BEYOND THE WORD/IMAGE DIALECTIC: A VISUAL GRAMMAR FOR CONTEMPORARY PICTUREBOOKS

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to use the grammar of visual design set out by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen to define changes in the visual codes of three postmodern picturebooks in direct comparison with three traditional picturebooks. I propose that the vocabulary and underlying concepts of the grammar supply a picturebook discourse more descriptive and inclusive than current methods. This examination is informed theoretically by the developments in the history of the picturebook that contribute to its versatility, the picturebook’s recent acquisition of postmodern features, semiotic interpretation of the picturebook’s double coded nature and the invitation to examine the interaction of the visual and verbal codes as part of the complex, yet flexible interaction between creator, text and reader.

I utilize a multidisciplinary, three-stage approach beginning with a social semiotic visual content analysis, based on the grammar of visual design, which produces data that is discussed in the framework of the contrasts between the three traditional and three postmodern picturebooks, and again with regards to identified postmodern characteristics. I continue by framing a detailed discussion of each of the three postmodern picturebooks with Lewis’ concept of an ecology of the picturebook, concentrating on viewing each book as a discrete entity, contextualized in the environment of its production and consumption, and presenting integrated image/word codes of communication.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

A picturebook is text, illustrations, total design; an item of manufacture and a commercial product; a social, cultural, historical document; and foremost, an experience for a child.

As an art form it hinges on the interdependence of pictures and words, on the simultaneous display of two facing pages, and on the drama of the turning of the page.

On its own terms its possibilities are limitless.

-Prefatory note to American Picturebooks by Bader (1)

The opening of Barbara Bader’s 1976 comprehensive look at the picturebook defines the essential elements of the form. The limitless possibilities arise from a complex combination of verbal and visual signs, expanding opinions of suitable subject matter, and evolving and adaptable formats. These features also make it difficult to formulate solid criteria for picturebook classification. With the picturebook’s ability to readily incorporate other forms, the defining features shift constantly. Recently, the picturebook has acquired many of the characteristics associated with postmodernism, and they have been changing the way picturebooks are read, while forcing a closer examination of that which has come before, especially for its child audience. Social semiotic study of the interaction between word and image in the picturebook may provide
evidence of how picturebooks that display postmodern characteristics present readers
with a revelation of and access to new codes of communication, and how an
understanding of the codes can lead to more flexible, multiliterate readers.

Background and Need for the Study

The contemporary picturebook has a long history that is entangled with both
'respected' literary and artistic forms, as well as 'popular' forms such as chapbooks, toy
books and comics. Its automatic association with very young children, along with its ties
to the popular trends in culture over the years, has limited inquiry into the mystery of
Bader's limitless possibilities. This marginalisation has freed picturebook creators to
eperiment unreservedly, constantly adding to the flexibility and range of the form.

Approaches to the academic study of picturebooks have been varied. Historical
accounts and genealogies of influential illustrators and their progenies have dominated
much of the early research. Educational and moral values also exemplify early standards
of picturebook evaluation that still influence current reviews. The illustrators'
biographical information, and their training background and techniques appear now as
they did in the latter half of the nineteenth and throughout the twentieth century.
Changes in design and technology have led to dense, full illustrations alongside a sparse
text, and the picturebook began to be studied in the context of art-criticism. Versions of
art-criticism have informed much of the contemporary picturebook analysis, largely
ignoring the role of the written text.

Postmodernism has recently received a great deal of attention from those studying
and creating picturebooks, although postmodern characteristics have been popping-up in
picturebooks since their early evolution from the toy book. The freedom to experiment provided chances for children’s book creators to play with book conventions, and expose the constructedness of their work, long before the “postmodern condition” had been identified. Postmodernism is described by Abrams as a term:

sometimes applied to the literature and art after World War II (1939-45)... that involves not only a continuation, sometimes carried to an extreme, of the countertraditional experiments of modernism, but also diverse attempts to break away from modernist forms... as well as to overthrow the elitism of modernist ‘high art’ by recourse to the models of ‘mass culture’ in film, television, newspaper cartoons, and popular music. (120)

Abrams goes on to state that the goal of some postmodernist writing is to:

subvert the foundations of our accepted modes of thought and experience so as to reveal the ‘meaninglessness’ of existence and the underlying ‘abyss’, or ‘void’, or ‘nothingness’ on which any supposed security is conceived to be precariously suspended. (120)

In the last fifteen years, conscious efforts to incorporate postmodern characteristics have been made by picturebook creators such as Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith, David Macaulay and David Wiesner. Much like their counterparts in adult fiction, they employ postmodernism as a means to an end, but is it to expose the limitations of ‘grand narratives’ and the constructedness of forms, or simply for fun and entertainment? The ‘postmodern’ picturebook has been said to display new codes, new systems of rules in the act of visual communication. With the double coded nature of the picturebook, the
postmodern features are expressed in the context of both words and images, and this is presenting a new challenge to readers.

Picturebooks no doubt have a visual component that can be described completely as singular pieces of art, but they also have a verbal component that works in the context of the visual to build something of greater meaning. Bader acknowledges this in the short statement above, as did many of her contemporaries. However, viewing word and image together to describe the picturebook event was facilitated in the 1980’s by the expansion of the field of semiotics. Semiotics is defined in Webster’s Dictionary as “the study of signs and symbols as elements of communicative behavior; the analysis of systems of communication, as language, gestures or clothing (1742).”

Applying semiotics to the study of picturebooks initiated a view that images were capable of being structured to communicate meaning in some way. Studying signs and sign systems, and how they may combine to make meaning gives opportunity to those wishing to describe the complex features of the picturebook to address both word and image as significant to the meaning of the story. Some of the first theoretical works in which both word and image were dealt with simultaneously were published in the 1980’s. Many theories of sliding scales and ratios between words and pictures followed, but they typically set the text and images in opposition. Early works also identified the need for a system to break down visual elements in the same ways that grammars do for verbal language.

A contextualized social semiotic framework describes a grammar for all forms of visual design. It seems to be a direct answer to the call of academics interested in the picturebook, but it does not address picturebooks in particular. Finally, at the beginning
of the 21st century, picturebook theory ran headlong into the combined visual and verbal study of social semiotics. Social semiotic analysis and the visual grammar offer new possibilities of discourse for the picturebook, and delineate the ways creators can potentially situate their readers in social interaction with picturebooks.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this thesis is to define changes taking place in the presentation of picturebooks, specifically, through the use of postmodern features. First, I will use a social semiotic visual content analysis to compare and contrast three picturebooks that display postmodern characteristics with three more traditional texts. Second, I relate the trends revealed in the primary stage of analysis to postmodern characteristics that have been identified in recent research. A framework that examines picturebooks as complex, integrated texts combining different, flexible associations of visual and verbal signification informs the third and final phase of my detailed analysis of each of the three postmodern picturebooks. Through this three-stage, multidisciplinary analysis, I intend to show that the codes for understanding picturebooks are becoming more complex. These complex codes defy convention, and at the same time, expose it. Increasingly complex codes require more flexible readers of all kinds of sign systems, but currently no comprehensive and effective vocabulary for discussion of images, and image together with words, has been agreed upon. I further propose that the social semiotic grammar of visual design set out by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen can be adapted to describe how meaning is communicated visually in picturebooks.
Children will develop the means to understand the new forms of media, but if command of the elements of visual understanding can be cultivated, control of the product may be achieved resulting in a mastery of production as well as reception of visual information. Dondis writes that, “visual intelligence increases the effect of human intelligence, extends the human spirit”, and this thesis attempts to advance such a visual intelligence (185). Postmodern picturebooks have been identified as a legitimate sub-category that offer a means to display the changes in media use and call attention to aspects of the production and consumption of texts in general, and the picturebook form specifically.

Through an adaptation of the terms for the visual grammar, I propose an attempt at a picturebook discourse that will address the meaning potential of images limited by words and words limited by images. Ultimately, the formal semiotic visual content analysis frameworks for picturebook discussion may be simplified to allow beginning readers to access their concepts. This combined with elements of basic visual literacy could be among the first stages of conceptualizing a multiple literacy curriculum.

**Definition of Terms**

A distinction needs to be made between the ‘illustrated storybook’, which can be any book displaying pictures, and the ‘picturebook’, which requires a fusion of text and illustration (Kiefer 6). In a ‘storybook’ the emphasis is on the story, while the pictures merely stand next to the text with a brief visual depiction of what has already been described (Kiefer 6). The ‘picturebook’, though not a clearly defined form follows some
general guidelines. Most important to this thesis is the picturebook’s interdependence of word and image and flexibility to adopt a variety of styles.

The academic study of children’s picturebooks being relatively new, consensus has not yet been reached as to the spelling of ‘picturebook’. It has been hyphenated as ‘picture-book’ in Peter Hunt’s Children’s Literature: An Illustrated History (1991), while some separate the words ‘picture book’ as Sheila Egoff does in her book, Thursday’s Child (1981). Others, like David Lewis in his book Reading Contemporary Picturebooks (2001), use the compound word ‘picturebook’. Following Lewis’s rationalization, I will use the compound word ‘picturebook’ to describe the “compound nature of the artefact itself” for I too believe that “the first step we should take in examining the picturebook is to look at it whole (Lewis, Reading introduction ix).”

Lewis raises a debate over the labeling of picturebooks as strictly postmodern (Reading 99-100). While the question will be addressed in the review of literature, I will be using the term ‘postmodern picturebook’ in reference to picturebooks that display postmodern characteristics identified by the research in an apparently deliberate manner, whether or not they are truly postmodern for the same purposes as adult fiction. The postmodern picturebook titles that I have chosen have all been used as examples of this emerging sub-field in much of the recent research. I explore picturebook creators’ intentions for the use of postmodern characteristics as part of the conclusion.

Limitations of the Study

In a study of meaning potentials, it is imperative to recognize the cultural context in which the meaning is being made. Seeing with a Western eye is central to this study.
The culturally bound image produces meaning in a very specific way. Some of the ways of seeing may be universal, and the social semiotic visual analysis described in this thesis could be a tool to document these kinds of similarities and differences between cultures. However, the categories for visual design are a firm foundation from which to build a discourse for visual meaning potential.

Because this is a preliminary use of the social semiotic analysis for picturebooks, only six books were analyzed, and only three garnered a close inspection. In order to establish trends, the initial content analysis could have surveyed more books. With a greater number of titles, an independent list of postmodern characteristics in picturebooks could have been generated. However, having evolved from an initial foray into the research already completed on postmodernism in picturebooks, this study began with a variety of pre-identified characteristics.

Summary

In this examination, I use a combination of the social semiotic content analysis of visual images and an analysis of the coherent organization of whole picturebooks as a tool to explore how codes of communication are changing in picturebooks that display postmodern characteristics. I examine how the vocabulary developed to deal with words and images together, as an integrated text, elucidates how we view the act of reading and its traditional logocentric constraints. In Chapter 2, the review of literature frames the picturebook in the context of: the varied and encompassing history of the form; the introduction of postmodern characteristics into children's literature; semiotic analysis of the word/image relationship; discourses surrounding visuality and visual literacy; and a
synthesis of recent studies of the picturebook reading event as a dynamic and holistic experience. In Chapter 3, I outline the theoretical methodologies (social semiotic visual content analysis; examination of postmodern traits; and integrated analysis of single picturebooks as internally cohesive entities); and the overarching parameters of the analysis. In Chapter 4, I discuss general trends of similarity and difference between the three traditional and three postmodern picturebooks chosen for this study, and then itemize the social semiotic trends as related to each of the identified postmodern characteristics (Fig. 1). I then introduce and analyze the culturally situated, yet internally coherent organization of three distinct postmodern picturebooks: The Stinky Cheese Man (1992) by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith, Black and White (1990) by David Macaulay, and The Three Pigs (2001) by David Wiesner. Finally, in Chapter 5, I draw conclusions related to my analyses and hypothesize towards further research implications, as well as future pedagogical applications of this study.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review proposes a framework for viewing the picturebook as a socially constructed artefact, viewed in the context of: 1) the picturebook’s history and development; 2) postmodern characteristics that appear in children’s picturebooks; 3) the analysis of picturebooks including the introduction of semiotics to the study of the word/image relationship, Lewis’s “ecology of the picturebook”, ideas related to visuality and the grammar of visual design. I use this theoretical background to frame: a social semiotic visual content analysis comparing three traditional picturebooks with three picturebooks that have displayed innovations based on the tenets of postmodernism; a correlation between the changes found in the visual content and the identified postmodern traits; and a thorough analysis of each of the postmodern picturebooks as complex, contextualized entities that display dynamic and flexible interactions.

The Picturebook: A Complex History

Traditionally, early books designed for young children combined pedagogy and religious didacticism, which mirrored the preference of utility over enjoyment for the people of this age (Egoff 248). The text generally considered to have been the first picture book for children was Orbis Sensualium Pictus (The Visible World in Pictures) by J.A. Comenius in 1659 (Kiefer 83). Because of its lessons for children in language and morality, Kiefer also jokingly refers to it as the “first basal reader” (83). Chapbooks
and hornbooks were other cheaply made alternatives for children to learn lessons through words and pictures (Kiefer 88). The continuing success and popularity of chapbooks inspired English publisher John Newbery to print *A Little Pretty Pocket Book* in 1744, exclusively for the amusement of children (Kiefer 84).

In addition to the chapbook, picturebooks owe some of their development to the subsequent development of games and toys in the mid-nineteenth century, and the satire and parody, along with irreverent use of humor of nineteenth century caricatures and comic strips (Watson and Styles 17). Comics and picturebooks share a somewhat common history along with common critical features according to Scott McCloud’s definition of comics as, “juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer” (9). Comic strips’ prevalent use of humour and amusement was eventually taken up by publishers of children’s materials.

*"The Great Three": Greenaway, Caldecott and Crane Create Delight for Children*

Printer and publisher Edmund Evans made picturebooks for delight available to the public for the first time in the late Victorian era through the works of Kate Greenaway, Randolph Caldecott, and Walter Crane, which liberated picturebooks from the earlier precepts of education and morality (Egoff 248). From the time of Evans, picturebooks continued to change along with Western society’s stances regarding children and the concept of childhood (Egoff 249). No longer was the child seen merely as a miniature adult or potential sinner who requires salvation. The child was beginning to be seen as a yet undeveloped person, and childhood as a magical time of wonder (Egoff 7).
Evans's influence and design sensibilities crafted the harmony of text and image that defines the picturebook today (Kiefer 86). It is also through his influence that in the early twentieth century artists turned their attention to illustrating for children. Beatrix Potter, Arthur Rackham, Leslie Brooke and Ernest Shephard were the bearers of the new spirit of childhood in England, while Howard Pyle, N.C. Wyeth and Jessie Wilcox Smith set the tone of illustration for delight in the United States (Kiefer 86).

**The First 'Picturebooks': A Safe Haven**

In the late 1920's, Wanda Gag's first book *Millions of Cats* in the U.S. and *Clever Bill* by British illustrator William Nicholson started the art form that we now know as the classic picturebook (Kiefer 86). This was the first time pictures rolled across the page leading the reader along from left to right, and beginning to end alongside the handwritten text, complementing each other and creating something with greater meaning (Kiefer 86). This classic form still appeals to children today, for its clear, distinct and imaginative illustrations, and orderly sweep across the pages. The texts allude to the western oral tradition, delineating a clear beginning, middle and end, with characters that are faced with a conflict, achieve a resolution, and return home safely. Naiveté is the dominant theme, and the conflicts are resolved completely and logically (Egoff 266; Goldstone, *Whaz up* 362). By couching the young readers in this secure, predictable pattern, the classic picturebook was meant to be a safe haven for all children (Egoff 250).

With the establishment of these themes of safety and security, picturebooks next turned to the representation of child life (Kiefer 87). The internal drama of everyday life for a child was portrayed thoughtfully and, by today's standards, quite tamely. Both Margaret Wise Brown and Ruth Krauss depict sweet and sentimental scenes of childhood
in many of their books. Clement Hurd’s illustrations for Brown’s Goodnight Moon (1947) employ anthropomorphic animals to represent a child’s bedtime, giving a soothing narrative bedtime story within a bedtime story. Krauss piques children’s interest with a blend of didacticism and wonder in A Hole is to Dig: A First Book of First Definitions (1952), which is innocently illustrated by Maurice Sendak. Realism touched with fantasy make up the world of many Virginia Lee Burton picturebooks such as Mike Mulligan and his Steam Shovel (1939) and The Little House (1942) which feature inanimate objects with human personalities. Whether focusing on the child’s life or the simple things that interest young children about the world, these picturebooks from the first half of the twentieth century treat ‘kids’ with ‘kid-gloves’, nestling them benevolently in their benign worlds.

**Wild Things: The Door is Knocked Down**

In 1963, Maurice Sendak’s Where the Wild Things Are disrupted this romantic vision of childhood in picturebooks. By showing the frustrated dream world of Max and his Wild Things, Sendak introduced fear and anxiety into picturebook publishing, and changed the face of the genre (Egoff 250). Books written in the gentle style of the past were still being produced, but the barriers they had set up were now being broken.

Now that the door to the subconscious personal life of children had been opened, many new sub-genres started to appear in picturebook publishing. Sendak started an avalanche of new styles. Everything from the use of media to the boundaries of appropriate subject matter was expanding and evolving (Egoff 253). Children’s books were tackling issues, offering therapy and catharsis to their young readers. Authors and illustrators were using picturebooks as social commentary, challenging existing power
structures even in the world of children (Egoff 252). Open-ended questions provided
readers with latitude enough to impose their own beliefs in their interpretation of the
characters and their struggles (Dresang 232).

The spirit and quality of picturebooks over the course of the past forty years has
been dictated not only by the emerging child audience and collapsing barriers of
appropriateness, but also by the advances in technology accessible to the mass
reproduction of the form (Egoff 253; Kiefer 87). Illustrators started experimenting with
artistic styles and media. With the development of full color camera reproduction came
opportunities for both large and small-scale artwork to be duplicated in traditional
picturebook size and format (Kiefer 87).

Because the picturebook has become a product for consumption, and an economic
commodity, some picturebook creators have reached celebrity status by developing a
signature style. Artists such as Eric Carle, Lois Ehlert, Tomie dePaola, Jan Brett, Leo
Lionni, and Barbara Reid compose picturebooks in diverse yet very personal styles. Fine
art styles too began to infiltrate the form, and picturebook creators like Paul Zelinsky,
Anthony Browne and Faith Ringgold have refitted the styles of the Dutch Masters,
Surrealists and Folk artists respectively.

As pictures took on more of the storytelling duties, words were being used more
sparingly, eventually making way for the wordless picturebook (Egoff 254). In the
wordless picturebook the pictures need to stand together to create the illusion of narrative
flow in static images (Nodelman 196). The pictures need an underlying unity to limit
their meaning down to a negotiable storyline (Nodelman 209). With the multitude of
influences, appropriations and transformations that have come into contact with the picturebook so far, what is happening now, and what will happen in the future?

**Constant Flux: The Future of the Picturebook**

The next stage in the evolution of the picturebook potentially expands the intended audience to include older children, teens, and even adults. Changes in both convention and audience are blurring the lines that form the border between picturebook and comic (Lawrence 6; Watson and Styles 16). Bader's statement that the picturebook is "foremost, an experience for a child" then seems to be extended by Egoff's claim that "in format and artistry, they are books for everybody" (270). Many of the authors and illustrators seem to realize that their audiences are not solely made up of children, and have been adding some sophisticated ideas and techniques to the versatile and accommodating picturebook form.

**Postmodernism**

A development that researchers have recently recognized in the production of picturebooks is the use of postmodernism, and some of its related features (Goldstone; *Whaz Up* 1999; Goldstone, *Brave* 2001; Grieve 1993; Lewis, *Reading* 2001; Watson and Styles 1996). Jean-Francois Lyotard wrote what many believe to be the first treatise on postmodernism in his short work, *The Postmodern Condition* (1984). Ultimately, he distills the postmodern condition to be a rejection of and "incredulity towards grand narratives (Lyotard introduction xxiv)". Lewis defines postmodernism as referring to "the cultural and intellectual phenomena that have grown out of the rubble and that have blossomed since the 1960's in the form of buildings, paintings, works of literature and
other cultural forms and artefacts (Reading 88).” He goes on to delineate the key features of living in a postmodern world as: indeterminacy; fragmentation; decanonization; irony; hybridization; performance and participation (Lewis, Reading 88-91).

Postmodernism in Children’s Literature

Postmodern children’s books deconstruct the traditional classic picturebook to the extent that the structures that were once relied on to help make meaning of a text may be questioned, toyed with and finally disparaged as yet another fruitless attempt at making a grand narrative (Grieve 15). Thacker and Webb refer to postmodernism in children’s literature as a “rejection of absolutes and essentialist thinking (140).” Postmodern picturebooks particularly establish a playful relationship with the reader and conventional literary forms that destabilizes the standard of literature for children (Thacker and Webb 142). Child readers of postmodern texts are empowered and entrusted with a role in creating meaning from open-ended texts (Thacker and Webb 142).

Lewis prescribes two possible versions for the postmodern picturebook: the “weak view” and the “strong view”. The “strong view” suggests that postmodern picturebooks are postmodern in the same ways that adult fiction is postmodern, analogous to the definition by Abrams in Chapter 1 (Lewis, Reading 99). The “weak view” considers the flexible and accommodating nature of the picturebook to have been “influenced by some of the numerous manifestations of postmodern culture (Lewis, Reading 100)”. Lewis favors the “weak view”, because of the intrinsic nature of the picturebook, and the inconsistencies he finds between postmodernism in adult fiction, and that identified in picturebooks (Reading 99-100). I address the weak and strong views in light of my findings in the final chapter.
Early Examples of Postmodern Characteristics in Picturebooks

Early experimenters with books of delight for children in the Victorian era developed toy books and pop-up books that created a playground within the confines of two covers (Watson and Styles 12). The practice of manipulating the whole physical space of the book changes the book into a “playground” (Grieve 16). Since the first picturebooks were created for purposes of intrinsic joy, there has been a natural playfulness in them (Lewis, Reading 87). This does not mean that all picturebooks are postmodern, however. The playfulness described by postmodern books pertains to more than playful characters in playful situations, but also playing with the construction of the book, using book production elements such as endpapers and verso-pages as part of the narrative, or part of the joke. As early as the 1940’s in the United States picturebooks like Virginia Lee Burton’s Katy and the Big Snow (1943) used borders to provide detailed information as an aside to the narrative, both breaking up the linear flow and providing an early form of hypertext. In the 1950’s Crockett Johnson’s Harold and the Purple Crayon (1955) presented a character who manipulates the two-dimensional environment on the page with his own purple crayon. Raymond Briggs made an entire fantasy world within the real world in Fungus the Bogeyman (1977). The bogeyman’s world is depicted as though part of a documentary and the makers take opportunities to manipulate their work in front of the readers. Allan and Janet Ahlberg revisit familiar fairy tales as well as the tradition of fully manipulable objects within their picturebook The Jolly Postman (1986). Nick Bantock uses the same device of movable components in his adult picturebook series of Griffin and Sabine (1991). The distinctive synergy of words and images gives the picturebook the freedom to continually redefine its own
boundaries, and this suits postmodernism's objective to push and question boundaries very well. While they may not have intended to create postmodern works, these earlier experiments illustrate how postmodern influences started to take root before they were categorized as a movement.

Postmodern characteristics have recently been used in picturebooks, and while there are many authors and illustrators who cleverly employ them, little research has been produced about the influence on readers or its potential for children's learning. Many titles exemplify a postmodern philosophy, including the space-flattening and fragmented visual sub-plots of David McKee's I Hate My Teddy Bear (1984), comic book creator Art Spiegelman's touchingly self-referential Open Me...I'm a Dog (1997), Chris Van Allsburg's study in perspective shift Bad Day at Riverbend (1995), and Sendak's ironic take on urban homelessness We Are All in the Dumps with Jack and Guy (1993).

Picturebooks by authors and illustrators that promote this 'revolution' in picturebook design are Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith's 1992 book The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales, David Macaulay's Black and White (1990), and David Wiesner's The Three Pigs (2001). All three won Caldecott Medals in the United States, and are very popular with children. These seminal works are shaking up the world of children's literature in much the same way as the "Great Three", Greenaway, Caldecott and Crane, of the late Victorian era, Găg in the early 20th century, Sendak in the 1960's and all of the boundary-breaking sub-genre artists and illustrators for whom Sendak opened the door.

Postmodern Characteristics in Picturebooks

Many recent works represent the different characteristics of postmodernism in picturebooks. Because different terms have been used to describe these characteristics, I
have synthesized six category headings that encompass much of the research to date in Appendix 1 (Figure 1). The category headings are: interactive; antiauthoritarian; multiple; fragmented; metafictive; and boundary breaking.

**Interactive**

Postmodern picturebooks are *interactive*. They encourage participation and performance in their readers (Lewis, *Reading* 91). By creating intentional gaps, the authors and illustrators compel the reader to join in the creation of the story (Lewis, *Going* 109). Because of its manipulable letters and envelopes within its pages, Allan and Janet Ahlberg’s *The Jolly Postman* (1986) is considered to be a prototypical interactive book. The letters can be taken out of their envelope/pages and read as sidebars from the narrative of the postman on his route. Spiegelman’s *Open Me...I'm a Dog* (1997) is complete with fuzzy endpapers to pet, and a leash protruding from the binding. The book relates the story of how a young puppy was magically transformed into the very book in the readers’ hands. Other examples of pop-ups and movables maintain this interactive quality, but may be considered as simply playful artefacts that are hybrids of toy and book (Lewis, *Reading* 98). Whereas *The Jolly Postman* and *Open Me...I'm a Dog* display other postmodern features, such as self-referentiality and intertextuality, that point toward a more conscious use of postmodernism.

**Antiauthoritarian**

*Antiauthoritarian* picturebooks undermine the status quo in both concept and design. The characterization of adult convention becomes a common antagonist. At times the attack is on the traditional canon of children’s literature itself, calling into
question the need for the placid, syrupy innocence of earlier works. Certainly, one of the easiest ways for authors and illustrators to make these attacks is through parody (Grieve 17; Lewis, Reading 97). One of the most popular manifestations of playful humor, parody can be readily adapted to fairy tales, which are legally and emotionally in the public domain (Stevenson 32). By shifting the point of view or continuing beyond “happily ever after” the possibilities are endless. Many parodies have a sarcastic, mocking tone (Goldstone, Whaz up 365; Grieve 16). This is sometimes carried over to mock not only the original tale, but also the form of fairy tales or even the convention of picturebook writing itself. Grieve uses the term “ex-centric” to describe how some picturebooks bring perspectives that are outside the mainstream range of picturebook topics to the center of their stories (16). Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith have proven to be masters of adapting parodies of stories in the public domain. Their picturebook, The True Story of the Three Little Pigs (1989) turns the tables of the original story, so that the wolf becomes a victim of three ruthless porcine agitators.

Multiple

The use of multiple perspectives allows the picturebook creator to open up a world beyond most children’s realm of experience (Goldstone, Brave 336). David McKee’s I Hate My Teddy Bear displays multiple perspectives simultaneously creating flattened out doors and stairways that show characters standing at right angles to each other, as they are represented on different planes. Multiplicity of voices and points of view shows how characters in a story are not simply singular, unchanging personalities, but entities with different roles, or subject positions that are flexible to their situations (Davies 48). By showing characters that understand their varying roles in multiple
discourses and can easily shift among them, the books free their readers to experiment with taking on new roles, and more clearly identify existing roles (Davies 139). Excess is an expected occurrence in the ‘over the top’ style of many picturebooks (Lewis, Reading 95). Lewis describes the shifting designation of ‘normal’ human behavior when cultural and societal norms other than the reader’s own are brought to bear as indeterminacy (Reading 88). Returning to Scieszka and Smith, The True Story of the Three Pigs gives voice to a character that normally carries an intrinsic ‘badness’, the wolf. Though he is given a chance to defend himself, it is difficult for readers to comprehend his innocence, and this becomes the ‘joke’ of the whole book.

**Fragmented**

Picturebooks exploiting postmodernism often have fragmented storylines (Lewis, Reading 89). Hypertext results from this fragmentation, to the point of side stories (some entirely wordless) taking over the main narrative. Stellaluna (1993) by Janell Cannon is the story of a baby bat that wanders away from its mother. The visual subtext shows moments of the mother’s search, while the main story is rooted in the baby’s adventure, until they meet, at which point the two parallel narratives collapse into one. Hypertext, as it is outside of the ‘real’ story, is fragmentation’s link to metafiction. Snowflake Bentley (1998), by Jacqueline Briggs Martin presents a straightforward narrative about a man photographing snowflakes. Sidebars to the main story give factual information about the characters and various subjects that come up in the course of the narrative. Tuesday (1991), a wordless picturebook by David Wiesner, has hypertextual windows to show many viewpoints at once. The surrealist illustrations show many views of mysteriously flying frogs simultaneously, allowing the reader to pause and look, not having to rely on
left-to-right eye movement. The frogs lift into the air en masse on their lily pads with no explanation. As if the readers could click their mouse on one of the frogs, a window pops up showing the same type of inner detail. Like computer hypertext, we can negotiate the story without these sidebars, or pick and choose into which ones we want to delve (Goldstone, *Whaz up* 363).

**Metafictional**

Patricia Waugh defines *metafiction* as the practice of self-conscious fiction (2). By knowingly alluding to other texts, or making reference to distinctive themes or configurations of any genre, picturebook creators engage readers' outside knowledge and establish parallel frameworks in their own stories. In Wiesner's *The Three Pigs*, the pigs traverse story lines and trespass on other characters, such as an about-to-be-slain dragon and a cat with a fiddle, that are easily recognizable to anyone familiar with the stories of western culture. The pigs also break and pass easily through the surface plane of their traditional 'story', as well as 'in and out' of other 'stories' they come across. This is also a metafictional device, disintegrating a level of the surface plane that separates readers from characters. Referring not only to outside stories, the characters in Wiesner's picturebook upon returning to the traditional 'three little pigs' frames consciously manipulate the physical text to rewrite their own happy ending. This self-reference is one of the key features of postmodernism in picturebooks (Goldstone, *Whaz up* 365).

Anthony Browne has made both homage and direct references to the surrealist painters Magritte and Dali in his picturebooks. The Ahlberg's *Jolly Postman* delivers mail to the likes of Cinderella, the Three Bears and the Wicked Witch. Chris Van Allsburg's *Bad Day at Riverbend* (1995) moves between the 'real world' and the book world in its
depiction of colourless line drawings representing an old west/cowboy community that is wrought by a plague of greasy streaks of light (and colour) that turn out in the end to be the lackadaisical crayon marks of a little girl in her cowboy colouring book. The shift in perspectives is much more evident visually. Without the words describing the surprised reactions of the cowboys, divorced from the conventions of a colouring book, one would assume this story is straightforward. However, after the first ‘attack’ of greasy light and colour, a visually astute reader would easily distinguish the crayon marks and the colouring book world. Van Allsburg allows the cowboys to reference themselves as real people, but uses readers’ knowledge of print conventions to establish the ‘reality’ of the girl and her crayons. By moving a perceived level closer to reality, the final pages of this picturebook break through a boundary between represented domains, which is the conceptual basis of the next characteristic.

*Boundary Breaking*

Finally, picturebooks displaying postmodern characteristics *break the boundaries* of the book as an artefact (Lewis, *Reading* 94). The changing concept of page and the manipulation of whole physical space of the book make for a closer relationship between readers and represented characters (Lewis, *Reading* 98). The represented participant in the reading event is more often depicted with a challenging, demanding gaze out at the readers, inviting them to participate with the characters rather than watch as observers. An early example of boundary breaking is *The Monster at the End of This Book* (1971) by Jon Stone and Mike Smollin. This book features the *Sesame Street* character Grover, who is himself a furry blue monster. He greets readers on the cover, and on the title page asks them to confirm if the cover actually said there would be a monster at the end of the
book. Every page after consists of Grover trying to prevent readers from physically
turning the page; with rope, glue, even bricks, but eventually they end up at the “end of
this book”, and it is he, Grover that is the monster. Although crude, this is an exemplary
title to illustrate the broken boundaries, both in the self-referential narrative, and through
the exposure of paratextual elements.

Postmodern or Not?

Lewis’s suspicions about the sustainability of truly postmodern picturebooks
stand in contrast to the categorization done by Grieve (1993) and Goldstone (Brave 1999;
Whaz up 2001). For the purposes of the clarity of this thesis, I refer to picturebooks that
display significant postmodern characteristics as ‘postmodern’ picturebooks. The
problems inherent with such labeling have been discussed earlier, and Lewis’s “strong”
and “weak” views of postmodernism in picturebooks will be addressed in terms of the
results of the social semiotic visual content analysis in my conclusion. This initial stage
of the analysis is built upon all forms of prior analysis of picturebooks combined with
recent developments in semiotics and theories of visual analysis. The next section
addresses the history of semiotic analyses of picturebooks including a detailed look at
Lewis’ encompassing idea of the “ecology of the picturebook”.

Picturebook Analysis

*We must find out what words are and how they function*

*They become images when written down*

*but images of words repeated in the mind*

*and not of the image of the thing itself*

-William S. Burroughs

Practically any examination of picturebooks includes some form of visual analysis. By focusing the methodology used, more detailed and serious attempts at describing the event of the picturebook can take place. Stricter methodological study of the picturebook can give researchers a more explicit way to describe what might otherwise remain vague feelings of “what works” (Jewitt and van Leeuwen 1). Overt methodology capitalizes not only on the content of an image, but the context in which the image was constructed. Visual analysts must consider the cultural context and issues of power in and around the production and reception of an image, and, at the same time, take into account their own way of looking at the image as analysts (Rose 3-12). Most important for picturebook study, Jewitt and van Leeuwen believe that images may be analyzed along with any accompanying text, or may even “see word and image as one indivisible unit of analysis” (7).

Kress and van Leeuwen address this “indivisible unit” of word and image in their explanation of a composite or “multimodal text” as “any text whose meanings are realized through more than one semiotic code (183)”. It appears that they are directly addressing the picturebook, a form with an inherent double-code. The grammar of visual design is then an attempt to investigate “integrated” texts that communicate through
multiple codes interacting and influencing each other (183). Their objective is to create an interdisciplinary study of words and images, and they seek “to use compatible language, and compatible terminology in speaking about both (Kress and van Leeuwen 183)”. Their goals serve the purpose of this thesis as well, and it is by their influence that I have undertaken a study of how multimodal texts that communicate through both word and image can be discussed as an integrated unit in the context of their social and cultural production.

*Interanimation* and *synergy* emerge from the research as two terms that ably describe the interrelationship of word and image. Interanimation indicates the reflexive nature of the bond between picture and text, while synergy emphasizes the product being greater than the sum of its parts (Lewis, *Reading* 35; Sipe *How* 98). Almost any work that exhibits a synergistic relationship and interanimation between words and pictures can fit the encompassing and flexible picturebook format (Goldstone, *Whaz up* 362). Attempts have been made to identify the different arrangements for text and illustrations to interact in building a story (Lewis, *Reading* 37).

**Categories of Image and Word Interaction**

Serious, academic attempts to classify the types of interactions between text and pictures started in the 1980's, notably after Nodelman’s 1988 work, *Words About Pictures* (Lewis, *Reading* 31). Previously, picturebooks had been studied not as an interaction between word and image, but according to a combination of their literary and artistic worth. Picturebooks have been classified as a means of historical documentation, to provide biographical information of illustrators, and by their educational value (Lewis,
Yet today, most picturebook critique focuses on artistic style completely divorced from literary qualities (Lewis, *A Form* 102).

Semiotic theory influenced picturebook scholars to focus on the interaction between words and pictures that takes place on the page (Nodelman 196). Many theories use a continuum to describe the relationships between word and image (Agosto 1999; Grieve 1993; Golden 1990; Nikolajeva and Scott 2001; Schwarcz 1982). These relations are defined by the amount of work the text is doing to tell the story versus the pictures. A summary of these continua have been gathered in a chart in appendix 2 (Figure 2).

Schwarcz classifies the continuum from congruency to deviation (Schwarcz 14-19). Nikolajeva and Scott identify a scale that ranges from symmetric relation at one end to sylleptic relation at the other. Two “mutually redundant narratives” characterize symmetry, in their terms. Completely independent narratives are the defining features of the sylleptic picturebook (Nikolajeva and Scott 12). Golden (104) also uses the term symmetry for her continuum, but has no encompassing term for its opposite. However, it is defined as either words or pictures telling the primary story, while the other shows selected aspects (Golden 104). Agosto first identifies the difference between ‘twice told tales’ and interdependent storytelling, which is characterized by synergy of text and image. Within her interdependent category, she classifies interactions through either augmentation, with one system amplifying or extending the other, or contradiction, with text and image representing conflicting information (Agosto 269). Grieve describes a harmonious relationship between the story and pictures, and finishes with them in opposing voices (16). These were all invaluable to picturebook research, and though all very solid in their theoretical bases, each was limited in its scope.
The limit of these approaches lies in the fact that they treat text and pictures as separate entities working against one another to create their special dynamic (Lewis, Reading 44). In the next section, I describe an attempt to reconcile the clash between words and images that I believe will lead to a better understanding of the way we read images in all contexts. Kress and van Leeuwen have made it clear that their approach to ‘multimodal’ texts can look at visual and verbal codes as an integrated text (183).

Lewis’s “ecology of the picturebook” tries to examine word and image together in the context of the wholeness of the picturebook, and its interdependence, flexibility and complexity, while addressing the fact that real readers are the definitive meaning-makers.

Ecology of the Picturebook

Because the previous theories have fallen short of describing a complete taxonomy of word/image relationships, Lewis purports that the picturebook is too flexible and complex to be limited by any one theory or rigid categorization (Reading 48).

Furthermore, picturebooks are typically intended for a child audience, and therefore adult specialists may not always have the best stance towards classifying them (Lewis, Reading 44). Lewis attempts to create an “ecology of the picturebook”, wherein he outlines a reading interaction which is more flexible and holistic (Reading 46). Each book is seen as a miniature ecosystem, first by reemphasizing interdependence of word and image (Lewis, Reading 48). Second, the picturebook is a dynamic and flexible structure with relationships that transform and adjust from image-to-image and book-to-book (Lewis, Reading 49). Third, like an ecosystem, the picturebook is complex and diverse, but also very organized (Lewis, Reading 52). Finally, the ecology of the picturebook takes the role of the reader into account, which sets it apart from the continuum approaches.
Without a reader trying to find meaning in the text, the words and images sit unanimated on the pages, no matter how often or varied they are said to be interacting (Lewis, Reading 55). By addressing each of these terms for a single picturebook, that book can be described not only as a whole, unique entity unto itself, but also as a unique contributor to and product of the society and culture in which it is constructed.

Interdependence

Reading multiple codes simultaneously puts many demands upon the reader. Lewis puts the interdependence in ecological terms by saying, “the words come to life in the context, the environment of the pictures (Reading 48).” Lawrence Sipe outlines a procedure for how meaning is built within the interdependence, with an oscillation back and forth between what can be understood from the different sign systems (How 101). A reader’s understanding of the illustration is influenced by reading the text, and vice versa. The strategy for reading words is primarily a sequential one, while visual understanding is more of a simultaneous endeavor (Sipe, How 100). When readers look at a picturebook, the words push them to turn the page, but the pictures invite them to gaze more deeply and leisurely, suspending the desire to proceed with the text. This is a model of the interdependence that underlies Lewis’s “ecology”. Many researchers cite this as the crucial tension that story is built upon (Lewis, Reading 32; McCloud 66; Nodelman 171; Sipe, How 97). It is this idea of story that has been left out of the continuum theories. The narrative is certainly influenced by the interdependence of the words and images, and the many continua of word/image relationships do ably describe the association for single, static images. However, with the ecological view we can investigate not only the integrated text of word and image, but also how the relationships
change over the course of each individual picturebook, and the affect this has on the narrative.

Considering the text and image together is vital because “the pictures themselves can imply narrative information only in relationship to a verbal context” (Nodelman 195). As part of a picturebook, a picture is only given meaning when provided with this narrative framing, much like the representational metafunction’s narrative process structures could show in great detail (Lewis, Reading 34). Picturebooks therefore, have an inherent plurality that stems from their interplay between written and visual sign systems (Goldstone, Brave 331; Grieve 16; McClay 93; Sipe, How 97; Trites 226). Their relationship to each other changes the meaning of both text and picture, creating an entity of meaning much more than the sum of its parts (Nodelman 199). The words may function to either limit the possible meaning of the image, or focus attention to certain aspects that may not be visually salient. Nodelman claims that pictures convey two kinds of information better than words can: “what type of object is implied by the words and which particular one of that type is being referred to (203).” If we write the word ‘apple’ it remains vague and open to interpretation, but by producing an image to represent the idea ‘apple’ we must portray a specific apple. Because of the gap between what words and pictures are able to communicate, words can alter our perception of pictures, often endowing them with narrative traits. Pictures can also alter the “narrative thrust” of words (Nodelman 196). The vast potential of picturebooks grows out of the fact that words and pictures each articulate “about matters on which the other is silent” (Nodelman 221).
Flexibility

The interdependence of word and image has been recognized and well documented, but Lewis’s ecological metaphor of flexibility goes beyond simple statements of interconnectedness (Reading 48). Just as an organism and its environment influence one another, so do word and image. Moreover, Lewis makes it clear that “there is no reason to suppose that the dynamics of this relationship remain the same from page to page, let alone book to book (Reading 48).” The relationship does not find equilibrium for itself in the picturebook, but is constructed by its creators to present shifts in the word/image correlation to readers. One of the principal troubles of categorizing picturebooks according to continuum theories stems from the shifting relationships, even within a single picturebook, that are inherent in this idea of flexibility (Lewis, Reading 49). The “ecology” does not, therefore, prescribe any set categories of relationship between word and image, but rather seeks to describe changes within single picturebook entities or, to extend the metaphor, ‘ecosystems’.

Complexity and Diversity

The complexity and diversity of the picturebook at first seems to be superficial. After all these are texts for children with very few words and many pictures. However, the words are not always connected in the same way, nor do they always execute the same function. Pictures too, as the grammar of visual design has shown, are more than just lines on a page, or simple representations of the everyday world (Lewis, Reading 52). Comics, like picturebooks, intertwine text and image to create a complex and diverse hybrid narrative. Scott McCloud’s Understanding Comics devotes a chapter to the part of the reading experience that happens between images, or in the vocabulary of
comics in “the gutters” (66). In picturebook terminology, the gutter is the seam along the middle where the pages are bound together (Sipe, *Learning* 70). McCloud believes that closure, the process of observing fragments but perceiving the whole, takes place in this space (63). Lewis also recognizes this type of closure in picturebooks saying that, “readers must work in the spaces between what the words say and the pictures show if they are to gain what the books have to offer” (*Reading* 107). Nodelman confirms this for picturebooks, saying, “as we move through a series of pictures, we have to imagine what happens between the moments of stopped time that we actually see” (244). In some cases, storytellers in visual media intentionally leave gaps for suspense and to engage their audiences (McCloud 63). The gutter becomes a site for imagination to reconcile two limited images and convert them into one idea (McCloud 66). Because this unified whole is not explicit, readers must participate by bringing their own experience to the gaps (McCloud 69). McCloud’s closure describes a major influence on the complexity and diversity of hybrid, word and image texts, and raises questions about the reader’s role in the picturebook reading event.

**Reader’s Role**

By considering the “texts-as-read” rather than the “texts-in-themselves”, Lewis moves closer to defining the interaction of words and images in the picturebook (*Reading* 48). Without the reader, the pictures and words will “stay quite still and determinedly leave each other alone (Lewis, *Reading* 55).” Lewis’s “reading event” echoes some of the ideas in pioneer reading theorist Louise Rosenblatt’s notion of “the poem” referring to “the whole category of aesthetic transactions between readers and texts (Rosenblatt 12).” The actual text as set out by the creator, together with the reader’s knowledge of
the cultural codes of language and their own personal history, make up “the poem”.
Lewis advocates the study of the reading event up to and including real child readers, which he has incorporated into Reading Contemporary Picturebooks. However, much of his focus is on the reading event with a general implied reader in mind. Jewitt and van Leeuwen address the issue of analysis with a reader in mind, but without real readers, stating, “analysis would not necessarily include the way in which meaning potential is realized with specific social interactions (7).” Because social semiotic analysis provides a logical and consistent examination of the potentials of the ‘cultural codes of language’, both verbal and visual language, it is the personal history of actual readers that remains unsurprisingly variable. There is no way to make a complete picture of the reading event without a specific, real reader.

**Visuality**

Picturebooks by their very nature exist primarily in the realm of the visual. Any analysis of the form, therefore, must deal with the concept of visuality. Rose makes this distinction between visuality and vision, “vision is what the human eye is physiologically capable of seeing... visuality, on the other hand, refers to the way in which vision is constructed in various ways” (6). This socially, culturally, and politically motivated way of seeing is alternately termed scopic regime (Rose 6). Seeing, within the confines of western civilization’s scopic regime, has become equivalent to ‘knowing’ reality. Visuality and vision mediate ‘Truth’ in the west (Rose 7). Even though visuality holds such an esteemed place, it is verbal literacy that is prized most (Berghoff, Cousin and Martens 521; Kress and van Leeuwen 4; Rose 7). In a society that highly values vision in
its interpretation of the world, it is ironic that there can be a lack of critical understanding of visual literacy.

**Visual Literacy**

Visual literacy addresses the ability to understand not only meaning of an image, but also the components that build meaning (Dondis 10-12; On-line Visual Literacy). R.E. Sutton describes visual literacy in terms of awareness:

Visual literacy is the awareness that comes with the appropriate development of our basic visual and aural competencies. It involves an awareness of who we are as individuals, an awareness that we are not alone...and an awareness that we communicate with one another, beyond speech with visual codes. Visual literacy is the awareness that the image (and sound) are a series of production decisions on the part of artists, producers and others. (15)

The On-line Visual Literacy Project defines visual literacy as, “the ability, through knowledge of the basic visual elements, to understand the meaning and components of the image.” Far from simply looking at pictures aesthetically, visual literacy encompasses the act of seeing in the context of social, cultural and self-imposed constraints that are inherent in Rose’s definition of visuality.

Identifying and understanding basic visual elements is fundamental to visual literacy (Dondis 11; On-line Visual Literacy). Art-criticism supplies terms for the most basic elements of visual literacy; the building blocks and the rules defining their combination (for illustrated examples of the basic elements, see Appendix 5). The most basic element is the dot (Fig. 12), and a dot extended becomes a line (Fig.13). With lines one can build shapes (Fig.14), and together shapes and lines can be used to convey
motion (Fig. 15). Elements of light and colour aid in building images. Value (Fig. 18) is the intensity of lightness or darkness. Hue (Fig. 17) is the visual literacy term for colour, as in the colours of the rainbow. The definition describes colour as the different hues in the visible spectrum of light. Saturation (Fig. 19) is the amount of grey in a particular colour, or hue; and texture (Fig. 20) is the visual interpretation of tactile qualities.

Finally, scale (Fig. 16) is the relative size of shapes in an image and dimension (Fig. 21), the two-dimensional representation that is interpreted as three-dimensional. These basic elements, in the context of individual artistic style and technique, make up the basics of all constructed images (Dondis 39-66; Lewis, Reading 103-116; On-line Visual Literacy). These elements of basic visual literacy are the smallest pieces from which we build communicative images, just as letters and phonemes are the smallest pieces of written and verbal communication (Jannedy, Poletto and Weldon 9). The smallest units of meaning in visual literacy (motion, scale, dimension) correlate to morphology; the linguistic sub field dealing with words or ‘morphemes’ in written and verbal communication (Jannedy, Poletto and Weldon 9). The next sub field of linguistics, syntax, defines the rules that govern meaning when words are strung together to make sentences, and how they relate to each other. Grammars prescribe the rules for sentence structure of any given language (Jannedy, Poletto and Weldon 10). The way images relate to each other in their layout on the page can then be referred to as a ‘visual grammar’. The next section illustrates an attempt by social semioticians to produce a grammar of this kind, and this thesis seeks to develop a model to analyze the integrated word/image texts of picturebooks based on this innovative work on the grammar of visual design.
Visual Grammar

Perry Nodelman first addressed the need for a grammar of visual literacy for picturebooks in the introduction to his book *Words About Pictures* (Lewis, *Reading* 116; Nodelman 211). He resolved that a visual grammar would help to consistently describe the function of the image for building meaning in the relationship between text and picture. The visual grammar was realized as it applies to all visual presentation, but ironically it never directly addresses the picturebook. Kress and van Leeuwen developed a comprehensive grammar of visual design in their 1996 book *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. While the topic of picturebooks is never broached in their work, their interpretation of images limited by words is quite relevant. The texts that are addressed in their work include advertisements, textbooks, magazine and newspaper layouts and gallery paintings.

Kress and van Leeuwen’s Metafunctions of Visual Communication

Visual grammar sees functionality as the basis for the development of visual resources. It identifies three ‘metafunctions’ of semiotic work that occur simultaneously (Kress and van Leeuwen 40). The metafunctions are based on the functional grammar developed for linguistic studies by M.A.K. Halliday (1985), and are labeled the ideational, the interpersonal, and the textual (Kress and van Leeuwen 41). These metafunctions are applied to the ‘language’ of images by Kress and van Leeuwen, but they are slightly altered and use alternate labels: representational, interactive and compositional respectively (Jewitt and van Leeuwen 140). All images then represent some aspect of the outside world (representational) while they simultaneously take part in some interaction with an outside participant (interactive) and represent an identifiable
kind of text (*compositional*). Identifiable texts in this case would be the cultural construct called picturebooks, but could be any visual construct from photograph to promotional poster. The outside participant could be the creator of the image or an observer taking some meaning from it (Kress and van Leeuwen 46). They distinguish between represented participants (characters) and interactive participants (any person outside the text interacting with it, author or reader/viewer).

*The Representational Metafunction*

Kress and van Leeuwen define the representational metafunction as “the ability of semiotic systems to represent objects and their relations in a world outside the representational system or in the semiotic systems of a culture (45).” Through its design of choices one can identify “visual structures that can realize ways of representing the world (Kress and van Leeuwen 45).” Therefore, pictures do not merely reproduce items from everyday reality, but they “produce images of reality which are bound up with the interests of the social institutions within which the pictures are produced, circulated and read (Kress and van Leeuwen 45).”

In order to further illustrate the first metafunction, I examine how it was first applied to picturebook images. Lewis demonstrates how the visual grammar can be applied to picture book art, story and narrative. His focus is on the ideational or representational metafunction, and he writes mainly about the narrative representation. Vectors, as realized in pictures, define action processes. Vectors give narrative visuals directionality (Kress and van Leeuwen 57).

Elements of images from the picturebooks *Gorilla* (1983) by Anthony Browne and *So Much* (1994) by Trish Cook and Helen Oxenbury are shown as examples of
vectors that act alone and act towards other elements (*Reading* 119). In *Gorilla*, an ape in a superhero costume flies across a movie screen. There are no other characters in the screen’s frame, and the gorilla is flying across from left to right, with no apparent goal in sight. The strong vector created by his body pointing to the right, but to nothing in particular is labeled a *non-transactional action process* (*Lewis, Reading* 117-119). The page chosen from *So Much* portrays a woman with arms outstretched, bending over slightly to greet a small baby. Her arms form a vector that is pointing at the baby, and complete a *transactional action process* (*Lewis, Reading* 119). All of these vectors, providing directionality, also give the pictures a narrative thrust. Without the directionality, the representational metafunction describes images as either analytical, classification, symbolic or some combination of these processes embedded within each other (*Kress and van Leeuwen* 79-112). The representational metafunction maintains that all images are constrained by the dominating cultural milieu in which they are produced and consumed, and that creators present testimony of that constraint through the interaction of represented participants. This notion of images is relevant to the views of visuality discussed earlier, and it is in this capacity that the representational metafunction informs aspects of my three-stage analysis.

The narrative representation allows for a translation from visual to verbal, which is never complete because of the nature of discrete semiotic codes, but is based on a system of choices made by creators of images between alternative structures (*Kress and van Leeuwen* 73; *Lewis, Reading* 119). Narrative processes, for Kress and van Leeuwen, describe what it is that the picture ‘says’. They are based on the actions represented in an
image, and express in what actions the characters are engaged, relating to verbs, nouns and locatives in verbal language (Kress and van Leeuwen 77).

I do not employ the representational metafunction as part of my social semiotic visual content analysis. The narrative process choice structures of the representational metafunction seemed to be suited to the study of picturebooks, but they contribute a verbal interpretation of an image; an interpretation that can never ‘say’ all of the things that the picture says for itself. To convert everything in a picture into words (or classes of words such as verbs, nouns, etc…) one would have to describe every detail as unique and specific, whereas a simple picture of a tree portrays a specific tree with a specific number of leaves, and a specific amount of light falling on it, from a specific point of view, and so on. The detail involved in tallying all of these ‘translations’ for an entire picturebook or set of books is excessive and generates too much data for the purpose of the analysis. However, Kress and van Leeuwen note early on in their description of the representational metafunction that the important point is that “the semiotic code of language and the semiotic code of pictures each have their own quite particular means of realizing what in the end are perhaps quite similar semantic relations (44).”

The Interactive Metafunction

The second metafunction, the interactive, consists of a series of choices that an artist can make to potentially position readers when creating an image. The choices are based on an interactive participant’s (creator or reader) contact with represented participants (characters), social distance from represented participants and point of view relative to the represented participants. These features of the interactive metafunction make up the first section of my social semiotic content analysis.
Contact is made between participants through *demands* or *offers*. Demanding gazes make direct eye contact between represented and interactive participants, while offers set characters' gazes anywhere other than directly at the reader. I employ the terms *demand* and *offer* as the two aspects of *contact* in my methodology.

Social distance combines many ideas of the portrayal of represented participants as close or far away from the viewer. It is a continuum from extremely close to extremely distant portrayals. To more clearly demarcate points along the range of distances, Kress and van Leeuwen draw on psychological proxemics of everyday interaction, painting, film and television terminology to describe conventions of social distance representation (130-133). In this thesis, I use the terms *intimate, personal, social*, and *public distance* to mark points along the range.

Point of view choices can be made in both the vertical and horizontal plane. In the vertical plane, point of view changes equate to perceived positions of power. A continuum exists along the vertical point of view that constructs positions of power for represented participants portrayed as higher than the viewer, a feeling of equality at eye level and positions of power for the viewer when the represented participants are portrayed lower (Kress and van Leeuwen 146). I employ the terms *top, high angle, level, low angle* and *bottom* to demarcate points on the vertical point of view continuum. Horizontal point of view changes depict levels of attachment between interactive and represented participants (Kress and van Leeuwen 143). Characters that *face* the viewer have the most potential for attachment, while characters portrayed from the *side* have the least. A *slightly turned* character is slightly more involved than the side view, and a character shown with his *back* to the viewer shares a vision of the represented world and
therefore has a higher level of attachment than the slightly turned character. In my use of horizontal point of view changes, I use the terms in italics in the above paragraph.

These are the choices picturebook creators must make when constructing an image. They may not make each of these decisions consciously, but the viewer is nonetheless situated according to the potential meaning structures. The next metafunction is the compositional. Through the choices made by a creator in this domain, a reader/viewer is informed about the conventions of the text they are reading.

The Compositional Metafunction

The compositional metafunction dictates the conventions of the text as cultural artefact. The choice structures in the compositional area are: salience; information value and modality. I use these as the main categories for the compositional aspects of the social semiotic visual content analysis.

Salience simply defines how clearly representations are laid out on a page. One bold image on an otherwise blank sheet displays high salience. Martin Handford’s Where’s Waldo (1987) books, with their dense and minutely detailed illustrations, are a prime example of low salience, and that is why it is difficult to find Waldo. Handford had to make a conscious decision about salience to produce a book of this kind. Between Waldo and the single image there is a continuum of varying levels of middle salience for the picturebook. Levels of salience can be made in many ways, but for picturebooks it is mainly through use of colour, framing techniques or texture.

The predictability of a text is played out in its information value. Kress and van Leeuwen present three standard concepts that are read in the layout of an image: left to right, top to bottom and center to margin (224). Left to right layouts traditionally display
given information, something the reader is already familiar with, on the left, and new information, something being introduced for the first time, on the right side of a layout. The top of a layout is associated with ideal or dream-like situations, while the bottom is associated with more grounded, realistic representation. In the center to margin display, the center image can unify the marginal images (Kress and van Leeuwen 186-211).

The final choice system is that of modality. The modality of any representation equates to its depiction of the visual world. *High modality* in an image would be characterized by photographic realism, though hyperrealism would be considered to be of lower modality. Representations made in *low modality* would be highly iconic, with very simple lines to convey a subject. Most cartoons are done in very low modality. Varying degrees of *medium modality* fall in between naturalistic high and cartoonish low modalities.

These systems of choice, defined by Kress and van Leeuwen, are enacted with every produced image, whether the artist is aware of the decisions or not (165). By making these alternatives explicit to readers, it could help them to understand not only how they make meaning, but also how to control media for their own purpose.

I employ the second two metafunctions (interaction and composition), and subsequent choice structures to make up the basis for my methodology of social semiotic visual content analysis. I address narrative concerns in my final analysis of the ecological status of each of the postmodern picturebooks, but I do not use the elaborate choice network for narrative representation set out in Kress and van Leeuwen’s representational metafunction. Instead, the representational metafunction helps inform the concepts of socially and culturally motivated visuality. I will be comparing and
contrasting the postmodern picturebooks and the traditional picturebooks on the basis of
the choices displayed in their interactive and compositional presentation. The interactive
choices are made as creators decide how contact will be made through demands and
offers, the social distance of the represented characters and the point of view potentials
presented to the viewers (vertical and horizontal). The compositional alternatives are
displayed through the salience, modality and information value choices made by the
creators of the picturebooks. These systems, based on the vocabulary of visual grammar,
are laid out as part of the methodology in Chapter 3, and are summarized in chart form in
Appendix 3 (Figs. 3 and 4).

**Simultaneous Metafunctions**

With these three metafunctions the image is put in exhaustive perspective, and it
becomes evident how the represented participants relate to one another, how the image
potentially situates the reader, and how the text as a whole has been set up to conform to
expectations of a given form. Syntax (rules for the formation of grammatical and
meaningful sentences) and pragmatics (analysis of situational contexts of language
utterances) are the linguistic categories that parallel the features of their visual grammar
(Jannedy, Poletto and Weldon 11). This analogy with language does not imply that
visual structures are like linguistic structures. They assert that like the linguistic domain,
all communication in the visual domain is coded (Kress and van Leeuwen 20). This use
of the word *code* is defined in *Webster’s Dictionary* as, “the system of rules shared by the
participants in an act of communication, making possible the transmission and
interpretation of messages (397).” Because we know the code without knowing
explicitly what makes up the code, it seems to be only common sense that we can
interpret images correctly (Kress and van Leeuwen 20). Kress and van Leeuwen give the example of the ‘stylized’ arts of other cultures, positing that, “we may experience these arts as ‘decorative’, ‘exotic’, ‘mysterious’ or ‘beautiful’, but we cannot understand them as communication, as forms of ‘writing’ unless we are, or become, members of these cultures (32).”

That we know how to look at constructed images seems intuitive, but Kress and van Leeuwen claim that as visual communication becomes more and more pervasive, a more methodical way to look at images will become necessary (39). This view is echoed in both Arnheim’s Visual Thinking and Dondis’s A Primer for Visual Literacy, as they too identify a need for better understanding of visual constructs as a means to improve not only general intelligence, but also the creative human spirit (Arnheim 315; Dondis 185). Rose’s visuality describes the act of seeing in visual context, and being visually literate equates to understanding the contexts in which we see. Kress and van Leeuwen set out to provide a systematic way of speaking about the contexts of the ‘new literacy’ of multimedia texts as emphasis shifts from the verbal to the visual (30). Their claim that visual literacy “will begin to be a matter of survival, especially in the workplace” creates urgency for such a change (Kress and van Leeuwen 3). I further address the critical importance of visual, as well as multiple literacies as part of my conclusion.

Rose identifies the site of production, the site of the image itself and the site of audiencing as the three contexts in which an image may exist (16). In Kress and van Leeuwen’s terms, these are limited to two sites that are described as part of the representational and interactive metafunctions. That of the represented participant (characters) coincides with the site of the image itself, and the interactive participant
(reader and/or author) combines the sites of audiencing and production (46). For the purposes of the analysis, I use the terms represented participant and interactive participant. I use the terms author/illustrator (or picturebook creator) and reader to distinguish between the sites of production and audiencing respectively within the category of interactive participants. Because meaning potentials and choice structures are the subjects of study, no responses of actual child readers have been used. Therefore, the site of audiencing must be considered theoretically as a matrix of meaning potential. Although I did not conduct any research on actual child readers, the possibility of addressing this in further research is addressed in the final chapter. With an ecological stance informing the third stage of the analysis, I represent the real, though adult reader in this application of the social semiotic categories.

The ecology of picturebooks examines issues similar to what might be addressed by the intensive narrative choice categories of the representational metafunction. Furthermore, it allows me to look at each postmodern picturebook in its social and cultural production contexts, and as a singular meaningful unit.

Summary

Together, the picturebook’s composite history, the introduction of postmodern traits into children’s literature and the development of picturebook analysis provide a particular view of the reading event. I employ the social semiotic visual content analysis, and I focus on the interactive and compositional choice structures to compare traditional and postmodern picturebooks. This also provides a systematic and consistent framework to describe the presentation of visual information in each of the three postmodern
picturebooks. The interactive metafunction describes the potential meaning of an image in the context of a communicative event between interactive participants, and the compositional locates the picturebook as a constructed artefact. I have chosen to exclude the choice structures of the representational metafunction from the social semiotic visual analysis, but incorporate its fundamental idea of seeing different influences on the production of an image through the represented characters' presentation.

The purpose of this study is to define these changes taking place in picturebook presentation by comparing and contrasting the visual grammars of traditional and postmodern picturebooks, and to provide a more systematic vocabulary for dealing with visually coded constructions in the picturebook. I use the postmodern characteristics that I have synthesized by condensing common themes in recent research (Fig. 1) to inform my postmodern picturebook choices and to facilitate the comparisons with traditional picturebooks in the findings. Lewis's "ecology of the picturebook" informs this study's view of 'audience' as an implied reader that is a potential meaning-maker. Lewis also provides the flexible view of each picturebook as a complicated social construct that supersedes 'word-versus-image' continua by considering the integrated dual codes of image/word texts. By describing the postmodern picturebooks in terms of the visual grammar, not only will different patterns become evident, but also the recognition and understanding of these patterns may initiate an agenda that will help introduce elements of visual literacy to beginning readers.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to compare and contrast visual codes in traditional and postmodern picturebooks within the framework of a systemic grammar of visual design. I propose that the vocabulary and underlying concepts of the grammar supply a picturebook discourse more descriptive and inclusive than current methods. This examination is informed theoretically by the developments in the history of the picturebook that contribute to its versatility, the picturebook’s recent acquisition of postmodern features, semiotic interpretation of the picturebook’s double coded nature and the invitation to examine the interaction of the visual and verbal codes as part of the complex, yet flexible interaction between creator, text and reader.

I utilize a multidisciplinary, three-stage approach beginning with a social semiotic visual content analysis, based on the grammar of visual design put forth by Kress and van Leeuwen, which produces data that is discussed in the framework of the contrasts between the three traditional and three postmodern picturebooks, and again with regards to the identified postmodern characteristics (Figure 1). I continue by framing a detailed discussion of each of the three postmodern picturebooks with Lewis’s concept of an ecology of the picturebook, concentrating on viewing each book as a discrete entity, contextualized in the environment of its production and consumption, and presenting integrated image/word codes of communication. As part of my conclusion, I relate new, integrated visual/verbal codes of communication that arise from the interdependence of
word and image in the picturebook to the postmodern picturebook’s capacity to manipulate and expose conventions of the form.

Sources for Data

The primary picturebooks that display postmodern characteristics selected for analysis are:

**Black and White** by David Macaulay (1990);

**The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales** by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith (1992);

**The Three Pigs** by David Wiesner (2002).

The three traditional books, which have been selected to make a general, comparison of picturebook sub-genres with the three postmodern books, are:

**Swimmy** by Leo Leonni (1963);

**Where the Wild Things Are** by Maurice Sendak (1963);

**The Three Little Pigs** by Marie-Louise Gay (1994).

Criteria for Selection

I chose the three postmodern picturebooks on the basis that these titles were repeatedly the focus of recent research, while the three traditional picturebooks are established classics by recognized picturebook creators. All of the postmodern choices are Caldecott Medal winners, the highest accolade for a picturebook produced in the United States. **Where the Wild Things Are** is also a Caldecott Medal winner (1964), and **Swimmy** was a Caldecott Honor book in the same year. The criteria for the Caldecott Medal include, “excellence of execution in the artistic technique employed”, and
excellence of pictorial interpretation of story, theme, or concept" (ALA). The committee also considers that the book must be a self-contained entity, not dependent on outside media (ALA). Gay's *The Three Little Pigs* was produced in Canada, and was therefore not eligible for the Caldecott, but she was awarded The Canada Council Children's Literature Prize for Illustration for *Lizzy's Lion* (1984), The Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Illustrator's Award for *Moonbeam On A Cat's Ear* (1987); and The Governor General's Literary Award for Illustrations for *Rainy Day Magic* (1987).

The postmodern nature of *The Stinky Cheese Man* has been well documented. Deborah Stevenson refers to *The Stinky Cheese Man* as, “the classic postmodern picture book”, and that it “puts the watching back into reading” (32). W. Nikola-Lisa says that Scieszka and Smith have “produced the epitome of the postmodern book” (39). Morag Styles adds, “You can’t read *The Stinky Cheese Man* without engaging with these bibliographic details, let alone considering the nature of narrative, authorial voice and intertextuality” (34). Although the format of *The Stinky Cheese Man* is technically at first glance a picture storybook, upon closer inspection there is a continuous narrative flow from cover to cover, incorporating pictures and images in the synergistic way of picturebooks.

*Black and White*, by David Macaulay, confines itself to the thirty-two page format of traditional picturebooks, but tells four concurrent stories that may or may not relate to one another, as readers are warned on the title page to pay close attention to both words and pictures. Goldstone singles out *Black and White*, observing, “these four stories within the story can be read up to down, right to left, left to right, or down to up. This is not uncluttered in design or action driven (Whaz up 362).” In a separate article Goldstone
Dresang and McClelland argue that Black and White is “the prototype of literature for a young person in the electronic age...the embodiment of profound and unalterable change in literature for young people (704).”

David Wiesner’s The Three Pigs (2001) displays every one of the identified postmodern characteristics. Parody, intertextual allusion, boundary breaking, anti-authority, metatext, fragmentation and multiplicity are all exhibited in the Caldecott Medal winner. No published research concerning this book has been identified. In his 2002 acceptance speech Wiesner explains:

The word most often used in reviews of The Three Pigs has been postmodern...The beauty of the picture book is that despite its seemingly rigid format, it is capable of containing an infinite number of approaches to storytelling...those thirty-two pages get taken down a staggering variety of artistic paths. (401)

Kitty Flynn of Horn Book Review starts her evaluation by stating, “David Wiesner's postmodern interpretation of this tale plays imaginatively with traditional picture book and story conventions and with readers' expectations of both (341).”

While Sendak’s Where the Wild Things Are did usher a new era for picturebooks, it is still considered to be a traditional, even iconic picturebook. Not only did it introduce a dark inner-world of a child, but it also brought a new design aesthetic to the picturebook world. In its time it was revolutionary, but in a different way than what is now deemed the ‘postmodern’ picturebook. Sendak experimented with framing techniques, a ratio of words to pictures that changed over the course of the book and, most notably, the inner-
frustrations of a child. Some of Sendak’s more recent work, such as *We Are All in the Dumps with Jack and Guy* (1993), may be considered to be in more of a postmodern idiom due to its transcendence of boundaries and antiauthoritarian tones.

Leo Leonni’s *Swimmy* was considered artistically to be quite revolutionary in its time, but is not considered postmodern by any of the standards and characteristics identified in recent research. Published in 1963, *Swimmy* tells a tale that exemplifies the ‘home-away-back home’ pattern of a traditional picturebook narrative. Done in ephemeral undersea-like watercolors the storyline tells of a small fish chased away from his ‘home’, sent out to see the wonders of the sea, and subsequently back to his original “home” situation.

Marie-Louise Gay’s *Three Little Pigs* (1994) is a more contemporary example of a traditional tale, traditionally told. It allows for a direct comparison of two ‘three pigs’ variants. Gay’s signature lively line drawings, vibrant colored, serve to illustrate a traditional, terse and repetitive storyline. Some of the postmodern characteristics have been adapted by the time of the text’s production, and appear in this book. The overall effect in the book is, however, much closer to traditional lines.
Research Design

Two research questions address the analysis of picturebooks and the possibility of the analytic tool to be used as a picturebook resource. The research questions are:

- How do picturebooks displaying significant postmodern features manipulate visual, textual and metatextual conventions of more traditional picturebooks?
- How might the terms of the visual grammar frame a vocabulary for integrated image/word texts for picturebook discourse that could, ultimately, be shared with child readers?

Social Semiotic Visual Content Analysis

As illustrated in the literature review, all visual production choices are made in specific cultural contexts. All visual analysis for Jewitt and van Leeuwen becomes, “evidence of how their maker or makers have (re-) constructed reality, as evidence of bias, ideologically coloured interpretation and so on (Jewitt and van Leeuwen 5).” This view is reinterpreted in Arnheim’s statement that, “the picture does not present the object itself but a set of propositions about the object; or if you prefer, it presents the object as a set of propositions (308).” In the first stage of the three-stage analysis, I rely on a social semiotic visual content analysis, which compares, contrasts and finds patterns in the sample of images, to expose the underlying structures of picturebook conventions, and to track changes in the conventions (Jewitt and van Leeuwen 154).

Philip Bell (in Jewitt and van Leeuwen 13) defines visual content analysis as an “empirical (observational) and objective procedure for quantifying recorded ‘audio-visual’ (including verbal) representation using reliable, explicitly defined categories (‘values’ on independent ‘variables’).” Visual content analysis is limited in what
questions it can answer on its own, and therefore is often used in conjunction with another visual methodology (Jewitt and van Leeuwen 13). Social semiotic analysis both defines the parameters for the terms at the outset, and frames the discussion of the patterns found in the results. The forms are inextricably linked, and they constitute the first stage of analysis. Jewitt and Oyama define the premise of social semiotic analysis:

Social semiotics of visual communication involves the description of semiotic resources, what can be said and done with images (and other visual means of communication) and how the things people say and do with images can be interpreted (in Jewitt and van Leeuwen 134).

Social semiotic visual content analysis brings quantitative data to the study of images, while it offers an explicit method for contextualizing them. It begins with a clearly defined hypothesis about the portrayal of represented participants by the producers of visual texts (Jewitt and van Leeuwen 14). Researchers using the social semiotic analysis need to recognize which kinds of rules apply in different contexts (Jewitt and van Leeuwen 134). Not only do semiotic resources result from a historical process, but they are also culturally determined rules we learn in order to communicate our own ideas and understand the ideas of others (Jewitt and van Leeuwen 136). The variables defined by the visual grammar attempt to describe a “meaning potential” that can only be put in motion by an interactive participant. However, the analysis would not necessarily include the way in which meaning potential is realized with specific social interactions (Jewitt and van Leeuwen 7).

The significance of social semiotics begins only when we start to use it as a tool for inquiry (Jewitt and van Leeuwen 136). It studies images in their social contexts, and
not only describes images as a "critical form of social discourse analysis", but may also
seek to influence the field of semiotics (Jewitt and van Leeuwen 6).

Visual social semiotics, like the grammar of visual design, recognizes three kinds
of semiotic work, the metafunctions: representational (ideational), interactive
(interpersonal) and compositional (textual). In this study the choice structures within the
representational metafunction were overly detailed, and I do not use them to define
variables or values in the social semiotic visual content analysis. The representational
metafunction concentrates on interactions between represented participants within an
image, but more generally identifies how those images are produced within a societal or
cultural framework. Images can construct particular associations in their layout that
betray the situation of their cultural production. It consists of an intricate system of
choices, and serves to 'translate' the literal meanings of images into words. An attempt
to incorporate the narrative process structures was made, but abandoned because the
details of analyzing entire picturebooks of images were overwhelming. I recommend the
narrative process structures for an in-depth analysis of a small number of images, but the
subjects of this study were entire texts. However, the emphasis on the culturally
constructed text does coincide with ideas of visuality that are consistent with the goals of
this study. In order to define the variables and values for the social semiotic visual
content analysis, I focus instead on the interactive and compositional structures, as they
address the image in the context of communicating messages between creators and
readers and the picturebook as a socially constructed artefact, respectively.
The interactive metafunction is the conduit by which the author/illustrator (in the case of the picturebook) manipulates the feelings of and communicates ideas to the readers/viewers. Jewitt and Oyama describe the common categories of the interactive metafunction best:

Images can create particular relations between viewers and the world inside the picture frame. In this way they interact with viewers and suggest the attitude viewers should take towards what is being represented. Three factors play a key role in the realization of these meanings: distance, contact and point of view. Together they can create complex and subtle relations between the represented and the viewer (in Jewitt and van Leeuwen 145).

I use the interactive structure to track differences in how readers are potentially situated by picturebook creators from traditional to postmodern picturebooks in the presence of postmodern characteristics.

Compositional meaning structures (modality, salience and information value) according to Jewitt and Oyama can be “applied to the layout of composite texts such as magazine pages, illustrated books, and so on (in Jewitt and van Leeuwen 147).” All images then represent an identifiable kind of text through their compositional production. The layout and overall design can define with what kind of text it is that readers are interacting. I utilize the compositional structure to see how changes in socially constructed picturebook conventions may change in the presence of postmodern characteristics.

The first stage of the three-stage analysis, as outlined above is the social semiotic visual content analysis. The framework defines variables and values for the study
through the choice structures available to a creator of an image that are defined by the interactive and compositional metafunctions. The goal in the first stage is to establish a baseline with the visual presentation of the three traditional books, and to expose differences in the presentation for the three postmodern books. The next section describes the second stage of the analysis, which compares the results of the first stage with the postmodern characteristics that were identified in the review of literature.

**Postmodern**

The second of the three stages is the correlation between the changes in visual presentation that were established by the social semiotic analysis and the postmodern characteristics that were identified in recent research (Figure 1). The research made comparisons between postmodern literary theory and themes that had been identified in many contemporary picturebooks. I examine how interaction, antiauthority, multiplicity, fragmentation, metafiction and boundary breaking relate to changes observed in contact, social distance, point of view (horizontal and vertical), salience, information value and modality of the postmodern picturebooks.

**Ecological**

Lewis's idea of an ecology of picturebooks introduces the possibility of studying them as whole entities that not only have internal cohesion, but also exist in a social, historical and cultural context. The picturebook has an unlimited capacity for change that was recognized early on in its development, but academic consideration of this flexibility and mutability has proven difficult to achieve. An ecological analysis does not prescribe any set categories, but rather seeks to describe the contexts and narrative fluctuations
connected with single picturebooks. This multidisciplinary approach will allow me to discuss picturebooks as having clearly delineated meaning potentials for specific cultural contexts, and as a persistently mutating, complex form that cannot always be rigidly categorized.

**Analysis Process**

The social semiotic visual framework is used to define variables each with several values (Figures 3 and 4), in order to undertake the social semiotic visual content analysis of three postmodern picturebooks and three traditional picturebooks. Based on the changes observed in the first stage of the three-stage analysis, the second stage will attempt to find significant correlations to the postmodern characteristics culled from recent research (Fig. 1). The third and final stage of analysis includes detailed, ecological discussions of each of the three postmodern titles as adaptable, integrated texts that exist as meaningful units.

**Defining Variables and their Values**

The method of analysis begins by defining the variables and respective values in the interactive and compositional categories, based on Kress and van Leeuwen’s visual grammar, and Jewitt and van Leeuwen’s social semiotic visual analysis. The variables defined by the social semiotic visual content analysis that I use for the interactive metafunction are: **contact, social distance, and point of view (vertical and horizontal)**. For the compositional metafunction, the variables I use are: **salience, modality** and **information value** (Jewitt and van Leeuwen 145-152). The next sections define the values attributed to each of the variables.
Interactive: Contact

The first variable of the interactive meaning structure is contact, the site where the represented participants set their gaze. The two values ascribed to this variable are demand and offer. A demand occurs when a character stares out at readers from the page. Alternatively, any other gaze is defined as an offer.

Interactive: Social Distance

The second interactive variable is social distance. The representation of social distance is most easily described through film terminology; close-ups, medium shots, and long shots tell something about how much of a scene or a character is visible. An extreme close-up, generally only a face or facial features filling the entire page, characterizes intimate social distance. Personal distance reveals the same amount of a character that you would see when having a close conversation with a friend, with head and shoulders displayed. Social refers to the distance between a viewer and people they might encounter by chance, but they are kept out of personal space. Public distance displays the entire body, from head to toe, along with surrounding accompaniments. These variations in representation, mainly made through manipulations of scale and dimension, form the values of social distance. How much of the represented participant is visible in each image defines these values.

Interactive: Point of View

The third and fourth variables are labeled point of view. Along the vertical axis, point of view signifies the amount of power readers potentially have in relation to the represented participants. Horizontally, the potential attachment of readers with characters
is a constructed value. The values of vertical point of view are simply a view from the
top, from a high angle, level with the participants, from a low angle, and from the bottom.
Accordingly the higher readers are constructed to be in relation to the participants, the
greater the readers’ feeling of power over them, and the lower the less. Horizontal point
of view, or *attachment* is characterized by whether the participants face the reader or not.
The values are maximum attachment, or *frontal representation*; *over the shoulder*, or
participants’ backs to readers; *slightly turned*; and minimum attachment in profile, or
from the *side*.

Compositional variables relate to the text as a recognizable construct, an artefact
of a specific culture, but do not necessarily tell about the cultural constraints defined by
the representational metafunction. The influences of these constraints are taken up in the
ecological analysis section as part of the totality of each of the picturebooks for
discussion.

*Compositional: Salience*

The first compositional variable is *salience*, the degree which things stand out as
important. The values along a continuum are *high salience*, *medium salience* and *low
salience*. High levels of salience can be made through size, color, framing techniques
and textures. Jewitt and Oyama suggest that the colour red almost always displays high
salience (in Jewitt and van Leeuwen 150). For picturebooks, the size of a represented
participant, frames and the use of blank space have been used traditionally to draw the
eye to a certain aspect of the page.
Compositional: Information Value

The second compositional variable is information value. Kress and van Leeuwen have shown that a pattern exists for meaning-making potential in the layout of information on a page from right-to-left, top-to-bottom and/or center-to-margin (186-211). These are the identified values of the information value category. The left side of a page is generally used for representation of given information and the right is reserved for new or challenging information. Ideal representations are likely placed at the top of a page and real, grounded images are placed at the bottom. In the center to margin relationship, the center image can either unify the surrounding images or simply exist as a more salient figure with attributes set in the margins (Kress and van Leeuwen 203).

Compositional: Modality

Third in the compositional metafunction is modality, or the degree of representation of reality. Naturalistic, high modality is typified by photographic realism, while more iconic and abstract images like cartoons show low modality. Anywhere in the middle is medium modality, and high, medium and low make up the values for this variable. Many of the books for this study display an internal variation in modality that is incomparable to other books.

In the study, seven variables, four interactive and three compositional, have been defined with several values on each (Figures 3 and 4).

Three-Staged Analysis: Distinguishing Patterns

The six selected picturebooks, three traditional and three exhibiting postmodern characteristics, were analyzed for each of the values defined by the visual grammar
(Figures 3 and 4). The occurrence of each value in the sample picture books was then recorded. Any differences between the patterns in the traditional and postmodern picturebooks was noted and considered for potential of changes in meaning.

I utilized the social semiotic visual content analysis to frame the picturebook images within the interactive and compositional metafunctions. The next chapter of findings begins with an investigation of the similarities and differences between the three traditional and three postmodern picturebooks drawing on the data from the social semiotic visual content analysis. Postmodern characteristics (Fig. 1) will be considered as the possible impetus for the changes in the integrated visual/verbal codes of the picturebook in stage two. In the third stage of analysis, drawing on Lewis’s “ecology of the picturebook”, I will examine each of the three postmodern titles in detail. The ecology allows me to view each book as a complex, discrete entity, contextualized in the environment of its production and consumption, and presenting integrated image/word codes of communication.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The primary research question asks how picturebooks that display postmodern characteristics manipulate visual, textual and metatextual conventions. The secondary question implicates the visual grammar as a means to picturebook and visual literacy discourses. In a three-stage analysis, I first compare trends in the interactive and compositional structures, from Kress and van Leeuwen’s social semiotic grammar of visual design, of three postmodern books to those of three traditional books. I discuss the six titles in the general terms of the two aspects of the visual grammar, and then re-examine them in the context of their relation to the identified postmodern characteristics (Fig. 1). Following these examinations, in the third and final stage, a detailed analysis of the data for each postmodern picturebook is made from the perspective of each book’s strongest postmodern trait. Lewis’s “ecology” informs this discursive analysis. The ecology details the complex and flexible relationship between the picturebooks’ creators, the represented participants and potential readers, and views each book as a discrete entity, contextualized in the environment of its production and consumption, integrating visual and verbal codes of communication.

Findings Related to the Research Question

I begin with an overview of the general notable differences in the interactive and compositional categories of the social semiotic content analysis of the six picturebooks. I
then go on to discuss the results of the primary analysis for each of the variables in terms of their respective values, making reference to the tables and graphs of the results in Appendix 4. After the initial social semiotic visual content analysis, I relate the differences between the traditional and postmodern books to the previously identified postmodern traits to determine any correlations. In the third stage of the analysis, I employ the encompassing concepts of Lewis's picturebook ecology and the vocabulary of social semiotics to frame a holistic discussion of each of the postmodern texts as discrete and meaningful entities.

On the whole, represented characters, through the interactive choice structures (Table 1 and Table 2) in the postmodern books were illustrated as more engaging, exhibiting more contact through demanding gazes, more instances of close social distance and more variation in point of view. The variations in both the vertical and horizontal axes situate readers in shifting positions of power and attachment, thereby making them potentially more than a passive observer of the story. In composition (Table 3 and Table 4), lower salience made the postmodern books more difficult to navigate, but more intriguing to decipher. Varying internal modality of the postmodern books was used to demarcate multiple story lines within the narrative, while the traditional books showed no change in modality. All of the postmodern books' layouts, with their lower overall salience, were conducive to higher numbers of represented participants throughout, and more characters in a given book equates to more instances of each of the interactive variables: contact, social distance and point of view (Table 1 and Table 2).
Social Semiotic Content Analysis

The variables and values from Figures 3 and 4 delineate the social semiotically framed picturebook conventions, and how they may be manipulated. The correlating graphs present the trends visually through colour groupings. The traditional titles are all represented by warm colours (red = Swimmly; orange = Gay's The Three Little Pigs; and yellow = Where the Wild Things Are), while postmodern titles are portrayed in cool colours (light blue = Black and White; purple = Wiesner's The Three Pigs; and royal blue = The Stinky Cheese Man). Overall, the graphs show fixed groupings of the warm coloured traditional texts, whereas the cool coloured postmodern texts are distributed across the many values for every variable. The trends are also displayed in Table 1-4 (Appendix 4). I now discuss each variable in more detail, beginning with the interactive category (Table 1 and Table 2), followed by the compositional category (Table 3 and Table 4).

Contact

Together the three traditional texts displayed one demand, all other contact was made through offers (Table 1), while the postmodern texts totaled thirty-four demands and one hundred thirty-nine offers (Table 2). The graph in Figure 5 illustrates how the traditional books are not represented, save for one lone incidence, in the portrayal of demands, which occurred in Where The Wild Things Are. The introduction of demands in the postmodern texts implies that to establish an interaction with the reader, the represented characters violate the story surface and break the boundary of the page. Readers are invited to participate in the story actively by making a connection across the former boundary. Textually, the postmodern characters address the reader directly
making verbal 'demands' of them as well. Individual examples of this are outlined in the
detailed descriptions of each postmodern picturebook in the stage three ecological
analyses. A verbal demand can be constituted as any kind of command, asking or
ordering someone to do something. An example is provided by Scieszka and Smith’s
narrator, Jack in the final pages as he requests that the readers “Be very quiet.” as not to
wake the sleeping giant. The process of breaking the surface of the page and the
boundary between represented and interactive participants relates directly to the
previously observed postmodern metatextual and self-referential features.

**Social Distance**

The traditional texts represented their visual storyboard entirely at public social
distance, with one exception in Gay’s *The Three Little Pigs*, which provided minimal
variance in its choice of shots (Table 1). The lack of warm colours in the intimate and
personal values is evident in the correlating graph (Figure 6), as is the grouping of all
three traditional books at public distance. Moreover, the graph (Fig. 6) and Tables 1 and
2 illustrate how the creators of the postmodern picturebooks, though they rely heavily on
public distance shots to establish scenes, make a conscious effort to vary portrayals of
social distance. The postmodern texts display a considerable amount of public distance
shots along with almost half as many social distance shots (Table 2). However, the
postmodern texts also used personal and intimate distance compositions (Table 2). By
varying the social distance between the reader and the characters, the book becomes more
dynamic and interactive, positioning the reader as a part of the story world.
**Point of View**

Variation in the point of view along the vertical plane did occur in the postmodern books more often than the traditional, but all six books were dominated by the eye-level point of view as illustrated in the graph (Fig. 7) and Tables 1 and 2. There is a significant peak of both warm and cool colours in the middle of the graph in Figure 7, and a few occurrences along the continuum of vertical point of view. Surprisingly, there are variations in the traditional books, as illustrated in the numerical data in Table 1, and by the orange peaks in Figure 7, representing Gay's *The Three Little Pigs*. The two older traditional books, *Where the Wild Things Are* and *Swimmy*, presented their stories exclusively at the level point of view with no variation, while Gay's more contemporary work represented one high angle and two low angle shots (Table 1). The postmodern texts, while relying on the standard convention of eye-level representation, experiment with extreme changes in points of view and sample them all in the two most recent books, *Black and White* and Wiesner's *The Three Pigs* (Table 2). The variation in point of view itself was identified as a postmodern characteristic, and can be seen representing the vertical perspective in the postmodern texts (cool colours) in the graph (Fig. 7). Readers are put in different potential positions of power in relation to the characters. Mirroring power relations in a communication exchange, the feeling of being in control transfers into a feeling of being controlled. In *The Stinky Cheese Man* all but two images were represented at eye-level, and the two exceptions portrayed extreme high-angle views (Table 2). I will further address the complexities of the interpretation of point of view for the postmodern picturebooks in the ecological analysis section.
Horizontal point of view in the traditional books mainly portrayed characters from the side or slightly turned, but rarely facing and engaging readers (Table 1). The postmodern books were varied in their representations, but were much more balanced (Table 2). The graph in Figure 8 provides a visual interpretation, showing that the traditional titles (warm colours) offered one very strong point of view in the horizontal plane with little or no variation. The presentation of characters in Swimmy was portrayed entirely from the side view, and Gay’s The Three Little Pigs represented most of its characters from the side as well (Table 1). In Where the Wild Things Are, most of the representations were slightly turned with a few occurrences in the other categories (Table 1). It is interesting to see that some of the trends in the postmodern books are also showing up in Where the Wild Things Are, which is considered a revolutionary book for its time. The topic of categorizing it as traditional, after viewing the social semiotic findings will be discussed, as it relates to the strong and weak views of postmodern picturebooks in the conclusion. The postmodern titles (cool colours), conversely display an erratic pattern that is unique to each book, but sure to experiment with each kind of representation. I now move to the compositional variables (Table 3 and Table 4), which help define the text as the social construct we know as the picturebook.

**Salience**

The traditional titles (Table 3) displayed highly recognizable, highly salient represented participants through a majority of their portrayals, as did the postmodern titles (Table 4). The graph (Figure 9) shows that the highest levels for all six books are set in the range of maximum salience. Reliance on highly salient features portrayed in the graph (Fig. 9) communicates the apparent need for a picturebook narrative to
establish scenes and characters visually. The difference between the postmodern books (Table 4) and the traditional books (Table 3) becomes slightly more apparent in the occurrences of middle salience. Most instances of middle salience representation portrayed circumstances of setting or accompaniment that give details, but take away from the main characters. It is through the occurrences of minimum salience that we see the postmodern picturebooks presenting challenges to the readers to reconcile cluttered displays for themselves. The lone warm colour on the graph of minimum salience again stands for Gay's *The Three Little Pigs*, and accounts for only one image. The most notable peak on the graph (Fig. 9) is the minimum salience value for *Black and White*. It is higher than both its maximum and middle salience values (Table 4). This can be attributed to the fragmented nature of the book, and will be discussed in the ecological analysis. However, it seems that, though both sets of books rely on high levels of salience, the postmodern books were the only ones to use minimum salience, or a dense and sometimes cluttered design, as conscious choices in positioning readers.

**Information Value**

Information value has proven to be the most difficult to interpret for the six picturebooks. The graph in Figure 10 shows the three western conventions of left-to-right, top-to-bottom and center-to-margin representation choices. The alternative to presenting information in this way is simply to not present it in any of these three conventions, and it is this possibility that communicates through its absence. The traditional books (Table 3) employ the first two conventions more often than the postmodern (Table 4), but the third category has the most postmodern occurrences and the least traditional. One of the purposes of this study is to show that the traditional
books used more conventional design strategies, and the data in Table 3 and the graph (Fig. 10) show that they do. The postmodern books, and their lower occurrences of left to right and top to bottom portrayals, could be interpreted as a challenge to the expectations of the conventions of the form. The center to margin relationship is the one area of contention. Sendak’s *Where the Wild Things Are* has its highest number of occurrences in the center to margin configuration (Table 3). Perhaps this was one of the features that made it revolutionary for its time, and it remains obscure in its traditional use today. The center to margin layout may still be seen as an experimental contemporary convention, and the postmodern books have merely been playing with it.

*Modality*

Finally, variations in modality are one of the clearest indicators of the differences between the postmodern and traditional picturebooks. The graph in Figure 11 clearly shows that, though the traditional books may be portrayed in different modalities from one another, the modality remains consistent from cover to cover with no variation (Table 3). This is a result of the picturebook creators choosing a style of illustration for their book and maintaining that style from start to finish. The postmodern books take a different approach. Two of the postmodern titles, *The Stinky Cheese Man* and *The Three Pigs*, show occurrences in all three of the marked modality fields, while the third, *Black and White*, registered in two fields. Scieszka and Smith’s use of collage and pastiche in *The Stinky Cheese Man*, affords them a range of modality changes within single images. Macaulay’s *Black and White*, with its four ‘stories’ separated by not only borders, but by their different styles of illustration, displays subtle changes on the continuum of modality that are not as clearly distinguishable when restricted to three categories chosen at the
outset of the study. And Wiesner's use of subtle modality changes in *The Three Pigs* requires much finer grading of the scale than is offered by these three choices. These problems are discussed for each picturebook in the detailed ecological analysis. For the purpose of this section, the difference in the representation of modality between the traditional and postmodern picturebooks is clearly the postmodern books' internal variation. I next associate these general trends more closely with the identified postmodern characteristics (Fig. 1).

**Trends Associated with Postmodernism**

The trends identified in the first stage of analysis through the interactive and compositional metafunctions of the social semiotic visual content analysis share some direct links with the identified postmodern characteristics (Figure 1). Because the basis for comparison between the six books was the presence of postmodern characteristics, the social semiotic changes described above can be attributed to the books being postmodern. However, this second stage of analysis itemizes the social semiotic trends as they relate to each of the postmodern characteristics (Fig. 1).

**Interactive**

Contact through demands creates a psychological interaction between readers and characters in the picturebook. Extreme close-ups at the intimate social distance may seem to come right off the page, and into the readers' domain. Eye-level representations may serve to create a feeling of equality between the characters and the readers. Characters portrayed frontally, facing the reader sometimes create an interaction, while
over the shoulder views encourage interaction by letting readers see what the characters see.

**Antiauthoritarian**

Antiauthoritarian themes can be presented visually in picturebooks by using the conventional form of the picturebook as the representation of authority. Demanding gazes, close-up representations, extreme point of view variation, low salience and shifting modalities all violate the standard ‘authority’ of the picturebook form. By challenging the expectations of seasoned readers, the postmodern picturebooks are visually antiauthoritarian. Challenges to characters that represent authority by other characters are a common example of antiauthoritarianism in the research. John Burningham’s picturebook, *Come Away from the Water, Shirley* (1977), has been cited as an example of antiauthority. The main character, Shirley, is at the beach with her parents, who shout typical parental warnings at her though they are oblivious to what Shirley is actually doing. Shirley does not speak, but neither does she heed her parents until it is time to go home. This representation of antiauthoritarianism is subtler in its visual presentation, and may be better suited to the representational metafunction to fully describe positions of hostility or defiance through both bodily and eye line vectors.

**Multiple**

Multiplicity is addressed most evidently by the variations of point of view. The postmodern picturebooks showed a greater variety of points of view in both the vertical and horizontal plane. Issues of modality change also relate to multiple ways of seeing the represented world in picturebooks. Information value is relevant to multiple ways of
presenting images. There are choices and conventions for representing information and by presenting it through unique, non-standard means; new standards of communication are possible.

**Fragmentation**

Fragmentation is most apparent in the postmodern books’ use of images with low salience. Images with cluttered designs coerce the eye to scan them for detail, something at which children are particularly adept. Low levels of salience relate to unresolved narratives, including examples of hypertext. Modality changes also present fragments of different illustrative styles to be reconciled by the readers.

**Metafiction**

Metafictional self-references can be portrayed through eye-contact demands from characters, or intimate social distance portrayal. By addressing the reader visually, characters call attention to the fact that they are ‘in the book’. For Wiesner’s pigs, changes in modality equal the characters self-awareness. They pass between ‘stories’ in the book world and easily take on whichever modality they encounter. It is only when they realize that they were stuck in a ‘story’, when they became self-aware that the real story begins.

**Boundary Breaking**

The last postmodern characteristic is boundary breaking, and it is manifested visually through demands, social distance and modality. When contact is made through a demand, it is made across the surface plane of the page. Variations in social distance, especially extreme close-ups at intimate distance, can push the surface plane as well.
Modality, especially internal changes in the modality of the representations, demonstrates the breaking and crossing of boundaries.

In the next section, I examine each of the postmodern titles individually, considering their strongest traits. The discussion is framed by the ‘ecological’ view of each picturebook as a flexible and complex entity.

“Ecological” Analysis

Lewis has delineated the picturebook’s interdependence, flexibility, complexity and diversity along with a description of the reader’s role in making meaning in his “ecology of the picturebook”. It is a model for looking at picturebooks as complete and meaningful units, which may incorporate meaning making through integrated double codes, visual and verbal working together, that provide each book with a unique rhythm. The picturebook form has been shown to be able to adapt to and adopt many other products of the culture around it, and I will now examine each of the postmodern picturebooks in the context of this holistic, multidimensional framework.

The Stinky Cheese Man: "If you read this last sentence, it won’t tell you anything."

Mocking authority through parody and pastiche

Scieszka and Smith’s parody of illustrated fairy tale storybooks fulfills many of the values ascribed to ‘postmodern’ picturebooks. The Stinky Cheese Man displays its confrontations with authority visually through variation in modalities, use of demands, low salience, and a flattening of perspectives. In their later work, Squids Will Be Squids (1998), they parody Aesop’s Fables by asserting on the inside flap that if you change the people to animals, “your stories aren’t rude gossip and bad jokes. They’re fables...if you
can't say something nice about someone, change the guy's name to Donkey or Squid.” They openly invite readers to challenge the power structure, and any other structure with which they may be in opposition.

The book’s depictions of contact situations are predominantly offers, as they would be in an illustrated book of fairy tales. The parody depends on this convention to make its reference to the original genre, so that the reader will make the visual connection between parody and parodied. However, there are occurrences of demands, which come from the title character, Jack the Narrator, the Giant, and the recurring Little Red Hen character.

The cheese man himself, stares out at the reader mesmerizingly with his eyes made of green olives and pimento held in place with toothpicks. His gaze does not so much invite, as it does stare blankly with the dead eyes of a fish. Yet he is unmistakably demanding attention, as the title character, and full-page, personal distance, lone participant opposite the first page of his story. The fact that this full-page illustration is on the right side of the opening, too, distinguishes it, by pulling the eye away from the words and smaller image on the left to this hypnotic gaze.

Jack the Narrator and the Little Red Hen appear together completely outside the level of the story, and so being on a closer plane of existence, they may be expected to make more contact with the reader than the other characters. The Hen in her demand sequence makes visual and verbal demands of everyone. This includes the characters that traditionally appear in her story, the Narrator, the author and the illustrator, and all the while she is demanding the reader to help her find these missing persons. Jack is directly addressing the reader, verbally and visually as he adjusts the dedication page, also
revealing one of his multiple identities in the background. A girl is standing next to a well with a bucket at the top of a hill, arms akimbo, apparently waiting for Jack. Who else could this be than 'Jill' waiting for Jack to climb the hill and fetch a pail of water? He later climbs a beanstalk and confronts the Giant. The Giant has the last laugh, and shares it with the reader in the final full-page illustration in which he eats the little red hen as a sandwich on the bread she baked. He looks out knowingly, sharing the joke and the ironical parody of crisscrossing fairy tales.

The representations of social distance were mainly public or long shots. This works with the supposition that in order to parody, one must use underlying examples of the original works. The modulation between social distances is a visual element of the parody itself. However, there are also instances of intimate and personal distance, close-up views that were not encountered in the traditional books. The intimate shots of the Giant, as he fills the frames of the illustrations, suggest that his formidable size cannot be contained or even represented in the confines of something as small as a picturebook.

The reader’s positioning in both the horizontal and vertical planes appear, from the data, to be quite similar to the traditional books. All but two representations along the vertical would seem to be at eye-level, which is almost true. The problem arises from Lane Smith’s Cubist-like flattening of perspective. These illustrations were the most difficult to classify, because in some cases, such as the extremely high angles, the whole viewing plane is flattened, to show multiple angles simultaneously. This flattening of perspectives is taken to extremes in the picturebook by David McKee, I Hate My Teddy Bear (1984). McKee represents all these different planes squished together like an unfolded three-dimensional shape; like a cube turned into six flat squares. Having noted
that, the horizontal plane of involvement showed the most representations slightly turned, inviting to the reader, yet indirect. In stark contrast to the traditional text Swimmy that depicts all of the fish from the uninvolved side view (as one would watch them in an aquarium), The Stinky Cheese Man shows characters from all angles. Nevertheless, the second most frequently depicted plane for characters in The Stinky Cheese Man was the uninvolved side view. This can be attributed to the sarcastic aspect of the parody. Unlike Swimmy's benign characters living their lives that happen to be part of a book, the characters in The Stinky Cheese Man when portrayed from the side, seem to be deliberately rude. They have attitude. They are disgruntled workers in a storytelling sweatshop. Jack the Narrator would then be their foreman. He attempts to keep the peace between everyone involved with the picturebook at hand, and therefore he is character with whom the reader has the most involvement. Over the shoulder representation was the hardest to categorize in this book. Due to the lack of fixed perspective and representation of only a few recurring characters, it became difficult to tell whether the scene was depicted over a shoulder or not.

Because the layout of the book is based on an illustrated storybook, the illustrations showed many incidences of high salience. Most of the ‘stories’ within the book are accompanied by one or two illustrations. In most cases the salient figures are the main characters of their ‘story’. Low salience is seen in ‘Giant Story’ where the Giant constructs a story in the cut-up method of cutting strips from stories and pasting them together to create new meanings or lack of meaning. The illustration is composed in exactly the same way. A pastiche of visual allusions to many historical children’s stories, such as a golden harp, a magic wand, and a blackbird baked in a pie, along with a
curiously Madeline-like yellow hat from Ludwig Bemelman’s *Madeline* (1939) to name but a few images, is topped off by a magazine advertisement photograph of a smiling mouth upside-down. There are no salient points in the illustration, just as there are none in the text that it accompanies.

The *Stinky Cheese Man* exists primarily as a parody. It challenges readers from cover to cover to interact, to play its game, to have fun reading the outrageous stories, and to search for visual allusions to the original characters being parodied. However, the fact that the challenges are cover to cover, and do not simply carry out intertextual and self-references, but also references to production features such as the end-pages, number of pages (more than a standard picturebook), and the ISBN number, give readers an opportunity to raise questions about the picturebook as an artefact, and as a product made for consumption. In this way, *The Stinky Cheese Man* may be more like the adult postmodern fiction in its deliberate exposure of constructedness, and subversion of traditional conventions.

*Black and White*: "...careful inspection of both words and pictures is recommended."

*Fragmentation of Narratives*

*This book appears to contain a number of stories that do not necessarily occur at the same time. But it may contain only one story. Then again, there may be four stories. Or four parts of a story.*

-From the warning on the title page of *Black and White*

*Black and White* claims its own fragmentation and celebrates it. Not only are the openings divided into four equal parts from the start, but characters and accompaniments
associated with one section appear in other sections, visual innuendoes suggest the atemporal relation between sections, and the titular black and white motif is the ultimate equalizer during the collapse of the sections. It confines itself to the thirty-two page format of traditional picturebooks, but tells four concurrent stories that may or may not relate to one another. The stories seem simple: there is a boy on a train, a family at home, people waiting for a train, and cows, Holstein cows, that seem to be controlled by a man in a striped shirt and a mask. What does this expose to us visually and conceptually?

The four-panel format that appears through most of Black and White accounts for the comprehensively higher numbers, although all of the postmodern books’ layouts were conducive to higher numbers of represented participants in general. The highest number of demands overall were found in this book, but there were also almost twice as many offers as demands. The lower left hand quadrant displayed most of these demands, as the reader is positioned as either one of the parents, or one of the children. In addition, the family dog stares out at the reader seemingly begging for help. Other demands are made by the striped shirt wearing ‘criminal’ who is the only character that freely moves among the four stories, putting him on a higher plane and closer to the reader. He too shares knowing looks with the reading audience.

Social distance is portrayed mainly through the public long shots, followed by nearly half as many social medium long shots. The top right hand quadrant remains fixed at public distance and frame.

The construction of viewer power in the vertical plane is again primarily equal at eye-level. There are experiments with extremely high and low angles that position the reader as powerful and powerless respectively. The lower left-hand quadrant depicts life
at home for a family of four and their dog. Representation comes from many points of view as the reader sees through the eyes of the parents looking down at the children, the children looking up at the parents, and from the low perspective of the pet dog, but never through the dog's eyes. The reader is meant to interact with each quadrant separately, and the positioning changes accordingly.

**Black and White** had its highest occurrences in the involved, frontal portrayal closely followed by the side, uninvolved. In contrast, *Where the Wild Things Are* shows a slightly turned Max and 'wild things'. These slight turns lessen the impact of the ferocious wild things, buffering their impact on child readers. **Black and White** has no monsters, and readers can be comforted by the frontal involvement of the tame characters. There is also a very high occurrence of characters represented from the side. With four stories working at the same time in the same opening the reader would be overwhelmed if there were not at least as many characters uninvolved as were involved. There are many 'role players' in the backgrounds that are represented from the side, simply because they do not need to be engaging, they are what Kress and van Leeuwen refer to as circumstances of accompaniment (75).

In the compositional realm, **Black and White** presents a unique challenge to rating salience in that there are four chances to make salient figures in nearly every opening. The numbers show an almost equal amount of high, middle and low salience occurrences. One reason for this is that at times one quadrant has a highly salient figure, while the others are more jumbled, making an entire quadrant the salient aspect of the opening. At other times two or more quadrants display highly salient figures, with the exception being
the top right hand ‘story’ which remains fixed in its perspective and style, maintaining low salience the entire time.

Modality varies internally and among the four quadrants, and Macaulay’s design school/architectural drawing style accounts for the clean lines of the medium modality, while his depiction of people holds to more cartoonish qualities. Ephemeral watercolours, somber sepia tones, and bright bold gouache are all infused with the motif of black and white through newspapers, cowhides and clothing. The internal change in modality is very subtle in this book, as it represents both the demarcation of the four ‘stories’ as well as their common thread. As all quadrants break down into the monochromatic fourteenth opening where colour, style and modality have no representation, and salience is completely lost, the reader is forced to reconcile these four ‘stories’ either into one overarching reality, or as four separate tales interrupted by this chaotic sequence.

Fragmentation of the images, as well as the ambiguity of the stories’ relationships to each other, makes demands on the readers. Their contribution to meaning finalizes, if only until the next reading of an imaginative reader, what this book is ‘about’.

*The Three Pigs: "I think...someone's out there."* Transcending Boundaries

The entire conceptual basis for *The Three Pigs* relies on the idea of traditional stories being contained by physical and conceptual boundaries. This convention of the bound story is exploited by the pigs’ ability to traverse boundaries with ease. They are free to ‘be’ intertextual as well as extra-textual. Boundary breaking in *The Three Pigs* is demonstrated mainly through shifts in modality, but can also be seen in its portrayal of contact situations.
Demands in *The Three Pigs* are relatively low, but astoundingly effective. The front cover is a perfect example of a demand image. All three pigs are in extreme close-up with all of their eyes firmly fixed on the point where any reader would be if they picked up this book. The reader is grabbed and pulled in right from the start. The scene and the mood are set, the reader is ‘in’; challenged to take part and interact with the three pigs. With the myriad of characters that the pigs come in contact with over the course of the book, the high amount of offers comes from the need to tell a story, and the characters that are circumstances of accompaniment.

Many of the shots are positioned from a far and impersonal public distance, but this frees the vertical and horizontal planes to rotate an almost full 360 degrees around the characters, once they take leave of the traditional storyline. In addition, there are examples of the whole range of social distances, including a dramatic close-up that invades the reader’s personal space, as one pig toys with the idea of some one being “out there” just beyond the reach of the frame. Much like the cover, the extreme close-up is high in modality and salience, but on the page opening, the pig also makes an implied verbal assertion of the reader’s existence. The reader is not directly addressed as was the case in *The Stinky Cheese Man*, but the position of a reader is alluded to by the pig in its invasion of social boundaries limited further by the text to make this assertion of shared experience with the reader.

The reader is placed in many different potential positions of power, however the mainstay is an eye-level point of view. The reader is watching from this perspective and is made to feel like a part of the action through horizontal perspective shifts and distancing. Extreme angles can be noted as the pigs are flying in their paper airplane, as
they rise, the reader is left on the ground of the story world looking up, and spinning around to keep up with the soaring pigs. Later, after picking up the cat and the fiddle, and saving the dragon from a slaying, the pigs peruse the endless ranks of story lines, when they suddenly come across their original story in a frame of the third pig’s brick house. Because all of the frames of their story have been disrupted they lay on the ground, while other story lines are upright like gallery paintings. The reader is able to see what the pigs and friends are looking at because the perspective is from directly above the frame showing the pig’s house, but the tops of the characters heads and bodies are in view. The actual frame now appears ‘right’ in that it is parallel to the surface plane, however the surface has shifted because of what the reader should know so far about the book.

Characters are portrayed on the vertical plane as they might be if the reader were actually standing among them, but only when they have passed through the boundary between the traditional story line and into the meta-story line. They are mostly depicted at a slight turn, as people might gather around one another. This book displays the highest number of over-the-shoulder shots, and the reader is positioned in more involved angles as the book moves from traditional storyboard frames to the meta-story world that the pigs discover and then back again.

Although many characters and circumstantial representations are present in the course of the book, the pigs stand out as salient in many of the openings. When compared with any of the traditional titles with their very consistently high levels of salient representation, *The Three Pigs* stands as a contrast with a few occurrences of low
salience. The relatively high salience, I believe can be attributed to the use, and absolute dependence on, variations in the internal modality.

Modality changes for the representation of the pigs signify traversing of boundaries within the pages of the book. Beginning with the cover, the pigs are represented in a quite realistic, even very human-like style. Each pig has a different eye-colour, and we can see details of their soft, short hairs, and round eyelids. As we move to the title page, the pigs are no longer as detailed and are noticeably more ‘drawn’. We are now ‘in’ the story of the three pigs. The first pig to return to the high modality of the cover is the straw house pig. He is blown through the surface plane of the ‘story’ and into a meta-text between the panels of the traditional story. We can see the threshold as he falls because his hind legs are caught on the edge of the panel, and they are still in the ‘story’ level modality. All three pigs end up in this high modality plane, and they explore it until they come across a sickeningly sweet image of “Hey diddle diddle”. Again as they cross the threshold they take on the extremely low modality of the scene, the most cartoonish in the book. They then venture into a black and white comic style adventure and take on that modality. Each border crossed is marked by a change in modality, and in some cases the only visible border is the pig represented as half in and half out of a degree of modality.

The theme of crossing boundaries is strong in Wiesner’s *The Three Pigs*, and he exploits visual representations of invisible boundaries. The pigs are free to pass between all of these borders. Boundary crossing comes through most clearly in the modality domain, but these are invisible boundaries. Wiesner’s use of physical frames indicates boundaries of a more solid and tangible nature. Gay’s pigs are represented in the same
modality throughout the story, and they are bound to their destiny because of it. If they were suddenly depicted in a different style, the reader would be surprised, and we can imagine after reading Wiesner's variant, so would the pigs. They do not change, because of Gay's conscious decision to keep them within their traditional boundaries.

This narrative "ecological" analysis provides a working example of how an integrated visual/verbal text can be discussed in the terms of the grammar of visual design. The social semiotic visual content framework from my methodology is based on the same concepts and terminology as the grammar, and the section above illustrates the consistency and effectiveness of this method of describing the picturebook as more than pictures and words, but as a postmodern multimodal text.

Summary

In this chapter I have tried to show, in the terms of the social semiotic visual content analysis, that the three postmodern picturebooks display information differently than the three traditional counterparts, and that the postmodern traits identified by the research have a correlation to these changes in the display of information. I have also provided thorough analyses of each of the traditional picturebooks framed by Lewis's complex ecology, and using the vocabulary of the visual grammar.

In the next and final chapter, I draw conclusions about the differences in presentation between the postmodern and traditional picturebooks. I consider how the visual grammar may be adapted by educators to include concepts of visual literacy in their curriculum, and how it may be adopted by academics interested in picturebooks to
describe image and word interactions as one integrated text rather than a continuum of rival modes of communication.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this thesis, I have used a multidisciplinary analysis as a tool to determine how codes of communication are changing in picturebooks displaying postmodern characteristics, how those changes relate to recent research on the postmodern picturebook and how the vocabulary developed to deal with images and words together, as an integrated text, elucidates how we view the act of reading and its traditional constraints. In Chapter 2, an extensive review of literature frames the picturebook in the context of: the varied and encompassing history of the form; the introduction of postmodern characteristics into children's literature; semiotic analysis of the word/image relationship; a synthesis of recent studies of the reading event as a dynamic, complex, social experience based on Lewis’s “ecology of the picturebook”; and discourses surrounding visuality and visual literacy. In Chapter 3, I have outlined the theoretical method (social semiotic visual content analysis; examination of postmodern traits; and integrated analysis of single picturebooks as internally cohesive entities); and the parameters of the analysis. In Chapter 4, I began by introducing general trends of similarity and difference between the three traditional and three postmodern picturebooks, and their potential significance. I considered the postmodern characteristics (Fig. 1) as the possible impetus for the changes in visual and verbal codes I have used the terminology of the visual grammar and the framework of the “ecology of the picturebook” to discuss and analyze three distinct contemporary postmodern
picturebooks: *The Stinky Cheese Man* (1992) by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith, *Black and White* (1990) by David Macaulay and *The Three Pigs* (2001) by David Wiesner. Finally, in this chapter, I draw conclusions related to my analyses and hypothesize towards further research implications as well as future pedagogical applications of this study.

**Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to define changes between three postmodern and three traditional picturebooks by analyzing them in a social semiotic visual framework, and then contextualize them with postmodernism and the ecological, holistic framework. Differences between the traditional and postmodern picturebooks have been discussed using the defined values and variables. These variables make up the ideational and compositional choice structures of the social semiotic methodology. The choices the creator of an image makes when positioning the readers’ potentialities of meaning determine the layout and design of the image.

Postmodern books display different visual patterns than their traditional counterparts. These differences may be directly linked to the postmodern characteristics that have been distinguished by the research to date (Figure 1). The *interactive* and *compositional* presentation of images in the postmodern picturebooks differs from the traditional picturebooks in the following ways:

1. The books with postmodern characteristics present information in a greater variety of ways
2. The represented characters gaze out at the reader more often or at all in postmodern books.
3 There is a greater variety in the depiction of social distance in the postmodern books.

4 The viewer is put in more varied positions of power and attachment in relation to the represented participants of postmodern books.

5 There are fewer occurrences of a highly salient central figure in the postmodern books.

6 Internal changes in modality are not displayed in the traditional books, but are in the postmodern books.

These changes define features that correlate to the postmodern characteristics, and support the research identifying their use in picturebooks. The interactive postmodern characteristic was represented in the social semiotic content analysis first through increases in the occurrence of demands, in which characters were portrayed making direct eye contact with the readers. The characters being represented in a variety of social distances, particularly the extreme close-up of intimate social distance creates an interactive relationship with readers. Themes of antiauthoritarianism were difficult to explain through the visual grammar, other than challenging the authority of the canon of picturebooks with changes in layout and design exhibited through all of the categories. A more detailed analysis in the representational domain may better serve the ideas of challenging authority visually. The multiple postmodern characteristic is easily relayed by the greater variety of visual presentation across the board for the postmodern picturebooks. Most notable are the multiple perspectives, which are directly related to the interactive metafunction’s point of view variables in both the vertical and horizontal plane. Fragmentation is framed by the social semiotic fields of salience and information
value. Changes in the internal modality of the postmodern picturebooks also relate to the fragmented trait. Visual self-reference had to be established to make a link between metafiction and the social semiotic visual analysis. Characters referring to themselves as characters or the book as an artefact were portrayed through modality shifts within the books, such as the pigs looking more or less “real” depending on which layer of the story world they were inhabiting. Eye-contact demands and intimate social distance, while interacting with the readers, as discussed above, are also a form of visual self-reference, acknowledging the characters existence as part of the book. The final postmodern trait is the breaking of boundaries that, in the postmodern books was made most evident through internal modality changes. Demanding gazes and intimate social distance portrayals also break the boundary of the page. The six categories derived from the research on postmodern picturebooks, were a basis for the selection of the three postmodern titles. The presence of these characteristics made the difference between the three postmodern picturebooks and the three traditional picturebooks. The research question sought to find what differences could be observed in an explicit systematic analysis of the six books, and the correlations above illustrate how those differences relate to the categories defined by the existing research.

Lewis’s question concerning the “strong view” and “weak view” of postmodern traits in picturebooks remains. In Reading Contemporary Picturebooks, Lewis establishes the “strong view” and “weak view” of postmodernism in picturebooks, suggesting that in the former, picturebooks use postmodernism in just the same way that adult fiction does, while in the latter, picturebooks are simply influenced by “some of the numerous manifestations of postmodern culture (100).” The trends revealed in the
history of the picturebook suggest that the weak view may be more viable. The results of
the social semiotic visual content analysis show that postmodern characteristics are being
knowingly utilized and have been assimilated to a certain extent by contemporary
picturebooks. The ecological discussions of the picturebooks as whole entities
demonstrate their inherent light and playful nature, in their visual presentation and
cultural contextualization. There is no meaningless abyss underlying the themes
presented in the postmodern books used in this thesis. Lewis recommends that the
picturebook not even be referred to as a genre, as in its flexible complexity it exploits and
integrates genres and formats for its own ends (Reading 65). This brings us back to the
opening paragraph from Bader, and the picturebook’s limitless possibilities. The
possibilities are limitless because the picturebook forages and constantly reconstructs
itself from the limitless semiotic resources in the surrounding context (Lewis, Reading
65). Picturebook creators are consciously employing something new, and the recent use
of postmodern characteristics work to expose the constructedness of the form and break
down dogmatic boundaries.

The “Grand Narratives” of children’s literature are undeniably targets, especially
for parodies, and ‘beyond-happily-ever-after’ stories, but to present children with ideas of
the “meaninglessness of existence” or the abyss of nothingness is contrary to the playful
nature associated with picturebooks of delight. The motivation of the postmodern
picturebook, I believe, is backed by Lewis’s weak view of postmodernism as another
aspect of popular culture that has been assimilated by the picturebook’s mutable form,
and finds its voice in poking fun at authority and convention.
Where the Wild Things Are is considered the single book that brought about a revolution in the design and content of picturebooks in the 1960’s, and like so many other groundbreaking works it remains relevant, and in the case of some of the social semiotic categories, to still be quite different in its presentation from newer traditional texts. It may even be seen as the transition book, straddling the gap between tradition and progress. In the next section, I make recommendations for future research, and suggest applications of some of the ideas in this thesis for education practice.

Recommendations for Future Research

Echoing Kress and van Leeuwen’s grammar of visual design, Dondis asserts, “compositional wholes along with the choices of techniques and their relative importance are a vocabulary of expression that corresponds to the structural arrangements and words in verbal literacy (183-184).” With the realization of a specific “vocabulary of expression” the grammar is a bold step toward a better understanding of visual and multimodal texts. Although the methodological framework of visual content analysis combined with the systemic functional analysis of semiotic resources has been employed for research with visual images before (Jewitt, A Social Semiotic Analysis of Heterosexuality in Sexual Health Resources: The Case of Images 1999; Jewitt, Images of Men 1997; Oyama A Study of Visual Images in Japanese and Selected British Advertisements 1999) picturebooks have not been used as the text under consideration. This study calls for closer work between semiotics and picturebooks. As children’s first encounter with the world of literature, the picturebook, and its intricate combination of two discrete sign systems fused together in its pages, are a fertile source of ideas for
semiotic research. Now that a connection has been made between the picturebook and this framework, it would be beneficial for a study to look at a wider range of books. A study to establish broader trends could include hundreds of titles of exemplary picturebooks from different genres. In order to foster a more profound understanding of the reading event, further studies could do an in-depth analysis of a single title. This would provide a chance to examine not just singular potential meanings, but may even elucidate probability matrices for meaning potential by framing the analysis across a variety of variables.

**Recommendations for Education Practice Implications for Educators**

*Beyond providing a body of shared information and experience, visual literacy holds a promise of an educated understanding of that information and experience.*

-From *A Primer of Visual Literacy* by Dondis (182)

**Visual Literacy**

Children in the west are taught the means to analyze language, and are indoctrinated into print culture at a very early age. By the time they reach grade three, many students are no longer encouraged to illustrate their own writing (Berghoff, Cousin and Martens 521). In many cases, expressing oneself visually, or any way other than textually is disregarded as childish or distinguished as different from communication and viewed as a purely aesthetic endeavor (Whitener-Lepanto and Harroff 4). Dondis wishes for educators to see that, “visual expression is neither appropriate for the custodial playtime nor esoteric, mystical magic (184).” Arnheim suggests that teachers need
“systematic training of visual sensitivity as an indispensable part of...preparation for (their) profession (Arnheim 315).”

Clearly, verbal literacy is privileged in contemporary western society (Dondis 185; Kress and van Leeuwen 15; Whitener-Lepanto and Harroff 3). However, because visuality is transparent in its practice, and basically absent in its means of analysis, it is largely ignored in schools (Dondis 19; Kress and van Leeuwen 15; Whitener-Lepanto and Harroff 4). Dondis is prompted to ask, “how does familiarity with the tool of verbal literacy affect control of written language as a medium of expression (184)?” Visual literacy then becomes a means towards a more profound understanding of visual as well as multimodal communication.

According to Whitener-Lepanto and Harroff, if visual literacy is viewed as “a necessary component to becoming educated in all areas”, then different literacies, including visual should be taught in the same way as verbal literacy (4). Therefore, as much time as is devoted to teaching the alphabet and written composition in our schools could be equally devoted to teaching the basic elements of visual design and composition (Whitener-Lepanto and Harroff 5). The study of visual literacy can increase students’ powers of perception, artistic ability, self-expression, self-awareness, and the ability to analyze and appreciate visual constructs among other gains (Sutton 16-19).

Pre-school age children have been shown to be adept at interpreting the world through all of their senses, and through various communicative systems (Berghoff, Cousin and Martens 521). This is subsequently trained out of them at school. If this proficiency with sign systems were instead fostered, children could move more flexibly as readers, promoting “a sensitivity to the full range of human meaning” (Berghoff,
Cousin and Martens 523). Rose puts this into a wider perspective stating, “there are
different ways of seeing the world, and the critical task is to differentiate between the
social effects of those different visions” (9). Dondis believes that by familiarizing
students with visual literacy, they will more easily comprehend all meaning in the visual
domain (185).

**Vocabulary for Picturebook Discussion**

Relative to visual literacy, and the potential for young learners, some of the
terminology, such as point of view, and the movie terms for social distance (close-up,
long shot, etc...) could be adopted directly into picturebook discourse, other terms may
need to be simplified somewhat. However, the concepts are concrete enough for
beginning or pre-readers to be able to understand. Having a means to discuss the process
of reading picturebooks helps readers to understand their own reading habits and creates
a more profound understanding of the multimedia act of communicating.

**Summary**

In this thesis, I set out to describe new forms of presentation in postmodern
picturebooks. During the course of my research, I discovered complicated issues
concerning the picturebook’s history, problems with theories that treated word and image
as competitors in their interactions and a social semiotic methodology designed to
reconcile multimodal texts like the picturebook. The result of this research is the first
step towards a consistent framework and vocabulary for picturebook discourse, and
through its adaptation, a means to an insightful appreciation of visual literacy.
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Children's Texts Cited


### Appendix 1: Postmodern Characteristics in Picturebooks

Figure 1: Postmodern Characteristics in Picturebooks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goldstone</th>
<th>Lewis</th>
<th>Grieve</th>
<th>Hornberg</th>
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<tr>
<td>Non-linearity</td>
<td>Excess</td>
<td>Parody</td>
<td>Interactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarcasm</td>
<td>Parody</td>
<td>Intertextuality</td>
<td>performance participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mocking tone</td>
<td>Irony</td>
<td>Antiauthoritarian</td>
<td>decanonization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antiauthoritarian</td>
<td>Hybridization</td>
<td>Ex-centric</td>
<td>sarcastic mocking tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple perspectives</td>
<td>Decanonization</td>
<td>Metafiction</td>
<td>parody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disintegrating surface</td>
<td>Indeterminacy</td>
<td></td>
<td>ex-centric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plane</td>
<td>Fragmentation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing concept of page</td>
<td>Boundary</td>
<td>Manipulation of the whole physical space</td>
<td>perspectives/voices excess indeterminacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>breaking</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fragmented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Performance and participation</td>
<td></td>
<td>unresolved narratives hypertext closure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Metafictional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>intertextual allusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>disintegrating surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>plane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>hybridization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boundary Breaking (metatextual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>hybridization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>changing concept of page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>manipulation of whole physical space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
## Appendix 2: Image and Word Relationships

Figure 2: Image and Word Relationships

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Congruency</strong></td>
<td><strong>Symmetry</strong></td>
<td><strong>Harmony</strong></td>
<td><strong>Augmentation</strong></td>
<td><strong>All word</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Elaboration</strong></td>
<td><strong>Clarification</strong></td>
<td><strong>Different voices</strong></td>
<td><strong>Intimation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Symmetry</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Specification</strong></td>
<td><strong>Enhancement/Enrichment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ironic relationships</strong></td>
<td><strong>Transformation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Complementary</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Amplification</strong></td>
<td><strong>Text is primary, picture shows selected aspects</strong></td>
<td><strong>Opposing voices</strong></td>
<td><strong>Humour</strong></td>
<td><strong>Expanding or Enhancing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extension</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pictures are primary, text reflects aspects already shown in pictures</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Fantastic</strong></td>
<td><strong>Counterpoint</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Complementation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Representation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Syleptic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Disclosure</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deviation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Irony</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Counterpoint</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Contradiction</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- **Text is primary, picture shows selected aspects**
- **Pictures are primary, text reflects aspects already shown in pictures**

All image
### Appendix 3: Variables and Values

Figure 3: Interactive Variables and Values Used in Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Contact</td>
<td>1.1 demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 offer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Social Distance</td>
<td>2.1 intimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2 personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.3 social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.4 public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Point of View (vertical: viewer power)</td>
<td>3.1 top (viewer power)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2 high angle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.3 level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.4 low angle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.5 bottom (viewer submission)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Point of View (horizontal: viewer attachment)</td>
<td>4.1 front (maximum attachment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.2 back (over the shoulder view)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.3 slightly turned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.4 side (minimum attachment)</td>
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Figure 4: Compositional Variables and Values Used in Analysis

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<td>1. Salience</td>
<td>1.1 high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3 low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Modality</td>
<td>2.1 high (naturalistic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2 medium (drawn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.3 low (cartoonish)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Information Value</td>
<td>3.1 left to right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2 top to bottom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.3 center and margin</td>
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### Appendix 4: Tables and Graphs of Findings Related to the Research Question

#### Table 1: Interactive Variables and Values for Traditional Picturebooks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Where the Wild Things Are</th>
<th>The Three Little Pigs (Gay)</th>
<th>Swimmy</th>
<th>Totals</th>
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<td>Demand</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offer</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Personal</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Top</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Angle</td>
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<td>Eye-Level</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>51</td>
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<td>Low Angle</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front (MAX)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over the Shoulder</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Turned</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Side (MIN)</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>16</td>
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Table 2: Interactive Variables and Values for Postmodern Picturebooks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Black and White</th>
<th>The Three Pigs (Wiesner)</th>
<th>The Stinky Cheese Man</th>
<th>Totals</th>
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<td><strong>Contact</strong></td>
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<td>Bottom</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Horizontal Point of View</strong></td>
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<td>Front (MAX)</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>28</td>
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Figure 5: Portrayal of Contact in Six Picturebooks

- Where The Wild Things Are
- The Three Little Pigs-Gay
- Swimmy
- Black and White
- The Three Pigs-Wiesner
- The Stinky Cheese Man

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>offer</th>
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<td>Swimmy</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black and White</td>
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<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Three Pigs-Wiesner</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Stinky Cheese Man</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
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Figure 6: Variation in Social Distance for Six Picturebooks

- Where The Wild Things Are
- The Three Little Pigs-Gay
- Swimmy
- Black and White
- The Three Pigs-Wiesner
- The Stinky Cheese Man
Figure 7: Variation in Vertical Point of View for Six Picturebooks

- Where The Wild Things Are
- The Three Little Pigs-Gay
- Swimmy
- Black and White
- The Three Pigs-Wiesner
- The Stinky Cheese Man

<table>
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<th>high angle</th>
<th>level</th>
<th>low</th>
<th>bottom</th>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Swimmy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Three Pigs-Wiesner</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Stinky Cheese Man</td>
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Figure 8: Variation in Horizontal Point of View for Six Picturebooks
Table 3: Compositional Variables and Values for Traditional Picturebooks

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<th>Salience</th>
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<th>The Three Little Pigs (Gay)</th>
<th>Swimmy</th>
<th>Totals</th>
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<td>Medium Salience</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimum Salience</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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Table 4: Compositional Variables and Values for Postmodern Picturebooks

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>The Three Pigs (Wiesner)</th>
<th>The Stinky Cheese Man</th>
<th>Totals</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salience</strong></td>
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<td>Maximum Salience</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Top to Bottom</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center to Margin</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td><strong>Modality</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Low Modality</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>65</td>
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</table>
Figure 9: Variation in Salience for Six Picturebooks

- Where The Wild Things Are
- The Three Little Pigs-Gay
- Swimmy
- Black and White
- The Three Pigs-Wiesner
- The Stinky Cheese Man
Figure 10: Patterns of Information Value Presentation in Six Picturebooks
Figure 11: Occurrence of Modality Variation in Six Picturebooks

- *Where The Wild Things Are*
- *The Three Little Pigs-Gay*
- *Swimmy*
- *Black and White*
- *The Three Pigs-Wiesner*
- *The Stinky Cheese Man*
Appendix 5: Basic Elements of Visual Literacy Illustrated

Figure 12: Dot

Figure 13: Line

Figure 14: Shape

Figure 15: Motion

Figure 16: Scale

Figure 17: Hue
Figure 18: Value

Figure 19: Saturation

Figure 20: Texture

Figure 21: Dimension
Figure 9: Variation in Salience for Six Picturebooks

- Where The Wild Things Are
- The Three Little Pigs-Gay
- Swimmy
- Black and White
- The Three Pigs-Wiesner
- The Stinky Cheese Man

Number of occurrences:

- Maximum salience
  - Where The Wild Things Are: 30
  - The Three Little Pigs-Gay: 19
  - Swimmy: 20

- Middle
  - Black and White: 18
  - The Three Pigs-Wiesner: 15
  - The Stinky Cheese Man: 9

- Minimum salience
  - Where The Wild Things Are: 7
  - The Three Little Pigs-Gay: 8
  - Swimmy: 1
  - Black and White: 0
  - The Three Pigs-Wiesner: 1
  - The Stinky Cheese Man: 0

Number of occurrences:

- Where The Wild Things Are: 13
- The Three Little Pigs-Gay: 9
- Swimmy: 15
- Black and White: 18
- The Three Pigs-Wiesner: 19
- The Stinky Cheese Man: 20
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