

**AUTHORSHIP AS ASSEMBLAGE:  
MULTIMODAL LITERACIES OF  
PLAY, LITERATURE, AND DRAMA**

**by**

**Kari-Lynn Winters**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**in**

**THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
(Language and Literacy Education)**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**

**(Vancouver)**

**December 2009**

© Kari-Lynn Winters, 2009

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis draws on Social Symbolic Mediation Theory, Social Semiotics, and Discursive Positioning Theories to explore a theoretical model I call “Authorship as Assemblage.” This model considers authorship broadly; it posits that authors are “declared, hidden, or withdrawn” contributors of multimodal meanings who orchestrate an array of semiotic resources, social (inter)actions, and discursive positions within and across a variety of social contexts (Barthes, 1970, p. 110). A literature review and three case studies suggest some of the ways multimodal authorship can be theorized and explored within and across social contexts, including a child’s out-of-school environments, during professional picturebook-making collaboration, and in a summer camp where youth explore playbuilding. By considering authorship broadly, its significance in the multiple fields of study can be seen. Findings of the thesis include that authorship can not be thought of as a isolated or stable phenomenon, for it is bound up with semiotic, social, and critical meanings that interrelate with and interanimate each other.

## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
List of Tables .....	v
List of Figures.....	vi
Acknowledgements.....	vii
1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Identification of the Problem .....	1
1.2 Purpose of Study.....	2
1.3 Theoretical Frame.....	4
1.4 Authorship as Assemblage: Building on Four Premises .....	5
1.5 Quilt-making as a Metaphor for Authorship .....	7
1.6 Themes and Definitions.....	11
1.7 Method of Research: The Structure of the Dissertation .....	14
1.8 Analyses.....	15
1.8.1 Elements of the Multimodality Analysis Frame .....	16
1.9 Methodology.....	19
1.10 Significance of Study.....	21
2 Literature Review .....	22
2.1 Perspectives That Have Informed Multimodal Literacy .....	23
2.1.1 Social-Symbolic Mediation Theories of Multimodality.....	24
2.1.2 Semiology, Semiotics, and Social Semiotic Theories of Multimodality .....	30
2.1.3 Semiotics.....	31
2.1.4 Discursive Positioning .....	37
2.2 Points of Inquiry .....	40
2.2.1 Authors Are Both Readers and Writers of Multimodal Meanings .....	42
2.2.2 Authors Use and Orchestrate a Multiplicity of Resources .....	42
2.2.3 Authors Shift among Social (Inter)Actions .....	45
2.2.4 Authorship Offers Multimodal Potentials for Positioning.....	50
2.3 Research Questions.....	52
2.4 Conclusion .....	52
3 Beyond Transmediation: A Case Illustration of a Child's Assembled Authorship.....	54
3.1 Purpose of the Study .....	54
3.2 Authorship in Out-of-School Contexts.....	56
3.3 The Study Context .....	57
3.4 Method.....	58
3.5 The Analysis Frame.....	59
3.6 The Study.....	61
3.7 Children Assemble a Multiplicity of Modes and Semiotic Resources .....	92
3.7.1 Children Position Themselves and Others within Discursive Practices .....	94
3.8 Conclusion .....	96
4 Authoring Picture Books: Assemblages of Modes, Semiotic Resources, Social (inter)actions....	98

4.1	Purpose of Study .....	98
4.2	Defining Picturebooks .....	101
4.3	Multimodal Theories of Picture Books.....	102
4.4	Assumptions about Picture Books .....	104
4.5	Background to the Study .....	106
4.6	Method.....	107
4.7	Data Analysis.....	109
4.1	Process Assemblages: Reader/Writer Relationships, Semiotic Resources, and Social (Inter)actions.....	111
4.2	Product Assemblages: Reader/Writer Relationships, Semiotic Resources, and Social (Inter)actions.....	123
4.3	Discussion.....	133
4.4	Conclusions.....	136
5	Playbuilding as Social and Multimodal Assemblage: Authorship and Authority .....	137
5.1	Purpose of the Study .....	137
5.2	The Authorship as Assemblage Theoretical Model.....	138
5.3	Defining Terms .....	139
5.4	Drama-Based Research with Children/Youth .....	141
5.5	Multimodality and Access .....	143
5.6	The Study.....	144
5.6.1	Study Context and Participants.....	145
5.6.2	Background to the Study .....	145
5.7	Data Sources .....	146
5.8	Method.....	146
5.8.1	Phase I.....	147
5.8.2	Phase II .....	148
5.8.3	Phase III .....	150
5.9	The Analysis Frame.....	151
5.10	Analyses of Four Discursive Events.....	154
5.11	Discussion.....	167
5.12	Conclusion .....	171
6	Conclusions: Assemblages of Authorship through Three Metaphors .....	173
6.1	I Remember .....	173
6.2	A Developing Perspective: Authorship as Assemblage .....	175
6.2.1	Three Visual Metaphors That Could Symbolize Authorship as Assemblage .....	175
6.3	Findings and Interpretations .....	185
6.3.1	Findings and Interpretations of Chapter 3: Leon's Loose Tooth.....	187
6.3.2	Findings and Interpretations of Chapter 4: The Making of <i>Jeffrey and Sloth</i> .....	189
6.3.3	Findings and Interpretations of Chapter 5: Collaborative Playbuilding with Youth.....	191
6.4	Extending Current Theoretical and Analytic Frames of Multimodality.....	193
6.5	Implications .....	195
6.6	Another Piece in the Multimodality Quilt: Temporary Conclusions.....	197
	Appendix A: Analysis Frame for Multimodality.....	200
	Appendix B: Example of Data Analysis For Old Ships .....	203
	References.....	204

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Analysis Frame for Multimodality .....	16
Table 3.1: Analysis Frame for Multimodality .....	60
Table 4.1: Analysis Frame for Multimodality .....	109
Table 5.1: Analysis Frame for Multimodality .....	152

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Quilt.....	8
Figure 3.1: Leon’s Map.....	67
Figure 3.2: Letter to the Tooth Fairy .....	71
Figure 3.3: Semiotic Potential of Leon’s Letter to the Tooth Fairy.....	74
Figure 3.4: Letter From the Tooth Fairy .....	77
Figure 3.5: A Gleeeful Tune.....	78
Figure 3.6: Comic Strip.....	81
Figure 3.7: Choosing a Movie Title, and Technical Features (e.g. setting, music).....	84
Figure 3.8: Choosing the actors .....	85
Figure 3.9 Choosing a Camera Angle.....	85
Figure 3.10: “[M]y tooth is loos[e]” .....	86
Figure 3.11: Did you hear about the gorilla? .....	87
Figure 3.12: “[I] am sad...” .....	88
Figure 3.13: “[I] want your tooth” .....	88
Figure 3.14: “I want my tooth back” .....	89
Figure 3.15: “[N]ow [I] will be sad”.....	90
Figure 4.1: Early Sketches of Jeffrey.....	116
Figure 4.2: Early Sketches of Sloth .....	117
Figure 4.3: Dummy Layout of <i>Jeffrey and Sloth</i> .....	121
Figure 4.4: Final Layout of <i>Jeffrey and Sloth</i> : pages 20-21 .....	125
Figure 4.5: Early Draft Layout of <i>Jeffrey and Sloth</i> : pages 20-21 .....	128
Figure 4.6: Final Draft Layout of <i>Jeffrey and Sloth</i> .....	129
Figure 4.7: Final Layout of <i>Jeffrey and Sloth</i> : Half Title page .....	132
Figure 4.8: Final Layout of <i>Jeffrey and Sloth</i> : Full Title page .....	132
Figure 5.1: Skits — Old Friends are Gold (Part 1) .....	158
Figure 5.2: Skits — Old Friends are Gold (Part II) Transcript.....	159
Figure 5.3: Sequenced Tableaux — When Friendships are Bad (Parts 1 & 2) .....	162
Figure 6.1 Visual Metaphor #1 — A Spiral Torus .....	176
Figure 6.2 Visual Metaphor #2 — Water Currents.....	179
Figure 6.3 Visual Metaphor #3 — A Quilt.....	183

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the contributions of the following individuals whose support and encouragement have enriched my experiences at UBC and have strengthened my authorship practices.

My Committee: Dr. Theresa Rogers, an extraordinary advisor who has guided me for nine years throughout my graduate programs, enabling me to find my voice and explore ideas that constantly inspire me. To you, Theresa, I am deeply grateful. Dr. Maureen Kendrick, an invaluable mentor who has encouraged me from the beginning of my time at UBC and who has been a constant pillar of support. Dr. Carl Leggo, whose creative identity encourages lived experiences of authorship in ways that interanimate my own worlds of authorship. Dr. Rob Tierney, whose wealth of knowledge in the field of literacy education and whose stories helped me to assemble this dissertation. Thank you.

The staff at Orca Book Publishers, who gave me permission to explore and discuss the creation of *Jeffrey and Sloth* (2007), and in particular Maggie de Vries and Ben Hodson, whose collaboration and creative contributions made chapter four what it is.

The Board of Directors and staff at the Kidsafe Project Society, who have supported my research and ideas for several years, and also the youth who let me observe them, interview them, and build plays with them.

My LLED department with its amazing professors and fantastic grad students, particularly Vetta, Marianne, Kim, Jodi, Lyndsay, Mia, Sarah, Jen, David, Anne Marie, Amanda, and Martin,, who welcomed theoretical and creative authorship discussions.

Jonah Winters, my incredible husband, and our children, whose love has sustained me.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

*We also have to reappraise given theories and develop new theories of explanation for events and practices, meanings and representations, on which [authors] call as they do their work of meaning-making in multiple situations of learning.* (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 24)

## 1.1 Identification of the Problem

Definitions of *authorship* have changed significantly over the last half century. Traditionally in the field of education, the term was used to denote the autonomous skills of knowing how to encode meaning through the printed mode. Later, definitions of authorship were rejuvenated to assume the producer of a published text, including those that were situated within specific domains of knowledge: authors in English classes might write poems, novels, essays; musicians in music classes might compose melodies through musical notation, and so forth. These more recent views also make assumptions that are problematic in today's integrated "information economy" (Luke & Carrington, 2002, p. 247). The assumptions seem to be that (1) authors are seen as merely *producers* of communicative signs; (2) modes of communication are stable and therefore can be categorized; (3) each mode of communication is mediated or realised by one primary social (inter)action (e.g., production) or one mode of representation (e.g., writing); and (4) authorship can be practiced in isolation, separate from the author's lived experiences and social worlds.

More recently, multimodal researchers have expanded definitions of authorship to include broader realms of multimodal communication and meaning-making (Dyson, 1997; Kress, 2003; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Siegel, 2006). For instance, Dyson argues that we need to "unhinge authorship from its narrow path" in order to foreground the "breadth of textual

landscapes” available and also to demonstrate that people are skilful users of meaningful symbols within social worlds (Dyson, 2001, p. 127). She and others (e.g., Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Kress, Jewitt, Ogborn, & Tsatsarelis, 2001; Kendrick, 2005; Pahl & Rowsell, 2005; Ranker, 2007; Rogers, Winters, La Monde, & Perry, 2010; Stein, 2008) are exploring broader landscapes of authorship in and beyond classrooms, including authorship that moves between modes (e.g., written, pictorial, photographed, spoken, embodied, filmed, sketched, painted, digitally-constructed). Their work shows that authorship, regardless of mode, is complex. It represents both the process of meaning-making and the traces that are left behind to be taken up by others. These researchers also demonstrate that authorship is intricately interconnected to thought, to the work of others, to the inherent resources of each mode, and to the purposes that each social context affords.

## 1.2 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to broaden notions of authorship by theorizing and researching an *Authorship as Assemblage* theoretical model, and then, through case studies, demonstrating some of its semiotic, social, and critical complexities. It is my belief that authors not only layer, interweave, hybridize, and embed multiple semiotic resources as they render meanings, but they also orchestrate an array of social relationships and inter(actions) during their authorship process, designing, negotiating, producing, and disseminating dynamic, complicated, and interwoven assemblages of meaning. In this model, authorship is always imbued with semiotic, social, and critical meanings, many of which are dynamic, continually in-process, and always interrelated.

Although recent multimodal theories and research provide useful terminology and important ideas about multimodal authorship (as demonstrated in chapter 2) — for example, articulating some of the ways that authorship is being produced through multimodality in our

expanding information economy — they still evoke questions about the sophistication of meaning making, questions that I hope to address in this dissertation. For example, at this unique time in history when participatory and integrated authorship practices are at the forefront of communication and modal boundaries are becoming even more blurred, in addition to asking the question “what modes are authors using to make sense of their worlds”, might we also consider how modes are being semiotically, socially, and critically interwoven, embedded, layered, and hybridized? Public speakers, for instance, draw on an array of resources such as vocal musicality, words, gestures, and facial expressions as they consider their social surroundings and their audiences, and at the same time they negotiate the discursive positions they will assume or how they will position others in order to determine the best way to convey their message. Authorship is profoundly complex. Authors simultaneously interweave, layer, embed, and hybridize these resources into a gallimaufry of meaning.

Research demonstrates that children have a tendency to sing, dance, and act out their understandings as they write stories (Dyson, 1997; Harste et al., 1984). Yet, their meaning-making is seldom linear. It is recursive, multidirectional, scrambled, and messy — and, most importantly, it is always complex. It seems to me that authors (regardless of the communicated content) are continuously assembling/reassembling semiotic resources, social (inter)actions, and discursive positions in order to communicate. If this is so, then perhaps it is time to reconsider linear perceptions of authorship. Is there a way to consider assemblages of semiotic, social, and critical resources together, including the ways that authors interweave, hybridize, embed, and layer available materials and resources, the ways they engage with social practices and their own situated environments, and the ways they structure their routines within discourses both in and across different contexts?

Even recent theories of multimodality may still be limited because they continue to

theorize modes “intersemiotically” as linear processes that authors follow (e.g., first he drafts an idea with a graphic organizer, next he writes the play, then he acts out the part with his partner). Alternatively, my Authorship as Assemblage model highlights the social, critical, and “intrasemiotic” ways that modes are mediated and communicated within concrete contexts (O’Halloran, 2004).

### 1.3 Theoretical Frame

People have always lived in a multimodal society where meanings were made through an array of semiotic modes. However, only within the last half century have these modes begun to be theorized and researched in the field of literacy. For example, Multimodal Discourse, Multimodal Literacies or Multimodal Pedagogies, Multiliteracies, Arts-Based Literacies, Drama in Education, Social Symbolic Mediation, New Literacy Studies, and Social Semiotics are some of the theories and research that challenge traditional views of authorship. Each demonstrates how complexities of meaning-making are shaped by multimodal discourse through social dynamics. Socially-constructed categorizations of knowledge have become more blurred (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Stein, 2008) and educational systems have, as a result, become more “multimodally integrative” (Fei, 2004).

In this dissertation, drawing upon the two multimodal perspectives *Social-Symbolic Mediation theories* (Bakhtin, 1981; Dyson, 1997; Vygotsky, 1979) and *Semiology, Semiotics and Social Semiotics theories* (Barthes, 1977; Halliday, 1979; Harste et al., 1984; Hodge & Kress, 1988; Kress, 2003; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2003; Peirce, 1940; Saussure, (1916/1974); Siegel, 1995), and then adding the third perspective *Discursive Positioning theories* (Davies & Harré, 1990; Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, Cain, 1998), I propose an Authorship as Assemblage theoretical model. I explore this through a literature review and several vignettes.

I chose these three interrelated theoretical perspectives because (1) multimodal literacy theories and research have proliferated over last half century, and using them all would be too much for a study of this scope, and (2) as Siegel and Panofsky (2009) proposed in their literature review of multimodality, perspectives chosen need to be located within contemporary discourses about literacies, diversities, and power so as to offer a full account of meaning-making and to “contribute to the reimagining and redesign of literacy education” (p. 22). These three perspectives, which I consider contemporary, not only contribute to ideas of literacy, diversity, and power, they also relate most closely to my topic of Authorship as Assemblage and to the broader question that I propose: How can we understand authorship as assemblage across and within diverse social contexts? How is meaning-making communicated through a myriad of semiotic and social layers and how does it position its authors within situated settings?

#### **1.4 Authorship as Assemblage: Building on Four Premises**

The Authorship as Assemblage model suggests four principles that undergird multimodal authorship:

- 1) Authors are both external and internal meaning-makers; they include any person who contributes meanings to texts whether they be “declared, hidden, or withdrawn” (Barthes, 1977, p. 110);
- 2) Within situational contexts authors use and orchestrate a multiplicity of modes that are made up of different semiotic resources;
- 3) Authors continually shift among the social (inter)actions of designing, negotiating, producing, and disseminating as they interpret and communicate meaning;

- 4) Inside discursive practices, authors create storylines and subject positions. These positions situate the authors themselves and the others within situated practices.

By demonstrating how this model can be taken up within situated social practices, I move this discussion from the theoretical to the practical realm. For example, below I compare quilt-making to narrative storytelling, hoping to demonstrate these four premises in action and explore, develop, and refine them throughout this dissertation. First, authorship — including the texts themselves (the quilt itself) and the active practices that were used to contribute to the meaning of the texts, “whether declared, hidden, or withdrawn” — applies to both the interpretation and the actualization of meaning. (Barthes 1977, pp. 110-11).<sup>1</sup> Second, within concrete contexts, authors move between and interweave/combine a multiplicity of modes (e.g., writing, reading, drawing, discussing) that are made up of semiotic resources in order to interpret and actualize their understandings. In other words, beyond the modes themselves — whether the authorship is drawn, cut, pieced together, sewn, written, spoken, embodied, sung, and so forth — authors also draw on, layer, and embed an array of semiotic resources such as words, fonts, gestures, colours, sounds, etc. in order to represent and communicate information. Third, despite the mode of meaning-making all modes comprise at least four common “semiotic actions”: design, negotiation, production, and dissemination (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). Since these actions are always situated within a context that includes relationships, purposes, social exchanges, and so forth, I use the term “social (inter)action” rather than simply “action.” I define this term in more detail later in this chapter. Fourth, as authors use

---

<sup>1</sup> The idea that readers are composers of text has been explored by semioticians, literary theorists, and literacy researchers for over thirty years — this is not a new idea.

modes and semiotic resources to create texts within their concrete situational contexts they also discursively position themselves and others (Davies & Harre, 1990; Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998).

## 1.5 Quilt-making as a Metaphor for Authorship

Authorship as Assemblage can be compared to quilt-making, and quilts themselves make excellent analogies for authorship. Quilt-makers author meanings externally as they choose, assemble, and stitch the fabrics, or as they engage with others and mediate social relations. They also author internally as they interpret their own work and compare it to or learn about the work of others. Either way, externally or internally, within social contexts they contribute to larger discourses of meaning-making. Within their own social worlds these authors also orchestrate an array of semiotic modes resources and social (inter)actions, taking on particular perspectives and being positioned by others.

The vignette below illustrates the Authorship as Assemblage model in practice.

### Vignette 1.1

Four authors (Nan Gregory, Mary Novik, Theresa Kishkan, and myself, Kari-Lynn Winters) were invited to join a Northern British Columbian Book Tour, a five day tour with nine stops. Each day we presented our books and stories to Northern British Columbian audiences. On this evening, in Terrace, BC, I sit in a gallery surrounded by stunning, intricate quilts created by Betty Doering, Jan Goodwill, and others (see Figure 1.1) and listen to Theresa Kishkan read a poetic personal essay about quilt-making from her book *Phantom Limb* (2007). She begins by inviting listeners to be present in the moment with her and to envision differing perspectives of culture, history, landscape and family-life.

"A quilt takes months," she begins. She pauses, gesturing for us to look around the room. In silence we examine the colours of the chosen fabrics, the geometrical designs and patterns, and the intricate stitching.

**Figure 1.1: Quilt**



"First you choose a pattern," she continues, "something formal or an idea to cobble together...."

Listening, I can't help but compare quilt-making to my own narrative storytelling...

---

A story takes months to build.

You choose a pattern, a character, or perhaps a piece of action or a theme — designing ideas to cobble together.

You try to negotiate how much material you will need and how long your story will be. Your writer's notebook, sketches, prior experiences, and the books you've read will make your choices difficult, each idea is more lovely than the next. You will choose too much material, or too little. Envision it, move with it, design and discuss it, so that later, once the piece is written, it will still hold its shape. Form the material into the required blocks (e.g., scenes).

Mental images, frames, rhythms, and dialogue might make things easier and more accurate. Mentally assemble your own experiences and possible storylines.

Fit the blocks of material together in an agreeable way, realizing that as you do so that your skills have not improved, despite the fact that you have been producing stories for years. More than a decade. Nearly two. These blocks may not fit together, which simply means you will have to constantly adjust and negotiate as you go. Sew them together by hand, through gestures or sounds, on the computer, or whichever mode best suits your story. Sandwich the themes inside your blocks. Baste your writing together with rough transitions. Then you can draft and re-draft, using templates or freehand patterns which you've designed, never to be seen again. Bring the layers together and create the texture for your story. Be prepared for pleasure as you sit and stitch, working from the centre out, forwards and backwards to prevent wrinkles.

Then be sure to share your creation with others. Hang up your writing, disseminate it, share it with everyone who will listen. Even when finished, pick up that story whenever you can, and take solace in your work.

Written by K. Winters, 2008; inspired by Theresa Kishkan (*Phantom Limb*, 2007, pp. 18-21)

This simple moment of creation, along with a lifetime of others, are being assembled every time that I author. This vignette invites readers to expand notions of authorship and to think about authors as meaning makers, who within a situational context actively design, negotiate, produce, or disseminate information — for example a child who reads a letter from the tooth fairy, an illustrator who paints a picture, or a group who forms a tableau for the stage. This model of authorship applies equally to the interpretation (the reading) of and the actualization (the writing) of meaning, a notion that Barthes (1977) invites in his book *Image-Music-Text*:

To understand a narrative is not merely to follow the unfolding of the story, it is also to recognize its construction in stories, to project the horizontal concatenations of the

narrative thread on to an implicitly vertical axis: to read (to listen to) a narrative is not merely to move from one word to the next, it is also to move from one level to the next. (p. 87)

Here, Barthes theorizes that readers, even though they are more oblique than writers, do not simply decode the words or automatically discover the meaning, they also simultaneously and actively construct and unify the meanings of a given sign system — including its grammar and functional units, the actions of the characters or actants being represented, and the narrative itself.

Even though the earlier vignette itself appears to be merely words on the page, this assembled authorship is both multimodally and socially composed. The words themselves, though primarily linguistic, also demonstrate the pictorial mode through framing, formatting, typography, and layout. Rhythm and pitch are suggested through the words, the typography, and the punctuation. Social (inter)actions are mediated through the “material processes” themselves, doing things within concrete contexts, (Halliday, 1985) and through the heteroglossic relationships that are influencing my authorship (Bakhtin, 1981). As I sat in the art gallery that evening, I was inspired by another writer and was reminded of my own social, historical, and cultural experiences such as the time when I read a book about quilt-making with my aunt, or the time in seventh-grade history class where we learned that American slaves read quilts and found their way to freedom. I also thought about Theresa Kishkan’s words and what her reaction might be when I show her how she inspired me, and when I position her as my mentor. Here the “linguistic sign” is a cue complex which is multiple and assembled, both multimodally and socially (Harste et al., 1984).

## 1.6 Themes and Definitions

As I began this thesis I tried to locate a word that would be complex enough to encompass the semiotic, social, and critical dimensions of meaning-making (both internalized and actualized). Though some contemporary scholars have used the terms “designer” (e.g., the New London Group) or “sense-maker” (e.g., Eisner), suggesting that they capture a wider sphere of semiotic practice, I believe that *author* is the most appropriate term for this thesis. As I use the term here, *author* not only suggests designing or generating meaning, it also includes the possible negotiations with and disseminations of semiotic resources amongst assemblages of social collaborations and critical practices. I define *authorship* as both a process of internal and external meaning-making and the traces or texts that are left behind. More specifically, this term encompasses the conscious arrangement of modes, which are composed of “culturally shaped semiotic resources,” as well as the orchestration of social-semiotic actions (or multimodal practices) and discursive positions in order to contribute meaning to situated social contexts (Stein, 2008, p. 26).

*Assemblage*, another significant term used in this dissertation, has its roots in a three-dimensional art process that was popularized in the 1950s and 1960s where artists combined, embedded, and layered everyday objects into a three-dimensional visual composition. The three-dimensional work of Joseph Cornell, Marcel Duchamp, or Pablo Picasso could be considered assemblage. Drawing on this idea as well as its etymological origins — from the Latin word *assimulare* meaning “to make like,” “to think like,” and later “to gather together,”<sup>2</sup> I define

---

<sup>2</sup> Most etymological notes in this dissertation are drawn from the online resource [www.etymonline.com](http://www.etymonline.com).

assemblage as the arrangement of the social, the semiotic, and the critical, which are meshed together in order to interanimate (mutually inspire) one another, resulting in a totality of meaning that is greater than the sum of its parts. Assemblages are always seen against the background of historical, cultural, ideological, discursive, and social contexts. Within assemblages social (inter)actions and semiotic modes/resources are rarely organized in a linear fashion. Rather, like a three-dimensional living hodge-podge, modes, actions, resources, and storylines stand beside and overlap one another, speaking to and interrupting one another, foregrounding some parts and hiding others.

In addition to authorship and assemblage, much of this thesis addresses *modes*. Modes are the active ways humans realise meaning, both internally (e.g. reading, calculating) and externally (e.g. speaking, writing, embodying a play). Modes are composed of semiotic resources and social (inter) actions which I define as follows:

*Semiotic resources* are socially shaped actions (e.g., facial expressions, gestures), materials (e.g., words, colours, sounds), and artifacts (e.g., images, sculptures, maps, clothing) that have potential communicative effects inherent in their organization (Van Leeuwen, 2005).

*Social (inter)actions* are the psychological activities and physical behaviours that people do in order to mediate communication (Harste et al., 1984). I punctuate this term as “(inter)actions” to acknowledge the dialogic and reciprocal relationships that enter into every social action. In other words, all mediation comes from the social ways that people act together, building on the mediations of others. I draw on four social (inter)actions throughout this thesis: design, negotiation, production, and dissemination.

In practice, meaning can be generated and realized *intersemiotically* (shifting between semiotic

modes), for instance, the same information can be written down and announced in person, or *intrasemiotically* (through the layered deployment of semiotic resources and actions within a mode), for instance the written mode involves visual and linguistic resources whereas an announcement involves words, gestures, facial expressions, clothing, etc. (Fei, 2004). Within situated contexts, modes also offer their users, the potential to discursively position people.

An example may be helpful to better understand modes. Imagine a four-year old child telling a story at a family reunion. The storyteller draws upon the modes of spoken language, embodiment, musicality, and so forth. Even though she is young, she uses semiotic social resources to command attention: she positions herself in front of her family, using gestures and sound effects to emphasize important points within the story. She uses her body, but she may also draw upon artifacts such as props (a pair of glasses, a stick, a paper and a marker) as a way to further highlight meanings. She moves between and assembles designs (initial ideas), negotiations (internal moments of pause and contemplation, how she situates herself in relation to her audience), productions (movements and words that actualize meanings), and disseminations (ways of sharing information).

Authors use particular resources and materials in specific situational contexts because each elucidates its own particular “*semiotic potential*,” its own affordances and limitations (Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Baldry & Thibault, 2006). Going back to the previous example, this storyteller’s use of social and semiotic resources affords spontaneity, an actor/audience relationship, and praise from her elders. But it is limiting as well. It is fleeting and difficult to capture. Even if the event were to be filmed, it would not capture the same experience for the viewers.

The word *authority* also appears throughout this dissertation, particularly in chapter 5. This word, which happens to be etymologically rooted in the word “auctor” or “author,” originally

meant a book or quotation that settles an argument. Here, authority refers to relations between knowledge and power, between individual learners and their situational contexts, as well as in the broader social, ideological, historical, cultural and political discourses in which these learners are embedded (Street, 1993). It includes how one positions oneself and is positioned within socially situated discourses, for example as being justified and having the right to produce, articulate or represent knowledge, or to gain access to information, or even how some forms of authorship might be perceived as powerful or truthful.

## **1.7 Method of Research: The Structure of the Dissertation**

This dissertation proposes this theoretical model of Authorship as Assemblage through a theoretical literature review (chapter 2), three stand-alone case studies (chapters 3-5) and a conclusion. Each chapter is related to the model and considers the broader guiding question, “How can we understand the complex assemblages of authorship?” Each chapter also takes on its own specific research sub-questions depending on the modes used, the author or authors involved, the social context where the meaning is created, and the specific emphasis of the chapter. This means that all of the chapters rely on the same theoretical frame (including social-symbolic mediation, semiotics and social semiotics, and the discursive, as outlined in chapter two) and the same four premises of authorship described above. The specific ways the chapters are laid out are described below.

In this first chapter I introduce the Authorship as Assemblage theoretical model, the purpose of this thesis, the methodology of the study and its analytic frame, as well as its significance within and outside of the field of education. Here I define the terms and themes that

are used throughout the thesis.

In chapter two I present a review of multimodal authorship, drawing on three bodies of literature that are not completely independent of one another: 1) *Social-Symbolic Mediation theories* (Bakhtin, 1981; Dyson, 1997; Vygotsky, 1979), 2) *Semiology, Semiotics and Social Semiotics theories* (Barthes, 1977; Halliday, 1979; Harste et al., 1984; Hodge & Kress, 1988; Kress, 2003; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2003; Peirce, 1940; Saussure, (1916/1974); Siegel, 1995), and 3) *Discursive Positioning theories* (Davies & Harré, 1990; Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, Cain, 1998).

Chapters three, four, and five are independent, stand-alone case studies. Although a brief review of this literature is brought up within each of these case study chapters, especially in relation to the form of authorship investigated, each chapter is also dependent on the theoretical frame that is outlined in chapter two.

Finally, chapter six is a conclusion. It sums up the findings across the entire thesis and suggests the implications of an Authorship as Assemblage model.

## **1.8 Analyses**

Each case in this thesis offers distinct points of inquiry that highlight different aspects of the Authorship as Assemblage model. In an effort to be consistent with the data analyses across and within a range of social contexts, each case study also shares a similar analytic framework (see Table 1.1). While two of the cases seem to appear more exploratory (chapters 3 and 4), each

analysis is guided by four common principles.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1.1: Analysis Frame for Multimodality**

Discursive Event	Principle #1	Principle #2		Principle #3	Principle #4	
	External and Internal Meaning- Making	Semiotic Resources		Social (Inter)actions	Discursive Positions of Author	
	Declared:  Hidden or  Withdrawn:	Semiotic Resource s	Semiotic Potential	Designs  Negotiations  Productions  Dissemination s	Of self:  Of others:	Structured Routines e.g., Who is eligible, rules of engagement

This chart draws from the work of Barthes (1977); Bakhtin (1981); Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001); Baldry and Thibault (2006); Davies and Harré (1990); and to some extent the work of (Hamilton, 2000). Each element of the frame is defined below.

### 1.8.1 Elements of the Multimodality Analysis Frame

- Discursive Event: any occasion where multimodal discourse is authored/assembled (designed, negotiated, produced, or disseminated) among participants and within concrete situational contexts (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001).

---

<sup>3</sup> This analysis frame was developed and refined through interactions with the chapter three and chapter four data. By the third case study (chapter 5), the frame was solidified and data was more directly driven by the frame.

- Authors make meaning both externally (producing and disseminating) and internally (designing and negotiating): this section describes how the participants “donate” meaning to the texts or storylines that are being created (Barthes, 1977). Meaning contributions apply to both the interpretation and the actualization of meaning.
- Declared Participants: the authors that are visibly creating meaning and contributing to the text within the social contexts (Barthes, 1977), such as the actors who are seen animating the characters on stage or the child who writes a letter at the kitchen table.
- Hidden or Withdrawn Participants: the less visible authors who are or may have been involved in donating meaning and contributing to the text within the social contexts (Barthes, 1977; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). For example, the audience who interprets the meaning of a play, the playwright or the director who contributed to the play’s narrative, or perhaps the people who were once “dialogically” involved in contributing to the meaning-making — such as Newton, if the play’s topic were to be about gravity (Bakhtin, 1981).
- Semiotic Resources: The orchestrations of semiotic resources within discourses and situated social contexts. More specifically, the semiotic resources function together intersemiotically and intrasemiotically (Baldry & Thibault, 2006).
- Semiotic Potential: The potential (affordances and limitations) arising from the perceivable properties of a mode or a semiotic resource (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001).
- Social (inter)actions: the multimodal actions or activities that authors do to construct meaning, including the ways they design, negotiate, produce, and disseminate information within situated contexts. In addition, social (inter)actions include the ways

that authors interact with one another, and how their actions relate to the discourses across and within sociocultural contexts (Bakhtin, 1981; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001).

- Positions Self: How, within a discourse, authors psychologically or physically situate themselves (i.e. socially, culturally, economically, politically) in both visible and hidden ways (Davies & Harré, 1990).
- Positions Others: How, within a discourse, authors psychologically or physically situate other participants (i.e. socially, culturally, economically, politically) in both visible and hidden ways (Davies & Harré, 1990).
- Structured Routines and Pathways: understandings about how specific literacy events work, including routes that facilitate and regulate actions, including rules of appropriacy and eligibility — who does/doesn't, can/can't engage in particular activities — and authority (Hamilton, 2000).

Although there are similarities between the chapters—particularly in regards to an overarching theme and research question, the same theoretical and analytic frames, and a consistent methodology—each provides a distinct, stand-alone case study. Chapter three, which tends to be explored more descriptively, traces the way a six-year old assembles communicative modes and resources and positions himself and others in his day to day life. Chapter four investigates the interpreted and communicated assemblages of three professional children's book authors. Chapter five on the other hand, uses a close analysis to dig deeper into the discursive positioning aspects of the authorship model, in particular how interactions with playbuilding and theatrical forms of meaning making might afford moments of authority for youth.

The authorship practices of nine individuals are investigated in this thesis. This is a small

sample, and it is not my intent to generalize my findings. Rather I want, as Stake (1995) puts it, to look for “the detail of interaction” between the participants and their circumstances, unpacking the processes of each author while considering the complexities of their contexts (p. xi). I want to look closely at the ways that these individuals use and assemble semiotic resources and social inter(actions) within situational contexts in order to give access to, position, and marginalize themselves and others. At the same time, I would like to examine the traces of authorship that they leave behind, theorizing about semiotic potentials and understanding why they chose particular resources.

## **1.9 Methodology**

I chose a qualitative multiple case study methodology (Stake, 2005) because it simultaneously enabled me to examine the products of multimodal authorship and to observe the underlying process itself, and at the same time, to develop and refine the Authorship as Assemblage theoretical model. Thus, as I explored the interplay between the semiotic texts themselves and the lived authorship of particular individuals within localized contexts, I also furthered my understandings about how authorship combines with unique critical circumstances and social assemblages of meaning-making. By watching how the case studies were authored and patterned, and by paying attention to how they were similar to or different from other theories of multimodal authorship, I was able to let this theoretical model emerge. Using Dyson’s (2005) words, it was the “relationship between a grand phenomenon and mundane particulars” that interested me. As Dyson implies, I wanted to understand how authorship was semiotically and socially shaped within localized social settings, including how these discursive practices positioned authors, but also how these examples of authorship could be thought about in relation to the broader theories of multimodal literacy, how these examples were patterned across the

three case studies, and finally how these patterns might speak back to the Authorship as Assemblage model.

Furthermore, much like the integrated ways that I've talked about authorship (see above), I chose the case study methodology because I wanted the readers to author their own perspectives of the data — holding a conversation with it — where they can clearly interpret and re-author the dynamic and richly textured assemblages of each case. Here, readers can locate themselves in relation to the case studies, interweaving and hybridizing their own understandings, layering their own questions, recursively ruminating about their own constructed meanings, and ultimately becoming a co-author of the studies.

Whereas ethnographies of multimodal practices might also deal with theory building, illustrative examples, and narrative descriptions of individuals or groups, their primary focus continues to be on “sustained [systematic] fieldwork” — over a considerable period of time — of study participants in coordination with their cultural sign-making, and their historical social learning (Wolcott, 1999, p. 198). A definition of ethnography might be:

[Ethnography] relies on some linkage with or acknowledgment of its history within anthropology and its subfields, such as linguistics.... [It] is a theory-building enterprise constructed through detailed systematic observing, recording, and analysing of human behaviour in specifiable spaces and interactions. (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 29)

Although this study uses ethnographic tools for data collection (e.g., observation notes, documents, participant interviews video taping), it differs from ethnography. First, the data for this dissertation were not gathered over a considerable period of time. For example, the data for the chapter three were collected within one week. Second, according to Denzin (1997),

ethnography involves “turning the gaze inward” aiming to uncover the tacit knowledge of culture participants. Case study, on the other hand, emphasizes the goal of gazing inward and outward simultaneously, aiming to delineate the nature of phenomena through detailed investigation of individuals/groups interacting with their social worlds (Dyson & Genishi, 2005).

Whereas some studies (e.g., Edmiston, 2007; Heath, 1983; Jones, 2006) investigate identities in relation to a participant’s more fixed identities of race, age, gender, class, abilities, and so forth, this study highlights how participants create and shift their more flexible identities in order to position themselves in different ways during situated discursive practices (Davies & Harre, 1990).

### **1.10 Significance of Study**

Thinking about authorship in stable or isolated ways, or only foregrounding the primary semiotic resources (e.g., writing) or social (inter)action (e.g., production) in multimodality discourses, not only underplays the author’s capacity for sophisticated, capacious meaning-making, it also limits the ways that authors’ processes and their texts can be analysed. It ignores the integrated semiotic relationships that occur inside the texts themselves and within the contexts of authors’ social lives.

Though some researchers have begun to theorize ideas around the intricacies of assembled authorship (Stein, 2008; Ranker, 2007; MacKey & McKay, 2000; Rogers, Winters, Perry, & La Monde, 2009), it continues to be beneficial to see more of these ideas in practice, especially in settings where authors are free to choose the modes and semiotic resources that they require and are encouraged to interact with others in authentic ways.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

*There is no ready-made tool-kit for analyzing multimodality in literacy studies, but researchers have turned to a range of theories in search of analytic guidance... Each approach has inspired distinctive lines of inquiry that...could be productively blended.* (Siegel & Panofsky, in press, n.p.)

Traditionally, authorship meant composing in page-bound and linear ways (The New London Group, 2000). This traditional way of thinking about communication often privileged the printed linguistic mode as the central way of representing meaning. More recently, however, authorship has been identified as increasingly multimodal and more complex than it had been originally conceived (Dyson, 1997; Dyson, 2002; Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984; Kress, 2003; Siegel, 2006). These researchers and others (Baldry & Thibault, 2006; Kendrick, 2003; Ranker, 2007; Rogers & Schofield, 2005; Stein, 2008) contend that there are multiple pathways to meaning making within cultural spaces — sometimes through the ears, but also through the eyes, the nose, the hands, the body, and so on. Jewitt and Kress (2003) re-articulate this message, stating that authoring in today's globalized media-infused community means being able to interpret and communicate with a full range of semiotic modes including through spoken language, drawing, film-making, and embodiment.

More recently, Marjorie Siegel and Carolyn Panofsky (in press) make the argument that the field of literacy studies is lacking a tool-kit for analyzing multimodality and that researchers have had to “mash-up” a range of theories “in search of analytic guidance” (Siegel & Panofsky, n.p.). They write:

The unsettled status of the field appears to be a productive moment of experimentation, invention, and problem posing as researchers design analytic

approaches that draw on a range of theoretical frameworks relevant to their research interests, purposes and questions.

They list seven studies that struggle with these same issues.<sup>4</sup> I am also experiencing a “productive moment of experimentation” as I am determining how to productively blend three perspectives of multimodality — Social-Symbolic Mediation, Semiotics and Social Semiotics, and Discursive Positioning — each with its own lineage, in order to conceptualize and put into practice my Authorship as Assemblage model of multimodality. Here, I am most interested in the ways authors interpret and actualize meaning within situated contexts and how their multimodal communication invokes a range of social actions, semiotic resources, and discursive positions.

While I would not go so far as to say that the three theories I draw upon are commensurate with one another (for that would imply that social semiotics has long been a North American tradition within education studies, when in reality it has not), I can still observe that the perspectives that have informed this thesis hold interesting resonances with one another.

## **2.1 Perspectives That Have Informed Multimodal Literacy**

Drawing on the three central theories that have been discussed above, this section traces the “mash-up” of multimodal theories (Siegel & Panofsky, 2009) that have informed my research

---

<sup>4</sup> Siegel and Panofsky list these seven studies, demonstrating how people are drawing on a range of theories in order to analyze and speak about multimodality: “e.g., Albers, 2008; Harste, Leland, Grant, Chung, & Enyeart, 2007; Hull & Nelson, 2005; Ranker, 2005; Rogers, Winters, LaMonde, & Perry, in press; Taylor, 2006; Wohlwend, 2009.”

interests and purposes. I describe both the historical lineages as they pertain to my studies and compare the resonances between these theories. Then, in the next section (2.2) I articulate how I integrate these theories into my own research.

### **2.1.1 Social-Symbolic Mediation Theories of Multimodality**

Psychologist Lev Vygotsky conceptualized what I am calling a Social-Symbolic Mediation Theory, where he posited that children use speech and play as “symbolic tools” for “organizing higher psychological functions” in their social worlds to fulfil needs, realize desires or thoughts, solve problems, and perceive their surroundings (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 23). This theory emerged both from Vygotsky’s scholarly career as a psychologist/medical doctor and from his observations and research with children in centres, classrooms, and psychological clinics. Vygotsky (1978) suggested that a child’s use of symbols had the potential to simultaneously mediate internal thought and to inform external action. For example, when children use symbols in their play they are allowing the symbol to mediate their internal thoughts (e.g., a stick represents a galloping horse), and at the same time to shape their external actions (e.g. the child stamps on the ground and shouts, “Giddy-up!”). He (1978) writes about this paradox:

On the one hand, it [a child’s use of symbols] represents movement in an abstract field... On the other hand, the method of movement is situational and concrete. In other words, the field of meaning appears, but action within it occurs just as in reality. (p. 11)

He goes on to suggest that play episodes such as these are more than simply active symbolic engagements for children; these actualized social practices are also significant factors in children’s literacy development.

The central question for Vygotsky was: How are children mentally negotiating symbols

and experiences, and at the same time, actively modifying and responding to their environments? Because children and their environments are always in the process of change, this question is still relevant today. Indeed, the foundations laid by Vygotsky have become fundamental concepts in modern fields of multimodal literacy pedagogy. For instance, traces of his ideas, specifically how symbols mediate thinking and shape social (inter)actions, can be found in the work of Bruner (1987), Dyson (1997), Harste et al. (1984), Kendrick (2003), and others noted in this thesis.

I am particularly interested in Vygotsky's discussion regarding the socialization of meaning-making: specifically that an author might be considered a social-symbolic mediator. Vygotsky postulated that a person first notices and begins to use symbols or "psychological tools," whether they be gestures, words, the use of artifacts, from their external world. Next, the person internalizes these tools, mediating thoughts. These internalized thoughts are then negotiated and transformed into external actions (Vygotsky, 1986).

Aspects of Vygotsky's theory also resonate with Russian philosopher, literary critic, and semiotician Mikhail Bakhtin (1981; 1986) and his work on the dialogic imagination. Both Vygotsky and Bakhtin highlighted the social nature of symbols (e.g., words) in their theories. For Bakhtin, authorship, what he calls *utterances*, is based on human social activity: a dialogical consciousness, so to speak (Wertsch, 1991). A pivotal argument in his dialogic theory is that each utterance (words and other symbols) "refutes, affirms, supplements, and relies on the others," conversing with utterances that have come before it, "...such that it presupposes them to be known, and somehow takes them into account" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 91). He writes:

Life by its very nature is dialogic. To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his whole life: with his eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body and deeds. He invests his entire self in discourse, and this

discourse enters into the dialogic fabric of human life, into the world symposium. (p. 293)

Bakhtin believed that utterances are more than simply a produced set of signs, but are always infused with dialogic negotiations. They are, he argues, always embedded in historical and social events, orientated towards a listener, and always in relation to those utterances that came earlier (1981). Moreover, all words “taste” of the contexts in which they lived socially and “all words and forms [symbols] are populated by intentions” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 293). Therefore (as Vygotsky, 1978, also notes), our utterances and our thoughts are inhabited by the productions of others and our thinking is negotiated through culture. This idea, that an author embeds and refracts the intentions of others, is observed throughout this thesis, particularly in the ways that humans often need to negotiate a multiplicity of meanings as they author.

Social-Symbolic Mediation Theories have introduced concepts like social-symbolic mediation, dialogism, symbol-weaving, and transmediation into the field of literacy, contributing to constructions of multimodality and also to this assemblage model.

Jerome Harste, Virginia Woodward, and Carolyn Burke (1984) applied Vygotsky’s social-symbolic mediation theory (1979) to their research, along with the process-writing pedagogies model (Emig, 1976; Flower & Hayes, 1980; Graves, 1983), Halliday’s functions of language theories (1975, 1978), and semiotics (Eco, 1976; Peirce, 1931-1958), in order to offer the field of education some ground-breaking insights on multimodal authorship. This research (Harste et al., 1984) challenged underlying assumptions about literacy instruction, while also demonstrating the sophistication of very young literacy learners. Positioning children as “active informants” allowed these authors to challenge literacy pedagogies in multimodal and sociocultural ways, including the business of “scribbling,” systematic language usage, invented spellings, modal instruction, underwriting, and child development, as well as the relationships between literacy

and gender, race, or socioeconomic conditions. Like Vygotsky (1978) and Bakhtin (1981), these researchers posit that children do not function as isolated individuals, separate from the environments that they live in. Rather, they embed symbols and move in and out of physical contexts and imagined contexts within their social worlds in order to construct interrelated sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, and symbolic meanings. Harste, Woodward & Burke (1984) suggest that gestures, embodiment, speaking, and drawing do not lie outside of the writing process, “but are an intimate and integral part of that process” (p. 37).

Harste and his colleagues consider their findings in relation to education and to teacher reform. Their concluding argument is that significant educational reform can only occur when teacher educators interact with students and discover how these students interact with knowledge systems.

Their research has informed the work of other multimodal literacy scholars like Beth Bergoff, Maureen Kendrick, Deborah Rowe, Kathy Short, and Marjorie Siegel. In addition to the ways they demonstrate social-symbolic mediation in their study, I am also influenced by another aspect of their theory, in particular, the ways that children weave modes of meaning-making and semiotic resources as they author, including drama (gestures, facial expressions), cultural artifacts (props, signs), drawing (pictures), and speech (words).

Another researcher contemporaneously exploring emergent multimodal literacy practices in the 1980s with Harste and his colleagues, was Anne Haas Dyson. Influenced by Vygotsky, but also by Werner and Kaplan (1964), and then later by Bakhtin, Dyson (1997; 2003) extends notions of social-symbolic mediation, symbolic development, and dialogism, arguing that authors embed and interweave their personal relationships and experiences with symbols in order to compose and participate in their real world communities. According to Dyson, all texts (social and semiotic) are embedded in the author’s social and cultural worlds. She writes:

Authors move among different worlds, different space/time structures, including the imaginary worlds they are forming, the ongoing social world within which they are acting and the wider world of experiences they are drawing upon. (1987, p. 4)

She goes on to say that beyond processes and products of text, sociocultural influences, popular culture, and ideological beliefs also affect students' language and writing development. Her argument is that teachers might consider providing students with opportunities to interact and even play during writing classes, for it is not only the writing itself but the children and their relationships with each other that, for many of them, can "provide the key to school writing growth" (p. 16). Her work demonstrates that play (whether it be dramatized, sketched, written) is its own assemblage of authorship.

Dyson regards authorship as a dynamic negotiation embedded in many worlds: symbolic, social, imaginative, and experienced. This idea is based on Bakhtin's (1981) notion of the dialogic. As Dyson (1987) writes, authorship "takes root and develops." It is always "embedded in [people's] lives..." (p. 26). The collaborative experiences of speaking, writing, drawing, and acting out roles suggest a way to think about writing as authors often infuse symbols, interact with others, and maintain connections with their wider worlds. Negotiated social authorship, like what Dyson suggests, significantly informs this dissertation. In today's integrated information economy, authorship assembles a multiplicity of relations, words, beliefs, rhythms, ideologies, images, past experiences, movement, and so on. As Dyson notes, authorship not only represents the complexities of thought representations through modes and semiotic resources, it also speaks to people's lived and present social worlds, while meshing the texts and traces of experience and meaning-making that are left behind.

Marjorie Siegel's dissertation (1984) shows the influence of scholars like Harste and Vygotsky, as well as the work of Eco (1986), Peirce (1931), and Suhor (1984), as she offers a

theory of *transmediation* to demonstrate that students move between language and other modes when they read. She postulates the process of taking understandings from one semiotic system and moving them into another in order to make meaning (transmediation) offers students more opportunities to engage with texts in more generative and reflective ways (p. 456). She suggests readers use sign systems to mediate other systems and found children learn more when they are encouraged to use additional modes of meaning-making. Siegel (2006) explains how this semiotic interaction achieves “generative power”:

When a learner moves from one sign system to another, semiosis becomes even more complex, in that an entire semiotic triad serves as the object of another triad and the interpretant for this new triad must be represented in the new sign system. And because no pre-existing code for representing the interpretant of another sign system exists a priori, the connection between the two sign systems must be invented (p. 70).

Filling the gap between the content and the expressive plane requires generative thinking. Moreover, she points out that although “[c]hildren have always engaged in what are now called multimodal literacy practices” (p. 65), changes in the ways people think about the literacy landscape are taking on a new significance in our modernized world. Her work is significant to my dissertation because it offers alternative ways to theorize multimodality, ways that do not privilege language over any other communicative mode.

In summary, these researchers found that child authors blend multiple modes of meaning-making and their social worlds during literacy practices. While Harste and his colleagues (1984) demonstrate that students embed other modes when they author, Dyson (1997) points to the ways that these semiotic embeddings are always intrinsically woven into the author’s social environments. Siegel (1995; 2006) posits that, within concrete contexts, authors transmediate

among an array of semiotic resources in order to gain generative power. In the case studies that follow in the next three chapters, I draw and build on each of these researched ideas as well as the theories of Vygotsky (1978) and Bakhtin (1981) as I explore and refine the Authorship as Assemblage model.

### **2.1.2 Semiology, Semiotics, and Social Semiotic Theories of Multimodality**

At around the same time (beginning in the 1970s and continuing through the 1990s), as social-symbolic trans/mediation theories were becoming more commonplace in education and literacy fields, the well-established traditions of Semiology and Semiotics were also transforming.

Through critiques of two divergent traditions of semiotics, specifically Saussure's (1857-1913) dyadic model of signs, which he called *Semiology*, and Peirce's triadic model (1839-1914), which he called *Semiotics* and then by drawing on Barthes (1970) and others (e.g., Bernstein 1971, Eco, 1976, and Jakobson, 1968), leading language scholars and semioticians like Michael Halliday, Robert Hodge, and Gunther Kress rejected structuralist approaches to semiotics and posited that people use signs within social contexts and in specific ways and for particular functions—a tradition that came to be known as Social Semiotics. This newer tradition emphasized that humans make meanings in their social worlds through multiple sign systems and not just language alone (Halliday, 1975; Halliday, 1978; Hodge & Kress, 1988). A social semiotic approach to meaning-making investigates human signifying practices within specific social and cultural circumstances. Before delving into these more recent social semiotic theories of multimodality, I would first like to explain Saussure's and Peirce's influential models:

#### *Semiology*

As mentioned in the paragraph above, Saussure offered a binary model in which a sign is

composed of two parts, the “signified” and the “signifier.” Saussure argued that, to be complete, a sign needs both the *signified* (the mental concept being discussed, such as a hand (pictured below)



and the *signifier* (the semiotic resource used to represent the concept such as the alphabetical pattern H-A-N-D, an image, a gesture, etc.). As Saussure puts it, the signifier and the signified are inseparable, “intimately linked” in the mind “by an associative link,” whereby “each triggers the other” (Saussure, 1983, p. 67).

### 2.1.3 Semiotics

Another semiotician, Charles Peirce (1931), thought differently of signs. While Saussure argued that the link between the signifier and the signified is always arbitrary (e.g., there is nothing “handish” about a hand), Peirce (1931) suggested that some signifiers have different associations with their signified object/s. He moved away from the notion of arbitrariness and instead, offered a more nuanced classification scheme, which is often simplified into three types of signs: indexes, icons, and symbols.

Peirce’s theory of semiotics (1931) differed from Saussure’s model of semiology in other ways too. For instance, rather than using a two-part model, Peirce (1931) focused on a triadic model which included an “object” (the concept being discussed), a “representamen” (the form the concept takes, such as the sound pattern, the sound vibration, the gesture, etc.), and an “interpretant” (the sense made of the sign) (see Chandler, 2002). Peirce’s triadic model (described below) made room for other semiotic systems, beyond merely linguistic systems, to be included in the field of semiology. I’ll illustrate the Peircian model using our example of the hand:



The *object* is the concept of a hand. The *representamen* is the drawn representation of the image that is depicted above. The meaning imparted by the sign is what Peirce called the *interpretant*, and in different contexts the above image can have different *intepretants*. In one context the depiction can mean simply *hand*, as in “a part of a body.” In another context the depiction may emphasize the thumb-touching-index-finger gesture to mean “OK, everything is good.”

### 2.1.3.1 *Beyond Semiology and Semiotics*

Saussure’s and Peirce’s semiology and semiotic theories (1916/1974; 1931) have infiltrated a number of fields of scholarship such as education, film and cultural studies, anthropology, even biology. Their work also influenced French literary theorist and semiotician Roland Barthes. While Saussure developed the principles of semiology as they applied to language, Barthes (1977) extended these ideas. He addressed the ways in which meaning is constituted and disseminated by a range of human endeavours from wearing clothing to photography, narratives, or music. Barthes argued that non-linguistic sign systems such as objects, images, and patterns of behaviour can and do signify meaning within societies. He suggested that “semantisation” — meaning making through participatory discourse — is inevitable: “as soon as there is a society, every usage [of an object] is converted into a sign of itself... these objects are unavoidably realisations of a model, the speech of a language, the substances of a significant form” (Barthes, 1964, p. 41).

Years later, beginning with his publication *S/Z* (1970) and later with *Image, Music, Text* (1977), Barthes argued that readers actively engage with texts, becoming “donors of meaning.” He writes:

Our literature is characterized by the pitiless divorce which the literary institution

maintains between the producer of the text and its user, between its owner and its consumer, between its author and its reader. This reader is thereby plunged into a kind of idleness — he is intransitive; he is, in short, serious: instead of functioning himself, instead of gaining access to the magic of the signifier, to the pleasure of writing, he is left with no more than the poor freedom either to accept or reject the text: reading is nothing more than a referendum. (p. 4)

His notion of authorship suggests that, in practice, there are no producers versus consumers of texts; rather, these roles are intrinsically connected and interwoven. Understanding authorship in these broader ways means that an author can be anyone who originates, re-constructs, or animates a text, including a child player, a children's book writer, an illustrator, an editor, an actor, a playwright, a musician, and dozens of other roles — including that of reader. These authors can be, Barthes (1977) explains, “declared, hidden, or withdrawn” (p. 111). Barthes' notion that all human endeavours carry meaning and that even reading is authorship plays a large role in my concept of authorship.

#### 2.1.3.2 *Social Semiotics*

By critiquing Saussure (1983) and by leaning on the work of Barthes (1970) along with a British linguist named Firth, linguist Michael Halliday (1985) initiated a theory of language called *Systemic Functional Linguistics* (SFL), which stressed that language can not be separated from its social purposes. This tradition argues against the traditional separation between language and society, and exemplifies the start of a ‘social semiotic’ approach as a way to understand communication practices. For Halliday (1978), language represents a “network of options” — also known as “meaning potential” — because it functions as a set of resources that speakers use within their social contexts (Halliday, 1978, p. 113). Furthermore, he argues that linguists can

not come to understand the nature of language if they do not question the functions of it in action (p. 3).

Drawing on Halliday's work (1971; 1978; 1985), scholars like Robert Hodge, Gunther Kress, and Theo van Leeuwen critiqued Saussure and Peirce. The central premise of their critiques was that signs should not be and can not be devoid of the socio-cultural contexts in which they are embedded. Hodge and Kress (1988) write:

...the social dimensions of semiotic systems are so intrinsic to their nature and function that the systems can not be studied in isolation. (p. 1)

Social Semiotics changed the landscape of education, particularly literacy pedagogies, inviting new, unpaved pathways for multimodal communication. A plethora of innovative research followed this tradition, including the work of Multiliteracies theorists (New London Group, 2000), New Literacy Studies scholars (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005; Ranker, 2007), and Multimodal Literacy researchers (Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Stein, 2008). In addition, theorists such as Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (1996) have built on Halliday's framework, constructing new *grammars* for other semiotic modes. Like language, these grammars are seen as socially shaped resources for making meaning,

Kress and his colleagues (Jewitt & Kress, 2001; Kress, 2003) continue to develop their multimodal social semiotic approach, suggesting theoretical perspectives and tools for scholars to use with, think about, discuss, and analyze multimodal texts. For example, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) offer a multimodal theory of communication that, they argue, is applicable to all modes of semiotic meaning-making. They write:

We see multimodal texts as making meaning in multiple articulations. Here we sketch the four domains of practice in which meanings are dominantly made. We call

these strata to show a relation to Hallidayan functional linguistics... Our four strata are discourse, design, production and distribution. (p. 4)

I will briefly define their strata (2001) here.

#### *2.1.3.3 Discourse*

Discourses are socially constructed knowledges that realize meaning and that have developed in specific social contexts. They have an existence which is separate from their mode of realization. Discourses appear as social actions in and across many communicative modes. Modes and materials that have been “culturally-mediated” have the capacity to realize discourses (p. 28). Conversely, “modes become shaped in response to discourse” (p. 56). For these reasons, discourse is never fixed. Rather, it has the potential to be re-organized or hybridized at any time through on-going social practices of multimodal interpretation or production.

#### *2.1.3.4 Design*

Design stands midway between content and expression. Designs are a means to realize discourses in the context of a given communication situation. They draw on semiotic modes which are capable of being realized; there is often “a deliberateness about choosing the modes of representation, and about framing that representation...” (p. 45). In other words, people chose particular modes for specific designs, depending on their purpose and their situational contexts. Designs, like discourse, are also fluid. Sometimes the boundaries between design and production and the boundaries between semiotic resources get blurred (e.g. teachers at the front of a class both improvise and plan their lessons, they speak and gesture simultaneously) (p. 55). Regardless, within social action designs transform and shape the modes that are used.

### 2.1.3.5 *Production*

“Production refers to the organization of expression, to the actual material articulation of the semiotic event or the actual material production of the semiotic artifact” (p. 6). This expression plane adds meaning because people do not simply realize designs, they also “bodily articulate” them with expression or feelings and with the background ideologies of the person/people who are communicating (p. 67). Productions also affect others, both through the modes/mediums and through the materials that are used. Interpretation, therefore, aligns itself with production; the two can not be separated. Like production, interpretation is “never a matter of passive reception” (p. 67). Production is the realization of design, encompassing the transforming and interpreting of materials within social practices.

### 2.1.3.6 *Distribution*

Distribution is a further stratum of expression. Sometimes people move beyond simply production and into distribution, as when a musician records a song which he then burns to CD and distributes to retailers. Meaning is added here because it makes a difference in how people access it. Hearing a person share a song by performing it at a karaoke bar is different than purchasing a CD and hearing the song on your home stereo, as the re-encoding, the social environment, and the ways the music is perceived are all changed. The message itself or the delivery of the message can be distributed.

Kress and Van Leeuwen’s strata are not intended to be hierarchically ordered. Although in theory their strata offer helpful ways of understanding multimodality and, in fact, play a significant role in this study, they appear rough at times and sometimes skip over aspects that are significant to more transient forms of authorship like gestures, puppetry, and theatre. Additionally, in this dissertation, in the tradition of Foucault (1980) *discourse* refers to dynamic

social mediations and social practices that are dispersed through cultural contexts by means of multiple modes of representation. These and other critiques are raised in Section 2.2 during the introduction of the Authorship as Assemblage theoretical model.

Beyond the theory itself, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) also create a terminology of common semiotic principles that operate in and across different modes. Although I have altered them slightly (i.e., changed “distribute” to “disseminate,” as explained in section 2.2.3), their terminology is extremely helpful for thinking about multimodal authorship. It focuses not only on the texts themselves, but also on the common semiotic principles that underlay all communicative practices.

#### *2.1.3.7 Transmediation Researchers*

Rather than drawing heavily on SFL, as the Social Semiotics tradition modelled, another perspective called Transmediation was also emerging in the field of education in the 1980’s. This perspective—pioneered by researchers like Charles Suhor, Jerome Harste, and Marjorie Siegel drew primarily on Peircian theories of Semiotics, along with those of Eco and to some extent Vygotsky—suggested that educators and literacy researchers should not only be concerned with linguistic resources, but also on how people move between sign systems in order to construct more generative understandings. They also highlighted the significance of generative meaning-making within various and situated communities of social practice.

#### **2.1.4 Discursive Positioning**

Discourse includes social and symbolic forms. It involves relations between individuals and groups and the knowledge/power structures that their social (inter)actions bring forth (Gee, 1996). It is socially constructed knowledge, including the semiotic mediations themselves and

the purposes for their production. Thinking about discourse in this way resonates with the work of sociolinguistic researchers like David Bloome (1985), Gumperz and Hymes (1972), Hymes (1974), and Labov (1972), and discursive positioning theorists such as Holland et al. (1998).

Although Foucault's (1980) theories are not directly cited in Bronwyn Davies and Rom Harré's Positioning Theory (1990) — for they drew more on social psychology, as well as psycho-linguistic and feminist post-structural theories — Foucault's thought appears in their later work and they share interesting parallels. For example, both Foucault (1980) and Davies and Harré (1990) expound a view that discourse is a fluid social practice, constructed by acts of communication. Additionally, each of their theories involves a social purpose, that identities are (to some extent) discursively constructed, and that discourse itself is implicated in the construction of power relations through its authorization of social positions.

Davies and Harré (1990) go on to recognize that, within discourse, individuals have the capacity to construct storylines, build subject positions, and exercise choice. Thus, they contend,

...the constitutive force of each discursive practice lies in its provision of subject positions. A subject position incorporates both a conceptual repertoire of a location for persons within the structure of rights for those that use that repertoire. Once having taken up a particular position as one's own, a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of particular images, metaphors, storyline and concepts which are made relevant within the particular discursive practice in which they are positioned. (p. 45)

This points to the ways that people take up positions and are positioned in relation to discourse. Compared to a person's more fixed personal identities (class, race, gender), these fluid discursive positions have the potential to be constituted and reconstituted through social interaction — the

same person is “variously positioned” in discourse as he/she is involved in the “continuity of a multiplicity of selves” (p. 48).

According to Davies and Harré (1990), individuals can position themselves by pursuing their own storylines and they can also be positioned in relation to others by adopting their storylines. Moreover, storylines are formed not only in the immediate context but also in relation to the utterances that have come before (Bakhtin, 1981).

In this dissertation these “socially generated, culturally figured worlds” (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998), where people recognize, interpret, and re-position themselves in relation to one another’s storylines and subject positions, will be interpreted in relation to a context of meaning as a tracing of the behaviours and artifacts that are communicated. I reiterate that, in the making of meaning, authors shape their worlds through multimodal expression and through discursively positioning others involved in the practice. They devise a plethora of perspectives that simultaneously shape their own understandings and fluidly lived identities (Holland et al., 1998).

Using the theoretical frame described in this section, specifically theories of social-symbolic mediation, social semiotics, and discursive positioning, I develop and refine the Authorship as Assemblage theoretical model. In chapters three, four, and five of this thesis, I document some of the socially situated and multimodal authorship practices of nine individuals through three stand-alone case studies. Based on these cases, I posit that authorship needs to be re-conceptualized in today’s information economy. I demonstrate that meaning is communicated through a myriad of semiotic and social layers, and that authors not only move between multiple modes as they make meaning but that they also assemble semiotic resources and orchestrate social (inter)actions during their authorship process. Furthermore, I investigate the socio-cultural discursive positions that are assumed during the authorship process.

## 2.2 Points of Inquiry

Kress (2003) argues that researchers need to examine what today's authors are doing in order to make informed decisions about tomorrow's pedagogies, policies, and theories. Although some education researchers note the social, semiotic, and critical complexities of multimodal authorship (e.g., Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, Rogers, Winters, La Monde, & Perry, 2010; Siegel, 2006; Stein, 2008; Winters & Rogers, 2006), more field research is needed to theorize and demonstrate these ideas. This includes not only the visible traces of authorship left behind (e.g., letters, notes, books, films), but also the more hidden and socially actions like designs, negotiations, productions, or disseminations practiced within situational contexts. It is only through observing authors — making them “informants” (Harste et al., 1984) — that we can come to appreciate the sophistication of authorship, particularly how modal and social boundaries are becoming more blurred (Kress & Van Leeuwen, (2001).

Beyond words alone, public speakers draw on gestures or visual presentations, clothing, and facial expressions, as well as the inflections and volume of their voices when they are speaking. Visual artists not only depict information spatially, they evoke patterns, moods, and settings too. Multiple semiotic resources, social (inter)actions, and positions are being assembled together in ways that shape the author's internal mediations and outward behaviours as well as the discourses or situational contexts. The question arises, how are these assemblages happening? How are authors assembling authorship semiotically, socially and critically in order to shape meaning in different contexts? How are they expressing themselves in declared ways and how are they designing their social worlds in more hidden ways?

Siegel and Panofsky (2009) note in their review of multimodal literature that “the theory of multimodality set forth by Kress and his colleagues ... has tended “to dominate the literature” (p.

100) — for example, Jewitt and Kress (2003); Kress (2003); Kress & Van Leeuwen, (1996; 2001). I have questions about these multimodal theories. Are the terminologies and the strata of principles that Kress and Van Leeuwen theorized in 2001 working across all semiotic modes? Is discourse considered a semiotic action in the same ways that design, production, and dissemination are considered actions? Is ‘distribution’ the proper term to indicate the sharing of multimodal authorship? Might we also consider how people negotiate their understandings modally and socially, positioning one another within discourse? This thesis will answer these and other questions.

Given the fast pace of research in this emerging field, we are left with ever more questions. We conclude, therefore, with some of the methodological and conceptual questions researchers will need to consider as they design their own analyses of multimodality. (Siegel and Panofsky, 2009)

To this end, I propose an Authorship as Assemblage model that is based on three perspectives of multimodal communication: Social-Symbolic Mediation theories, Semiotics and Social Semiotics theories, and Discursive Positioning theories. This assemblage model suggests four principles that undergird multimodal authorship:

- 1) Authors are both external and internal meaning-makers; they include any person who contributes meanings to texts whether they be “declared, hidden, or withdrawn” (Barthes, 1977, p. 110);
- 2) Within situational contexts authors use and orchestrate a multiplicity of modes that are made up of an array of semiotic resources.
- 3) Authors continually shift among the social (inter)actions of designing, negotiating, producing, and disseminating information as they interpret and communicate meaning.

- 4) Inside discursive practices, authors create storylines and subject positions in order to experience and reflect on their own perspectives. These perspectives position authors and the others within situated practices.

These principles are explained below.

### **2.2.1 Authors Are Both Readers and Writers of Multimodal Meanings**

The idea that authors are both readers and writers has been well explored. For example, Barthes (1977) posited that both readers and writers transform texts into meaningful information, re-writing the original meanings through a donation of new experiences and ideas. In the 1980s and early 1990s, literacy scholars began researching the reading-writing relationship (e.g., Harste et al., 1984; Short, 1984; Tierney & Shanahan, 1996; Wells, 1986). They consistently found that the nature of thinking is complex, active, and productive. Therefore, they argued that instead of separating reading and writing or teaching them as isolated entities, the field of literacy could benefit by thinking about reading and writing as more synchronized and by interweaving these processes together with literacy pedagogies.

### **2.2.2 Authors Use and Orchestrate a Multiplicity of Resources**

Marjorie Siegel (1984, 1995, 2006) examined reading as signification. She drew upon Charles Suhor's notion of transmediation (1984), Charles Peirce's theory of semiotics, and on data from research projects that incorporated transmediation (Borasi & Siegel, 1988; Siegel, 1984) in order to demonstrate that students move between language and other modes when they read. Here Siegel suggests that readers use sign systems to mediate other systems; they know more when something arises through an additional mode. Later she explains (2006):

When a learner moves from one sign system to another, semiosis becomes even

more complex, in that an entire semiotic triad serves as the object of another triad and the interpretant for this new triad must be represented in the new sign system. And because no pre-existing code for representing the interpretant of another sign system exists a priori, the connection between the two sign systems must be invented. This is how transmediation achieves its generative power. (p. 70)

Her work and the work of others mentioned earlier in this literature review offer new ways to theorize multimodality, ways that do not privilege language over other communicative modes.

Kress and his colleagues (2001) found similar results. They demonstrated that authors use a multiplicity of communicational modes in the science classroom, creatively employing different media like microscopes, language, diagrams, or 3D models. These researchers found that the students' intents for using multimodal representations "were identical" to those of language users; they were for the purpose of communication (pp. 2-3). They also added that, within this science class environment, language was not seen as the central form of communication. The findings suggest that thinking about subject areas in monomodal and stable ways is a mistake, for people moved between different modes of representation and communication. This multimodal movement not only gives meaning-makers freedom to compose in ways that suit their identities and socio-cultural circumstances, it also offers sign-makers different potentials, affordances, and limitations when communicating each mode.

Pippa Stein (2003) posits similar ideas. Always drawn to pedagogy, Stein explored relationships between social semiotics, multimodality, and the teachings of multimodal literacy in contexts of cultural and linguistic diversity. In one area of her work, she observed children's transformations and recontextualizations of 3D doll-making in the context of a larger story project (2003). Here, she proposed the idea of "chains of semiosis" that come to be "fixed" by "the production of multiple semiotic objects in sequenced stages and across different modes...."

(p. 123). She posits that when children use semiotic chains they are able to re-shape their knowledge. And further, researchers are able to gain deeper understandings into the relations between creativity, multimodal pedagogies, and resources for representing and learning. Thus, tracing the semiotic chains of human meaning-making begins to show the complexities of multimodal authorship.

As a researcher who has studied children's art-making in relation to their print literacies, I too have observed the potentials that multimodality presents for generative meaning-making (Winters, 2004). Multimodality suggests additional opportunities as well, for it gives authors favourable circumstances in which to think recursively in participatory, creative, and critical ways, including chances to embed, interweave, layer, and hybridize semiotic resources, social (inter)actions, and discursive positions. It was during this research that I began to notice how complex and messy — semiotically, socially, critically — authorship really is. From this viewpoint, it appears that notions of transmediation and semiotic chains have the potential to be further elaborated; within concrete contexts, authors not only move linearly through a series of interrelated modes (2-D figures then spoken dialogues, then....) rather, they simultaneously mesh (interweave, embed, layer, and hybridize) an array of semiotic resources, social (inter)actions, and discursive resources at the same time. It is here that I believe current multimodal theories can be expanded. Researchers like Holland et al. (1997), Siegel (2006), Stein (2008), and Rogers, Winters, Perry, and La Monde (in press) have begun to explore this idea — that authorship is interconnected with the complexities of semiotic communication, social exchanges and actions, and imagined storylines. Therefore in this thesis, using case studies, I hope to further demonstrate this elaborate hypothesis. I will detail the ways that authorship is a continually-evolving assemblage of products and processes that includes social (inter)actions, storylines that position people within discourses, as well as a multiplicity of modes that are made up of different semiotic resources.

### 2.2.3 Authors Shift among Social (Inter)Actions

Authorship in this dissertation outlines an assemblage of products and processes. Authors are people who contribute to the meaning of a text — whether declared, hidden, or withdrawn — who “with signs at their disposal” assemble meanings within social contexts (p. 111). Here, the focus of authorship goes beyond the traces and artefacts of meaning-making, such as the words on a screen, the brush strokes on a canvas, or the gestures in a play, and moves into the realm of symbolic mediation. This communication “in the making” idea is posed by numerous researchers (Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Pahl & Rowsell, 2005; Rogers, Winters, Perry, & La Monde, 2009; Stein, 2008), who demonstrate that the traces of communication are densely interwoven with the multimodal and social decisions that are made throughout the process. This idea also resonates with Harste, Woodward, & Burke’s findings (1984), who write:

With a focus on product, we not only fail to see growth, but also to make and take the opportunities for literacy which abound around us. (p. 22)

They argue that the product of authorship (e.g., the text) demonstrates a mere fraction of the author’s decisions. For these reasons, in addition to the communicative products created, I also explore authorship as a set of social (inter)actions that people perform in order to mediate communication. These (inter)actions acknowledge “dialogic” and reciprocal social relationships (Bakhtin, 1981) as all authorship builds on the mediations of others. I draw on four social (inter)actions in this thesis: design, negotiation, production, and dissemination. These (inter)actions parallel Kress and Van Leeuwen’s strata of multimodal discourse (2001). I use that word “parallel” because I have made some significant alterations to their theory; it seems to me that Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2001) stratum of meaning-making has the potential to be theorized further, especially so that it considers the intricacies of the social and semiotic interactions within lived moments of design. Their theorizations of strata have been altered in the

following ways and for the following reasons:

- 1) In this assemblage model, discourses are realised by and through social actions. For example, as authors negotiate a play by observing it, they recognize the activities they are viewing on stage represent particular patterns of meaning or discourse, such as a comedy. Prior knowledge of this discourse informs the types of meanings that they make, their understandings of the play's purpose, and (to some extent) the ways that they respond. Here, discourse is an umbrella term that is both informed by and informs the ways that people interact. In Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2001) model, discourse is equally stratified, sitting at the same level as these other social actions. This seems confusing to me. Do people discourse discourses? And if they do how might we know which discourse (noun) they are discoursing (verb)? Furthermore, the term *discourse*, as used in this thesis, particularly with discursive positioning, is inspired by Foucault's notion rather than Kress and Van Leeuwen's. I argue that discursive positioning is a dynamic part of the authorship process. Here, discourses are realised through social (inter)actions where people design, negotiate, produce, and disseminate meanings.
- 2) The word *negotiation* has been added as a social (inter)action in the Authorship as Assemblage model. Do authors move directly from their designs into their productions? Or might they also negotiate these semiotic decisions as they mediate their understandings? Vygotsky (1978) argued that there are two types of negotiations: those that are symbolic and those that are human. Both mediate thoughts. Symbols, for instance, have the potential to denote or replace other things (a pile of clothing becomes a baby). Authors negotiate these symbols within concrete contexts in order to construct meanings. At the same time, human negotiations allow authors to mediate their worlds and participate in collaborative actions and meaning constructions. Here a group of

individuals may mediate their interactions, social distances, and types of symbols that are appropriate for the social context. Disruptions or replacements of internal thought and social navigation, as well as internal or external bargaining and social re/positionings, occur quite often in authorship. For instance, an illustrator determines that a character's head is too light-bulb shaped and makes the character look too old, or a speaker stands too close to her audience. Dyson shows us that authors do indeed make negotiations as they author meaning; they make/re-make semiotic and social decisions that not only support their meaning-making within their environments, but that position themselves and others throughout the process (1997).

- 3) In this dissertation, I use the term *disseminate* rather than Kress and Van Leeuwen's term *distribute* to describe the act of animating, sharing, or distributing information. Clarifying terminology in a progressive, growing field of study helps to develop the theory as people come to make sense of its etymological and ideological underpinnings. Here are some reasons for this particular change in terminology.
- *Distribute*, coming from the Latin *distribuere*, means to "deal out in portions" or to "allot individually"; this implies a giving out or selling that is highly organized and formal (e.g., a record company distributes CDs). It suggests a degree of exclusivity and technical expertise (e.g., technicians record the music in studios, record companies use a network of distributors to get the CDs into stores).
  - By contrast, *disseminate*, stemming from the Latin *disseminare*, means to "spread widely" or "scatter in every direction." This definition relates more closely to assemblage, mostly because it suggests a less formal notion of communication and because it seems to encompass a wider range of modes, including more transient modes such as drama or discussion. Do people really distribute discussions when they speak face

to face? It seems to me that they “spread the word,” “disseminate information,” they “spread” gossip, and so forth.

With these alterations I define each of the four social/semiotic actions that constitute meaning-making below.

#### *2.2.3.1 Design*

Design initiates thinking. It can be described as an author’s preliminary conceptions or initial sparks of thought as he or she begins formulating ideas. Designs are internal plans of action rather than material productions. They might represent a feeling or an intuition. Sometimes designs remain unrealized — for example, an author is intrigued by a piece of artwork. Yet this author may not know what it is about the piece that is so compelling.

The resources that are available, both multimodally (e.g., materials on hand, preference for a particular form) and socially (e.g., cultural and historical relations), will play a role in shaping this conceptual interaction.

#### *2.2.3.2 Negotiation*

Negotiation stands between an author’s initial thoughts and a realised production. It includes moments of disruption, internal bargaining, and navigation, as well as social orchestration and re/positioning. Here authors question, determine, and organize which available semiotic resources they will use and decide how they will or will not use them within particular socio-cultural contexts — perhaps basing their decisions on prior dialogues or the ways that these resources might have been organized by their cultures in the past (Bakhtin, 1981). Negotiation is about authors making active and semiotic orchestrations that not only support their meaning-making within social contexts, but also in ways that position themselves and

others throughout the process.

Even seemingly passive activities like reading involve active and complicated negotiations of meaning (Barthes, 1977; Winters, 2004). Negotiations can be realized internally, as for example as an author reads a book, plans an event, makes a goal, or calculates a set of numbers. They can also be realized externally, as for example how authors situate themselves in a room or discursively position another person.

#### *2.2.3.3 Production*

Production realises meaning. It physically articulates texts or conveys information (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001). It moves authors from the realm of conception or mental interpretation into the realm of physical expression or representation. Here authors can use a range of modes (e.g., spoken language, movement, singing, written language, drawing) to realize their understandings. Production, like the other assembled actions, is always active. It may or may not be intricately connected to dissemination. For example, an author who stands on a theatrical stage delivering lines is producing a text and simultaneously disseminating it, whereas an author who sits alone writing in a journal is still producing a text but may chose not to disseminate it. These assembled actions are intricately tied to the semiotic potentials of each mode.

#### *2.2.3.4 Dissemination*

Dissemination refers to the act of animating, sharing, or distributing information, such as the above example of an actor who animates a play on a theatrical stage, or a student who shows off a new web-page. Production can be synonymous with dissemination (e.g., a speaker, when talking, may at the same time realise and share information); at other times, dissemination is more stratified (e.g., a record company hires a distributor to disseminate CDs).

These are merely examples. The important idea here is not the degree of stratification, but rather that assemblage encapsulates social and relational action. As renowned dramatist Dorothy Heathcote (2009) explained to me, “Drama is based on social acts — there is no un-doing!” This idea can be extended beyond drama to all semiotic modes of authorship. While authorship can be re-made, it can never be undone. This is because assemblages are always in the making, “continuously evolving through our understanding of the world and our own bodies’ experiences of and participation of the world” (Ellsworth, 2005).

Moreover, an individual’s meaning-making is partial in relation to the whole of the social practice. At the same time as an author designs, negotiates, produces, or disseminates information, other people within the discourse or the situational context may be authoring their own representational and communicative modes. Here authorship re-assembles as individuals continually act in relation to others, deploying meanings and situating others within imagined storylines, and at the same time they position themselves in various ways within the discourse. Like most social practices, assemblages are always in the making.

#### **2.2.4 Authorship Offers Multimodal Potentials for Positioning**

Michel Foucault (1977), a French philosopher and activist, studied micro-power structures. In his book *Discipline and Punish* he examined power structures that governed Western societies since the Eighteenth Century, particularly in relation to prison and school systems. Here, Foucault demonstrated that people can be both empowered and constrained by discourse and that they have the ability to control the environment around them, including the behaviour of other people. Davies and Harré (1990) build on his ideas, showing how discourses give people the authorization to position themselves and others.

Most of the research on discursive positioning focuses on language-based modes of

discourse (Davies, and Harré, 1990; Holland et al., 1998). What, if any, discursive positioning opportunities do multimodal discourses offer in terms of authority and power across and within social practices?

In a study of youth literacy practices, Theresa Rogers, Andrew Schofield, and I (2006) found that multi-modal pedagogies grant some students more access to authority and agency because they privilege additional modes of communication other than the spoken and written word. In this way, multimodal discourses have the potential to empower those who struggle with written language; students can construe and express meaning in ways that work best for them (e.g. visually, kinesthetically, graphically). Stein (2008) discovered similar results. She contends that multimodal ways of communicating not only give access and agency to diverse groups of people, they also position these people in various ways within the situational and cultural contexts of their lives.

Kress (2003) also acknowledges that the production and reception of multimodal forms, in ways that go beyond alphabetic print, might constitute a new “restructuring of power in the field of representation and communication” (p. 17). He contends that a small percentage of the global population have been the gatekeepers or authorities for institutional authoring practices, controlling the production and dissemination of information throughout history, but that newer modes of communication are challenging these distributions of power. Educators, for instance, have held power in public domain: they decide who can or cannot be certified and also who is or is not allowed to produce and disseminate information through peer-reviewed journal publications. However, today’s more globalized multimodal communication lends agency to many more people, giving them access to a range of social domains and enabling them to widely and collectively distribute multimodal information through YouTube, print-on-demand, podcasts, blogs, “home-brew” video games, and so forth.

## 2.3 Research Questions

The theories and hypotheses that I have mentioned about authorship suggest one overarching research question: How can we understand Authorship as Assemblage across and within social contexts? Throughout this dissertation, this question is divided into three subquestions relating both to the topic at hand (i.e., a boy's out of school literacy practices, a picturebook collaboration, and playbuilding with youth) and the principles that undergird the Authorship as Assemblage Model: (1) How are authors both readers and writers of multimodal texts? (2) How do the nine authors that I observed multimodally assemble authorship within their situational contexts? (2) Within situated contexts, what social (inter)actions do authors do in order to interpret and communicate information? (3) How do these nine authors position/re-position themselves and others as they use these modes and in this particular context?

## 2.4 Conclusion

Multimodal theorists have acknowledged that the changes in our information economy require literacy scholars to rethink pedagogies and theories, re-evaluating multimodality and its implications.

The changes in the conditions surrounding literacy are such that we need to reconsider the theory which has, explicitly or implicitly, underpinned conceptions of writing over the last decades... Meaning making in writing and in reading both have to be newly thought about. (Kress, 2003, p. 35)

Yet "this emerging field of scholarship has not settled on a single definition, theory, or set of analytic tools, even if some approaches have nearly become synonymous with 'multimodality'" (Siegel and Panofsky, in press).

Literacy studies have taken a semiotic turn. Thinking about authorship in social and multimodal ways has everything to do with today's field of literacy education, for it not only challenges the ways that people think about print and other forms of communication, it also considers the logic that undergirds multimodal authorship. What social (inter)actions and semiotic resources are being employed? For what purposes? Is the text that is being created governed by time and sequence or by spatial organized arrangements? How does this mode of communicating affect the author's social agency or access to literacy?

Contemplating literacy in these broader ways acknowledges the assemblages of semiotic, social, and critical authorship, exploring both the resources and actions that are employed to contribute meaning and the ways that people access/deny and position one another within situated contexts. I believe that looking at authorship in these semiotic, social, and critical ways — what I am calling assembled authorship — could map onto, inform, and even influence literacy pedagogies. This “Authorship as Assemblage” model has the potential to extend these and other current multimodal theories, while at the same time acknowledging the permeable and fluid boundaries between semiotic and social systems in the contemporary semiotic landscape.

### **3 BEYOND TRANSMEDIATION: A CASE ILLUSTRATION OF A CHILD'S ASSEMBLED AUTHORSHIP**

*Authors do not function as isolated, disembedded souls producing disembedded text worlds. Rather authors move among different worlds, different space/time structures, including the imaginary worlds they are forming, the ongoing social world within which they are acting, and the wider world of experiences that they are drawing upon. (Dyson, 1987, p. 4)*

In a paper she presented at the Creating Word Conference in 1987, Dyson argued that authorship is an embedded interaction with multiple worlds, including the multimodal, the imaginary, the social, and the experiential. She demonstrated authorship doesn't have to begin in a classroom, or when a child begins a new task. Nor does it need to begin with pen and paper. And it is not distinct from play or from the sociocultural, historical, and multimodal contexts in which it is embedded. Authorship occurs throughout the day, everyday.

#### **3.1 Purpose of the Study**

In this case study of one child's multimodal authorship, I draw upon three multimodal perspectives — Social-Symbolic Mediation Theories, Semiotics and Social Semiotic Theories, and Discursive Positioning Theories — to ground the broader question about multimodal authorship “how can we understand authorship as assemblage across and within social contexts?” and to support the Authorship as Assemblage theoretical model that I propose. This model suggests four principles that undergird authorship (see chapter 1 for more details):

- 1) Authors are both external and internal meaning-makers; they include any person who contributes meanings to texts whether they be “declared, hidden, or withdrawn” (Barthes,

1977, p. 110);

- 2) Within situational contexts authors use and orchestrate a multiplicity of modes that are made up of different semiotic resources;
- 3) Authors continually shift among the social (inter)actions of designing, negotiating, producing, and disseminating as they interpret and communicate meaning;
- 4) Inside discursive practices, authors create storylines and subject positions. These subject positions situate everyone involved (including the authors themselves) in the situated practice.

In this case study I move the theoretical discussion to the practical realm, demonstrating how this model illuminates Authorship as Assemblage. Specifically, I explore how my son Leon,<sup>5</sup> then a six-year-old boy, authored his out-of-school world, orchestrating a multiplicity of semiotic modes and resources as well as discursive positions. Although I touch on all four of these principles throughout this case study, I specifically highlight two in this chapter: Principle #2, that within concrete contexts authors assemble semiotic modes and resources, drawing on the semiotic potential of each, and Principle #4, that inside discursive practices authors create storylines that position the authors themselves and others who are or were once participants in the situational context.

The purpose of this case study is two-tiered. First, I demonstrate that rich authorship, which is simultaneously socially, multimodally, and critically orchestrated, occurs each day, every day, outside of school contexts. Through vignettes and responses to the vignettes, I

---

<sup>5</sup> To ensure the privacy of minors, I've used pseudonyms for all of the children in this study.

examine and demonstrate the complexities of authorship, specifically the extent to which a six-year old child richly weaves between, layers upon, and embeds multimodal and critical meaning-making practices across multiple discourses and out-of-school contexts. Second, this study further illustrates sections of a theoretical model that I propose, termed Authorship as Assemblage.

This case study offers this new perspective of authorship that (1) emphasizes the recursive and complexly assembled nature of social, critical and semiotic authorship, (2) draws on distinct but overlapping lineages of multimodal theory, and (3) interweaves multimodal perspectives with a critical discourse perspective. I believe the Authorship as Assemblage approach may expand researchers' and educators' conceptions of authorship, so that they can better understand and facilitate students' abilities to garner, interpret, create, and share their ideas through a range of semiotic and social actions. I offer these points of inquiry for this case study: (1) How does the six-year-old boy in this study multimodally assemble authorship within his situational contexts? (2) What are the semiotic and social potentials of the modes and resources that he chooses? And (3) how does he position himself and others within these discursive practices?

### **3.2 Authorship in Out-of-School Contexts**

Beyond the three theoretical perspectives I laid out in chapter two, another multimodal perspective should be mentioned here: authorship in out-of-school contexts. Multimodal researcher Kate Pahl (2002) argues that while children's schooled meaning-making practices are "highly researched and visible," children's authorship at home is often ignored or discarded (p. 145). A child's home life is intrinsically connected to her multimodal authorship and to her social worlds. Other scholars (Hull & Schultz, 2001; Kendrick, 2005; Kendrick & McKay, 2004) have argued this as well, stating the home is not only intimately connected to the meanings

children produce, but that it shapes children's in-school learning and the ways they see themselves and others as meaning makers. Authorship in out-of-school contexts and schooled pedagogies are inextricably intertwined. For these reasons, there needs to be more rigorous theoretical frames and researched studies that examine children's multiple communicative practices in the home and community (Pahl, 2002).

### 3.3 The Study Context

During the summer of 2006 I had the opportunity to observe and collect data on my son. I observed Leon for a week, keeping detailed research notes (both in the moment and reflective), interviewing him, collecting documents, taking screen shots of his computerized authorship, and video-taping when possible.<sup>6</sup> In order to make these observations and write the vignettes that follow, I took a "child as informant" stance (Harste et al., 1984), observing, conversing, and asking questions along the way but at the same time allowing Leon to guide the study.

I chose Leon for several reasons. First, I wanted to explore my assumption that young children are adept authors outside of school who continuously assemble/re-assemble their understandings throughout their social lives. Because I live with Leon, I am aware of some of his background connections and previous "utterances" (Bakhtin, 1981). Second, at the time of this

---

<sup>6</sup> There are few video-taped segments in this case study for three reasons. First, because my video camera needs to be plugged in, I found this way of capturing the data cumbersome and inauthentic. Second, the narrative approach allowed me to observe from a variety of positions and multimodal perspectives (e.g., as his mother who could discuss ideas with him, as a scrapbooker who could collect his documents, as an artist who copied his drawings). Third, Leon acted differently when the camera was on, as though he was performing for the camera rather than simply making-meaning.

study, Leon had recently learned how to compose ideas through print (i.e. encode words) and he knew about constructing ideas through other modes as well. I was curious to see which semiotic decisions he would make in order to communicate his ideas. And third, as his mother I have an interest in understanding him better, knowing which semiotic resources appeal to him and how he positions himself and others through discourse.

Leon is a sensitive and thoughtful boy who loves playing with Lego, reading books, gaming on the computer, and writing in his journal. He lives in a urban environment in Western Canada in a one-bedroom apartment with his mother (me), his father, Jonah, and his younger sister, Kenzie. Both Jonah and I are very involved with his education; we make ourselves available to help him whenever the need arises. His teacher told me that Leon is at “the top of his class in academics” and that “he is a leader on the playground.” His report cards support these claims. Leon has many friends, with whom he loves to talk and play, but he also is quite content to play on his own.

### **3.4 Method**

I chose an exploratory case study approach (Stake, 1995), in which the fieldwork and data collection were undertaken prior to making any hypotheses about the Authorship as Assemblage model. I chose this approach because I was (and still am) continually developing and refining this model. Moreover I was interested in a narrative research method that captured both the minute details of Leon’s authorship and the broader social contexts and discourses with which he interacts.

During the week that I systematically collected data, Leon spent much of his awake time authoring.<sup>7</sup> I chose to organize the data sequentially around a theme emerging from the study itself: the loss of a tooth. I use a series of vignettes as a way to anchor a detailed exploration of his meaning-making within and across a range of contexts. Following each vignette, I include a response speaking to the broader research question mentioned above: how can we understand Authorship as Assemblage across and within social contexts? Next, I summarize Leon's discursive events and, drawing on the theoretical and analytical frames (see section 3.5 below), I analyse how he assembles modes and semiotic resources, the semiotic affordances and limitations of these assemblages, and how he discursively positions himself and others in order to interpret and actualize meaning with social contexts. These vignettes and their responses are followed up by a broader discussion of the Authorship as Assemblage theoretical model.

### **3.5 The Analysis Frame**

Drawing from the work of Barthes (1977), Bakhtin (1981), Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001), Baldry and Thibault (2006), Davies and Harré (1990), and to some extent the work of Hamilton (2000), I have compiled an analysis frame that speaks to the Authorship as Assemblage Model as a whole (see Appendix A for the entire frame or see Table 3.1, Analysis Frame for Multimodality, to see how parts of this frame apply).

The following sections of the frame pertain to this case study:

---

<sup>7</sup> As Leon's parents, Jonah and I are constantly involved in collecting data about our children. In essence, the week was a chance to put what we already knew under a microscope.

**Table 3.1: Analysis Frame for Multimodality**

Discursive Event	Principle #2 Semiotic Resources		Principle #4 Discursive Positions	
	Semiotic Resources:	Semiotic Potential	Of self: Of others:	Structured Routines e.g., Who is eligible, rules of engagement

- **Discursive Event:** any occasion where multimodal discourse is authored/assembled (designed, negotiated, produced, or disseminated) among participants and within concrete situational contexts (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001).
- **Semiotic Resources:** The orchestrations of semiotic resources within discourses and situated social contexts. More specifically, the semiotic resources function together intersemiotically and intrasemiotically (Baldry & Thibault, 2006).
- **Semiotic Potential:** The potential (affordances and limitations) arising from the perceivable properties of a mode or a semiotic resource (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001).
- **Positions Self:** How, within a discourse, Leon psychologically or physically situates himself (i.e. socially, culturally, economically, politically) in both visible and hidden ways (Davies & Harré, 1990).
- **Positions Others:** How, within a discourse, Leon psychologically or physically situates other participants (i.e. socially, culturally, economically, politically) in both visible and hidden ways (Davies & Harré, 1990).

- **Structured Routines and Pathways:** understandings about how specific literacy events work, including routes that facilitate and regulate actions, including rules of appropriacy, authority, and eligibility (who does/doesn't, can/can't engage in particular activities) (Hamilton, 2000).

That said, this case study was intended to be child-centered and exploratory. In order to design the study in this way, I didn't foreground this analytic frame during data collection. Rather, I let the data emerge inductively, reassessing the analytic frame as I went. In other words, although I later used this more structured analytic frame as a way to understand and disseminate Leon's authorship, this chapter was initially guided by the research questions and Leon's dynamic social, critical, and semiotic (inter)actions within the situational contexts.

### 3.6 The Study

#### **Vignette 3.1: Day 1: July 14, 2006**

Six-year-old Leon watches an *Arthur* cartoon (created by Marc Brown) on television. This animated series features Arthur, an anthropomorphized aardvark, as its protagonist. In this particular episode, entitled *Arthur's Tooth*, Arthur watches all of his friends lose their baby teeth while his teeth remain solidly in his mouth. To make things worse, his friends tease him and exclude him from their games (e.g. squirting water through the empty space where the tooth once was, or whistling). Arthur resists this teasing by trying to find ways to participate. In the end, Arthur accidentally gets bumped by a soccer ball, thereby making his tooth fall out.

Later during an interview following the program, Leon describes this cartoon as "serious business." He indicates that he knows the social pressures involved for those who have not yet lost a tooth, stating, "Kids will think that [he is] a baby" (Interview Notes, July 14, 2006).

### Response to Vignette 3.1

Like Arthur, Leon still has all of his baby teeth. Throughout his last year of school (kindergarten), Leon's anxiety about losing a tooth has been growing. Not only does he tell me and his father all about his friends who have lost their teeth, he also can be seen secretly wiggling his teeth in private.

Can wiggling teeth in private be considered authorship? As mentioned in the earlier chapters, definitions of authorship have broadened over the last half century so that they do not privilege linguistic forms of meaning-making but consider all communicative modes. Thus, thinking semiotically, these actions are both social signs that when placed within particular contexts (e.g., at home when he thinks no one is looking) become *semiotic resources* — the socially shaped actions, materials, and artefacts that authors use for meaning-making (Van Leeuwen, 2005). In this context, the act of gesture (wiggling a loose tooth) indicates that Leon wants his tooth to come out. The context in which he performs this act (wiggling his tooth in private) may also suggest that (1) the loose tooth is bothering him, or (2) that he wants the tooth to come out and perhaps he wants others to assume that the tooth became loose on its own. Obviously, he chooses this gestured semiotic resource because it has a physical consequence — his tooth may come out.

Watching the cartoon and constructing meaning from it constitutes an act of authorship. As demonstrated in the vignette above, Leon thinks about the cartoon later in the day. He re-interprets its meanings, mapping it onto his own sociocultural environment, as for example when he describes the cartoon as “serious business” (Interview Notes, July 14, 2006).

Drawing on Vygotsky's notion of mediation (1962; 1979) and Bakhtin's (1981) dialogic theories, researchers such as Harste, Woodward, and Burke (1984) and Dyson (1997) observed

that when young children authored storylines they also drew, dramatized, sang, and discussed their understandings, as well as contextualized these interpretations within their socially-lived worlds. Here, Leon's behaviours and his social relations are mediated both through his inner thoughts and his gestured output. His words and gestures around losing a tooth suggest that he is embedding social ideologies about popular culture and child development into his own life narrative, and in the process he is positioning himself and others and framing his own understandings of the world (Dyson, 1997; Marsh, 2003).

**Vignette 3.2: Day 2: July 15, 2006**

It is a summer day in Vancouver. Leon is eating an apple. He announces "It will make his loose tooth fall out" (Research Notes, July 15, 2006). When finished, he decides to read *Franklin and the Tooth Fairy* (Bourgeois & Clark, 1995), a picture book about a little turtle named Franklin who doesn't have any teeth. This fact upsets Franklin because, if he doesn't lose a tooth, he will never "grow up" and he will not "get a present" from the Tooth Fairy (p. 16). Franklin decides to trick the Tooth Fairy by putting a tooth-shaped white rock under his turtle shell. The Tooth Fairy, however, will not be outsmarted. In the end, Franklin's parents give him a present to celebrate his growing up.

Leon laughs out loud. He thinks it's funny that Franklin tried to outsmart the Tooth Fairy. He blurts out, "The Tooth Fairy would never fall for *that* joke!" (Research Notes, July 15, 2006).

He emphasizes the word "that." I stop doing the dishes and ask, "Oh yeah. Why not?"

"Because tooth fairies are smart and magical" (Research Notes, July 15, 2006).

This conversation reminds me of a set of pictures that were recently emailed to me. I ask Leon if he wants to see some pictures of his friend Olson.

Leon runs over to the computer. The subject line for the e-mail reads, "And then there were none." It shows Leon's friend Olson smiling a gummy toothless grin. Olson had apparently

lost his four front teeth in one week. Leon laughs, then tries to wiggle his own loose tooth with his tongue, "No one will think he's a baby," he says (Research Notes, July 15, 2006).

As I return to the dishes. Leon looks at the emailed picture again.

He cheers, "Hey mom look! It's gonna fall out soon!" He pushes at a loose tooth with his tongue until it twists forward and sits awkwardly in his mouth.

### **Response to Vignette 3.2**

Leon moves intersemiotically between eating, reading, talking, and observing. His responses to the book and the emailed picture are rooted in the social discourses and popular cultures he has experienced at school and by through accessible media such as computer games, books, or television. He is performing social and semiotic (inter)actions here — psychological activities and social behaviours — in order to mediate communication (Harste et al., 1984). I punctuate this term as "(inter)actions" to acknowledge the dialogic and reciprocal relationships that enter into every social action (Bakhtin, 1981). With his "No one will think he's a baby" sentence and his wiggling of the tooth with his tongue responses, he produces and disseminates meanings that speak to and position him within the larger discourses of which he is a part. It appears as though he is comparing himself to Olson, echoing an idea that he seems to believe: kids are babies until they lose their baby teeth. This example resonates with the semiotic and sociolinguistic ideas that Michael Halliday theorized in 1978. Drawing on earlier semioticians like Roland Barthes (1970) and Ferdinand de Saussure (1974) and sociolinguists like Basil Bernstein (1971; 1973; 1975) and Dell Hymes (1969), Halliday suggested that sign systems function and often get taken up in social contexts. He writes:

A child learning language is at the same time learning other things through language — building up a picture of the reality that is around him and inside him. In this

process, which construal of the semantic system in which the reality is encoded. In this sense, language is a shared meaning potential, at once both a part of experience and an intersubjective interpretation of experience. (1978, pp. 1-2)

In his theory, Halliday argues that language (and I would argue any other mode) goes beyond simply expressing personal meanings, it also actively symbolizes a person's social world (e.g., through dialects and registers). It is both a functional instrument for communication (social semiotic meaning-making) and a way of representing larger social systems. In this vignette, Leon is both expressing himself by producing and disseminating meanings through gestural and linguistic resources, and he is also interpreting his contextual world by designing and negotiating the social meanings of the picture through social (inter)actions.

As Leon looks at the emailed picture he might also be creating his own storyline, positioning himself as the boy who has never lost a tooth and Olson as the boy who has lost four teeth. Davies and Harré (1990) suggest that positioning is a social phenomenon that is jointly created between the authors of any discourse.<sup>8</sup> Within concrete occasions of discourse, people make sense of their own positions in the world in relation to the positions of others (Holland et al., 2001). For example, humans hold inner conversations where they construct storylines based on the available discourses and their own past experiences.

It is important to note that, as a researcher and as his mother, I am not neutral in this process. Although not purposefully, I was also positioning Leon within this particular discourse, for I showed him the photo of Olson. Here, though I was a “withdrawn participant” — a less

---

<sup>8</sup> These scholars define discourse as an institutionalised use of language and language like sign systems (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 45).

visible author who was involved in creating meaning and contributing to the meaning-making within the social contexts — I was unconsciously asking him to negotiate his imagined social relationships with Olson, thereby positioning him and Olson in particular (Barthes, 1977, p. 111). This resonates with an idea that Hamilton (2000) and Pahl (2008) offer, that literacy practices are often informed by “less visible” participants and narratives. Indeed, there is a strong relationship between the meanings that people construct and the hidden social practices that go unnoticed. My participation in the event and the emailed picture become a literacy artefact that I offered, what Dyson (1997) calls “a cultural symbol,” that will inevitably link to and shape future social events and meaning-making.

### **Vignette 3.3: Day 3: July 16, 2006**

The next day — a hot summer day — Leon, his baby sister, and I go to the beach to meet friends and have a play date. I bring the water squirters. Leon and a friend play water fight. Leon, avoiding a solid soaking, dodges and starts to fall. He quickly moves his knee forward to catch himself but ends up hitting his mouth on his knee. A gush of blood drips downward and soaks into the sand. Leon looks up panicked, then he touches his mouth and notices that his tooth is missing. His eyes widen. He excitedly points to his blood-soaked mouth, and begins gesturing his (what seems to be joyful) message. My friends and I grab towels and run to Leon. I am not sure whether to be worried or pleased. At a loss for words and with a mouthful of blood, Leon continues to point out his good news. Then, suddenly, his smile turns into a look of fear. He states that he needs the tooth so that he can give it to the Tooth Fairy (Reflective notes, July 16, 2006). Then he falls to his knees, frantically sifting through the sand. He repeats himself, saying something like “If I don’t find it, the Tooth Fairy won’t come!” My friends and I try to help him, but it is no use; there are thousands of tooth-shaped white rocks.

On the walk back to the car, Leon picks up a small white rock.

I ask Leon what he is doing.

When we reach Sandy's house Leon immediately asks for a pencil and a piece of paper. He draws a map, complete with a symbol to indicate north, south, east and west (see Figure 3.1). The map includes the places that are important to Leon, including his own house in what he calls "the city," Sandy's house, and (most importantly) an X to mark the spot on the beach. He also indicates the route that the Tooth Fairy should take. Creating this map calms Leon. "At least now she will know where to go and even if she can't read the map at least I can go back to the beach to find my tooth" (Research Notes, July 16, 2006).

### **Response to Vignette 3.3**

Leon's excited reaction to his tooth being missing relates to his social understandings of what it means to lose a tooth. Perhaps he has created a new storyline: now he is positioned as a kid rather than "a baby" (Research Notes, July 15, 2006). At first he shares these understandings through gesture, excitedly pointing to his blood-soaked mouth. This is an apt mode since his mouth is bleeding and he can't talk well. However, once he realizes though that the tooth is lost and Tooth Fairy might not come, he adds language as a semiotic mode. Gestures don't seem to be specific enough, for he is not only indicating his discontent with the situation (not finding the tooth), he is also filling in information about the Tooth Fairy — ideas that are less concrete in this situational context.

Marjorie Siegel (1984), while working on her dissertation *Reading as Signification*, observed that students moved between multiple modes during reading. She found that their ability to take understandings from one symbol system and move them into another offered students more opportunities to engage with texts and to be more generative and reflective in their meaning-making (p. 456).

Siegel's research resonates with another concept suggested by Pippa Stein (2008) called

“Semiotic Chains” (p. 39). She and other researchers (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Kress, 1997; Pahl & Rowsell, 2006) recognize that people fluidly transfer meanings, putting them into different modes, to create chains of interconnected meaning-making across a range of social contexts.

Siegel’s and Stein’s research demonstrates that different modes of meaning-making, when used together, can advance students’ meaningful constructions of knowledge. However, their research doesn’t demonstrate the extent to which meaning-making can be recursive and continuously re-assembled in the mind of and through the actions of a meaning-maker. Here, although Leon is re-thinking a similar topic he has thought about earlier, his combinations of gestures, words, facial expressions, and so forth convey different ideas about losing a tooth. Leon does not move linearly through the modes simply making connections, rather he layers, embeds, hybridizes, and blends semiotic resources, social (inter)actions, and positions in linear, recursive, and meshed together ways to construct new assemblages of authorship.

Later, when Leon wanted the Tooth Fairy to know where his tooth was, he drew a map (Figure 3.1). This could be because Leon has seen others use maps before, or it could be because he knows that maps afford spatial information. But so do pictures. Why then did Leon choose to draw a map rather than a picture? This is where the “functionality” of each system becomes important (Halliday, 1978; 2006). I believe that Leon chose to draw a map rather than a picture for two reasons. First, he needed to send a message about the exact location of the tooth. He did not need to show a picture of any beach, as a drawing might afford, rather he needed to show one specific beach. Because maps embed both pictorial and linguistic semiotic resources into one layered or hybrid system, Leon could convey to his audience (the Tooth Fairy) the exact location of his tooth. Second, Leon used the map to emphasize a spatial relationship, specifically where his home was in relation to the beach, so that the Tooth Fairy could find her way. Thus the map itself also affects Leon’s positioning. Dyson (1997) writes:

Children have agency in the construction of their own imaginations — not unlimited, unstructured agency but agency nonetheless. They appropriate cultural material to participate in and explore their worlds, especially through narrative play and story.  
(p. 181)

His assertive stance within the discourse (writing directions to help the Tooth Fairy or himself find the tooth) lends Leon agency, moving him away from a place of helplessness (a boy who lost his tooth) toward a place of empowerment (a boy who has the tools that will help him locate his tooth).

**Vignette 3.4: Day 3: July 16, 2006**

At Sandy's house Leon plays with his friends. He relays Arthur's story to them and shows how he can put a straw in the space the tooth left when he drinks his water.

That evening, Leon's thoughts go back to the Tooth Fairy. "Do you think she'll come?" He appears upset that he has no way to communicate with her.

"She'll come," I say.

Unsatisfied, Leon composes a letter (see Figure 3.2). He looks at me intermittently, his face hopeful. At times he bites his lip or places his tongue in the empty space where his tooth was.

Figure 3.2: Letter to the Tooth Fairy

To: ~~The~~ He TOOTH FAIRY  
 I AM SORRY I DIDN'D  
 TELL YOU WHEN IT  
 HAPPENED BUT I  
 WANT TO TELL YOU  
 NOW I LOST MY  
 TOOTH ON JERRIKO  
 BEACH CAN YOU FIND  
 IT AND GIVE ME  
 A REWARD

(To: The Tooth Fairy I AM SORRY I DIDN'D TELL YOU WHEN IT HAPPeNeD BUT I  
 WANT TO TELL YOU NOW I LOST MY TOOTH ON JeRRIKO BEACH CAN YOU FIND it  
 AND give Me A ReWARD)

Then he carefully folds the map and the letter and puts them under his pillow.

### Response to Vignette 3.4

Hodge and Kress (1988) argue that authorship can not be set apart from the contexts in which it exists. They go on to say that communication, of whatever form, is always embedded with other social meanings and actions. The vignette above illustrates this idea. Typically, children in Canada put their tooth under their pillow in order to claim a reward from the Tooth Fairy. Leon, being a child from this culture, wrote “CAN YOU FIND It AND give Me A ReWARD.” Leon knew this tradition not only from multiple media such as television shows, books, and videos, but also from the dialogues he had experienced and re-authored in his own mind (e.g., talking to friends, seeing emailed pictures). His authorship practices are both ingrained in the systems of discourse in which he engages and reauthored through the discourses he realizes. At the same time as he is designing meanings and coming to understand the discourses in which he participates, he is also shaping his own social (inter)actions with the world —designing, negotiating, producing, and disseminating meaning (Bakhtin, 1981; Dyson, 1997; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001).

To ensure the Tooth Fairy’s arrival, he chose to write a letter. Why did Leon write a letter instead of perhaps acting out a play, or drawing a picture to the Tooth Fairy? I believe that he chose to write a letter for several reasons. First, he is familiar with the genre of letter writing. He has written to and received letters from his grandparents, and he had recently just read the story of *Franklin and the Tooth Fairy*, where he saw that the Tooth Fairy does read children’s letters. Another reason is because he knew how to encode words, therefore writing a letter was something he could do. If perhaps he didn’t know the alphabetic code, he may have chosen another more accessible semiotic system (e.g. pictorial) or a different mode of production (e.g. dictating the letter to me). At this point in time, though, he could position himself as a writer. Third, writing affords evidence of its occurrence. There is a permanence about the written text

that can not be attained from more ephemeral semiotic modes such as play or drama (Halliday, 2007 [1979]). And because the Tooth Fairy was not there yet, he was unable to simply have a spoken conversation with her. Yet a picture of the event would have also offered evidence. Why then didn't he choose a pictorial system? Perhaps a picture might not have offered the specific meaning he desired. Again, he needed to address the Tooth Fairy, not an elf fairy or a flower fairy. Also, pictorial systems draw on the semiotic resources of layout and image to afford immediate spatial meanings to viewers. Here Leon did not need this immediacy. In fact, in this context, immediacy could be seen as a limitation for Leon, seeming "too polysemous" or too open for definite interpretation (Barthes, 1977). The letter allowed him to (1) address a specific reader (the Tooth Fairy), (2) communicate his emotional thoughts, (3) evoke the action of his story, (4) orient his reader, and most importantly (5) persuade his reader in his absence. It might also be argued that Leon was leaning on the rhetorical strength of language to enhance his argument.

Baldry and Thibault (2006) hypothesize that in any text there will be more than one semiotic resource at work. They call this the "Resource Integration Principle." For example, within Leon's letter, words are embedded into visual and linguistic clusters that communicate meaning (see Figure 3.3).

**Figure 3.3: Semiotic Potential of Leon's Letter to the Tooth Fairy**

Evidence of a Written Letter Text	Affordances of a Written Letter Text
<i>To: The Tooth Fairy</i>	1) Address his reader: <i>Leon addresses a specific reader — the Tooth Fairy.</i>
<i>I AM SORRY I DIDN'D TELL YOU WHEN IT HAPPeNeD BUT I WANT TO TELL YOU NOW</i>	2) Communicate his emotional thoughts: <i>Leon explains that he forgot to tell (perhaps by writing a letter) the Tooth Fairy about losing his tooth earlier in the day and that he has a purpose for telling her now.</i>
<i>I LOST MY TOOTH ON JeRRIKO BEACH</i>	3) Evoke the action of his story: <i>Leon evokes a scene, describing the movement</i>
<i>CAN YOU FIND It AND give Me A ReWARD</i>	4) Persuade his reader: <i>He asks the Tooth Fairy to help him find the tooth and to give him a reward.</i>
<i>FROM: Leon</i>	5) Orient his reader: <i>So the Tooth Fairy knows who to give the reward to, Leon offers information about who wrote the letter.</i>

As a reader of this text, your eyes locate the clusters of words. You negotiate these clusters (not always in conscious ways), fill in the gaps, and create meaning: a contribution which, ultimately, offers the reader the role of author. Here, Leon clusters the information and frames the words on the page in a particular way in order to convey specific meanings. And at the same time, he has positioned the reader as a co-author (Davies and Harré, 1990). Theorists such as Barthes (1977), Bakhtin (1981; 1986), and Davies and Harré (1990) suggest that every bit of

authorship is, in actuality, re-authorship. Barthes (1977) writes:

A text is a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is the tissue of quotations... The writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings... (p. 146)

Leon's letter makes reference to prior assemblages from his lived social worlds. Here he "scavenged" from himself, creating what Dyson (2003) calls a "complex gestalt" of cultural authorship (p. 5).

In a previous vignette I mentioned transmediation, the process of moving from semiotic system to another in order to create more generative understandings (Siegel, 1995). Harste and other educational theorists (Berghoff et al., 2000; Eisner, 1998; Gallas, 1994; Semali, 2002) acknowledge that transmediation offers children different potentials for meaning-making. When children borrow diverse modes of representation for meaning-making they also borrow diverse ways of thinking (Eisner, 1998). Yet, the extent to which this theory speaks to some multimodal data may not yet be fully realized because modes of meaning-making still tend to foreground one semiotic system at a time. The idea is that people move from one unified semiotic system to another. Yet here, as the data demonstrate, Leon not only draws on the linguistic mode when he writes a letter, he is also clustering the words on the page to create a layout. He is employing other resources at the same time (e.g., gestures, facial expressions, the cadence and tone of his voice). Dyson (1982; 1997, 2003), Gallas (1994), Harste et al. (1984), and others demonstrate that children sing, dance, and act out their understandings as they write stories. Beyond moving from mode to mode, children are also assembling multiple resources in semiotic, social, and critical ways. They move in multidimensional ways "intersemiotically" and "intrasemiotically" — between and inside texts — layering their understandings through a multitude of semiotic

modes and resources, while at the same time interacting with their social environments and subject positions (Fei, 2006).

Other modal layers that Leon evokes might include the drama of the scene. For example, his words “I’m sorry that I didn’t tell you...” employ the literary and theatrical device of foreshadowing. We know that something bad has happened even before he tells us directly. In addition to embedding the theatrical mode, Leon embodies movement as he produces his letter. For example, he feels with his tongue the empty space in his mouth as he writes, he bites his lip, and he moves his face. This idea resonates with Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2001) and Baldry and Thibault’s (2006) idea that no mode is monomodal.

**Vignette 3.5: Day 4: July 17, 2006**

Leon’s father told me that the next morning Leon reached under his pillow and found an envelope with his name on it. Apparently he jumped out of bed and tore into the envelope. Inside were a two dollar coin and a letter. Leon cheered and then read the letter (see Figure 3.4).

**Figure 3.4: Letter From the Tooth Fairy**

*Dear Leon,*

*I found your tooth at Jericho Beach.*

*Thank you for the map and for the letter too.*

*Here is your reward.*

*Love: The Tooth Fairy*

*p.s. I like teeth like yours — the ones without  
cavities. So keep brushing and flossing.*

Later that day, when I arrived home from work, I was greeted by a dancing son who was still holding his reward. He held up the money and sang a happy tune (see Figure 3.5). I smiled and commented on how lucky he was to get that much money.

Leon responded, "Well, which would you want? A rotten apple or a good healthy tasty apple?"

"The good one," I say.

"Well the same is true with the Tooth Fairy. I got \$5 because I kept my tooth clean and healthy." (Reflective Notes, July 17, 2006)

**Response to Vignette 3.5**

When I arrived home on day four, Leon was eager to share his morning events. To convey this information, he simultaneously demonstrated, sang, and danced these meanings. I would argue that he orchestrated at least three modes (dance, song, visual) at one time before he used language. And because all modes are made up of more than one of semiotic resource, he assembled multiple semiotic resources (rhythms, pitch, gestures, facial expression, and so forth)

at the same time.

To remember this tune, I immediately called a musician friend and sang it onto her voice mail. She then transcribed it for me as his song did not include lyrics (see Figure 3.5).

**Figure 3.5: A Gleeful Tune**



Van Leeuwen (1999) suggests that musical semiotic systems have a great potential to demonstrate mood. He writes:

[Music] can carry visceral knowledge (such as emotional messages) that has the potential to be felt in deeply intuitive and embodied ways. (Van Leeuwen, 1999)

I believe that music-making affords visceral meanings because it physically vibrates the vocal cords (when producing and disseminating lyrics) or the inner ear bones and the eardrum (when playing an instrument, singing a song or interpreting the sounds) and so forth. This can be a positive or a negative experience. For example, when you are dancing and enjoying music, it can feel like it not only surrounds you but is part of you. When you don't want to hear something, it is sometimes difficult to get away from the sound — you can't simply *look away* or "close your eyes" as you might do with a visual mode.

Music, like all semiotic systems, also has its limitations (Van Leeuwen, 2005). For example, like pictorial systems, music has the potential to be “polysemous” — too open for definite interpretation (Barthes, 1977). Semioticians, Baldry and Thibault (2006) argue this is because musical systems depend solely on a symbolic mode of arbitrariness. In other words it can be difficult to portray exact meanings from a sender to a receiver. Yet in this context, with the multiplicity of resources that Leon assembled — the rhythms, layered with the pitch of his voice, the gestures of holding up the coin in combination with his dance moves, and then adding in the words — I understood precisely what he was communicating.

The song that Leon sang was a tune that demanded a response (especially when sung with the gestures he portrayed). So in addition to positioning himself as the informant, he positioned me in such a way that I could not help but give him a positive reaction: a smile. This particular tune contained familiar and “happy” melody patterns. The arrangements of pitch and the repetitive configuration of the notes were similar to other familiar, happy songs like *Happy Birthday* and *For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow*.

I am reminded of Bakhtin’s (1981) concept of “dialogism.” He writes:

...the dialogic nature of language is a social phenomenon that cannot be neutral and impersonal... but exists in other people’s contexts, serving other people’s intention.

(Bakhtin, 1981, p. 294)

A song, like any other semiotic resource cannot be neutral as culture and social contexts are always charged with meanings. Leon and I both live in a culture where songs holding quick, lively, and constant rhythms tend to feel happy. As demonstrated here, all semiotic systems impart the potential to frame our experience; we cannot escape the social, historical, and cultural worlds that we inhabit (Harste et al., 1984).

**Vignette 3.6: Day 5: July 18, 2006**

Leon realizes that he has forgotten to tell his grandparents, Nana and Bubba, about his lost tooth. He asks to call them, but they are at work. He will have to wait until they get home. But Leon can't wait. Instead he pulls out a piece of paper and tries to draw a picture of his tooth story. His picture is cluttered and filled with random pictures and words (e.g. Leon with his toothless grin, a beach-like scene, red marks "to show blood," he explains); a map similar to the one he drew earlier; a little elf-like girl with wings; and a \$2 coin. Leon huffs with frustration. He presses his lips together. His eyes fill with tears.

"What's the matter?" I ask.

Pointing, he complains "I don't like it. I don't have space. How can I tell it [his story] when I don't have space?" As he speaks his voice gets higher. By the end of the sentence his voice sounds like a mere squeak.

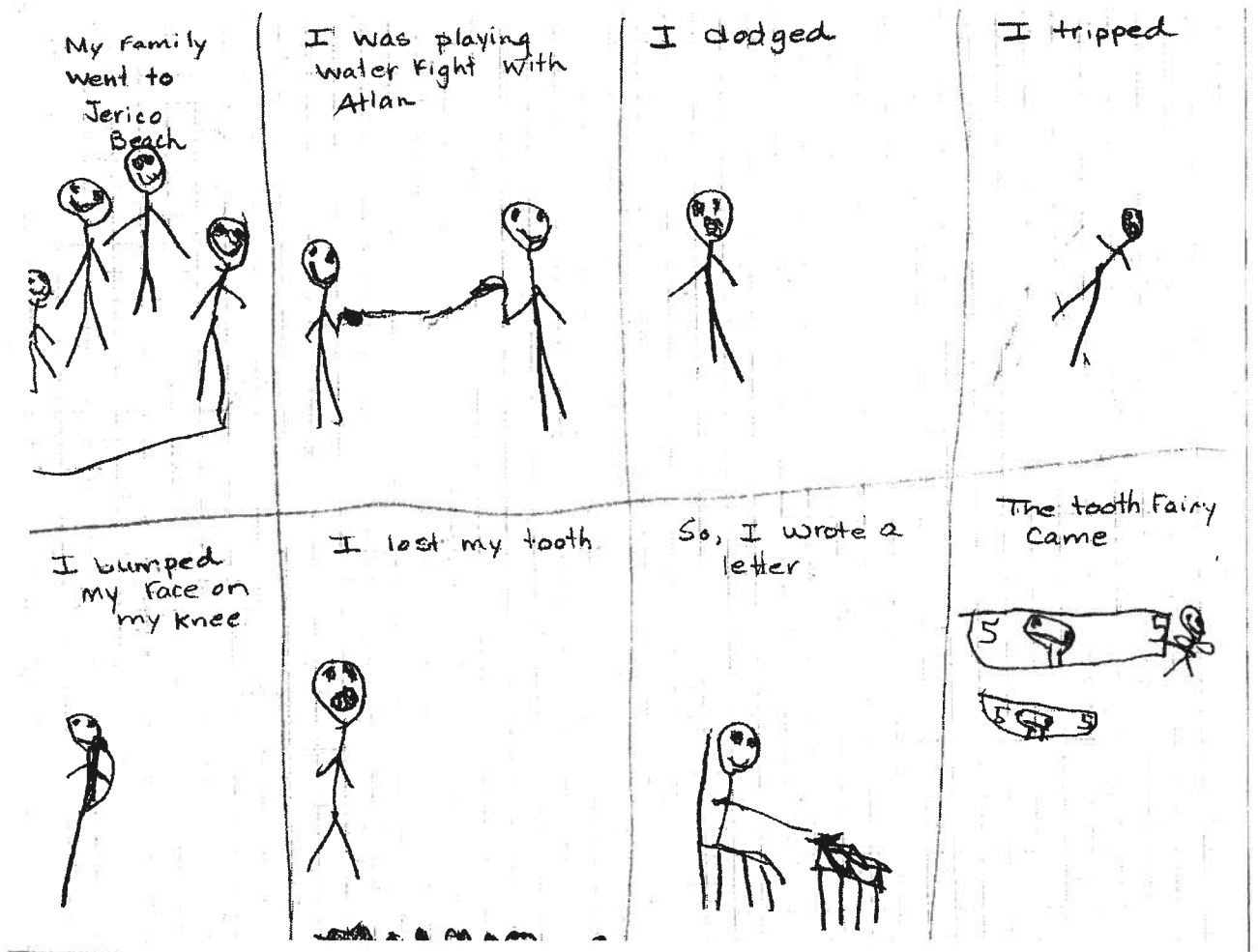
"It looks fine. I can see the whole story."

He pouts. "That's because you were there. Anyways, I don't like it!"

Then, Leon rips up the paper and puts it in the trash. I stare at him, confused. He grabs a second piece of paper.

He mutters something and then sits down again. He picks up a pencil and draws lines, charting out his paper into eight sections. He begins to draw a comic strip (see Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6: Comic Strip



When he is finished drawing the stick figures, he asks me to provide the lettering. He recites, pointing to the different frames:

1. My family went to Jericho Beach.
2. I was playing water fight with Atlan.
3. I dodged.
4. I tripped.
5. I bumped my face on my knee.

6. I lost my tooth.
7. So, I wrote a letter.
8. The Tooth Fairy came

Now satisfied, he places his comic strip beside the phone. This will remind him what to tell Nana and Bubba.

### **Response to Vignette 3.6**

It may appear in this vignette that Leon is using just two semiotic resources to express himself: pictures and words, but upon closer examination we can see that he is also calling on other resources as well, including gesture (e.g. pointing, ripping the paper) and music (e.g. disjunctive voice articulation, pitch movement, and volume). His modes of authorship are not distinct or categorized. They are blurred. The picture he designs, produces, and destroys becomes the inciting incident for a range of authored emotions through modes and semiotic resources. The jumbled sketch does not encompass the affordances that he needs: an organized way to represent and relate a story, particularly a step by step account of the event. It was clearly not the best choice for Leon. Feeling frustrated, he re-negotiated how he authored his ideas, and embodies gestures like pressing his lips together and layering in sound through huffs and growls.

Kress, Jewitt, Ogborn and Tsatsarelis (2001), in their exploration of modes used in the science classroom, found that gestures are more than simply behaviours; rather, they are active modal choices used to punctuate other texts, explore meanings, bring an entity into existence through action, demonstrate an idea, or communicate a feeling. In this case, Leon assembled modes together with a multiplicity of emotions, social actions within the social context.

Leon chose to re-author his ideas in a comic form (see Figure 3.6), a format that he thought was more suitable. As Baldry and Thibault (2006) explain, pictorial semiotic systems are partial.

Since they are organized spatially, not temporally, it is difficult to demonstrate temporal information through pictures alone (e.g. a sequence of events). Graphic devices such as a clock, arrows, or framing would probably have to be used to convey the sequences. On the other hand, linguistic systems are also limited because they tend to “homogenize” members or objects of particular class (Eisner, 1998, p. 14). For example, when we say “that is a tree,” we are suggesting that all trees are the same. Additionally, using only linguistic semiotic systems makes it tricky to demonstrate the social distances between people and objects or certain gestured movements (e.g. gaze). As Leon assembled multiple semiotic modes and resources he gained the affordances of each system and produced the specific meanings that he intended to communicate.

Throughout this exchange Leon positioned himself, me, and others (Nana and Bubba) into the storylines that he was creating. He wanted to be the informant who would tell his grandparents about the tooth. However, he needed a way to organize his thoughts. I didn’t fully realize how important this was to Leon at the time. So when I tried to help him solve his problem by taking on a supporter role — “It looks fine. I can see the whole story.” — he refused to participate. Instead he carried on in his own manner, making it clear to me that he was in charge and that he owned the experience. It wasn’t until later that I realized that he was positioning me as an outsider or a researcher.

### **Vignette 3.7: Day 7: July 20, 2006**

In the afternoon Leon plays a web-based edutainment program called *Webkinz* ([www.webkinz.com](http://www.webkinz.com)) on the computer. Here, he adopts a pet and takes care of it by buying it food, clothes, and furniture. This program offers hundreds of interactive activities: reading interactive storybooks, playing arcade games, completing employment jobs, going to tournaments, inviting friends over, and so on. Today Leon is creating a theatrical movie which, when programmed, will be performed on his computer screen. As he plays he talks to himself (and to me presumably). I transcribe his conversation during the event. Later, I

take screen shots, which are included below.

Leon sets up the theatre on his game and goes to initial set-up page (see Figure 3.7). Here he types in his movie title, "i lost my tooth." Then he chooses technical features such as the background setting, the colour of the sky, and the music. He decides on a cityscape and a dark blue cloudy sky. The music he picks is upbeat (similar to the theme song of the TV show *Seinfeld*).

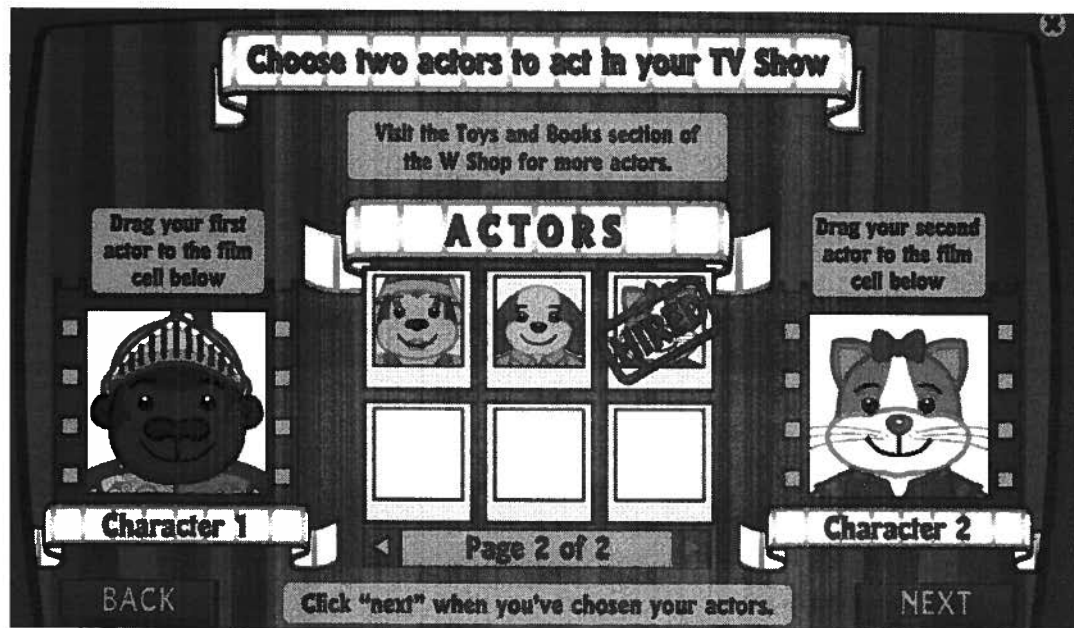
**Figure 3.7: Choosing a Movie Title, and Technical Features (e.g. setting, music)**



Leon says to me, "I'm going to choose a gorilla because he'll lose his tooth."

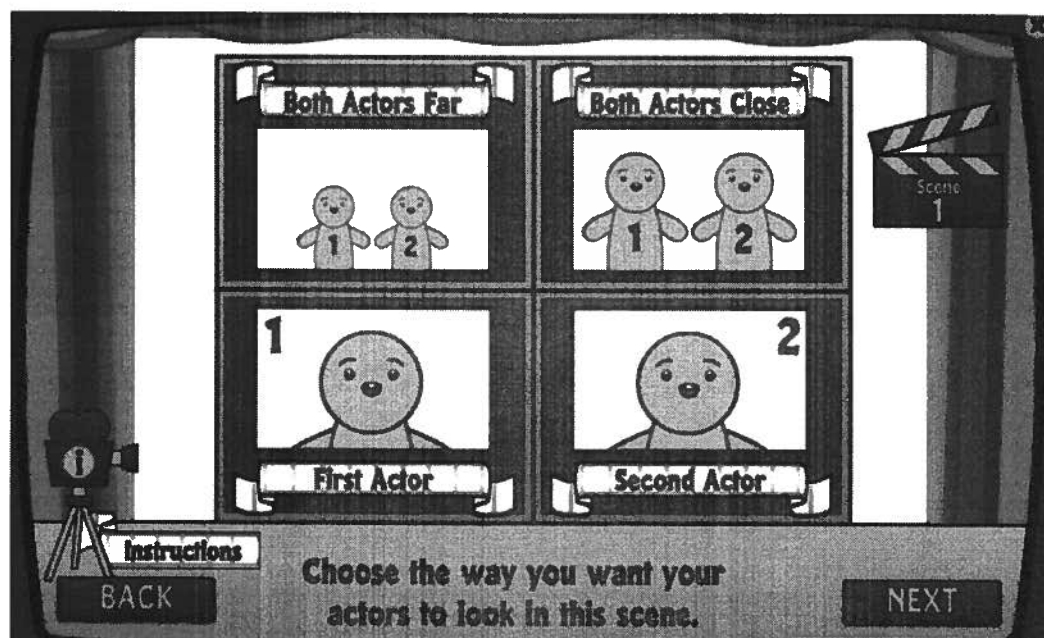
Next he hires his actors (see Figure 3.8).

Figure 3.8: Choosing the actors



He chooses a gorilla wearing an armoured knight suit and cat wearing a striped a tee-shirt and a bow in her hair. Now he is ready to compose scene one.

Figure 3.9 Choosing a Camera Angle



He looks through all of the camera angles (see one option in Figure 3.9). He picks an extreme close-up of the gorilla. All that can be seen is the gorilla's head and shoulders and the background setting (see Figure 3.10).

Next, he chooses the characters' emotions and types words in a speech bubble. He chooses a happy emotion and then writes in the gorilla's speech bubble, "my tooth is loos".

**Figure 3.10:** "[M]y tooth is loos[e]"



Leon is taken back to the same set-up page (see Figure 3.7). This time he chooses a close-up shot of the cat. Again he chooses a happy emotion. He types in the cat's speech bubble, "[D]id you hear [about] the gorilla[?] His tooth is loos[e]" But Leon is not satisfied with his writing. He tries different keys on the keyboard. He inputs and deletes several times. After a few minutes he sighs loudly.

Leon: *(to me)* How do you use the exclamation mark?

Me: How do you use it or how do you type it?

Leon: I mean type it.

[I show Leon how to type an exclamation mark.]

Leon: I can do it.

Leon types an exclamation mark at the end of his dialogue (see Figure 3.11).

**Figure 3.11: Did you hear about the gorilla?**

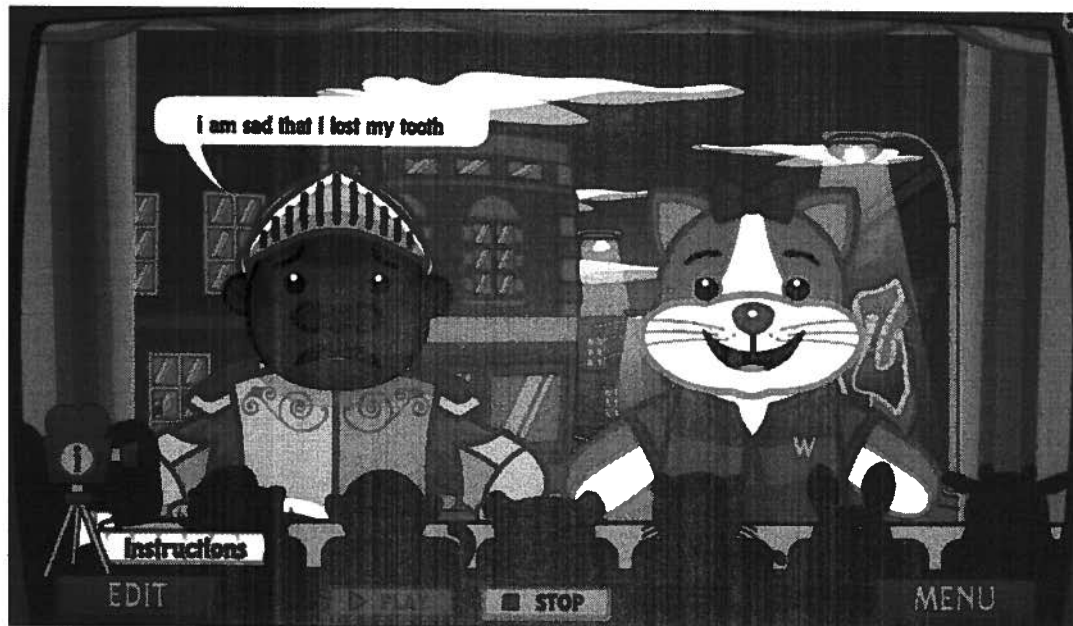


Next, Leon decides on a medium shot (both the gorilla and the cat are shown from the waist up) (see Figure 3.12). This medium shot allows Leon to now choose an action. He determines that the gorilla should be dancing and looking scared.

Leon: "Look, the gorilla is worried because he lost his tooth."

He types in the gorilla's speech bubble, "[I] am sad that I lost my tooth". The gorilla's dancing action combined with his sad face and his words makes the gorilla look panicked about losing his tooth.

**Figure 3.12: “[I] am sad…”**



The cat's response is "[I] want your tooth." (see Figure 3.13) Leon makes the cat smile and shake. She appears overjoyed.

**Figure 3.13: “[I] want your tooth”**



Leon: Look how exited she is! She's so excited that she can't stop shaking. (Leon laughs and imitates the cat's gestures).

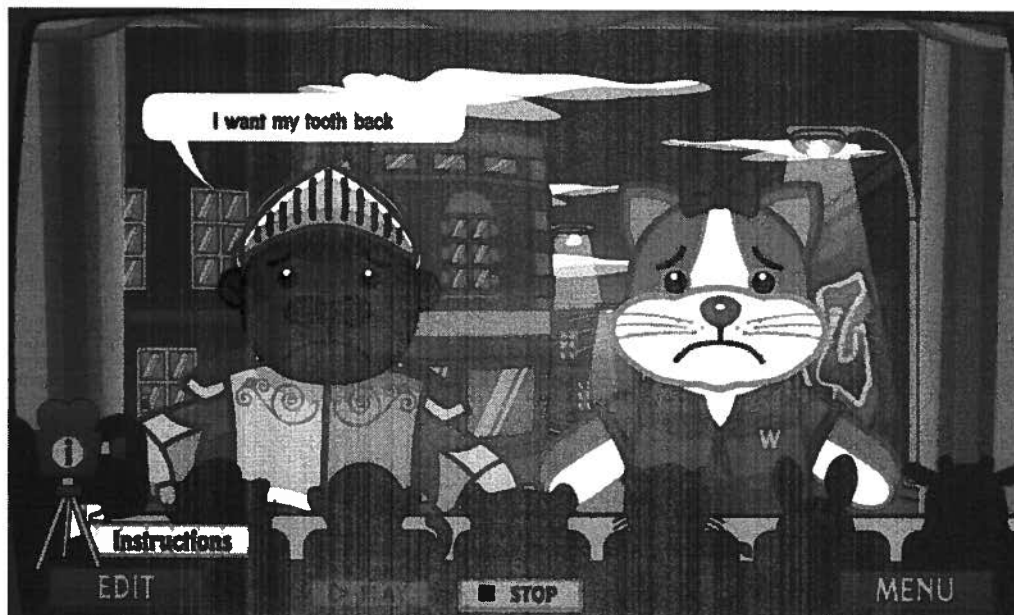
Leon gets the gorilla to say with a sad face, "[I] want my tooth back." Again he chooses a medium shot.

"Why did you choose that shot?" I ask.

"I need to show how their arms are moving. It didn't look good to go too close here because I couldn't show his arm waving. See?"

He goes back to the set-up page (Figure 3.7) and gives his cat character a sad expression and a waving action (see Figure 3.14). The waving, in combination with her sad facial expression make the cat look really distraught.

**Figure 3.14: "I want my tooth back"**



Next he types in the cat's speech bubble, "[I] have a loos[e] tooth too and i will have to give my tooth to you and i will get no money" (not shown here).

For the next scene, Leon chooses a medium shot so that both characters can be seen from

the waist up. On the gorilla's pull-down emotion menu he chooses happy. From the action menu he decides on the shaking gesture. He types into the gorilla's speech bubble, "[T]hen [I] will be happy" (not shown here).

Leon: (to me) "[The gorilla] thinks that is a good idea. He wants to have the teeth. Then he'll get some money."

**Figure 3.15: "[N]ow [I] will be sad"**



Leon chooses a sad face from the cat's emotion pull-down menu and a shaking action. He types in her speech bubble, "[N]ow [I] will be sad" (see Figure 3.15).

Leon: "She's giving up her tooth but she didn't have to do that. And now she is sad. She just shouldn't have said anything. Now look at her. She's shaking with sadness. (*laughing*) She sure is a whiner."

Leon types in his name as the director, sound, scenic, and light designer. He watches his movie seven times, saves it, and then turns the computer off.

**Response to Vignette 3.7**

Digital forms such as these afford the dynamic and simultaneous assembling of modes, including digital, movement, musical, pictorial, linguistic, and dramatic. Each of these modes individually generates its own distinctive meanings and encompasses its own semiotic resources (e.g., the pictorial device of the speech bubble indicates what the character is saying). Though it was interesting to see how Leon moved between these modes of meaning-making, the analysis still seemed less nuanced than what I wanted.

Investigating more deeply, I began to see that in addition to moving from mode to mode, Leon was also assembling — integrating, embedding, layering — multiple semiotic resources together in ways to relate to and affect one another. For instance, Leon assigned the gorilla dance-like gestures when this character was supposed to be feeling sad. This action seemed strange to me at the time, as characters do not usually dance when they are worried or sad. But when the gestures were layered with the sad facial expression and the words “[I] am sad that I lost my tooth,” the message was clearer. These resources when assembled together made the gorilla look panicked, as though he was floundering or overwhelmed. The meanings resulting from the overlapping semiotic resources trumped the sum of their parts. When orchestrating multiple semiotic resources in this way (i.e., through digitally animated modes), authors like Leon are given further opportunities to express themselves.

Turning to notions of positioning, authors are given chances to take on different positions when authoring through multiple modes. As people create discourse, they position themselves in terms of categories (e.g. I am a boy and I am not a girl) or in terms of storylines (I made this picture, therefore I am an artist) (Davies and Harré, 1990). Once located within an imagined category or storyline, they mediate and realize (i.e., author) their understandings from this perspective (Holland et al., 1998). For example, Leon decided that the gorilla, like himself, could

be a character who had lost a tooth. From Leon's perspective, he might have categorized the information in this way: I lost a tooth and the gorilla lost a tooth, therefore the gorilla and I share the category of mammals who have lost teeth. In this vignette, this category develops further into a storyline. For instance, since Leon was sad when he lost his tooth, he determines that the gorilla should be sad too. This may be, as he experienced, a common reaction to losing a tooth. Bakhtin terms this living-through-phenomenon "authoring" and explains: "We see not only our selves, but the world... we see the world by authoring it" (Holquist, 1990, p. 84).

Leon assumed other positions too, such as a film-maker, director, screenwriter, actor, sound designer, and as an expert web navigator. He successfully constructed a complex multimodal play without feeling overwhelmed. He also transitioned between and layered multiple modes (visual, tactile, linguistic, gestural) and semiotic resources (pictures, words, actions) with ease, and naturally assumed the author role. At the same time he was able to position me as a student of technology, as he could inform me about his digital meaning-making practices.

### **3.7 Children Assemble a Multiplicity of Modes and Semiotic Resources**

Over the last four decades, scholars from a range of fields have argued for broader, more socially complex, and integrated notions of authorship, notions that consider the child's social contexts and an array of semiotic modes (e.g., Bakhtin, 1981; Dyson, 1997; Eisner, 1998; Harste et al., 1984; Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Kress, 2003; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Siegel, 1995,

2006; Vygotsky, 1979).<sup>9</sup> These theories or studies — which hold interesting resonances with each other — challenge the privileging of language in meaning-making, suggesting that all communicative modes be given serious consideration and attention, not just language alone.

As further demonstrated in this case study, one reason for this challenge is that researchers have found that when children are encouraged to use multiple modes as a way to contribute to their own meaning-making they are offered more opportunities to engage with texts and to mediate and realise information in generative and reflective ways (Dyson, 1997; Siegel, 1995; Winters et al., 2006). Additionally, as shown by Pippa Stein (2008) and as suggested in this case study, it is natural for humans to communicate through more than one mode. All authorship is multimodal (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Stein, 2008). For these reasons, the concept of multimodality and its applications to authorship and pedagogy are significant, especially when it is used to deepen/broaden children's relationships with meaning-making.

Leon demonstrated that authors continually layer, embed, hybridize, and blend semiotic resources as they author their social worlds in order to interpret and actualize particular meanings. For example, Leon created a picture so that he could tell the story of how he lost his tooth to his grandparents. When the picture did not allow him to express his ideas in the way that he wanted, he created a comic instead. Leon intuitively felt that the picture wasn't working, and feeling frustrated he ripped it up. He needed a form that afforded both pictorial and linguistic modes, where he could integrate lines to frame each moment, pictures that showed where he was

---

<sup>9</sup> I would not go so far as to say that these perspectives that I draw upon are entirely commensurate with one another; that would imply that social semiotics has long been a North American tradition within education studies, when in reality it has not.

in relation to his peers and depicted his action, and allowed him to tell his story sequentially. His meaning-making was not linear; it was recursive and complex. He continually re-visited his ideas, building new assemblages of authorship that combined an array of semiotic resources, social (inter)actions, and subject positions.

The shift that I am suggesting here is subtle. Instead of looking at modes as linear, particularly the active and interconnected ways that humans interpret, actualize, and contribute to their own meaning-making, such as watching a television show, map-making, writing a letter, directing a film, and so forth, researchers can apply my Authorship as Assemblage model to examine the recursive and assembled ways that authors integrate, layer, hybridize, and embed social, critical, and social resources as they move across and within social contexts.

### **3.7.1 Children Position Themselves and Others within Discursive Practices**

Bakhtin (1981) offers the concept of dialogism, the idea that all authorship is part of a greater whole and that there is a constant interaction between all meanings, past, present, and future. These dialogic interactions not only shape the storylines that we imagine, but they help authors position themselves and others within these imagined storylines (Holland et al., 1998). For example, when Leon watched the *Arthur* television program or read the *Franklin and the Tooth Fairy* he noticed that the friends teased the character who had not yet lost a tooth. This is evident when he states that losing a tooth is “serious business” and later when he responds to the emailed picture of Olson by saying “No one will think he’s a baby” (Research Notes, July 15, 2006). Here Leon is authoring his position within a larger discourse. Bakhtin (1986) says this about dialogism:

He is not, after all, the first speaker, the one who disturbs the silence of the universe.

And he presupposes not only the existence of preceding utterances — his own and

others' — with which his given utterance enters into one kind of relation or another.

(p. 124)

Leon not only draws on the authorship of others, he also builds on them, creating renewed storylines about his own social contexts — imagined storylines that position himself and others within the discursive practices. For example, when Leon said “Kids will think that he is a baby” (Interview Notes, July 14, 2006), he might also have been thinking, *Kids will think that I am a baby*. Holland, Skinner, Lachicotte, and Cain’s Theory of Self Formation (1998) might suggest that as Leon articulates his own position he is also authoring his own self identity because “identities remain dependent upon social relationships and material conditions” (p. 189).

To go further, I would argue that Leon’s authorship was mediated through assemblages of social (relationships), semiotic (modes and resources), and critical actions (positioning himself and others) within concrete situations. In order to contribute to his meaning-making, Leon drew on dialogic (inter) actions, modes such as watching cartoons, reading books, and playing Webkinz as well as digital, linguistic, pictorial, and gestural resources available to him outside of school contexts, and the positions that he had imagined within his social environments. The integration of these interactions, positions, and modes of authorship, along with the semiotic resources he richly assembled, provided richly interwoven spaces of meaning-making that emphasized literacy practices, symbolic weaving, and discursive positioning.

Theories of discursive positioning argue that no text is made or interpreted in isolation from other texts (Holland et al., 1998). Leon is linked to his larger community. He not only draws on his experiences from the larger society, he took in and authored his own understandings of what it means to lose a tooth, relaying meanings back and forth between himself and his environment.

### 3.8 Conclusion

For nearly a week Leon authored an assemblage of understandings of what it meant to lose a tooth, demonstrating the multiple pathways to any one piece of knowledge (Dyson, 1997). The case study follows a large body of research that suggests young children are flexible, multimodal authors, who portray and enact the meanings that best suit their intentions and their broader social worlds (e.g., Dyson, 1997; Gallas, 1994; Harste et al., 1984; Kendrick, 2005; Kress, 1997). This study differs from these other studies in that it demonstrates authorship might be even more assembled than has previously been theorized. I suggest that Leon not only moved from mode to mode, realizing multimodal meaning in his social out-of-school worlds, he also fluidly authored a complex assemblage of semiotic resources and he drew upon his own dialogic experiences in order to position himself and others within imagined storylines. Meaning was carried differently by each semiotic resource Leon used and by each position he imagined. Furthermore, by assembling semiotic resources together, not one after another, Leon was given rich opportunities to re-author meaning and to position himself as an effective meaning-maker.

Within their social worlds, authors play out their multimodal understandings intuitively and in non-categorized, embedded and overlapping ways — through play, drama, song, art, language, numeracy — with natural ease, not fretting about which semiotic system they will use first. They mesh together semiotic resources, inevitably drawing on their past connections with the world, their present experience with the socio-cultural context, and with the semiotic systems available to them (Kendrick, 2003).

However, something happens when children enter school. Seemingly all at once, their expertise in weaving, layering, and embedding appears to be forgotten as schools continue to isolate and categorize learning and communicative systems (e.g. math class vs. language arts

class vs. visual arts class). These traditional views of authorship not only limit the understandings of researchers and educators — as stable views of authorship do not recognize and therefore can not analyze the complexities of multimodality within their participants' social worlds — they might also be disenfranchising children who come to school with complex and integrated ways of making sense of their worlds. Thinking about multimodality as assemblage is significant. First, it gives authors additional opportunities to re-author modes in flexible ways that suit their social contexts. Second, it offers researchers more nuanced and intrasemiotic understandings into children's authorship and assemblage patterns. In an ever-developing information economy where meanings are pluralized, infused with multiple modalities made up of semiotic resources (words, images, gestures, sounds, etc.) and social (inter)actions, children need multiple communicative pathways to participate in today's diverse, social, and information-laden worlds.

## 4 AUTHORIZING PICTURE BOOKS: ASSEMBLAGES OF MODES, SEMIOTIC RESOURCES, AND SOCIAL (INTER)ACTIONS

*My creative process starts with the manuscript. I create images right away from the words. The musicality of them, or how the action is written. I'm also focused on what the characters' surroundings are, and, as corny as it sounds — the feeling of the book. Because the feeling of a book isn't just visual, it's kind of like the words, the tone, the space, the angles — all of it, all mixed together. (Ben Hodson, illustrator of *Jeffrey and Sloth*, 2007)*

Show, don't tell. Keep the plot moving — make the story active and engaging for the reader. Explore the musicality of the language. And leave room for the illustrations. These are guidelines that many writers of picture books grapple with from the moment they touch the keyboard or begin to sketch, through the drafts and edits, to the moment the book is interpreted by a reader.

### 4.1 Purpose of Study

In this case study, drawing on *Jeffrey and Sloth* — a picture book that I wrote, Ben Hodson illustrated, and Maggie de Vries edited — I suggest that picture book authorship, like all authorship, is interpreted and realized through a multitude of semiotic resources and through the authors' social (inter)actions. In these ways authorship is multimodal, social, and critical. Here, I use the word author in the broadest sense, as any person who contributes to the text whether declared, hidden, or withdrawn.

Although children's literature scholars do a good job of constructing theories that investigate one of these perspectives or the other (e.g., how the semiotic resources are combined,

how to examine picturebooks in critical ways, or the author's process), few scholars, to my knowledge, have examined these three perspectives together, looking more closely at the socially practiced, critical, and semiotic nature of picture books. For example, on the one hand several people have written about their own process as children's authors (e.g., Atwood, 2002; Chambers, 1985; Ellis, 2000; Fitch, 2000; Little, 1987; Nodelman, 2008). These books are useful as they give insider perspectives into how the stories were constructed, and they often describe how these authors interact with the larger discourse of children's literature. However, most of this research is narrated from one person's point of view in the form of a biography or an autobiography. These personal accounts often underestimate the intricate social and critical relationships that are established throughout the publishing process. Additionally, with the exception of Chambers (1985) and Nodelman (2008), most of these biographies/autobiographies lack the academic rigour (especially the theory) that I am striving to achieve in this chapter.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, scholars like Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996; 2001) have constructed well-developed theories that look at how modes and semiotic resources assemble, including constructions of visual grammars or analysis frames that can be used to understand multimodal meaning-making. These are purposeful research tools that can guide multimodal transcription, analysis, and understanding. However, these tools tend to focus on the texts themselves, (e.g. magazines, diaries, toy instructions) rather than on the processes of authors and their social, semiotic decision-making.

The purpose of this study is twofold: (1) to trace how both the products (such as the semiotic resources of the book itself) and the processes (such as the "lived, collaborative nature" and semiotic actions of three authors' meaning-making) came to be assembled in the picture

---

<sup>10</sup> I also recognize that producing theories was not the intentions of these memoirs.

book *Jeffrey and Sloth*; and (2) to propose an Authorship as Assemblage model as a way to better understand the complexities of picture book authorship.

This model leans on three theories: Social-Symbolic Mediation, Semiotics and Social Semiotics, and Discursive Positioning. It suggests another way of researching and analyzing picture book authorship. Specifically, it examines the ways that authors use and orchestrate a multiplicity of modes and semiotic resources, and suggests the intricate social and active relationships of how texts are designed, negotiated, produced, and disseminated by authors across and within the moments of multimodal meaning-making.

This Authorship as Assemblage model suggests four principles that undergird authorship (see chapter two):

- 1) Authors are both external and internal meaning-makers; they include any person who contributes meanings to texts whether they be “declared, hidden, or withdrawn” (Barthes, 1977, p. 110);
- 2) Within situational contexts authors use and orchestrate a multiplicity of modes that are made up of different semiotic resources;
- 3) Authors continually shift among the social (inter)actions of designing, negotiating, producing, and disseminating as they interpret and communicate meaning;
- 4) Inside discursive practices, authors create storylines and subject positions. These positions situate the authors themselves and the others within situated practices.

Although this case study touches on all four principles of the Authorship as Assemblage model, it highlights three of these notions: Principle #1, authors are both readers and writers of multimodal meanings; Principle #2, authors interweave, layer, and combine multiple semiotic

resources; and Principle #3, there is a multiplicity of social actions that continue to go unnoticed in the field of literacy education and picture book critique.

Using these principles, the picture book *Jeffrey and Sloth* (Winters & Hodson, 2007), and my own unique positioning as multimodal literacy researcher and a children's author, I hope to expand current semiotic theories about picture books. I explore the following points of inquiry: (1) How do three authors interpret (e.g., read) and actualize (e.g., write, illustrate, discuss) social and multimodal meanings as they author *Jeffrey and Sloth*? (2) In what ways do these three authors multimodally assemble semiotic resources as they author this picture book? (3) How do these three authors assemble social (inter)actions within their situational contexts?

## 4.2 Defining Picturebooks

Picture books are more than simply texts with illustrated add-ons. Rather, the picture book is a “multisemiotic space” (Stein, 2008) where authors are both readers and writers of meaning. These authors employ semiotic resources (language, pictures, rhythms, actions) and social actions (designing, negotiating, producing, and disseminating information) in order to mediate and actualize stories, to evoke emotions and sensory perceptions, and to share knowledge. The following criteria exemplify how a picture book is defined in this case study:

- a succinct storybook (typically 32 pages; see Pattison, 2008)
- designed to be read aloud (according to publishers this is one of the main purposes of this genre)
- constructed by the author/s, illustrator/s, and publishing company for children; and
- one in which the modes (the writing, illustrations, layout) are equally important for the

construction of meaning and all contribute to the telling of the story.

### 4.3 Multimodal Theories of Picture Books

In recent years some theorists have begun to explore the collaborative semiotic nature of picture books. For example, drawing on social-symbolic mediation theories (Siegel, 1995) and semiotic theories (Peirce, 1940), Lawrence Sipe (1998) uses *transmediation* to theorize how readers oscillate between the pictures and the words when they construct and interpret picture books. Drawing on other children's literature critics, he defines a picture book as "synergistic," meaning the combined components of the book are greater than its parts (Sipe, 1998, p. 98). He writes:

A variety of metaphors have been used to describe it [the picture book]. In some cases, the metaphor is drawn from music. Cech writes of the "duet" between text and pictures. Pullman utilizes the term "counterpoint", while Ward and Fox refer to the "contrapunctual" relationship. Ahlberg talks about the "antiphonal" effect of words and pictures. On the other hand, using scientific metaphor in writing about illustration, Miller uses the idea of "interference" from wave theory, describing how two different wave patterns may combine to form a complex new pattern. Moebius utilizes geographical imagery to speak of the "plate tectonics" of text and illustrations. (p. 98)

Leaning on Sipe's definition, I also suggest that the linguistic-pictorial relationship is a nuanced relationship; as Ben Hodson states, "it's a lot more than just drawing what the words say" (Hodson, interview transcript, 2007). Further, I posit that picture books require even more semiotic synergies than simply the words and pictures. Picture books also offer layouts and action, rhythms, and patterns, each relating to the words and pictures and conveying different

meaning potentials and evoking distinct understandings. Beyond words and pictures alone, multiple semiotic resources come together in picture books, conversing with each other, interrupting, expanding, or interrogating the other's meaning. Without this dialogue the picture book would feel less nuanced, for each completes the other (Sipe, 1999). This is because when actualized in concrete social contexts (e.g., during the writing, illustrating, editing, or reading of a text), each *mode* — the active ways that humans realise meaning, both internally (e.g. reading, calculating) and externally (e.g. speaking, writing, embodying a play) and through the use of semiotic resources and social actions — carries its own unique affordances and limitations, which can not be entirely transmitted from one mode to another (Van Leeuwen, 2005).

Perry Nodelman (1988), also drawing on semiotic theories, speculates on the ways that pictures, words, depictions of action, and rhythms work together in picture books. He observes that words, because of their temporal organization, have a greater semiotic potential or affordance for conveying temporal information. This is because linguistic modes require a more linear structure, taking their shape piece by piece through time. Words are put beside other words, creating phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and finally entire stories. Moreover, linguistic systems have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Some of these potentials are based in cultural practices. Perhaps in different contexts, e.g. where the structure of writing is more pictorial, the linguistic mode in written form may offer different affordances (Kenner, 2003, cited in Jewitt & Kress, 2003). Conversely, pictures are better at conveying spatial information, including the social distances of the characters, their appearances, gaze, and gestures.

Other researchers like David Lewis (1996), Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott (2000), and Aidan Chambers (1985) also describe the complexities of picture book format, especially how language and image work together and how these books contribute to children's literacy development.

Additionally, language researchers such as Geoff Williams draw upon lineages of semiotics (e.g., Peirce, 1940; Saussure, 1974) and sociolinguistic theories (Halliday, 1971; 1978), and then apply this theoretical frame to the field of children's literature in order to analyse the complexities of picture book authorship. Working from a Systemic Functional Linguistics perspective (Halliday, 1985), Williams is interested in both the ways that picture books function in literacy learning and also how grammars (both verbal and visual) can be used to represent the poetics of and to analyze picture books.

#### **4.4 Assumptions about Picture Books**

While writing the theoretical section above, I encountered a few assumptions about picture books.

First, one might think that picture books only make meaning from two communicative resources: the words and the pictures. While this is an important semiotic relationship, especially in picture books, there are other semiotic relationships that could be explored. Does a child reader not also experience the book's rhythms, colours, patterns, pacing, layouts, fonts, and so forth? Does a writer not draw pictures or maps in her mind, think about the cadence of the language, the punctuation marks, in addition to the words themselves? Does an illustrator not hold in his own scribbled notes the gestures of the characters, the layout of the page, and the tone of the story? Does the editor not think about the book's page turns, the page design and fonts, the rhythm of the words, as well as the actions of the characters? Indeed, authors assemble multiple modes and resources, and at the same time they are also internalizing thoughts, shaping discourse, situating others, and all the while communicating meaning (Bakhtin, 1981; Vygotsky,

1979). Thinking they are doing otherwise underestimates the sophistication of their authorship.<sup>11</sup>

This evokes a question mentioned earlier: how do authors of picture books (including, as noted, writers, illustrators, and editors) simultaneously assemble multiple semiotic resources in order to realise meaning?

Second, the authorship of picturebooks is rarely crafted in organized linear ways. Although there is greater recognition that each authoring process is often unique to its author/s, linear ways of constructing stories (such as drafting, creating, revising, and then publishing) are still being taught in many schools. This case study demonstrates that authorship is recursive and interactive; it is more assembled than these some linear pedagogies suggest. Assemblage is the arrangement of the social, the semiotic, and the critical, which are meshed together to interanimate and mutually inspire one another, resulting in a totality of meaning that is greater than the sum of its parts. I am interested in the situated social actions that authors perform in order to assemble meaning for the picture book. How did these authors design, negotiate, produce, and disseminate an array of semiotic modes and resources for *Jeffrey and Sloth*? I suggest their contributions of meaning are assembled, rather than linear. Furthermore, these social actions, which are always dynamic and “in the making,” shape the broader discourses and situational contexts of which they are part, and at the same time these discourses affect the modes that authors (inter)act with or employ.

Third, picture book authorship is not as isolated as some people may think. For example, some people may visualize writers and editors sitting alone with their computers, weaving words

---

<sup>11</sup> This argument, that no mode is monomodal, has been raised in the field of literacy by Jewitt and Kress (2003), Kress (2001), Baldry and Thibault (2006), and others.

into sensible, seamless stories, or perhaps they picture lone illustrators sitting in their studios drawing and painting pictures. Yet, in my experience, authors (including, but not limited to writers, illustrators, and editors) also socially negotiate and collaborate, assembling social resources and opening up collective communication pathways. Authors discursively position one another and are positioned by the modes that they are using in order to create the best book possible.

To my knowledge, semiotic notions of picture books have not been well explored, particularly how authors interpret and actualize texts within their social environments and how they collaboratively assemble social actions and semiotic resources in order to create a picture book.

## 4.5 Background to the Study

*Jeffrey and Sloth*, a story about a boy who overcomes writer's block by doodling and writing about a round-bellied, long armed sloth, was written by myself, illustrated by Ben Hodson, edited by Maggie de Vries, and published by Orca Book Publishers in 2007. Because I define authorship as both the text itself and the active practice of using social and semiotic actions within discourses and situated contexts in order to donate (interpret or create) meaning, whether it be "declared, hidden, or withdrawn" (Barthes, 1977, pp. 110-11), I consider all of us — myself, Ben, Maggie, and Orca — authors of this book.<sup>12</sup>

I would even argue that the reader who actively contributes information to the meanings of

---

<sup>12</sup> That said, each one of us still has a primary responsibility. It would be untrue to say that I wasn't responsible for the words, Ben for the illustrations, and Maggie for the collaboration of the words and illustrations together.

the book becomes an author when he picks up the book and “transacts” with it (Rosenblatt, 1978). This idea is borrowed from Roland Barthes, who suggests that authorship applies equally to the interpretation (i.e. a reader, an editor, an actor) of and the creation (i.e. a writer, an illustrator) of meaning. This idea is reiterated in relation to children’s literature by Aidan Chambers, children’s novelist, researcher, and critic (1985).

## 4.6 Method

This exploratory case study (Stake, 1995) was researched in 2007, shortly after *Jeffrey and Sloth* was published. Here, I let the data and the field work guide me as I developed and refined the Authorship as Assemblage theoretical model. This exploratory approach presents opportunities to further understand the dialogic, collaborative, and semiotic nature of picture book authorship, and it also enables the readers to obtain an insider perspective into a process that they might not typically get to see so that they can hold a conversation of their own about picture book authorship.

Next, I propose case illustrations and vignettes of *Jeffrey and Sloth* to look at the textual and social authorship of myself, Ben, and Maggie. I chose this particular book because I developed professional relationships with each of the other authors and because, as a recent publication, the process is fresh in my mind. In addition, being the writer of the words, I offer an insider’s perspective.

Using these case illustrations and vignettes as a ways to analyse and examine authorship, I hope to demonstrate some of the social and semiotic assemblages that occurred during the making of *Jeffrey and Sloth*, particularly how three of the authors (the writer, the illustrator, and

the editor) assembled their work within the larger discourse of picture book publication, and how within this discourse these three authors positioned themselves and each other. To investigate these phenomena, I do the following:

- 1) using data sources such as reflection journal entries, transcripts and interview, and emails, I suggest some of the ways that these three authors read and write meaning, in order to realize the book;
- 2) using a page spread from the book, I examine the semiotic assemblages that were employed by three authors, including the ways that the semiotic resources were orchestrated the different authors to communicate the intended meanings;
- 3) using this same spread as well as additional data sources — reflection journal entries, transcripts of interviews, emails, and other page spreads from the book — I outline each author's overall process in narrative form, paying attention to the social (inter)actions that these authors use to design, negotiate, produce, and disseminate meaning.

It is not my intention to undo the rich work that that has been done in the fields of multimodality and picture book criticism; rather, this chapter offers literacy researchers and children's literature theorists another way to explore picture books. It offers theoretical and analytical tools from a multimodal literacy and critical perspective that can be used to interpret and appreciate the complexity of a picture book's semiotic interplay.

To insure validity and minimize misrepresentation, I use a methodological triangulation of movement between documents and processes transcribed on interviews and in journals of the writer, the illustrator, and the editor; and thereby ensuring that my study accurately reflects the ideas each author intended to represent.

## 4.7 Data Analysis

Data is analyzed through a multimodal frame that draws on social-symbolic, social semiotic, and discursive positioning theories (see Appendix A for the entire analysis frame or see Table 4.1: Analysis Frame for Multimodality to see how I used the parts of the frame for this particular study). In addition to the ways that semiotic resources are organized within the book itself, these case illustrations also explore the ways that these three authors assembled their own social (inter)actions as they collaborated on and developed it.

**Table 4.1: Analysis Frame for Multimodality**

Discursive Event	Principle #1	Principle #2		Principle #3
	Internal and External Meaning- Making	Semiotic Resources		Social (Inter)actions
	Declared:  Hidden or  Withdrawn:	Semiotic Resources:	Semiotic Potential	Designs  Negotiations  Productions  Disseminations

These sections of the analysis frame that pertain to this case study:

- Discursive Event: any occasion where multimodal discourse is authored/assembled (designed, negotiated, produced, or disseminated) among participants and within concrete situational contexts (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001).
- Authors make meaning both externally (producing and disseminating) and internally

(designing and negotiating): this section describes how the participants “donate” meaning to the texts or storylines that are being created (Barthes, 1977). Meaning contributions apply to both the interpretation and the actualization of meaning.

- **Declared Participants:** the authors who are visibly creating meaning and contributing to the text within the social contexts (Barthes, 1977). For example, the actors who are seen animating the characters on stage or the child who writes a letter at a kitchen table.
- **Hidden or Withdrawn Participants:** the less visible authors that are or may have been involved in donating meaning and contributing to the text within the social contexts (Barthes, 1977; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). For example, the audience who interprets the meaning of a play, the playwright or the director who contributed to the play’s narrative or perhaps the people who were once “dialogically” involved in contributing to the meaning-making — such as Newton, if the play’s topic were to be about gravity (Bakhtin, 1981).
- **Semiotic Resources:** The orchestrations of semiotic resources within discourses and situated social contexts. More specifically, the semiotic resources function together intersemiotically and intrasemiotically (Baldry & Thibault, 2006).
- **Semiotic Potential:** The potential (affordances and limitations) arising from the perceivable properties of a mode or a semiotic resource (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001).
- **Orchestrations of Social (inter)actions:** the multimodal actions or activities that authors do to construct meaning, including the ways they design, negotiate, produce, and disseminate information within situated contexts. In addition, social (inter)actions include the ways that authors interact with one another, and how their actions relate to the discourses across and within sociocultural contexts (Bakhtin, 1981; Kress and Van

Leeuwen, 2001).

Because the intent of this case study was exploratory and because I am still testing the usefulness of this analysis (e.g., whether it will work across an array of social contexts), I am primarily guided by the authors themselves and the research questions. Rather than letting the analysis frame structure the data collection, I allowed the book itself and its authorship shape the study.

#### **4.1 Process Assemblages: Reader/Writer Relationships, Semiotic Resources, and Social (Inter)actions**

The Authorship as Assemblage model proposes that authorship is both a product and a process. Before analyzing the product (the book) itself in relation to the model, I would like to explore some of the ways this product came to be developed. Specifically, using narrative recount and interview transcripts, I will demonstrate how Ben, Maggie, and I assembled modes and semiotic resources, while continually shifting among the social (inter)actions of designing, negotiating, producing, and disseminating as we interpreted and realized multimodal meanings in the book.

##### **Vignette 4.1: Kari-Lynn Winters' narrative recount**

I start with a spark of an idea, nothing that would be sensible to anyone else — an image, a feeling, a phrase. *Jeffrey and Sloth* grew out of a feeling of frustration. I was taking a course at UBC in writing with Dr. Carl Leggo in 2003. I was annoyed at myself, because like some writers, I was experiencing writer's block. When I mentioned this problem to Dr. Leggo he facilitated a class discussion. During this discussion another student made a joke about writing, saying that he simply writes about the items in his room, such as his desk, his chair, etc. Dr. Leggo chuckled and said something along the lines of: "Right, if you can't think of anything to write about, write about having nothing to write about" (class notes,

2003). I went home that evening, determined to write about nothing in particular.

That night, I sat down at my computer and wrote,

"I can't think of anything. I can't think of anything to write.

I just can't think of what to write about."

Then I wrote,

"said Jeffrey."

This ignited an idea — I could write about a kid who was experiencing writer's block!

From here, I made a list of all the things (that I could remember) that people in my life had said about me as a writer. Words like lousy and lazy emerged alongside words like imaginative and storyteller. At this point in time, I felt stuck again as if the writer's block had returned. I knew that I had the beginnings of a story: a character with a goal. I also knew that the setting had to be in the home as I remember sitting at the kitchen table for hours as a child, trying to complete my own homework. But beyond this, I was confused.

I remember thinking, *How do I get at the heart of this story?* and *What might my obstacles be?* I put the story aside, half convinced that I was indeed a lousy writer. However, the other half of my mind was fighting back — standing up for me. It kept saying, *You're not a lousy writer, you just can't think of anything to write about.*

I eventually decided to take another piece of advice from Dr. Leggo. He told our class to "live poetically" and pay attention to the world around us. I did this, gathering snippets of conversations. It was the following Saturday that I decided to go to the Vancouver Aquarium with my son, where we saw a sleepy sloth. I couldn't help but compare myself to him, reiterating the words in my head, *lazy*. This sparked another idea. Perhaps this sloth could be a match for Jeffrey!

From there, it felt as if the story wrote itself. I remember writing it as quickly as I could when

I got home — I didn't want to forget. I also remember experiencing lucid moments of characterization (Sloth would want to sleep, therefore he would want items that would help him sleep more comfortably like a pillow and a blanket) and plot (Sloth could be a doodle that comes to life and Jeffrey could be in control of him). When I was finished that day, I had a so-so chunk of a story that might work.

During the edits over the next few weeks (years, for that matter), I focused on what was working in the story and what needed to be changed. Influenced by my writing class, my previous experiences, my knowledge of story structure, and my Master's thesis (Winters, 2004), I decided that I would think about artforms as a way to edit the story. And so, using different coloured highlighters, I went through the text thinking about drama, visual art, and music. In terms of drama, I thought about the actions and reactions of the characters, how the characters would gesture or move, and pictured using my "drama eyes" what they would look like if they were on stage in front of me (Heathcote, class notes, 2009). On occasion I found myself having to explain my strange call outs (e.g., "Whatever I write you have to do!") and actions (e.g., dragging my hands on the ground) to my 3-year-old son. He would laugh and say, "Mommy's crazy." In addition, I scribbled doodles and words on scraps of paper and post-in notes, trying to capture the next sentence of the story. I also read the story aloud, marking the words that didn't sound right or stood out.

I submitted draft #10, entitled *Jeffery's Wor(l)d Meets Sloth*, to my creative writing class, and then later that year (after numerous additional drafts) to *Chameleon: UBC's Journal of Writing for Children*. This submission was accepted in October of 2003. It was then that I felt the story was good enough. The voices in my head had subsided, "at least for that evening" (Winters & Hodson, p. 31). I submitted the manuscript on January 1, 2004 as my New Year's Resolution. It was accepted for publication in May of that same year by Maggie de Vries at Orca Book Publishers.

For the next year, I barely heard anything about the book. I forced myself not to edit it again until I heard from Maggie. It was in May of 2005 that I found out that Ben Hodson would be the illustrator. He had recently visited the Orca office; Maggie and the art director were "very impressed with his range, the creativity he brings to his art and the interesting things

he does with his lines" (email conversation with Maggie de Vries, May 3, 2005).

A year later I began collecting my edits, emails and a letter from Maggie, and Microsoft Word's "track changes" notes. Most of these edits were text rephrasings, offered as a way to make the story more concise, visual, active, or rhythmic. For example:

*Jeffrey rubbed his eyes. He had just watched his sloth doodle move!*

became

*"Whoa!" Jeffrey jumped to his feet... (p. 12)*

Many of Maggie's suggested edits were to trim the text and to "create slightly more concrete images" (email June 27, 2006). Maggie and I continued back and forth edits such as these, through emails and letters, until November 2006 when I saw the illustrated proofs. At this point, with the illustrations articulating the story, Maggie and I felt many of the words were "superfluous" so we included many deletions. As Maggie notes, "...much of the text simply fell away" (de Vries, interview, 2008).

I didn't meet Ben until the book was published in April, 2007. He, Maggie, and I, along with Orca co-publisher Andrew Wooldridge and over 150 audience members, joined together at the Aquarium for the book's launch.<sup>13</sup>

Authorship not only represents the complexities of textual representations and activities through symbolic mediation (semiotic action), it also speaks to people's past experiences and present social worlds (Dyson, 1997; Bakhtin, 1981; Vygotsky, 1979). I label this phenomenon "social (inter)action" and define it as the psychological activities and physical behaviours that people do in order to mediate communication (Harste et al., 1984). I punctuate it with the

---

<sup>13</sup> A video of this launch can be found at [kariwinters.com/jeffrey](http://kariwinters.com/jeffrey).

parentheses to acknowledge the dialogic and reciprocal relationships that enter into every social action. The narrative recount above, which is based on journal entries and class notes, demonstrates some of the complexities of my semiotic actions and social interactions as I authored this book. Conversations in class sparked designs for stories in my mind. These were negotiated on my drive home and produced in words later on my computer. Vygotsky (1979) would argue that all mediation comes from the social ways that people act together. As I began to write *Jeffrey and Sloth*, I couldn't separate myself from my past experiences; I began negotiating my lived understanding of writer's block, specifically what it felt like to be positioned as a lousy or lazy writer and also as an imaginative storyteller by others. Then after accepting Dr. Leggo's message to "live poetically" and after spotting a sleepy sloth, I began designing a new story in my mind. "Perhaps this sloth could be a match for Jeffrey." I negotiated this idea again and again. Producing while simultaneously re-designing, sharing, re-designing again — it became a quilt of meaning-making. This assembled approach to writing speaks to the importance of redundancies, revisits, and recursive processing in authorship. It was a process that offered me many opportunities to re/design, re/negotiate, re/produce, and re/disseminate information.

#### **Vignette 4.2: Ben Hodson interview**

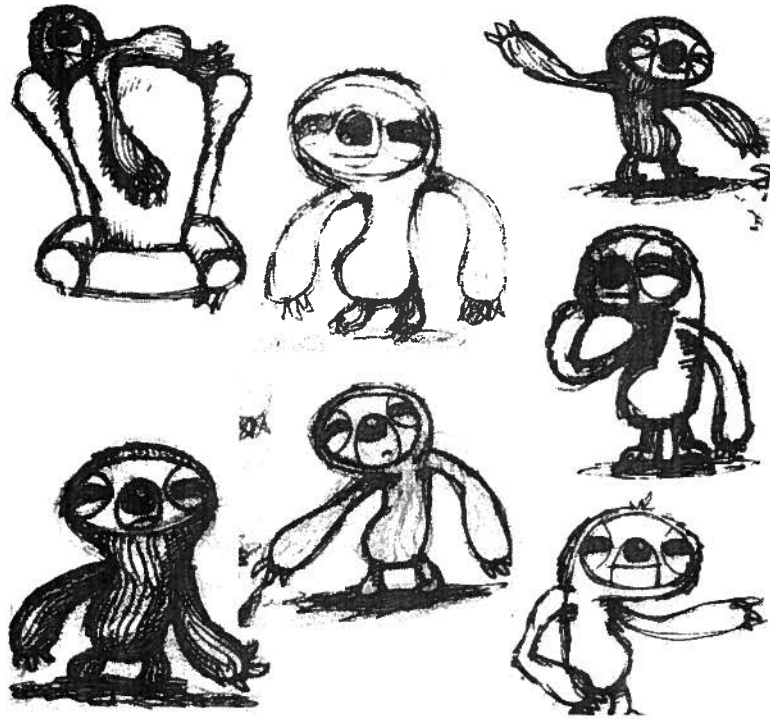
I met with Ben Hodson after the book launch in April, 2007 to interview him about his process. He had this to say.

K: Can you tell me about your creative process?

B: Well, it starts once I get the manuscript. I print it out and read it through and try to get with the voice of what the characters are like. And from that, I sort of visualize the surroundings. This book takes place in one room, so that was challenging to try to wrap my head around how to create a narrative in one closed space and keep it interesting and



**Figure 4.2: Early Sketches of Sloth**



B: I was thinking about Sesame Street. That whole style of ...

K: Like their big heads or ...

B: Just, all around. It's not intimidating. Their totally simple face portrays so much nuance to the personality, it's incredible. I loved Sesame Street! I still love Sesame Street. I think it was brilliant.

K: Did you start drawing right away?

B: My creative process starts with the manuscript. I create images right away from the words. The musicality of them, or how the action is written. I'm also focused on what the characters' surroundings are, and, as corny as it sounds, the feeling of the book. Because the feeling of a book isn't just visual, it's kind of like the words, the tone, the space, the angles — all of it, all mixed together. I think I just really visualize them. I'm a very visual person, so I create imagery right away from the words. The musicality of them, or how

they're ... I think I'm more focused on what the surroundings are and mostly the feeling of the book. Because the feeling isn't visual, but still it's kind of like... [*pauses to think*]

K: The tone?

B: Yeah. The tone. So then I try to sketch some quick thumbnails to get down some ideas of what comes to my mind instantly when I'm reading. It isn't until the second or third read-through that I think about [*pauses*] the era or just the look.

[both look at sketches]

B: ...some different manuscripts have different styles that pop to my mind of either the era or just the look. These different things that change the art, so this [*manuscript*] kind of had, for me this 50s sort of, pretty graphic looking —

K: Do you actually research items from that era, like furniture and stuff?

B: Yeah, a lot of eras, all kinds of stuff. I like the really flat look of the 50s illustration... I just sort of worked for what I was thinking. Fairly flat, kind of angular, graphic colours, big segments of colours... Then, I get some thumbnails down, I start building personalities of the characters. I'm reading and drawing and I scribble down stuff... I try to get ideas right away that pop into my mind. Sometimes you forget stuff, you know, you're reading through and you get a flash and you read on and you forget. So it's nice, as soon as you can capture something I find that it's ... sometimes those rough drawings have a lot more life than things you think about too much, things that just come to you. And that's about it. That's the process that I go through.

Design initiates thinking; it is a semiotic action “that stands midway between content and expression” (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 5). Designs, they argue, are a means to realize discourses in the context of a given communicative situation. Here, authors employ semiotic modes which are capable of being realized. As these researchers argue, there is often “a deliberateness about choosing the modes of representation, and about framing that

representation...” (p. 45). As Ben Hodson read the story, he began designing pictures in his mind — the tone of the book, what the surroundings might look like, who the characters might resemble. At the same time, he negotiated his own social experiences, combining bits from different television shows that he has watched and historical eras that he has explored.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) say that sometimes the boundaries between design and production and the boundaries between semiotic resources get blurred. For example, teachers at the front of their class both produce and plan their lessons simultaneously. A vignette demonstrates this idea. While Ben was producing thumbnail sketches based on the look of Sesame Street characters, he drew Jeffrey with a longer and differently shaped head. While in the process of producing this sketch, he realized that the “light-bulb” shaped head (see Figures 4.1 and 4.3) might suggest to readers that Jeffrey was older than the 7 or 8 year-old Ben wanted him to look. For this reason, he decided to re-sketch Jeffrey with a more “melon-shaped head” (see Figures 4.4 and 4.8). Ben positioned himself both as an illustrator and as a reader — “one reader among many” — asking himself how would others understand his work (Chambers, 1985, p. 93). This depth of negotiation could have occurred if design was not entangled with production. He demonstrates that authors move fluidly and in non-linear ways through social (inter)actions.

#### **Vignette 4.3: Maggie de Vries interview**

Maggie de Vries was the editor at Orca Book Publishers at this time. She had this to say:

M: *[looks at the original manuscript]*... I guess the thing that was striking about this story, in terms of illustration, was the contrast between what was really happening and what the doodles, and how to bring the fantasy and the reality together, and how to have that link be through doodles. And so I was picturing that, and Lynn (the art director) was picturing that. She pictures things in a different way than how I do, she's better at selecting illustrators. Anyway she came up with Ben Hodson.

K: Can you tell me about your process?

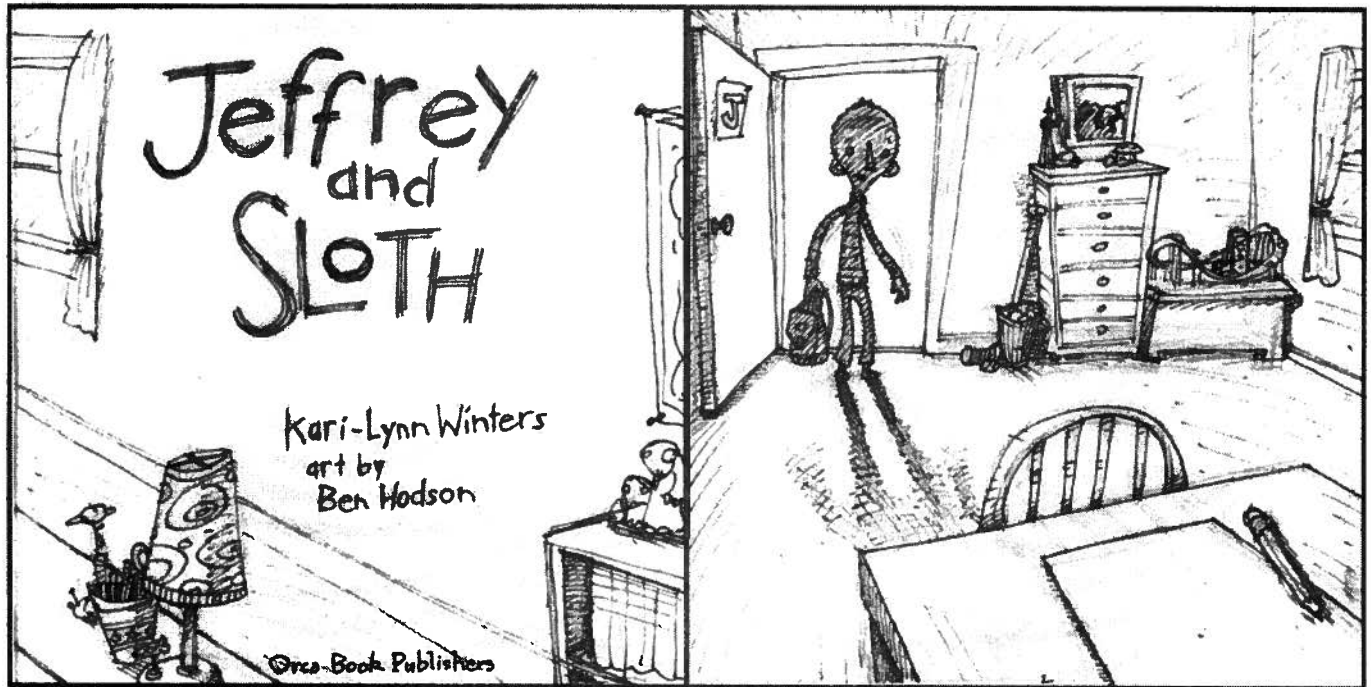
M: When looking at a picture book, I don't always necessarily vividly picture exactly what the illustrations would look like, there's quite a lot of flexibility in my mind, but there is a sense of the story being illustratable, and in need of illustrations to be a complete. Some stories are really evocative. But they just don't need to be illustrated because the pictures are there already — it's all going on in your head. For a picture book, the story has to beg for illustration, and I have to see those gaps. Because I'm very open to a variety of styles, I depend on an art director to bring me samples of different styles so that I can look through and see which ones seem to match what I imagine. And [when I read a story] I'm also looking for what has to happen — it has to be exciting to visualize it.

*[M. flips through the pages of the manuscript]*

This story in a sense is all set in the same place, but the imagination takes it all over the world, so it works really well that way. And the illustrator handled that really well.

K: These are Ben's initial sketches. *(Kari pulls out the dummy layout of Jeffrey and Sloth, see Figure 4.3).*

Figure 4.3: Dummy Layout of *Jeffrey and Sloth*



M: Yeah, a lot of what's in the finished book is right here already. The style didn't change that much, and a lot of the content stays the same. It's really interesting to see ... So what happened here, is that I'm responding to the first stage, I think. These cuts are [pauses] where the text starts to fall away and become redundant, just bits of it. Pretty minimal edits, it seems to me, just a few cuts... This book was fairly straightforward.

K: What's going on in your mind as you make these cuts?

M: It's partly that I'm picturing in my mind, as I read, and then sometimes what happens is I'm reading somebody's story and all of a sudden the picture goes fuzzy. I think, and I can't see it. So the picture goes fuzzy, and then I ask the author to bring it into focus — like the details.

K: It's almost like you're behind a camera or something.

M: Yeah, I'm looking, as I read. Just looking, I don't think about what I'm doing. I just do it. But that is what I'm doing; I'm picturing it. And then there's some bits, when you read a

book and there's foreground and background, you know, there's supporting information and information that's central. That's good too. You don't want it all to be foregrounded. You want those layers, and so sometimes it's OK to have that bit be blurry in the background.

[Reads]

Here, you say "Now Jeffrey was smiling" — that's foregrounded and you want the reader to see it really clearly. A lot of that is very subtle. I'm not necessarily thinking it out to myself, I'm just sensing my way through and making the suggestions where they feel necessary. And earlier you mentioned music and rhythm, I'm also feeling the, the rhythm of it, the language, and the sound of the language. I find when I read aloud I tend to tap my foot. There's a rhythm. Like when I read aloud, in front of an audience or whatever, my foot is going to find the rhythm. And when I'm editing, I'm still hearing it in my head. And you can sense, as soon as the rhythm isn't working; it starts to bother you. Even if you're just reading a book for fun or whatever — like rhyme, unintentional rhyme, or alliteration. Those kind of things also jump out, so I'm listening to what it sounds like. I'm hearing it in my head.

K: Right.

M: So there's the picture, what you're seeing, there's the rhythm, what you're sensing, there's the actual sound of the words, which is different from the rhythm, which would pick up on any internal rhyme — just word clunkiness that doesn't sound good together. There's also pacing, like for example a sentence I just looked at from what I was just reading, it had the first part of the sentence and then a dash and then the second part but a whole shift in thinking had gone on between the two so just put a period and a capital letter between the two, there's more time for thinking for that to happen. So just subtleties of pacing. I guess that's another part, is questioning. Picturing what's happening, including the action obviously, and not only seeing where it needs to come into focus but also seeing where it doesn't make sense, where I don't believe it, where I don't find the words coming out of the mouth of a particular character are suited to that character, where the characters start talking to feed information to the reader and it stops being the real deal, all those things. So

I watch and listen too, it all blurs together....

Maggie de Vries, like myself and Ben Hodson, articulated a sophisticated assemblage of semiotic (inter)actions. In addition to designing and negotiating an array of semiotic resources (words, pictures, layouts, rhymes, rhythms, pacing), she also produced and disseminated carefully constructed notes. These notes, when with myself, Ben Hodson, and (at times) the other staff at Orca, needed to be clear enough to decipher. Therefore, there was the added social action of dissemination, as she shared her interpretations and suggested modifications. Not only was Maggie de Vries designing the story and pictures in her own mind, negotiating the relationships of the characters and the semiotic resources in order to produce a tightly-knit plot, she was also designing, negotiating, producing, and disseminating editorial notes for others to read. Here, Maggie assumed the positions of a reader, an editor, and a writer. In addition to interpreting the scenes, picturing the story and identifying the “fuzzy” bits, she also contributed her own ideas and revisions to the story.

## **4.2 Product Assemblages: Reader/Writer Relationships, Semiotic Resources, and Social (Inter)actions**

Another aspect of the authorship is the product that is left behind.<sup>14</sup> Below is a double-page spread (pp. 20-21) from the book (Figure 4.4). The most visible authors involved in making this spread are the writer and illustrator, myself and Ben Hodson. However, other, more hidden participants were also involved, including the editor, the art directors, the staff at Orca Book Publishers, picture book critics and reviewers, and the readers.

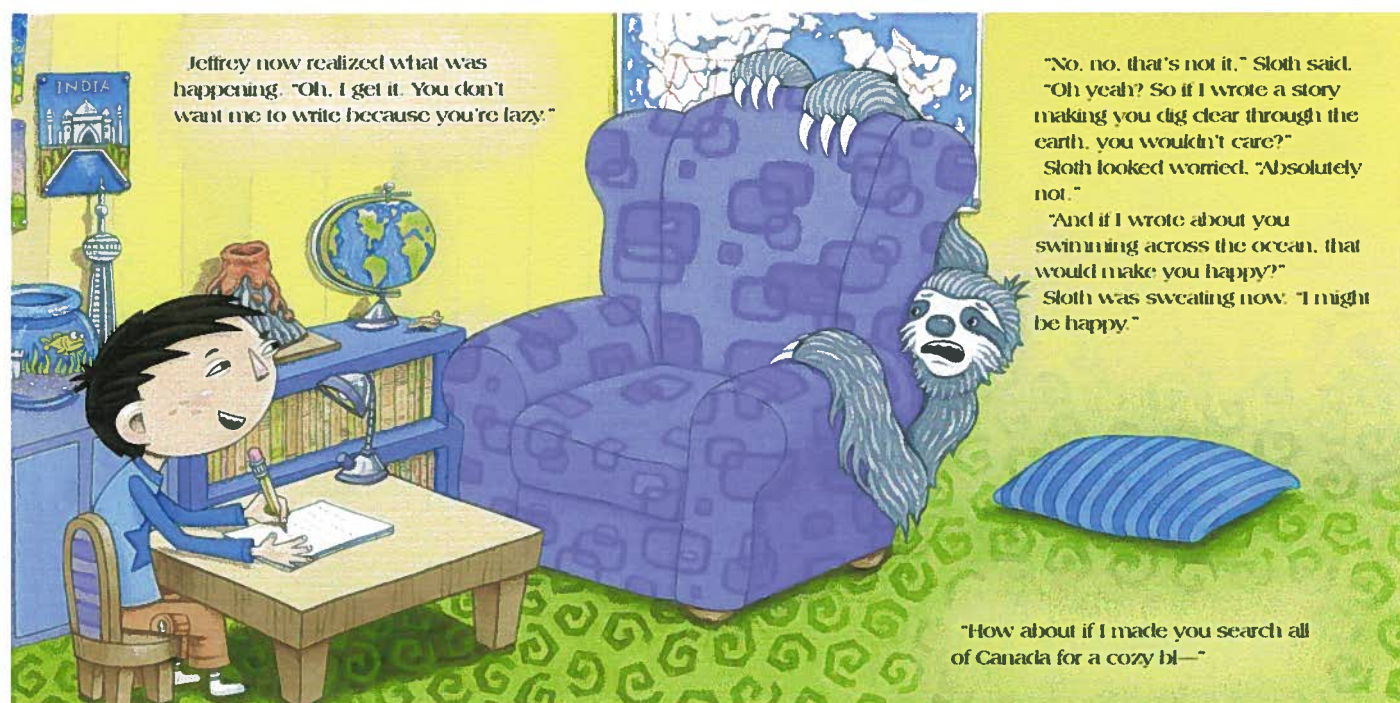
---

<sup>14</sup> Due to the length of this chapter, I am only able to analyze one double-page spread.

One might argue that the difference between the “declared” authors (myself and Ben) and the “hidden” or “withdrawn” authors, is that the declared authors produced the initial, original meaning for the picture book (Barthes, 1977, p. 110). However, theorists such as Barthes (1977) and Bakhtin (1981; 1986) suggest that every product of authorship is, in actuality, re-authorship. Barthes (1977) writes:

A text is a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is the tissue of quotations...The writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings... (p. 146)

In this way, everyone who contributes to the picture book, even the writer and the illustrator of the story, are assembling their own meanings based on their dialogic experiences, their cultures, their ideologies, and so forth. All authorship is assembled.

**Figure 4.4: Final Layout of *Jeffrey and Sloth*: pages 20-21**

Some multimodal researchers, based on the work of Vygotsky, 1978, have suggested that authors use symbols to mediate their thoughts within sociocultural frames (e.g., Dyson, 1997, Harste et al., 1984). For example, a writer for children may think through a problem on paper, on a screen, while driving, or during conversations through drawings, gestures, conversing, and so forth. These semiotic resources become complexly interwoven together and meshed within the writer's social world and within the writing itself. Thus, as authors externalize meanings, they are also mediating their understandings.

A multitude of semiotic resources are being mediated in the above spread. Rhythms are afforded through the interweaving questions and statements as well as through the patterning on the rug and chair. The theatrical nature of the action/reaction dialogue offers a feeling of interrogation and a shifting of character perspectives. The layout, which emphasizes a pause before "How about if I made you search all of Canada for a cozy —," when combined with

Jeffrey's facial expression, indicate how much Jeffrey is enjoying his new-found power. The use of punctuation, particularly the dash at the bottom of the page, shows that Sloth is interrupting Jeffrey. Sloth's facial expressions interwoven with his gestures demonstrates Sloth's reluctance as well as the irony of Sloth's words "Absolutely not" or "I might be happy." In addition, the use of the bold colours, angular shapes, and a graphic style of illustration suggestive of a 1950s time period. This evokes Harste et al.: "[Authorship, then,] is not print production per se, but rather, an orchestrated set of multimodal cues carefully laid forth in an attempt to placeholder and potentially sign one's meaning" (Harste et al., p. 35).

Each semiotic resource mentioned above carries its own communicative meaning potential (Jewitt & Kress, 2003). These meanings interact with or play off one another, interanimating and mutually inspiring one another, resulting in a totality of meaning that is greater than the sum of its parts. For example, Sloth's facial expressions, gestures, and physiological responses indicate that he is feeling uneasy. These resources also become entangled with the authors' social (inter)actions. For instance, some children who have read the book tell me that Sloth looks scared; others suggest that he is nervous. Readers fill in the gaps, contributing to and construing their own understandings, thereby becoming authors themselves. Depending on their prior experiences, cultural backgrounds, relationships with writing, understandings of gaze and facial expressions, etc., the moment where the pictorial, linguistic, and theatrical modes combine communicates a particular message to one person (Sloth is scared) and something entirely different to another person (Sloth is nervous). This is because they come to the book's semiotic resources with different understandings of these resources and with unique sets of social practices. Then, drawing on their own repertoires of social practices, meaning-making processes, and so forth, each author designs, negotiates, produces, and/or disseminates new meanings for the narrative. Collections of semiotic resources become layered and embedded with the author's social actions in something I call an *assemblage*. This assemblage is intrinsically multimodally

and socially complex, and is always larger than its parts.

As a way to demonstrate some of the ways that Ben and I assembled the semiotic resources and social (inter)actions in this story, I offer an early draft of the story and a section from Ben's interview, followed by a brief explanation of the discursive events.

**Vignette 4.1: Early draft of *Jeffrey and Sloth***

Jeffrey now realized what was happening. "Oh I get it. You don't want me to write because you're lazy. Whatever I write you have to do."

"No, no, that's not it," Sloth muttered as he peeked out from behind the chair.

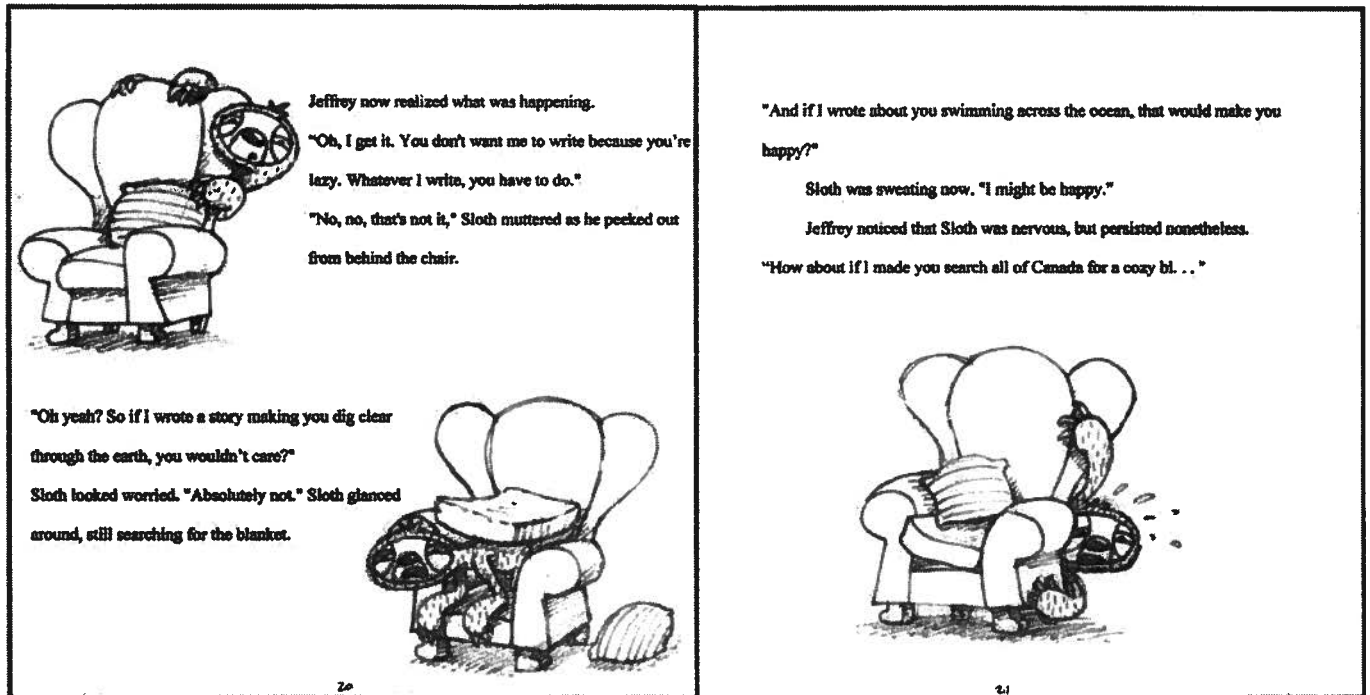
"Oh yeah? So if I wrote a story making you dig clear through the earth, you wouldn't care?" asked Jeffrey.

Sloth looked worried. "Absolutely not." Sloth glanced around, still searching for the blanket.

"And if I wrote about you swimming across the ocean, that would make you happy?"

Jeffrey noticed that Sloth was nervous, but persisted nonetheless. "How about if I made you search all of Canada for a cozy bl..."

Figure 4.5: Early Draft Layout of *Jeffrey and Sloth*: pages 20-21



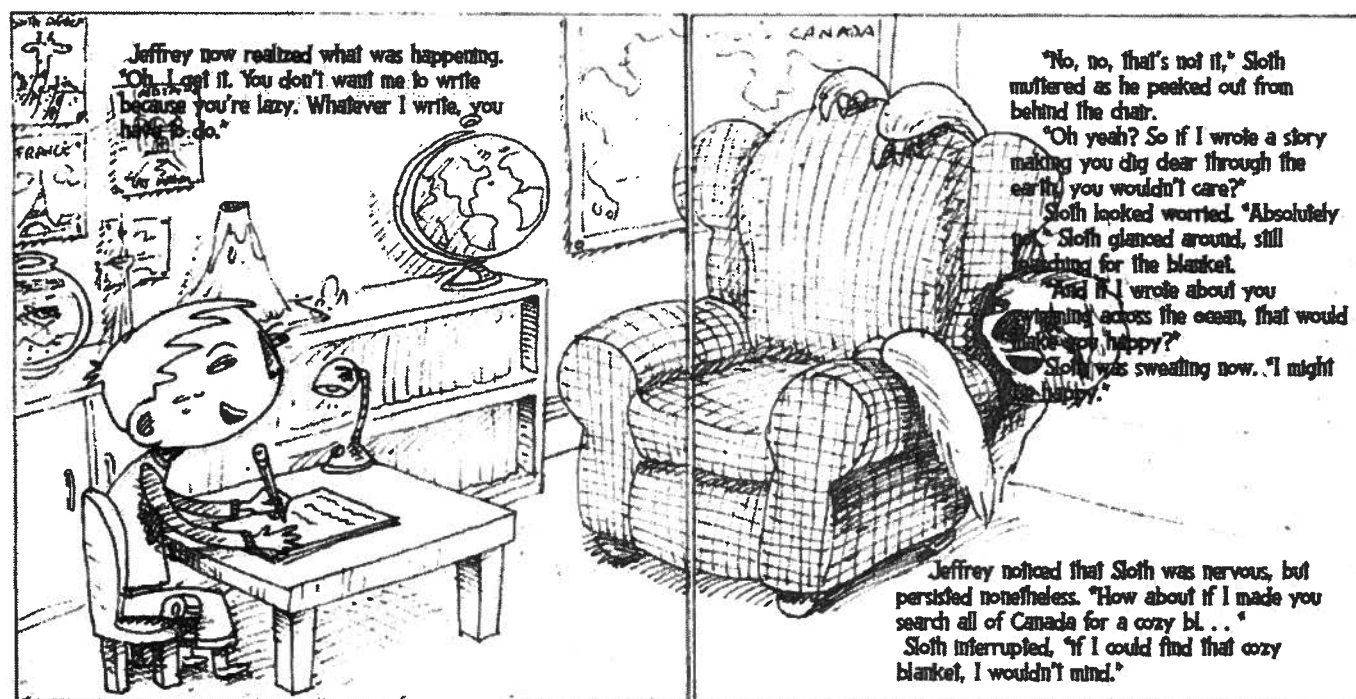
Here, Ben Hodson and I both performed social (inter)actions while positioning one another. For example, by writing the words “Sloth muttered as he peeked out from behind the chair,” I ensured that the chair would be central in the picture. Additionally, at the end of this page I introduced the idea of Canada. These words put the illustrator in a position where he needed to think about how notions of Canada might enter into the story. Although Canada is not in the illustration yet, his stream of consciousness notes at the bottom of the page (too light to be visible in the scans above) read “*animated. add bits of things. says Canada*” and “*Jeffrey sees globe. Sloth globe. everyone sees globe.*” Hodson is negotiating both Jeffrey’s character (what could make Jeffrey think about Canada at that moment in time with Sloth?) and also his audience (how could he represent Canada to the readers of the book?). About this spread he comments:

I don’t just draw the characters and the settings straight on. A lot of times I try to frame it [the spread] too. [This framing] encloses the perspective. It’s like a movie, I guess, you’re trying to frame what’s important and just cut away the clutter. Of course I have to draw the

characters and the chair and the pillow because they are in the story itself. But sometimes, I draw a lot more [stuff in the room] than I need to and you can just like focus in, zoom in on the room and cut away a lot of the extraneous stuff that's just distracting.

As a writer, I also frame the story. Sometimes I try to envision the story as a play, occurring on a stage. I construe the action and the dialogue in my mind's eye as though the characters are actually moving and talking on stage in front of me. I should note that I never had the opportunity to see Hodson's early illustrations (Figure 4.5); the earliest draft I saw was much more similar to the final version:

**Figure 4.6: Final Draft Layout of *Jeffrey and Sloth***



It is clear there were too many words on this spread, making it look cluttered and unappealing to a reader. By re-drawing the illustration in this way, Hodson positioned me as an editor — what words could I take out to make the spread look less cluttered? And I was positioned as an art director and marketer: will the extra words clutter the page layout? Will

readers enjoy the experience? Since Hodson had drawn the chair with Sloth behind it, I could now take out the unnecessary words that re-articulated the same meanings. In terms of structured routines, it is typical for a writer to include too many details — this is because authors and illustrators do not often have the opportunity to meet and discuss their visions of the story. Additionally, it is not considered good form for an author to give an illustrator too many notes about how she wants the spread to look. Therefore, in order to ensure that the picture included the degree of irony that I wanted for the story, I needed to write words like: “Sloth muttered as he peeked out from behind the chair” or “Sloth was sweating now.”

Regarding these pages, Maggie De Vries interacted with me in other ways. For example, she suggested that I remove the phrase “And whatever I write, you have to do.” As the editor, she was eligible to make suggestions such as these. Her suggestion positioned me as a critic and a reader — would this decision make the book more engaging? And it positioned me as a teacher — taking out this phrase might allow the children to make more inferences. In the end this was a good decision as the phrase was *telling*, not *showing*, the reader what to think.

As editor, de Vries is also eligible to decide on the page breaks. She states:

I go through the book and start breaking it up. Places where it seems like a good idea to break it up, for a set of reasons which are usually not articulated fully in my mind. And then I get to the end and I've got way too many pages, usually. Or sometimes it's just one or two too many. And then I go back and look for ways of combining in order to get it into 32 pages. So I kind of feel my way through, but what I'm looking for is natural breaks in the action. I'm looking for moments of surprise, where a page break can heighten that. Page breaks are a little bit like chapters; in a sense, they can be. They can be used as cliffhangers, in a sense. (Interview transcript, 2008)

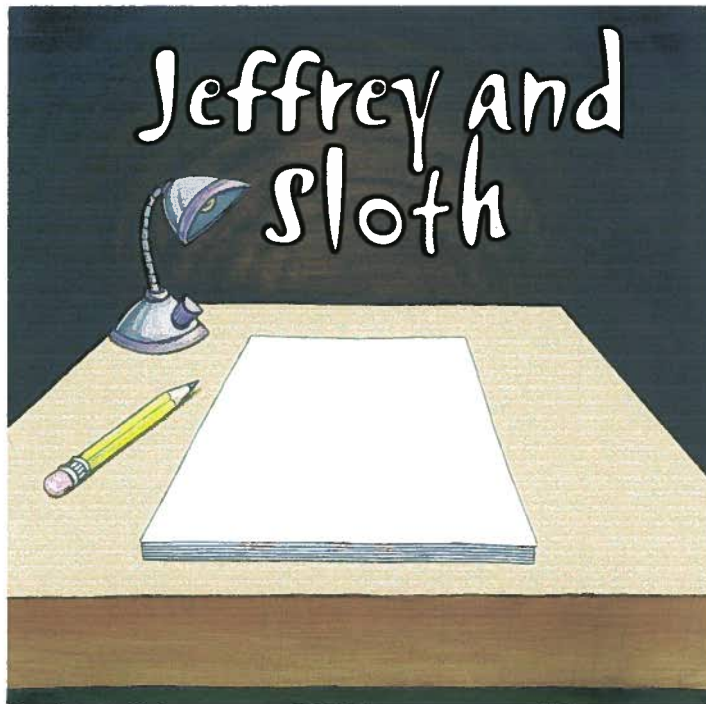
From a reader's perspective, too many words might make a page look cluttered. Too few words might not carry enough of the action. Consciously thinking about the page numbers in this way

situated de Vries as a page designer; not only was she estimating how many words should go on any one page, she was also figuring out the number of page layouts needed across the entire book. While the standard length for a picture book is 32 pages (Pattison, 2008), there is more than one way to break up the content into those 32 pages (Martz, 2009). De Vries elaborates on how she decides on the page layouts:

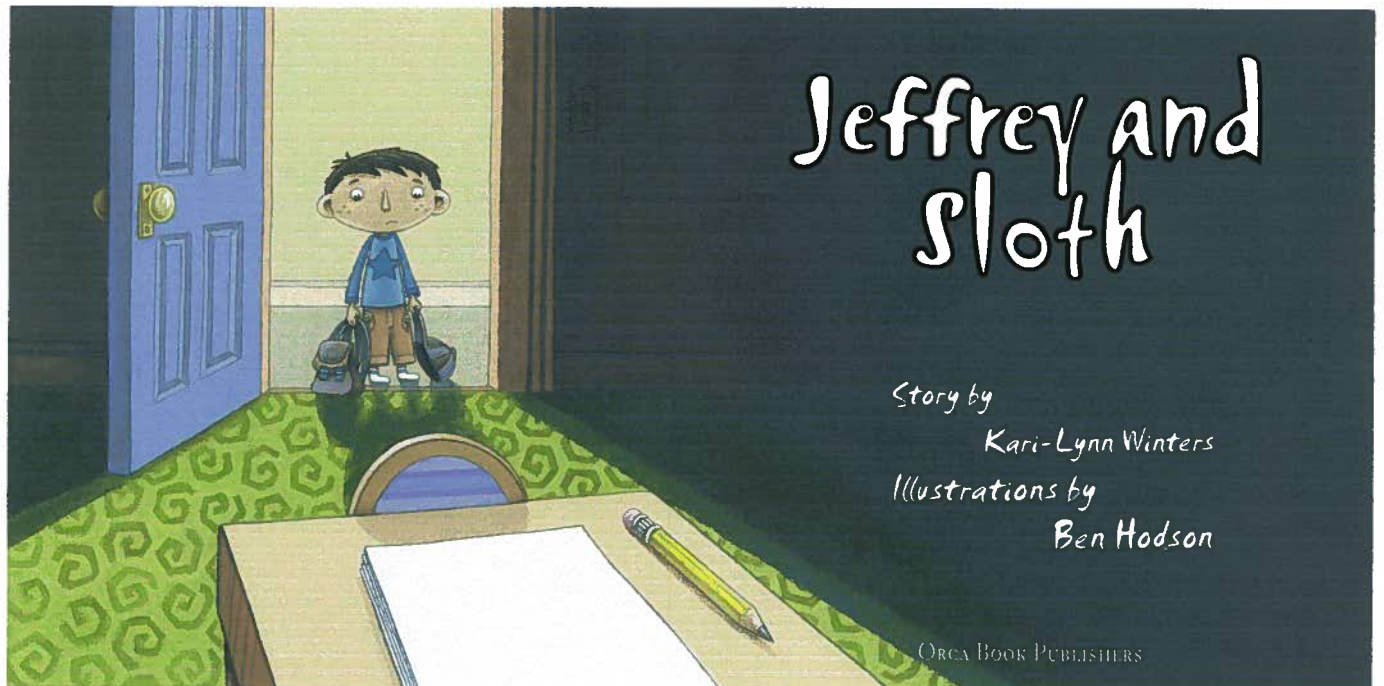
And then I'm thinking about how to end it. And there's the choice of ending it on page 32, which gives you a single page. This has a different impact. So a reader's going through spread, spread, spread, spread, and then often there's a little surprise at the end of a picture book, and that can be really effective on page 32. In this book we used the opening to make an impact — the half and full titles are leading the reader in. They lead us in. (*Maggie flips through the beginning pages of the book.*) There is the blank page [the half title — see Figure 4.7.], and there is Jeffrey looking at the page [the full title — see Figure 4.8], and then into the story... I think it was probably the right decision. I think the opening's very effective.

Readers often comment on half title (showing the blank page; see Figure 4.7) and the full page title (showing Jeffrey standing at the door, ready to enter his room; see Figure 4.8). These pages introduce the problem and Jeffrey's character. They also add to the tone of the entire book.

**Figure 4.7: Final Layout of *Jeffrey and Sloth*: Half Title page**



**Figure 4.8: Final Layout of *Jeffrey and Sloth*: Full Title page**



### 4.3 Discussion

Throughout the chapter I refer to Ben Hodson (illustrator), Maggie de Vries (editor) and myself (Kari-Lynn Winters, writer) as authors of the book *Jeffrey and Sloth*.<sup>15</sup> Authorship goes beyond language alone. We were all authors, donating meaning. We originated this combination of language, but also designed and created the pictures, proofread and made modifications to the pacing, the rhythms, the narrative, and we interpreted the story. For this reason, I define “author” not only as the person who writes the words, but any person/people who donates to — originate/s, re-construct/s or animate/s — a piece of work. Much like with copyright law, in this chapter an *author* is defined as the creator/recreator (any person or group) of any work, be it written, painted, sculpted, filmed, photographed or otherwise, within a network of social, dialogical practices, who designs (originates), negotiates (interpret), produces (represents), or disseminates (communicates) meaning.<sup>16</sup> Drawing on the work of Roland Barthes (1977), notions of authorship suggest that in practice there are no simple *producers* versus simple *consumers* of texts; these roles are intrinsically connected and interwoven. This idea also resonates with Barthes’ earlier work (1970), specifically his essay *S/Z*:

Our literature is characterized by the pitiless divorce which the literary institution maintains between the producer of the text and its user, between its owner and its consumer, between its author and its reader. This reader is thereby plunged into a kind of idleness — he is intransitive; he is, in short, serious: instead of functioning

---

<sup>15</sup> Although I also consider Doug McCaffry (book designer) another author in the *Jeffrey and Sloth* project, I was unable to speak with him as he is no longer working at Orca Book Publishers.

<sup>16</sup> [http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/sc\\_mrksv/cipo/cp/copy\\_gd\\_protect-e.html](http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/sc_mrksv/cipo/cp/copy_gd_protect-e.html)

himself, instead of gaining access to the magic of the signifier, to the pleasure of writing, he is left with no more than the poor freedom either to accept or reject the text: reading is nothing more than a referendum. (p. 4)

Understanding authorship in these broader ways means that an author can be someone who interprets a book or someone who actualizes it, including a children's book writer, an illustrator, and editor, a reader, an actor, a playwright, a musician, and dozens of other roles. These authors can be, as Barthes (1977) states, "declared, hidden, or withdrawn" (p. 111).

Researchers such as Marjorie Siegel (1995; 2006) posit that authors move between multiple modes to mediate their understandings. Siegel, drawing on Suhor (1984), defines *transmediation* as the process of taking understandings from one sign system and moving them into another in order to make meaning. In this way, authors have additional opportunities to engage with texts and to realise information in generative and reflective ways (p. 456). Hodson's quote at the beginning of this chapter demonstrates an array of modes that he is transmediating between. He moves from reading the language, to hearing the tone of the manuscript, to drawing sketches, and so forth. As Sipe (1998) notes, Siegel's ideas are useful when thinking about the authorship of picture books, because authors do transmediate between a range of modes as they interpret and realize meaning.

I wonder, though, if this idea could be further extended? In this case study the authors demonstrate their use of modes (e.g., writing, illustrating, critiquing, reading) and semiotic resources (e.g., actions, rhythms, colours, angles, and so forth). Indeed, an orchestration of semiotic resources, social (inter)actions, and subject positions are realized here and assembled during the acts of multimodal authorship. The resources that authors employ hold their own meaning potentials that suggest storylines and position other authors in sophisticated and productive ways. Drawing on this case, I posit that within situational contexts authors use and

orchestrate a multiplicity of modes and semiotic resources. For instance, each of the authors above uses and revisits the musical mode: while I address the cadence of the language, Hodson speaks of the tone or feel of the book, and de Vries discusses the rhythm that people sense. There is no denying that in musical semiotic systems, structures of rhythm, melody, salience, and framing matter; they are used and combined to construe distinct meanings (Van Leeuwen, 1999). For children's picture book authors, using the mode of music is invaluable. Picture books are intended to be read aloud. The musicality of the language (e.g. use of syntax, diction, punctuation, the flow) and the pictures need to simultaneously radiate both the energy and the intent of the story. The musical mode is a force that moves the reader fluidly through the book. The musicality of the language can either enhance or distract from the message that the author is trying to convey. For this reason it is a crucial part of writing picture books; the words need to fit together much as lyrics in a song. They need to flow off the tongue, and to sound right. Creating a synergy of modes that goes beyond the words and the illustrations (e.g., thinking about the musical mode) reveals an additional acoustic layer of information — here the picture book also shapes meaning through the semiotic resources of sound and silence.

Additionally, authors continually shift between the social (inter)actions of design, negotiation, production, and dissemination as they donate meaning, and they situate themselves and others within that practice.

Multimodal research on children's literature usually has asked questions like: "What modes of meaning-making are offered by picture books?" "What do children glean from the ways that the pictures and the images go together?" "What information do the pictures offer that the language may not?" In our modern information economy, where children and adults alike are authoring in a multitude with a multitude of resources and at least four different semiotic actions, it might be more helpful to ask: "How do authors use semiotic resources in social contexts in

order to author picture books?” or “What are authors doing with picture books, specifically how are they assembling social (inter)actions and positioning one another in the process?”

## **4.4 Conclusions**

As the example above demonstrates, picture book authorship is dynamic, complex, and dialogic. It goes beyond two modes of meaning-making to incorporate an assortment of semiotic modes and resources such as images, words, punctuation symbols, “digitally-manipulated” layouts, sounds, colours, rhythms, shapes, patterns, page breaks, and so forth. Authors read (interpret) and write (realize) these modes, assembling them and at the same time continually shifting among the social (inter)actions of designing, negotiating, producing, and disseminating meaning.

## **5 PLAYBUILDING AS SOCIAL AND MULTIMODAL ASSEMBLAGE: AUTHORSHIP AND AUTHORITY**

*Individual children would learn to write if they felt they owned their text and its meaning.* (Dyson, 1997, p. 179)

This chapter resonates with Anne Dyson's (1997) opening quote. It argues that children, will feel like legitimate authors who can participate in the continual process of authoring and re-authoring their worlds, only when they are offered diverse multimodal, imagined, and social (inter)actions and are given opportunities to participate in their own socio-cultural communities.

### **5.1 Purpose of the Study**

Recent notions about authority and multimodal authorship are brought to bear in this chapter as I explore how five children orchestrate an array of semiotic resources and "discursive positions" in order to interpret and realize theatrical scenes (Davies & Harré, 1990).

With the rapid technological and conceptual changes of the late Twentieth Century and early Twenty-first Century, researchers, theorists, and educators alike have been forced to rethink multiple pathways for multimodal authorship (Dyson, 2003; Eco, 1979; Kress, 1997). Authorship has become recognized as semiotic and participatory (New London Group, 2000; Stein, 2008). Therefore it is my strong belief that researchers, theorists, and educators need to examine what today's authors are doing multimodally, socially, and critically in order to make informed decisions about tomorrow's pedagogies, policies, and theories.

I offer four points of inquiry. (1) Which semiotic resources do these five children choose to employ as they author plays in this particular context? (2) What meaning potentials do these multimodal assemblages hold? (3) How do these children assume and assign discursive positions

as they build plays in this particular context? (4) How might multiple modes of authorship lend children authority in particular environments and give them opportunities to feel like legitimate authors?

## **5.2 The Authorship as Assemblage Theoretical Model**

In this case study, I draw upon the authorship of five children in order to expand the theme of authority in relation to my proposed Authorship as Assemblage model. This model suggests multimodal, social, and critical ways to interpret, transcribe, and analyze all forms of authorship, including more ephemeral forms such as drama or theatre; specifically, it explores the ways that authors interpret and realize meanings through orchestrations of semiotic resources, social (inter)actions, and discursive positions. My theory suggests four principles that undergird authorship (see chapter 1 for more details):

- 1) Authors are both external and internal meaning-makers; they include any person who contributes meanings to texts whether they be “declared, hidden, or withdrawn” (Barthes, 1977, p. 110);
- 2) Within situational contexts authors use and orchestrate a multiplicity of modes that are made up of different semiotic resources;
- 3) Authors continually shift among the social (inter)actions of designing, negotiating, producing, and disseminating as they interpret and communicate meaning;
- 4) Inside discursive practices, authors create storylines and subject positions. These positions situate the authors themselves and others.

Although I touch on all four of these principles during this case study, I highlight three in this

chapter: Principle #1, that authors both interpret and actualize multimodal meanings; Principle #2, that within concrete contexts authors assemble an array of semiotic modes and resources, drawing on the semiotic potential of each; and Principle #4, that inside discursive practices authors create storylines that position themselves and others, sometimes in ways that lend them authority.

### 5.3 Defining Terms

*Authority* — which originates from the same Latin word as author (*auctoritas* or *auctor* meaning “rightful ownership” or “book that settles an argument”) — suggests that authors have the right to own their our imagined storylines and to assume or assign discursive positions, empowering/disempowering themselves and others within discourses in sophisticated ways. These positions offer authors opportunities to engage in particular “communicative functions” in order to satisfy their own needs, gain power, monitor their actions, express opinions, maintain social relationships, create imagined worlds, communicate information, amuse themselves and others, record events, acquire knowledge, and so forth (Halliday, 1973). Authority through authorship also means that participants have the potential to gain or limit access to knowledge within social relationships, depending on the discourse itself and their social contexts.

Much of this chapter is about multimodal authorship. In practice, meaning can be realized through a variety of modes; for instance, the same information can be announced in person or via a podcast, embodied through gestures or with props (e.g., puppets), presented in a video game, on a website, or through a picturebook. Here, *modes* are defined as the active ways that humans realise meaning, both internally (e.g. reading, calculating) and externally (e.g. speaking, acting). Modes consist of semiotic resources and of social (inter)actions. Both are defined below:

- 1) *Semiotic Resources* are actions (e.g., facial expressions, gestures), materials (e.g., words,

colours, sounds), and artefacts (e.g., images, sculptures, maps, clothing) that have potential communicative effects inherent in their organization (Van Leeuwen, 2005).

- 2) *Social (inter)actions* are the psychological activities and physical behaviours that people do in order to mediate communication (Harste et al., 1984). I use the term “(inter)” to acknowledge the “dialogic” reciprocal relationships that enter into every social action. All mediation comes from the social ways that people act together, building on the mediations of others. I draw on four social (inter)actions throughout this thesis: design, negotiation, production, and dissemination.

When modes (semiotic resources and social (inter)actions) are used within social contexts, they have the potential to position authors discursively.

*Discursive Positions* — In this dissertation, rather than the more fixed identity positions like race, class, and gender, I am talking about dynamic subject positions (Davis & Harre, 1990; Rogers et al., 2010). This is not to say that these more fixed positions do not dialog with or inform the social practices of authors. Indeed, authorship is always filtered through a person’s more fixed positions and sociocultural background (e.g., Heath, 1983; Edmiston, 2007). While researchers and anthropologists have produced such informative studies about people, their socialized identity positions, and the kinds of texts they author (e.g., Heath, 1983; Jones, 2006; Medina & Campano, 2006), that is not the intent of this chapter. This study is not an anthropological study, nor is it an ethnography. Because of the short duration of the study and its organizational structure (only looking at children in a camp setting), I do not feel that making claims about the youths’ more fixed identities would even be feasible. For example, although the members of this group are all considered vulnerable (e.g., living in high crime urban areas under impoverished conditions), I am not looking at this aspect of their identity; instead I am investigating how five children who happen to be considered “vulnerable” author through

multimodality and use discursive positions within a summer camp setting in order to gain authority. I am not examining the cultural schemes per se, but the ways individuals participate within these schemes (Brooker, 2008).

#### **5.4 Drama-Based Research with Children/Youth**

My Authorship as Assemblage model leans on Social-Symbolic Mediation theories, Semiotic and Social Semiotic theories, and Discursive Positioning theories to offer new ways of looking at drama-in-education and other ephemeral forms of multimodal authorship. It not only considers the more permanent texts that are authored (e.g., scripts, videotaped versions of theatrical productions, reflective journals, interview transcripts) — what Stein (2003) might label “fixing the semiotic chain”, but also the in-process social and semiotic (inter)actions that the authors communicate (e.g., designs of meaning-making, negotiations of social relations, theatrical productions, and improvised disseminations of information). Additionally, the model explores the positions authors adopt and assign — positions that shape both the multimodal texts themselves and the author’s process of meaning-making.

Three multimodal literacy scholars, Anne Dyson (1997), Brian Edmiston, and Jeffrey Wilhelm (2008), draw heavily on Social-Semiotic mediation theories, in particular Vygotsky and Bakhtin, during their drama-based inquiries with children. In Dyson’s (1997) ethnographic study of an urban classroom of 7- to 9-year olds, she examines how school children use popular culture to express themselves and relate to others in their writing and in their own socio-cultural storylines. Dyson observed children embodying superhero stories in their literacy classrooms and on the playground, revealing both their own discursive identities and their ideological assumptions of their social worlds. She demonstrates that authorship cannot be thought of as a

separate or stable phenomenon, for it is bound up with other social and symbolic forms, especially drama, oral language, drawing, and play — it is always an interrelated aspect of childhood culture. Similarly, Edmiston and Wilhelm (1998) argue “Drama worlds are created in *interaction*” (p. 5). While working with primary students in schools, they demonstrate how drama has the potential to weave together school curricula with social actions, imaginative threads of narratives with complex dialogic embeddings of children’s culture, and critical understandings with symbolic mediations. They posit dramatic inquiry has the potential to provide dialogic and imaginative spaces where authors may reassess their assumptions about how power operates, while at the same time evaluating the ways that the dramatic mode affects their social relationships.

Other researchers have also used drama as a way to explore the multimodal meaning-making of youth. For example, while weaving together imaginative, active, and social practices through drama, media, and literacy activities, Winters, Rogers, and Schofield (2006) found that youth who had fragile relationships with school were given more opportunities to engage in multiple literacies as critical social practices and to transform their ideas into an art form. Additionally, through drama, these students gained motivation for learning and improved their participatory meaning-making skills.

Like these researchers, I am interested in exploring how drama might lend five children additional opportunities to express themselves, while exploring relationships between authorship and authority. It is my belief that dramatic inquiries such as these create possibilities for social and semiotic assemblages of mediation and for multiple viewpoints, which can be beneficial for

thinking about nuanced notions of literacy and drama pedagogies.

## 5.5 Multimodality and Access

Another aspect of authorship is access: who is authorized to participate in discursive events in order to gain knowledge or be included in social interactions? Traditionally, teachers distributed information through the verbocentric mode by giving lectures, writing notes on the blackboard to be copied or discussed, and question/answer arrangements. This approach to pedagogy emphasized a “regulated knowledge” model (Kress, 2003, p. 173) whereby knowledge flows from the more powerful teacher to the less powerful student. This model tended to obscure social (inter)actions with knowledge, access to the discourse, and relational subject positions.

Today’s preference for linguistic monomodality has begun to reverse (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). Twentieth-century shifts made by schools of social-symbolic mediation and social semiotics were partially responsible for initiating this change (e.g., Bakhtin, 1981; New London Group, 2000; Siegel, 2006; Stein, 2008; Vygotsky, 1979). Additionally, newer technologies like educational manipulatives, video games, or podcasts, combined with visual-rich media like websites, broadcast television programming, or picture books, have made communication more participatory. This shift suggests that more youth are beginning to participate in the design, negotiation, production, and dissemination of knowledge and therefore are being authorized to contribute to how education and relational identities are being shaped, e.g. the relationship of teacher/student. Kress (2003) discusses this idea:

The affordances of the new technologies of representation and communication enable those who have access to them to be ‘authors’, even if authors of a new kind — that is, to produce text, to alter texts, to write, and to ‘write back’. Where before

the author was a publicly legitimated and endorsed figure, now there is no such gate-keeping. (p. 173)

In the way Kress suggests here, power differentials and access to authority are transforming in our modern times. Multimodal authors are being authorized to contribute to how education and relational identities like educator/learner or expert/novice are being shaped.

## 5.6 The Study

This “interpretive case study” (Dyson & Genishi, 2005), which follows five youth, aims to semiotically, socially, and critically explore the authorship of a dynamic and participatory drama practice called *Playbuilding* (Tarlington & Michaels, 1995). Through the processes of notetaking, videotaping, close readings of field notes, transcripts, and interviews, and coding pieces of data into categories of relevant information, I weave together an informative case study that demonstrates aspects of my Authorship as Assemble theoretical model (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). Rather than using deductive logic (e.g., with a syllogism like “all youth author; all authorship is multimodal; therefore all youth author multimodally”) or discovering truths by asking the authors to fill in a survey or answer researcher-constructed questions about particular modes or embodied certain internal positions, I chose an inductive, interpretive case study approach. I chose this because it is simultaneously open-ended, socially interactive, and participatory. I want to explore how the authors come to understand multimodal authorship and how they choose their particular modes of discourse and discursive positions as they author. I want to analyze how and why they choose to assemble their texts in the way that they do. I am unpacking what Stake (1995) calls the “epistemology of the particular” (p. 40).

Collecting data that reveals the lived nature of drama/theatre is crucial for this case study. Although products of meaning-making were collected and analyzed, e.g. the videotaped play and

the scripts, these products were always examined in relation to the process the youth employed to get there.

### **5.6.1 Study Context and Participants**

The study took place during the 2007 educational summer camp for five weeks at the Kids' Place Project<sup>17</sup> in an urban area of Western Canada. This is an organization that provides safe havens for 400 of Vancouver's impoverished, vulnerable children. All of the children who attend Kids' Place are invited by the school and the organization's board of directors to attend free summer camps, spring break camps, or winter break camps. The procedure for being invited to the camp is as follows: (1) The Kids' Place board of directors sends a notice to school, stating how many spaces are available for each camp; (2) the school team determines which children will be accepted; (3) invitations are distributed to the families; and (4) families send back the signed forms.

Seventeen participants were invited to take part in this case study (i.e., all the intermediate students at the one site I selected). Five participants took part: Sharon (age 13), Lisa (age 12), Julie (11), Darren (11), and Paul (9).<sup>18</sup> The process for choosing the participants is outlined in section 5.8.1, Phase I.

### **5.6.2 Background to the Study**

Through a preliminary discussion with these five participants and the staff at Kid's Place, I

---

<sup>17</sup> To ensure the privacy of minors, this is a pseudonym.

<sup>18</sup> These are pseudonyms.

found out that three of the youth (Sharon, Lisa, and Darren) had troubles with or simply disliked writing in school. When I asked why, they didn't know or they said that writing was boring for them. Later, Sharon mentioned that for her, writing in school was always about "certain types of things like grammar and spelling, or forming a story and that... It was never about fun stuff or ideas or anything interesting." (Interview Notes, 2007)

My prior work experience at Kid's Place, where I coordinated their camp literacy programs for four years, lead me to believe that some of the children attending the camp had difficulty articulating their experiences in linguistic ways.<sup>19</sup> Thus, in order to give opportunities for participatory authorship and access to authority, it was crucial for me to encourage multimodality. I suspected that drama would also provide a way to overcome this obstacle, for I am trained to teach drama-in-education and they had used drama with great success in the past.

## **5.7 Data Sources**

Data sources for the study included interview and field notes, picture books, video transcripts, collected documents (e.g., photos, drawings, poems, posters, blocking notes, scripts, paper props, musical scores), participant-filmed videos, and researcher filmed videos.

## **5.8 Method**

There were three phases in this study. Phase I focused on drama instruction and

---

<sup>19</sup> I had worked at Kids Place for four summers prior to doing my research there. I held the position of the literacy coordinator. My purpose in this job was to offer students rich literacy environments in order to maintain and develop their reading and writing skills.

improvisation games. Phase II was less scaffolded by myself in terms of drama instruction; it focused on playbuilding. Phase III was a presentation that was entirely created by the children. This final phase, which was more theatre-based (rather than drama instruction), gave students opportunities to present their theatrical performance. I describe the phases in more detail below.

### **5.8.1 Phase I**

In order to give participants the opportunity to know about the study and give their assent, and also to extend my appreciation to Kid's Place for letting me conduct research in their organization, I agreed to teach two free two-hour classes in literacy and multimodality. During this time, Phase I, seventeen middle school youth participated in a variety of multimodal authorship activities such as improvisation, poster making, music-making and drama games. These activities were focused around a chosen theme — friendship. To explore this theme I pre-selected five picture books: *Fly Away Home* (Bunting & Himler, 1991, about homelessness); *Pink* (Gregory & Melanson, 2007, about materialism and wanting things); *The Recess Queen* (O'Neill & Huliska-Beith, 2002); *My Name is Yoon* (Recorvits & Swiatkowska, 2003, about identity in different contexts); and *Scaredy Squirrel Makes a Friend* (Watt, 2007, about friendship and anxiety). The youth heard book talks and saw the illustrations for each picture book before voting for their favourite. Although there were votes cast for each of the books, *Scaredy Squirrel Makes a Friend* was chosen as the winner. This book was then read aloud to the group.

At the conclusion of Phase I, all seventeen participants were invited to take part in the research study and to produce and perform a play. For one reason or another (e.g., the participant had different interests, the participant could not attain permission from parents/guardians to participate, scheduling conflicts) only five intermediate youth participated in Phase II and Phase III. These participants filled out consent forms giving me permission to record and share their

authorship processes.

### **5.8.2 Phase II**

With our theme chosen and with the help of a camp counselor and a camera operator,<sup>20</sup> we embarked on the next part of the research. For this two-week phase I facilitated a variety of modes and critical approaches to authorship. The practical goal was to create a multimodal production that would be performed for the Kid's Place audience. Drama-in-education and playbuilding books and articles were helpful resources, for example Belliveau (2006), Neelands and Goode (2000), O'Neill and Lambert (1982), Tarlington and Michaels (1995), and Weigler (2001). Below are drama activities that the youth used to construct their plays.

- **Graffiti:** Graffiti is a drama activity that combines caption making (verbal encapsulations) and visual arts. In this literacy event, youth stood in front of a blank mural and thought of a slogan or phrase that pertains to their theme (friendship). When they were ready, they visually designed (with pictures, icons, or words) and said their phrase out loud.
- **Skits:** Youth formed small groups. They selected one slogan from the graffiti board. Next, they designed, produced, and shared a short skit about the slogan they chose.
- **Connection Chains:** This dramatic literacy event allows youth to think about connections that they may have with a theme or a book, and to further these connections through frozen, gestured poses. Here youth were asked to think about their own connections to the

---

<sup>20</sup> It is important to note here that I hired a camera operator to record each of the practice sessions, the interviews, and the final performance. This was done in order to facilitate data collection, while still overseeing the playbuilding activities.

book *Scaredy Squirrel Makes a Friend*. One at a time they formed a line of tableaux (statues) that demonstrated their chain of connections. The others, who were not yet in the connection chain, tried to read the image or suggest the connection that their peers were embodying. In this study, youth connected ideas surrounding fear of new friendship, body grooming, and what happens when things don't go as planned.

- **Machine:** Already in a chain formation, the machine activity was now implemented. This is another dramatic literacy event. Here, youth constructed a machine through physical gestures. One student started a repeated action and sound. Each student then added a new action and sound to the existing machine. In this case the machine was a "Friendship." Youth were asked, "What might each part of the friendship machine do? What noise might each part make?" The youth created two friendship machines. They decided that if they created two machines they could show two important ideas about friendship: a friendship that was going well, and a friendship that was falling apart.
- **Sequenced Tableaux:** Here, youth filled out a prompt sheet with 5 prompts. For example some of the prompts read: "Friendship is \_\_\_\_." "When I think of friendship I \_\_\_\_." "Friends are \_\_\_\_." The youth voted for one of these prompts. Next they created a series of tableaux to demonstrate this idea.
- **Recreating Poems and Picture Books:** Next, youth were given opportunities to choose poems or short picture books from a table of resources. These linguistic resources were originally chosen by the researcher and the counselor based on succinctness, audience suitability (would work for young children or adults), and connections to the theme. Youth were asked to re-interpret the poem or picture book in any way they deemed appropriate. On a table I placed multimodal materials such as rhythmic instruments, clay, puppets, paints, digital cameras, a keyboard, video cameras, markers, poster paper, math

manipulatives, costumes, stuffed toys, blankets, construction paper, scissors, and constructive blocks. The youth were invited to use any of the resources they needed.

### 5.8.3 Phase III

During Phase III, the youth were interviewed individually. I was particularly interested in their choices of modes, which comprise of semiotic resources and social (inter)actions, and the positions that they used/assigned as they represented and communicated meaning. Here, I asked informal questions like: tell me about one of the scenes you created; or what role did you take as you created that scene. Each interview lasted 10 min (5 participants x 10 min. each = 50 min. total).

Next, I asked the participants to help me create the play script by organizing their authored pieces, scenes, and transitions (Phase II activities 2-6, above) into an order that they deemed appropriate. They chose to write this list. In doing this, we created an outline for a 35 minute devised play. This outline, which included a selection of scenes and activities that the youth had authored, became our running order. Here is the order that the participants and I agreed upon:

- 1) Sequenced tableaux (three tableaux demonstrating friendship as being good — having a friend to rely on, jumping for joy, feeling confident)
- 2) Recreated Picture book (*Yo Yes!*)
- 3) Machine
- 4) Connection chain #1
- 5) Sequenced tableaux (3 tableaux demonstrating friendship being not good — fighting, jealousy, left out)

- 6) Skit #1 (You see, I see)
- 7) Recreated Poem (Three Legged Race)
- 8) Skit #2 (Stick Together — silver and gold)
- 9) Recreated Traditional Poem (Old ship/New ship)
- 10) Connection Chain #2

## **5.9 The Analysis Frame**

Drawing from the work of Barthes (1977), Bakhtin (1981), Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001), Baldry and Thibault (2006), Davies and Harré (1990), and to some extent the work of Hamilton (2000), I have compiled an analysis frame that speaks to the points of inquiry and also the Authorship as Assemblage Model (See Appendix A for the entire frame or see Table 5.1: Analysis Frame for Multimodality to see how I used the parts of the frame for this particular study ).

**Table 5.1: Analysis Frame for Multimodality**

Discursive Event	Principle #1	Principle #2		Principle #4	
	External and Internal Meaning-Making	Semiotic Resources		Discursive Positions	
	Declared: Hidden or Withdrawn:	Semiotic Resources:	Semiotic Potential	Of self: Of others:	Structured Routines (e.g., Access and Authority, Who is eligible, Rules of engagement)

The sections of the frame that pertain to this case study are listed below:

- **Discursive Event:** any occasion where multimodal discourse is authored/assembled (designed, negotiated, produced, or disseminated) among participants and within concrete situational contexts (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001).
- **Authors make meaning both externally (producing and disseminating) and internally (designing and negotiating):** this section describes how the participants “donate” meaning to the texts or storylines that are being created (Barthes, 1977). Meaning contributions apply to both the interpretation and the actualization of meaning.
- **Declared Participants:** the authors who are visibly creating meaning and contributing to the text within the social contexts (Barthes, 1977). For example, the actors who are seen animating the characters on stage or the child who writes a letter at the kitchen table.
- **Hidden or Withdrawn Participants:** the less visible authors who are or may have been involved in donating meaning and contributing to the text within the social contexts

(Barthes, 1977; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). For example, the audience who interprets the meaning of a play, the playwright or the director who contributed to the play's narrative or perhaps the people who were once "dialogically" involved in contributing to the meaning-making — such as Newton, if the play's topic were to be about gravity (Bakhtin, 1981).

- **Semiotic Resources:** The orchestrations of semiotic resources within discourses and situated social contexts. More specifically, the semiotic resources function together intersemiotically and intrasemiotically (Baldry & Thibault, 2006).
- **Semiotic Potential:** The potential (affordances and limitations) arising from the perceivable properties of a mode or a semiotic resource (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001).
- **Positions Self:** How, within a discourse, authors psychologically or physically situate themselves (i.e. socially, culturally, economically, politically) in both visible and hidden ways (Davies & Harré, 1990).
- **Positions Others:** How, within a discourse, authors psychologically or physically situate other participants (i.e. socially, culturally, economically, politically) in both visible and hidden ways (Davies & Harré, 1990).
- **Structured Routines and Pathways:** understandings about how specific literacy events work, including routes that facilitate and regulate actions, including rules of appropriacy, authority, and eligibility — who does/doesn't, can/can't engage in particular activities (Hamilton, 2000).

These elements directly relate to the points of inquiry that are offered above.

## 5.10 Analyses of Four Discursive Events

The four discursive events represented as vignettes in this section stem from Phase II and Phase III as well as from the field notes, documents, and transcripts that I collected, and the interviews that I conducted with the youth. Integrated with each is an analysis, based on points of inquiry that I described earlier.

### Vignette 5.1 — Graffiti

It is the first day of Phase II. The youth have decided on their theme (friendship) and have heard the story of *Scaredy Squirrel Meets a Friend*. Now they have been asked to design and produce slogans about friendship. As mentioned earlier in its description, Graffiti is a mode that affords at least two semiotic resources (i.e., words and pictures).

In this discursive event, the youth (also recognized as the declared participants — the authors that are visibly creating meaning and contributing to the text within the social contexts) fill a blank mural with the slogans, thoughts, or phrases relate to their theme. Here, the youth author slogans about: meeting a friend; keeping friends; the down-side of friendship; and maintaining a long-distance friendship. The hidden or withdrawn participants (the authors that are less visible or no longer visible) include myself as I guided the exercise, the camera operator, the Kid's Place counselor, and the friends that the participants have outside of the study.

Although I am careful not to say "write" your slogan, every author writes their caption in words (e.g., "Stick together"; "Friends sometimes get jealous"). Only three out of the five participants (Darren, Lisa, and Julie) use the pictorial mode to support their captions. For example, Lisa writes the caption "Friends equal happiness." Beside this caption she draws a picture of a two stick people with their arms around one another (representing friends), beside an equals sign (=) and a smiley face icon.

Lisa's slogan and iconic picture represent a double-articulation of thought because both the words and the pictures were telling the same story (Kress, 2003).

Meanwhile, Darren writes the slogan, "Stay in touch!!!!" Alongside it, he sketches a picture of two frowning stick people — one inside an airplane and the other on the airport tarmac,

Here, the panels and the words suggest a synergy rather than a double-articulation of meaning, because the pictures aren't literally representing the words: the picture isn't, for example, showing two people holding on to one another. Rather, the words "Stay in touch!!!" become a metaphor that suggest additional meanings — that someone has moved or is in the process of moving away and that one of the two (or both) people represented want to keep in contact with one another. Second, each mode adds its own significant detail or perspective. The illustration adds new information about the distance that will separate the two characters: it is significant enough to warrant an airplane ride.

Darren puts frowns on the characters' faces, indicating that they are sad about this particular event. Without both of these modes, the reader would miss some relevant information. He reads the slogan out loud. His face looks sad and his posture looks wilted.

Drawing on Darren's actions and bodily position as he read his slogan, I wondered if he had recently experienced a move of his own, thereby positioning himself as one of the stick people in the text. Later, during the interview Darren had this to say about his position. "I made that slogan because when I was six, my cousin moved to Nebraska. I wanted him to write me letters. And sometimes he does." As a reader of this discursive event, I had mistakenly positioned Darren as the person who had moved, when all along he had positioned himself as the person who was left behind.

As a researcher, I viewed this discursive event as an opportunity to understand the ways that the youth were multimodally, socially, critically assembling meaning for themselves. For

example, when Paul read aloud his slogan “Friends sometimes get jealous,” the other participants nodded and responded by telling their own jealousy stories, creating what I call a “social relation assemblage” — a spontaneous and collaborative type of authorship that layers with and extends the original text.

Using the example “Friends sometimes get jealous,” I noticed that the participants took on the “ally” position in relation to Paul. They nodded and mutually took ownership of the slogan by adding their own gestures and jealousy stories. By assuming these “ally” positions, the other participants gained authority over the text; Paul was no longer the sole author. Rather, each participant was contributing to the discursive event.

### **Vignette 5.2 — Skits**

I ask the students to create skits based on one of the graffiti slogans. Lisa and Darren organize themselves into a pair because they both want to explore Lisa’s slogan “Friends Stick Together.”

Lisa and Darren choose puppets to represent their characters. Then they choose their character names. Their character names make them laugh and start coming up with ideas. These ideas are both discussed and improvised. They begin setting their scenes. Lisa takes the position as playwright. She orders the scenes, writing them on paper. Next, the two youth rehearse the scenes, re-designing how they might perform this skit for the finale.

Their skit, which became Skit #2 in our finale, consisted of six short scenes: (a) a whale named Blubberface and a panther named Hairynose become friends; (b) Blubberface suggests that new friends are silver and old friends are gold — an idea that they appropriated from a poem; (c) Blubberface then introduces Hairynose to her old and “gold” friend Moo-Moo, a cow that has been friends with Blubberface since they were “calves”; (d) Hairynose, overwhelmed with jealousy because he is only a “silver” friend, tries to eat Moo-Moo but gets caught by

Blubberface during the process; (e) Blubberface scolds Hairynose for trying to eat her friend, and Hairynose promises to be nice and not eat Moo-Moo; (f) the three friends have a picnic together.

Julie, another study participant (though not in this skit), suggests possible props for their scene. Lisa and Darren think this is a great idea. In addition to the grabber puppets and stuffed toys they have already decided on, the youth grab a blanket, some bits of string and finger puppets. They physically situate themselves behind a covered table. The bits of string and finger puppets serve as props, specifically as seaweed, bananas, and other foods. (See Figure 5.1). As Lisa writes down her lines (based on their rehearsed improvisations), Darren keeps a list of the props they will need.

During the finale performance, the declared participants of this discursive event were Lisa and Darren and the audience as they were interacting with the two participants on stage (including other Kid's Place kids, counselors, local fund-raisers and board members, and university researchers such as myself and Theresa Rogers). The hidden or withdrawn participants included Julie (for suggesting the props), Paul (another one of the study participants who helped compose the music that introduced the skit), and a Kid's Place camp counselor (who participated in the finale as a musician).

**Figure 5.1: Skits — Old Friends are Gold (Part 1)**

The grabber puppets and stuffed animals, although limiting in regards to facial expressions and gesture, afforded the students the immediate persona of the particular animal they were representing (e.g., a whale, a panther, or a cow), and allowed them opportunities for word play (e.g., Blubberface as the name of the whale or when the whale states, “I’ve known Moo-Moo since we were calves.”) The music that introduced the scene offered rhythm, cord structures, and a “jealous-like” tone. The words conveyed the relevant information needed to communicate the narrative.

The skit itself was organized around spoken themes — meeting a new friend, introducing a metaphor (i.e. new friends are silver, old friends are gold), getting jealous, and choosing to stick together. These spoken themes were layered and interwoven simultaneously with other semiotic modes (e.g., music, puppets, theatre). The characters positioned one another and themselves in dynamic ways. For example, when Hairynose is initially positioned as Blubberface’s “Silver” friend, he is ecstatic. However, when Moo-Moo comes into the picture and is positioned as

Blubberface's "Gold" friend, Hairynose becomes jealous. This character suddenly sees himself as being second-best.

Outside of the play, the modes that the participants use become exaggerated for the audience. For example, some words are spoken louder and their inflection is different. Also, because the skit is no longer only being authored by the participants, myself, and the camp counselors — now the skit is also being authored by audience — the participants do things like wait for laughs or improvise short scenes. For example, see the interaction between these participants in the transcript:

**Figure 5.2: Skits — Old Friends are Gold (Part II) Transcript**

Lisa as Moo-Moo: *(to Hairynose)* Why do you want to eat me?

Darren as Hairynose: *(to Moo-Moo)* Because you are so juicy. Juicy like real steak. And your milk is so good.

*(Audience laughs)*

Lisa as Blubberface: *(to Hairynose)* Hey, what's going on here?

Darren as Hairynose: *(to Blubberface)* Uh ... nothing.

Lisa as Hairynose: *(to Hairynose)* You were going to eat Moo-Moo!

*(Moo-Moo nods. Audience shouts out, "Yes he was!")*

Darren as Hairynose: *(to audience)* Why'd you tell her?

*(Audience laughs)*

Darren as Hairynose: *(to Blubberface)* All right, I admit it, it's true. I ...

Lisa as Blubberface: *(to Hairynose)* The only way you can get out of being "silver," which

you are almost “bronze,” which is an “acquaintance” —

*(Audience laughs)*

Lisa as Blubberface: *(to audience)* Hey! What are you laughing about? It’s real!

*(Audience shouts out and laughs)*

Lisa as Blubberface: *(to Hairynose)* Since you are like that, you will be Bronze. Are you going to stop being jealous?

Here, the audience interpreted the performance and contributed their own bits of script to the skit (laughs, call outs), becoming declared authors. Lisa and Darren also interacted with the audience, re-authoring the script and its meaning within the new social context. Here the participants positioned the audience as authors. They invited and even played with their contributions, incorporating them into the play. The performance atmosphere and affordances of wordplay and the puppets helped to accommodate these social negotiations.

During the finale, when new structured routines were introduced (i.e. the audience was now eligible to participate), Lisa and Darren took on new positions as they re-authored the script, accommodating the audience’s contributions. Whereas in rehearsals the pair positioned themselves as equal and collaborative improvisational playwrights — designing the scenes, negotiating their characters’ actions, or producing scenes amongst themselves — on stage they situated themselves and were situated by the audience as performers and comedians. Here they claimed authority over the script by disseminating it. For they and they alone were authorized to be on the stage during their scene, and throughout the performance itself they held the authority to address the audience and decide at what points the audience could contribute (e.g., “Hey! What are you laughing about?” or “Don’t laugh now!”).

**Vignette 5.3 — Sequenced Tableaux**

This group of authors was particularly interested in representing the contrast between when a friendship is good (e.g., “When I think of friendship I jump for joy”) versus when a friendship is bad (e.g., “Friendship is not good when you are left out”). They demonstrated these ideas through two sequences of three tableaux.

The study participants, the declared authors in this piece along with the audience members, orchestrated an assemblage of modes and semiotic resources in order to design, produce, and disseminate this discursive event.

To begin, a camp counselor and I (hidden or withdrawn authors) ask the youth to finish a selection of written prompts. For example, one prompt might read:

*When I think about friendship, I \_\_\_\_\_.*

It is not surprising that the participants used the written linguistic mode here: not only is it an excellent mode for private thought (Goody & Watt, 1963), the prompt itself conveys words as its primary semiotic resource.

Using these prompts, all of the children, working together, design tableaux to represent the ideas that the prompts convey. Here, these authors socially negotiate which prompts to choose and how they will create the statue.

The tableaux, although polysemous and silent in nature, afforded sensuous, embodied ways of showing the participants’ inner thoughts (see Figure 5.3, Sequenced Tableaux). Rogers and O’Neill (1993) suggest that when participants use tableaux (or process drama), the texts themselves are transformed because the students are able to go beyond words and show their personal connections and understandings. “...The final world that infiltrates the classroom as a result of using drama is the personal world of the students” (p. 75).

During the *When Friendships are Bad* tableaux, the participants repeatedly designed tableaux that spatially demonstrated exclusion (i.e. one person is separated from the group). See Figure 5.3, Sequenced Tableaux:

**Figure 5.3: Sequenced Tableaux — When Friendships are Bad (Parts 1 & 2)**



*“Friendships are bad when there’s jealousy.”*



*“Friendship is not good when you feel left out.”*

Drama affords this spatial organization in ways that are difficult to produce in linguistic modes. The captions (linguistic) tell us about the subtle differences in the narration. For example, whereas the excluded character in the left-hand image above reveals jealousy and resentment, the excluded character in the right-hand image suggests loneliness or sadness.

It is interesting to note that some of the positioning that was occurring inside the play during these sequenced tableaux scenes was also being mirrored outside of the play. For instance, during the designing phase of this activity, the girls (Sharon, Lisa, and Julie) were holding a lot of authority; they determined whose prompts would be represented and made suggestions about how each of the participants should position their body thereby excluding the boys.

Darren and Paul tried to physically re-position themselves, such as by placing themselves

(centre stage) in the middle of the action. The girls ignore them and continue with their own storylines. Darren asks questions and makes alternative suggestions for the tableaux, but the girls refuse to engage with his ideas. Eventually, Darren decides to step out of the tableau (as seen in the first picture in Figure 5.3). At this point, he appoints himself as the director of the scene. In this role, he casts the characters in the ways that he wants, blocks the scene (e.g. tells each author how to position their bodies), and communicates his own interpretation of the narrative. Paul signals his discontent by making facial expressions (e.g., rolling his eyes) and through gestures (e.g., crossing his arms). He suggests that there could be music in the scene to highlight Darren's interpretation of the play. Darren agrees that adding music might be a good idea. Paul announces that he will still be in the play, but that he will also write the music. He goes over to the keyboard and begins to work with a counsellor on the music.

Here, both boys felt ignored during the tableaux scene. Their feeling of disempowerment sparked a desire for them to change their discursive positions in the scene. For Darren, although he did not have authority inside the play, his self-appointed role as the director lent him new social and critical opportunities like being included in the group, and having the power to author the scene in the ways that made sense to him. Paul, on the other hand, not appreciating the position in which he was being situated — as a pawn in the play — also made a strategic move. Although he remained as an actor in both scenes, he appointed himself as the musical composer's (a Kid's Place camp counselor) assistant. Here, he helped compose a piece of music that added to the mood of the scene.

#### **Vignette 5.4 — Recreated Poems and Picture Books**

In another discursive event, the participants (visible authors) were encouraged to chose from a variety of materials in order to author a multimodal interpretation of a traditional poem or a contemporary picture book.

Some of the youth browse through magazines, poetry books, and picturebooks looking for poems or stories that they want to represent. Others examine the materials table, deciding on what materials might be useful. The materials table includes: poster paper and paint, blankets, cameras, a keyboard, puppets, stuffed toys, markers, musical instruments, and construction paper.

Again I became one of the hidden or withdrawn participants (along with the camera operator, the poets and writers who had written the traditional poems and picture books, the camp counselors, and the other campers).

Pippa Stein (2003) uses the phrase “semiotic chain” to suggest the ways that children in her study used a variety of texts and modes in order to create 3-D dolls (p. 123). Later (2008) she posits that people, in addition to moving from text to text in a sequenced process of meaning-making, also concurrently orchestrate “communicational ensembles” of modes and media (p. 1). This revised notion offers a more overlapping, simultaneous way of thinking about multimodality that resonates with my Authorship as Assemblage model. For instance, during this vignette above, participants like Sharon and Julie assembled and overlapped semiotic, social, and critical actions, creating what Bakhtin (1981) would term a multimodal “heteroglossia.”

The participants create short scenes with their stories/poems and materials. While one group chooses to narrate and act out a picturebook (*Yo Yes!* By Chris Raschka), another group transforms a traditional poem (*Old Ships are Gold*) using puppets and props.

They chose (what seemed like) the most apt mode to represent and communicate their ideas, inviting what Eco (1976) would call “unlimited semiosis” (p. 68). For instance, the folded crumpled paper afforded both the three dimensional look of a ship as well as the texture that was needed to communicate the idea of an “old ship.” The finger puppets, although deemed too small to use for the finale, fit perfectly inside the paper ships. Additionally, when the participants experienced limitations with the modes such as the paper boats that continued to tip over, they

either layered additional semiotic resources into their authorship (e.g., holding the boat and adding action to the poem, or adding dialogue such as “It was such an old ship that it wouldn’t even stay afloat”) or they re-designed their props (e.g., using the folds in the blanket to support the paper ship). Pahl says that: “When the affordances of one mode begin to lose their communicative possibility, another mode can be taken up” (2003, p. 140). This was certainly the case here as the authors fluidly interwove and layered resources in order to interpret and actualize the meanings that they needed.

Alongside their poem — There are old ships. And there are new ships. But the best ships are friendships — these youth played with three aspects of the text: (a) the notion of old, (b) the notion of new, and (c) the notion of friendship. These three thematic phrases organized their scene through time (e.g., the narrator placed these phrases in this sequence) and through space (e.g., a crumpled vs. a crisp folded-paper boat, placement on the puppet stage).

A while later, Sharon and Julie think that the camera might help them. They use the video setting on the camera to film their scenes. They immediately replay and view their scenes after they are finished recording. They revise their scenes, adding gestures, words, new props, and so forth.

The camera enabled Sharon and Julie to review and edit their authorship. Meanwhile, my use of the two cameras: (1) the one held by Sharon and Julie; and (2) the one operated by an adult assistant) allowed me to simultaneously position myself within and outside of the scenes at the same time. Here, I recorded the bigger picture of their authorship (their discourse) and, at the same time, the scenes they were creating (in the ways that they wanted these scenes framed). Below is a transcription of their broader authorship (see Figure 5.4 — Recreated Poem Transcript).

**Figure 5.4 — Recreated Poem Transcript**

(Sharon and Julie stand in front of the table of materials)

Sharon: Let's use the...the...camera. Yeah! Right on! We can do still-frame photography....

Julie: Or...I know. (she grabs a piece of purple construction paper and begins folding.)

Sharon: (Playing with the camera) Hey, there's video on it too. Let's act out the scene...(looks up)...what's that going to be.

Julie: A ship.

Sharon: Show me how.

(Julie shows Sharon how to fold a ship. Sharon follows Julie. Sharon stops.)

Sharon: We only need two.

(Sharon grabs the first ship and crumples it up.)

Julie: Hey!

Sharon: It's the old ship.

(Julie nods and then laughs. Sharon grabs two finger puppets from the table and sticks them in the boat.)

Here, Sharon was positioned as the director. Meanwhile, Julie took on the position of artist. While Sharon suggested how the scene could be acted out, Julie began creating paper boats to represent the "ships." Sharon watches, learning how to fold. Here, Sharon is positioned as Julie's student. Just a second later, Sharon has an idea. She decides that the scene needs two ships and that one of them needs to be crumpled. At this point the authority is shifting quickly from Julie to Sharon and then from Sharon to Julie, demonstrating the flexible ways that youth

are able to fluidly and quickly shift their discursive positions.

### 5.11 Discussion

It is not a new idea to suggest that authors are both readers and writers of meaning. Barthes (1977), for example, talks about the death of the author. Here he is suggesting that since readers bring their own understandings and contribute to the text, they become authors in their own right. To understand meaning is not to merely unfold it, but to add to it — sewing it together with a “narrative thread,” so to speak (Barthes, 1977, p. 87). A similar argument could be made about theatrical audiences. They are not passive observers, especially when, as seen in this case study, they are reacting to, speaking back to, and encouraging the participants. They are not only designing meanings in their own minds and contributing to their own understandings, they are also disseminating information socially and contributing to the theatrical production itself.

Vygotsky (1978) offers a theory of higher psychological processes that he calls “signalization” (p. 52). He suggests that when people are given opportunities to socially mediate and make sense of signs within situated social-cultural contexts, they are also given opportunities to internalize meanings. He (1978) writes:

...Any function in the child's cultural development appears on stage twice, on two planes. First it appears on the social plane, then on the psychological, first among people as an interpsychical category and then within the child as an intrapsychical category. (p. 57)

This signalization theory can be applied to the case study. As Lisa and Darren authored their skit *Old Friends are Gold*, they consciously and unconsciously mediated their own understandings based on their audience’s authored reactions. For example, although puns were an original part

of their skit, like when the whale says to the cow “We’ve known each other since we were *calves*,” the positive encounters that the participants had with the audience (the audience’s laughter) encouraged these authors to incorporate more wordplay into their scene, such as when the panther speaks to the cow, “...you are so juicy. Juicy like real steak. And your milk is so good.” This notion, that authors are both external and internal multimodal meaning-makers, which includes looking at the “hidden and withdrawn” authors in addition to the “declared authors,” is beginning to be taken up in literacy (e.g., Hamilton, 2000), however I have not yet seen this notion as frequently in the field of Drama-in-Education. Yet it contributes to the idea that all authorship is a socially-situated mediated activity that occurs between the individual and the society.

The socially mediated nature of communication resonates with Bakhtin’s dialogic theory (1984) as well. He theorizes that life by its very nature is dialogic because people draw upon others’ utterances in order to contribute to an evolving community (p. 293). He writes:

All words have the “taste” of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day and hour. Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions. (p. 293)

In this way, people simultaneously draw upon and contribute to a larger cultural system when they author.

These social-symbolic mediation theories outlined by Vygotsky and Bakhtin have become fundamental to the Authorship as Assemblage model I propose. They have the potential to be explored further in regards to authorship, and particularly in regards to drama/theatre, where children play out their roles and co-author complex dialogic and symbolic mediations alongside

their audiences.

Few people would deny that, when given opportunities to author multimodally, authors move between modes fluidly, evoking rich, sophisticated meanings. Numerous literacy researchers have successfully demonstrated this over the last half century (e.g., Dyson, 1997; 2003; Harste et al., 1984; Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Kress, 1997; Pahl & Rowsell, 2005; Siegel, 1995; 2006; Stein, 2003; 2008; Winters, 2004). Nor is it an original idea to suggest that the product of authorship, be it written, sketched, filmed, enacted, sung, and so forth, is only the tip of the iceberg, and that the true process of authorship is where the thinking occurs (e.g., Baldry & Thibault, 2006; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Winters et al., 2006).

What is unique, however, is looking at the ways that authors simultaneously layer and embed a multiplicity of modes that are made up of semiotic resources and social (inter)actions, alongside critical discursive positions. Here, researchers have opportunities to further understand and analyse more ephemeral modes of meaning-making such as drama or theatre, puppetry, movement, and so forth, while at the same time paying attention to the social and interactive processes and products of authorship. This is demonstrated during the Old Ships scene. Here, these authors were not only moving between the modes of film, drama, prop-making, and language, they were also assembling numerous semiotic resources and social (inter)actions, while at the same time positioning themselves and one another within their social environments. Investigating the process and the invisible evidence of meaning-making, as the assemblage model does, is significant. It not only provides evidence for critical claims such as “authorship is autonomous” (Kress, 2003) as it is shaped by and also shapes to broader cultural systems of discourse, it also empowers authors, giving them opportunities to design, negotiate, produce, and disseminate nuanced and more “dialogic” assemblages of meaning (Bakhtin, 1981). Additionally, examining what today’s authors are doing lets researchers make informed

decisions about tomorrow's pedagogies, policies, and theories.

These authors positioned themselves and others as they assembled social and semiotic meanings as they created plays in this particular context. Davies and Harré (1990) and Holland et al. (1998) argue that people take on and assign subject positions based on their own imagined storylines. From these unique stances, they make decisions and discursively interact with those around them. Davies and Harré (1990) write:

A subject position incorporates both a conceptual repertoire and a location for persons within the structure of rights for those that use that repertoire. Once having taken up a particular position as one's own, a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, storylines and concepts which are made relevant within the particular discursive practice in which they are positioned. At least a possibility of notional choice is inevitably involved because there are many and contradictory discursive practices that each person could engage in. (p. 46)

These positions are never unitary, nor are they permanent. In the making of meaning the author takes on a discursive position or perspective that is both shaped by and also shapes her actions, modes, and meaning-making.

As I began to investigate this idea further, I realized that subject or discursive positions have the potential to lend authors authority. These positions stem not only from the individuals who are positioning the authors, but also from the authors themselves. For example, in the sequenced tableaux, the girls tended to inhabit the authoritative positions, determining how people would be posed, what roles they could take, how they would be physically situated in relation to the group, and so forth. Acting in these ways, especially in other contexts, might be

considered bullying or at least bossiness. And although the boys tried to reject these ideas by asking questions or coming up with new suggestions, it wasn't until the boys actually repositioned themselves that authority was shifted. For example, Darren stepped out of the scene and appointed himself as the "director." Since the girls understood the role of the director, they accepted this change, therefore also accepting they now had less responsibility to design the scene. Paul, on the other hand, positioned himself as the music assistant. Here, he had opportunities to contribute to the scene in new but important ways. He had authority over the sound design, and added to the play through rhythms, tones, and melodies. The others valued this contribution and accepted his new position.

In this way, authors hold agency. They are their own multimodal assemblages — they are the plays that they make, the silences they choose not to articulate, the sketches they draw, and the positions they appoint and assume. As they appropriate the authorship of others through drama and multiple modes, mediate and internalize these understanding, participate in social contexts, negotiate structured routines, and explore their own positions, they continuously gain and give up authority. As Dyson (1997) writes, "Children have agency in the construction of their own imaginations..." (p. 181). They can engage differently, be silent or still, take on peripheral positions, and still satisfy their needs, while at the same time actively participating in the social contexts or their authored, sophisticated lives.

### 5.12 Conclusion

So much goes into authorship: the social and dialogic interactions that surround the authors, the storylines they imagine they are dialoging with, and the orchestration of modes and semiotic resources. Broadening notions of authorship, such as my Authorship as Assemblage model tries to do, not only gives researchers new ways to study multimodal authorship within

and across social contexts, it also offers authors the potential to better understand their own authorship and, as demonstrated in this case study, it could potentially lend them authority in social contexts so that they feel like legitimate authors who own their meaning-making.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS: ASSEMBLAGES OF AUTHORSHIP THROUGH THREE METAPHORS

*Each text we make is a complex sign reflecting our interests: in this sense, this study can be interpreted as a sign which reflects my own history and interests. (Stein, 2008, p. 14)*

### 6.1 I Remember

As a child I used to think that authorship meant composing original ideas. I believed that these ideas could only be represented through print (e.g. on a typewriter, in a book or newspaper) or through hand-lettering (e.g., cursive writing). I thought authorship was a linear process that had nothing to do with my social worlds. Authorship, as far as I knew, had nothing to do with the subject positions or storylines I imagined in my mind nor did it include the multimodal actions I used to create meaning in my life. This meant that unless I could learn to articulate my thoughts through writing, my contributions, my ideas, and my understandings would not be recognized.

I recently found a personal writing journal from fourth grade that demonstrates my then-limited notions about authorship. In this journal there was a blank page that held the ghostly remains of an erased phrase: “I remember.” The day I wrote this phrase in cursive handwriting and then quickly erased it is still etched in my mind. The re-created vignette below (see Vignette 6.1 — Reflections on an Excerpt from My Grade Four Notebook), alongside my re-imagined reflections from three decades later, demonstrate my narrow understandings about authorship in the 1970s.

**Vignette 6.1 — Reflections on an Excerpt from My Grade Four Notebook**

Personal Narrative “Descriptive Writing”	Reflective Notes
<p><i>“Let’s do some creative writing today,” says Mrs. McNaughton (my remedial teacher), handing us our journals. “We’ll work on writing a descriptive story. What are some descriptive words?”</i></p> <p><i>Immediately, everyone starts scribbling. I sit — frozen. I try to sneak a peek at what they are writing, but can’t read cursive upside down.</i></p> <p><i>I put my pencil on the paper and try to write the words “I remember” in cursive. It looks messy so I erase it.</i></p> <p><i>Miss McNaughton sees my struggle and sits beside me. “Kari, you can do this. You’re always acting out descriptive stories at recess. Try to write one of those.”</i></p> <p><i>I try to focus on an important memory; still, nothing happens.</i></p>	<p>Descriptive word? What is she talking about? What does she mean?</p> <p>Everyone is writing. I should write something too.</p> <p>My writing is messy.</p> <p>I don’t know what to write about.</p> <p>What does acting out stories at recess have to do with writing?</p> <p>What do I do?</p> <p>I wish I was doing anything else</p>

Looking back, I am disappointed by how narrowly some students (such as myself) defined authorship. It meant written production, nothing else. I could not understand at that time how acting out stories could have anything to do with learning, storytelling, meaning-making, and especially with authorship. This way of thinking was not only narrow and naïve, it was also disempowering, for it made my own talents and strengths seem worthless. For example, I could

tell stories on the playground. I could represent my understandings through theatrical performances and visual art. I could interpret and design my own meanings within social contexts. I could create storylines and subject positions, situating myself and others within and across an array of social environments. But from my perspective, these assembled notions of authorship didn't count.

## **6.2 A Developing Perspective: Authorship as Assemblage**

Now I see things differently.

My conceptions of the Authorship as Assemblage theoretical model developed over many years and continue to evolve with each new text that I create and with each unique social context that I encounter. This model takes into consideration my entire history — socially, semiotically, and critically. In this way, I embody the opening quote by Pippa Stein, “Each text is a complex sign ... which reflects my own history.”

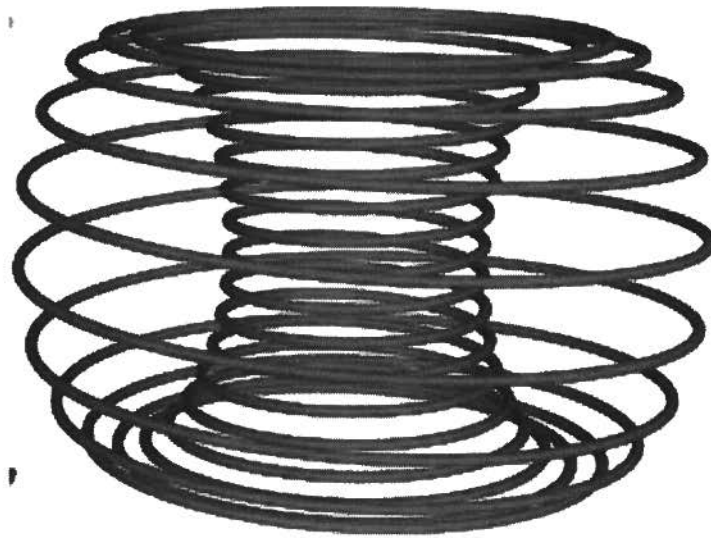
Authorship as Assemblage is based on my own interactions with my social worlds as a literacy researcher, a dramatist, a mother, and a children's author, and my choices to use these particular theoretical frames, methodologies, and study contexts. In combining these perspectives, I hope to have contributed to the field of language and literacy, while coming to understand some of the sophisticated assemblages of authorship.

### **6.2.1 Three Visual Metaphors That Could Symbolize Authorship as Assemblage**

The previous chapters are exploratory and are used as way to develop and explore the Authorship as Assemblage theoretical model. In addition to examining how the model works across unique contexts (as demonstrated in the three case studies), I also wanted to create a visual metaphor. This can be challenging because each metaphor carries its own affordances and

limitations; hence, none of the metaphors I came up with are ideal. Therefore, as a reflection of my process, a reflection that resonates with the entire thesis, I will present an assemblage of visual metaphors: a spiral torus, water currents, and a quilt.

**Figure 6.1 Visual Metaphor #1 — A Spiral Torus**



Ideally, this visual metaphor for Authorship as Assemblage should be represented in a 3-dimensional form, to better demonstrate its complexities. However, because I am limited by the 2-dimensional affordances of the paper or the screen, only one perspective at a time can be illustrated. This means that the author reading this thesis will need to imagine the fluidity of this torus in a spiralling motion, whereby the internal becomes the external and vice versa.

The inner core of the torus, filled with empty space, represents the possible meanings that are available within the particular discourses. The middle spiralled pillar of this torus represents the author's process of semiotic, social, and critical meaning-making as they try to spiral around the potential information, assembling it from differing perspectives. These meanings are shifting. As the spirals rotate and air moves through the space. The larger outer spiral represents the

broader social and cultural contexts.

Looking closer, each whorl of the spiral — which is both internal and external — represents the tools of meaning-making such as the semiotic resources employed, semiotic actions, or the discursive positions. This metaphor suggests that authors orchestrate an array of semiotic resources, continually shifting their social (inter)actions of designing, negotiating, producing and disseminating, while simultaneously contributing to their own understandings and participation of assembled authorship. Further, as authors move up and down, inside and outside the spiral, they assume or assign discursive positions in ways that always interweave with their social environments.

I will demonstrate this model further with a spoken word poetic vignette that I authored (see Vignette 6.2). This vignette draws on the happenings of chapter three.

### **Vignette 6.2 — A Spiral Torus in Relation to Leon**

Spiralling out from the centre, from the meanings in his life.

He is the drawer, the thinker, the maker — the author.

He builds the comic, the letter, the play,

assembling his worlds.

What does it mean to lose a tooth? No one will think he is a baby.

Whorling through each day.

Swirling, producing, whorling, designing, twirling, negotiating, curling, disseminating,

UN—

FURL—

ING—

Through each day,

he originates, animates,  
and donates the meanings,  
spiralling them back to the centre, from the context of his life.

This notion of the spiral torus is complex, and though in some ways it accurately represents my theoretical model, it is not complete. It still raises questions about the linearity and the predictability of authorship. Each whorl in this spiral appears neatly placed along a continuum. Such perfect placement feels straightforward or predictable, and therefore inauthentic. Additionally, while this visual metaphor does demonstrate a simultaneous internal and external nature, a recursive process, and a dialogic interconnectedness (Bakhtin, 1981), it doesn't show the ways that authors connect with one another within social contexts, for example, creating unique storylines.

**Figure 6.2 Visual Metaphor #2 — Water Currents**

This visual metaphor highlights the nonlinearity of authorship, suggesting that it is less predictable than in the previous visual metaphor and that it has a life of its own. Here, authorship moves and wanders; it is boundless and non-linear. It is a place where a multiplicity of modes can interanimate each other, where subject positions are in constant motion. Authorship can indeed feel like this at times. It can be dynamic, making it difficult to capture and analyze. Also, it is difficult to separate the parts from the whole — like the text from the author, or the discursive identities from the social environment. Below, I use a second vignette to relate this metaphor to chapter four (see Vignette 6.3).

### **Vignette 6.3 — Water Currents in Relation to Three Picturebook Authors**

The current re-authors its shores.

While re-tracing its past — its path — to other streams, rivers, and oceans, it re-writes what's already been written.

## 6 Conclusions

Playing its performances, it calls to us, "You can't catch me."

Stories resound and reverberate, transform, and congregate.

Moving between.

The current is not sluggish.

Our hands are hungry. They thirst for more.

Continuously collecting,

desiring one more sip.

Our ears swallow greedily.

The taste of the words unique to each ear drum.

The current is not tasteless.

Our eyes crave to clutch its colours,

its momentum, its cadence.

Our bodies reach and try to hold...

If only for a moment.

Our pens scratch the paper.

The current moans.

It refuses to be harnessed, and spills from our palms,

seeping into every possible space and future moment.

Only traces of its existence.

Then re-tracing its past — its path — it moves on.

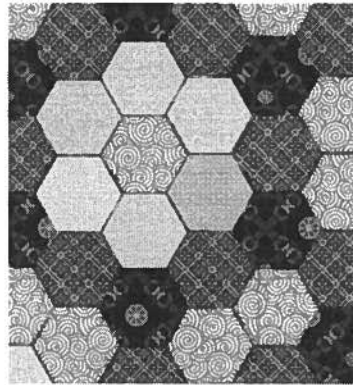
This visual metaphor, which fluidly lends itself to semiotic, social, and critical assemblages, particularly in the ways the meanings integrate and dialogue with one another, suggests the dynamic and collective nature of authorship. As Ben, Maggie, and I noticed, the meanings in *Jeffrey and Sloth* (Winters, 2007) became bigger than the sum of its parts. This active synergy could not be harnessed.

That said, the water current metaphor is limited in at least two ways. First, it doesn't represent the agency — “control over one's behaviour” — that authors have during authorship (Holland et al., 1998, p. 38). During the making of this picturebook, each of the authors held agency, our own means of ensuring that our voices were heard. While we did congregate and collectively create the meaning of the story, we also established that our own efforts were not washed away. I drew heavily on the organization of the words and the punctuation in order to represent the cadence of the story and the performance qualities for reading it aloud, while Ben thought about the colours, patterns, the bodily gestures, and Maggie thought about the synergy, the page turns, and the bigger picture. These semiotic resources that we used informed our work. These words, rhythms, cadences, and so forth became the clay that we collectively formed. And in this way, we gained agency through “self-directed symbolizations” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 277). Furthermore, it would be inaccurate to say that we didn't assume our own roles or hold responsibilities. In this metaphor, water currents culminate and have the potential to sweep away obstacles in their paths. How might individual agency be maintained in a current? Water seeps into every space; it isn't bounded. As an author I like to think that we collaborated, yet I recognize my own authority — relations between knowledge and power, between individual learners and their situational contexts, as well as in the broader sociocultural and critical

discourses in which these learners are embedded (Street, 1993). The second limitation for this metaphor has to do with the idea that water does not embed, interweave, or layer, rather it only hybridizes its sources. To explain this point I need give distinct examples of authorship regarding each of the above. These examples are drawn from chapter four.

- Embedded: In the storybook *Jeffrey and Sloth*, the words themselves were embedded within a visual format. The font and layout of the page enclose the linguistic mode, suggesting particular kinds of meaning.
- Interwoven: In many cases, the words are interwoven with the artwork. Here the words and the illustrations interweave, but traces of each are still visible.
- Layered: As a picture book is being authored, the writer may choose to build onto a narrative by adding dialogue, gestures, actions, and so forth. The illustrator may choose to further elaborate these resources.
- Hybridized: When the words of *Jeffrey and Sloth* are read aloud, the written words, the punctuation, the cadence, and the spoken words become one. It is impossible to separate these hybridized elements.

Each unique arrangement offers distinct meanings; each has its own affordances and limitations. Although water currents can embed rocks or sticks, can they embed creeks into streams? Interweave with rivers? Or layer onto oceans? I suspect that the visual metaphor of a water current is limited in respect to authorship because it seems to have only one capacity for assemblage: to hybridize.

**Figure 6.3 Visual Metaphor #3 — A Quilt**

Using quilts as a metaphor for authorship gives agency back to authors as they can ultimately “gain control over their own behaviour”, for example, by deciding where the pieces of fabric are placed, what colours they want to choose, and so forth (Holland et al. 1998, 39). Quilts also afford unique arrangements of assemblage, including the capacity to embed colours inside broader patterns, layer materials, interweave different strips of fabric, and hybridize shapes into other shapes (e.g. putting several triangles together to form a hexagon pattern).

Drawing upon Vignette 1.1, “Quilt-making as a Metaphor for Authorship,” I have created a poetic vignette that compares quilt-making to chapter 5.

#### **Vignette 6.4 — Quilting in Relation to Playbuilding**

Our authorship is a quilt  
 of odd ideas cobbled together.  
 Piece by piece, bit by bit, all of it pieced together.

We cut the fabric carefully.  
 And choose the patterns we'll use.

Stitch by stitch, bit by bit. Five stitches at a time.

Are you sure you want this one?

Yes, I know that's the one.

Piece by piece, bit by bit, all of it pieced together.

Stretch it. Move it. Place it,  
in the spot that makes most sense.

Stitch by stitch, bit by bit. Five stitches at a time.

Stop bossing, can't you see....

My threads are becoming unravelled

Piece by piece, bit by bit, all of it pieced together.

Join the layers with a running stitch,  
then hang it up to show.  
Stitch by stitch, bit by bit. Five stitches at a time.

We're all authors of this transformation.

Piece by piece. Stitch by stitch. All of us pieced it together.

Although I use the phrases “bit by bit” or “piece by piece,” I am not suggesting a linear pattern. Pahl and Rowsell, (2005) drawing on Kress and Jewitt (2003), argue that educators need to re-evaluate notions of reading paths because texts are no longer “straightforward” (p. 35).

They offer a typical webpage as an example, observing the inclusion of sound bites, labels, images, and bits of animated text that readers practice and experiment with. Extending this reading path idea to a broader notion of authorship, I would argue that a quilt doesn't have to be authored with a linear path either, for the eye can read a multitude of unidirectional patterns. And even as the hand bastes its patches its stitches on at a time, it may move around the pieces of fabric, straight through it, or simply skim the top.

Furthermore, it is important to recognize that quilts have both breadth and depth. Beyond the assembled patterns and colours that are visible, there is also a thin batting and fabric backing. I think of these hidden features as indispensable and intrinsically interconnected, in much the same way that I think discourse, fixed identities, and sociocultural environments as inextricably linked to authorship.

For the reasons listed above, the visual metaphor of the quilt most closely represents the Authorship as Assemblage theoretical model. However, this metaphor is not perfect either; it not only lacks a sense of fluidity once it has been sewn (i.e., it is difficult to re-assemble), it also lacks a visual representation of the recursive nature that the spiralled torus demonstrates so aptly.

### 6.3 Findings and Interpretations

The Authorship as Assemblage Model suggests semiotic, social, and critical ways to theorize and research multimodal authorship. It draws on, integrates, and extends three established theoretical traditions — Social-Symbolic Mediation Theory, Social Semiotics, and Discursive Positioning — and posits four principles:

- 1) Authors are both external and internal meaning-makers; they include any person who contributes meanings to texts whether they be “declared, hidden, or withdrawn” (Barthes,

1970, p. 110);

- 2) Within situational contexts authors use and orchestrate a multiplicity of modes that are made up of different semiotic resources;
- 3) Authors continually shift among the social (inter)actions of designing, negotiating, producing, and disseminating as they interpret and communicate meaning;
- 4) Inside discursive practices, authors create storylines and subject positions. These positions situate the authors themselves and the others within situated practices.

By paying attention to these unique principles, through the careful observation of nine participants, this thesis contributes to the field of literacy education by illustrating the semiotic, social, and critical complexities of authorship within and across social contexts. It suggests that authors not only connect their authorship to their own social worlds as they render meaning, but also interweave, layer, embed, and hybridize multiple semiotic resources. They also orchestrate an array of social relationships and actions during their authorship process — designing, negotiating, producing, and disseminating complicated assemblages of meaning.

Authorship as Assemblage suggests a critical perspective of multimodal meaning-making and posits that discourses are realized in sociocultural contexts. Within these discursive practices, authors create storylines and subject positions in order to tell themselves and others how they are positioned in relation to the context. These imagined story lines and subject positions become part of the authors' "figured ... narrativized, or dramatized worlds" as they intermingle with the authors' experiences and more fixed identities (Davies and Harré, 1990, p. 53). Davies and Harré elaborate:

A figured world is formed and re-formed in relation to the everyday activities and events that ordain happenings within it ... it is an abstraction, an extraction carried

out under guidance. (p. 53)

Through this study, I came to better understand the sophistication with which authors assemble information; here, both child and adult authors alike interweave, layer, embed, and hybridize semiotic, social, and critical understandings into a blend of meaning-making. These actions are rarely straightforward or linear. They are recursive, multidirectional, dynamic, and often chaotic. My case studies demonstrate that authors continuously assemble/reassemble semiotic resources, social (inter)actions, and discursive positions in their social worlds, both “intersemiotically” between modes and “intrasemiotically” within modes (O’Halloran, 2004).

### **6.3.1 Findings and Interpretations of Chapter 3: Leon’s Loose Tooth**

#### *6.3.1.1 Leon Used Recursive and Multiple Pathways in Order to Make Sense of Topics*

Chapter three demonstrates that there are multiple pathways to any one piece of knowledge. This idea is not new. Dyson (2000) has suggested that children are particularly good at recontextualization, reconstructing symbolic texts within new contexts. They glean these symbols from “a myriad of voices surrounding them” and re-integrate them in dynamic ways back into the fabric of their lives (p. 362). Others have observed similar phenomena, e.g., Kendrick (2005), Marsh and Millard (2000), and Pahl and Rowsell (2005). As a literacy researcher I am intrigued by how recursive Leon’s multimodal authorship became. Not only did he use multiple semiotic resources and social (inter)actions to contribute to his own meaning-making, he repeatedly drew upon and interwove his previous multimodal assemblages, generating new perspectives and new understandings with each go-round. Leon demonstrated several ways to interpret and actualize what it means to lose a tooth.

### 6.3.1.2 *Leon Knew the Affordances of Different Semiotic Resources*

Leon demonstrated that he had internalized and understood the most apt ways to present his ideas. He knew the semiotic resources he needed to layer, embed, hybridize, and blend in order to actualize the exact meanings he desired. For example, he created a picture to show his grandparents how he lost his tooth. When the picture did not afford the opportunity to express his ideas in the organized and sequential way that he wanted, he created a comic instead. Leon determined the affordances of the image and he knew that the semiotic resource that he had chosen wasn't working. For this reason he decided to layer words into his meaning-making and use a more hybridized mode.

### 6.3.1.3 *Leon Mediated Meanings Socially and Individually (Externally and Internally)*

Vygotsky (1978) argues that every aspect of a child's life occurs on two levels, a social level and later on an individual level. This case study resonated with Vygotsky's theory. His social, dialogic interactions not only shaped the storylines that Leon internalized, but they helped him re-position himself in relation to others inside the social context. As Bakhtin (1986) would argue, he was using an array of previous utterances to help him navigate his social relationships. For example, the subject positions that Leon constructed in relation to his friend Olson's toothless grin informed his relationship with his peers, me, and even the Tooth Fairy. In other words, Leon not only drew on the authorship of others, he built onto them, creating renewed and multilayered storylines and subject positions. For example, while reading *Franklin and the Tooth Fairy* (Bourgeois, 1995), Leon heard "Losing your baby teeth means your are growing up..." (p. 21). He later appropriated and built onto this idea, stating, "No one will think he (Olson) is a baby" (Interview Notes, July 14, 2006). Does he then situate himself as one of the kids who has not lost a tooth? Does Leon think that others, like his friend Olson, will think of him as a baby?

#### 6.3.1.4 *Leon Simultaneously Assembled Past Figured Worlds and Present Social Worlds*

By assembling his past relationships and positions, he simultaneously interacts with his present social contexts. Not only do these interactions seem inevitable, given the richly interwoven spaces of dialogic meaning-making that I observed, other researchers have witnessed similar phenomena. For instance, Debra Skinner observed a Gyanumayian woman scale a wall so that she could subscribe to “the religious tenets she absorbed in childhood” and still be able to accept Skinner’s invitation for an interview (Holland et al., 1998, p. 273). Similarly, Stein (2008) witnessed a Southern African girl’s multimodal performance, which conveyed her historical understandings, her cultural storytelling rituals, and her figured worlds “with every layer in her communicational ensemble” (p. 53). Likewise in chapter three, Leon inextricably and simultaneously linked his past understandings to his present larger community.

### 6.3.2 **Findings and Interpretations of Chapter 4: The Making of *Jeffrey and Sloth***

#### 6.3.2.1 *Picturebook Authors Are External and Internal Meaning-Makers*

In practice, there are no simple *producers* or *consumers* of texts; these roles are intrinsically connected and interwoven (Barthes, 1970). What is written today by the writer, the illustrator, or the editor will be re-written tomorrow by the publisher, the art director and the reader. Each rereading is in fact another re-authoring. Ben Hodson, Maggie de Vries, and I continually shifted between the interpretation and actualization of meaning by positioning ourselves as both readers and writers of texts.

#### 6.3.2.2 *Picturebook Authors Contribute Meaning in Ways that Go Beyond Words and Images*

As presented in the fourth chapter, Ben Hodson, Maggie de Vries, and I contributed a myriad of meanings with and beyond written language and illustration. In addition to these more

recognized semiotic resources, we played with pacing, rhythms, punctuation symbols, formatting, intonation, and gesture. As Van Leeuwen (2005) and others have argued, semiotic resources hold their own affordances and limitations; for this reason, additional semiotic resources interanimate one another, making the sum of the whole larger than its individual parts.

Picture books are intended to be read aloud (Nodelman, 1988). Therefore, the musicality of the language — the use of syntax, diction, punctuation, the flow — is important. When the musicality, the performer, and the book are brought together, they too, like the words and the illustrations, create a synergy of modes the shape further authorship.

#### 6.3.2.3 *Picturebook Authors Continually Assemble Social (Inter)actions*

Picturebook authors rarely author stories in a linear or a prescribed way; instead they continually assemble and re-assemble information through actions of meaning-making, such as designs, negotiations, productions, and disseminations, within their situated social environments. These changing contexts shape the orchestration of possible (inter)actions. In this way, Authorship is always being socially re-assembled.

Picturebook authorship is social in another way too. As writers, illustrators, and editors we assembled information, assuming that there will someday be readers and listeners interacting with our work (Harste et al., 1984). These readers and listeners, if present or through reviews, will give us feedback through their words, their engagement, their tone. And at that time we may choose to re-author our own work by omitting difficult vocabulary for younger listeners, emphasizing particular moments in the story, pausing, changing our vocal inflections or bodily positions, and so forth. This example illustrates that authorship is socially interactive and continually re-assembled.

### 6.3.3 Findings and Interpretations of Chapter 5: Collaborative Playbuilding with Youth

#### 6.3.3.1 *Authors are Contributors of Meaning Whether Declared, Hidden, or Withdrawn.*

Authors can be “declared, hidden, or withdrawn” (Barthes, 1977, p. 111). This resonates with Bakhtin’s notion (1981) that no idea is original; for every idea is rooted in historical and social contexts, indeterminate of origin. This is a particularly vivid point in theatre production, as one may ask, who is the author? Is it the playwright who wove the words, the set designer who drew and arranged the stage, the lighting or sound designers who bring light and rhythms to the space, or the actors who bring the stories to life? Maybe the author is the audience who interprets the play, arranging it in their minds so that the multimodal information makes sense?

This chapter suggested that all who contributed to the context, including the audience, are indeed authors. To understand meaning is not to merely unfold it, but to contribute to it, sewing it together with a “narrative thread” (Barthes, 1977, p. 87). Theatrical audiences are not passive observers. They react, speak back, encourage, and fill the gaps as they observe, interpret, laugh with, and participate in the experience and contribute to the meaning of the work. Even during seemingly simple moments of authorship like tableaux, authors are negotiating visible and invisible complexities of modal affordance and position.

#### 6.3.3.2 *Authors Think about More than the Texts They Create*

There is more to authorship than the product. This has been an ongoing debate in the theatre/drama field — process or product? This chapter demonstrates that children, in addition to thinking about the product or performance itself, drew on their own assemblages of authorship as they continued to author. Here, the youth drew on semiotic resources, in often recursive ways, to interpret and actualize particular meanings. They determined that a blanket could be a tablecloth and then later decided it could also represent the sea; a camera could help them revise their work;

and a performance could include re-interpreted picturebooks and poems (e.g., by using the words but changing the setting of the story). Bakhtin posits, that “all words and forms are populated by intentions” (p. 293). Here, the youth brought their previous intentions to bear when they performed. These intentions were embedded into, interwoven with, and hybridized, becoming an integral part of the final presentation. These intentions arose out of earlier assemblages of meaning-making. For this reason it is important to recognize that the texts that are produced and disseminated are only a small part of the broader authorship assemblage.

#### *6.3.3.3 Authors Continually Negotiate Discursive Positions in Order to Gain/Give up Authority*

New Literacies Researchers (Gee, 1996; Street, 1995; 2003) argue that social practices are always embedded with relations of power. This is because all social practice is ideological, “rooted in a particular world-view” (Street, 1995, 78). I also noticed this phenomenon. Throughout the dissertation, discursive positions and authority were continuously being re-negotiated in order to gain or cede authority. I found that these authors simultaneously drew upon and contributed to larger power systems as they authored. Their world-views, comprised from imagined storylines, not only helped them gain understandings about their environments but they also positioned them within their social relations and social contexts. Sometimes these storylines enabled them to dominate and marginalize others, and at other times these “figured worlds” allowed them to step back or give up their authority (Holland et al., 1998). These discursive positions, along with numerous others, continually shifted and were re-negotiated by the authors.

Power relations were never absolute or permanent. Some people may assume that every human wants power all of the time, but my findings did not illustrate this desire. These youth demonstrated that they were content to fluidly move in and out of positions of power, sometimes taking responsibility for the group and telling others what to do or where to stand, and at other

times giving up their authority and being open to being moved or dominated by another author. Ideas about the fluidity of power in authorship have been examined by researchers like Timothy Lensmire (2000), but need to be explored further in the field of education. For instance, sometimes the authors assumed subject positions that were overly authoritative, demonstrating that every mediated symbolic and social system has its limitations. Dramatic playbuilding and improvisation, like all forms of authorship, is not perfect. Moreover, there were other times when certain youth felt disempowered, dependent on others, or they were restricted in their access to resources. But, drama had the potential to offer agency to these youth too. They could regulate how they might re-position themselves in order to fit in their social environment, like by becoming the director or musician of the scene, re-authoring a scene, or introducing a new prop.

#### **6.4 Extending Current Theoretical and Analytic Frames of Multimodality**

Broadening notions of authorship, such as my Authorship as Assemblage model tries to do, not only gives researchers new ways to study multimodal authorship within and across social contexts, it also evokes further questions. I will introduce a few of the many ideas that could be explored further.

##### *6.4.1.1 Metaphors*

Metaphors for writing need to reveal the sophistication with which people assemble semiotic, social, and critical meanings in messy, recursive, and fluid ways. Earlier in this chapter, I tried to come up with one visual metaphor. This attempt was unsuccessful since metaphors, like modes of meaning making, hold inherent affordances and limitations. Perhaps more than one metaphor needs to be added to the mix, as one metaphor alone does not capture the embedded, interwoven, layered, and hybridized ways that meaning can come to be.

#### 6.4.1.2 *The Recursive and Re-negotiated*

Authorship is rarely straightforward or linear (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). In the making of meaning the author is both shaped by her past actions and is also shaping her present and future actions. As shown in these case studies, these “dialogized hybrids,” which are semiotic, social, and critical, suggest recursive and re-negotiated patterns of practice (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 76). In chapter three, we see how one boy returns — through various semiotic resources and social interactions — to a topic he is trying to understand. In chapter four, three professional authors play with aspects of rhythm in spiralled, re-negotiated ways. In chapter five, the youth return to their own authorship through words, cameras, props, and drama, each time re-negotiating their meaning-making but re-figuring social relationships and their discursive positions. The recursive/re-negotiated patterns of authorship practice have the potential to be explored further across schooled and out-of-school contexts.

#### 6.4.1.3 *Internalized Semiotic, Social, Critical Affordances*

I was struck by Leon’s ingenuity when it came to choosing apt semiotic resources for meaning-making, determining appropriate social (inter)actions in social contexts, and positioning himself and others in sophisticated ways. I had underestimated the richness, the complexities of his thinking. More research on the assembled authorship of very young children would be incredibly helpful, not only for primary educators but also for parents, caregivers, psychologists, picture book authors, dramatists, artists, and so on.

#### 6.4.1.4 *Picturebook Authorship as Semiotic, Social, and Critical Spaces*

While it is becoming more common to examine the polysemous nature of picturebooks particularly the ways that pictures and words interanimate one another (MacKey & McClay, 2000; Nodelman, 1988; Sipe, 1998), few studies examine the other multiple semiotic resources

that might also be embedded, interwoven, hybridized, and layered. Even fewer are theorized in these rigorous ways from the perspective of assembled authorship. Though Ben, Maggie, and I had individual roles and responsibilities during our authorship of *Jeffrey and Sloth*, we collaboratively contributed to the story in multimodal ways, e.g. through designs, negotiations, productions, and disseminations of semiotic information. Further, few educational studies articulate the assemblages of authorship from an insider's perspective, from the other side of the publisher's walls. Yet, editors, art directors, and publishers have opportunities to profoundly add to or change the picturebooks that are available to the public.

#### 6.4.1.5 *Rethinking Empowerment/Disempowerment During Assemblages of Authorship*

Authors play out their critical understandings, constructing complex dialogic and symbolic mediations within and across social environments. At times these authors position themselves and others as powerful, but they can also position themselves and others in less powerful ways. However, these reduced subject positions had the potential to lend the authors agency in certain situations (e.g., I choose to step out of this scene, or I choose to be a musician instead of an actor). Additionally, what might be seen as disempowered positions allowed the author to re-access participation or new modes of learning. For example, in the process of getting *Jeffrey and Sloth* published, my role as writer allowed me to accept the roles and strengths of illustrator Ben Hodson and editor Maggie de Vries, learning from them and also understanding how rhythms are found in the words themselves, the pictures, and even the page turns. Although notions of empowerment in education have been around for decades, much of the research speaks of marginalization and disempowerment as a negative phenomenon.

## 6.5 Implications

›With the rapid technological and conceptual changes of the late Twentieth and early

Twenty-first Centuries, researchers and educators have been forced to re-examine the assembled and multimodal authorship of humans (Dyson, 2003; Eco, 1979; Kress, 1997). Because the Authorship as Assemblage theoretical frame is flexible —semiotically, socially, and critically — it has the potential to influence multiple fields of multimodality, including literacy education, teacher training, art programming, psychology, children’s literature, new media studies, and so on. For instance, the Authorship as Assemblage model offers a lens through which researchers, educators, and other professionals can better understand embodied thinking and ephemeral modes of meaning-making, while still considering the social and critical aspects of the authors’ lives.

Within schools, this model could be used as a way to bring theory and practice together. The upside is that hundreds of students — students like myself — might come to know that their thinking and their voices are important. Instead of seeing curricular subjects on pedestals as I did, they might recognize semiotic resources are merely tools for meaning-making, and that furthermore that they have an array of potential multimodal choices for designing, negotiating, producing, or disseminating information. Additionally, they can be encouraged to think dialogically and to connect with their past experiences/utterances. Too often in schools, it seems that people are prompted to just “move forward”: get to the next level, learn another skill, advance to the next grade. Yet, Authorship as Assemblage suggests that much can be gained from recursive social practices. Using this model, students could potentially try on different subject positions and be supported as they experiment with different storylines in order to determine what might work best for them. Agency is about having choice. It is not always about gaining power. By taking on or understanding less common or different subject positions within safe environments (e.g., within their Language Arts or drama class), students may be better equipped to deal with difficult situations and they may gain a sense of empathy — which is essential in developing imagined characters or “figured worlds” (Holland et al., 1998).

The downside of using the Authorship as Assemblage theoretical model in schools or other institutional settings is three-fold. First, it is time-consuming to observe and keep track of each individual's assembled authorship. How is this even possible in today's globalized, fast-paced information economy? Second, how would an educator know all of the dialogic relations or social (inter)actions of an author's mind? Because so much of authorship is interpretation, how might an educator know what an author is designing or negotiating? In this way, a lot of this multimodal work is intuitive. Third, how might an educator assess multimodality in a systematic way, when it is ephemeral and always being reassembled or when it is internal? Or when meaning is both shaped by and is shaping the social context (New London Group, 2000; Stein, 2008)?

## **6.6 Another Piece in the Multimodality Quilt: Temporary Conclusions**

So much goes into authorship. All three case studies demonstrate that authors simultaneously assemble semiotic resources, social (inter)actions, and discursive positions while evoking rich and sophisticated meanings. This is not a new idea. Numerous literacy researchers have successfully demonstrated the complexities of multimodal authorship (such as: Bakhtin, 1981; Davies & Harré, 1990; Dyson, 2003; Harste et al., 1984; Holland et al., 1998; Jewitt & Kress, 2003; 2007; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Pahl & Rowsell, 2005, Stein, 2008). I try not to think about this thesis as a new or original idea, but rather as another piece in the multimodal literacy education quilt. This patch, speaks to, interrupts, and layers onto the patterns of theoretical meanings that have come before and will follow.

Like other multimodal researchers have discovered, rich theories such as the one I am proposing have the potential to address, but also to evoke, questions. These questions and answers together point to the significance of the complexities of the Authorship as Assemblage

theoretical model. As researchers we can see for ourselves that authorship is sophisticated — not merely the encodings of meaning through the printed mode nor simply a stable or linear process made up of autonomous skills. Indeed, we continue our struggle to determine exactly what multimodal authorship really is. I can not answer that question fully, as I am still developing this theoretical model (and will continue to develop it for years to come), but I can challenge some recent assumptions based on this thesis. For example, I can argue that:

- 1) Authors are more than merely *producers* of text;
- 2) Modes of communication are never stable. They are recursive, interwoven, embedded, and hybridized with semiotic, social, and critical meanings, which are always assembled in different ways based on the social environments of the author/s;
- 3) Each mode of communication is mediated or realised by multiple semiotic resources and social (inter)actions;
- 4) Authorship can not be practiced in isolation, separate from the author's lived experiences and social worlds. How could it be, when authors are constantly constructing storylines and subject positions that affect their meaning-making and their discursive identities.

I believe that, even though the Authorship as Assemblage model may evoke further questions, it also has the potential of adding to the field of multimodal literacy. For authorship is full of complexities and authors not only layer multiple semiotic resources as they render meanings, but they also orchestrate an array of social inter(actions) and discursive storylines during their authorship process. My case studies demonstrate that authors design, negotiate, produce, and disseminate dynamic, complicated, and interwoven assemblages of meaning within and across social contexts. In this model, authorship is always imbued with semiotic, social, and critical meanings which are dynamic and interrelated. In addition, by showing how this model

can be taken up within situated social practices, I show how theory can be translated into practice. Further, the Authorship as Assemblage theoretical model explores another way we can theorize and analyze multimodal authorship across and within social contexts.

Building from literacy, semiotic, and identity theories, this study touches on assemblages of knowledge, processes and products of meaning-making, play, out-of-school contexts, authority, children's literature, drama and playbuilding, reader/writer relations, multiple semiotic resources, social (inter)actions, and discursive positions. While this thesis doesn't answer all of the questions that might be evoked about authorship, perhaps it is these questions that will inspire others to negotiate their own topics of discussion and their own semiotic, social, and critical authored assemblages.

## APPENDIX A: ANALYSIS FRAME FOR MULTIMODALITY

This analysis frame draws from the work of Barthes (1977); Bakhtin (1981); Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001); Baldry and Thibault (2006); Davies and Harré (1990); and to some extent the work of (Hamilton, 2000).

Each element of the frame is defined below.

Discursive Event	Principle #1	Principle #2		Principle #3	Principle #4	
	External and Internal Meaning-Making	Semiotic Resources		Social (Inter)actions	Discursive Positions of Author	
	Declared: Hidden or Withdrawn:	Semiotic Resources	Semiotic Potential	Designs Negotiations Productions Disseminations	Of self: Of others:	Structured Routines e.g., Who is eligible, rules of engagement

- Discursive Event: any occasion where multimodal discourse is authored/assembled (designed, negotiated, produced, or disseminated) among participants and within concrete situational contexts (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001).
- Authors make meaning both externally (producing and disseminating) and internally (designing and negotiating): this section describes how the participants “donate” meaning to the texts or storylines that are being created (Barthes, 1977). Meaning contributions apply to both the interpretation and the actualization of meaning.
- Declared Participants: the authors who are visibly creating meaning and contributing to

the text within the social contexts (Barthes, 1977), such as the actors who are seen animating the characters on stage or the child who writes a letter at the kitchen table.

- **Hidden or Withdrawn Participants:** the less visible authors who are or may have been involved in donating meaning and contributing to the text within the social contexts (Barthes, 1977; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). For example, the audience who interprets the meaning of a play, the playwright or the director who contributed to the play's narrative, or perhaps the people who were once "dialogically" involved in contributing to the meaning-making — such as Newton, if the play's topic were to be about gravity (Bakhtin, 1981).
- **Semiotic Resources:** The orchestrations of semiotic resources within discourses and situated social contexts. More specifically, the semiotic resources function together intersemiotically and intrasemiotically (Baldry & Thibault, 2006).
- **Semiotic Potential:** The potential (affordances and limitations) arising from the perceivable properties of a mode or a semiotic resource (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001).
- **Social (inter)actions:** the multimodal actions or activities that authors do to construct meaning, including the ways they design, negotiate, produce, and disseminate information within situated contexts. In addition, social (inter)actions include the ways that authors interact with one another, and how their actions relate to the discourses across and within sociocultural contexts (Bakhtin, 1981; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001).
- **Positions Self:** How, within a discourse, authors psychologically or physically situate themselves (i.e. socially, culturally, economically, politically) in both visible and hidden ways (Davies & Harré, 1990).
- **Positions Others:** How, within a discourse, authors psychologically or physically situate

## Appendices

other participants (i.e. socially, culturally, economically, politically) in both visible and hidden ways (Davies & Harré, 1990).

- Structured Routines and Pathways: understandings about how specific literacy events work, including routes that facilitate and regulate actions, including rules of appropriacy and eligibility — who does/doesn't, can/can't engage in particular activities — and authority (Hamilton, 2000).

## APPENDIX B: EXAMPLE OF DATA ANALYSIS FOR OLD SHIPS

Discursive Event	Principle #1	Principle #2		Principle #4	
	External and Internal Meaning-Making	Semiotic Resources		Discursive Positions	
	Declared:  Hidden or  Withdrawn:	Semiotic Resources:	Semiotic Potential	Of self:  Of others:	Structured Routines (e.g., Access and Authority, Who is eligible, Rules of engagement)
Filmed Puppet Show	V: Julie and Sharon  H: the camera operator, the audience  W: the camp counsellor, myself	Paper  Gestures  Props and Puppets   Words (written and spoken)   Cameras	Folded  Ephemeral  Tangible objects   Permanency  Or  Ephemeral   Permanency  Editing	Actors  Film-makers  Directors  Writers  Camera Ops.	“Just t talk.” “Let’s redo it.” “Let’s not say let’s hug though.”

## REFERENCES

- Atwood, M. (2002). *Negotiating with the dead*. Toronto: Anchor Canada.
- Bakhtin, M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Bakhtin, M. (1986). *Speech genres and other late essays*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Baldry, A. & Thibault, P. (2006). *Multimodal transcription and text analysis*. London: Equinox.
- Barthes, R. (1970). *S/Z*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Barthes, R. (1977) *Image, Music, Text*. London: Fontana.
- Berghoff, B., Egawa, K., Harste, J., Hoonan, B. (2000). *Beyond Reading and Writing*. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Bernstein, B. (1971). Class, codes and control: Theoretical studies towards a sociology of language. London: Routledge.
- Bernstein, B. (1975). Class, codes and control: Towards a theory of educational transmissions. London: Routledge.
- Bloome, D. (1986). Reading as a social process. *Language Arts*, 62(2): 134-142.
- Booth, D. (1994). *Story Drama: Reading, writing and roleplaying across the curriculum*. Markham, ON: Pembroke Publishers.
- Bourgeois, P. & Clarke, B. (1995). *Franklin and the tooth fairy*. Toronto: Kids Can Press.
- Bruner, J. (1987). *Actual minds, possible worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bunting, E. & R. Himler (1991). *Fly away home*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Chambers, A. (1985). *Booktalk: Occasional writing on literature and children*. Harper & Row.
- Chandler, D. (2002). *Semiotics: The basics*. London: Routledge.
- Davies, B. & Harré, R. (1990). Positioning: The discursive production of selves. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 20(1), 43-63.
- Dyson, A. H. (1984). Learning to write/learning to do school. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 18(3): 233-264.
- Dyson, A. H. (1997). *Writing superheroes: Contemporary childhood, popular culture, and classroom literacy*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Dyson, A. H. (2001). Writing and children's symbolic repertoires: Development unhinged. In S.B. Neuman & D. Dickinson (Eds.) *Handbook of early literacy research* (pp. 126-141). New York: Guilford.
- Dyson, A. H. (2003). The brothers and sisters learn to write: Popular literacies in childhood and school cultures. New York: Teachers Collage Press
- Dyson, A. H. (2004). Diversity as a "handful": Towards retheorizing the basics. *Research in the teaching of English*, 39, 210-214.

## References

- Dyson, A. H. & Genishi, C. (2005). *On the Case: Approaches to language and literacy research*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Eco, U. (1976). *A theory of semiotics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Edmiston, B. & Wilhelm, J. (2008). *Imagining to learn: Inquiry, ethics, and integration through drama*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Edmiston, B. (2007). Mission to mars: Using drama to make a more inclusive classroom for literacy learning. *Language Arts*, 84(4), 337-346.
- Eisner, E. (1998). *The kind of schools we need: Personal essays*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Ellis, S. (2001). *From reader to writer: Teaching writing through classic children's books*. Toronto: Groundwood Books.
- Fei, V.L. (2004). "Developing an integrative multi-semiotic model". In K.L. O'Halloran (Ed.), *Multimodal discourse analysis* (pp. 220-246). London: Continuum.
- Fitch, S. (2000). *Writing maniac: How I grew up to be a writer and you can too*. Markham, ON: Pembroke Publishers.
- Gallas, K. (1994). *Languages of learning: How children talk, write, dance, draw, and sing their understanding of the world*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Gee, J. (1996). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., London: Falmer Press.
- Goody, J. & Watt, I. (1968). The consequences of literacy. In J. Goody (Ed.), *Literacy in traditional societies* (pp. 27-68). Cambridge, England: University Printing House.
- Gregory, N. & Melanson, L. (2007). *Pink*. Toronto: Groundwood Books.
- Halliday, M. (1975). *Leaning how to mean*. New York: Elsevier North-Holland.
- Halliday, M. (1978). *Language as social semiotic*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M. (2004). Language and the reshaping of human experience. In J. Webster (Ed.) *The language of science. Volume 5 in the collected works of M.A.K. Halliday*. London: Continuum.
- Halliday, M. (2007). Differences between spoken and written language: Some implications for literacy teaching. In J. Webster (Ed.) *The language of science. Volume 9 in the collected works of M.A.K. Halliday*. London: Continuum
- Hamilton, M. (2000). Expanding the new literacy studies: Using photographs to explore literacy as social practice. In D. Barton, M. Hamilton, & R. Ivanic (Eds.), *Situated literacies: Reading and writing in context* (pp. 7-15). New York: Routledge.
- Harste, J., Short, K., & Burke, C. (1996). *Creating classrooms for authors and inquirers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Harste, J., Woodward, V., & Burke, C. (1984). *Language stories and literacy lessons*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with words*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Heath, S. B. & Street, B. (2008). *On ethnography: Approaches to language and literacy research*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Heathcote, D. (2009). Class notes.

## References

- Hodge, R. and Kress, G. (1988). *Social semiotics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Holland, D., Lachicotte, W., Skinner, D., & Cain, C. (1998). *Identity and agency in cultural worlds*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Holquist, M. (Ed.) (1981). *The Dialogic Imagination*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Hymes, D. H. (1969). Linguistic theory and the functions of speech. *International Days of Sociolinguistics*.
- Jewitt, C. & Kress, G. (Eds.) (2003). *Multimodal literacy (Vol. 4)*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Jones, S. (2006). Language with an attitude: White girls performing class. *Language Arts*, 84(2), 114-124).
- Kendrick, M. (2003). *Converging worlds: Play, literacy, and culture in early education*. Bern: Peter Lang.
- Kendrick, M. (2005). Playing house: A sideways glance at literacy and identity in early childhood. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 5(1), 5-28.
- Kendrick, M., & McKay, R. (2004). Drawing as an alternative way of understanding young children's constructions of literacy. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 4(1), 109-128.
- Kishkan, T. (2008). *Phantom limb*. Markham, ON: Thistledown Press.
- Kress, G. (1997). *Before Writing: Rethinking paths into literacy*. London: Routledge.
- Kress, G. (2003). *Literacy in the new media age*. London: Routledge.
- Kress, G. and Van Leeuwen, T. (1996) *Reading images: The grammar of visual designs*. London: Routledge.
- Kress, G. and Van Leeuwen, T. (2001). *Multimodal discourse: The modes and media of contemporary communication*. London: Arnold.
- Kress, G., Jewitt, C., Ogborn, J., Tsatsarelis, C. (2001). *Multimodal teaching and learning: The rhetorics of the science classroom*. London, UK: Continuum.
- Lensmire, T. (2000). *Powerful writing, responsible teaching*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Lewis, D. (1996). *Reading contemporary picturebooks: Picturing text*. London: Routledge.
- Little, J. (1987). *Little by little*. Toronto: Puffin Canada.
- Luke, A. & Carrington, V. (2002). Globalisation, literacy, curriculum practice. In R. Fisher, M. Lewis & G. Brooks (Eds.) *Language and Literacy in Action*. London: Routledge/Falmer.
- Martz, J. (2009). "A Second Look at Picturebook Dummies." Retrieved July 2009 from <http://drawn.ca/2009/03/09/a-second-look-at-picture-book-dummies>.
- Mackey, M., & McClay, J. (2000). Graphic routes to electronic literacy: Polysemy and picture books. *Changing English*, 7(2), 191-201.
- Medina, C. & Campano, G. (2006). Performing identities through drama and teatro practices in multilingual classrooms. *Language Arts*, 83 (4), 332-341.
- Neelands, J. & T. Goode (2000). *Structuring Drama Work: A Handbook of Available Forms in Theatre and Drama*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

## References

- New London Group (2000). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. In B. Cope & M. Kalantzis (Eds.), *Multiliteracies: Literacy learning and the design of social futures*. (9-37) NY: Routledge.
- Nikolajeva, M. & C. Scott (2000). The Dynamics of Picturebook Communication. *Children's Literature in Education*, 31 (4), 225-239.
- Nodelman, P. (1988). *Words about Pictures: The Narrative Art of Children's Picture Books*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- O'Halloran, K. (ed.) (2004). *Multimodal Discourse Analysis: Systemic Functional Perspectives*. London: Continuum.
- O'Neill, A. & L. Huliska-Beith (2002). *The recess queen*. Scholastic Press.
- O'Neill, C. 1995. *Drama worlds: A framework for process drama*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- O'Neill, C. and A. Lambert (1982). *Drama structures*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Pahl, K. (2003) Children's text making at home: Transforming meaning across modes. In: C. Jewitt and G. Kress (eds.) *Multimodal Literacy*. 2003. New York: Peter Lang Publishers pp 139-154.
- Pahl, K. and Rowsell, J. (2005) *Literacy and education: The new literacy studies in the classroom*. London: Paul Chapman.
- Pattison, D. (2008). "Standard picturebooks are 32 pages." Retrieved July 2009 from <http://www.darcypattison.com/picture-books/picture-book-standards-32-pages>.
- Peirce, C. (1931). In C. Hartshorne, P. Weiss & A. Burks (Eds.), *Collected writings*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Ranker, J. (2007). "Designing meaning with multiple media sources: A case study of an eight-year old student's writing processes". *Research in the Teaching of English*, 41(4), 402-434.
- Recorvits, H. & G. Swiatkowska (2003). *My name is Yoon*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Rogers, T. and C. O'Neill. 1993. Creating multiple worlds: Drama, language, and literary response. In *Exploring Texts*, Edited by G. Newell and R. Durst, 69-89. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon.
- Rogers, T., Winters, K., La Monde, A., Perry, M. (2010). Youth media production as new literacy practices: A play of genre, positioning and critique. *Pedagogies*.
- Saussure, F. ([1916;1974] 1983). *Course in general linguistics* (trans. Roy Harris). London: Duckworth.
- Schofield, A. and T. Rogers (2004). At play in fields of ideas: Teaching, curriculum, and the lives and multiple literacies of youth. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 48.
- Schultz, K. & Fecho, B. (2000). Society's child: Social context and writing development. *Educational Psychologist*, 35(1), 51-62.
- Semali, L. (2002). *Transmediation in the classroom*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Siegel, M. & Panofsky, C. (2009). Designs for multimodality in literacy studies: Perspectives and questions. Paper presented at the meeting of the International Reading Association.
- Siegel, M. (1984). *Reading as signification*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University.

## References

- Siegel, M. (1995). "More than words: The generative power of transmediation for learning". *Canadian Journal of Education*, 84(1), 65-77.
- Siegel, M. (2006). "Rereading the signs: Multimodal transformations in the field of literacy education". *Language Arts*, 20(4), 455-475.
- Sipe, L. (1998). How picture books work: A semiotically framed theory of text-picture relationships. *Children's Literature in Education* 29(2), 97-108.
- Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stake, R. (2006). *Multiple case study analysis*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Stein, P. (2003). The *Olifantsvlei* fresh stories project: Multimodality, creativity and fixing in the semiotic Chain. In C. Jewitt and G. Kress (eds.), *Multimodal Literacy* (123-138). New York: Peter Lang.
- Stein, P. (2008). *Multimodal pedagogies in diverse classrooms: Representation, rights, and resources*. London: Routledge.
- Street, B. (1993). *Cross-cultural approaches to literacy*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Street, B. (1995). *Social literacies*. London: Longman.
- Suhor, C. (1984). Towards a semiotics-based curriculum. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 16, 247-257.
- Tarlington, C. & Michaels, W. (1995). *Building plays: Simple playbuilding techniques at work*. Markham, ON: Pembroke Publishers.
- Van Leeuwen, T. (1999). *Speech, music, sound*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Van Leeuwen, T. (2005). *Introducing social semiotics*. London: Routledge.
- Vygotsky, L. (1986). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind and society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Watt, M. (2007). *Scaredy Squirrel makes a friend*. Toronto: Kids Can Press.
- Weigler, W. (2001). *Strategies for playbuilding*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Wertsch, J. V. (1981). The concept of activity in Soviet psychology: An introduction. In J. V. Wertsch (Ed. & Trans.), *The concept of activity in Soviet psychology* (pp. 3-36). Armonk, NY: Sharpe.
- Wilhelm, J. 1997 "You gotta be the book": *Teaching engaged and reflective reading with adolescents*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Williams, G. (2007). Attractive complexity. Paper presented at the meeting of the National Council for the Teachers of English.
- Winters, K. (2004). *Developing an Arts-Integrated Narrative Reading Comprehension Program for Less Proficient Grade 3 and 4 Students*. Master's Thesis, University of British Columbia.
- Winters, K. and Hodson, B. (2007). *Jeffrey and Sloth*. Victoria: Orca Book Publishers.
- Winters, K., T. Rogers, & A. Schofield. (2006). The Antigone project: Using drama and multiple literacies to support print literacy among youth. In J. Jasinski Schneider, T. Crumpler, & T. Rogers (Eds.), *Process drama and multiple literacies: addressing social, cultural, and ethical issues*. (35-53) Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.