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Main content

Article Preview :

A picture book is a text, illustrations, total design; an item of manufacture and a commercial product; a social, cultural, historical document; and, foremost, an experience for a child.... On its own terms the possibilities are endless.

--Barbara Bader(1)

This article explores the unique crux between visual, oral, and textual storytelling occupied by the powerful art of the picture book. It addresses the misconception that visual images stifle the work of the imagination by fixing a text. Instead, the picture book is an ideal forum of dialogue for difficult or sensitive subjects, where words and pictures offer two different interpretations of the story. The article concludes by positing the possibility of the picture book as a medium of postmodernism which demands active reader participation, analysis, performance, and re-creation--continually subverting the relationship between omniscient-authorial adult and passive child recipient.

What is a picture book?

Lay responses to this question will often refer to the ubiquitous A for Apple/B for Bear alphabet book, or that indestructible object known as a toy or board book, containing a myriad assortments of flaps, holes, and pop-ups, and used, most commonly, as a toddler's teething tome. These examples are picture books. But so are Babette Cole's *Mommy Laid an Egg* (2) and Michael Rosen's *Sad Book*, (3) which tackle, respectively, the subjects of sex and death. Oh, *The Places You'll Go!* by Dr. Seuss (4) is also a picture book--one that is customarily purchased by adults for adults, particularly as a going-away gift prior to a long journey. There are picture books on everything from Hiroshima to homosexuality; picture books that are lyrical, abstract, philosophical, surrealistic; picture books that are enjoyed by children and adults alike.

The picture book is a rich and versatile art form which has surpassed all prevailing notions of the medium. It is no longer exclusively peopled by a cast of adorably furry characters--including the ever-present rotund baby bear and mischievous kitten--who learn, through the threat of a fearsome foe, to obey their mothers. In other words, it no longer houses stories stripped down to the sum of their pedagogical aims: the technical development of reading skills, coupled with the didactic 'message' or 'moral' from the omniscient adult author to the tabula rasa that is the passive child addressee. The good picture book challenges and subverts this relationship on every page. This article will explore the unique features of the picture book that put this process into play.

Words and Pictures: Multiplying Readings

"And what is the use of a book," thought Alice, "that has no pictures or conversation in it?"

--Lewis Carroll (5)

It is very difficult to find one universal definition of the picture book. It is usually composed of thirty-two pages, but picture books of twenty-four and forty-eight pages are also in existence. The word count is often less than one thousand, though many are well below five hundred, while others range up to two thousand. One can only say, with relative confidence, that the essence of the picture...

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Postmodern theatre, like other postmodern art forms, discards many of the ideas of modernism. Theories of modern theatre propose that access to universal truths can be achieved through artistic representation of life. Postmodern theatre, however, rejects the notion of make-believe and instead sees theatrical performance as a real life event or happening in which the audience participates. Devices like standard plots and character development are minimized. This type of theatre embraces human experience in various forms and takes its inspiration from history, culture, and social issues. David H The Postmodern Picture Book. Developing Textual Author "ity" in Elementary Readers. Authors. Young children in today's society need experiences that position them as agents who understand how texts work and how to manipulate texts for a variety of social purposes – most importantly to practice literacy as social actors who contribute productively to the world in which they live. Keywords. Critical Literacy Picture Book Fairy Tale Literacy Practice Young Reader. These keywords were added by machine and not by the authors. This process is experimental and the keywords may be updated as the learning algorithm improves. This is a preview of subscription content, log in to check access. Pr