

BREAKING NARRATIVE BOUNDS:
THE USE OF MULTIPLE VISUAL NARRATIVES IN CALDECOTT MEDAL
AWARD BOOKS

By

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by

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For Mom and Dad

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Most picture books follow a conventional, continuous narrative pattern presenting one strand of a tale in linear sequence with pictures illustrating the written text. A handful of picture books deviate from the traditional narrative style to produce visually engaging multiple narratives. Multiple narratives can be, as Maria Nikolajeva describes, either counterpointing with two or more mutually dependent narratives, or sylleptic with narratives independent of each other. Picture book multiple narratives allow a child reader to tune out the everyday noise and concentrate on the frozen narratives on the page, spending as much time as she is able to negotiate the text. This creates an environment for the child to go at her own pace negotiating between the narratives. This thesis argues that multiple visual narratives, whether counterpoint or sylleptic, require more advanced analysis from readers than continuous narrative style, encourage creativity by breaking traditional conventions, and when used in conjunction with a folk or fairy tale revision, amplify the retelling's multi-leveled nature by building on cultural

knowledge. Also, multiple narratives in picture book form allow the child to freeze the narratives and analyze them strand by strand, learning to integrate and process these multiple narratives, thus learning a multi-tasking lesson that will be applicable for the rest of the child's life.

Allocation of space into picture books using multiple visual narratives may not be mainstream yet as it is with television and film, but several award winning texts have already successfully experimented with this technique. Specifically, this visual exploration predominates among illustrators who have won multiple Caldecott Medals for retellings, including Leo and Diane Dillon, Marcia Brown, and David Wiesner. Primarily, Dillon's *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* (1976) and Wiesner's *The Three Pigs* (2002) represent the top Caldecott retellings presented via a counterpointing multiple narratives technique. However, I also explore one exception that illustrates a sylleptic quadruple narrative—the 1991 Caldecott Medal winner, *Black and White* by David Macaulay. The crux of my analysis will focus on the newest Caldecott winning multiple narratives text, *The Three Pigs*, because of its diverse use of multiple narratives to retell the traditional version of “The Three Little Pigs” and its visual distinctiveness in diverging from the primary narrative into other narrative possibilities. However, all of these texts illustrate basic functions and artistic designs of multiple narratives, challenge readers with cognitive puzzles and create something visually new and stimulating the Caldecott committees saw worthy to award.

BREAKING NARRATIVE BOUNDS

Introduction

The twenty-first century has become a technologically advanced era of multi-tasking, a term first associated with a computer processing multiple independent jobs simultaneously. While this was once an expression limited for computers, neither adults nor children can escape multi-tasking, nor can they escape the barrage of visual stimulation in everyday life. It is reasonable to assume that in our culture children from even a preverbal age navigate multiple stimuli, particularly visual stimuli. A mother sits in the kitchen paying bills electronically on her laptop, baking cookies in the oven, and cutting out a craft project for her son. Meanwhile her son watches cartoons on the kitchen television, listens to a children's CD playing from his mother's laptop, plays with his dog, and helps paste the craft cutouts onto a poster board. While this may not represent every home in American, the one constant factor among Americans is that we live in a fast-paced society where sensory stimuli from visual narratives bombard us daily.

Life is not a sequential storybook where only one event takes place at a time. Film and television, particularly sitcoms, have capitalized on the up-tempo, multi-faceted slice of life by having multiple subplots and narratives intertwine. Children learn to process and make sense of multiple narratives from a very early age. Even *Sesame Street*, that standard of children's television, jumps from activity to activity in order to keep the

child's attention. However, one visual medium is beginning to use multiple narratives—picture books.

Most picture books follow a conventional, continuous narrative pattern presenting one strand of a tale in linear sequence with pictures illustrating the written text. A handful of picture books deviate from the traditional narrative style to produce visually engaging multiple narratives. Multiple narratives can be, as Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott describe, either counterpointing, with two or more mutually dependent narratives, or sylleptic with narratives independent of each other (12). The similarity between the definition of multi-tasking and multiple narratives cannot be ignored. Both denote a variety of activity happening at once that the user must process. Picture book multiple narratives allow a child reader to tune out the everyday noise and concentrate on the narratives frozen on the page, spending as much time as he or she is able to negotiate the text. This creates an environment for the child to go at his or her own pace to negotiate between the narratives. This thesis argues that multiple visual narratives, whether counterpoint or sylleptic, require more advanced analysis from readers than continuous narrative style, encourage creativity by breaking traditional conventions, and when used in conjunction with a folk or fairy tale revision, amplify the retelling's multi-leveled nature by amplifying cultural knowledge. Also, multiple narratives in picture book form allow the child to gaze at the narratives and analyze them strand by strand, thus learning to integrate and process these multiple narratives.

As postmodernism becomes even more mainstream and even approaches being passé, there will be a growing number of picture books that use multiple narrative techniques, thus reducing the uniqueness of this visual experimentation but increasing the

need for critical analysis that can maneuver print multiple narratives. At least, this is how the current trend logically concludes if one looks chronologically at Caldecott Medal Award picture books as a control group. The picture books of the 1970s begin to subtly try multiple narrative techniques, but it is not until the 1990s and later that one sees whole picture books incorporating visually experimental multiple narrative techniques, not on a spread-by-spread basis, but as the foundation for the storyline and picture book as a whole. Multiple visual narratives will cease to be ground breaking and exploratory in picture books as they become an expected norm, just as continuous narrative is currently. Picture books will have finally caught up with how people experience everyday life, popular culture and the visual media of television and film by producing not just one story line for the reader/viewer to follow but multiple narratives to analyze. For this reason, picture books with multiple narratives need to be included in academic discussions of how picture books work and in public spheres such as libraries so that parents, teachers, and librarians can aid a child reader through the format, thus learning how to traverse the page's space and hopefully read more thoroughly the multiple narratives of daily life.

Allocation of space into multiple visual narratives may not be mainstream yet as it is with television and film, but several award winning texts have already successfully experimented with this technique. Specifically, this visual exploration predominates among illustrators who have won multiple Caldecott Medals for retellings, including Leo and Diane Dillon, Marcia Brown, and David Wiesner.¹ Primarily, Dillon's *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* (1976) and Wiesner's *The Three Pigs* (2002) represent

¹ Nonny Hogrogian has also won two Caldecott awards for folktales, but prefers a continuous narrative style.

the top Caldecott retellings presented via a counterpointing multiple narratives technique. However, I also explore one exception that illustrates a sylleptic quadruple narrative—the 1991 Caldecott Medal winner, *Black and White* by David Macaulay. The crux of my analysis will focus on the newest Caldecott winning multiple narratives text, *The Three Pigs*, because of its diverse use of multiple narratives to retell the traditional version of “The Three Little Pigs” and its visual distinctiveness in diverging from the primary narrative into other narrative possibilities. However, all of these texts illustrate basic functions and artistic designs of multiple narratives, challenge readers with cognitive puzzles, and create something visually new and stimulating the Caldecott committees saw worthy to award.

Multiple narratives differ from continuous narrative by adding a second scene or episode to the initial pre-text storyline. Both multiple narrative types can be stylistically structured within a double narrative or a split narrative framework, but on rare occasion can also take the organization of a quadruple narrative.² A double narrative³ contains two distinct scenes of character and/or setting within a field of action (the page), whereas a split narrative includes two different episodes within the same setting and field of action. Agreed, all picture books are multiple narratives because of the distinction between the textual narrative and the picture narrative. However, as both Nikolajeva and Perry Nodelman maintain, to read a picture book with both verbal and visual narratives

² While triplet narratives are a possibility, I am not aware of a Caldecott winning picture book that uses one.

³ The term double narrative should not be confused with Barbara Herrnstein Smith’s discussion of the “two-leveled model of narrative,” which she explores in “Narrative Versions, Narrative Theories.” Her “two major senses of narrative ‘versions’ – that is, as *retellings* of other narratives and as accounts told from a particular or partial *perspective*” focus on research of one story in multiple versions. She specifically uses *Cinderella* as an example that has been retold numerous times (211, 227).

effectively, they should be read together for maximum comprehension. Therefore, for my argument I will not split text and picture, or what W.J.T. Mitchell calls “the imagetext,” into separate narratives, but instead, proceed with the multiple narratives definition established in the introductory paragraph with text and image creating one complete narrative. Text and image become inseparable from the narrative strand of the picture book as a whole.

While this study focuses on the limited multiple narrative examples within the picture book genre, the most common picture books are symmetrical or complementary, meaning the relationship between text and image is redundant or fills in each other’s gaps (Nikolajeva & Scott 14). Both relationships usually create a continuous narrative within a given picture book. While some picture books create captivating and experimental tales with these relationships, this thesis focuses on the visual experimentation multiple narratives perform. Illustrators like Dr. Seuss, Maurice Sendak and Chris Van Allsburg were and are experimental, each contributing a unique style to the field of children’s literature and producing radical picture books that are now mile stones and classics for children. However, for this essay, I address the patience and aptitude for assimilating more than one narrative, while juggling both pictures and text, which gives a distinctive manner to multiple narratives.

Multiple narratives require more advanced analysis and attention from readers because of their multi-layered storyline in addition to the interplay of text and image. Multiple narratives not only require more attention, but also necessitate more time in reading. Upon reading a text for the second time, which children inevitably do with a good book, multiple narrative picture books tend to reveal more previously unnoticed

detail or silent characters than continuous narratives reveal. Usually, a continuous narrative does not divide the reader's attention up into as many components for synthesis; it usually retains a cohesive story of complementing picture and text. Some illustrators, particularly ones that use a comic book panel style, do divide the page up into smaller chunks, but the overwhelming number of picture books separates text from a singular picture. However, for reading both continuous and multiple narratives, a reader must have a learned fundamental proficiency to read imagetext before they can comprehend a picture book.

Picture book readers comprehend new material in light of old material already presented by not only rotating back and forth from picture to text and back to picture on a single page, but also through a continuous process of turning the page to assimilate the new page with the previous ones. Picture book readers must balance and incorporate both the written text and the visual illustrations, into a complete reading. The negotiation between image and text creates a constant ping back and forth to integrate both into one rational narrative read by visual literacy. By adding a second, third, or fourth narrative possibility, the narrative juggling act becomes exceptionally difficult if all narratives are presented simultaneously on a one or two-page spread, as they are in *Black and White*. However, if the second narrative distinctly pulls away visually and departs from the first narrative, as in *The Three Pigs* and Blair Lent's illustrations in *The Funny Little Woman*, then the spatial distance helps the reader follow both narratives conjointly without them competing for the reader's attention. Also, the reader's ability to comprehend the narratives increases if the reader is familiar with the opening narrative. For example, *The*

Three Pigs original narrative retells the traditional story of “The Three Little Pigs,” a story almost every American reader knows.

Reading multiple narratives successfully can increase the enjoyment level from a text: “a major source of pleasure in picture books is the joy of discovering a meaningful aspect of visual information” (Nodelman 20). Visual information in picture books adds enjoyment to the reading experience while teaching subtle forms of visual literacy a child may receive through television and film, but may not necessarily know how to comprehend or analyze. As narrative complexity escalates, the illustrator has expanded boundaries to create new and original works. In turn these highly creative works are passed to the reader to process.

Multiple narratives increase the audience’s reading level complexity and visual stimulation as a result of the artist’s intricate narrative arrangement. Multiple narrative techniques, whether split, double or quadruple, intensify the artistic/creative difficulty of composition. By adding a second layer of meaning to the visual narrative, the artist goes a step beyond continuous narrative to create a multi-leveled sequence of events capturing the reader’s interest and making them linger on the page to pour over the illustrations. Visual details, particularly ones that break from the traditional continuous narrative style of most picture books, encourage more audience participation by compelling the reader to *read* not only the text, but also the accompanying visuals in an attempt to synthesize the multiple parts into a coherent whole. Later in the essay we will look at specific illustrators, analyzing their visual complexity through multiple narratives.

Multiple narratives can be potent when illustrating a retelling or a revision of a traditional story that the general public knows, like folk and fairy tales. The audience’s

foreknowledge of the base narrative helps allow illustrators the ability to visually experiment by branching off of the traditional tale in unique directions. Also, parents and teachers are more accepting of texts that have won awards, specifically the Caldecott Award for picture books. Thus, the union of a traditional tale retold with original multiple narrative illustrations merges for a winning combination with recognition from the Caldecott committees.

While retellings seem well suited for experimentation through dual narratives, any text can also use this technique; retellings are just exceptionally compatible because of their place in cultural knowledge. Every text analyzed in this essay will be a Caldecott winning folk or fairy tale retelling, except for one. Macaulay's *Black and White* creates an alternative for how retellings generally incorporate multiple narratives. While retellings give the audience foreknowledge to ground them, *Black and White* bewilders and unsettles its reader by creating multiple interpretations for exactly how the story can be read, thus making the audience actively participate to negotiate the narrative space with increased opportunities of interpretation. Yet, even with its level of narrative difficulty, or perhaps because of its difficulty, the 1991 Caldecott committee saw something unique and distinguished in the illustrations and the text.

Framing this thesis within the context of the Caldecott Medal gives legitimacy and authority to the texts discussed. Without the label of distinction that the Caldecott Medal implies, my argument would weaken because the texts would not have the approval of the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), which holds responsibility for awarding the Medal, giving selected texts credence and clout.

My research blends artistic techniques with reader response to formulate the benefits of multiple narratives within picture books. I posit that multiple narratives, still scarce in number even though they have been used in Caldecott winners since the mid 70s, possess characteristics that creative illustrators can use to increase reader enjoyment, time, and level of analysis. When multiple narratives are used in conjunction with retellings, it makes it easier for the reader to navigate through a traditional pre-text. However, multiple narratives, particularly in sylleptic picture books, can unsettle the reader by creating difficult puzzles for the reader to negotiate. This paper analyzes the visual trend of multiple narratives in texts that both exemplify this technique and have also won the Caldecott Medal.

Multiple Narratives: Limitations, Techniques, and Possibilities

Critic Joseph Schwarcz in *Ways of the Illustrator: Visual Communication in Children's Literature*, defines continuous narrative the same as Lyn Lacy's split narrative: "the protagonist of the story being illustrated (or any other figure) appears two or more times at different places in one and the same picture, while the background and the other elements of the picture remain more or less unchanged" (24). Rebecca Lukens in *A Critical Handbook of Children's Literature* also defines continuous narrative as the technique "in which action is depicted through the repeated picturing of the character in different places or motions all within the same illustration" (42). However, since neither Schwarcz nor Lukens discuss other visual narrative possibilities, I am going to defer to Lacy since she elaborates with other narrative possibilities. This is just one example of terminology dissonance within the discussion of children's picture books and illustration. Yet, at least Schwarcz and Lacy discuss multiple narrative possibilities even if they use differing terminology. Nodelman, even through his subtitle specifies "The Narrative Art

of Children's Picture Books," does not address multiple narratives past the merging of image and text.

Scholarly discussion of illustrations and narrative in children's picture books lacks a conversation about multiple narratives, creating a void within the overall discussion of picture books. Schwarcz considers the following questions, "in what ways does the illustration, an aesthetic configuration created for children, express its contents and meanings? How do its elements combine and its structures operate so as to carry the messages to which we are asked to relate?" (4). These questions set up the ideal forum for a discussion on multiple narratives, but he neglects to proceed past continuous narrative style in his terminology, while referring to illustrations and instances that break with continuous narrative to form multiple narratives. Schwarcz does briefly address "counterpointing," but only as a method for text and illustration to function together, not necessarily through a larger narrative structure (17).

However, Lacy in *Art and Design in Children's Picture Books: An Analysis of Caldecott Award-Winning Illustrations* defines several techniques of multiple narratives, including split and double narrative. Additionally, in *How Picturebooks Work*, Maria Nikolejeva and Carole Scott mention and even name multiple narratives, yet they disregard sylleptic narratives except for one or two passing references. Thankfully, they sufficiently discuss counterpointing narratives giving future scholars and critics at least a vocabulary to work from, a typology they acknowledge as problematic. The problem may arise because of inconsistent usage and multiple terminology sources from semiotics and narratology. Nonetheless, even if scholars do not yet have the exact terminology

with which to discuss multiple narratives, illustrators continue to create picture books using this technique.

Illustrators use several artistic and stylistic techniques in conjunction with multiple narratives to amplify a picture book's visual effect. Artists can employ a variety of techniques to develop multiple narratives, including: crypthesthesia, which hides images within other images; reflection, which mirrors images to offer ambiguity of interpretation; montage, the juxtaposition of interconnected plots, images, or ideas; and metamorphosis, the transformation of a figure in stages within a single setting. Within picture books, these artistic techniques occur within a single field of action, relying on the multiplicity of images or the twofold purpose of a repeated single image to create a dual narrative. Narrative fusion between multiple narratives happens within the field of action in the text, which for picture books consist of the physical page, and in the reader's mind as they interpret the narrative strands. Yet, some illustrators, like Wiesner, try to visually break the page boundary in innovative ways to enhance their narratives.

In *Words About Pictures*, Nodelman explains that the reader must possess a basic learned competence to read visual narrative and interpret the pictures with any accompanying text (11). Even simplistic picture books targeted toward babies “imply a surprisingly sophisticated reader and viewer” because of the “codes, conventions, assumptions, and interpretive strategies” one must apply to read these texts (35). Interpretive strategies require negotiation between text and image – a constant cycle of thesis, antithesis, synthesis back and forth between words and pictures, each presenting narrative information. Nodelman writes, “picture books that tell stories force viewers to search the pictures for information that might add to or change the meaning of the

accompanying texts” (18). The reader uses the same interpretive strategies with multiple narratives as with a single narrative; the visual search intensifies, sometimes even doubling or quadrupling the complexity with multiple narratives in a picture book.

Evelyn Goldsmith writes, “although there is no clear agreement about what constitutes complexity in visual material, it is generally accepted that human beings of any age find it attractive” (399-400). A preference for complexity will ensure readers’ return to picture books with multiple narratives, while encouraging illustrators to create more texts in this format. In visual complexity, a picture book rivals other visual narrative forms of communication using a print media. It is, as Nodelman describes it, “a subtle and complex form of communication,” whose complexity escalates as narrative layers are added (20).

Illustrators who creatively break a traditional narrative by illustrating multiple narratives may also crack convention by adapting puzzle or gaming aspects into their techniques. Some illustrators use “hidden” images. Marcia Brown illustrates her Caldecott Award winning retelling *Shadow* with “cryphesthesia—an image hidden artistically within others to produce a double, ‘hidden’ meaning” (Lacy 189). *Shadow’s* primary narrative portrays the world of the living in black cutout forms while the second underlying layer of narrative in translucent white shapes, enhanced through cryphesthesia, implies the world of the shadow or the dead, a hidden second layer to life. This produces a backwards shadow effect with the solid figures of the world in black and the shadows in transparent white, transposing the normal view of a shadow caused by the sun. While *Shadow* is a translated narrative poem, these subtle techniques are usually reserved for non-sequential, non-narrative stories where the visual game is the purpose,

and the textual clues add little. For example, the *Where's Waldo* series or Mitsumasa Anno's *Anno's Journey* focuses the reader's attention and action on finding the correct visual sign with little or no text. A non-linear, print hypertext format may be the next step if multiple narratives ever become passé. For now, picture books that both experiment with text and image, while breaking traditional conventions of continuous narrative, are a rare find.

When parents or teachers discover one of the uncommon multiple narratives in picture books, they may assume a higher difficulty level or balk at the visual differences with traditional picture books. Therefore, because of preconceived assumptions, parents and teachers may not share multiple narratives picture books with children unless the books are either ALSC approved through the Caldecott Medal or of familiar folk and fairy tales. Nodelman explains, "guides for teachers about using books with children most frequently suggest that those books should be chosen on the basis of a child's previous familiarity with their subject and style" (37). This pedagogy builds on previous knowledge that usually overlooks new and exciting multiple narratives unless they are teamed with a familiar aspect recognizable to teachers and parents. For example, when paired with a classic tale, parents and teachers respond favorably to visual experimentation, as is the case with *The Three Pigs*. This is particularly true with folk and fairy tale revisions because of their unwavering place in our cultural knowledge, or to use Carl Jung's term, our collective unconscious.

One can see the propensity for folk and fairy tales within the Caldecott Medal winning texts. Even though Caldecott winning illustrations must be original, the originality of the text is not included in the criteria for the award. Twenty-seven out of

the sixty-six Caldecott Medal winners are retellings. With retellings securing over one-third of the awarded Medals and countless Honor seals, why, when the Medal rewards the most distinguished American picture book for children, do we see a predominance of unoriginal stories? Using revisionist tales creates a common ground between reader and illustrator, giving the reader familiar footing and the illustrator a shared jumping off point for visual experimentation. Retelling well-known stories in picture book form allows parents and children foreknowledge of the story and sanctions the illustrator to experiment visually with multiple narratives and include more multi-cultural references and styles within a picture book space. The illustrator may continue to build on a folk or fairy tale's multi-faceted approach by visually using a double or a split narrative technique in their illustrations or expand on the multicultural references in regard to the text's cultural basis, all aided by the audience's prior knowledge.

Because the audience understands the morphology of folk and fairy tales, the illustrator may use a recognized storyline as a mechanism to experiment with multiple narratives, which is what David Wiesner does in *The Three Pigs*. He or she can do this freely within a traditional story because the audience will retain comprehension as long as they have an understanding of the basic narrative story or structure. Wiesner explains this concept in his Caldecott Medal acceptance speech:

I had ideas for so many neat visual things that could happen. Characters could jump out of the story. The pictures could fall down, be folded up, crumpled; text could get scattered about. What I didn't have was a story. Every time I tried to turn these ideas into a book, I ran into the same stumbling block. If I created a story and then had the characters leave to take part in a new story, the reader would be left wondering what was happening in the initial story. To make this idea work, I realized that I needed a story that as many kids as possible would already know, so that when the characters took off, the reader would leave the story behind as well and concentrate on the new journey the characters would take. So, I thought, what

are the most universal stories around? In a way, any story would do. "Goldilocks"? "Hansel and Gretel"? And then, right on cue, up stepped those three pigs. (394)

An illustrator can also effectively use multiple narratives with retellings because of folk and fairy tales' multi-layered natures. Folk and fairy tales historically transcended a dual audience of child and adult, usually having one standard moral for children's ears and an implied moral or level of meaning for adults to ascertain. Writing to a dual audience helps create situations where multiple narratives are applicable and accessible. But the duality does not end with audience.

Sometimes multiple narratives can be expressed through culturally influenced illustrations and stylistic narrative techniques. For example, the Dillons' culturally inspired woodcuts form double and split narratives that illustrate the primitive West African tale *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in Peoples' e Ears*. Wiesner's *The Three Pigs* sets a revisionist, postmodern American example through the medium of a cartoon double narrative. The American Dream of rags to riches breaks hierarchical convention by teaching children class boundaries are impermanent. Children are taught they can write their own destiny and become anything they want: president, congressman, astronaut. Similarly, in *The Three Pigs*, the main characters grow from rags to home owners, conquer their fears, boundaries, and enemies to write their own happily ever after ending. Both of these Caldecott Award books use cultural settings or culturally influenced illustrations to enhance the multiple narrative.

Illustrator Blair Lent explains that while his pictures may be suggested by cultural Chinese sources, he has "in no way attempted to imitate Chinese painting. These illustrations are interpretations by a Westerner of a fabled land" (Bader 458). And interpretations are all the reader can expect, but picture book interpretations and revisions

incorporate the American, or as Lent describes himself, the Western depiction, thus strengthening the illustrator's connection to his American audience. Nodelman agrees: "As in illustrations that evoke the styles of other times and other cultures, the meaning of those styles for us has more signifying potential than what they meant for those who first saw them, and for whom, presumably, they so expressed the values of their own culture that their stylistic characteristics were not remarkable noticeable" (85). An American picture book retelling is specifically effective after it has been adapted for an American audience. Nodelman continues, if the readers are "unfamiliar with the conventions of an alien culture, the remaking of the imagery of that culture in terms we can understand is inevitably more meaningful than the original" (Nodelman 95). Therefore, even when other cultural tales are used in American picture books, there must be a blending of cultures, just like there is a blending of image and text, before the reader can comprehend the narratives. This merger adds dimension and substance that illustrators can draw from for multiple narratives.

In support of the genre of picture books for an American audience, the ALSC, housed under the American Library Association (ALA), created guidelines of merit through the formation of the Caldecott Medal. The Medal generates a level of distinction within the genre of picture books with which to judge quality, a quality Frederic Melcher saw demonstrated in the work of British illustrator Randolph Caldecott, after whom the medal is named. The ALA awarded the first Caldecott Medal in 1938, sixteen years after the other prestigious children's award, the Newbery Medal, was established. A selection committee elects one text a year, brands the chosen text's cover with a gold medal

signifying artistic distinction among American picture books and rewards the illustrator with a bronze Caldecott Medal. Honor books receive a silver seal.

The Caldecott Medal is an illustrious honor, which is essentially guaranteed to be a “distinguished” product. The winners are top illustrators who conform to the guidelines of excellence that the ALA drafted and set high standards of excellence for other picture books to follow. As a literary prize, the Medal helps further legitimize picture books through this created canon of quality. Committee members employ the following criteria when identifying a distinguished picture book: “excellence of execution in the artistic technique employed; excellence of pictorial interpretation of story, theme, or concept; of appropriateness of style of illustration to the story, theme, or concept; of delineation of plot, theme, characters, setting mood or information through the picture; and excellence of presentation in recognition of a child audience” (Terms and Criteria).

In theory, the Caldecott Medal helps structure the field of picture books and keeps the standards of expectation high. Irene Smith asserts that it, “set[s] standards rather than catering to them; therefore improvements in content and design can be fairly placed in their direct line of influence” (104). The trend set by Caldecott winners has been one of conservatism and white middle class mores, however multiple narrative texts like *The Three Pigs* and *Black and White* expand the conservative stance to include more visually experimental texts. Retellings, like *Mosquitoes* and *Shadow*, expand the outmoded homogenous attitude to include more positive cultural diversity. Whether experimental or conservative, once the illustrated text has the Caldecott Medal branded to the front cover, parents assume it to be superior to other picture books.

While the Caldecott Medal exemplifies excellence within the picture book genre, multiple narratives have the potential to visibly exhibit compositional excellence and experimentation to break traditional convention and challenge the reader with more complexity for added enjoyment. By *Black and White* and *The Three Pigs* winning the Caldecott Award, thus becoming recognized as an exemplary picture book, hopefully we will see more multiple narratives picture books on the market. But, the ultimate decision begins in the illustrator's imagination to be transferred onto the page through various artistic mediums.

Multiple Visual Narratives: Illustrators Redesigning Space

Within picture books, the illustrator becomes the visual narrator or visual storyteller: “just as the storyteller’s point of view gave form and direction in ancient oral tradition so too can the illustrator’s viewpoint give form and direction” (Lacy 16-17). Several illustrators have capitalized on reworking traditional tales with their original art: Marcia Brown won three times (1955, 1962, and 1983); while Leo and Diane Dillon (1976, 1977) won twice with retellings. David Wiesner won the Medal twice, but only one, *The Three Pigs* (2002), is a retelling. David Macaulay visually revised architectural structures in his two Caldecott Honor texts: *Cathedral* (1974) and *Castle* (1978), but his original sylleptic quadruple narrative won the 1991 Caldecott Committee over with its “udder chaos,” creating a groundbreaking moment in picture book multiple narratives. The next such moment would come with Wiesner’s *The Three Pigs*.

Standard stories such as folktales, fairy tales, and retold classics create a controlled narrative space that allows illustrators to experiment with visual forms and also to explore multi-cultural styles. The traditional pre-text narrative in conjunction with audience foreknowledge helps create limits and boundaries within which the illustrator

works. Of course, sometimes they work to seemingly destroy these boundaries, but without these limits disorder would reign and jumble the narrative to incoherency. Each picture book must retain some semblance of a cohesive underlying narrative structure or the additional narratives would be chaotic. With retellings, the audience has some prior knowledge about the story's content or narrative, therefore the illustrator can draw attention away from the pre-text itself and onto the additional, original narrative.

The recent 2002 winner visually explores space through a double narrative while retelling the traditional story of "The Three Little Pigs," creating the most experimental revision to date. However, this is not the first visually experimental retelling. Several other tales take visual liberties with space to experiment with narrative, breaking continuous narrative into a split narrative or double narratives and sometimes both. Other texts than the ones I specifically focus on use multiple narratives. For example, *The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship* (1969) illustrated by Uri Shulevitz and retold by Arthur Ransome uses a split narrative technique to help create a fantasy setting with illustrations of the flying ship. However, the texts chosen reflect the best use of multiple narrative techniques for this thesis. For example, the Dillons' illustrate folktales with not one narrative technique, but several including both split and double narratives.

Split and Double Narratives: Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears

Leo and Diane Dillon's use of multiple narratives is a result of the cooperation and input of the two-person illustrating team. According to their Caldecott Medal acceptance speech, they consider their collaborative illustrations to be, essentially, done by a third person, a collective merging of their talents. Together they developed a collaborative artistic style of woodcutting, which can be seen in their two back to back Caldecott Medal winners, *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears: A West African Tale* (1976) and

Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions (1977). Their artistic style was influenced by the “African batik, with its variety of repeated patterns and traditional motifs” (Lacy 186). The African influence compliments the West African folktale, while according to Nodelman, block printing, “associates these pictures with the static convention of folk art, which tends to be more oriented to pattern than action” (72). The Dillons’ artistic style is a direct result of their partnership and cultural influences.

Their style helped them win their first Caldecott Medal for *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People’s Ears*, which is unique for both the culturally influence and the multiple narrative techniques. Lacy writes, “the divergence from the norm in *Mosquitoes* is, then, not found in a truly different book layout but in the Dillons’ use of the artistic element *space* and in their unique, cinematic uses of continuous narrative, split narrative, and double narrative” (193). Because of the multiple techniques employed, we will disregard the continuous narrative aspect because of its commonality and begin with their use of double narrative.

Retold by Verna Aardema, *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People’s Ears: A West African Tale* retells a West African Tale about why pesky mosquitoes insist on flying around people’ ears. One day the mosquito flies over to the iguana and proceeds to tell the iguana a lie. This irritates the iguana to the point where he puts sticks in his ears so as not to hear at all. From there, a negative chain of events occurs, which end in the death of a baby owl. Because the owlet has died, the mother owl refuses to hoot and wake up the sun, causing a great disturbance among the animals. The lion calls an animal council to ascertain the lack of day and the story proceeds from there like “The House That Jack Built,” constantly repeating each animal’s action and reaction until they discover the

culprit—the mosquito. His punishment is to buzz in people’s ears asking, “Zeee! Us everyone still angry at me?” (25).

The Dillons’ illustrate double narrative within the context of storytelling, specifically at an animal council scene in *Mosquitoes*. The double narrative elaborates the animals’ stories about what caused the negative chain of events that progress throughout the book. Black, night scenes of the animal council crowd the left hand side of the page, while the visual exaggerations of what the animals say are interpreted to the right hand side of the page. The exaggerations are framed with black, usually by black trees, but have a background of sky blue, visually distinguishing them from the primary narrative. Nodelman’s reasoning for these scenes’ construction centers on the disruption between the verbal and the visual of storytelling: “this discontinuity between two parts of the same picture clearly marks off the depiction of the storytelling from the depiction of the story being told; it provides basic information we need to understand a complex picture” (Nodelman 131-32).

While the discontinuity between the left hand side of the spread and the right hand side of the spread does provide crucial information for interpreting the double narrative, Nodelman neglects to mention the textual inadequacy of the animal’s stories creating gaps that must be filled visually. He also specifically classifies the spread as a whole picture with two parts, making a passing reference to two distinct narratives, the storytelling and the story, without classifying the nature of the illustration as a representation of counterpointing multiple narratives.

However, this lack of classification by Nodelman may be a result of a lack of terminology with which to address multiple narratives that we have already discussed.

Yet he does use the available terminology incorrectly. Nodelman in *Words About Pictures* discounts Lyn Lacy's visual interpretation of a picture book in order to prove her analysis revealed opposite results than what she concluded (126). But in this example, Lacy would have an opportunity for rebuttal. Nodelman incorrectly describes a scene in *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* as a "continuous narrative," a term which he cites from Joseph Schwarcz (166).

Nodelman specifically references the first python illustration as a continuous narrative: "we also see the same characters twice in different locations and must understand that the depiction on the left comes first in order to understand the story, but here the figures are sometimes immediately beside each other and sometimes even partially superimposed on each other" (167). The Dillons' illustrate split narrative through the character of the python. He talks to the iguana on one page, while on the next page he crosses the gutter and slips down the rabbit hole, all on the same length of tale with two heads. This creates an M.C. Escher visual effect for children to pause and consider. An effect that is not just a case of images superimposed, but a key use of split narrative as Lacy accurately validates (193).

Mosquitoes offers examples of metamorphosis, "in which the stages of transformation for a figure are presented in a single setting" and montage, which is "used to compress within a scene a set of interconnected plots or ideas" (Lacy 189). Marcia Brown's *Once a Mouse. . .* (1962), a fable from India, also incorporates metamorphosis to illustrate the physical change of a tiger back into a mouse. Both tiger and mouse are woodcut on the same spread, showing the same character in two different manifestations, on the same wordless page spread. The main character, a magical hermit who saved the

mouse and gradually transformed him into a tiger reverses the process because of the tiger's ungratefulness.

On the left hand side of the spread in *Once a Mouse . . .* stands the hermit with arms outstretched toward the tiger and mouse, casting his spell. The tiger's body crosses the page gutter, but heads away from the hermit into the woods to disappear and hide his shame. The mouse, at a full gallop, seems to run out of the tiger's mouth and into the woods as monkeys and other forest creatures watch hidden in the trees. The use of color binds all three characters together in their magical moment of transformation. With a red sunset, maroon ground, and green woods, the only white space on the page encircles the mouse, defines the tiger's strips, and clothes the hermit, visually determining their interconnectedness through color.

This metamorphosis visually shows the physical loss of the mouse, which transforms from a muscular tiger back into a tiny rodent within the same field of action. However, *Mosquito's* metamorphosis with the double narrative of the night storytelling scene does not depict reality; instead it shows what the animals' perceive. For the audience to accurately view the animals' perceptions, they need to view the metamorphosis on the same page spread, playing on the duplicity of a narrative through the "idea that more than one image can be presented within a single field of action" (Lacy 189).

Another visual addition can come in the form of a visual narrative that has little or no textual backing. This creates a separate visual narrative outside the primary narrative. One of the best-loved children's books of all time, *Goodnight Moon* by multiple Caldecott Honor winner Margaret Wise Brown, added a silent character to fascinate

children. Within each illustration, there is a small, gray, “young mouse” that appears in different locations about the room. His little whiskered nose points out from odd places, seemingly to encourage children to play a game of *Where’s Waldo?* with him. As Barbara Bader aptly summarizes, “hardly noticeable, he is never unnoticed” (259). The mouse adds a new visual narrative to the pretext, but retains distance from the continuous narrative of bedtime rituals.

Similar to the quiet, little gray mouse in *Goodnight Moon*, the Dillons’ created two animals, a little red bird and an antelope, which silently move independently from the textual narration, thus creating their own personal narrative, a visual story within a story. However, in *Mosquitoes* the little red bird is not as completely separate from the continuous narrative as it may seem to the casual reader. The bird serves a purpose of pointing out the significant action or object within a spread with his pointed, triangular beak; “at one point, for instance, the bird’s beak points at the mosquito, which has carefully hidden itself behind a leaf” (Nodelman 128). The bird flies around, adding a second visual layer to every spread since he is the only character seen on every spread.

Similarly, the antelope in *Mosquitoes* creates a narrative all his own apart from the text. Instead of pointing to important details, he seeks a connection with the reader in a more forward manner, highlighting his own importance. The antelope’s gaze focuses not on the storyline action like the bird’s beak, but on the reader. He continually tries to catch the reader’s attention with his wide eyes and toothy grin, both directed at the reader. Even when all of the other animals hoot and howl in disgust to punish the mosquito, we see the antelope in the background, bright-eyed and smiling, the only animal grinning instead of baring teeth or scowling. Unlike the red bird, the antelope is

textually acknowledged once: “the antelope was sent to fetch him” (Aardema 19).⁴ This brief reference adds credence to the character, giving readers a brief textual clue to the antelope’s presence in case they had previously missed him and his showing off.

In *Mosquitoes*, the red bird functions as a sign pointing to action and the antelope extends the narrative outside of itself and the animal council to include the reader in a more intimate connection through gaze. Macaulay’s *Black and White* has a similar rodent, a small gray squirrel, in “Waiting Game,” who imitates and reflects the absurdity of the character’s actions by mimicking them. If the characters put on newspaper hats, the squirrel has a newspaper hat on. If the characters applaud, then the squirrel applauds. He is similar to Wise’s gray mouse, dashing about the page, always to be found in a new location.

Children are taught to read at a young age, but they are mainly educated in school to read words. Because of the lack of text to identify these unidentified, nameless characters, the audience must make cognitive leaps to correctly analyze the multiple narratives presented: visually, textually, and combined. Nodelman explains that without basic understandings of visual and verbal literacy, “children with little experience of books scan pictures [. . .] and consequently focus their attention on what are meant to be insignificant details” (7). He is both right and wrong. Yes, children do need certain skills to effectively navigate a picture book. However, as the little red bird illustrates, there are very few insignificant details thrown into picture books, especially Caldecott winners. And sometimes, the details and additional characters add a second narrative to

⁴ Pagination begins on the first illustrated page.

the original pre-text, adding to the reader's experience both enjoyment and an added layer for analysis.

Quadruple Sylleptic Narratives: *Black and White*

Multiple narratives need more sophisticated examination and attention from readers because of their multi-layered story. In *Black and White*, after briefly explaining the various narrative possibilities, Macaulay begins with this warning: "careful inspection of both words and pictures is recommended" (i). While this quote could be printed at the beginning of every picture book, the cautionary beginning is pertinent to *Black and White* because of its increased cognitive level in negotiating the puzzling, atypical, multiple narratives to combine them into related stories. Most people cannot read *Black and White* one time through and be finished or satisfied. The reader, especially the child reader, experiments with different sequential possibilities, probably first reading the entire book, then each of the four potential individual narratives: "Seeing Things," "Problem Parents," "A Waiting Game" and "Udder Chaos."

Macaulay, in his Caldecott Acceptance speech, remarks, "it is designed to be viewed in its entirety, having its surface 'read all over.' It is a book of and about connections – between pictures and between words and pictures" (410). Yet, he depicts the only true use of sylleptic multiple narratives within the Caldecott canon by having four narratives that can be read independent of each other. The uniqueness of the text revolves around the fact that while the four stories can be read as independent, combined they create an intertextuality of connectedness through overlapping situations, visual motifs and color. Macaulay begins his text with the following preface as a warning: "this book appears to contain a number of stories that do not necessarily occur at the same time. Then again, it may contain only one story." (i).

In case the reader missed the read warning box on the title page, Macaulay visually shows the overlapping nature and maneuverability between the various narratives by having the thief from “Udder Chaos” climb down a sheet rope, crossing and casting a shadow on the title page for “A Waiting Game.” All four narratives have unique artistic styles and predominant colors to set them apart. Yet in the penultimate spread, these styles and colors fade into black, white, and gray, erasing literal panel boundaries for just one instance and then revert back to distinct storylines on the final spread (26). However on the final spread, some of the intertextuality remains because the robber from “Udder Chaos” stands on the train platform of “A Waiting Game.”

Independent of each other, the stories may seem no different than other narratives, but combined and read together, the four narratives in *Black and White* intertwine temporally and spatially through odd moments in characters’ lives, through the use of black and white hues, and through repeated motifs of trains, newspapers, and cows that wander in and out of various panels. This creates a fractured, full-bodied narrative, split into four perspectives, told by four different narrators at different times. Yet sometimes, the physical panel boundaries break down, deleting line and panel restrictions, thus illustrating the interconnectedness of the four narratives.

Black and White won the Caldecott for its illustrations in 1991. This is the first instance of blatant multiple narratives, used in an experimental fashion. Two years later, *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales* illustrated by Lane Smith and written by Jon Scieszka, wins the 1993 Caldecott Honor Seal for fractured fairy tales that breaks narrative convention. *The Stinky Cheese Man* bridges the retellings

counterpointing multiple narratives with sylleptic choices, thus giving a median example between *Black and White* and *The Three Pigs*.

Black and White manipulates four complementing narratives; *The Stinky Cheese Man* manages a fractured story book with distinct fairy tales such as “The Really Ugly Duckling” and “Little Red Running Shorts” linked together through the peculiarity of their revisions and the persistent narrator of Jack; *The Three Pigs* begins with a traditional narrative, deviates from that narrative into the marginal space, and then eventually returns to the opening narrative to alter it in light of the other narratives presented. All three texts have at least one example of chaotic typography where the literal words are askew and falling down the page, illustrating the unstable nature of a multiple narrative and its potential to change and rewrite existing narratives.

Postmodern Multiple Narratives: *The Three Pigs*

One of the most experimental Caldecott Award winning texts is *The Three Pigs* (2002) by David Wiesner. It experiments with form through the medium of a picture book, challenging readers and breaking into boundaries not explored before, while grounding itself in a well-known story. As the chair of the 2002 Caldecott Award Selection Committee, Kate McClelland describes *The Three Pigs*:

Pigs burst through the pages' boundaries and soar into new dimensions. Transformations occur as the pigs boldly enter new stories, make friends, and ultimately control their own fate. Witty dialogue and physical humor make this a selection that will have youngsters squealing with delight. Through Wiesner's vision and artistic virtuosity, *The Three Pigs* celebrates possibility. (www.ala.org)

By including experimental texts in the Caldecott canon, the selection committees show that experimental behavior is acceptable, but only under the correct guidelines. Wiesner's visual narrative both revises and transforms the traditional version of “The Three Little Pigs,” utilizing the margin space and activity therein to displace and rewrite

both the original text and conventional illustrations. The revision happens inside the pre-text panels; the transformation occurs outside in the marginal gutter creating parallel visual narratives.

In Wiesner's acceptance speech for the 2002 Caldecott award, he asserts, "*The Three Pigs* is the culmination of nearly a lifetime of thinking about a particular visual concept. And it all started with Bugs Bunny" (393). He proceeds to describe an exact episode of Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd where they run out of the cartoon and into blank white space. Additionally, in his forward to *Wordless/Almost Wordless Picture Books: A Guide*, Wiesner credits the black and white woodcut images of Lynd Ward's *Madman's Drum* for teaching him "many things about conveying information visually and about pacing and rhythm of a story" (vii). The reader of Wiesner's book can see these influences of the graphic narrative styles of comics and cartoons in his adventurous pigs, all styles that effectively use multiple narratives. Wiesner demonstrates that multiple narratives, when used in conjunction with a folk or fairy tale revision, amplify the retelling's multi-leveled nature. After reading this picture book, no child will ever see "The Three Little Pigs" in the same light.

Wiesner's *The Three Pigs* develops fairy tale characters that not only step out of their archetypal roles, but also gain agency to create their own ending after exploring multiple stories. He capacitates the three pigs to jump out of their framed story book pages, explore their margin spaces, and share their freedom with others, thus concluding the multiple narratives in a politically correct, multi-culturally-embracing, reinterpreted, happily ever after ending. Wiesner empowers his characters to break free from their original frames and scripted roles thus regaining their personal voice by controlling and

retelling their individual stories outside of the prescribed boundaries of the pre-text narrative. Yet, they finally integrate back into their original story line, changing not only the visuals, but also the text. Within the constructed confines of a fairy tale (these boundaries literally beginning at “once upon a time” and ending with “and they all lived happily ever after”) Wiesner assembles counterpointing narratives to supplement the symmetrical narrative of the traditional tale.

The first narrative, the pre-text that begins the book, conveys the traditional story “The Three Little Pigs.” The second narrative augments the first, moving from frames into white space surrounding the first narrative. The true ingenuity of this text comes when the two narratives meet, combining both stories into an unusual, yet at the same time, traditional ending. Wiesner, through a comic framed parallel narrative, springboards from a traditional fairy tale, revising “The Three Little Pigs” to suit a postmodern viewing audience who can appreciate that not all stories are linear, and not all tales end exactly as expected. Children’s literature scholar Jack Zipes, writing generally of fairy tale retellings in *Sticks and Stones* notes: “as they explore neglected issues and dimensions [. . .], they define themselves in relation to these traditional pre-texts and thus provide a new understanding [. . .] while determining and predetermining the fairy tale in contemporary society” (123). The three little pigs, once outside of the pre-text, develop through exploration and experience, providing new understanding and meaning to their story and setting, eventually returning to their original story to impact it with their newfound agency.

Will Eisner notes that usually, “the first page of a story functions as an introduction. It is a launching pad for the narrative, and for most stories it establishes a

frame of reference” (62). However, Wiesner creates a false expectation, setting up the boundaries of a traditional fairy tale only to obliterate this expectation. The first part of *The Three Pigs* develops like a storyboard. The reader opens the book to a traditional picture book beginning: text and illustration incorporated into one picture with illustration that supports the expected text. And, it also begins with the cliché, “once upon a time” (Wiesner 1). The divided frames or balloons are not yet visible. Word balloons are only used when the pigs step out of the story frames into the marginal gutter, or “space between panels” (Eisner 163). In *The Three Pigs*, the art form does not initially dominate the reader’s attention, but as we extend beyond the frame of the original narrative, the visuals become increasingly more important. Continuing through the story there is a greater “interdependency of words (text) and image (art)” (Eisner 124).

This interdependency achieves an elevated level when the pigs begin their second narrative. It occurs in the white space outside the panels that constitute the margin or gutter between panels, the proverbial space between the lines. Eisner proposes, “if a rule is possible, I would ordain that ‘what goes INSIDE the panel is PRIMARY!’” (63). Wiesner’s key achievement in narration, however, comes not inside his panels but outside them. The panel may be considered a “single-sequence container,” within the field of action, but since Wiesner’s narrative expands outside the frame, the whole page becomes what Eisner terms a “super-panel [...] best employed for parallel narratives,” the exact function for which Wiesner uses the super-panel (80). Eisner continues,

In a plot where two independent narratives are shown simultaneously, the problem of giving them equal attention and weight is addressed by making the panel that controls the total narrative the entire page itself. The result, a set of panels within panels, attempts to control the reader’s line of reading so that two storylines may be followed synchronously. (80)

Wiesner not only relies on the stylistic choice of panels within panels to convey his double narration, but he also depends on the reader's familiarity with the traditional tale "The Three Little Pigs," the text of which is not included in this book in its entirety. Ironically, the double narrative begins not with the pig initiating his escape from the story, but with the wolf who huffs and puffs and blows the little pig out of the frame. The pig responds factually, "hey! He blew me right out of the story!" (Wiesner 3).

After this spatial rupture occurs, there is a breakdown between text and illustration in the pre-text narrative. Discrepancies between text and illustration appear with these alterations; the text within the panels informs the reader that the wolf ate the pig, yet the pig's involvement outside the panel confirms the truth in the pig's escape as he leaves behind a bewildered looking wolf.

Wiesner uses the illustrations within the panels as marginal gloss to contradict the "original" text. After the first pig is blown out of the panel, the text of the narrative remains consistent with the original, but the illustrations accompanying the text alter to prove what actually happens—the wolf does not eat the pig because the pig has been blown out of the wolf's visual plane. Therefore, in the illustration, the wolf shrugs his shoulders in disbelief, wondering where the pig has gone, while the text affirms that he "ate the pig up" (Wiesner 3, 5). This discontinuity between illustration and text within the panel continues throughout the entire first narrative.

Moreover, the pre-text panels are not the only instance where this glitch occurs; we also see it in the subsequent narratives that the pigs jump into. Graphically, the knight in the chivalric fantasy scratches his head and wonders where the dragon is while the text asserts that the prince "drew his sword, and slew the mighty dragon" (28). Words remain

fixed in tradition; illustration conforms. This could be accounted for because the traditional tale is not Wiesner's wording, therefore he has no control over the original text, only his unique illustrations. Once his illustrations (the pigs) gain agency through their exploration, they secure control over the original text, molding it to fit their paradigm. The three pig's story stagnates on the page, unable to change or move away from the "original" until they learn to wander in the margin becoming their own characters. Here they are given agency to become the characters they desire, not the characters scripted for them. They replace the original text with their own version, literally replacing the physical text by knocking the letters off the page before hanging them back up again.

While the pigs are wayward, escaping their original narrative and wandering within the margin, they also complete the original text by gaining their own voice to finalize the original text with the same expected wording of "and they all lived happily ever after" (Wiesner 38). But they do this through an unexpected means. The text of the original tale is unaware of their presence in the margin, evident by the text continuing as if the pigs are still in the panes, the illustrations are vividly aware that the pigs have escaped into the gutter. They both digress from the original text, while at the same time completing that text with a fuller explanation through multiple interpretations of their final panel. Without the marginal gloss of the pigs, the story would have remained just a simple telling of "The Three Little Pigs" with new illustrations by Wiesner. The addition of the pigs playing in the margin, the tension created between the original story and the use of marginal space unifies the parallel narratives into one cohesive, unique tale of textual displacement and revision.

The pigs gain distinction from the pre-text once they are outside of the panels and in the margin. The most evident and instantaneous change that occurs as the pigs retreat out of the rectangular panel is their appearance, which helps visually separate the two narratives. Visual segregation with varying artistic styles, colors, texture, and space is a common way to distinguish between multiple narratives. Blair Lent uses a similar visual distinction of color and detail to separate his parallel narratives in his 1973 Caldecott Medal winner, *The Funny Little Woman*.

The Three Pigs opens with the expected cartoon style animation within the frames. This style includes simplified, clean lines; uniform pastel colors; and a lack of detail. As the pigs step out of the frame into the white marginal space, they become less cartoonish as the style begins to more closely reflect reality. Details such as multiple colors, hair, and shadows are employed to create a realistic affect. But this is not the only change between the first narrative in the panel and the second narrative in the margin.

Differing typography in the font of the text delineates narratives. In the marginal second narrative, the New Century Schoolbook font of the pre-text converts to a more conversational typeset, illustrating the transition from didactic fairy tale to freedom and exploration through the font choice. Also, inside the panel, the pigs' scripted text is framed with quotation marks denoting their speech. Yet, all three pigs have the exact same dialogue: "not by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin" (Wiesner 2, 5). Hairs absent from their stylized faces until they enter the margin where they are drawn with an abundance of body hair. Outside of the panel, each pig speaks individually through word balloons, adjusting the method of speech to differentiate between the first and second narrative. This marginal gutter space thus becomes more realistic than the contrived

story in the frame, granting the pigs agency to begin creating their own story once outside their restricted, first narrative.

This exploration of self-identity leads them through other constructed tales, like the nursery rhyme and knight's tale, yet within these other tales, their presence has the power to alter illustrations, just as they altered illustrations within their own story. Only when the adventure concludes are they able to also alter text within the panels and rewrite their own story within the context of the original narrative.

Yet the pigs do not escape into the margin without a narrative attempt to recapture the traditional within-the-frame fairy tale storyline, depicted with one standard illustration with a frame per page. After the first pig escapes, the following page consists of a full page spread, visually forcing the story back into its first symmetrical narrative with illustration submitting to and illuminating text. However, the first little pig alerts his companion to the newfound world between the panels (Wiesner 4). The pigs then begin to explore their ability to disturb and move the panels, as seen in the wolf's panel tilted askew (6). Expanding their level of control over the panels, and simultaneously over their original narrative, the realistically rendered pigs fold the two-dimensional wolf up into a paper airplane, moving on with their new life. It is interesting to note that the pigs rely on their past narrative as a mode of transportation to search their new space, thus why these multiple narratives form a counterpointing picture book in place of the sylleptic picture book.

Although there is a deconstructive aspect of them riding on traditional voice, Wiesner uses this paper airplane as a way of connecting the two narratives. There is not a single spread absent of a panel in some shape or form: the margin cannot stand alone

without a panel to create a margin; the second narrative cannot exist without the first. Throughout the exploration, a spatial relationship between panel and margin is retained. The pig's exploration takes the form of a major wordless sequence in Wiesner's book. Here, the pigs disregard all semblances of rigid, rectangular panels when they fold up the wolf. They also disregard the super-panel, or the page boundaries, by flying out of the reader's line of sight and off the page, thus symbolizing their learned knowledge of how to break the rules and gain a euphoric freedom. Wiesner illustrates this exaltation through their visages displayed while the pigs contentedly coast on the airplane delighting in their surrounding and liberty (12-13).

Whether or not the nearly wordless flight scene was the pig's happiest moments or not, it is still the central sequence of motion and discovery that enlightens the entire second narrative. This narrative develops around the central flight, which visually stands out because of the mammoth white space allowed on the double spreads. White space could be seen as the lack or absence of background, liberating the pigs even more from the pre-text setting. In the forward to *Wordless/Almost Wordless Picture Books: A Guide*, David Wiesner self-reflects, "early on, I realized that creating a sequence of images was more interesting than just a single picture. Creating a wordless picture book requires great care and clarity in every aspect of the pictures making. Because the images are the 'text,' everything in them must contribute not only to the advancement of the plot but to revealing the emotions and feelings of the characters." (vii).

By disregarding the field of action, one pig shatters the imaginary fourth wall by informing his companions, "I think . . . someone's out there," speaking to the reader (20). This creates a higher level of involvement between the reader and the pig, reversing the

voyeuristic gaze from the character back onto the reader. Because the pig has been allotted agency over his domain in the margin, we, the readers, become another narrative possibility he could enter. By visually identifying the reader through his gaze and then verbally affirming the reader's presence, the pig has the possibility of joining our reality in the same way that he is about to join a nursery rhyme. Even though the pig is located off in the margin from the original three little pigs tale, once he recognizes the world outside of the picture book, the full spread of the picture book becomes a panel that he could escape from. While this might be impossible for a printed text to convey, it would be an action that one might expect in an animated cartoon or hypertext.

The white space of the marginal second narrative not only theoretically reflects back on the original narrative, but also becomes a haven for the pigs, a place to escape being eaten by the wolf. The first pig persuades the second pig to join the second narrative by telling him, "come on—it's safe out here," away from the restrictive pre-text (Wiesner 5). The pigs define their panels as confining and restricting in contrast to the openness of the white space where the one pig exclaims, "now we have room to move" (7). It is at this point that the pigs begin developing into fully rounded individuals with specific and unique characteristics, although they do retain some characteristics from the original tale. For example, the third pig who built his house out of bricks continues to be the wisest pig of the three even outside of the pre-text. In the margin they are given choices, not scripted lines, yet these choices come after the developmental preparation of the pigs.

Once outside the original panels of the first narrative, the three pigs navigate the marginal space of the second narrative, learning to interact with their new surroundings.

Accustomed to a rigid, rectangular panel guarding the confines of their existence, the pigs first advance through a tremendous void of white space, clearing the field of action from color and form. When speaking of the extensive white space in his text, Wiesner says, “but in the context of the story, that emptiness creates as much of a sense of place as does an elaborately detailed illustration.” (395). The white space is a distinct place—the margin of the first narrative and the setting for the second. It may be absent of any drawn setting, but it is a means to interact the pre-text with other narratives not their own. After flying around in the margin, they traverse through two independent narratives: a borderless nursery rhyme and a multi-paneled fantasy. They conclude back in the standard rectangular panel of the first narrative. Each additional narrative escalates the pigs’ experience and agency. The marginal second narrative transports the pigs between other narratives, but the original pre-text narrative constructs the organizational structure that unites each different story, connecting it to the next narrative.

After the airplane ride in the second narrative, the pigs’ first encounter with another story happens gradually over three spreads, slowly introducing them back to storybook characters, set panels, and scripted narratives. After their plane crash, the wisest pig notices a green tint at the top of the right hand page. He is the only one who notices and informs his two brothers, “hey! Over here!” (19). The wisest brother and the second wisest brother slowly stretch the independent, third narrative down into their space until the full page constitutes a new story completely removed from “The Three Little Pigs.” Yet this story is a return back to the basics of reading through a baby’s nursery rhyme. “Hey Diddle Diddle’s” illustrations are elementary with pastel colors and little detail into

which the pigs integrate, matching the color palette and style of the nursery rhyme illustrations.

Additionally, the nursery rhyme's panel is oval and fluid, bleeding into the white space instead of having a rigid border. The shape and lack of a border ease the pigs into their first attempt to invade another story. While they are able to enter the story, they neither talk to the characters nor directly influence any character. Moreover, the illustration continues to faithfully represent the text. The cat with the fiddle daintily steps out of the panel after her part in the rhyme finishes (23). Yet, the pigs do not have a direct influence on the third narrative: the cat's curiosity prompts her to follow their lead, step out of her fiddle solo, and join the pigs in the marginal white space (23). Later, as the pigs gain experience, they gain power over which texts they enter and power to effect elements within those narratives.

The fourth and final narrative they encounter depicts a black and white chivalric fantasy. This tale has neither the rigid border of the fairy tale, nor the fluid border of the nursery rhyme. As the middle stage, this medieval text has panels within panels that create a buffer zone for ease of entry. The multiple panels create a second layer of gutter space for the pigs to navigate and familiarize themselves with before delving into the actual text (26). And the pigs do just that. In a smaller, less prominent panel, we can see all three pigs riding on the dragons back drawn in the same pen and ink crisp style in which the dragon is drawn.

Additionally, the pigs directly influence the dragon to leave his panel. The situation of the fantasy text allows the pigs to actualize power in aid of the dragon because he is in the same situation of danger as the pigs were in with the wolf. The pigs

actively rescue the dragon from being slain by the prince, physically pushing him out of the frame. While the pigs indirectly influence the cat who willingly joins them, they forcibly alter the dragon's fate. But because the dragon has the help and experience of the pigs, he does not have to escape in stages, first through his own story gutter and then into the larger marginal white space. Instead, he leaves directly into the greater margin, curling his talons over his story's gutter, but never breaking the dimensional space of the gutter to enter his second narrative (27).

Once in the marginal second narrative, although the dragon and the cat stylistically take on the attributes of realism in their drawing, their speech remains that of their tale. This discontinuity creates a dissonance between text and illustration. The cat sings the chorus, "hey diddle diddle!" and the dragon eloquently thanks the pigs, "many thanks for rescuing me, O brave and noble swine" (Wiesner 29). The cat and dragon are not transgressing prescribed roles because they are not exploring their new identity in the second narrative yet. Also, both bring props from their original narratives with them as narrative links: the fiddle and the rose, which they carry till the end of the picture book. They not only bring these props along with them, but also actively use them in the final panel once the characters are settled into the pig's brick house: the cat plays her fiddle and the dragon displays his golden rose as the table's, and the whole panel's, centerpiece. Their inability to leave behind their old narratives has possible consequences that may leave the entourage in shambles, but before this final panel, the characters attempt to reconstruct the fairy tale with an ending more suitable to their liking.

Attempting to reestablish the original narrative of "The Three Little Pigs," the frame spreads back into a full-page panel (Wiesner 36). Here the additional characters

enter the three little pigs' realm, scare the wolf, and scatter the text of the traditional fairy tale thus merging all narratives into one collective, ur-narrative. By gathering up the scattered letters, the pigs and company can visually and textually reconstruct not only their new dwelling, but also the ending to their collective narrative. With dragon and cat in tow, the pigs reenter their pre-text home. When the pigs enter their original story, it is in the same panel from which the last pig left. Although the first narrative is chronologically in the same place (the text has not altered), the illustration of the wolf within the panel is different. The positions of the wolf within each panel connote instability, thus reflecting that what has occurred outside the panel—the pigs' exploration of their surroundings and the exercise of their own voices—has affected the traditional narrative. Indeed this schism between text and illustration further enforces the concept that the pictures not only fail to reinforce the text, but also suggest a second narrative that parallels the original.

The blending of the narratives occurs in the final panels, taking aspects from each one to create a final unified whole. Even though the pigs resume their storybook coloration once they are inside the pre-text panel, they retain agency over their destiny and story by controlling the text of the original story. However, once back in the pre-text story, none of the animals continue to speak, either through quoted dialogue within the rewritten text or through the word balloons used while they were in the margin. In fact, they never speak in any of the paneled stories. To save the dragon, the pig must first stick his head out of the panel into the margin to regain the power of speech (27). Without dialogue, the blending of the two narratives culminates with a merger in the last full-page panel. However, because it is a little pig placing the lettering up, we can

assume, even though there are no quotes or word balloons, that this is his voice—his curtailed voice.

In the final panel, the text remains incomplete: “and they all lived happily ever aft [. . .]” (Wiesner 38). The general reader may disregard this incompleteness and subconsciously fill in the last two letters: “e” and “r,” which the pig clutches in his hoof. So driven by the traditional narrative ending, it may not occur to the reader that instead of saying “after,” the final complete narrative concludes with “aft.”

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines “aft” as “behind, in the rear” and “of time: back from the present, earlier.” Do the characters only live happily ever after in their previous, individual narratives? “After” is also defined in the OED through time as “of time” or “next, following,” the opposite definition of “aft”. If they were only happy earlier, then what is the cause of their incomplete happily ever after now in their combined narrative? Or, does the little pig not have the time or ability to complete the word?

The answer may be found in the dragon’s gaze and countenance. Every other character in the last panel looks up expectantly at the little pig, but the dragon, while clutching the soup barrel in his talons, longingly hungers after the pig with a look of devious desire on his face. This is not the first time that the dragon has looked hungrily at the pig. When the two first meet in a sub-panel of the chivalric fantasy, the dragon watches the pig with the same mischievous grin, while the pig contentedly rides on the dragon’s back (Wiesner 26). In his original narrative, the dragon constitutes the villain who must be eradicated from the land. Why should the dragon lose his villainous character role just because he steps into the marginal second narrative? None of the other

characters have a drastic personality change, only a period of growth. The dragon still guards the golden rose even though the knight can not reach it, thus showing evidence that his old nature remains with him even in the new collective narrative. Within the final panels, evil has not been totally eliminated from the story as evidenced by the wolf sitting outside the window. It is quite possible that the dragon may take over the role of the wolf, not in huffing and puffing (though dragons are known for that with their fire-breathing ways), but in eating the little pig up.

“Aft” also holds a nautical or aeronautical denotation according to the *OED*, “of motion or direction: towards the stern, into the hinder part of the ship” or “of position: in or near the hinder part or stern of a ship. Also of an aircraft.” Note that it is not only a ship that uses aft, but an aircraft as well. The pig placing the final letters may be referencing the paper airplane they used previously in the text. One illustration in particular shows the aft of the airplane as well as the hindquarters and tails of the three pigs (Wiesner 14). Combining both meanings of “aft” (earlier and in the hinder part of an aircraft) confirms the exact moment of their happiness—their airplane ride. This is the moment when they are euphoric from escaping the wolf with their lives intact, and are on an exciting journey through uncharted marginal space. In the white space they are in a type of collective unconscious, linking to every narrative. Here they are free travelers with unlimited access to narratives. We can see an even greater connection with the enjoyment of the white space and my interpretation of aft because the pig placing the letters is the same pig that first initiates exploration of the white space (9) and then exploration into other stories (21). Him initiating this journey shows his enthusiasm, which later turns into longing as he reflects back. His longing constitutes the final

merger of the two parallel narratives. However, the pigs return to their pre-text, but not without nostalgia for the happy days within the margin's white space.

In *Sticks and Stones*, Zipes concludes that, "it is important to consider the unique aesthetic modalities that are employed to transform the ideological meanings of the pre-text, and it is especially significant to consider how illustrations and texts are used to counter each other in unique ways" (108-109). He also notes, "the most exciting work that is done in the illustration [. . . of] picture books involves the use of revised stories and sophisticated imagery to work against and question the pre-text" (116). Quite clearly, Wiesner has mingled illustration and text to suggest two differing, though connected, stories. By allowing the pigs to escape their traditional narrative that occurs within confining panels, Wiesner empowers the pigs to develop their own voices and ultimately to write and rewrite their own stories into another narrative. Indeed, it is in these marginal, gutter narratives that the truly interesting story takes place as the pigs revise and question their own pre-text in order to "all live happily ever aft[. . .]" (38).

Conclusion

Illustrator and Caldecott Honor winner Joseph Low explains, "the thing which is missing from most children's books is the thing which is at its peak in children's own work: spontaneous invention, emotional intensity, a natural use of the visual language" (125). Multiple visual narratives bring back these three missing elements, effectively integrating invention, emotion, and visual language into something both child and adult readers can enjoy.

Nodelman writes that, "narrative art is always a combination of pattern and randomness, order and disorder—one might even say, of abstraction and representation," (74). One can see pattern and randomness, order and disorder in the multiple narrative

picture books discussed. Leo and Diane Dillon's *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* displays both split and double narrative techniques in the mid 1970s, to be one of the first Caldecott winners attempting to experiment visually. David Macaulay, in the early 1990s, creates a quadruple sylleptic picture book that displays temporally displaced interconnectedness through visual clues and motifs. *Black and White* begins a small movement toward experimental multiple narratives. Again, in 2002, the Caldecott recognized another exceptional multiple narrative, David Wiesner's *The Three Pigs*. *The Three Pigs* alleviates the seemingly disconnected chaos of *Black and White* by using a traditional, well-known fairy tale as its narrative pre-text. These texts, through using multiple visual narratives, require more advanced analysis from readers than continuous narrative style and encourage creativity by breaking traditional conventions. Hopefully this trend of narrative experimentation will continue and more distinguished picture books will be available for children and adults to read and enjoy.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Cathlena Anna Martin's journey to graduate school in English began before she could read. Her mother would sit and "rock, rock, read" for hours in the rocking chair, thus instilling a natural love for books. Cathlena's strong reading education continued through high school at Briarwood Christian High School where her English teachers pushed her to excel. She went on to receive two bachelor's degrees, one a Bachelor of Arts in English and the other a Bachelor of Science in Education, from Samford University in Birmingham, AL. Again, strong English professors mentored her to continue schooling in English.

Cathlena's area of interest is children's literature, particularly visual narratives, fairy tales, and retellings. Once this thesis is submitted, Cathlena will take part of the summer off to go home to spend time with her parents, and then begin her Ph.D. studies at the University of Florida.