

The Picture Book - *Useful Terms*

Counterpoint

When words and pictures provide alternative information, telling different stories, or contradict each other. Pat Hutchin's *Rosie's Walk* is a great example of words and pictures telling two completely different stories, contradicting each other (see *Words and Pictures* lecture). The visual narrative is more complicated and exciting than the verbal one, which comprises a simple, twenty-five word sentence which is very boring when read without the pictures. But magic occurs when words and pictures are read together. John Burningham's *Come Away from the Water, Shirley* is another example. However, here the nature of the interaction between words and pictures is different. Words and pictures are in full accord on the verso, but totally contradictory to the story told by the pictures on the recto, which constitute a wordless narrative. The two narratives also conflict in their genre: One is 'realistic' and the other a fantasy.

Décalage

A French word meaning 'gap' or 'shift', used to describe the way that the meaning of words and pictures on a double page spread in a picture book can deliberately contradict or challenge each other. For example, *Cockatoos* by Quentin Blake.

Iconotext

Terminology that helps to convey the essence of word/image interaction in picture books, coined by Kristin Hallburg in 1982.

Intertextuality

The meanings and associations rising out of the relationships between a text and other texts, especially literary ones. When one text makes reference to another text, which might be in the form of written word, illustration, media text or wider cultural forms. A classic example of a picture book that make use of this device is Anthony Browne's *Into the Forest*.

Irony

Irony is often used to express the exact opposite of what is said or illustrated in a book, and often adds humour. It is the opposite of what would be expected. For example, in Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith's *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*. This twist on the classic fairy tale is an ironic one that shows the Big Bad Wolf in a sympathetic light. Here, the reader learns that the Big Bad Wolf just had a cold and was trying to bake a cake.

Multiliteracy

'Literacy educators have coined the term multiliteracy to focus on the itways in which literacy education will need to change in order to address the social diversity, technology, and globalization of our new and changing world (New London Group, 1996). The term literacy is no longer appropriate, as it focuses on language alone. Multiliteracies focus on the many modes of representation and forms of text that have been made available through multimedia and technological change" (Anstey, 2002, p.446).

Paratext

This consists of all the information that is not part of the central story itself such as the author's name, publishing details, blurb, dust cover, preface and endpapers (see the Anatomy of the Book).

Postmodernism

In the field of picture books, it refers to narratives which have many of the following characteristics: Playfulness, parody, rule-breaking, ambiguity, intertextuality etc. (see *The Postmodern Picture Book – Useful Terms*).

Subversive

Seeking or intended to subvert an established system or institution e.g. subversive literature.

Subvert

To undermine the power and authority of (an established system or institution).

References

Anstey, M. (2002), 'It's not all black and white: Postmodern picture books and new literacies.' *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 45:6 pp.446-457