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Abstract
Picturebooks represent a unique visual and literary art form that engages young readers and older readers in many levels of learning and pleasure. This form, however, is changing rapidly and in turn generating new possibilities for teaching and research. Knowledge of recent developments in picturebooks, ways of reading these books, and bridging picturebook forms and innovations with reader response will enable practitioners to initiate fruitful conversations about the importance of picturebooks in the curriculum and inspire new directions in research.

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Carol Driggs Wolfenbarger and Lawrence R. Sipe

A Unique Visual and Literary Art Form: Recent Research on Picturebooks

Picturebooks represent a unique visual and literary art form that engages young readers and older readers in many levels of learning and pleasure. This form, however, is changing rapidly and in turn generating new possibilities for teaching and research. Knowledge of recent developments in picturebooks, ways of reading these books, and bridging picturebook forms and innovations with reader response will enable practitioners to initiate fruitful conversations about the importance of picturebooks in the curriculum and inspire new directions in research.

What Is a Picturebook?

We begin by analyzing the terms in the book that identify this familiar object. One may find several spellings: picture book, picture-book, or picturebook. We find, however, that the compound word, "picturebook" (Marantz, 1977; Lewis, 2001), recognizes the union of text and art that results in something beyond what each form separately contributes. Sipe (in press) makes the argument that, "'Picturebook' emphasize[s] the inextricable connection of words and pictures and the unique qualities of the form: a picturebook is not simply a book that happens to have pictures." Further, as Arizpe and Styles (2003) point out, a picturebook is a "book in which the story depends on the interaction between written text and image and where both have been created with a conscious aesthetic intention" (p. 22). Sipe (1998) also argues that the actual reading event is part of a synergy created when text and art come together in the form of a picturebook; some new entity is revealed that is more than the sum of its parts. As the event of reading a picturebook evolves, readers integrate their responses to each element of the book into a complete experience. For example, Dresang (1999) describes the graphic synergy in Macaulay's *Black and White* (1990), the 1991 Caldecott winning picturebook in which the words that tell the story appear as the text of a newspaper article held by a character. At some point, Dresang suggests, "[the pictures] are so interrelated [with the text] that the reader sometimes cannot distinguish one from the other" (p. 90). Scholars of children's literature concur that in many ways it would be possible to call the object a *picturebook text* (Lewis, 2001, p. xiv) because the images and text work so tightly together to convey temporal and spatial information.

While words and pictures work together, they also create tension as each creates constraints on the other (Nodelman, 1988). In *Beach* (2006), for example, author/illustrator Elisha Cooper writes, "As the day begins, the beach is empty, waiting to be filled." The reader turns this first page and sees three horizontal scenic paintings across a two-page spread. Cooper's parallel watercolor paintings show change over time. The top shows an almost empty ocean beach; the middle shows more people and umbrellas; the bottom shows the beach full of people. On the horizon, the reader sees a sailboat that seems to move toward the right hand edge of the scene in each strip. The sailboat and changes in the cloud formations show the progression of time from top to bottom. Readers would be baffled if, instead of a beach, the art showed an elevator full of people. Given the book's title, *Beach*, the reader expects a complementary image, but can be delighted by a surprising juxtaposition and sequence of images that illuminate and offer more than a static idea. Sipe suggests that the pleasure of reading a picturebook like *Beach* arises in part from the new meaning that becomes possible as the two forms, text and image, interrelate so that neither overwhelms or 'possesses' the other.

Fiction is a popular story genre developed in picturebooks, yet it is not sufficient for describing the full range of available narratives in this form. For the purposes of this review, we broaden the definition of picturebook to include *picturebook format* (Bishop & Hickman, 1992).

This term recognizes that there are narrative and nonnarrative (Donovan & Smolkin, 2002) illustrated nonfiction texts, and the appearance of these books matches picturebooks that tell stories. Steve Jenkins's *Hottest, Coldest, Highest, Deepest* (1998) is an example of a beautifully crafted and meticulously designed nonnarrative nonfiction book. The double-page spread on which Lake Baikal appears features two sections of text: the larger font size describes the lake using superlatives (oldest and deepest), and the smaller font size text compares Lake Superior with Lake Baikal. There are two insets: one is a map that locates Lake Baikal in Russia with a small global view showing the location in the eastern hemisphere; the second inset shows a comparison of the height of the Empire State Building with the depth of Lake Baikal. Charts and maps are discreetly paired with Jenkins's cut-paper collages. The reader is able to see relationships between the new and the more familiar. As with fictional narratives, the art in information picturebooks provides and extends information in the written text.

How Can This Relationship between Art and Words Be Described?

Our society is inundated with visual images. Sport team logos, automobile emblems, yellow arches, and other product packaging have become symbols to which children and adults attach recognition and meaning (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). These visual images signal meaning without requiring an accompanying verbal text because they are linked to other visual media (television) and highly contextualized places and experiences (e.g., ordering fast food, eating cereal, attending sporting events). Children have learned to expect pictures to have personal and social meaning. How, then, does this experience of visual meaning-building translate into reading experiences? And how can researchers and teachers describe these experiences as they share new forms of picturebooks with children?

In a picturebook, words and pictures never tell exactly the same story. It is this dissonance that catches the reader's attention. Readers work to resolve the conflict between what they see and what they read or hear. Satisfying picturebooks create a playing field where the reader explores and experiments with relationships between words and the pictures. Nikolajeva and Scott (2001) suggest that there are at least five ways that words and pictures interact in picturebooks, opening up possibilities for readers' experiences and explorations: 1) symmetry—the words and pictures are on equal footing; 2) complementary—each provides information; 3) enhancement—each extends the meaning of the other; 4) counterpoint—words and pictures tell different stories; and 5) contradiction—beyond different narratives, the words and pictures seem to assert the opposite of each other. This language of symmetry, complementarity, enhancement, counterpoint, and contradiction can be useful to teachers and researchers as we select literature that will challenge and extend young people's interpretive sophistication. Each of these devices raises the possibility that text and image are more than simply *connected*. Rather, as Lewis (2001) suggests, "children reading picturebooks . . . must find routes through the text that connect words and images" (p. 32). In well-crafted picturebooks, the author, illustrator, and book designer work together to make the book's opening pages and changing visual cues both engaging and suggestive for readers' interpretations. This coordination of artistry is often most visible in the *peritext*—the physical features and design elements of picturebooks that surround the story (Genette, 1997; Higonnet, 1990). When readers' attention is directed to these parts of the book, information about the story and its changing dimensions are visible in the book's dust jacket, front and back covers, the endpapers, and the dedication and title pages. For example, the story may be summarized on the endpapers, as in Jerry Pinkney's illustrations of the new hatchling on the front endpaper and the adult swan on the back endpaper in his interpretation of Andersen's *Ugly Duckling* (1999).

Many teachers will recall occasions when children have been especially attentive to the relationship between a text and its design. During a discussion of *The Napping House* (Wood, 1984), for example, two second-graders demonstrated their recognition of how change in color from front to back endpapers showed passage of time:

Sally: *That makes sense, because it's dark when the story starts, so there's a darker endpaper, and it's lighter when the story ends. So the endpaper is lighter, back there.*

Gordon: *Yeah, that makes sense! Darker, then lighter. That's*

different, like most books, then endpapers are the same on the front and the back.

Meek (1992), a renowned scholar of literary response, would describe the children's dialogue about *The Napping House* as their effort to pull words through the pictures; we would add that children are also pulling the pictures through the words. Building on this idea, Lewis (2001) calls this experience of reading *interanimation*—that is, a process by which the verbal text draws the reader's attention to particular parts of the illustration and, correspondingly, the images "provide the words with a specificity—colour, shape, and form—that they would otherwise lack" (p. 35). Given these descriptions of reading images and words simultaneously, researchers and teachers can begin working together to document how young and older readers move across and through artists' and authors' carefully designed forms and content. As is evident in the children's brief dialogue, talking about design features of picturebooks can deepen and extend readers' literary understanding and interpretive sophistication (Sipe & McGuire, 2006a).

Postmodern Picturebooks

Teachers and researchers are further challenged to find useful language for talking about picturebook design and interpretation when using books by authors and illustrators who deliberately work against a linear storytelling pattern, in what are commonly referred to as "postmodern picturebooks" (Goldstone, 1999, 2002; Dresang, 1999; Lewis, 2001; Pantaleo, 2002, 2004). In her analysis of postmodern picturebooks, Goldstone (2002) suggests that the nontraditional story structure in these books positions the reader to co-create with the author/illustrator within a nonlinear format. Goldstone identifies four characteristics of postmodern picturebooks that distinguish them from the straightforward story grammar of characters in a setting presented with a problem for which a satisfactory solution must be found. Characteristics of postmodern picturebooks include nonlinearity, self-referential text, a sarcastic or self-mocking tone, and an anti-authoritarian stance.

Nonlinearity suggests that the reader moves backward and forward through the text and that there may be multiple stories being told. For example, Macaulay's *Black and White* (1990) presents four stories happening simultaneously that eventually interrelate. Often, authors and illustrators use sidebars or place narrative information in decorative borders on the page to create additional links to other narratives and ideas. For some adult readers, this orientation to the page of a postmodern picturebook is like watching children playing on various pieces of playground equipment while also being aware that others are chasing around or playing kickball in another part of the space. All are contained by the boundaries of the playground, and all are playing—some children knowing other children and the other games they are playing—but not everyone knows the "inner life" or connected stories that are sure to be moving through the children's lives. The reader, author, and illustrator, like playground directors, have to move more closely into the "play space" to understand patterns and purposes for the players' moves. Research that focuses on how children and adults find their way through the picturebook space can illuminate new ways of defining reading and talking about books.

Self-referential text refers to the images and text that depict the book itself being created. In Wiesner's *The Three Pigs* (2001), the pigs jump out of a very ordinary, unexciting version of the well-known tale and race into an adventure that jumps at the reader like a 3-D movie. In this version of the tale, readers see the artist's flat (usually unobtrusive) pages suddenly reshaped by the characters so they can make their own adventure, free from the constraints of the well-worn path of the familiar tale.

The sarcastic or mocking tone that Goldstone refers to is not bitter or negative, but playful and intertextual. Scieszka and Smith's *The Stinky Cheese Man* (1992) exemplifies this bending of fairytales out of their usual shape when they tease the very characters featured in the book. For example, in order to escape the fate of being eaten for lunch, Jack uses narrative knowledge, not quick feet, to challenge the giant. He tells a story; but the story is an ever-repeating tale that creates a narrative trap, thus freeing Jack to run away as the giant is tied up in the endless words of the story. The degree to which the giant becomes lost in language is also expressed on the page through the size and contours of the font. In this case, Jack's repeating tale grows smaller and smaller with each retelling until it is so small it cannot be easily seen—or heard. The increasingly small font not only suggests the Giant's entrapment, but also the distance Jack has gained between the giant's

table and freedom. Many readers may be aware of narrative traps (through website searches, for example), but may not have a language to use for describing the sense of being lost in words, fonts, and page changes. It is possible to pursue interrelationships between postmodern picturebook forms and children's growing sense that words and their trails should be questioned, not merely followed in a linear pattern.

Goldstone describes anti-authoritarian text by suggesting that the transactions among the author, reader, and text are not as straightforward as the reader drawing on her prior experiences and arranging the new text experience on an existing cognitive hanger. With postmodern picturebooks, the reader "enriches and supports the storyline by infusing personal emotions and experiences but also actively creates parts of the narrative" (Goldstone, 2002, p. 366). Metcaff (1997) says that readers/listeners become "accomplices" (p. 53) in these books. Raschka's *Yo! Yes?* (1993) is such a book. The text consists of 34 words, a brief exchange between two boys. The conversation is so limited that the reader must shape the context by reading the visual narrative of Raschka's art in order to create the story of what's happening to the boys.

Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale by Mo Willems (2004) is another example of a postmodern picturebook. The story is about an event many young children and their parents have experienced, the loss of a beloved stuffed animal. Willems created the art using computer manipulated photographs and his hand-drawn sketches. The effect of juxtaposing real and invented space and characterization presents a departure from the norm of maintaining a singular, coherent time and place. Sipe and McGuire say "such books gesture toward convention just as they proceed to disrupt it" (in press).

We argue that postmodern picturebooks have the potential to elicit intriguing and novel responses from children. In conversation with teachers and peers, readers can present playful and insightful revelations of how they are developing literary understanding in relation with their reading of other 21st-century texts.

The Growing Importance of Nonfiction Picturebooks

One second-grader, in a study conducted by Palmer and Stewart (2005), stated boldly that she wanted more "learning books." Indeed, with so many informational books available, it is surprising to find how limited the selection of such books can be in most classrooms. Duke (2002) found that in spite of indications of children's preferences, a startlingly small amount of time in classrooms was spent on informational picturebook texts. She found an average of only 3.6 minutes per day spent on nonfiction in the first-grade classroom she studied. Often, teachers and researchers are unfamiliar with this genre and find, on first reading, that the presentation of information is difficult to manage or discuss (Palmer & Stewart, 2005), but the informational picturebook genre is more likely to be used if the books represent an alignment with required curricular topics. However, beyond issues of access and content connections, the researchers found that the books require teachers and children to pay explicit attention to the genre's use of space, images, and text placement. As Donovan and Smolkin argue (2002) in their study of science nonfiction picturebooks, the genre, content, and visual features enhance science instruction and encourage young readers' interest in science-related topics.

Visual features, those elements of overall design and illustration, "serve a special comprehension function in that these elements help readers link information-containing portions of the texts" (Donovan & Smolkin, p. 510). The art in informational picturebooks can convey such things as size comparisons, texture, and habitats not local to the reader's community. Thus, teachers and students must work together to translate one set of circumstances and meanings to their own situation—and vice versa. These translations or movements across objects, time, and place are powerful starting points for research about relationships between authors and students' representations of and discussions about distant and local meanings concerned with land use, health issues, and global events.

Further, as Pappas (2006) suggests, informational picturebooks offer students and teachers the possibility of developing a language of science. The language of science goes beyond simply learning specific vocabulary; rather, it extends to learning linguistic registers, the language of inquiry, observation, and logically arrived-at hypotheses for observed phenomena. She writes, "There exist frames-of-expectation for readers using typical text of the genre" (p. 241). These expectations include readers' engagement with question-posing and examination

of evidence. Teachers and students can work together to develop their awareness of such expectations when they select science-based information books and as they attend to and use the language of scientific inquiry.

One book that would surely encourage this kind of investigation of form, inquiry processes, and social context among older readers is Molly Bang's *Nobody Particular: One Woman's Fight to Save the Bays* (2000). Bang's creation exemplifies the role of inquiry in specific local contexts, while it also makes full use of postmodern forms of art and text relations. It is the story of Diane Wilson, a Texas shrimper who becomes so enraged by the effects of pollution from a chemical plant that she begins a one-woman fight with giants in the chemical industry. The pollution endangers fish, plants, and humans. Her goal is to change chemical producers' practices and return the bays and their inhabitants to a healthy environment. The book is 48 pages with no endpapers. Color paintings reveal the setting—the water and land. Laid on top of these paintings are black-and-white images, like newspaper photos with text bubbles, and articles that report the obstacles Wilson encounters. As Diane Wilson realizes the dire conditions the pollution is causing and faces dangerous challenges, her thoughts and words are contained in an array of text bubbles. Reading this book requires movement not only through the chronology of events that led to Wilson's campaign, but also through Wilson's landscape, her inner life, and the future for which she struggles.

In addition to analyzing the language of science and other forms of inquiry-based approaches embedded in nonfiction literature, it is also important for teachers and students to develop criteria for judging the accuracy of nonfiction content. Drawing on the guidelines outlined by the Orbis Pictus Book Awards Committee, established by NCTE, Lamme and Fu (2001) developed and applied a useful range of criteria for judging nonfiction picturebooks. In their analysis of a book focused on rice farming in Indonesia, Lamme contrasted the insider/participant view with the outsider/observer view that the author brings to the text, and Fu weighed the book's account of rice farming in relation with her own experience as a farm worker in The Cultural Revolution in China. As in the study of fiction, they ask readers to consider who can best represent the story of a particular group: a person who is part of the group or one who is outside the group? Because nonfiction books claim to represent a true picture, they are accountable to those who raise the insider/outsider issue. At a time of tremendous change in communication technology and access to information, it is crucial that teachers and students have many opportunities to examine the structure and selection of information in books. Nonfiction picturebooks offer a compelling and readily available resource for raising critical questions about authorial viewpoint, the language of inquiry vs. the language of authoritative statements, and the relationship between image and text in conveying evidence and possibility. Again, an important contribution to the field of children's literature research will be studies of students' and teachers' analyses of the ways information is structured and made open to examination.

Readers' Experiences with and Responses to Picturebooks

Based on several year-long studies of young children's literary reading, Sipe (2000, in press) developed grounded theory of literary understanding that serves to frame the responses of young readers as they read and/or listen to narrative. Three principal impulses appear to guide children's responses to literature: 1) the hermeneutic impulse or the desire to know; 2) the personal impulse or the need to connect stories to one's own life; and 3) the aesthetic impulse, in which readers either experience the secondary world of the story (Benton, 1992) as if they were there or use the story as the springboard for their own creative "performances." The aesthetic impulse pushes readers' creative potential to shape the story and make it their own. Sipe (2000) says the richest literary understanding results from the interaction of all three impulses; no one of the three is better or more desirable than the others. In a later study, Sipe and Bauer (2001) recounted their work with kindergarteners' response to traditional tales and fantasy/fairy tales told in picturebooks. Their findings are consistent with Sipe's earlier study, and suggest further that indicators of literary understanding emerge as young readers make intertexual and real-life connections during interactive read-alouds. Teachers encouraging this kind of talk can lead children to become confident readers and writers. Facilitating children's performative responses and enabling them to manipulate the text in imaginative ways allows the children to become active agents in the story rather than merely passive spectators of someone else's telling.

In a study that also respects and encourages children's artistic responses to literature, Carger (2004) described children's bilingual talk as they responded to picturebooks. She worked with third-graders in Chicago to investigate ways in which visual arts could support and enhance language and literacy learning. During Carger's time with the students, she provided opportunities for the children to talk about picturebooks she read aloud, to record their responses in journals they also illustrated, and to create art using clay. She found that the children developed as art critics and their command of English language flourished. She writes, "The students engaged in divergent thinking . . . . [A]rt provoked them to reflect and to engage in authentic inquiry . . ." (p. 280).

Although children are often positively engaged with picturebooks, they may also respond with negative comments. While some educators or other adults may interpret this as dislike for the book, Sipe and McGuire (2006b) report that young children's oppositional responses or resistance to picturebooks read aloud can reveal ways in which this audience perceives the book's literary and visual elements and their relationships as they convey meaning. From their observations of interactive read-alouds, the researchers identified six conceptual categories that describe how and why children may express resistance to a picturebook:

1. *Intertextual Resistance.* A new version of the story is different from the version with which the child is familiar.
2. *Preferential or Categorical Resistance.* Children attribute their dislike of the book to some personal construct: e.g., the book is for someone much younger or the topic is boring.
3. *Reality Testing*. Children perceive a conflict between the world of the story and their understanding of reality.
4. *Engaged or Kinetic Resistance.* Events or characters in the story are rejected because they are painful for the reader to consider.
5. *Exclusionary Resistance.* Children can't imagine themselves in the story.
6. *Literary Critical Resistance.* Children have constructed criteria of what makes a good story, and the present story doesn't meet those criteria.

Sipe and McGuire (2006b) theorize that "the match or mismatch between the assumptions and perspective embedded in the text [and/or the art] and those held by the reader contribute to the expression of resistance" (p. 10). The researchers suggest that "Observant teachers can capitalize on instances of resistance . . . to initiate deeper discussions" (p.10) about both text and art in picturebooks. Such discussions encourage students to learn from one another's perspectives, to question and develop rationales for artists' and authors' decisions, and to create their own versions of stories and images. Resistance is not the same as indifference; rather, it is another form of engagement that is likely to inspire considerable interest and analysis among readers.

Active Meaning Making with Images and Texts

Whether through resistance or delight, young and older readers usually find many ways to be engaged with the images and ideas represented in picturebooks. As described earlier, the process of reading these books requires an active experience of creating routes of reading that account for the tension between words and images, references to related texts, and specifically located memories and meanings evoked by the text. The range of high-level thought and social conversation such books engender should be reason enough to bring these books to all children. Still, many older readers in particular have limited access to the artistry and possibilities of active reading that picturebooks offer. Unfortunately, many readers leave primary grades with the idea that picturebooks are only for the very young. Part of this is perpetuated by the separation of picturebooks within the library. The collection of picturebooks is often referred to as "E Books" (look for the "E" on the spine) or "Everybody Books" or (worse) "Easy Books." While this is a logistic and accepted solution in some libraries, it often creates a barrier that upper elementary and middle school students won't cross. Teachers who incorporate picturebooks/illustrated books/books in picturebook format in the instruction and have these books available in the classroom can diminish the reluctance of older readers to return to the pleasure of reading books with many illustrations. Benedict & Carlisle's edited volume *Beyond Words: Picturebooks for Older Readers and Writers* (1992) offers a useful overview of the strategies and directions teachers and researchers might pursue in developing curricula around picturebooks with older students.

Of course, one way to diminish the starkness of this line is for teachers to make picturebooks available to their upper elementary and middle school students. Any picturebook, no matter how "simple" the subject matter, can

be considered a sophisticated aesthetic object. Carefully considering the peritextual features, illustrations, text, and the interrelationships among these elements may lead older students to a new appreciation for picturebooks and the professional work that goes into creating them. New research needs to be developed that combines the study of older children's picturebook reading with their interest in and knowledge of postmodern text structures. Further, we suggest that teachers and researchers work together to document and understand how readers—whether struggling or striving—make their way through the tensions and possibilities conveyed by picturebook texts. How do students bring their reading of multilayered texts (websites, videogames, advertising) to their reading of picturebooks? What forms of media and text analysis become visible among students as they read and discuss contemporary picturebooks? How do they actually make meaning as a community of readers while positioning themselves as coauthors along with the picturebook author, the illustrator, and the book designers?

In addition to the coauthorship available to readers of picturebooks, it is possible to imagine and study co-artistry. Many children's first exposure to serious art is through picturebooks. Whether in the classroom or in the art room, teachers from kindergarten through high school can share picturebooks as part of the art education curriculum.

Picturebooks are available that present artists' biographies or artwork resembling the artistic style of a well-known artist or school of art; some describe and illustrate specific elements of art including color, shape, line, texture, and perspective. Attending to the specific media used by the book artist, such as photography, print making, or collage, can inform readers about the artist's technique and the media's potential for conveying meaning. Looking at text-sets, a group of books by one illustrator, to familiarize readers with the idea of artistic style can also engage students in co-creating artwork in the manner of a specific artist's interests and style.

While many students are familiar with informally talking about and analyzing moving images, such as video and television, fewer students have opportunities to linger and ponder over "the static image" (Salisbury, 2004). Through picturebooks, readers have more leisure to merge the artist's new vision with their own prior experience, to co-create the image and its meaning.

Picturebook authors are like poets searching for concise, spare, evocative language that captures the essence of what the characters are experiencing. The best picturebook authors/illustrators are in tune with human needs and desires. The best picturebook authors and illustrators illuminate places within the reader's

Books about Art

Capatti, Berenice. (2005). *Klimt and His Cat.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers.
The life of Gustav Klimt is told by his cat.

Jonas, Ann. (1989). *Color dance.* New York: Greenwillow.
Four young dancers using sheer fabric of red, yellow, blue, black, and white show how laying one color on top of another creates other colors.

Lewis, Patrick, & Kelly, Gary. (2004). *Stolen smile.* Mankato, MN: Creative Publications.
The Mona Lisa is stolen from the Louvre in 1911.

McDonnell, Patrick. (2006). *Art.* New York: Little Brown.
Art, a young boy, creates art using various media.

Reynolds, Peter H. (2004). *Ish.* New York: Candlewick.
Picturebooks can address attitudes about art; who is an artist; and how art can make you feel. Ramon loves to draw, but his older brother makes fun of him.

Rubin, Susan G. (2001). *The yellow house: Vincent van Gogh & Paul Gauguin side by side.* New York: Abrams.
Van Gogh and Gauguin influenced each others' painting and shared ideas.

Scieszka, Jon, and Smith, Lane. (2005). *Seen Art?* New York: Viking.
The narrator tries to find his friend Art in the new Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Check out other books by these authors:

Eileen Christelow
Pat Cummings
Leonard Marcus
Molly Bang

—Barbara Z. Kiefer

experiences and cast light in those shadowy corners that lurk alongside the pathways to new understandings. The new understanding can be self-understanding or a greater awareness of one's place in the world. Young and older children, like artists and poets, are also authors and coauthors of images and social meaning who deserve the time to ponder and the opportunity to discover forms of representation and inquiry that will develop their capacity for poetic searching. Today's picturebook authors and artists invite readers into the play of visual elements and unexpected textual avenues. They are calling for coauthors who play "out of bounds," who seek layers of meaning, not a single already-told tale. Contemporary picturebooks are filled with new forms, images, and intersections, and are vital spaces for collaborative imagination and inquiry; they should be central to the future work of teaching, learning, and research.

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