PATRICIA PAUGH

6. THE POSTMODERN PICTURE BOOK

Developing Textual Author "ity" in Elementary Readers

ABSTRACT

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. This chapter explores the postmodern picture book, a genre that provides a venue for classroom teachers to engage even the youngest of students as "designers of meaning." The chapter highlights the constellation of features found in postmodern pictures books through an analysis of several texts readily available to classroom teachers and librarians. It presents a typology of features draw from classroom research on this genre and includes a lesson plan designed to support pre- and in-service teachers in closely analyzing these texts with a critical literacy focus in mind.

INTRODUCTION

> It is through our own narratives that we principally construct a version of ourselves in the world, and it is through its narrative that a culture provides models of identity and agency to its members. (Bruner, 1996, p. xiv)

About ten years ago, as high stakes tests invaded classroom consciousness, a teacher in one of my reading assessment classes laughingly shared a satirical "rewriting" of a state test question by one of her fourth graders. This student created a Romeo & Juliet-like love story based on fictional fourth graders. The writing included a short passage (the love story) accompanied by five comprehension questions modeled directly on the testing format. In this playful writing sample I saw mastery of the genre of test taking but also mastery that did not sacrifice the author's own intentions. She demonstrated control of literacy as a social practice by playfully and intentionally mixing genres; creating a narrative of romance located in her current social context (a topic of priority for female students reaching the "tween" years) parodied as a school-valued assessment. In contrast, during a more recent visit to an urban school in a different city, I noticed a hallway bulletin board featuring a group literacy project. The elementary students, in small groups, had dissected four sample literature responses from the

P. Paugh et al. (eds.), Teaching towards Democracy with Postmodern and Popular Culture Texts, 97–115.
© 2014 Sense Publishers. All rights reserved.

state testing website. Rationalizations for why each response had earned a score of 1, 2, 3, or 4, written by each group were posted nearby. It was apparent that the featured end goal of the activity was memorization of the language expected for a good score on the test. Unlike the fourth grade love story cited above, there was little indication of playful flexibility or innovative thought in the compliant (and eerily similar explanations) written next to each group's model response posted in that hallway. If the intention of schooling in today's world is for students to gain a greater awareness of the world around them, and to be active in recognizing the possibilities for their own roles in that world, then literacy should serve to activate the social imagination. The first response to the high stakes test serves as an excellent example of a student who is learning to read and write the "words" expected in school, but also reserves her right to play with and manipulate those words for her own intentions. The second writing example lacks such demonstration of ownership. To paraphrase Freire and Macedo (2013), how can teachers prepare our youngest students to be, like our fourth grader above, flexible and independent owners of the "words" they need for school success while simultaneously learning to be authors who use their words to interact purposefully and intentionally in the "world?"

The purpose of literature study is to promote a "critical analysis of the status quo that can open students to new perspectives, prepare [them] for current and coming challenges to traditional ways of being, and perhaps even stimulate them to launch their own challenges to the old order" (O'Neil, 2010, p. 41). With this purpose in mind, choice of literature in the elementary classroom is key – literature that prompts students to learn how to confront beliefs unlike their own, participate in changing social orders, and negotiate rapidly changing global resources (O'Neil, 2010). This chapter reviews a genre that has come to be known as the "postmodern picture book" (PMPB) and its potential for introducing critical literary analysis to children as they prepare to be literate citizens in a world where communication and social discourse is rapidly changing. The literacy practices that are needed to engage in the world today may not even be recognizable in the near future. Therefore, rather than teaching our students the skills for reading today's text, literacy education for the 21st century must be focused on a stance where students interact with texts as critical designers and consumers.

NEW TIMES, NEW LITERACIES AND THE POSTMODERN PICTURE BOOK

Technologies of communication and the redistribution of wealth around the world due to ease of transportation and communication necessitate interaction among groups whose belief systems, values and cultural practices are very different. This increasingly globalized society brings into new relationships the diverse social narratives that shape cultural practices around the world. As in any social interaction, there exist power dynamics that define social positions and ways of operating in the world. These dynamics are communicated through texts consumed and produced not only in school but in everyday life. In order for children to fully participate in society now and in the future, they need to retain authority to both

question and redesign the multiplicity of text forms encountered as part of a daily influx of information. Three related theoretical frameworks known as New Literacy Studies, Multiliteracies, and Critical Literac(ies) help us to reconceptualize this view (see New London Group, 1996; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003). In this chapter, the ideas found in these frames define how the term critical literacy is used. All three explain literacy in plural forms (i.e. literacies) indicating an expansion beyond what in modern education has been a text paradigm or a privileging of print-based communication. One key point is that print is only one of many semiotic (sign) systems that can be interrelated in order to create textual meaning (Unsworth, 2008). Today's texts are not only print-based but digital and usually include multimodal formats (e.g. a video game, a social media site, or an online newspaper article which includes video, animated data representations, and/or scrolling updates that compete with the main print article). Besides the reliance on printed text, a second key point challenges traditional assumptions that the message of a text is static and contained within the words. Instead, a critical literacies frame considers meaning as fluid and context-dependent where readers may make different choices about how to read a text and create meaning from the messages it communicates. Thus, a text may hold multiple meanings. Often the reader is also an author who inscribes the text further, choosing to identify with or challenge its meaning (e.g. engaging other readers using a comment area in a blog). Important to communication in contemporary society is the argument that there is "no reading or writing … outside of social practice" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006, p. 3). That is, the function of any text is defined according to the social context where it is produced or consumed. The New London Group (1996), anticipating the technological shifts and emerging global society of the 21st century, conceived a theory of "multiltieracies" or "literacy as design." Antsey (2002) explains that to be "multiliterate requires not only mastery of communication, but the ability to critically analyze, deconstruct, and reconstruct a range of texts and other representational forms" (p. 446).

A third key point is that literacy practices are to be used for social and economic justice. Anstey (2002) continues to argue that multiliteracy "also requires the ability to engage in the social responsibilities and interactions associated with these texts" (p. 446). This view of critical literacy emerged in relation to Paulo Freire's conception of literacy as power – to "read the word and the world" (Freire & Macedo, 2013). Critical literacy challenges the master narratives that are accepted within dominant society, not as natural truths but as constructions of specific power relationships that benefit some but not others (Janks, 2013). Learning to be aware of and to re-write these relationships in the interest of social and economic justice is a major focus of critical literacy pedagogy. Those representing marginalized positions assume power when they use critical literacy practices to improve their lives and those of their communities.

Thus, these related movements offer a framework for expanding understandings of literacy for social participation in these "New Times." Yet as others in this volume explain, these frameworks are still largely invisible within current school discourses. This is an issue of access to the power of full literacy practices,

especially for schools in lesser resourced communities where it is common for teachers to be subject to standardization pressures (e.g. the test prep activity shared earlier), rather than supported in developing the types of literacy instruction where children learn to be active designers, rather than passive receptors, of meaning (Janks, 2013).

POSTMODERN PICTURE BOOKS FOR 21ST CENTURY ELEMENTARY CLASSROOMS

A genre of children's literature, the postmodern picture book (PMPB) (Goldstone & Labbe, 2004) lends itself to exploration of texts in ways that can enhance young readers' experiences of identity and agency as literacy practitioners within classroom instructional spaces. Traditional picture books are already multi-modal, and postmodern picture books build on (or some say disrupt) traditional relationships between image and story more extensively. Similar to digital texts, they invite interactions between the text and readers in ways that encourages the reader to shift from a role of passive recipient of the author's intended meaning to the role of active co-author. An early example is Maurice Sendack's *Where the Wild Things Are* appearing in 1963. The genre proliferated in the 1990's and early 2000's. Notable offerings often familiar to elementary librarians and teachers are bodies of work by Scieszka and Smith (e.g. *Stinky Cheese Man* and *Squids will be Squids*), Weisner (e.g. *Tuesday* and *The Three Pigs*) and Willems (e.g. *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* and *Knuffle Bunny*). More recently, authors such as Shaun Tan (e.g. *Tales from Outer Suburbia* and *The Arrival*) continue to innovate with this genre. As will be repeated below, it is important to note that the relationship of the postmodern picture book and traditional picture books is not a binary – instead it is the constellation of linguistic and semiotic features of certain pictures books that reposition the act of reading which helps us select their use for a postmodern era.

WHY "POSTMODERN?"

The designation "postmodern" relates economically and politically to "New Times" – this is the era after WW II leading into subsequent decades of rapid cultural shifts driven by constantly emerging technologies. Postmodernism represents a contestation of the authority of universal truths or metanarratives that in the past were invisible arbiters of how power is distributed within society. Allan (2012) describes these to include metanarratives of progress, science and religion. A sociocultural critical literacy diverges from traditional literacy analyses. In the former, the goals are to enculture readers into these metanarratives. Instead, postmodern analysis is given over to "playfulness, pleasure, hyper-reality and image resulting in new metanarratives" (Allan, 2012, p. 3) which interrogate and reject the certainties which have naturalized life in Western cultures over the past two centuries. Postmodernism introduces skepticism toward: authority, received wisdom, and cultural and political customs. Allan shares an example of

postmodern critical literacy where the reader takes on the metanarratives of consumerism that have become invisibly embedded within the range popular cultural texts consumed by both adults and children.

For young children, a purpose of traditional literature study has been to socialize them into the cultural values of the societies in which they live. Throughout history, folktales and fables have worked to teach important lessons about values and conduct necessary to interact successfully within a community. Critical literacy adds a dimension to this focus, by encouraging both recognition and questioning of societal norms. Although arguments have been made that such critical approaches to literacy are unsuitable for elementary-age children, there is evidence that young children are not only capable, but more flexible, in using literacy for social purposes (Goldstone & Labbe, 2004; O'Neil, 2010). Therefore, exploring postmodern texts can serve as a bridge for young students (and their teachers) to develop important critical literacy practices as part of their school experience.

POSTMODERN THOUGHT MEETS THE PICTURE BOOK

Teaching young children to be literate practitioners involves not only the skills that they need to decode text, but an invitation to see their roles as active meaning makers when they read and write, an identity that the New London Group (1996) terms "designers of meaning." Unfortunately in much of the prescriptive reading and writing curriculum provided to teachers in current classrooms the positioning of the reader is largely passive Rarely are teachers encouraged to teach elementary-aged children to analyze texts with a goal of rethinking or reworking the messages. As other teacher/authors in this volume explain, taking such a critical stance is usually invisible in the discourses of teachers' professional development. PMPBs, if included in text-sets used for literacy instruction, can be helpful tools for teachers who wish to re-center literacy identity and agency into their core curriculum.

Although conceived by some as a genre or sub-genre (see Goldstone & Labbe, 2004), the PMPB is less a text-type than a form of picture book which contains specific constellations of language features inviting the reader to develop relationships with text in new ways. Anstey's (2002) bulleted list, consolidated below, offers a concise summary of the understandings needed for a 21st century literacy curriculum:

> 21st century understandings include: all texts are consciously constructed and have particular social, economic, political and cultural purposes; texts come in a variety of representational forms incorporating a range of grammars and semiotic systems; the reader or viewer may need to draw upon several grammars and semiotic systems in order to process some texts; changes in society and technology will continue to challenge and change texts and their representational forms; there may be more than one way to view a text depending upon a range of contextual (social, economic, cultural, or political)

> factors: there is a need to consider the possible meanings of a text and how it is constructing the reader and world of the reader. (pp. 446-447)

Picture books that offer opportunities to develop these understandings range from those with traditional structures or storylines to those whose message or structural features disrupt the expected. A picture book is considered postmodern if its features somehow offer the reader opportunities to think differently or divergently about the world and his/her place in that world (Allan, 2012). Goldstone and Labbe (2004) note that PMPBs have "different functions, formats, and semiotic codes" (p. 198) with some or all of the following characteristics: non-linearity in terms of story line (e.g. multiple storylines or multiple narrators), irony and contradiction, and/or exposure to the author/artist's creation of the text (e.g. "breaking the surface" where the characters leave the page or the story or the hand of the illustrator appears).

A favorite in my teacher education courses is the picture book, *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type* (Cronin and Lewin, 2000). In contrast to other PMPBs, this resembles a traditional story with a clear setting, characters and linear plotline. However the plot revolves around a secondary text type, letters composed by personified farm animals. The plot is described in an editorial review on Amazon.com (Coulter, online) as follows:

> The literacy rate in Farmer Brown's barn goes up considerably once his cows find an old typewriter and begin typing. To the harassed farmer's dismay, his communicative cows quickly become contentious:
>
> Dear Farmer Brown,
> The barn is very cold at night. We'd like some electric blankets.
> Sincerely,
> The Cows
>
> When he refuses to comply with their demands, the cows take action. Farmer Brown finds another note on the barn door: "Sorry. We're closed. No milk today." Soon the striking cows and Farmer Brown are forced to reach a mutually agreeable compromise, with the help of an impartial party – the duck. But this poor, beleaguered farmer's "atypical" troubles are not over yet!
>
> This hilarious tale will give young rebels-in-the-making a taste of the power of peaceful protest and the satisfaction of cooperative give and take.

In this story, the image of literacy as a social practice is clearly conveyed as the characters create texts for a social purpose – to negotiate their labor for fair working conditions. The creation and exchange of texts is central to the plot. The reader follows a series of letters created using "typed" font to record the negotiation between animals and farmer. By centralizing the creation of texts (the letters), the author and illustrator demonstrate the act of reading and composing as purposeful. The reader sees the characters choosing both formal and informal

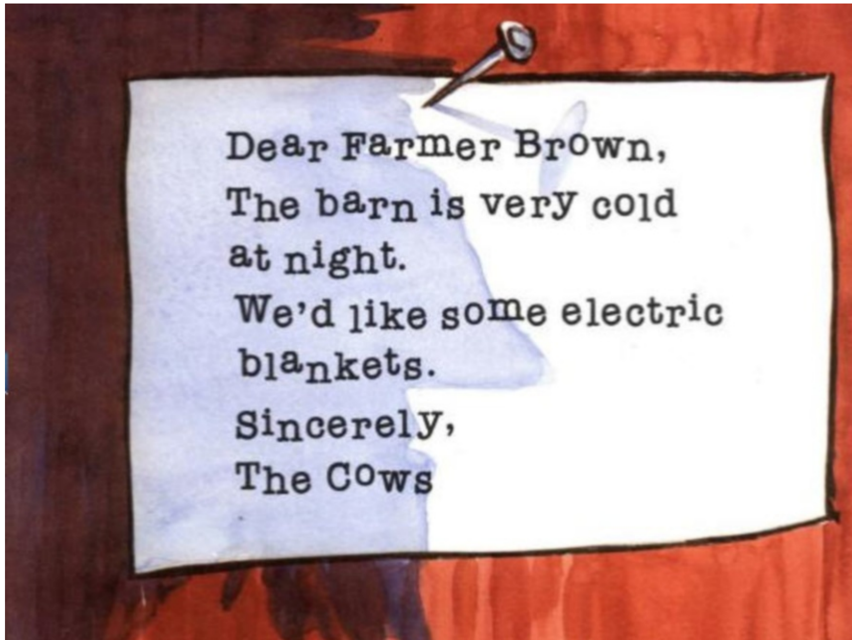
Dear Farmer Brown,
The barn is very cold
at night.
We'd like some electric
blankets.
Sincerely,
The Cows

Figure 1. Example of a letter as a secondary text feature from Click Clack Moo: Cows that Type (Cronin & Lewin, 2000).

language, including the cows' own version of "moo" to redesign their workplace, or as New London Group (1996) describes, their "social futures."

Postmodern picture books, along with many other picture books, are often recommended for specific age ranges and yet the messages available reach across boundaries of age and interest. In fact, my pre-service teachers often question the suitability of picture books for older elementary readers and beyond. *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows that Type* is one example of how fluid boundaries can be when decisions are made about what counts as a suitable text and for whom. In a January 2014 official blog post, Carl Fillichio, Head of the U.S. Labor Department's Office of Public Affairs announced that this book had been recently added to the Department's list of "Books that Shaped Work in America." Support for this action, he explained, stemmed from a swell of public support for the value of its message, concluding:

> There is no doubt it is helping to shape an important aspect of work in America and I'm hopeful that it will continue for years to come. Because for work, workplaces, and workers to thrive (not just survive) in our nation or anywhere in the world, we need to continue to grow generations of leaders who understand labor-management relations … and most importantly, who

> will foster and utilize creative, “win-win” partnerships between labor and management. (online)

Recognizing that a range of ages is important to building social consciousness, Fillichio connects the use of this text to schools (providing an example of teacher, Jill Nicklas Rolle, who used it to explain a union strike to her second graders) but also relates its message to an adult forum, a White House summit where major corporations and the Labor Secretary explored collaboration towards common goals between labor and management. The lesson here is that the choices of texts that can be used as part of a basic reading curriculum (n.b. Fillichio explains that *Click Clack Moo* was used previously to “teach reading” by Ms. Rolle). His argument supports a critical literacy agenda; Classroom curriculum must also include messages that encourage young readers to question and construct big ideas important to their lives.

TEXTS OF PLEASURE VS. TEXT OF BLISS

How a text positions the reader is key when making choices of classroom literature. For example, teaching young children the workings of narrative texts provides them with tools to identify and question their own place in society through reading. Authors of fictional narratives, for example, invite the reader into the text using literary devices that allow him or her to enter the world of the characters and make sense of experiences important to their own lives. Escaping into the world of reading can and should be a practice that provides comfort and security for young readers living in a world of uncertainty and change (O’Neil, 2010). Yet, by also offering texts that are uncomfortable and invite readers to struggle with the unfamiliar, the authors/illustrators of PMPBs provide a second, important form of engagement with literature. Introducing both forms draws on Roland Barthes (1975) conception of texts of plaisir (pleasure) and texts of jouissance (bliss) as equally necessary types of engagement with literature. The former types of texts “content the reader and represent a familiar – and therefore comfortable – experience of reading” while the latter “are discomfiting because they represent a break with the familiar” (cited in McGuire, 2008, p. 205). In their research on reading PMPBs with third graders, McGuire et al. found that students became highly engaged in ways consistent with the latter. That is, their focal students “wrestled through the newness and ambiguity, playing, debating, flipping backwards and forwards, ventriloquizing characters, and voicing their own stories” (p. 205). The active involvement identified through McGuire et al.’s research is consistent with other studies of teachers who engaged their elementary age students with postmodern texts (see Hassett & Curwood, 2008; Pantaleo, 2004; 2006; Serafini, 2005). These classroom studies demonstrate how the genre affords young readers authority over texts important to their identities as critical literacy practitioners. This section of the chapter synthesizes characteristics of PMPBs including “metafictive” literary devices and a typology of features intended to help to elementary teachers interested in choosing such texts for their classrooms.

METAFICTIVE DEVICES

PMPB authors draw on specific "metafictive" literary devices to promote the types of interactions displayed by McGuire et al.'s (2008) young readers (e.g. playfulness, active co-construction of meaning through decision-making or filling intentionally left informational gaps). Metafictive writing "intentionally and systematically draws attention to its status in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality" (Pantaleo, 2006, p. 2 citing Waugh, 1984). Found in PMPBs, meta-fictive devices include:

– Intertextuality. In PMPBs the reader is asked to make "inter" textual connections with texts, illustrations and other cultural artifacts from his/her outside experiences as well as "intra" textual connections using multiple cues and lines within the text itself.
– Parody. Through satire or a comic take on original texts, PMPB authors show that rules can be broken while also providing a tribute to the original (Pantaleo, 2006).
– Irony/contradiction. PMPB readers face disruption of the expected in terms of competing styles within a text, or in the logic of the narrative. For example, illustrations may contradict what is said in the print, asking readers to decide how to use them (Goldstone & Labbe, 2004).
– Pastiche. In some PMPBs author's use pastiche or a compressing or interweaving of different tales in the same space (Pantaleo, 2006).

Many PMPBs often riff off of traditional fairy or folktales using these literary devices. A popular PMPB is David Wiesner's 2002 Caldecott winner, *The Three Pigs*. An analyses of PMPB by Goldstone and Labbe (2004), along with my own experiences with this text is synthesized below. In Wiesner's take on this classic fairy tale, the story begins with a traditional orientation. He introduces the characters using the expected text wording and a traditional illustration where the characters are center to the page (e.g. The wolf approaching the house of the first little pig requesting, "Little pig, little pig, let me come in." With the first little pig replying, "Not by the hair of my chinny, chin, chin"). Yet, when the wolf blows down the house of straw, the first pig is blown out of the text itself, appearing outside of the original page, and speaking to the readers directly. The illustration quality changes outside of the page, as the pig's figure appears more realistic, almost photographic in quality, and his speech is encased in a speech bubble similar to those found in cartoons. As the story progresses, the characters of the pigs take charge of their own fate. For example, the first pig invites the second out of the story to escape the wolf. Later, the three pigs are shown physically taking a page from the traditional tale and creating a paper airplane that they fly across several pages of the storybook. Wiesner breaks up and adds layers to the traditional story as the pigs travel between fairy tales visiting the nursery rhyme "Hey diddle diddle" and then rescuing a dragon about to be slain by a knight. Eventually two of the characters from these other tales, the dragon and the nursery rhyme cat, accompany the pigs back to the original story where the dragon successfully and permanently intimidates the wolf. Metafictive devices are visible as Wiesner

presents the opportunity for intertextual connections to classic children's tales. The reader is also expected to make sense of contradictions between the printed text and what is communicated in the illustrations. For example, although the text continues to display the traditional verse, "The wolf huffed and puffed … and ate the pig up," the reader sees the wolf looking confused and the second little pig having already escaped outside the parameters of the page). Finally the pastiche or interweaving of tales shows the reader that the rules of a fairy tale are able to be broken and demonstrates the power of the characters to make choices outside of traditional expectations.

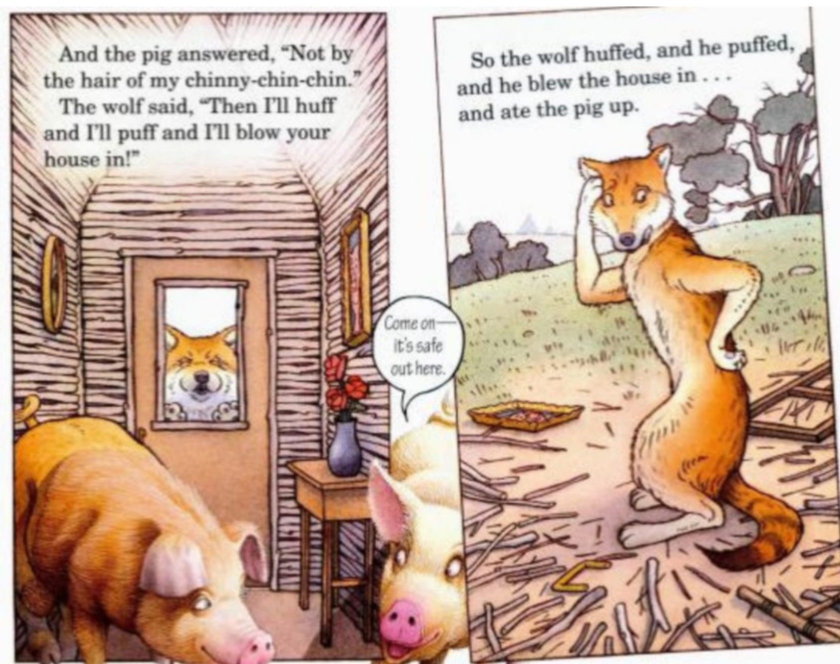

Figure 2. Example of "Breaking the Surface" in Wiesner's (2001) The Three Pigs.

TYPOLOGY OF POSTMODERN PICTURE BOOK FEATURES

In addition to literary devices, PMBP authors also disrupt readers' expectations by manipulating features found in both fictional and non-fictional texts. In keeping with the postmodern intentions of this genre, PMPB authors present features that expose naturalized assumptions as well as offer readers opportunities to engage in reconstruction of assumed social realities. They do this by presenting texts that position and reposition the readers and his or her expectations. Readers are invited to witness the text creators' play with textual features and to play with these

themselves. In doing so, readers fill gaps in meaning created through these disruptions. Thus, through their struggle to fill the gaps, McGuire et al.'s (2008) third graders actively made meaning by interacting with the texts and then collectively discussing and debating their meaning choices. Pantaleo (2004, 2006) organized a typology of features found in PMPBs using Dresang's (1999) characteristics of "Radical Change." These characteristics describe changes in children's literature in relation to "positive changes in the digital world" (Dresang, 1999, p. 14 as cited in Pantaleo, 2004). The three types of changes include: changing forms and formats, changing perspectives, and changing boundaries. These feature types necessarily overlap with each other as well as with metafictive devices, however, the typology helps refine our analysis by adding two additional lenses by which to explore: 1) the actual construction of the book and, 2) the boundaries between the producers, subjects, and consumers of the text. A summary of these features, using Dresang's/Pantaleo's organizational framework is shared in Table 1.

Table 1. Typology of characteristics of postmodern picture books.

Dresang's Typology (Pantaleo, 2004, 2006)	*Examples from the Literature*
Type One: Changing Form and Formats • Graphics in new forms • Words and pictures at new levels of synergy • Non-linear organization and format • Non-sequential organization and format	*Striking visuals* (e.g color shows meaning, words represent a sound, text imposed on a picture) (Pantaleo, 2004) *Typographic experimentation* (e.g. title upside down, readers prompted to insert their own names) (2006) *Symbols*, *fonts*, *sizes* chosen to convey meanings, color (Hassett & Curwood, 2009) "*Ontological meaning*" (e.g. structural changes to the text such as pathways to follow with parallel displays of information, cross referencing of elements, images that extend or replace the written word) (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003) *Contesting discourses* between illustrations and written text requires reader to consider alternative readings or meanings (Anstey, 2002) *Multiple narratives and narrators* require reader to bring "order" to the chaotic story (Goldstone & Labbe, 2004) *Non-traditional use of narrator voice, plot, character or setting* which disrupt expected authority of author,

	characters or reader (Anstey, 2004; O'Neil, 2010)
Type Two: Changing Perspectives • Multiple perspectives • Visual mixed with verbal • Previously unheard voices • Youth who speak for themselves	*Multiple voices* in one book or from many stories or books. Character(s) who speak from *range of life experiences.* Picture books with *multiple visual perspectives* (e.g. view from above or in the midst of action) (Pantaleo, 2004) *Distribution of power* from narrator to major or minor characters (Goldstone & Labbe, 2004) *Interactive narration* (e.g. direct address from characters to reader, over expectations to play with the book or contribute to story) (Hassett & Curwood, 2009; O'Neil, 2010) *Availability of multiple readings* and meanings for a variety of audiences (Anstey, 2002)
Type Three: Changing Boundaries • Subjects previously hidden • Settings previously overlooked • Characters portrayed in new and complex ways • New types of communities • Unresolved endings	Boundary crossing between author/illustrators and storyline (e.g. what is imaginary and *what is real*?) (Goldstone & Labbe, 2004) Reader should not expect to be immersed in "time and space" of story – instead *juxtaposed w/reality* (Goldstone & Labbe, 2004; McGuire et al., 2008) *Collapse of hierarchies* between high/low cultures (e.g. knowledge, taste, opinion) (Allan, 2012) *Exposing hidden or naturalized cultures* (e.g. making patriarchy visible in reconstructions of princess fairytales) (Allan, 2012) *Questioning of certainty* (Allan, 2012) *Difference co-exists* rather than resolves (Allan, 2012) *Disruption of the "peritext"* or how the book is made. "*Breaking the surface*" challenges to underlying structure and codes (e.g. "special planes" include: back, mid, front, off the page, space under or around individual pages) (Goldstone & Labbe, 2004; Pantaleo, 2006)

By its nature, however, the PMPB resists typification. The typology merely creates a tool for educators to dig more deeply into texts that challenge their own comfort levels before adding this to their instruction with students. For example, originally in my English Language Arts classes, I asked the pre-service elementary teachers to read a traditional version and then Wiesner's version of *The Three Pigs*.

When I asked, “What did you notice?” most students quickly gave up on the latter text, stating that they were confused by it and felt young children would be also. Interestingly, researcher Frank Serafini (2005) found a similar reaction from intermediate grade students who were initially reluctant to struggle with the complexity presented by books with metafictive characteristics. Yet, in keeping with McGuire et al.’s (2008) findings discussed above, and eventually in Serafini’s project, when students struggled with complexity and negotiated meaning collectively, they became engaged, challenging their own thinking and that of their peers. Therefore, part of the teacher educator’s and teacher’s role is to provide entry points that challenge readers to dig deeper.

For example, analytical questions based on the typology shared here, may open a text that seems initially confusing and inaccessible to the reader. Examples are:

– Type One: How does the author/illustrator manipulate the graphics in this book and why?
– Type Two: Who is in charge of the story?
– Type Three: What is real in this story and what is make-believe?

In their analysis of *The Three Pigs*, Goldstone and Labbe (2004) share their thinking about the affordances of Wiesner’s text in addressing the last question:

> What is real here? The book? The story? The reader’s perceptions? In *The Three Pigs*, the pigs step out of the pages, knock over pages, and turn a page of the story into a paper airplane. On the last page, two pigs and their newfound friends, the cat and the dragon, sit down to dinner while the third pig is carefully placing letters to read ‘and they all lived happily ever after’ … Postmodern picture books keep the reader aware of the physical world. True, these books invite the reader into the story, but they provide reminders to keep one foot grounded in reality. These books do not blanket the reader with their stories, rather they prod and tease the reader with questions … By disclosing how the book is created … [they remind] the reader that there is another world outside the narrative … highlighting two significant aspects of the reading process: reading should connect directly with everyday life [and] the written word is not above questioning. (p. 201)

The literature contains examples of differing roles for teacher facilitators who challenged their students to develop habits of critical reading through PMPBs. A word of warning, however, is to keep in mind the intentions of teaching with PMPBs, which is, to diffuse power and authority over the text and its messages. The value of the PMPB is lost if the questioning becomes reified into close-ended, one right answer formats, that already render classrooms non-dialogic. In the classroom studies reviewed for this chapter, the purposes of active participation by students was achieved through contextually created instruction where power to create meaning was distributed across the student/teacher relationship, but those relationships did not always look the same.

TEACHING AND THE POSTMODERN PICTURE BOOK

Writing about the need for a 21st century pedagogy, Hassett and Curwood (2008) remind teachers that "if the world of communication is not standing still, why would our pedagogic practices?" (p. 281). Several of the classroom studies reviewed here included examples of teachers' pedagogy. In these, the teacher's role remained intact (instructor, teacher, model) but was reconceptualized with several new attributes. Of primary importance was ensuring increased student involvement as presenters and evaluators of ideas in ways that in traditional classrooms are often delineated solely by the teacher's interpretation. The teacher's role required active leadership in reminding students to hold one another accountable for listening as well as responding and ensuring that no voices were silenced, yet she remained a co-constructor of ideas "with" the students, realizing that "students sometimes know as much, if not more, about certain things" (p. 280). Instruction included teachers' monitoring and uptake of ideas in ways that continued to challenge the depth of students' thinking. McGuire et al.'s study suggests a "weaving of responses" and provides transcribed examples of teachers' questioning and prompting to show how they positioned students to "focus their gaze on the inquiry" without losing students' development of ownership in their ideas (p. 204).

In McGuire et al.'s (2008) research, they noticed teachers' roles as consistent with Aukerman's (2006 as cited in McGuire et al.) "Shared Evaluation Pedagogy." That is, the teacher invited students into conversations but actively refrained from "hypermediating" or forwarding their own ideas as primary. By facilitating multiple interpretations offered in the space of dialogue, teachers retain their authority as "knowers" but also position children also as "possible knowers" by weaving their responses into the conversation. In such conversations, children were positioned to grapple with the texts and with each other's ideas and teachers remained open to learning from student ideas. A sample question provided by the authors illustrates how a teacher maintained student Oumar's idea as central to the topic, while challenging him to think more deeply: "What do you think Oumar, do you have an answer to your own question?" (McGuire et al., 2008, p. 196).

Hassett and Curwood (2008) describe this type of dialogic literacy instruction as a combined space where "joy and laughter" between students and teacher exist along with explicit teaching of conceptual tools for text analysis. They describe how a teacher, Tess Theobold, served as "design consultant" as she incorporated PMPBs as mentor texts for writing. Through the use of analytic strategies such as "think alouds" Ms. Theobold engages students in dialogue with attention to specific text features over the course of several readings. For example, Keller's (2003) PMPB, *Arnie the Doughnut* served as a mentor for identifying author's tools. The protagonist, Arnie, is a personified doughnut, who sits in the bakery case watching as other doughnuts are chosen by customers, one by one, until he is finally sold to Mr. Bing. Hassett and Curwood's plot summary states,

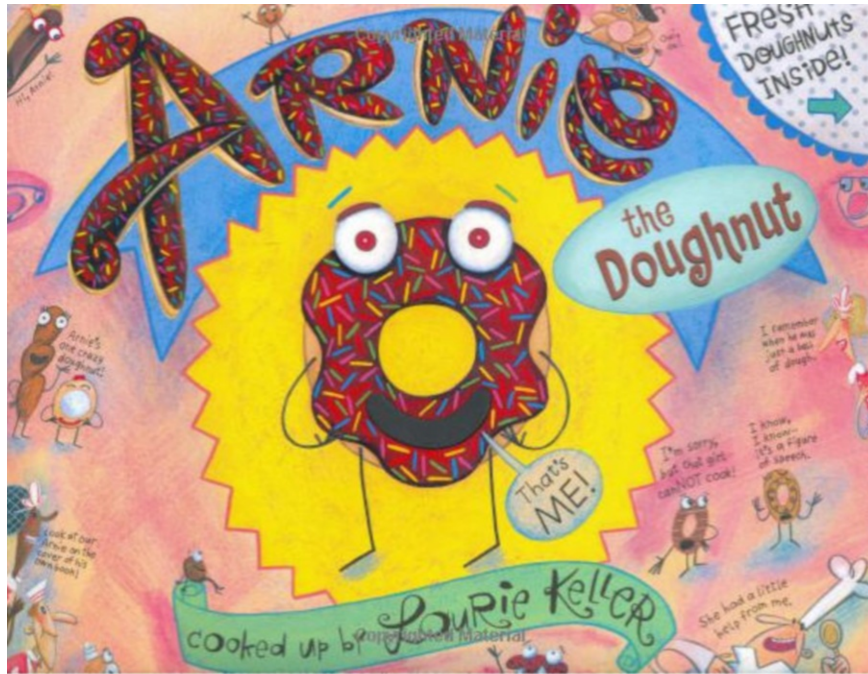

Figure 3. Cover of Arnie the Doughnut (Keller, 2003).

> The book itself, in general terms, is about a doughnut that goes home with Mr. Bing, and then after some negotiations becomes his pet rather than being eaten. And yet, this brief summary of the plot does not describe the book at all … Throughout the entire book, Keller writes and designs specific meanings into the story she wants to tell through words, images, and multiple perspectives. (p. 275)

The visual characteristics of this text lend itself as a great example to share "ontological meanings" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003, as cited in Goldstone & Labbe, 2004, p. 271) through multiple, multimodal pathways. Communication includes: parallel displays of information, cross referencing of elements, and images that extend or replace the written word. For example, the cover epitomizes the graphic design incorporated throughout the book. It centers on a central graphic depicting Arnie, the multicolored pastry, with a speech bubble where he exclaims "That's ME!" In addition, multiple small figures are depicted across the cover, each with a comment nearby. Humor is communicated through the intersection of graphics and prints. For example, instead of the traditional "by" in front of the author's name, Keller substitutes "cooked up by" placing two figures of doughnuts nearby, referencing the author with the following comments, "I'm sorry, but that girl can NOT cook!" and the reply, "I know, I know – it's a

figure of speech." Throughout the book, the author uses multimodal graphics and texts (e.g. colored words, bold words, high levels of detailed pictures, words in different languages, sometimes things in order and sometimes order is all over the page, speech bubbles, thought bubbles and dialogue bubbles) through which choices of meaning are available to the readers (Hassett & Curwood, 2008, p. 275).

Ms. Theobold, by reading and thinking aloud in dialogue with her students, over multiple readings of the books, captured how Keller and authors of several more PMPBs utilized a variety of modalities and for what purpose. Eventually, for her students, the author's tools became their writer's tools as her own students chose from the variety of "available designs" to create their own story pages, examples of which are shared by Hassett and Curwood in their description.

CONCLUSION

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. The field of critical literacy – defined in the socio-cultural scholarship by three related theories – New Literacy Studies, Multiliteracies, and Critical Literacies – provides a framework for teachers who wish to enhance their classroom teaching to promote literacy that prepares students for flexible, context-focused, and agentic relationships with a broad array of texts. The postmodern picture book provides a venue for classroom teachers to engage even the youngest of students as "designers" of texts which in turn invite them to become "designers of their social futures" (New London Group, 1996). PMPB authors present opportunities that blur the boundaries about what is held invisible and often unconditionally accepted constructions of reality. By doing so, they help circumvent the limits we set on children as complex thinkers. As we've seen above, readers of these books by necessity become co-authors of meaning. As one fifth-grader in a classroom study reviewed here stated, "I thought the book was like a movie that was never rehearsed" (as cited in Pantaleo, 2006, p. 285). That student recognized the text as fluid and open to adaption as it is performed – a potential inherent in all PMPBs. This student is developing a textual "author" ity (Hassett & Curwood, 2008) to claim a stake in the meaning, by assuming power to make choices as she engages in performing a role in her world.

CHILDREN'S BOOK REFERENCES

Cronin, D. (author), & Lewin, B. (illustrator). (2000). *Click, clack, moo: Cows that type*. New York, NY: Athaneum Books for Young Readers.

Keller, L. (2003). *Arnie the doughnut*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

Wiesner, D. (2001). *The three pigs*. New York, NY: Scholastic

REFERENCES

Allan, Cheri (2012). *Playing with picturebooks: Postmodernism and postmodernesque.* London, UK: Palgrave MacMillan.

Anstey, M. (2002). "It's not all black and white": Postmodern picture books and new literacies. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *45*(6), 444-457.

Barthes, R. (1975). *The pleasure of the text*. Translated by Richard Miller. New York, NY: Hill.

Bruner, J. (1996). *The culture of education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Coulter, E. Review of *Click, Clack, Moo Cows That Type*. Amazon. Retrieved from: http://www.amazon.com/Click-Clack-Cows-That-Type/dp/0689832133/ref=tmm_hrd_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&sr=&qid=

Dresang, E. (1999). *Radical change: Books for youth in a digital age*. New York, NY: The H.W. Wilson Company.

Fillichio, C. (2014, January 2). Re: What typing cows teach us [Web log post]. Retrieved from: http://social.dol.gov/blog/what-typing-cows-teach-us/

Freire, P., & Macedo, D. (2013). *Literacy: Reading the word and the world*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Goldstone, B. P., & Labbe, L. D. (2004). The postmodern picture book: A new genre. *Language Arts*, *81*(3), 196-204.

Janks, H. (2013). Critical literacy in teaching and research. *Education Inquiry*, *4*(2), 225-242.

Lankshear, C., & Knobel, M. (2003). *New literacies: Changing knowledge and classroom learning*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Lankshear, C., & Knobel, M. (2006). *New literacies: Changing knowledge in the classroom* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill International.

O'Neil, K. (2010). Once upon today: Teaching for social justice with picture books. *Children's Literature in Education*, *41*, 40-51.

New London Group (Cazden, C., Cope, B., Fairclough, N., Gee, J., Kalantzis, M., Kress, G., Luke, A., Luke, C., Michaels, S., & Nakata, M.). (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, *66*(1), 60-92.

Pantaleo, S. (2004). Young children and radical change characteristics in picture books. *The Reading Teacher*, *58*(2), 178-187.

Pantaleo, S. (2006). Scieska's *The Stinky Cheese Man*: A tossed salad of parodic re-versions. *Children's Literature in Education*, *38*, 277-295.

Serafini, F. (2005). Voices in the park, voices in the classroom: Readers responding to postmodern picture books. *Reading Research and Instruction*, *44*(3), 47-64.

Unsworth, L. (2008). Multiliteracies and metalanguage: Describing image/text relations as a resource for negotiating multimodal texts. In J. Coiro, M. Knobel, C. Lankshear, & D. Leu (Eds.), *Handbook of research on new literacies*. New York, NY: Routledge.

LESSON PLAN FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS METHODS COURSE

This is a lesson designed to introduce pre-service elementary teachers to the postmodern picture book.

Step One: Choose a picture book with postmodern features as described in Table 1. Several well known authors provide a body of work with some excellent choices to get started (see below for some authors who offer a body of work). Many of their texts are readily available in school and community libraries.

Provide groups of students (approximately five per group) with a copy of the text. Engage the whole class in a read-aloud making sure that everyone has full

view of the illustrated text or ask each group to read the text together. Encourage students to respond freely to the first read. Did they enjoy the book? Why or why not? Listen for comments that you may want to explore further and facilitate a discussion if warranted. For example, in Tan's *The Arrival*, readers may share the strong emotion expressed despite the lack of words OR they may ask questions about who or where the story took place based on contradictory messages in the images (e.g. origami in what looks like a mid-20th century Eastern European family).

Step Two: Re-read with "Two Hats" – Hat #1: For your personal and group response. Hat #2: As a critical literacy teacher. Often I find in my courses that pre-service teachers jump to discuss the book in terms of their classroom teaching before they actually take time to engage as a reader themselves.

Hat #1. Personal and Group Response. Use the questions mentioned in the chapter as prompts. Find evidence in the text that support your opinion. Engage in a discussion about meanings in the book.

Prompt based on Radical Change Characteristics (Dresang, 1999)	Evidence (Table 1 from the chapter may be helpful for revising these questions to better fit the chosen text)
Type One: Does the author/illustrator manipulate the graphics in this book? How? Why?	
Type Two: Who is in charge of the story?	
Type Three: What is real in this story and what is make-believe?	

Hat #2. Critical Literacy Teacher. In what ways might a teacher facilitate a discussion around this book? What are some ideas for analyzing the features of this book? How might they engage in critical literacy practices to critique or reconstruct meanings from this book? What are some specific ways in which using this book can help young students expand their literacy practices?

Note: Interesting as well to check online to see what others have done with these stories. For example on You Tube, on the author's page, or … what else can you find?

Author	Web Page	Some Titles
Jon Sciezka and Colleagues	http://www.jsworldwide.com/	The Stinky Cheese Man Math Curse Squids will be Squids Baloney, Henry P. Battle Bunny The Real Story of the Three Pigs Time Warp Trio (Series)
Shaun Tan	http://www.shauntan.net/	Tales from Outer Suburbia, The Arrival, The Lost Thing, Eric The Red Tree
Chris Van Allsberg	http://www.chrisvanallsburg.com/home.html	Bad Day at Riverbend The Garden of Abdul Gasazai Jumanji The Mysteries of Harris Burdick The Polar Express Two Bad Ants The Wreck of the Zephyr
David Wiesner	http://www.davidwiesner.com	The Three Pigs Tuesday Flotsam Night of the Gargoyles The Loathsome Dragon
Mo Willems	www.mowillems.com/	Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus (there are other Pigeon books) Knuffle Bunny We are in a Book!