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Paddington and the Portrayal of Refugees: An Application of Narrative Theory

Abstract

In 2014, the European Migrant Crisis was at its peak and citizens of the world wondered how to handle such a large number of refugees. Media of various types commented on the crisis, including a children's film called *Paddington*. The purpose of this research is to determine the way that *Paddington* portrays refugees and apply Fisher's narrative theory in order to understand the narrative coherence and fidelity of the story told in the film. I watched the film and took note of the ways the experiences of the main character, Paddington, are similar to the experiences of refugees. Using this information, I determined the elements of the film's narrative that reinforced or challenged the refugee narrative told in the world during the crisis and today. Understanding the ways that narratives like *Paddington* can apply to our everyday lives is an essential part of learning how to communicate with our communities about the most important issues in our world.

Introduction

Currently, there are 68.5 million refugees that are are forcibly displaced, according to the United Nations. The year 2014 marked the peak of the European Migrant Crisis, which was characterized by a mass influx of people from predominantly Muslim countries in the Middle East and Africa. This was the setting in which *Paddington*, a children's film about a migrant bear, was released into American theaters. Most critics agree that *Paddington* tells a story similar to that of refugees, and therefore serves as political commentary in a form that is accessible to children (Leslie). Because the ways in which individuals and groups are portrayed in media

make a difference in the way people perceive those people or groups in their everyday lives (De Coninck), it is important to understand narratives like *Paddington*.

Paddington is a story about a young Peruvian bear, Paddington, who travels to London in search of a new home after his home is destroyed by an earthquake. He is taken in by a middle-class family, and the movie follows Paddington and as he navigates life in a new, foreign place. The bear faces prejudice, poverty, loneliness, and constant barriers to success while he embarks on his journey to find a long lost family member and a new home. Paddington's journey serves as a reflection of some struggles that refugees face globally every day (Leslie).

The solution for the problem and the answer to the question of how to handle the influx of people into Europe was highly controversial at the time of *Paddington*'s release. A study of news coverage in eight European countries during the refugee crisis revealed that news coverage largely perpetuated the idea that refugees are political, social, and historical actors, which kept them out of our "communities of belonging" (Chouliaraki, Lilie, Zaborowski). Another study found that media in the United Kingdom constructed refugees as "tragic victims, an out-of-control mass, pests, or potential invaders" (Baker and McEnery).

Because we understand that media influences our opinions of refugees and immigrants, it is important that we consider the ways in which refugees are portrayed in many types of media beyond news coverage— even in a harmless children's movie such as *Paddington*.

Understanding the messages that we are being sent daily and the ways in which we are persuaded helps us understand ourselves and how our opinions are formed. Especially when human lives and wellbeing are at stake, it is crucial to examine the narratives of marginalized groups in order to bring us closer to self-awareness and awareness of the experiences of others.

Through performing a textual analysis, we can examine how children's' media portrays social justice issues by looking at *Paddington* and its portrayal of refugees as an example. We will look at the context of the story and the discourse surrounding migrants and refugees at the time of the film's release. Then, we can then assess the narrative coherence and fidelity of *Paddington*'s portrayal compared to these portrayals using narrative theory.

Literature Review

Walter Fisher is an American rhetorical scholar who created narrative theory in order to describe the importance of narratives in creating social reality and meaning. What became known as Fisher's Narrative Paradigm includes four baseline assumptions: First, humans are natural storytellers. Next, humans make decisions based on good reasons. Third, those good reasons are based on history, biography, culture, and character. Last, and most key to this analysis, rationality is determined by the narrative's coherence and fidelity, as well as humans' nature as storytelling beings. At the heart of narrative theory is the idea that humans communicate naturally through narrative, and stories give meanings to experiences and draw people into communities.

Narrative coherence refers to the probability that the narrative could actually happen. Humans choose to believe a story partly because they judge it to make sense. This can include character behavior, plot, and realism. Narrative fidelity, however, has to do with how a story fits into an audience's beliefs or worldview. An audience is more likely to internalize a narrative if it resonates with individuals' beliefs and experiences. Humans judge narrative fidelity and coherence in every aspect of life, whether the narrative comes from a friend, from the news, or

from a movie. In order to understand the narrative of refugees portrayed in *Paddington*, we must understand the narrative of refugees portrayed in other media.

Europe's refugee crisis has captured the attention of various news networks globally and many media organizations have sustained coverage of refugees and their families over the past three or more years. Several studies have focused on the portrayal of refugees in news coverage with differing scopes. Refugees often emerge in news coverage as a faceless mass and are referred to as an "influx" or "flood" (Lams 119). Lams also found that migrants are "overwhelmingly collectivized and positioned in a negative passive role with little agency" (119), but this view may have something to do with political alignment. A similar study found that anti-immigrant bias and content bias were strongest in areas where there was more right-wing populist communication, but this media had influence in areas even where it was not abundant (Wirz, 505). Additionally, in areas where populism is combined with right-wing ideologies, "foreigners are excluded from the people, and immigrants are blamed for the people's problems" (498). However, the messages communicated in the news are not the only factor that influence attitudes. The medium in which people habitually consume news affects their attitudes as well (De Coninck 403). Citizens who read quality online newspapers and highly trust television and radio tend to have more positive attitudes of both immigrants and refugees. However, citizens who watch cable television and read popular newspapers tend to have more negative attitudes of both immigrants and refugees (415). Attitudes towards this group are also reflected in the percentage of quotes by migrants or refugees in news coverage (Chouliaraki). The percentage of quotes by migrants or refugees varies widely according to the standing of the group in relation to the society (621). Quotes by refugees or migrants increased 4% following a

famous migrant death and the tone of the reporting shifted to focus more on humanitarian aspects. Then, there was a drop to 12% after the 2015 Paris terrorist attacks, which nearly silenced the refugee voice “who had, by now, shifted position from victim to terrorist” (620).

On an interpersonal level, many narratives portrayed in news coverage seek justification for refugees’ actions. British citizens admit to ignorance (Leudar 202), feeling social responsibility (203), expressing overt prejudices (200), and questioning the motives of refugees (201). Despite the attitude that refugees are “just here so they can get their... money, housing, blah blah, send them back” (201), many refugees articulated having dreams or plans to return to their country of origin simply because they have a connection to the land itself and not for economic reasons (Bilge 138). Factors that influence refugees’ attitudes to stay in their new environment include the relationships between the groups that coexist in the new environment and the perceived similarities (traditions and values) and commonalities (language and religion) between those groups (Bilge 140). However, one study found that asking a person “where are you from?” contributes to that person’s feelings of being an outsider or “the other” (Hatoss 48). Their response gives clues to how they may be structuring their own identity in their new environment (54, 56).

If we look beyond the portrayal of refugees in print news, we see that the portrayal of refugees in visual media is critical to initiating conversation and debate about issues like the European Migrant Crisis. For example, showing refugee children in photographs has massive effects on the public’s perception of migrants and their families, including the legitimization of migrant humanity and border crossing (Cmeciu 90). The most effective portrayals of refugees in stirring an emotional reaction include a focus on individuals rather than portraying them in a

large group (90). In fact, visual elements such as portraying the “migrant father, relation between children and barriers, visual oxymoron...and atmosphere” in photographs encourage identification with refugees (Kedra 37). Specifically, showing children and accompanying male adults legitimizes the refugee experience.

While many photos perpetuate the narrative of refugees as “pollutants and terrorists,” photos can also further the narrative that refugees are “skilled, normalized, and ideologically American” (Perreault 79). Refugees are most normalized when they are depicted looking directly into the camera in a steady, powerful position, and surrounded by mundane objects in their own living quarters. This depiction coupled with showing refugees using common, non specific language about widely-shared interests, this encourages maximum identification between the subject and the viewer (91).

However, some argue that the people’s overexposure to these types of images causes compassion fatigue, and “the flows of images create a routine that normalizes such depictions and diminishes people’s interests in them” (Kedra 42).

A medium more important to this research that builds on the attitudes generated by news and photos is films. Igartua notes that films are particularly effective in reducing negative attitudes towards stigmatized groups (Iguarta 168). Identification is highly important because it generates empathy which contributes to positive attitude change, but it was limited in producing empathy with highly prejudiced previous views (168). This study measured the attitudes of elementary school children. In 2010, Igartua performed a similar study which measured the attitude change of adults when shown a film about a controversial topic dealing with social justice. However, identification with the characters in the film yields positive attitudes and

beliefs in only some groups (Igartua 6). Political self-positioning plays a role in the effectiveness of persuasion by this medium (9).

Narrative theory acknowledges the importance of storytelling in helping humans make sense of the world, and narratives “bring attention to what a society sees as reasonable and appropriate. The researcher using narrative theory explores settings, characters, narrators, heroes and themes,” or the elements that create a narrative frame (Perreault 85). While narrative theory can be applied to look at the narrative frame of all portrayals of refugees, it may be especially useful in *Paddington* to determine the ideologies behind the film’s portrayal.

Methods

For this research paper, I executed a textual analysis of the 2014 movie *Paddington* using Fisher’s narrative paradigm in order to determine the film’s portrayal of refugees. Narrative theory allows me to take a close look at the narrative coherence and fidelity of the refugee experience in the film. I have chosen this film because it was released in 2014 at the height of the European Migrant Crisis and serves as political commentary as to how refugees should be treated in modern society (Leslie). Because we know that media portrayal of refugees affects attitudes towards them (De Coninck), understanding the portrayal of the refugee experience in *Paddington*, a children’s movie, is essential if we are to understand the messages children are being sent about these issues kinds of issues.

I watched the film once via Netflix, taking careful notes on aspects of the refugee experience that are present in the film and also in other portrayals outlined in the literature review. These include: What words were used to describe Paddington? (Leslie). How do people react to Paddington’s presence and actions? (Leudar). What barriers to success does Paddington

face? (Leslie). In what ways is Paddington kept out of the “community of belonging”? (Chouliaraki, Lilie, Zaborowski) Are Paddington and others of his species portrayed as “tragic victims, an out-of-control mass, pests, or potential invaders”? (Baker and McEnery). Likewise, are Paddington and others of his species portrayed as a faceless mass or referred to as an “influx” or “flood”? (Lams 119). Does Paddington play a passive role in his situation? (Lams 119). Does Paddington dream of returning to his country? For what reasons? (Bilge 138). How does Paddington respond when people ask where he is from? (Hatoss).

One aspect of Fisher’s narrative paradigm that is crucial to examine is the concept of narrative coherence, which asks, “does this story make sense?” I determined the coherence of the refugee narrative portrayed in the film by answering the questions, “are the plot and characters in the story believable?” “Do the characters behave in a consistent manner?” “Do all of the parts of the story fit together?” (Eaves and Savoie). I provided information for why or why not I believe these questions to be affirmative or negative.

Narrative fidelity is another aspect of Fisher’s narrative paradigm which describes the tendency of an audience to accept a story if the story resonates with the audience’s values or beliefs. I determined the fidelity of the refugee narrative portrayed in the film by answering the questions, “who is the intended audience of this film?” “What are the attitudes and beliefs of people regarding refugees at this time period?” “What about the audience would make them inclined to believe this story?” “Is this portrayal consistent with other portrayals?”

Once I collected this data, I drew conclusions about the implications of these findings according to Fisher’s ideas about storytelling, meaning making, and social reality. Further, I explained implications of these findings using Fisher’s theory that a story is more likely to

influence human beliefs and actions when humans judge the story to have both coherence and fidelity.

Analysis

News networks today use many names to describe refugees, which can affect viewers' perception of them (De Coninck). What words were used to describe Paddington? Throughout the film, characters who think positively of Paddington call him by his name. Characters who think negatively of Paddington routinely refer to him as just "bear." However, this is an indicator of attitude change towards Paddington, especially in Henry Brown, the father of the Brown family. Viewers can sense Mr. Brown's warming attitude towards Paddington throughout the film, as he calls Paddington "bear" less and less. We can see the humanization of Paddington through Mr. Brown's eyes in this way. However, the neighbor, Mr. Curry, who is opposed to Paddington's presence calls him even worse names, refers to him as an "unsavory character," a "most unpleasant creature," and a "furry menace." This is a distancing mechanism used by these men to disassociate themselves with Paddington, and the same mechanism is familiar to viewers because it is used widely in reference to refugees today. Because we recognize this from what we see in the news, this aspect of the film plays into narrative coherence.

The characters' reactions to Paddington's presence may also resonate with viewers because, perhaps, viewers would react the same ways to a refugee in their lives. For example, when the Brown family first saw Paddington alone on a train platform, Mr. Brown huddled his family close and said "stranger danger. Keep your eyes down, there's some sort of bear over there. Probably selling something." When Mrs. Brown approached him and said hello, Mr.

Brown seemed bewildered. When Mrs. Brown said they would help Paddington, Mr. Brown looked shocked and angry. She said it was “no trouble at all.” This incident reflects vastly different attitudes and assumptions that people may have towards refugees in reality.

Additionally, the grandmother of the family did not flinch at all when Jonathan, the son of Mr. Brown, told her they found a bear in the train station. This could be because she is a product of a different time, where people were not so afraid of bears (refugees). Judy, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Brown, asks Jonathan not to say anything about Paddington at school, because “everyone thinks we’re weird enough without the bear.” Because these are, perhaps, reasonable and familiar ways to react to a refugee, the family’s reactions play into narrative coherence.

As a migrant in a new country, there are many potential barriers to success. *Paddington* portrays a few that draw attention to problems refugees may have faced in Europe in 2014. For example, Paddington is unable to find the name and location of the man who promised his family “a warm welcome” in London because the records of the man were destroyed. Additionally, Paddington often can’t get the help he needs because the Brown family repeatedly think he is lying about his experiences and problems, although he never is. When Paddington was almost kidnapped, but did not have the vocabulary to convey what happened to him, Mr. Brown later told his wife “the worst part is that he won’t even tell us the truth. How can he live with us if we can’t even trust him?...this house just isn’t the place for a bear.” Because language barriers, distrust, and lack of proper documentation are not only problems for a bear, but historically for many refugees seeking a new home, these issues enhance the coherence of the narrative.

Chouliaraki, Lilie, and Zaborowski discuss the ways in which refugees have difficulties settling into new homes because they are kept out of “communities of belonging.” *Paddington*,

too, experiences this. When the Brown family first encounters Paddington, Mrs. Brown goes to find somebody who would be able to help him. However, when she returns and suggests to Mr. Brown that they let Paddington stay with them overnight, Mr. Brown resists. His excuse is “he’s not our responsibility.” Mr. Brown excuses them from caring about Paddington because he is not like the Browns. Later in the film, a taxidermist who is hunting Paddington asks the taxi driver who brought Paddington home with the Browns about him, saying “you must get a lot of strange customers in here” The taxi driver replies, “you don’t know the half of it. I’ve had bishops, magicians, bears, contortionists.” Here, the taxi driver groups Paddington with other outcasts in society. When viewers see these things happening to Paddington, they are likely more inclined to believe the narrative because perhaps they, too, have been treated as an outsider. This is an example of how persuasive storytelling can be because of humans’ nature as storytellers.

The film *Paddington* even nods to common representations of refugees portrayed in the media, such as their portrayal as “tragic victims, an out-of-control mass, pests, or potential invaders” (Baker and McEnery). The characters’ opinion of Paddington as a pest, invader, or out-of-control is evident in their reactions to him. For example, when Paddington overflows a bathroom in the Brown household, causing damage, Mr. Brown says, “that animal is going straight to the authorities!...I’m not putting this family in danger while you go on some wild goose chase [to find a non-existent explorer]. First thing tomorrow, that bear is out of here.” Clearly, Mr. Brown sees Paddington as a threat at this point in the film.

Another example is the neighbor Mr. Curry’s response when he first saw Paddington with the Browns. He says, “a bit of a racket coming from your way last night.” Jonathan says, “this is Paddington. He’s a bear!” Mr. Curry responds, “I can see that. He must be a long way from

home.” Mr. Brown says, “don’t worry Mr. Curry, he’s going.” “Just as well, then. Don’t want to be kept up by any of your loud jungle music.” Here, we can see how Mr. Curry has stereotyped Paddington as a pest based on assumptions he has about Peruvian bears. Because viewers will recognize these depictions and stereotypes of refugees from their news consumption, the narrative in *Paddington* is more believable.

Similarly, another familiar depiction is showing refugees as a faceless mass or referring to them as an “influx” or “flood.” Media often show refugees in boats, paddling towards safety (Lams). In the film, one scene shows Paddington and his aunt paddling in a small canoe down a long river until they reach a harbor where a crane was loading cargo onto a barge. Then, Paddington stows away inside a lifeboat on the barge, where he makes the trip from Peru to London. Also, in a more obvious example, Paddington floods the bathroom in the Brown family’s home and a wave of water comes cascading down the stairs with Paddington riding the bathtub as a boat. Lams claims this depiction of refugees as a wave dehumanizes them, but this film’s depiction uses it more as a way to emphasize how overwhelming Paddington was. This scene makes a salient point: people expect migrants entering a country to be as chaotic as a bear staying in their home.

Paddington attempts to comment on the agency of refugees in a situation where many perceive them as passive. Paddington is portrayed as a passive actor in his situation at times, which we can see in his dependence on the Browns to help him find a home. However, he does take an active role in searching for the explorer, helping others, doing good deeds, and teaching the Browns new things. His agency in the film helps characterize refugees as being somewhat out of control, but desperate to prove they are capable and willing to act. This portrayal may be

more persuasive to viewers because so many other aspects of the film are coherent to them, echoing Fisher's theory that narrative coherence helps determine the rationality of a message.

Bilge addresses the misconception that refugees want to settle in new places permanently, saying that most dream of returning to their countries of origin. Paddington does express missing his country, but it mostly has to do with his struggle to adapt to life in London. We learn this through a letter he wrote to his aunt, who is still in Peru. He writes, "I do miss our old home, although I'm beginning to understand life in London. The Browns are a curious tribe, but I rather like them... I'm actually beginning to feel at home here." Bilge suggests that the factors that influence refugees' decision to stay in their new environment include the health of their relationship to the groups that exist there, or the perceived similarities they have with the groups (140). Paddington's words reflect the importance of this relationship exactly. Because this situation echoes Bilge's research, the narrative is more believable to viewers.

Another way of gauging Paddington's attitude and feelings about his situation is by assessing his response when asked where he is from. Paddington is only asked this question once, and he says, "I'm from Darkest Peru!" What is important about this is that once Paddington says this, the neighbor Mr. Curry makes assumptions about Paddington being "the other," as Hatoss's study predicts (48). Additionally, Paddington's response could suggest that he has not settled in to life in London, according to Hatoss (54, 56) which is logical given that this conversation happened shortly after Paddington's arrival.

It is important to note how characters' opinions of Paddington differ when he is portrayed on his own versus accompanied by others, because we see these different portrayals of refugees in media in our everyday lives. For example, when Paddington overhears a conversation

between Mr. and Mrs. Brown where they say that it might be better if Paddington leaves, he leaves on his own. For a while, he is invited to stand next to an English guard under his shelter as a display of community. As Paddington stands there beside the guard, he seems respectable. If a guard allows him to stand by his side, it seems that everybody should. However, when the shift changes and another guard comes, the guard kicks Paddington out in the rain. He sleeps on a bench, looking helpless and pitiful. Kedra's research draws attention to how the depiction of migrant children next to fathers or other authority figures increases audience identification with them. When viewers identify with a character, they are more likely to be persuaded by the story they are telling.

An important way that *Paddington* bolsters narrative coherence is by portraying other experiences that are historically common for refugees to experience. Because Fisher claims that humans make decisions about people and things for good reasons, one of which being history, this is a persuasive way to make a point about refugees.

For example, refugees are displaced because their homes are no longer safe to live in. Likewise, Paddington came to London because his home was destroyed by an earthquake and killed his uncle who took care of him. Also, Paddington came to London in hopes of finding an explorer who might give him a home, but factors out of Paddington's control kept him from finding the explorer. Eventually, after many days of searching, Paddington found out that the explorer had died, and the home he was promised was no longer an option for him.

Another common experience Paddington had that refugees commonly experience is a language barrier. For example, shortly after the Browns meet Paddington, Mr. Brown says "what's your name? Do bears even have names?" Paddington pronounces his name, roaring like

a bear, and then urges Mr. Brown to try it. When Mr. Brown growls but apparently fails to pronounce it, Paddington says “Mr. Brown. That is extremely rude.” Consequently, the Browns give Paddington an English name, one that is easier for them to understand and pronounce.

Another problem that Paddington runs into is the different social norms in London. For example, Paddington licks Judy’s face when she says she needs to wash it and he doesn’t understand why she gets angry.

Problems with law enforcement are also common among refugees. When Mrs. Brown files a missing persons report and she describes Paddington by his height and the clothes he wears, the officer is attentive. Once she mentions that he is a bear, however, the officer looks up and says “there’s not much to go on.”

Lastly, people take advantage of Paddington because they know he is unfamiliar with his surroundings. For example, a taxi driver takes an extra long route so that he could charge him extra money. He says, “the young bear said it was his first time in London. I took him to see the sights! I should have charged more!”

Through many examples, we have seen ways that elements of *Paddington* have narrative coherence. However, as a whole, we must assess if the plot and characters are believable to determine the narrative coherence of the whole film. It may be difficult to say that a story about a talking bear becoming a part of an English family is believable, but at a baseline level, it is. If one looks at the story as one of a family mercifully taking in a migrant child, it is believable because we have heard similar stories in our lives. After all, *Paddington* was inspired by the treatment and depiction of child refugees in World War II (Byrne).

Additionally, the characters behave consistently, which is another indicator of narrative coherence. They are true to the personalities that were apparent when the characters were first introduced. Even though some attitudes, like Mr. Brown's, about Paddington changed drastically throughout the film, their attitude change happens gradually. Mr. Brown even reverts to his old attitude when a crisis happened, which makes his final attitude change more believable and realistic.

The parts of the story fit together logically in a plot that is easy to follow. This film is intentionally simplistic in plot because it is designed for children to enjoy. This may be the most important aspect of the film, because according to Fisher's theory, we know that stories are an especially effective way to communicate messages. If the goal of *Paddington* is to comment on the way our society should act towards refugees, a good story is the best way to do it.

Although narrative fidelity depends on an individual viewer's beliefs, we can draw conclusions about the narrative fidelity of the film based on the intended audience and their attitudes and beliefs towards refugees in this time period.

The intended audience of this film is children, but moviemakers know that parents will also be watching. The references to refugees in World War II will not be recognizable to children, but they will be evident to adults. For example, Paddington's aunt gave Paddington some reassurance as he boarded the lifeboat that took him to London. She said, "you know, there was once a war in the explorer's country. Thousands of children were sent away for safety, left at railway stations with labels around their necks. And unknown families took them in and loved them like their own. They will not have forgotten how to treat a stranger." Parents who

remember refugees in World War II may be more readily accepting of this story because it would have narrative fidelity to them.

Another aspect that helps determine narrative fidelity among *Paddington*'s audience is the context in which the film was released in 2014. The European Migrant Crisis was fresh on the people's minds at this time. News outlets showed images of refugees with commentary for hours a day (Perreault). People were scared of what effect the influx of foreign people would have on their communities. This attitude is well reflected in a conversation between the taxidermist and the neighbor in *Paddington*. The taxidermist begins, saying "I can see why having that beast next door would upset you so." Neighbor: "I suppose I should be grateful that it's only one bear." Taxidermist: "Oh but it always starts with just one, Mr. Curry. Soon, the whole street will be crawling with them. Drains clogged with fur, buns thrown at old ladies. Raucous. All night picnics." Neighbor: "what can we do?" Taxidermist: "I have certain connections. If I can get a hold of the bear, I can see that he's sent where he belongs, no questions asked." This moment in the movie will increase narrative fidelity in people who were more fearful of refugees during this time.

However, whether viewers find narrative fidelity in the more historical standpoint or the more fearful standpoint, a strength of *Paddington* in regards to narrative fidelity is that American viewers of this film might identify with the Brown family. They are a white, middle-class family who have a comfortable, yet hectic life. They aim to put their children first and reduce risk in any way possible. If the Browns could take in a bear and love him as their own, could any other family take in a child in need?

Lastly, in order to determine narrative fidelity, we must ask, is this portrayal consistent

with other portrayals? As reflected in the questions above, *Paddington* has many aspects of the refugee experience and the feelings of people who interact with refugees documented in this film. As outlined in the literature review, news outlets may portray refugees in a different light than *Paddington* does, but the topics portrayed are consistent.

Discussion

Understanding the content of the narrative as well as its coherence and fidelity helps us to understand why *Paddington* can be a persuasive portrayal of refugees. According to Fisher, when humans judge a story to have both coherence and fidelity, we are more inclined to believe the messages it is sending. In this case, that message is that everybody is worthy of a home and worthy of love. Mr. Brown says it best, exclaiming, “when I first met Paddington I wanted nothing to do with him. But my wonderful wife, she opened her heart to him, and so did my incredible children, and now I have too. It doesn’t matter that he comes from the other side of the world, or that he’s a different species... We love Paddington. And that makes him family. And families stick together!”

Making commentary on social justice issues accessible to many audiences is crucial in helping the public understand the issues we as a society face every day. Because humans are “storytelling animals” (Fisher,) we must understand the power of narratives in order to communicate most effectively about the issues that affect our global community.

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