooks about parental incarceration and substance use can serve as useful tools to help other children develop sympathy and empathy toward children with incarcerated or addicted parents, as well as to help caregivers and educators introduce children to these topics.

This thesis also contributes to the bodies of literature that mobilize thematic narrative analysis, techniques of visual criminology and autoethnography, demonstrating how these methodological approaches can function together within a shared theoretical framework. In this study, these three methods complemented each other well as they share similar ontological and epistemological positions as they are rooted in arts-based methods that interrogate how representation through narrative, including text and images, is intricately bound to our experiences.

As a case-centred approach, narrative analysis allowed me to more deeply analyse a small sample of material. Specifically, the thematic approach to narrative analysis allowed me to focus on the general content of the books in the dataset. It positioned me to view language as a resource rather than the specific topic of investigation, as would be the case in the structural narrative analysis tradition. Ultimately, mobilizing thematic narrative analysis allowed me to examine what was said in the books rather than the finer details related to how it was linguistically written.

While there is a growing tradition in narrative analysis that focuses on visual narratives, I found visual criminology a more useful complement to thematic narrative analysis as it maintains a sharp focus on criminological concepts in relation to visual imagery. Indeed, mobilizing visual criminology allowed me to examine the imagery in the books and to holistically consider how the interplay between text and images constituted the broader thematic narratives. Specifically, through the use of concepts such as ‘visuality’ and ‘countervisuality’, I was able to consider how images and media are used to communicate and share knowledge about criminalization and imprisonment. Since these concepts are about unseeing as much as they are about seeing, they also helped me to consider not only what the books were saying, but also what they were not saying, and how such important information that is absent from the book’s messaging contributes to shaping specific narratives.

By incorporating autoethnography, I sought to contribute to a growing body of literature in criminology that acknowledges and values the role of emotion and subjectivity in shaping and informing research. This approach was an especially helpful supplement to thematic narrative analysis and visual criminology as my primary methods as it provided a useful method through which I could incorporate autoethnographic reflections throughout this thesis to better identify how the analysis was shaped by my lived experience as a child of a former prisoner and drug user. Indeed, it created space for personal and honest reflections in my analysis related to how the narratives in the dataset resonated or not with my lived experience. It also helped give voice to my inner child who did not always feel safe to share her experiences. I hope this approach can inspire future researchers who may share these experiences to trust their insights as valuable.

My analysis of the children's picturebooks included in this study shows that they have the potential to sensitize children to the emotional experiences they might encounter when a parent is incarcerated or living with addiction. However, it is important to put these picturebooks into context and remember that on a larger scale, they can have a limited impact on improving the plight of children with incarcerated parents. Community-based care and policy changes are also needed to relieve the pains associated with parental incarceration and to reduce the frequency in which families experience criminalization and imprisonment in the long term. Kopak and Smith-Ruiz (2016) suggest that community programs should target those that are most likely to be affected by parental incarceration to offer social supports, including communities of Black children and children living in poverty, as well as considering the differential impacts children may face when they have a mother or father that goes to jail or uses substances (p. 109).

Indeed, policy-oriented approaches that take a harm reduction approach are needed to reduce the negative effects of parental incarceration. This can include shortening prison sentences

and introducing family-friendly prison policies and a welfare-oriented juvenile justice system (Kopak & Smith-Ruiz, 2016: p. 110). Such approaches have the potential to diminish the short-term pains and long-term transgenerational effect of parental incarceration on children (p. 109). While picturebooks can be useful communication tools for understanding and coping with the experience of parental incarceration and addiction, alone they are insufficient. Building partnerships and support groups within communities characterized by high rates of incarceration can go a long way in providing immediate services for children of incarcerated parents (Kopak & Smith-Ruiz, 2016: p. 110). Policy changes must also address the detrimental impact of imprisonment on families, and particularly on marginalized families, including Black and Indigenous families (p. 110).

6.3. Future Directions

As the intended audience for the current dataset is children under the age of ten, it is important to acknowledge that it is more likely that more complex issues such as relapse and mental illness would be dealt with in books for adolescents. I acknowledge that literature for adolescents on the topics of addiction, criminalization, and imprisonment may better nuance the realities of these issues and experiences and address some of the limitations of my study, but it is my hope that future authors of picturebooks for young children can also find ways to have conversations around how mental illness, addiction, race, gender, and class can impact the experience of criminalization and imprisonment for both the parent and the child.

I encourage other researchers to take this up as an area for future study. Frigon's children's books (2010; 2016) published in French may be a good place to start as they allude to the challenges associated with release and re-entry, which is one of the main criticisms resulting from this study on the existing literature on these topics for children under the age of ten. Future

directions in children's picturebook research on the topics of parental incarceration and substance use may also want to follow Reimer's (2019) lead and consider collaborating with children and their families in the research process. Indeed, important next steps in picturebook research involve attempting to craft narratives that can better nuance these conversations while working with children and families in the process to further explore how these books are used as communication tools and to consider what narratives are useful or not to those that are reading and using them.

This thesis may also be of interest to frontline practitioners and service providers, such as social workers who work with children of incarcerated parents, in order to further explore how these stakeholders and knowledge users respond to the images and texts in the books, or to further understand their experiences attempting to use these tools to communicate with children on the topic of parental substance use and incarceration. As this study was limited to books that were produced in the Western context, it would be beneficial for future researchers to study picturebooks written and published in non-Western contexts to understand the similarities and differences that exist in how children's experiences are represented and shared with young readers.

Finally, in light of the need for more community-based services and alternatives to incarceration, I encourage future researchers to take up the task of exploring how content related to community-based care and alternatives to incarceration—including prison abolition—can be communicated to young children. Notably, these books may serve a different purpose from the current dataset in that they may not necessarily be intended to help children cope when they have a parent who experiences incarceration. Rather, they may serve as useful tools for parents or early childhood educators to raise a future generation of adults and decision-makers to think about concepts such as criminalization, imprisonment, harm, accountability, and wellbeing differently.

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