THE RESPONSE OF PRIMARY
CHILDREN TO PICTURE BOOKS

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By
Barbara Zulandt Kiefer

The Ohio State University
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Reading Committee:
Charlotte S. Huck
Johanna S. DeStefano
Kenneth Marantz

Approved by
Charlotte S. Huck
Adviser,
Faculty of Early and Middle Childhood Education
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VITA

September 21, 1944 ........ Born - Orange, New Jersey

1966 ......................... B.A. in Art Education,
                          Westminster College,
                          New Wilmington, Pennsylvania

                          Victorville, California

1973-1979 ..................... Teacher, Cardinal School District
                          Middlefield, Ohio

1979-1982 ..................... Graduate Teaching Associate,
                          The Ohio State University
                          Columbus, Ohio

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CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Background of the Study

The children have returned from lunch recess full of laughter and talk. They quickly settle themselves in a ragged semicircle at their teacher's feet. Mrs. Hall, holding a copy of Maurice Sendak's *Outside Over There* open at her left shoulder--pictures facing the children--draws their attention with the words: "This is one of those books." As she begins to read, their fidgets disappear; their eyes cease wandering around the room. A few kneel, bottoms on their heels; most sit Indian fashion, ankles crossed. Frowns of concentration appear, wrinkling little brows. Backs bend forward, heads tilting back; some rest their elbows on bent knees, chins cupped in half open fists. Eyes move rhythmically--some from teacher's face to book, to teacher's face again--others in little circles around the page. Many mouths hang slightly open; here a tongue peeks out to touch an upper lip, there two rows of little teeth chew gently on a bottom lip. The children listen, look, and talk, and look again. Several children glance quickly at a friend, smile, then look to the book again, glad that someone else is sharing their enjoyment.
Just as Sendak's heroine charms goblins with "a captivating tune" the teacher has worked her magic with a picture book and captured the imaginations of twenty-one first and second graders.

The scene is a familiar one to teachers and librarians who take time to read to children. Many parents, too, are familiar with the cry of "read it again" which represents the enthusiasm young children have for picture books. The combination of image and text in the form of a picture book may be a child's first introduction to literature and literacy. Yet the picture book has received little attention from researchers in either of these two fields.

During the past sixty years most of the research concerning picture books has sought to provide insight into children's preferences for illustrations in books. In his 1948 review of such a group of studies made during the 1920's and 1930's, Morton Malter (1948) declares that the major assumption of these studies is that

children's preferences should be considered in a) establishing educational objectives, and b) selecting materials to further objectives already selected....The studies thus provide data for a) persons concerned with establishing educational objectives, and b) those responsible for constructing materials of learning (e.g., authors, illustrators, editors) (p. 378).

Often, however, these studies were conducted for commercial rather than educational purposes. William Miller (1936), the author of one such study states:
If large proportions of the space in books are to be given over to illustrations, the cost of which appreciably conditions the price of books, it is proper to inquire which is the most suitable illustrative technique. If illustrations are to serve a useful purpose, they must appeal to children.... (p. 273.

Unfortunately for those authors, illustrators and editors who wished to make use of the studies to provide "suitable" illustrations, no firm conclusions regarding children's preferences were reached. Malter suggested that this may have resulted from the isolation of certain variables which might best characterize an illustration. He concluded that the results of these studies were "thus likely to be disappointing to a publisher or illustrator looking for a more specific type of directive" (p. 384) and suggested that other factors such as social setting, expert opinion, and the needs of children be considered when selecting illustrations.

Despite Malter's recommendations, researchers have continued to ask the same questions in regard to children's preferences for illustrations, and usually for the same reasons. In 1953 Gertrude Whipple conducted a preference study in order to "derive valid standards which could be applied by teachers and school officials to appraise the interest appeal of illustrative materials" (p. 262). In 1967, G. L. and Ruth Freeman suggested that "Future picture books can...be constructed upon the basis of exact information when we allow the child to choose the types of
illustrations which appeal to him" (p. 34). More recently Gerald Smerdon (1976) conducted research which attempted to compensate for weaknesses in the earlier studies by eliminating variables such as artistic style, color and technique. His conclusions regarding preference for realism, however, were similar to many earlier studies. And like the researchers before him, Smerdon finds "implications for adults, both for those who purchase and for those who prepare books for children" (p. 30).

It is possible that those "who prepare books for children" have paid little heed to the results of these preference studies when accepting picture books for publication. Certainly, an examination of recent offerings by our more distinguished houses of publication reveals a wide variety of the style and media used in illustrations of picture books. It is less certain, however, how those "who purchase books for children" have reacted to these preference studies. At a recent national conference, one librarian was asked how she would use the research reports of children's illustrational preferences. She responded, "Well, I guess I would use it to help select books for the kids. I guess I would try to select things kids really like." She later clarified these remarks by explaining that "of course" she knew other criteria entered into book selection besides children's preferences. But her response points out a problem that may exist on a wider scale among those who purchase books for children.
Students who enter the field of library science may likely do so out of an interest and affinity for the literary arts rather than the fine arts. Many of these students might agree with Egoff (1973) who decries the practice of allowing children to follow their preferences. She suggests that librarians and teachers must take their cue from Matthew Arnold and "propogate the best that is known and thought in the world" (p. 32). Librarians (and teachers) who are trained to recognize the best that is known in literature find that their training seldom extends into the field of visual art or aesthetics in general. Thus, it is possible that when called upon to make decisions about pictorial matters, as when selecting picture books, they might rely more heavily on "preference" studies and less on their own judgment.

It has also been shown (Nemeyer and Paul, 1975) that when ordering books many librarians tend to rely on reviews in library journals. Yet these reviews also stress concerns with written forms to the neglect of pictorial qualities of picture books. Kenneth Marantz (1977) has noted "a general reticence" in many reviews of picture books "to deal with the visual qualities of the pictures" (p. 149). He finds that reviews are often heavily balanced in favor of the literary aspects of the books rather than dealing with "the visual components which in reality are the picture book" (p. 151). Reviews that center so little attention
on these visual components may reinforce the uncertainty many librarians feel. Furthermore, as drastic cuts in municipal and educational budgets become more widespread, "those who purchase books for children" may become even more conservative in allocating their purchasing funds. In order to get the most out of their purchasing power, librarians and other book purchasers may tend to rely more heavily on expert opinion as represented by research conclusions.

An additional problem that arises in previous studies of children's preferences for picture books has been the failure to address findings to the classroom teacher who might also be assumed to have an interest in children's reactions to these books. Despite Malter's report that previous studies claim to be useful in setting educational objectives, few researchers attempt to make recommendations for classroom practice besides declaring that teachers should know what children like. Yet Gardner (1970) suggests that young children have the potential to take into account "subtle properties of pictorial materials," and that teachers might develop a variety of exercises which could "encourage flexibility in a child's responses while deepening his discriminative and evaluative powers" (p. 16). Cianciolo (1980) found that after a ten-week training session children were much more aware of and accepting of books that were illustrated with pictures done in a variety
of styles. Moreover, Storey (1979) found that group instruction centering upon three different styles of book illustration significantly increased verbal expression of response to picture books. These studies suggest that teachers might have an important role to play in expanding preferences for styles and media of illustration.

Problems with many previous studies of children's preference for illustrations may arise in part because of a confusion of the terms "preference" and "response." In his introduction, Smerdon (1976) discusses the importance of developing insight into children's responses to picture books. He asks "What kind of pictures evoke what kind of response from children?" and posits that the significance of the child's response might be greater than that of the adult's. Yet Smerdon concludes his study by discussing preferences as if the terms "preference" and "response" were synonymous.

Certainly, neither dictionaries nor Thesauruses would identify the two terms as synonyms. Response, according to Webster's New World Dictionary, is "any behavior resulting from an application of stimulus;" while preference means "greater liking; one's first choice." But Smerdon's interchanging of the two words reflects a confusion that may have grown from the relative isolation of scholars in the fields of literature and the visual arts.

When considering the nature of the interaction between reader and the work of art, literary researchers have
tended to discuss findings in terms of response (Purves and Beach, 1972) while studies of viewer and art object seem to have focused on aesthetic preferences or judgments (Williams, 1932; Katz, 1944; Hutt et al., 1976). These two differing approaches have widened the gulf between the two fields, at least on the surface, and led many in literary circles to accept the term "preferences" in regard to visual works when they would not accept that term in regard to literary matters.

The fact that with picture books we are dealing with a unique art form, equal to far more than the sum of its parts (i.e., literary text and pictorial text), may have led to this confusion of terms and to the attempt to separate the art object into isolated variables in order to know more about children's reactions. Thus far these studies have tended to concentrate on the book's pictorial aspects and seem to have focused on what children like rather than how they respond. Yet respected theorists in the field of aesthetics would agree that this is a facile explanation for what is a complicated and involved process. Langer (1978), for example, rejects the notion that art can be described in terms of pleasure or mere liking, especially in light of the "intrinsic unpleasantness of much contemporary art" (p. 205).

Warlow (Meek et al., 1978) describes the response process as "essentially affective, what D. W. Harding calls
the outcome of complex interaction among mutually entangled systems of sentiment" (p. 96). To limit studies of children and picture books to what they prefer denies the complexity of these interactions and eliminates possible insights which might broaden educational understandings. Bloomer (1960), for example, found that when asked to choose a favorite picture, and then choose a picture to write about; children generally chose their least favorite picture, and wrote more complete stories for those pictures (that is, they added beginnings and endings to the events pictured). He states:

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clearly a different task evolved for the child when asked, on the one hand, for the picture he preferred, and, on the other hand, to respond to some picture. The child seemed to prefer the picture that was most complete and satisfying to him and that stimulated some fantasy. But when the child was required to respond to a picture, the illustrations that he disliked seemed to provoke more tension and hence produced a response toward resolution. (p. 338).
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Barto (1979) describes children's reactions to her poem about a well-loved but battered teddy bear. When the poem was first published, the artist had depicted a bear with his paw bandaged. "The artist had not wanted to upset the child, intimating that now nothing hurt the teddy bear, and all the unpleasant things were gone" (p. 12). Yet Barto found children reacted indifferently to the poem and illustration. In a later edition, however, when the bear was pictured without its paw, children responded with
expressions of sympathy, concern, and personal recollections. The artist who had drawn the first illustration later remarked, "evidently I deprived the child of the possibility to act" (p. 12).

Asking the child what he "prefers" may indeed deprive him of a range of responses which center around an important part of his emotional development, but which are not always part of his conscious awareness. Bettelheim (1976) discusses the child's need to deal with both the rational and irrational elements of his personality. While the child can deal with his rational side at first hand, he is often unable to come face to face with his emotional side. "The child must somehow distance himself from the content of his unconscious and see it as something external to him to gain mastery over it" (p. 55). Indeed, while the child may not directly verbalize these feelings, they are often apparent in the narrative he constructs. Applebee (1978) found that children's stories often focus on the consequences of violating social expectations. When children do depict unacceptable actions, however, they are more likely to exclude themselves from the narrative and to use less realistic settings. A focus on children's preferences may fail to elicit those responses which could furnish insights into key thoughts and feelings.

Studies which describe children's preferences also fail to account for individual variations in response.
Rosenblatt (1938, 1976) describes the necessity of considering both the individual reader and the book when planning educational experiences. In discussing personal reactions to picture books, Marantz (1977) states that there is no "common denominator among children's appreciative interests or abilities" (p. 151). Instead, Marantz describes the individual art experience as the "somewhat mysterious and always personal reactivation of the book experience, each time a bit different as metaphors grow richer" (p. 151). The depth of a response and its change over time are not often described or accounted for in a great many of the illustrational preference studies to date, nor is the importance of considering these individual responses when planning relevant educational programs.

Not only do many studies relating to children and picture books fail to consider a wide range of possible responses children might make, but they also fail to consider the particular nature of the picture book itself. Huck (1961, 1979) defines the picture book as "one that conveys its message through two media, the art of illustrating and the art of writing. Both media must bear the burden of narration in a well-designed book that reflects its whole character" (p. 112). Bader (1976) explains,
pictures and words, on the simultaneous display of two facing pages, and on the drama of the turning of the page" (p. 1).

Marantz (1977) argues that picture books "...are dependent upon their sequencing and the overall design of page and book, and so suffer a loss of meaning and significance when separated and displayed" (p. 148).

Yet researchers, in order to limit the number of variables which might affect children's choices, often remove illustrations from the context of the book (Martin, 1931; Whipple, 1953) when obtaining children's preferences. Others present children with a series of photographs or drawings which have been prepared especially for their studies (Bloomer, 1960; Miller, 1936; Rudisill, 1952). Still others use mechanical devices which flash pairs of pictures in an exposure box (Freeman and Freeman, 1933, 1967) or on a large screen (Smerdon, 1976). All of the above studies, however, purport to relate their findings to book illustrations and/or picture books.

Berridge (1980) summarizes past preference studies:

From Rudisill in 1952 to Hutt in 1976 and Smerdon in 1977 the same fault persists; that of generalizing from data in an artificial testing situation because of the need to restrict the variables in the interest of scientific objectivity (p. 26).

She calls for

...studies where the research is less esoteric and more applicable to other situations; less concerned with artificial constraints in the name of scientific rigour and more concerned with finding out what children think and feel in normal circumstances (p. 27).
Bloomer (1960) also concluded that "further experimentation seems warranted to determine the factors in the child or his environment that predispose his response to pictures" (p. 340). Purves and Beach (1972) in discussing the complexity of the nature of response to literature note:

It may be that the process is so complex that one can never map the domain of response to literature fully, yet researchers should not give up the attempt. Continuing exploration will help curriculum builders and teachers better understand the articulations, or lack of them, of their students, better structure activities that enhance both cognitive and affective goals and better define just what it is they want to teach (p. 175).

In view of these recommendations and the above considerations, it seemed warranted to observe children in the course of their interactions with picture books in a natural setting such as an elementary school classroom, and to ascertain through observation and interviews, responses over time to picture books in a variety of styles and genre.

**Statement of the Problem**

During the past sixty years, many studies relating to children's picture books have been conducted for the purpose of aiding publishers in constructing books that children will like, and in helping book purchasers buy books that children prefer. Seldom have insights been sought which would lead teachers to plan programs that are more relevant to individual needs. In addition, research often has focused only on illustrations and has thus removed pictures from the
context of the book, failing to consider the integrity of the picture book as an art object. Current understandings in the field of children's literature suggest that the term "preference" fails to account for a wide range of personal response which may be desirable as a result of a child's interaction with a book. There is a need to broaden understandings regarding a wide range of responses that individual children make to particular picture books in order to give publishers, librarians, and teachers a wider frame of reference.

The purpose of this study is to use techniques of qualitative research to examine and describe the response of first/second grade children to picture books in a natural setting in order to formulate problems, classifications, and hypotheses regarding (1) responses to picture books, (2) the relations of these responses to styles and techniques of illustration, and (3) to use insights gained to make recommendations for specific classroom practices which would enable teachers to enhance and deepen initial reactions to picture books.

**Definition of Terms**

For purposes of clarity and consistency, the following terms will have these meanings in the context of this study:

1. **Picture book.** An art object which is dependent upon a succession of pages to convey a message. This message may be presented solely in pictures or through a combination of pictures and written text.
2. **Response to picture books.** The interaction between reader and book that involves a variety of verbal and nonverbal reactions. Response involves the giving of meaning which changes and may grow more profound over time.

3. **Style in picture books.** The artist's manner of expressing. The artist's manner concerns the choices made regarding the elements of design, technique, and pictorial conventions as well as idiosyncratic aspects involved in conveying meaning.

**Results of the Pilot Study**

Questions which will serve as a basis for gathering data were formulated as a result of a pilot study conducted in the spring of 1981. In this study, methods of qualitative research were applied to determine the reactions of individual students in a combination first/second grade classroom which consisted of 19 second graders and 4 first graders to selected picture books over a period of ten weeks. The site chosen was an "alternative" school in an upper middle-class suburb of Columbus, Ohio. The classroom used an informal approach to education modeled on the British system. The curriculum was organized around themes or topics in which books of all kinds played a major role. The students were encouraged to read a variety of picture books and to react both verbally and nonverbally to these books. I assumed the role of participant observer for a period of ten
weeks, recording background data and events by means of descriptive notes and anecdotal records (see Appendix A). In addition, written work and other products of the children which were relevant to their reactions to picture books were analyzed (refer to Chapter III, pp. 98-107).

As the study progressed, certain key themes regarding children's response to picture books began to emerge. These seemed to center on the responses of the children to a variety of picture books, the way the responses changed over time, and the influence of the setting (most specifically the teacher) on these responses. Data were then examined and organized in four general categories: changes among children, changes between books, changes over time, and the context in which these changes occurred.

Changes Among Children

The bulk of the data centered on the differences and similarities noted in the ways in which children responded to books. As I reviewed the data, I found that these responses could be categorized as follow: how children choose picture books, how children look at picture books, how children talk about picture books, what children see in picture books, and what behaviors and products grow out of their contacts with picture books.

How children choose picture books. On one of my early visits to the site I accompanied the children to the library. The librarian read to them and then spent a
short time telling the children how books were arranged on the shelves. To illustrate, she showed them that the Dr. Seuss books were shelved under the letter S.

When the children were allowed to choose their books, many of them went first to the books which were placed on top of the shelves—covers facing forward. The children picked these up, looked at the covers, and then leafed through the books. If none of these books seemed to interest them they turned to the bookshelves. Many of them looked first through the S selections—especially the Dr. Seuss books. As they waited to check their books out, they leafed quietly through them.

In the classroom, books that the teacher read to the group were often popular. Generally, four or five hands would go up following the reading asking, "May I have that book?" In addition, the teacher would often single out books on display for the children's attention. Peer influence also seemed a factor in the way children chose a book. Children often read in pairs and thus one child would introduce a book he liked to his partner. On other occasions there seemed to be a classroom grapevine operating. These children seemed especially interested in books that had "secrets"—books with illustrations that portrayed stories or riddles not presented in the text itself. When one child discovered a book with "secrets," it was not long before most of the children had read it, although there
was no general announcement made concerning the book's qualities. Rather, it seemed that these "secret" books were talked about in "secret."

**How children look at picture books.** In this classroom children generally experienced picture books in three different ways: group reading, partner reading, and sustained silent reading (individual reading). During group reading the teacher would read the picture book by holding the book at her left shoulder with illustrations facing the children. The children sat in a semicircle around the teacher; toward the back the children were more loosely grouped. As the teacher read, some children (especially those in the front) seemed to scan the page. Their eyes moved around in a circular motion, seldom resting on any one point even when the teacher stopped reading for discussion. Other children glanced back and forth from the book to the teacher's face in a rhythmic fashion. Others, usually those at the back of the room, looked at each other or at different spots in the room as well as at the book.

During partner reading each child chose several books, and the partners took turns reading to each other. Edward and Tommy, for example, took turns reading each page of *Jumanji*. Edward, on the right, covered up the pictures with his elbow as he read the text. The partners did not spend much time looking at the illustrations at first, but as the
tension of the story built they stopped to inspect the pictures more carefully. Once the climax had been reached, however, they gave the illustrations only a quick glance as they finished the text. Other pairs of children often gave more attention to the pictures as they read, stopping to discuss what they saw or thought.

In sustained silent reading, the children (and teacher) knew that they were expected to read to themselves for a preset period of time. The children evidenced a wide variety of behaviors during this individual reading. Some picked the book up and leafed through it from back to front before they began to read. Others began at the front end pages and looked slowly through the entire book, then went back and began reading the text. Still others began reading immediately, looking at pictures as they went. Many of the children spent time looking at pictures that accompanied each page of text. Peter, for example, inspected each illustration carefully as he turned to a new page. Then he read the text, occasionally glancing back at the picture as he read. Other children read first and then examined the illustrations. Of these, some merely glanced at the picture while others gave it more attention.

Toward the end of my observation I asked children how they liked to look at a new book and handed them a recently published book, Jumanji by Chris Van Allsburg. Many of them stated that they looked at new books "carefully," examining
first the cover, then the end pages, title pages, and dedication pages. Sixteen children (8 girls and 8 boys) said they looked at all the pictures first and then went back to read. Seven children (4 girls and 3 boys) said they liked to begin reading right away. Jenny explained, "I like to look at pictures first to get a hint about what it's going to be about. It's hard for me to understand the book without looking at the pictures first."

**How children talk about picture books.** As I listened to these children talking about picture books, I noticed that they often used a very specialized vocabulary. They mentioned title pages, dedication pages, endpapers, artist's "technique" or his "media," and words pertaining to media—like collage, watercolor and acrylics. For example, Lisa in discussing John Goodall's books explained that he used half pages or "three pages to make one whole picture" (the middle page is cut in half).

On other occasions, children created words or metaphors which more closely reflected their own experiences when they described books. Ricky assured the group that an artist had used "color concussion [sic]" to create one-color wood block prints. He knew this because "I looked carefully at the pictures with a magnifying glass." Children used words like "pumpy" or "mashed potatoes" to describe Tomie De Paola's distinctive clouds. Hildy described Sendak's elaborate illustrations in *Outside Over There* as "lushy,"
while Joan called them "antique." The ripples of foam on the lake in **Dawn** were compared to "whipped cream men put on to shave."

At times, words in their own vocabulary seemed inadequate to express more abstract qualities of art which they might not have fully understood. Alan had a hard time explaining why he felt a carriage was made of metal. He could only say that "it had a metal look," and could not explain how the artist might have accomplished this. Often, children would point to pictures to explain their reasoning. Alan, in comparing two books said, "It looks like he used a different style." When I asked him what he meant by style he explained, "Look, it kinda goes weessh umm," and his hand made a curving sweep. He ended, sounding slightly frustrated, by stating: "and anyway - they're not the same name" (pointing to the illustrators' names on the covers).

I found that picture books often engendered detailed discussions not only with the teacher, but also with each other. Especially during partner reading, children would stop and talk with each other about the books. They often expressed feelings. "Oh, don't show that picture, it's so sad," said Jenny of a closeup showing a dog covered with porcupine quills. Karen explained that a picture in **We Be Warm Till Springtime Comes** made her feel "like I'm on my Mommy's lap." They also made predictions and inferences regarding stories. Roger and Steven decided that the
story in *Outside Over There* is really a dream because there is a sleeping shepherd on one page and "you count sheep when you dream." They often asked questions about the story. Amy wondered why the strawberry snatcher in *The Grey Lady and the Strawberry Snatcher* had mushrooms coming out of his feet, or why he had red stains on his fingers. Often the children simply exchanged information. While looking at Goodall's *Story of an English Village*, Peter explained, "You can really tell what the weather is." Alan agreed: "The sunny sky is a lighter blue, the rainy sky is a greyish blue."

**What children see in picture books.** Not only did these children have specific ways of talking about picture books, but they also talked about particular aspects of what they saw in these books.

First, they talked about details in the pictures as often, or more often, than the pictures in general. As my observations progressed, I found that the children often mentioned very small details that I had overlooked. In a group session on one occasion Alan, who had been sitting in the back of the circle (about twelve feet away from the book) and who had only sporadically looked at the book, nevertheless noticed that the small figure in Carle's *The Hole in the Dyke* was wearing wooden shoes. The first thing that Amy mentioned about *The Grey Lady and the Strawberry Snatcher* was that the Strawberry Snatcher had
mushrooms growing under his feet. Several children on separate occasions mentioned that the Grey Lady sees the Strawberry Snatcher trying to snatch her berries, although she is pictured with her back toward him, and only a tiny spot of white in her eye shows she may be glancing over her shoulder. Other children mentioned tiny sheep or gnomes in De Paola's *The Legend of Fin M'Coul*. When the teacher read *Dawn*, many children pointed out the thin lines of color around the pictures which may have resulted when color overlays did not quite match. Peter showed me a tiny book lying on the floor on one double-page spread of Shulevitz's *Oh What a Noise*. The book is less than one inch wide, yet Peter showed me that the title written on its spine is the same as the title of the book.

Many children were intrigued with details in the pictures in *Ms Glee Was Waiting* (Donna Hill). Tommy noticed that the tiny clock on the cover said four o'clock and that by the end of the book one hour and five minutes had passed. Other children found a small map on the dedication page which is the clue to a secret contained in the story. Still others found a child's drawing of Ms Glee's house on the title page and connected it to a picture of Ms Glee's house in the story.

Often, the details a child noticed seemed especially unusual. On one occasion, Roger insisted that *Mother, Mother, I Want Another* (Maria Polushkin) was by the same
author as *I Saw A Ship A Sailing* (Janina Domanska). I tried to hypothesize some reason for this statement, but could find few similarities in style or story between the two. When I asked Roger for his reasons, he explained that they had "the same writing." And indeed, both books were printed in Abbot Old Style—a rather unusual and stylized type. The letters on each cover were only an inch high, but he had focused on these rather than other aspects of style or subject matter.

Children often talked about details which seemed relevant to recent experiences. Through the period of observation many children mentioned aspects of pictures which dealt with the time theme they were studying—especially clocks or the passage of time. On another occasion, Jenny and Lisa mentioned pictures in *We Be Warm Till Springtime Comes* which reminded them of a technique they had used in art just recently. Amy declared that a character in *The Grey Lady and the Strawberry Snatcher* must be from "Portugal or Japan. My sister has a doll that has shoes like that."

Behavior and products which grow out of contact with picture books. Oral language that resulted from children's immediate contact with a picture book was certainly one form of response which I observed. In addition, I found other behaviors and products which took longer to develop, but which also seemed to constitute response to picture books. For the most part, these responses originated with
the child. The teacher would help children who wanted to execute a particular project (like a mural), but would rarely assign such work to children.

One of the first behaviors I noticed in these children was simply repeated readings of books. One reading of a book seldom seemed to be sufficient for many of the children. I often found children rereading books I had seen them with on previous occasions. When I asked Amy if she had looked at *The Grey Lady* and the *Strawberry Snatcher* since my last visit she said, "I keep on going back. I picked it up every day." This seemed to summarize the responses of many of the children.

Children often connected new books with other books they had read. When the teacher read *Ben and the Porcupine*, Ricky remembered information about porcupines he had read in *Animal Fact and Animal Fable*. Many children connected the toy dog in *Jumanji* to the real dog in *The Garden of Abdul Gasazi* by the same author. Others compared the rainbow in Carle's *The Mixed Up Chameleon* to the sunrise in *Dawn*. When the teacher read *Outside Over There*, Peter recalled *The Story of an English Village* because there were "faint houses way out here next to the mountains."

Sometimes children drew on experiences outside the classroom to make comparisons. Ricky told me that the butler in *Bill and Pete* was like the T.V. character in Richie Rich cartoons. Hildy wanted to know if *Outside Over There* was a Bible story.
Many times, contact with picture books was reflected in the stories children told or wrote. Alan made up a story in which the strawberry snatcher put on their teacher's clothes and tried to impersonate her. Mrs. Hall reported that on a field trip the children declared that they had "seen" Ms Glee's house. In Karen's story, "The Cuckoo Clock That Stopped," the villain is struck blind—a reflection perhaps of the fate of the stepsisters in Hogrogrian's Cinderella, which she had read some days previously.

On three occasions that I observed, children chose to dramatize picture books. When I arrived, the children were presenting a play—a result of the teacher's reading of De Paola's The Comic Adventures of Old Mother Hubbard. Later, several girls found some hand puppets and presented versions of Cinderella after several of the Cinderella books had been shared in class. At the end of my visit, Amy and two other children were preparing their version of The Grey Lady and The Strawberry Snatcher.

Finally, the children often created art work that reflected their use of picture books. Two group murals were made during my observations. One group of children created a mural about Hutchins' Clocks and More Clocks, and another group did a mural based on Ms Glee Was Waiting. In both cases the children seemed to want the book close to them as they worked. At one point, work on Clocks and
More Clocks was halted because the book was lost. Yet the children rarely copied artists' techniques, did not always use the same media, and seldom reproduced copies from the book. The Clocks and More Clocks group created a house that was similar to Hutchins', and they tried to include many of the objects in Hutchins' house. The children's renditions seemed to be products of their own imagination, however. Hutchins' grandfather clock had angular, straight line details while the clock in the mural was filled with curlicues. In the Ms Glee mural the children moved even further away from the original work. Dawson's pictures are black line drawings with two-color overlays, giving shades of yellows and reds to the pictures. The children, however, chose to use collage, tempera, and marbelized chalk cutouts. Even though several children began coloring in reds and yellows there seemed to be no conscious connection with Dawson's work. When I asked Amy if she consulted the book, she said she decided what colors to use without looking at the book: "I picked red because I wanted to do red." Roger, who used yellow, orange and violet, said he chose those colors because "it makes it more colorful."

At other times the influence of picture books is more subtly expressed. When Ricky showed the class his story about clocks, several children said it reminded them of Slobodkin's The Late Cuckoo Clock. Ricky declared he had some other book in mind, yet when I compared his jeweled
clock with one in Slobodkin's story I found they were almost identical. Even more striking was the resemblance of Peter's picture of himself in his room at night to the bedroom in Shulevitz's *Oh What a Noise*. This was a book which Peter had shared with me about a month before. He had been absent from school for two weeks, and when he returned the student teacher had read Barrett's *I Hate to Go to Bed*. Peter and several other children had done pictures of themselves following the reading. When I compared Peter's drawing to Shulevitz's, I found many similarities which were not present in Barrett's book. Peter's walls were bright green and his door bright pink. Shulevitz's walls were bright pink and his door bright green. In both pictures there is a brown bookcase or bureau on the left-hand side. In both there is a figure in or near the bed on the right, only facing in opposite directions. Like Shulevitz, Peter showed two back walls of the room meeting in a corner. None of the other children had portrayed this aspect of perspective. In fact, I believe it is unusual for children Peter's age to include this in their drawings.

**Changes Between Picture Books**

While changes among individual children seemed to comprise the bulk of the data, these changes were the result of the children's responses to a wide variety of picture books.
The teacher was knowledgable about and familiar with a large number of picture books in various styles and techniques and kept many books on hand in the classroom. I estimated that there were between 400 and 500 books available at one time to children in this classroom. These books represented a cross section of children's picture books presently in print. There were wordless picture books, alphabet books, counting books, storybooks, informational books, and books of rhymes and poetry. Well-known children's book authors and illustrators were widely represented and displays often centered around a number of titles by the same author or illustrator. The books included illustrations originally executed in a variety of media such as woodcut, collage, watercolor, oil, acrylic, pen and ink, pencil, pastels, and crayon; and a variety of artistic styles from abstract to realistic to surrealistic. Techniques included full color, one- or two-color overlays, black and white artistic executions, and black and white photographs. In short, many of the variables examined separately in the above-mentioned preference studies were included within the contexts of the books the children used.

While I made no attempt to keep track of the books the children were using according to such variables as style or media, I did note children's responses to several books which did not conform to conclusions reached by many of the preference studies. Many previous researchers (Miller, 1936
Rudisill, 1952; Stewig, 1975) found that children did not like black and white illustrations. However, I observed three books in black and white make the rounds of the class. Karen read We Be Warm Till Springtime Comes and talked about her feelings with the class: "When I read this book I got a special feeling." Mrs. Hall (the teacher) asked, "How did it make you feel?" Karen answered, "That you're sitting with them. Willie D. Chapman [The author] uses words like he was talking." Amy and Mary read The Garden of Abdul Gasazi by Van Allsburg. They told the class the pictures were "neat, he sketches them with pencil and ink." When someone remarked that "the pictures are pretty good even though they're not in color," Karen declared, "Just because they're not colored doesn't mean they're not good." Steven agreed: "Pictures don't have to be in color. In true life a bridge isn't yellow."

I followed their comments up later when I asked them to read Van Allsburg's latest book, Jumanji, also in black and white. Steven elaborated his earlier statement: "It's harder when it's in black and white. It takes more time and you don't just whip through the book." He explained that the monkeys hiding in the closet would have been easier to see if they were in color. "You like to take time," he said. At another time Edward agreed that the book "looks better in black and white," but disagreed as to why. He pointed out a picture in which a python's skin
had the same pattern as the chair's upholstery. "You can see it easy," he said of the two patterns, "color would be too hard." Tommy agreed with Steven's earlier statement that not all things in life have colors; "Walls are usually grey, doll houses white, and rhinos greyish."

Other art elements that some researchers had determined children did not like were present in a wordless picture book by Mollie Bang, The Grey Lady and the Strawberry Snatcher. The artist used some unusual techniques in this book. The Grey Lady's clothes are the same mat grey color as the background which allows the Grey Lady to disappear on occasion, but which is confusing at times. In addition, instead of the usual half-page and double-page sequencing, the story changes in mid-page so that sometimes there appear to be two Grey Ladies or two Strawberry Snatchers. Perspective is often distorted and the illustrations are surrealistic in style—a Chinese princess carrying a basket of writhing eels rolls down the street on a skateboard, mushrooms grow under the Strawberry Snatcher's feet, and a Buddha sits in a window next to an Early American quilt. Despite its nonconformity the book proved to be tremendously popular with many of these children, and the responses which grew out of the book's initial appearance in the classroom are indicative of the changes which occur in response over time.
Changes Over Time

Previous studies that relate to children and picture books generally were conducted within one short period of time. In most cases, children were asked what they preferred at a given moment and no attempt was made to examine those preferences further. During my observations, however, I found children returning to some books many times—rereading them, talking about them, and responding in a variety of other ways. A good example of how one child's response to a book changed and deepened over time occurred with Amy and the previously described *The Grey Lady and the Strawberry Snatcher* by Mollie Bang. The Grey Lady buys a basketful of strawberries and sets off for home. The Strawberry Snatcher appears and tries to grab her basket. She leads him on a chase past city buildings, in and out of a bus, and into a forested swamp where a wild game of hide and seek ensues. Finally, the Grey Lady leads the Strawberry Snatcher past a raspberry patch. His attention is diverted by the lush berries, and the Grey Lady arrives home safely where she shares her berries with her rather unusual family.

During one of my visits, Mrs. Hall had placed the book and a box of fresh strawberries in the library corner with a sign that read: "The Grey Lady loves strawberries. Do you?" I watched as Amy picked the book up and leafed through it from back to front. I asked her what she thought. "Strange
pictures," she replied, "people are like vanishing. You can only see their ears. That must be the Strawberry Snatcher." She leafs through it again, back to front. "Yeah, that must be the Strawberry Snatcher." At this point she put the book back and walked away. Mrs. Hall was standing nearby and asked her what she was thinking. Amy returned to the book and picked it up. "They're strange looking characters. You can tell this guy's the Strawberry Snatcher," she told the teacher. Mrs. Hall replied, "You know what this reminds me of? When you finished Ms Glee... you asked me to find more books like that." Amy brightened. "You can find clues?" she asked. "Have you found clues?" answered Mrs. Hall. Amy looked at the book with renewed interest. Her teacher thus sparked a series of responses in Amy that were still going on when I left the class almost a month later.

On this first day Mrs. Hall and Amy spent some more time discussing the book, looking at the cover flaps and making inferences about the setting. Amy stated: "You can tell this is like from a Chinese story," and pointed out the lady on the skateboard and the Buddha figurine. "It must be in the old times," she said, indicating the brick sidewalk, "where we live they wouldn't be carrying around snakes." She was intrigued by the red on the inside of the Strawberry Snatcher's fingers and decided this must be strawberry juice.
She brought the book to me and looked through it again from the beginning, talking through her ideas aloud. She noticed the fruit seller's green thumb and the mushrooms growing beneath the Snatcher's feet. "I betcha he lives in the forest," she told me, "see, that's how he gets mushrooms coming out of his feet." She decided that the forest is really a swamp because the Snatcher gets all "smeary," which indicated there was water there. At this point she seemed confused by the sequencing and decided that there were two Grey Ladies and two Strawberry Snatchers. She also referred to the Grey Lady as a "he" (although she read the title to me). She concluded that the Grey Lady got home safely: "He lets his family have a couple of strawberries and then the box is all empty. And then the last page is like the back and the front page is like the page right next to it."

She took the book back to Mrs. Hall and explained, "Hey, Mrs. Hall, he fell in the lake and got all smeary... and you can't see any strawberry stuff (red stains). That's what happens to me. I get all red all over my fingers at my Grandma's cabin." She eventually put the book back and returned to her other work. During the remainder of the morning I saw other children look at the strawberries, but only Ricky picked the book up, and he put it back after quickly leafing through it.
When I returned to the class several days later, Amy greeted me at the door with The Grey Lady...in hand. She was anxious to tell me that she had found new "secrets" and explained that the fruit seller at the beginning of the book was really the Strawberry Snatcher. She pointed to the Snatcher's hat. "See, that's his magic hat. He can change into the fruit seller and the lady in the telephone booth." Her reasoning seemed logical. The Snatcher's head is covered during the entire book until his last appearance in the raspberry patch when his hat falls off to reveal a full head of yellow, wiry hair. The fruit seller and the lady in the telephone booth have almost identical hair (which seems anomalous with their Negroid features).

It seemed Amy had given the book some attention since she had first approached it. She agreed: "I picked it up every day." She had also discovered that there was only one Grey Lady and referred to her as a "she." In addition, Amy told me that now she knew that the Grey Lady had grey hair and a grey cape, and not a funny hat as she had thought before. She also found another "secret" in the Grey Lady's house at the end of the book. The two small pictures (of a young couple) on the wall meant the old man in the room was the Grey Lady's husband. The pictures were of them "when they were younger."

On this visit, Lisa and Linda were looking at The Grey Lady and the Strawberry Snatcher. Amy informed me that
several other children--Joan, Mary and Steven--had also discovered some "secrets." When I asked the teacher if she had talked about the book to the class, she said she had not, but that Amy's enthusiasm for the book had spread to these other children. Each time I returned during the following weeks, more children had looked at the book. In fact, it had become so popular that it often could not be found, and one of the children stated that there must be a "book snatcher" in the room. At one point during group discussion following silent reading, Mrs. Hall saw Amy with *The Grey Lady...* on her lap. "Look what Amy's got. Would you identify Amy with that book?" she asked the class. She wondered how many children had not seen the book. Four children raised their hands. "You're missing a treat," she told them.

Amy continued to respond to the book as time went on. She spent some time looking at another Bang book, *Wiley and the Hairy Man,* that Mrs. Hall had found. Eventually, she found an identical tiny hairy man "leaning out the window of the bus in *The Grey Lady...*" In addition, she had asked the school librarian for more books by Mollie Bang and brought in Bang's *The Old Woman and the Red Pumpkin* to share with the other children. Amy also brought in two Japanese dolls from home which she included in a display. She told me her doll looked more like the one in the book than her sister's because "look, it's green
too." As she talked with Joan and me about the dolls, the two of them began to look through the book for other objects that they had at home. At first they planned to make a display. But then Amy exclaimed, "Hey, maybe we could go a play." On my last visit the two girls were busy in the art corner cutting out construction paper to make a box of strawberries for a prop.

Responses to the book also surfaced in other children. The book continued to disappear and the children continued to talk about the "book snatcher." Steven made up a tale in which the Straberry Snatcher impersonated Mrs. Hall. On my last day with the class I had hung a print of an early painting by the modern Dutch artist Piet Mondrian next to a design of cut out shadows which the children had made. As Alan walked past the print he exclaimed, "Hey, that looks like the trees in the Strawberry Snatcher"—a connection even I had not made.

Amy's experiences were only one example of how response changed over time. Her own interest in The Grey Lady... grew out of previous interest in the "secrets" in Ms Glee Was Waiting, which in turn, perhaps, had roots in some other experience or book. I found that many children seemed to gain new understandings as they spent more time with a book. Several weeks after Mrs. Hall had read Sendak's Outside Over There I showed a reproduction of Breughel's "The Fall of Icarus" to many of the children.
It was also those children I had seen reading the book in prior days who immediately identified the work with Sendak's book. The children who had dramatized De Paola's *The Comic Adventures of Old Mother Hubbard* at the beginning of my observations did not realize then that the action of the book took place on a stage. Mrs. Hall reported that no one mentioned this fact, and when I asked several children why they did a play they said, "because the words rhymed." When Mrs. Hall read the book several weeks later, however, Roger noticed the stage right away. Other children began to point out the scenery, stage lights, and balcony.

**The Influence of the Setting**

I have shown, I believe, that response changed from child to child, that styles and media changed from book to book, and that children's responses to picture books changed over a period of time. The amount of data I collected and the variety and depth of responses I observed were due for the most part to the context in which they occurred. I originally chose the site because I felt that children would have the opportunity to work with a large number of picture books, and because I felt that children were encouraged to respond to picture books in many different ways. I had not realized, however, the key role that the teacher played in this interaction between child and book. As the study progressed, I began to identify themes connected to the teacher's place in the response process.
Mrs. Hall was an experienced teacher who had taught in the informal school for years. She was a soft-spoken, supportive and caring teacher whose love and enthusiasm for teaching was expressed in her statement: "Sometimes it's magic!" She was extremely knowledgeable about children's literature, especially picture books; a result perhaps of her enthusiasm, her continuing study at the university, and her work as a reviewer on the university magazine for children's literature. Although she had had no formal art training, she showed a strong interest in the art aspects of children's picture books. While I was in her classroom she tended to focus her discussion on the illustrations as often, or more often, than on the story.

Her influence on the children was a subtle one and might be explained by beliefs and objectives she discussed with me during my visits. She seemed to believe quite strongly that by encouraging children to look closely at picture books she was fostering behaviors that influenced other areas of learning. She was really teaching them to be aware - to learn how to look. "Noticing things in books helps them look more carefully at caterpillars," she said when they wrote observations of the metamorphosis process. When we talked about the children's drawings and sketches, she stated that many children had trouble sketching objects because they had a hard time seeing shapes within larger, more complex shapes. She seemed to feel that their work
with picture books would help them—not just to identify surface similarities in art, but to look beneath the surface in all aspects of their learning.

She was convinced that all this took time, that these understandings resulted from a cumulative process. She told me about a class she had taught for two years. Although the children had learned to look carefully at books and always noted the author biographies and plot summaries on the cover flaps, it was almost two years before they began to write summaries of their own stories. She did not teach the children to summarize, but patiently nurtured the process as it developed in the children. Because she realized that the response process took time, she often reintroduced books to the children after a period of weeks or months, with an eye toward new experiences they'd had which might change or deepen their responses. She aptly stated her approach to teaching as "forming links along the way" and "planting little seeds."

Even as she read and reread books with children, her comments did not instruct so much as they encouraged children to discover on their own. She frequently used specialized vocabulary when she talked about the pictures. Her comments expressed facts about the illustrations: "Look how he shows progression" or "He won the Caldecott Award this year," and her own entusiasm: "I think it's neat
how on this title page the dog's scarf extends out" or "these are *special* pictures."

She stated firmly that she never asked children what they liked; instead, she asked them to compare or comment or express feelings. Questions noted throughout my observations included:

How did you find out about...?
How did you know...?
How does the artist show nighttime (passage of time, etc.)?
Does the title tell you what it will be like?
What does this remind you of?
Can you think of another story...?
What did you notice about this?
What does this book make you think about?
How does this book make you feel?

Her questions were open-ended and her comments were gauged more toward sparking interest or causing children to question than in presenting them with a body of facts. As she prepared to read Sendak's *Outside Over There* to the children, her comments generated a feeling of anticipation.

**Mrs. Hall:** I have a special new storybook to share with you. Please come up close, very, very close. It's one of those books. What did you say about this book, Hildy?

**Hildy:** Is that from the Bible -?

**Mrs. Hall:** ː*Pauses* The author -
1st child: Maurice Sendak

2nd child: I know! Ohh - she also umm - wrote Where the Wild Things Are.

Mrs. Hall: Maurice Sendak. Look what I just did. I flipped to the back pages. Why?

Child: They tell something.

Mrs. Hall: I thought there might be a picture of Maurice Sendak and wanted to see - Maurice Sendak is a man and I thought we might have some information on the back pages...

After the children had made further comments about the book, Mrs. Hall asked, "What would you expect to find in this story just from looking?" The children supplied a variety of answers: "Flowers..." "Little people..." "Jahwahs..." "A whole bunch of babies." Then, as she read, the children continued to comment. Mrs. Hall would often pause at the end of the page, inviting their reactions with a question or with her silence.

Mrs. Hall: [reading] "'They stole my sister away!' she cried, 'to be a nasty goblin's bride!' Now Ida in a hurry snatched her Mama's yellow rain cloak, tucked her horn safe in a pocket, and made a serious mistake."

What do you think the mistake would be? She made a serious mistake - [she paused, then turned the page and read] "She climbed backwards out her window into outside over there."

Child: Look at that shadow. Like they're going to take her -

2nd child: Umm - is that a crack there? Is that a crack? It looks like there's a special light there. It's the light there. Maybe that down there -
it gets to the ship - the light in the picture.

3rd child: And it has a moon coming up and everything.

4th child: It could be a path.

Children: Yeah!

Mrs. Hall: A path to where?

4th child: I don't know -- the goblins --

2nd child: Oh! Outside over there.

3rd child: Yeah - into outside over there.

Mrs. Hall: I like that, don't you?

Child: I was gonna say that.

As each new page was read and studied, the children excitedly verbalized their reactions. At the end, however, Mrs. Hall helped to return the focus of their thinking to the total book:

Mrs. Hall: What does this book make you think about? What does it make you think about, Melissa?

Child: $\sqrt{\text{Interrupting}}$Daytime - because it starts -

Mrs. Hall: What, Melissa?

Melissa: Well, water - cause there was a whole bunch of water and there was always water.

Mrs. Hall: Jenny?

Jenny: It made me feel sad.

Mrs. Hall: Why would you say that?

Jenny: Because they took the baby away. They did a couple things that were sad but the ending made me feel better.
Mrs. Hall: Hildy?

Hildy: Well, because the pictures and stuff.

Mrs. Hall: What did the pictures make you think of?

Hildy: Well, they're sort of lushy and stuff --

Mrs. Hall: Lushy. Hmmm. That's lovely. Tommy?

Tommy: Okay - ummm - there's time in it because it starts from the day it goes all through night and back to day again.

Child: And the moon - it changes -

Mrs. Hall: The moon. Does the moon really change? /*Bell rings for lunch*/

Tommy: No - it was just in different positions.

Mrs. Hall: Who wants this book? Who asked for it?

Amy's comment best sums up this teacher's role in enhancing the children's response to picture books. After Mrs. Hall had redirected Amy's attention back to The Grey Lady and the Strawberry Snatcher, and Amy had looked more carefully at the book, she looked up and said, "There could be secrets in every story - like Mary found secrets in that story (The Clown of God) and I didn't know there were secrets in this story till Mrs. Hall showed me."

Questions to Guide the Research

Domains and themes which emerged during the course of the pilot study enabled me to formulate the following questions which served as a basis for gathering data during
the present research:

I. What changes occur among children as they respond to picture books?

A. What oral responses do children make to picture books?
   1. What oral responses are found in teacher/pupil situations?
   2. What oral responses are found in peer situations?
   3. What oral responses are found in participant observer situations?
   4. What additional oral responses do children choose (i.e., story telling or drama)?

B. What written responses do children make to picture books?
   1. What direct references to books or illustrations do children make in their written work (transactional mode)?
   2. What elements of picture books occur in children's stories (poetic mode)?

C. What nonverbal responses do children make to picture books?
   1. What physical reactions do children exhibit during group or individual reading?
   2. What "art" work and artifacts do children create?
II. What changes occur in response to the style and what responses do children make to books in various media?

A. To what extent are children aware of the original media used by illustrators?
   1. Do they use technical vocabulary such as watercolor paintings, color separation, or line drawing?
   2. Do they use similar media when responding to a book with art work?

B. To what extent are children aware of the style of illustration?
   1. Can they identify several books by the same illustrator?
   2. Can they identify illustrators who work in similar styles?
   3. Can they identify similar styles used by different artists?

C. How do children respond to books that have realistic illustrations? Abstract illustrations?

D. How do children respond to books that have full color illustrations? Black and white illustrations?

III. How do children's responses to picture books change over time?
A. What kinds of responses do children make after first reading or hearing a picture book?

B. What are the responses to the same book several days later?

C. What are the responses to the same book several weeks later?

IV. In what setting do these responses to picture books occur?

A. What is the role of the teacher in initiating or extending children's responses?

B. What is the role of peers in initiating or extending responses?

Organization of the Study

Chapter I presents the background of the study and reports the findings of the original observations undertaken to provide a framework for primary children's response to picture books. In Chapter II a critical review of research related to children's response to picture books is presented. Chapter III details the methods and procedures used. Descriptive data from the second observation period is reported in Chapter IV. Chapter V presents a summary and conclusions of findings from both observations and makes suggestions for educational practice and for future research.
CHAPTER II
A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

To date, the understandings we have of children's response to picture books are fragmented and unclear, indicative perhaps of some small aspect of cognitive or aesthetic functioning but unable to provide us with more than a very limited view of how the child reacts to picture books on a continuing basis in the real world. Information that might be relevant comes from a variety of fields: education, psychology, aesthetics, and reading. Research in these fields, however, has often remained grounded in adult paradigms of how children operate. The researchers carefully limit variables, test children under laboratory conditions, and generalize findings regarding norms rather than individual variation. Seldom have the researchers attempted to uncover the child's understandings or to look at the world through the child's eyes—in spite of the fact that current theories in psychology, language learning, and response to literature see the child as an active participant and constructor of his own learning, in the context of his own world. The application of previous findings dealing with children and picture books to educational practice has thus been limited.
In addition, researchers have seldom differentiated between the picture book, which is an aesthetic object, and more utilitarian visual stimuli. They have thus, in the course of their research, removed pictures from the context of the book and presented prepared pictures or slides as representative of picture book illustrations. In some psychological studies pictures have been reduced to matrices, geometric designs, or out-of-focus objects. Reading researchers, who might be expected to be concerned with the reading of books, have often defined reading as the identification of single words or have defined pictures to include Venn diagrams, maps or charts. Even those scholars who have looked at the interaction of pictures and written texts have generally limited their studies to textbooks or newspaper articles.

In the following discussion I will show why theories from the field of response to literature are also appropriate when considering children's reactions to picture books, and I will review those response studies which have implications for the present study. I will then review the studies relating to children's preference for illustrations; studies which often purport to examine response to picture books. Next, I will examine research from psychology, reading and art which are relevant to the present study. I have organized this research into categories relating to the topic of literacy—a term which grows out of the word
"literate," meaning having an education, and which *The Random House Dictionary of the American Language* states "is characterized by skill, lucidity, polish or the like."

Since picture books combine visual texts with written texts, I have chosen the terms "Visual Literacy" and "Language Literacy" to examine research relating to the range of cognitive and affective functions necessary in the course of becoming educated through and about picture books.

**Response to Literature**

**Theoretical Perspectives**

Theories from the fields of cognitive psychology and linguistics have led many educators to propose that a child learns in active participation with his environment, collecting data and hypothesizing about that data to form a construct of his world and of his language. Dewey (1938) insisted that principles of education "must be based upon experience--which is always the actual life experience of some individual" (p. 89). Piaget (1977) has repeatedly stated that "the pupil learns much less by watching something being done than by doing it himself" (p. 26). The child learns by acting upon an object so as to transform it. As the active involvement relates to learning to read, psycholinguists such as Smith (1973) have proposed that "the motivation and the direction of
learning to read can only come from the child..." (p. 195).

There is some basis for supposing that affective as well as cognitive processes are best served by this model. Langer (1967, 1972) proposed that cognition and emotion involve the same basic psychological processes, although we tend to separate them into objective and subjective worlds. Theories of response to literature have in part grown out of the notion that the child must be given the opportunity to engage his subjective self in a search for meaning as well as his objective self. In the late 1930's literature educators (who had previously viewed the reading process merely as sender-message-receiver) began moving toward this view with Rosenblatt's (1938, 1976) insistence that the work of literature did not exist until a reader took hold of it. She stated:

The literary work exists in a live circuit set up between reader and text; the reader infuses intellectual and emotional meanings into the pattern of verbal symbols and those symbols channel his thoughts and feelings. Out of this process emerges a more or less organized imaginative experience (p. 25).

Presently, this assumption lies at the heart of many theories of response to literature. It has led researchers to ask what the child brings to the aesthetic experience and what his responses tell us about aesthetic processes. In their review of research in response to literature, Purves and Beach (1972) state:
Response consists of cognition, perception, and some emotional or attitudinal reaction; it involves predispositions; it changes during the course of reading; it persists and is modified after the work has been read; it may result in modification of concepts, attitudes or feelings. The research indicates that there may be some common processes, some sort of 'kernels' from which the wide range of response is generated (p. 178).

The complexity of the process has been shown by Hickman (1979), who surveyed response to literature in an elementary school setting. She found that children often exhibit physical responses to books as well as intellectual responses— they seemed to want to hold books, to share them with others, to act out the stories or to write about them. Responses often took the form of art work, games or displays. She reported that response needed time, sometimes days, sometimes weeks, to develop fully and that response to books changed as children returned to them again and again. She noted a wide variation in individual response. Similarly, Applebee (1978) distinguished between subjective and objective characteristics of response when he identified patterns relating to Piagetian developmental stages. He found that children in the preoperational stage had difficulty verbalizing response while children in the concrete operational stage were better able to summarize and categorize response. When asked to discuss a story, for example, preoperational children would not reorganize the information, but simply retold it. Concrete operational children, however, did summarize the story under
some broad category such as adventure story. When asked
why they liked a story, children who were still egocentric
saw little reason to explain their liking. When pressed
for an answer they simply centered on one part of the story
which stood out in their memory: "I liked it because they
got the money and the gold" (p. 99). Older children, how-
ever, began to organize their feelings into broad catego-
ries and evaluated a book according to categories of
"exciting," "boring," or "funny."

In attempting to define the nature of response, Purves
and Beach (1972) include the variables of the "reader,"
the "literary work," and the "situation of reading." They
state:

These three large groups of variables interact
in starting the process of reading and respond-
ing which might or might not result in one of
the following overt behaviors: stated responses
of some sort--some verbal or nonverbal behavior
which is an acknowledged result of the reading
and response, which is communicable, and which
may manifest itself up to several years after
the experience of reading; or a modification
of the reader's concepts, attitudes, perceptual
abilities, and emotional or psychological state,
which may not be an acknowledged result, may
not be communicated, and may not be susceptible
to measurement (p. 181).

It is with these understandings regarding the dimen-
sions of response that I will review additional literature
relating to children's response to picture books.

**Response to Picture Books**

Few studies in the field of response to literature
have actually focused on picture books, perhaps because
the interaction of pictures and words may compound an already complex process. Those studies which have attempted to describe response to picture books reveal possibilities inherent in the topic and also some shortcomings of certain research approaches.

One of the few studies to look at response as well as preference for illustration was conducted by Bloomer (1960) with 336 fourth, fifth and sixth graders. Bloomer chose themes of positive tension, negative tension, and neutral tension, and had each theme illustrated in three different styles. He asked children to look at the three illustrations of each theme and to designate the picture best liked, least liked, and then to choose one to write about. He found that children wrote more about pictures they disliked, either because of style or theme. He also proposed that while a child preferred color pictures, they tended to "distract him from the subject of the picture, to draw him away from the theme of the picture and its logical relationships" (p. 338).

Curtis (1968) examined oral responses of five first-grade boys in order to determine the effects of illustrations and text in cueing response. Following the reading of three picture books: Sendak's Where the Wild Things Are, Peet's Randy's Dandy Lion, and Keats' Whistle for Willie, the boys first retold each story and then "reread" it from the illustrations. The responses were organized into
T-units and compared with the stories. Curtis concluded that because 25% of the cues were generated by text alone (as opposed to 50% for text and pictures and 11% for illustrations only) the text was more influential in generating response than the illustrations were. Unfortunately, Curtis does not consider the findings in the light of accepted definitions of the picture books as a unit of pictures and words (Huck, 1979; Bader, 1976; Marantz, 1977).

Curtis also examined the frequency of figurative language in response to the three books and found virtually none. Although he admits that his research allowed only a limited time of exposure, he questions "the generally accepted concept that exposure to literature will expand the versatility of oral communication." His statement is, I believe, illustrative of a failing of many studies which do not consider the importance of time in developing response.

Storey (1978) also measured the verbal responses of children to illustrations in picture books in order to shed some light on preferences and to provide information regarding oral responses to art. Sixty fifth graders were divided into treatment and control groups and given a pre-test which measured their verbal responses to illustrations in three styles of art. The treatment groups then received three weeks of "style study" in which illustrations were discussed and the children drew or painted in particular
styles being studied. The treatment group showed significant gains on the posttest and used significantly more stylistic terms. She found no difference in emotional characteristics of responses in the two groups. The treatment group's responses increased in length but not in "level of sophistication."

Donlan (1975) suggested that young children might have difficulty verbalizing their reactions to picture books and applied methods of content analysis to the drawings of 90 children, grades K through 3, following a reading of Silverstein's *The Giving Tree*. The children were allowed to choose three crayons from a total of eight colors and asked to draw whatever came to mind during a five-minute period. Drawings were then compared to the book in order to examine responses. Donlan found that children chose colors which corresponded to the real world and not to those used in the book. Their choice of color combination seemed to reflect their identification with a particular story element. In addition, students tended to go beyond details given in illustrations and embellished their pictures with physical and emotional characteristics. He also found age level differences in the story elements emphasized in drawings (younger children emphasized the tree, and older children the boy). He suggested that older children were better able to recognize the mature theme in the book.
Several studies of response to literature mention picture book illustrations as part of the larger topic. White (1954) reported that her daughter at about age two-and-a-half was very much aware of pictures that did not conform to the text. She also noted that pictures establish the existence of a thing for young children, therefore they are disturbed by decapitated adults or floating hands. White (1954) and Butler (1980) both noted the young child's preference first, for very simple boldly colored drawings then, for highly detailed illustrations. Butler proposed that younger children focus on parts of the illustration and scan it for detail rather than seeing it as a whole. Hickman (1979) found that when children in grade 4-5 chose to make a picture in response to a picture book, they often focused on the artist's style and technique in order to recreate specific illustrations.

Children's Preferences for Picture Book Illustrations

The question "What types of illustrations do children prefer in books?" has been asked by researchers in various ways over the past sixty years. Most of these studies have attempted to isolate certain variables in order to make suggestions as to the types of books publishers should prepare or librarians should purchase. Trying to trace a clear and logical course through the maze of preference studies is rather like trying to follow a pinball game—the ball seems to jump randomly from one corner of the board
to another while a bewildering array of flashing lights and ringing bells distract attention from the course the ball takes. It has been almost as difficult to identify a recognizable pattern in the studies of children's preferences for illustration. Various researchers manipulated a number of variables--age, sex, socioeconomic status, content, style, and technique--often with contradictory results. At one moment a researcher would speak of children's response and then equate response with preference. In addition, in most studies no clear definition of a picture book was given. Researchers seemed to speak of picture books, textbooks, posters, and audiovisual aids as if they were the same entity. Even when picture books were the focus of the study, subjects were tested on various devices--slide, picture pairs, and other specially prepared materials--none of which represented a real picture book. Also, no clear definition of such terms as "realistic," "modeling," "saturated color" were given.

**Early preference studies.** Bamberger's study (1922) was one of the earliest to look at children's preferences for picture book illustrations and one of the few that managed to treat the book as an entity. In this study 317 children, grades one through three, were told the first part of a fairy tale. Children were directed to examine five versions of the tale illustrated in five different styles, and to pick the edition which they preferred.
Results led Bamberger to suggest that children preferred brightly colored illustrations with storytelling qualities. She suggested that older children were more accepting of softer tints or tones and that all children preferred large central groups and bold, well-rounded, three-dimensional forms.

Morrison (1935) asked 500 first through third graders to examine forty prints and to choose and rank their favorite five. Like Bamberger, she found that the story interest of the picture was most frequently mentioned as the reason for choice. This was also the finding of Whipple (1953) who clipped illustrations from basal readers and arranged them in booklets. When 150 fourth graders were asked to pick one they would like to read, they most often picked colorful pictures with eventful themes and large centers of interest.

Martin (1933) took a group of picture books and categorized them according to techniques, style (degree of realism), content, and familiarity of content. She then masked the written text and asked 1,637 children, preschool through grade nine, to rank the books according to their preferences. Like Bamberger, Martin found that color and storytelling qualities of illustrations were considerations in the children's preferences. She stated, however, that realistic pictures were of prime consideration in a child's choice and that children did not like "decorative"
illustrations. (She did note, however, that "familiarity" with the book—that is, books which had been used in their classes—also played a role in their preferences.)

Like Martin, Mellinger (1932) found that 821 children in grades one, three, and five preferred color and realism in illustrations. She, however, did not use books, but had pictures of three subjects prepared by the artists using three different techniques—black and white, two-color, and three-color. Rudisill (1952) followed a similar procedure with 1,000 children grades K-6. Again, the same artist rendered a particular subject such as a colored photograph, a black and white photograph, a realistically colored drawing, and a colored decorative drawing. Children were asked to indicate the one they liked better of paired pictures, and Rudisill reported that realistic color was the most important factor in their choices.

Miller (1936), too, found that full-color reproductions were most popular with 100 primary children, grades one through three. The children made their choices from among seven different executions of the same subject matter: a photograph, a line drawing, a wash drawing, a black and white illustration, a full-color illustration, an illustration with red predominant, and an illustration with blue predominant. (He also found that the children preferred red over blue.)
Since the previous studies attempted to control factors such as age and sex, we might be led to conclude that children regardless of age or small differences between the sexes prefer large, realistic, colorful illustrations with large centers of interest and eventful themes. Freeman and Freeman (1933, 1967) found, however, that 60 children of nursery school age preferred small central figures, small pictures, and decorative rather than realistic pictures. (These conclusions were generalized to picture books after children looked at pairs of pictures exposed in a lighted box approximately three feet long.)

French (1952), in an attempt to further illuminate possible age differences in preference, compared 142 first graders to 554 older children. The children chose one of two pictures which varied only in amount of detail shown. He found that younger children preferred less complex pictures and hypothesized that this tied in with their artistic abilities at this age. Amsden (1966) also focused her attention on 60 nursery school children in a paired picture situation. She held subject matter constant and varied color, value, and style. She concluded that "fanciful" drawings were preferred to "true to life" drawings and that light tints and dark shades were preferred to bright colors.

It seems that rather than clarify previous findings, further studies simply added to an already confusing picture;
and it is difficult to know what conclusions, if any, could be drawn from these early preference studies. It seems that in the late 1950's we were no closer to understanding children's response to picture books than we were with Bamberger's studies in 1922.

The preference studies from 1960 to the present. When we consider the changes which have occurred in society, in children, and in books since the early 1920's we might simply conclude that these early preference studies are of little more than historical interest. Certainly, the medium of television may have changed not only children's reading habits, but the habits of their culture as well. Indeed, present day researchers in justifying the importance of their studies emphasize these societal changes. Stewig (1975), for example, states that an important part of young children's environments is made up of visual materials. Watson (1981) acknowledges that color television programs and colorful magazines may have had an influence on children's preferences. Weiss (1982) refers to technical advances which have made possible improvements in the way books are produced. Unfortunately, researchers continue to ask the same questions today as they did fifty years ago with much the same results—results which still have little to do with how children look at real books in the real world.
Lam (1969) is typical of researchers who confute picture books with textbooks. In her introduction she discusses picture books and "people who work with children's literature" and then conducts her study with styles of art used in primary reading textbooks. Lam labeled these styles "realistic," "muted-realistic," "semi-abstract" and "cartoon," and assembled four sets of pictures containing each style. Each set was organized by a different subject matter: "real life" animals, "real life" people, "fantasy" animals and "fantasy" people. After 90 second graders had indicated the picture they liked best in each set, Lam concluded that realistic art was preferred regardless of content. She thus recommends that realistic art be used in second grade basal readers.

Ladan and Frascara (1977) attempted to conduct a cross-cultural study of North and South American children. Ladan chose 71 Canadian seven-, nine-, and eleven-year-olds and attempted to replicate a study conducted by Frascara (1975) with 440 Argentinian children. Ladan presented children with pictures of the same subject matter (a giraffe in front of a tree) varied as to contour (soft versus sharp), form (realistic versus abstract), and complexity (simple versus detailed). She reports that the Canadian children liked soft contours and realistic forms although older girls preferred geometric shapes. Ladan and Frascara go on to run a cross-cultural comparison with
their data, and to draw conclusions about both cultures even though the Canadian children viewed black and white photographs reproduced and reduced in size from 60 cm. to 2½" x 3½" from original color paintings which were shown to the Argentinian children. This tendency to ignore very basic aesthetic understandings regarding the influence of color and size on the overall effect of a piece of art is, unfortunately, not uncommon in other preference studies.

Smerdon (1976), who made a very real attempt to correct weaknesses of earlier preference studies, still failed to consider that technical factors (such as media) and design qualities (such as color, line, shape and value) are difficult, if not impossible, to isolate from the work of art as a whole. Smerdon had one artist prepare 12 black and white pictures of a castle on a continuum from realistic to abstract. After an independent panel of artists also ranked the pictures as realistic or abstract, Smerdon chose the six pictures most often agreed upon. These were flashed on a screen in pairs (for five seconds) to 381 children from ages 6 to 15; the children marked preferred pictures in a response booklet. Smerdon concluded from their responses that children preferred what artists and most adults called "realistic" art forms. (He also noted that younger children and some adolescents seemed to prefer less realistic forms.) Smerdon stated that by eliminating color as a variable he hoped to reduce the emotional elements in choice. He
acknowledges that black, "as the absence of colour" may produce its own emotional reaction. In attempting to eliminate emotional responses, however, he fails to consider that emotion may be a vital part of artistic response. In addition, it is possible that black line drawings are more appropriate for realistic portrayal of subject matter while color is more suitable for abstract execution. I would also argue that it is difficult to generalize children's preferences for paired slides viewed for five seconds to children's response to picture books, as Smerdon tries to do.

Weiss (1982) has carried to the extreme this tendency to generalize children's preferences for artificially prepared instruments to their preference for picture books. Weiss emphasizes the importance of the book's format or overall appearance in determining children's book selection. She elicited reasons for the preferences of 145 children in grades three through six for formal factors such as page size, type (typography), and position of illustration. She concluded that children preferred a variety of page sizes but liked large print (18 point) most often. The majority also preferred the pictures on the bottom of the page although boys preferred illustrations at the top while girls tended to choose the bottom. Weiss suggests that teachers and librarians should be aware of these preferences and that book designers "should place illustrations either at the top or bottom of the page" (p. 405). Weiss has made these
recommendations regarding books from preferences for an object that holds little other than a surface resemblance to a book; she purposefully arranged words in random order "so as not to convey any meaningful content," and used blue pieces of construction paper to represent the illustrations.

Locke (1972) also attempted to make recommendations to book publishers from a study which had little to do with children and books. She tested color preferences of young children and suggested that publishers might want to use results when determining the color of book covers. Since 40% of the children selected red and purple as their favorite colors, we might visualize the libraries of America as exclusively red and purple worlds if the publishers were to take these results seriously.

Unlike many earlier researchers, Stewig (1975) did not confuse picture books with other visual objects. In addition, he admitted that pictures are made up of components woven into a complex unit. Like earlier researchers, however, he proceeded to break that unit into its parts: color, modeling, proportion, detail, and space. Like Smerdon, Stewig prepared pairs of slides (in order to test preferences for books) which showed the same subject matter but which varied in the degree of realism used for each variable. For example, to test the variable of modeling, the slides showed very flat objects contrasted with highly modeled shapes. About 285 children in preschool through
grade one were tested and results distributed by level in
school, sex, social class, and racial group. His findings
are, like those of earlier studies, not particularly reveal-
ing. Upper middle-class white children preferred realistic
color and flat shapes. White males liked realistic propor-
tion. Upper-class youngsters liked details and shallow
space. In addition, he reports that the "older" children
preferred realistic color, but nonrealistic shapes, non-
realistic space, and fewer details. Stewig's "older" chil-
dren, however, are first graders; a detail which makes age
level comparison among studies more difficult and once
again illustrates that trying to make sense out of the
confusing nature of conclusions regarding preference for
illustrations is also difficult.

Most recently, Watson (1981) studied the preferences
of 575 children ages two to sixteen. In addition, he asked
88 teachers what they thought the children would like in
order to determine whether teachers were cognizant of chil-
dren's likes and dislikes in picture books. Like researchers
before him, however, Watson equated single pictures with
picture books. He asked children to look at five sets of
illustrations arranged on tables. In each set a different
subject was illustrated in four different styles: cartoon,
realistic, impressionistic, and expressionistic. The pic-
tures were of queens, quails, elephants, umbrellas, and
"jumping." They were taken from commercially prepared
alphabet books which had been illustrated in various media: pen and ink, water color, and opaque paint. When he compared the choices of children and teachers, he found that teachers were not at all accurate in making selections for children; they thought that children would most often choose cartoon drawings. Watson's findings regarding the children's choices are fairly predictable in the light of previous studies. He found that bright, opaque colors were most popular with young children, and that realism was preferred by all ages. More surprising, concerning previous results, was the "strong" preference of older children for pen and "Indigo" ink. His findings that boys show a strong preference for pictures of elephants and also for quails, and that younger girls like queens while older girls prefer pictures portraying jumping, lead us to question once again the relation of these studies to the real world. For, while Watson cautions teachers to be aware of children's preferences in order to be able to fill gaps in their knowledge, his findings little prepare the teacher to do so.

In fact, in most of the preference studies, educational concerns seem irrelevant when researchers make recommendations concerning their findings. Smerdon, Lam, and Weiss, for example, suggest that rather than rely on our adult preferences, we let children follow their own likes and dislikes when choosing books. Ladan and Prascara (1977) even go so far as to suggest that
it is perhaps **unwise** to structure every contact a child has with a book as a learning experience... Books created for recreational purposes may not appeal to their young audience if their illustrations are aimed at teaching; for example, 'bed-time stories' are usually well illustrated for the child's sake, but illustrations designed to stimulate thought defeat the book's purpose (p. 126).

While few of us involved with children's **literature** would wish to disregard enjoyment as a key factor in the response process, neither would we wish to designate as literature those books which serve simply as emotional pacifiers. Ladan and Frascera's statement is, I believe, representative of researchers who fail to consider that in addition to involving children in picture books, it is also the teacher's job to **educate** the eye and ear rather than to sedate the imagination.

**Research related to children's preferences for picture books.** In many studies of aesthetic preference (in this case preference for paintings) researchers dealt with variables such as subject matter, color, and style which are found in picture books. The methodology used in these studies was similar to that used in the picture book studies and results were often the same—ineconclusive and confusing.

Williams (1924) and Rump and Southgate (1967) surveyed children at art exhibitions as to their favorite works of art and the reasons for their choices. In the Williams study fifth, sixth and seventh graders preferred pictures with storytelling qualities. Rump and Southgate found that
seven-and eleven-year-old children preferred familiar content, simple subject matter, realistic execution and brightly colored paintings. Fifteen-year-olds were less demanding of familiar subjects and realistic portrayal. Mellinger (1932), Hildreth (1936), and Katz (1944) asked children to indicate preferences for paintings and illustrations. Mellinger’s first, third and fifth graders preferred color and realism. Hildreth’s three- to six-year-olds preferred realistic pictures which portrayed action. Katz’s children, grades two to six, preferred "traditional" paintings over modern. Waymack and Henderson (1932) asked fourth, fifth and sixth graders to choose one of twelve reproductions of paintings and write the reasons for their choices. Tabulation of results showed that the reproductions were most often selected on the basis of color, "prettiness," scenery and interest in people and subjects portrayed.

Studies of reading interest whose findings also might be expected to extend to picture books share some of the shortcomings of preference studies. Often, illustrations are all but ignored in the findings even when picture books are the focus of the research.

Abrahamson (1979), for example, who analyzed 50 picture books from 1979 Classroom Choices (a compilation of children’s favorite titles) to determine structure and reading preferences, does not mention the illustrations at all except to note that Tomie De Paola appears on the list more
than any other author/illustrator. Fenwick (1975) examined
the library circulation of junior school pupils and noted
only that books which had a high percentage of illustra-
tions were popular. Grover (1976) conducted a similar
survey of 52 second graders, but noted only that "quantity
and style" of illustration, among other variables like
readability level, influenced book preferences. Warthman
(1970) asked 582 children, grades four through six, to
choose their favorite books from selected Caldecott Award
(given to "the most distinguished American picture book")
winners and other honor books to see if children would pick
the same book as the Caldecott committee did. The books
were arranged into seven groups by year of publication
beginning in 1938 and every five years thereafter. Since
the student's choices agreed with only two winners out of
the seven, Warthman concluded that children did not gener-
ally select Caldecott Award winners for their first choices.
Warthman ignored the fact that children of the present day
may have visual preferences different from Caldecott
committees in earlier years. In addition, the inability
to choose between the award winner and a runner-up may not
indicate aesthetic unawareness of children; the Caldecott
committee often has the same difficulty in selecting the
single award winner from a field of excellent picture books.
(Charlotte Huck, 1980 Caldecott Chairperson, in an informal
interview.)
Visual Literacy: How Children Attend to and Comprehend Pictures

In the review this far, I have shown that researchers who have looked at preferences or interests have failed to delve into children's response to picture books in other than a surface way. We may know, in general, what children like (and in the light of the sometimes contradictory results of these studies even preferences are not always clear). We still do not know how children respond to books, how these responses change, or what role the teacher or librarian may play in developing response. Since vision is involved in response to picture books, it seems appropriate to turn to the field of psychology in an attempt to broaden our understanding of children's response to picture books. Ladan and Frascara (1977) suggest that picture preference studies may produce data which will clarify and extend results of perceptual development. I would suggest that our understanding of visual literacy may perhaps help extend our understandings of what children like in picture books to how they respond to picture books.

The literature related to vision and perception is more extensive than I could hope to deal with in this brief review. I have chosen the term "visual literacy," therefore, to draw together those key studies which are relevant to children's response to picture books. Fransecky and Ferguson (1973) define the visually literate person as one who is able to "discriminate and interpret the visible
actions, objects and symbols, natural or man made, that he encounters in his environment" (p. 45). The child responding to a picture book must also discriminate and interpret what he sees. This process involves his attention, his recognition, and finally, his understanding.

**Studies from the Field of Psychology**

Attention to pictures involves the isolation of informative areas; it is a process of familiarization. Research has shown that developmental differences may exist in this process. Gardner and Gardner (1970) reported that even very young infants attended to and preferred edges, contours, and contrast in pictures. Fantz (1961) found that infants under six months spent more time looking at a drawing of a clown face than at a plain oval. Mackworth and Bruner (1970) compared eye fixations of 20 adults and 20 six year olds as they looked at a series of photographs. They found that children, when looking at unfamiliar or blurred photographs, had shorter eyetracks and that they tended to become "hooked by details." When the pictures were blurred, the children seemed to lack "an effective program for visual search" (p. 172). They could not inspect details and monitor peripheral fields at the same time.

In the light of Mackworth and Bruner's findings, Coles, Sigman and Chessel (1977) investigated eye movements of preschool children (ages 3:5 to 6:5) and adults in an attempt to describe scanning strategies during familiarization and subsequent recognition of geometric patterns.
They found that adult scanning was more systematic and organized. Youngest children were the least systematic and had longer fixation durations. The researchers suggest that the lack of systematicity "could in part be simply that the child is answering a different question to that understood by the adult; or it could be that he is deprived of two important aids--an adult tutor and his finger!" (pp. 126-127).

Hutt, Forest and Newton (1976) compared the length of time five- and seven-year-olds spent looking at pictures with the children's preferences for the pictures. Children's eye movements were monitored as they looked at a set of pictures containing a neutral design, a "nice" picture, and a "frightening" picture. The children were asked to give the order of preference for each set of pictures. Children of both ages looked longest at the "nice" pictures than at the "nasty" pictures (a devil dancer, a leper, etc.). Both ages gave first preference to the "nice" pictures, but younger children preferred "nasty" pictures over neutral designs. The researchers concluded that preference in young children depended on the attention value of the picture rather than its aesthetic content.

Aiken and Hutt (1974) investigated the preferences of three- to ten-year-olds for complex patterns. They found that three-year-olds were unreliable in their ranking of simple and complex pattern designs, but that the preference for complexity increased with age with five- and six-year-
olds preferring simple patterns. They suggested that these preferences are related to cognitive development and that the five-year-olds tended to look for material "they can categorize and construe in terms of available classes and concepts" (p. 429).

The comprehension of visual stimuli is a more complex issue, and harder to identify than is attention to pictures. Sigel (1978) argues that picture comprehension involves understanding: "Comprehension must be distinguished from recognition, where recognition refers to the identification or labeling of a picture and does not imply or require understanding" (p. 95). I would suggest that in order to recognize even the simplest object in a picture one must understand or have knowledge about that object. Perhaps recognition of pictures could be compared to what reading educators call the literal level of comprehension—the memory level in Bloom's Taxonomy (1956). This definition suggests that the viewer has some basic understanding in order to label what he sees, but does not assume that the viewer can interpret relationships within the picture—a skill for which more complex mental operations are necessary. It is important to differentiate between recognition and comprehension because while neither ability seems to be innate, picture recognition seems to be learned rapidly while comprehension does not automatically follow recognition.
There has been some argument as to whether picture recognition is an innate or learned ability. In their study of one child's visual development, Hochberg and Brooks (1962) concluded that by age two, children can recognize representations in pictures even when they have little or no prior experience with pictorial materials. Other researchers, however, have argued with this conclusion. Deregowski, Muldrow and Muldrow (1972) worked with adults in Ethiopia who had never seen pictorial representations. When presented with pictures of familiar animals, the adults ignored the representations altogether and investigated the paper on which the pictures were printed. Sigel (1981) suggests that the adults went "through a process of identifying fragments of the picture and linking them into a comprehensive whole" (p. 100). (This same process may account for the young child's fixation on details as he attends to unfamiliar visual stimuli. Mackworth and Bruner (1970) did find that as the six-year-old subjects became familiar with a picture, their eye movements were less random and fixation time decreased.)

In summarizing picture recognition research, Sigel (1978) seemed to feel that picture recognition was a cultural convention although it was easily learned. The seeds of this learning may lie in the culture also. Ninio and Bruner (1978) point to mother and child interactions during picture book reading as a stepping-stone to understanding
representation not only in pictures but in language as well. Their proposal has important implications in a study of response to picture books and may explain why some children who are able to recognize pictures of objects have difficulty in explaining more complex relationships in pictures. It may be that this early experience with pictures in some meaningful context is necessary to lay the foundation for higher levels of picture comprehension.

Mandler and Robinson (1978) investigated developmental changes in picture recognition in a population of 144 first through fifth graders. The children were shown sets of eight pictures with each set containing objects organized into scenes. Following presentation of each set, the children were tested on pictures in which some type of transformation had occurred. The transformations tested the children's abilities to recognize certain types of information: inventory information, or content of the picture; descriptive information, or what objects look like; spatial relation information; and spatial composition information. Mandler and Robinson (1978) found that when objects in pictures were organized into a real-world scene, the performance of children of all ages was similar to that of adults. They suggest that children have acquired schema or "internal structures which are built up through experience" and which "organize and give meaning to incoming information" (p. 123):
When materials are presented in formats which conform to already acquired schemata such as those for real-world scenes or stories, children as young as first graders encode the same kind of information as adults and their memory performance is similar in kind...." (p. 135).

If our understanding of visual literacy is to extend to aesthetic as well as cognitive realms (as it must in a study of response to picture books) then we must extend our discussion to the child's understanding not only of what objects lie in the picture, but also to his understanding of the relationship between those objects and their relationship to his own experience. Several recent studies have shown that these understandings do not automatically grow out of picture recognition. Jahoda et al. (1977) suggested, for example, that difficulties in comprehending pictures are encountered not in simple object recognition but in interpreting various parts of the same picture. Hudson (1967) reported that subjects sometimes misinterpreted implicit spatial relationships and occasionally the depicted activities in pictures. Sigel (1978) reported a number of studies which found that low S.E.S. children had difficulty not in labeling pictures, but in classifying or categorizing them. He describes one study in which six year-old Black children were given pictures of familiar objects as well as three-dimensional objects of the same items. While the children could classify the three-dimensional objects, they were not able to create classes or
groupings for the pictures. Sigel suggested that this ability involves cognitive processing in addition to recognition, and that children must acquire a rule that objects can be translated into other forms. Cocking and Sigel (1979) ask a pertinent question regarding the acquisition of such rules: "Where do children learn these rules of equivalence? Is it through direct teaching? This seems unlikely" (p. 176). I propose that the answer may lie in Ninio and Bruner's (1978) description of a mother and child "reading" together from a picture book, and in Mandler and Robinson's (1978) contention that schemata for comprehension are formed during real-life experiences with stories. A study of children responding to picture books may uncover evidence to support this proposal.

Studies from the Field of Aesthetics

In 1956 Benjamin Bloom proposed a taxonomy of educational objectives to explain cognitive process, a taxonomy which is still relevant to educators. The categories of mental operations Bloom proposed were hierarchical, moving from "memory," which involved simple recall of events, through increasingly complex stages to "evaluation," which required a judgment of quality. Reading educators have used a similar and compatible hierarchy in describing levels of comprehension. These are often referred to as the "literal" level, which requires that the reader recall or translate information in the story; the "figurative" or "inferential"
level, which requires the interpretation or application of information; and the "evaluative" level, which requires that the reader analyze, synthesize, or evaluate information. This type of hierarchy is also appropriate in a discussion of the comprehension of visual material. The research supports the fact that the child begins with simple recognition of objects, then becomes increasingly able to interpret pictures, and finally, may analyze complex relationships and make judgments of value. This last dimension of visual literacy becomes most apparent with studies of stylistic awareness in children. Style in picture books is a complex issue which will be dealt with elsewhere in this paper (Appendix D). For present purposes, however, I will define style as "the manner of expressing" (Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, 1968). The child's understanding of style will thus encompass both a growing understanding of the artist's meaning and the choices the artist makes in order to express that meaning.

Gardner (1972) suggests that style sensitivity be operationalized as the ability to group together works produced by one artist. This ability, like other matters of visual comprehension requires a complex range of processing from recognition of similarities in content to judgments regarding form and, finally, the ability to criticize criticism. Ecker (1973) suggests that in the highest levels of awareness, children will "theorize about
the nature of art and criticism, and analyze theories and arguments" (p. 70).

Gardner and his associates at Harvard Project Zero have conducted a number of studies of children's stylistic awareness. In summarizing this research, Gardner (1972) stated that seven-year-olds seemed to have an awareness of style even if they cannot express that awareness in words. When asked to group paintings according to style, for example, younger subjects most often equated subject matter with style. It was not until adolescence that subjects seemed to adopt a more flexible method of judging similarity—one which included aspects of composition, balance, and "overall expressiveness" (Gardner and Gardner, 1970). When attention was drawn away from subject matter (by holding the pictures upside down) older elementary children (preadolescents) were also more flexible in recognizing stylistic qualities. However, Gardner found that primary children consistently focused on subject matter.

In a later study, Gardner, Winner and Kircher (1975) found that children of ages four to seven displayed misconceptions about the origin of works of art ("they are made at a factory") and the training required to produce art ("anyone can do it"). When asked to define works of art, these children focused on the content (a picture of a horse was identified as a horse). Value statements also centered on the children's feelings: "it's a nice design" or "it
has pretty colors." Gardner felt that these impressions about art were a natural part of the child's mental development. He suggested that training could, at the proper time, increase stylistic awareness, but that this training need not be tied to cognitive operations.

Several studies reinforce the idea that systematic training can increase children's sensitivity to style. Gardner (1972) found that seven-year-olds could be helped to decenter from subject matter by considering the pictures as having family relations—if two persons in two pictures looked alike they were "related" and paintings as a whole could be similarly related.

Other studies in the field of art education have shown that programs designed to focus the student's attention on style have increased aesthetic awareness. Day (1976) conducted experiments at the high school level in which teachers presented biographical and cultural information on a particular style; students viewed slides and filmstrips explaining a style, students and teachers engaged in discussions about the style, and students engaged in studio practice based on concepts exemplified by the style they had studied. Day concluded that "the shaping of an individual's general aesthetic taste...is a lengthy process, but it is a process in which a well-prepared teacher can participate with significant effect" (p. 38). Wilson (1966) found that when a group of fifth and sixth grade students were led to
experience alternative aspects of paintings through language (i.e., they read about paintings and discussed them) as well as through studio courses, the students' ability to analyze and evaluate paintings increased significantly.

Olson (1970) compared two methods of teaching art appreciation to fifth graders. In the "historic" group children merely received an exposition of historical facts. In the "critic" group, children were provided opportunities for personal discovery through discussion. Results show that the "critic" group received significantly higher scores on descriptive and interpretive measures and were better able to hypothesize the meaning of the work. Olson concluded that verbal response is an essential element in acquiring an appreciation for art.

It should be noted that the findings of these art educators is comparable to understandings from the field of literary response: first, that response or awareness has developmental aspects; second, that it requires time; and third, that children require a variety of modes - both verbal and artistic - for maximum growth in understanding to occur. Thus it seems possible that a study of children's response to picture books may help uncover findings which will prove relevant to a broad range of disciplines.
Language Literacy: How Illustrations Interact with Written Text as Children Read

Reading researchers in the late 1960's who focused their attention on the place of pictures in the reading process often concluded that pictures played a negative role. Samuels (1967), for example, hypothesized that when pictures and words were presented together, the pictures functioned as distractors and interfered "with the acquisition of reading responses." Samuels presented groups of kindergartners with four words on index cards, either with pictures or without. The no-picture group gave significantly more correct responses to the printed words following learning trials. Weintraub (1960) investigated the effects of pictures on second graders' comprehension (as measured by multiple choice questions concerning detail and main idea). He found that comprehension scores were higher when pictures were not present.

In reviewing other research involving pictures and reading, Samuels (1970) concluded that the bulk of the research on the effects of pictures on acquiring a sight vocabulary indicated that pictures interfered with learning to read. In addition, Samuels reported that pictures, when used as adjuncts to printed text did not facilitate comprehension, although they did not interfere with it either. He admitted, however, that pictures did have a positive effect on attitudes toward reading. He therefore recommended that pictures be kept out of the child's text and the teacher
be given a "series of large and colorful pictures for each story. The teacher might then show and discuss each picture as she builds a background for the story. When the children actually read, the pictures would be put away" (p. 405). An alternative suggestion was that printed text be kept separate from pictures when books were printed.

Problems with this and other reading studies conducted into the mid-1970's were similar to problems found in many preference studies. Text and pictures were separated in the interest of scientific rigor, and the reading process was often reduced to a simple word-in-isolation recognition task. In addition, the definition of comprehension was limited to information such as the main idea or details which could be measured with a standardized test. Samuels states, for example, that "If a picture is to enhance comprehension, it must be able to convey information that is relevant to the questions asked on a test" (p. 404).

Fortunately, theoreticians and researchers in the field of reading, like those who have looked at visual literacy, have come to recognize that comprehension involves both convergent and divergent thinking. Indeed, comprehension depends on the individual's schemata or framework for interpreting his world, a framework which may vary drastically from child to child (Rumelhart and Ortony, 1976; Mandler and Robinson, 1978). In addition, psycholinguists (Halliday and Hasan, 1978) and sociolinguists (Cazden, John and Hymes,
1972) have helped us to see the importance of studying whole texts and context rather than bits and pieces represented by words or sentences.

In her review of current findings regarding illustrations and reading comprehension, Schallert (1980) argues that pictures benefit reading as well as listening comprehension over a variety of prose types when pictures either repeat information in the text or provide information for which the text merely lays a framework. Rohwer and Harris (1975), for example, examined fourth graders on a simple expository passage using seven different combinations of print, oral recordings, and pictures. The subjects were tested using sentence verification, short answer questions, and free recall; and performed better on combinations of oral language plus pictures or print plus pictures. Branford and Johnson (1972) gave subjects paragraphs which did not make sense (although each sentence did) -- information about interrelationships of objects was left out. When subjects were tested, those who were given a picture which elaborated these relationships remembered more information and rated the text as more comprehensible than those who were given inappropriate pictures or those who saw no picture at all. Levin (1981) supports the positive role of pictures in enhancing both listening and reading abilities. He states that the results of recent experiments
clearly permit the conclusion that picture effects in children's prose learning are positive, potent and pervasive. In particular, visual illustrations constructed to be relevant to (indeed, overlapping with) a story's content have been found invariably to facilitate children's learning of that content (p. 204).

I would suggest that picture books in which "the fusion of pictures and text is essential for the unity of presentation" (Huck, 1979, p. 105) best meet the criteria of both Levin and Schallert for the type of material which best facilitates listening and reading comprehension. Furthermore, since the development of reading proficiency requires many of the same processes and understandings as the development of visual literacy (although at a different age), I would argue that picture books may represent a profoundly important medium for learning concepts necessary for the understanding of written modes as well as artistic modes.

Summary

Previous studies which dealt directly with children's preferences for picture books have yielded confusing results. While we may be able to conclude that aside from differences of age, sex, and culture, children like realistic, colorful pictures, it is seldom possible to generalize these findings to children's preferences for picture books. Moreover, the lack of clear definitions for terms like "realistic" makes it difficult even to draw conclusions about preferences. In fact, knowing what children prefer
does little to permit educators to know how to broaden children's tastes or to deepen their understanding of aesthetic objects like the picture book.

Theories developed by researchers not directly concerned with children and picture books have been more revealing both of developmental trends and also of the complexity of mental processes which might be involved in children's response to picture books. Conclusions reached by those who have studied response to literature include the importance of time in the development of response. Children need days and weeks in which to fully react to a work of literature, and years in which to articulate and refine understandings gained through these reactions. Moreover, this broadening and deepening of response seems to need a particular context—a context in which the child is free to act upon, and act out his thoughts and feelings; and a context in which a teacher or knowing adult provides the structure out of which learning can occur.

Research from the fields of psychology and aesthetics supports the belief that given time, a meaningful context, and opportunities to interact with each other and adults, children can develop increasingly complex understandings of pictorial stimuli. In view of these understandings and the failings of empirical studies of children's preferences for picture books, I chose to use methods of qualitative research to study the responses of primary children to
picture books in a natural setting, over a period of twelve weeks, in order to provide a descriptive framework which would suggest hypotheses for future research and also suggest specific educational practices.
CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

Preliminary Planning

Many previous studies of children and picture books have attempted to discuss children's responses to picture books in terms of their preferences for illustrations. Frequently, these studies have used techniques of quantitative research in order to describe specific variables that children prefer or dislike in illustrations. I have argued, however, that understandings from the field of children's literature have shown the response process to be a complicated one which involves the individual reader, the individual literary work, and the situation of reading as well as cognitive and affective factors, all of which may take time to develop. Applebee (1978), for example, has shown the need for studying response over time rather than at a single moment in time: "There is ample evidence to suggest that the giving of meaning is a slow contemplative process involving significant changes over relatively long periods of time" (p. 91).

Hickman (1979) noted that response to literature, because it involves a variety of modes, both verbal and nonverbal, is best studied in a naturalistic setting.
Researchers in other fields have also stressed the importance of the context—the environment with which and in which the child interacts—to language learning (Donaldson, 1978; Wells, 1981), cognitive development (Bruner, 1978), and visual literacy (Ninio and Bruner, 1978; Sigel, 1978). In addition, many researchers have suggested the need to keep the art object (in this case the picture book) intact rather than to isolate the pictures into meaningless parts (Levin, 1981; Mandler and Robinson, 1978; Marantz, 1977; Schallert, 1980). Randhawa (1978 stated: "Learner characteristics, task demands, and pictorial integrity interact, and the future research should be directed to reveal the variety of these interactions" (p. 209). It seemed, therefore, that a research situation which allowed me to observe children in a natural setting as they responded to picture books over a period of time would best serve to answer the questions raised at the outset of this paper.

Barton and Lazarsfeld (in McCall and Simmons, 1969) state that "qualitative methods are particularly suitable for the exploratory phase of research; their wealth of detailed descriptive elements give the analyst the maximum opportunity to find clues and suggestions" (pp. 239-240). The techniques of anthropological research called ethnography or participant observation provide a combination of methods for studying particular kinds of subject matter such as social groups or informal groups.
This characteristic blend of techniques... involves some amount of genuinely social interaction in the field with the subjects of the study, some direct observation of relevant events, some formal and a great deal of informal interviewing, some systematic counting, some collection of documents and artifacts and openedness in the direction the study takes (McCall and Simmons, 1969, p. 1).

The purpose of such a study, according to McCall and Simmons, is an "analytic description of complex social organizations" which "generates new empirical generalizations (and perhaps concepts and propositions as well) based on these data" (p. 3).

Spradley (1980) suggests that the focus of ethnographic research lies not so much in studying people as in learning from them. The need to learn from children becomes apparent when literature relating to their response to picture books is reviewed. At the present moment we have learned, I believe, as much as we can learn from studying children's preferences for picture books. This fact becomes especially apparent when we consider that in sixty years of studying preferences little new information which might be of use to educators has been revealed. In fact, studies of preferences have become more and more removed from the world of real children and real books. It is time, then, to approach this topic from a different direction, using qualitative methods to raise new questions regarding understandings gleaned through empirical research of the past.
Gardner (1979 provides support for dual approaches to research (both quantitative and qualitative) in his discussion of cognition in terms of symbolization. In calling for research which will further define various processes of symbolization, he suggests the need to note relationships between the systems. He cautions that researchers can become so intent on details in one system that they fail to note relationships between neighboring domains. As I have shown in Chapter II, this has been the problem with many previous studies relating to pictorial symbols.

Gardner (1972), in discussing research into children's awareness of style in pictures, argues that the predilection for notational systems has also imposed severe restraints on the researcher. He suggests, for example, that categories which a culture may impose on the researcher may blind him "to aspects of art which a less informed subject will take into account" (p. 329). Gardner states that "given the argument that cognitive mechanisms operate at least in part in a nonnotational way, it seems clear that cognitive psychology must eventually investigate nonnotational systems" (p. 334).

An additional reason for choosing ethnographic methods for the present study is that in at least one other symbol system, that of language, ethnography has proved a viable alternative to empirical systems. Searle (1969) and Hymes (1972) have argued, in fact, that language cannot be
studied apart from the context in which it is used. The shift in language research from a study of linguistic units in isolation to the study of language competence in the context of a speech community has led to an increasing number of "ethnographies of speaking" (Hymes, 1974). Researchers are being educated by children about language learning, and the insights gained from this research have provided practical suggestions as well as theoretical implications. In describing the differences between traditional linguistic investigations and ethnographic studies, Zutell (in press) notes the following:

1. A holistic framework is employed; language is observed in its larger cultural context with emphasis on overall effects rather than on minute slices of linguistic data.

2. The focus is on routine everyday events and the implicit organizing structures used in such circumstances.

3. Investigators do not separate themselves from the situation they are observing but attempt to become accepted participating members in order to maximize the naturalness of the situation and to heighten their own sensitivity to the structures in operation.

4. Categories of classification are not rigidly imposed but remain flexible so that new ones develop as they emerge from the data itself. Structures and structuring are interwoven throughout the study.

5. Data collection remains open ended and a variety of sources may be used—field notes, videotapes, case studies, reports of informants, etc. The focus of data collection is on description as opposed to manipulation and on each individual as opposed to an average.
In relating such methods to pictorial investigations with young children, Gardner et al. (1975) suggest that because the child can determine the direction and wording of subsequent issues, and because the interviewer can construct follow-up questions which may probe beneath the surface of the child's response, a methodology which is "designed to uncover what the subject believes and how he conceives of an object even if he or she has difficulty putting it into words..yields a greater reliability in response than closed questionnaires or directed inquiries" (p. 74).

With these considerations in mind, methods of ethnographic research were chosen to conduct the present study. Since the purpose of this study was to provide a framework for describing children's response to picture books in order to formulate hypotheses for future research, and in order to make recommendations for classroom practice, and since previous research had not considered the developing responses of individual children in a natural setting to whole picture books, I therefore:

1. conducted direct observations of children and teachers in a first/second grade combination classroom,

2. interviewed children and teachers on the basis of behaviors I observed,
3. participated directly with children in activities designed to further define themes identified in these observations.

**Setting and Population**

Since the object of the study was to provide as much descriptive data as possible regarding the range and types of responses children make to picture books, I felt a traditional classroom setting which allowed children little choice in picture books or little free time in which to respond to them would be less desirable than a classroom in which literature and not textbooks was the focus of the reading program. I recognized that such a classroom might represent the ideal rather than the norm and might make generalization difficult, but it seemed necessary to identify a wide range of responses to picture books which might possibly occur in order to establish a framework for description and to identify possible research hypotheses. LeCompte and Goetz (1982) state, in fact, that "...generation, refinement and validation of constructs and postulates may not require replication of situations. Moreover, because human behavior is never static, no study can be replicated exactly, regardless of the methods and designs employed" (p. 35).

Among the schools known to me were several informal alternative schools whose teachers showed an enthusiasm for children's literature. These teachers used children's
literature as the focus for classroom instruction and provided children with many opportunities to respond to books in a variety of contexts and media. Furthermore, children were generally free to follow their own leads when it came to choosing books and activities.

While picture books are commonly used in all grades in these schools, it was decided that a first/second grade combination classroom would be most appropriate for the study. While upper grade classrooms would have furnished considerable data, children in the upper grades tend to be more fluent readers and are more apt to choose to read chapter books, that is, books consisting mainly of printed text with few if any illustrations. Furthermore, while children in preschool and kindergarten (ages five to seven) enjoy picture books, they often have difficulty expressing their reactions to these books. Applebee (1978) showed that younger children who are in the preoperational stage of development (ages two to seven) respond to questions about books in a manner which reflects their egocentric nature, while concrete-operational children (ages seven to eleven) were better able both to discuss reactions and to separate objective and subjective responses. Conducting observations in a classroom which combined first and second graders allowed a broader base for comparison of possible developmental differences. At the same time, by including second graders, who at ages seven and eight are more likely
to have moved into the concrete-operational stage, I increased the likelihood of collecting more insightful answers into their reactions to picture books. Moreover, it was my experience as a second-grade teacher that many second graders have become independent readers of books. By conducting my study in a combination classroom, I was able to observe children being read to by adults as well as reading to themselves. This allowed comparisons to be made of group as well as individual responses to picture books.

In order to refine themes and domains of response identified during the pilot study, I chose to conduct the present study with a population similar to that of the original study. Therefore, I contacted the teacher of a first/second grade combination classroom in the same school district, but at a different school, and received permission to enter the classroom as a participant observer. The site chosen for the study was in the same upper middle-class suburb of Columbus Ohio, as used for the pilot study. The school system provided traditional neighborhood schools and two alternative schools which parents could request for their children. The philosophy of the alternative classroom which was chosen for the study was based on the British "informal" approach.

In addition to regular exercises in math, spelling and handwriting, the teacher planned activities centered upon a theme such as folktales or weather. During the days or
weeks devoted to a theme, children chose language and art projects suggested by the teacher which focused on aspects of the theme. The teacher collected picture books relating to the theme which were highlighted in daily read-aloud sessions. Children were also encouraged to read these books during daily free-reading sessions. Except during class discussions, children were free to move about the room and to talk with each other as they worked, were encouraged to read widely on their own or with partners and to discuss the books with each other. Paint, chalk, crayon, and other media were available to children who wished to create a product in connection with a particular book.

The classroom in which I conducted my study consisted of 21 children, ages six through eight, 14 first graders (ten girls and four boys) and 7 second graders (five girls and two boys). In addition to the regular classroom teacher, school personnel and parents were regular visitors to the classroom. The school welcomed visitors, and interested parents or educators often wandered through the room stopping to talk with children and to ask about their work. Since the children were used to having extra adults around, my entry into the group was less conspicuous than it might have been in a more traditional classroom. It was also assumed that my presence would have less influence on everyday procedures and behaviors than might have been the case in a less-visited environment. I explained my
presence to the children by stating that I was interested in how they looked at picture books, what they thought as they read them, and what they did with them. I invited the children to come and tell me special things about their books or to read to me whenever they cared to.

**Collection of Data**

Since the identification of change over time was considered to be a key aspect of children's response to picture books, a period of twelve weeks during the winter and spring quarters of 1982 was chosen as a time frame for this study. During this time an attempt was made to visit the classroom once, sometimes twice, each day for several hours. The teacher and students were asked to supply contextual information for those times when I could not be present. The teacher also kept a file of children's writing and reading which was consulted for supplementing observer information. Although it has been noted that response may be months and years in developing, it was felt that the twelve-week period would allow collection of enough data to note patterns of response over time as part of the descriptive framework of response to picture books.

In the first weeks of the study, while I became familiar with the children and they became familiar with me, I attempted to remain as much of an observer of the action as possible. I recorded behaviors, verbal and nonverbal, of the children and teacher; and asked for clarification
of behavior with statements like: "You said those pictures looked real. Can you tell me why you feel this way?" Some of the children began to greet me when I arrived in the classroom, and several girls asked to read to me or requested help with their writing or math work. Others just simply ignored me as I walked about the room. Assuming that the children had become comfortable with my presence, I then began to assume the role of participant with individual interviews and planned activities.

Description of Procedures

Descriptive notes and anecdotal records were kept in a daily log and constituted the basic data of this study (see Appendix A). Items and events that were clearly related to children's responses to picture books were noted. In an attempt to further define themes and domains identified in the pilot study, I examined behaviors more systematically with regard to how individual children chose books, how children looked at books, what children saw in illustrations, and how children talked about books. I also noted reactions to specific books in order to examine these reactions during the course of the study, and in order to develop insights concerning responses over time. I recorded teacher/child and child/child interactions which I felt revealed the influence of the context upon children's responses. In addition, audiotapes were made with a cassette recorder. These tapes included group discussions and individual
interviews. The tapes were dated and transcribed and served to reinforce the records in the daily log (see Appendix B and C).

Upon entering the classroom each day, I noted the date and the activity in which the children were engaged in the daily log. Notes taken during group meetings when the teacher read to the children or held group discussions generally included the following:

1. Title and author of the book and other books mentioned
2. Comments of the teacher both in introducing the book and during the reading, and in answering questions
3. All comments and questions of the children, identifying the speaker when possible
4. Physical behavior of the teacher during reading, including the position of the book (whether held facing out or in her lap)
5. Physical position of specific children in relation to the book, physical behavior during the reading, and direction of the gaze
6. Verbal and nonverbal behaviors of teacher and students during postreading discussions including all mention of specific books.

I also used the log to record comments and behaviors of children as I observed them in individual or small group
activities. I occasionally used the tape recorder during these sessions, but found that it often seemed to distract the children. Notes taken during individual or small group sessions of the children included:

1. Title of the book the child was reading
2. Comments to me or to others about the book
3. Physical behavior during reading

As data on individual children accumulated in the daily log, and as I became more familiar with each child, I began a file for each child in the room. Information noted on the card of each child was collected from the daily log and from individual interviews. During these interviews I presented children with two recently published picture books: Bloom's *We Be Warm Till Springtime Comes* (Chaffin, 1980) and Domanska's *What Do You See?* (Domanska, 1974) and asked them to show me how they liked to look at a new book. The books were chosen to provide children with a broad range of stylistic variables—from realistic to abstract, bright colors to black and white—without isolating such variables from the context of the book. Bloom has illustrated Chaffin's story of an Appalachian family in textured, highly modeled black and white which enhances the dramatic nature of the tale. Domanska's brightly colored, patterned shapes in *What Do You See?* balance the rhythm of her simple refrain. During these interviews, the following behaviors were noted:
1. Which book was picked up first
2. Behavior as they looked at the book
3. Comments as they looked or read through the book
4. Reading behaviors and strategies

Questions used to guide the discussion included:

1. What are you thinking about as you look through the book?
2. What kind of story is it?
3. How does it make you feel?

In addition to the daily log and pupil file, mimeographed class lists were used to keep track of books children were reading, books they had chosen for special projects, and library selections. The lists had space for noting comments and allowed me to record initial reactions to books as well as later responses. The lists also enabled me to keep track of the reading of all class members during the observation period.

Mursell (1950) suggested that the characteristic of aesthetic response remains one of a response to "evocative values or 'meanings' of organized design" no matter what the modality. In addition to observing and interviewing children regarding their response to picture books in the course of their classroom experiences, it seemed appropriate, therefore, to conduct a structured activity which might be more revealing of meanings which children ascribe to various stylistic properties of picture books.
Toward the end of the twelve-week period of the study the teacher gave me time to read the Grimm Brother's *The Bremen Town Musicians* to the class. The children were informed that these folktales were often told by the grandmothers as families gathered around the fire in the evening. The story was read from a Grimm Anthology without showing illustrations, and children were asked to try to imagine pictures in their heads. After the reading the teacher led a brief discussion, asking questions like "What was your favorite part?" and "What kind of media would you use to make a picture of the story?" Over the following two days I showed small groups of children three versions of the story, chosen to provide the greatest possible stylistic contrast. Domanska (Grimm, 1980) illustrated the tale in abstract, geometric shapes using bright, contrasting colors in an expressionistic manner. Diamond (Grimm, 1981), on the other hand, chose to execute her drawings with varying densities of black dots which convey a softened, almost misty feeling to the illustrations. And Plume (Grimm, 1980) created stylized, rather naive drawings in a variety of colors and textures for her version of the story.

The children interviewed were those who had not left school early for spring vacation. This group consisted of fifteen children: four second graders and eleven first graders—nine girls and seven boys. Questions used to guide the discussion included:
1. What are you thinking as you look at the book?
2. Are these books by different artists?
3. How did the story make you feel?
4. What kind of story was it?
5. Do any of these illustrations match your feelings when you heard the story?
6. Do any of these books match the pictures you imagined as you heard the story?
7. Why did these artists choose to make such different illustrations?

The interviews were taped, transcribed, and examined as part of the total data (see Appendix C).

**Analysis of the Data**

Although questions of validity are a major concern of any research study, LeCompte and Goetz (1982) suggest that validity may be a major strength of ethnographic studies. As data in the pilot study and the present study were collected and analyzed, care was taken to insure that the categories proposed for children's response to picture books were reflections of the way the children experienced reality and not the way the researcher wished them to appear. To that end the choice of two sites allowed for comparisons of response and subsequent modification of categories. Time spent in both sites, while not of the duration of anthropological studies, did provide for continued analysis of data, with time between the two studies for reflection
and reexamination of initial questions and themes. In both studies I entered the sites as an observer, only assuming a participant stance as categories and questions arose from data concerning the interactions of the children and teacher. This gradual change in my own role in the setting reduced possible observer effects.

Every possible effort was made to insure that data were objectively recorded. I believe my background in art education, elementary education, children's literature, and as a practicing artist allowed me to make realistic choices about what data were worth noting and which were significant to the aims of this study. Following each day in the field, I reviewed the day's notes and made further generalizations and hypotheses concerning the daily occurrences and their possible connections to previous occurrences. Drawing from the list of questions that guided the development of the study and from items that demanded attention as the study progressed, I refined domains of response identified in the pilot study and further identified categories or themes that seemed significant. As these themes developed, I directed interviewing and pupil activities in order to further define significant themes. Eventually, I considered themes which emerged together with relevant theories and research related to children's responses to picture books in order to make specific recommendations for classroom practice, and in order to develop hypotheses for future research.
Summary

A qualitative approach was used to explore children's responses to picture books in an informal, self-contained, first/second grade combination classroom. The period of the study covered twelve weeks during the winter and spring quarters of 1982. I took the role of participant observer, recording background data and events by means of descriptive notes, anecdotal records, and tape recordings. In addition, I collected written work, and photographed other products of the children which were relevant to children's responses to picture books. Finally, specific data were collected through activities which focused on responses to specific books or styles of illustration. These data and procedures were analyzed and refined for implications regarding their practical and theoretical significance.
CHAPTER IV

DESCRIPTIVE DATA

The purpose of this study was to provide a descriptive framework for primary children's response to picture books which would allow the formulation of hypotheses for future research and of suggestions for classroom practice. During the course of the pilot study the following themes were identified which center on change:

Variations Among Children's Responses to Picture Books

1. Differences in response among children. These changes occurred among children as they chose picture books, looked at books, talked about books, and otherwise reacted to books.

2. Differences in children's response to picture books. The variety of books available to the children included both the genre of book (ABC, Counting, Poetry, Wordless Picture Book and Picture Story Book), the style of illustration (black and white to full color, and realistic to abstract).

3. Changes in time. Changes occurred in the reactions of an individual child to a particular book over a period of time—sometimes minutes, sometimes days and weeks.
4. The context in which changes occurred. The physical and social environment of the classroom provided a specific context for the occurrence of changes.

Over the course of the twelve-week period of the present study, the children had many experiences with picture books. Some activities were directed by the teacher, others guided by an interviewer, and many more grew out of the inclinations and abilities of each individual child. This variety of experiences has provided a broad range of data with which to describe the response of primary children to picture books. The original themes were useful in preparing for data collection at this second site. However, differences and similarities in the context of the present study suggested new themes more appropriate for the organization of data collected and more suitable for the report of the data. In this chapter, therefore, I will discuss primary children's response to picture books as it occurred in the context of the particular classroom, the variations in children's response, and the differences in individual response over a period of time.

The Context for Response

The amount of data relevant to children's response to picture books generated during the course of my observations must be due in some part to the context of the classroom—the environment, the availability of books, and the
time given for reading and response. In addition, the participants in this particular classroom culture may also have contributed to the response process.

The Classroom Setting

The physical environment of the classroom was such that children could find picture books, and find a place to read them and react to them. A reading area was built in one corner of the room near the class library. Here an old sofa, a rug, and a rocking chair provided a comfortable spot for curling up with a book; and the spot was always occupied by at least three or four children during free reading. Other children took their books to the tables or the rag rug in the center of the room. The children were free to move around the room, exchanging books with each other or picking new books from the library or display shelves.

The picture books that were available represented a wide variety of genre and styles. These included adventure stories, folktales, poetry, fantasy concept books, wordless books, and ABC books. The styles of illustration ranged from surrealistic to abstract, and the books were originally executed in a variety of media. The books ranged in excellence from grocery-store paperbacks to this year's Caldecott winner and honor books—books considered to be among the best American picture books published for children.
The children were given free time for reading at least twice a day—approximately thirty minutes in the morning and thirty minutes in the afternoon. During this time they read either with partners or by themselves. They were also free to read at other times during the day so long as their assigned work was completed. Time was also allocated for response to books. Group discussion was routine both during and after the time the teacher read to the children. The children were also allowed to talk together throughout the day as they read or worked on projects. In addition, the children were expected to react to books through writing, drama or art activities which the teacher suggested. More discussion would follow as each child presented his or her project to the class.

The Role of the Participants

The peer group. During my observations in Mrs. Jay's classroom, I did not record any incidents in which a child directly influenced another child's response. I felt, however, that an unspoken subtle grapevine existed in which children looked to their friends to suggest what to read or for approval in sanctioning a "good" book. Two boys, for example, followed Adam to the non-fiction shelves in the library. As he moved to the shelf with animal books, they too began looking through the same shelf, Adam volunteering to help them find a good book. On other occasions in the classroom, best friends would exchange "best" books,
and children would declare their affections for the books loudly. "Oh, I love this book, I love this book," said Nina of _The Terrible Nung Gwama_. By the end of the week three other children declared that it was their favorite too.

**The teacher.** A much more overt influence on the children's choices, on the direction their responses took, and their concept of stylistic elements was the teacher, Mrs. Jay. When I asked children why they chose to read a particular book, a common response was "cause Mrs. Jay read it to us and I liked it." It seemed that many of the books the children remembered or returned to were books either read or talked about by their teacher. When Mrs. Jay asked the children to make a list of their favorite books so she could order new titles for the classroom library, the books children mentioned over and over again were those that had been read aloud or displayed. (Forty-three of the 72 titles were those Mrs. Jay remembered reading that year, and 29 of the 36 which received multiple votes had been read by the teacher.)

Besides the impetus given response by reading aloud each day, Mrs. Jay provided structure for response activities centered on books. Activities which children could complete in response to a book were provided on a "planning page" which listed ten to twelve projects and several types of writing (see Figure 1). In addition, she often made
Folktale Project Planning Page

Your name __________________________________ Date started_________

______________________________________________________________

Title of the folktale__________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Origin of your tale - what country?______________________________

Author or retold by___________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

*Writing - choose 1 thing

____ What was your favorite part?

____ Who was your favorite character? Why?

____ What things happened in 3’s?

*Other responses - choose 1 thing

____ felt story or magnet ______ stuffed character

____ mural ______ mobile

____ puppet ______ book-retell story

____ picture-paint, watercolors, ______ game

____ collage, fabric ______ survey

____ clay figure of a ________ diorama

____ character

____ stitchery

____ map

____________________________________________________________________________________

Figure 1. Facsimile of folktale planning page.
specific assignments to groups of children. When some of
the children had completed individual folktale and biog-
raphy projects, for example, she told them to pick a friend,
to choose a folktale book, and to create a mural: "like you
see it in the book. Try to imitate the style. If they use
lots of colors then you use lots of colors."

As the children talked about books, Mrs. Jay seemed to
exert a subtle direction on the course of the discussion.
During these conversations, she emerged as a "teacher" or
imparter of knowledge. Many of her questions, for example,
seemed directed at conveying information: "What does
assemble mean?" "What does gawking mean?" "You're letting
these words go by like you understand them." She often
asked questions about the media an artist had used: "What
did Mrs. Jay say he used to make these skinny lines?" Her
questions and comments served to focus the children's
attention according to her own agenda rather than to invite
divergent thinking on their part, as in the following
excerpt from her reading of Outside Over There:

Mrs. Jay: (reading)'When Papa was away at sea,
and Mama in the arbor,' see what -
where Mama is sitting? Does anyone
know what kind of plant that is?

Children: (comments from many)

Mrs. Jay: Grapevine arbor. How does it start
to grow? (pause)

Children: (more comments)

Mrs. Jay: Then it just grows up the side like.
Adam: Yeah, we have some of that in our yard.

Mrs. Jay: (reading) 'Ida played her wind horn to rock the baby still - but never watched.'

Children: (comments) Ooooo.

Child: I know what happens.

Mrs. Jay: Look at the baby's face. Is she enjoying the music, do you suppose?

Children: Yeah. Yeah.

Mrs. Jay: (reading) 'So the goblins came. They pushed their way in and pulled the baby out, leaving another all made of ice.'

Stella: The eyes are gross.

Child: I know what's going to happen to the baby.

Mrs. Jay: Big eyes - kinda bulgy.

Children: (more Ahhs and Ooohs).

Mrs. Jay: (reading) 'Poor Ida, never knowing, hugged the changeling and she murmured: "How I love you." The ice thing only dripped and stared, and Ida mad knew goblins had been there.'

Kate: What is that?

Adam: The ship.

Mrs. Jay: Look at Ida. How is she feeling?

Children: Mad.

Mrs. Jay: How is the sea feeling?

Children: Angry.

Mrs. Jay: How do you know the sea is angry? Adam?
Adam: Because the waves are starting to close in on the ship, starting to get rough on the sea.

Mrs. Jay: Right. What kind of weather do we have?

Children: Storm.

Adam: A big storm.

Child: Bad weather.

2nd child: A wind storm.

The children continued to express an interest in the ship which appears on subsequent pages. Mrs. Jay directed their attention to other aspects of the illustrations.

Mrs. Jay: Look at the flowers. They even look like they're going to climb in the window. (Reading) "They stole my sister away!" she cried, "To be a nasty goblin's bride!" Now Ida in a hurry snatched her Mamma's yellow rain cloak, tucked her horn in her pocket, and made a serious mistake.'

Child: What was the mistake?

2nd child: Oh! It's gone. (referring to the ship).

Adam: It sunk.

3rd child: It either sunk or it was burnt.

4th child: How did she make it sink?

Mrs. Jay: Oh, I don't think Ida made it sink, do you? (The children argued about the boat, but Mrs. Jay resumed the story. Toward the end of the book the sea is visible once more but the ship is still missing.)

Mrs. Jay: (Resumes reading) "Terrible Ida," the goblins said, "We're dancing sick and must to bed." But Ida played a
frenzied jig, a hornpipe that makes sailors wild beneath the ocean moon.'

Mrs. Jay: Look at the moon.

Adam: And the ship's gone.

Nina: It docked - it got --

Mrs. Jay: (Interrupts) See the reflection on the water?

Mrs. Jay mentioned several times that she hoped the children would become more critical as they looked at and read books. After Amanda had stated that reading Peter Spier's People had helped her learn all about people, "how they're different from other people," Mrs. Jay told me, "I thought that was a really critical comment. I thought that was good." On another occasion she stated: "I notice their comments have been much more critical since we looked at the books" (Caldecott nominees).

Mrs. Jay's desire to convey information and to help children become critical thinkers was evident in two units she planned around the illustrations in picture books. When I first entered the classroom, Mrs. Jay was comparing the books illustrated by William Steig to those of Peter Spier. She began by showing a film version of The Cow Who Fell in the Canal. She asked the children to decide if Spier or Steig had done the illustrations and to write down their reasons: "What you noticed or heard that helped you make your decision." A class discussion followed the writing. During the following week she asked the children to compare books of William Steig and Peter Spier. The
following exchange is typical of the questions raised during the discussion of the other books as well:

Mrs. Jay: Did you like the illustrations?

Children: Yes.

Mrs. Jay: What do you think William Steig used to make the illustrations? If you look at this picture you can really tell.

1st child: Chalk.

2nd child: Pink.

3rd child: Color.

4th child: Water paint.

Mrs. Jay: I would say paint. If you look at the colors, what do the colors do?

Meg: They mix.

Mrs. Jay: And they look more faded.

Anne: How do they make them not mix?

Mrs. Jay: If you want them to mix you use more water. What did he mean at the end when he said, 'Madame Tarsal knew her onions'?

For the second unit on picture books the children were asked to choose one book by each author which they thought had won the Caldecott award (she told the children that this medal was given for the book with "the best pictures." ) However, the discussion of their choices proved to be a focused lesson on stylistic evaluation rather than a time of sharing their reasons for liking the book. Examples of this discussion follow. To introduce the unit, Mrs. Jay
brought in eight books which she read and discussed with the children over a period of eight days. Among these books were Chris Van Allsburg's *Jumanji* which won the 1981 Caldecott award, and four honor books: Maurice Sendak's *Outside Over There; On Market Street*, illustrated by Anita Lobel; *A Visit to William Blake's Inn; Poems for Innocent and Experienced Travelers*, illustrated by Alice and Martin Provenson; and *Where the Buffaloes Begin*, illustrated by Stephen Gammell. She also included three books which had won no awards, but which she thought were interesting: *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain*, illustrated by B. Vidal; *What Amanda Saw*, illustrated by Paul O. Zelinsky; and *Bo Rabbit Smart for True: Stories from the Gulah*, illustrated by Ed Young.

She introduced the books and told the children:

> What I want you to do...is look at the books, don't just pick it up and look through it fast. If you were on the Caldecott committee and it was your job to select the best picture book, what would you be looking for?

In order to compare the books, Mrs. Jay prepared a large chart (see Figure 2) using categories she reported had emerged from earlier discussions. As she read each book to the children, she organized discussion around these categories. As she finished reading *Outside Over There*, for example, she immediately turned the children's attention to these categories.

Mrs. Jay: (reading the last page) 'Which is just what Ida did.'

Children: (Clapping) Yeah!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of Color</th>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Shape or Size (Placement of Words)</th>
<th>Type of Illustrations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What Amanda Saw</td>
<td>browns, blues</td>
<td>pencil or charcoal</td>
<td>rectangle 2-page size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2-page white frame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>words in triangle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Over</td>
<td>lots of color</td>
<td>paints oil crayons</td>
<td>rectangle 1 page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There</td>
<td>dull or faded</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 page part of page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>framed words and picture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>bottom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3c Rabbit</td>
<td>black, white and grey</td>
<td>pencil charcoal chalk</td>
<td>small some medium square 8 on 2 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Market Street</td>
<td>colors match bright went with object</td>
<td>colored markers</td>
<td>medium rectangle words frame around words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing the In to Kapiti Plain</td>
<td>lots of blue green nature colors bright colors</td>
<td>crayon resist paints oil crayons white outline</td>
<td>2 page size rectangle poem, up and down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumanji</td>
<td>black, white, grey</td>
<td>chalk pencil Oil crayons</td>
<td>rectangle 1 page white frame frame around words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Visit to William Blake's Inn</td>
<td>colors look old brown parchment</td>
<td>paints chalk special type of paper</td>
<td>rectangle different sizes poem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where the Buffalo Begin</td>
<td>black, white and grey</td>
<td>pencil chalk charcoal</td>
<td>different sizes square circle with buffaloes in it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Facsimile of teacher prepared chart for the unit on Caldecott books.
Mrs. Jay: I think we have a lot of things to look for in **Outside Over There**.

Child: The babies.

2nd child: The goblins.

3rd child: The birds.

Mrs. Jay: All right. First of all, who would like to tell us about the use of color? Adam?

Adam: He used peach - and then like normal colors of clothes you wear -

Children: True. True.

Adam: (Continuing) Blue - gold.

Child: He used green a lot.

Mrs. Jay: Keep on making comments - don't stop.

Adam: He made - he used green a lot. He used white.

Child: I like the way he did the sky and the moon.

2nd child: I like the way he made the goblins.

Anne: The goblins all - they look the same when they're in their outfits -

Mrs. Jay: It's hard to tell them apart. All right, so are you saying that he used lots of colors?

Children: Yeah.

Adam: He used lots of colors.

Mrs. Jay: Think about the colors in the story - would you say that these colors are real bright, real intense, or are they more of a faded or a dull color? Like the reds - do the reds seem as bright as our reds here?
Child: Nooo. (other comments)

Mrs. Jay: Okay. So the colors are more --
Would you agree with Gail? Gail said they were -- even though
the illustrator uses a lot of colors they're still kind of
dull.

Child: Dull.

2nd child: Yeah - they are.

Adam: Looks like he used chalk.

Child: Chalk?

Mrs. Jay: All right. What about the media
that was used? What kind of
material? Could this have been
pencil?

Children: No.
Maybe a little.
No.
Yeah.
A little.

Child: -- in the raincoat - to trace -

Mrs. Jay: To trace? Do you think he traced?

Children: No. No.

Mrs. Jay: No - I don't think Mr. Sendak would
trace.

Adam: Really - yeah - if he -

Mrs. Jay: Does anybody have any ideas about
what you think he used? Adam?

Adam: He might 'uv used colored pencil.

Mrs. Jay: Adam thinks maybe colored pencil?

Adam: Felt?

Mrs. Jay: Is this collage?

Children: No No.
Mrs. Jay: No, it's not collage, is it? It's some type of a paint or a picture. Okay - maybe it's some type of a paint? (comments from children) (pause) Perhaps some type of - some of you said oil craypas, crayons perhaps? (comments)

Adam: Anne said that.

Mrs. Jay: All right. What about the shape or the size of these pictures?


Mrs. Jay: All right. What can we say? First of all - in Amanda - in What Amanda Saw, we said that the shape of the pictures were rectangle and that they were always two page size, and they put a white frame around the pictures. Now what kinds of things can we notice in this book that are different?

Stella: Some pages are - are - two one whole - - - - like -

Mrs. Jay: Some are two pages, some are like this one back here - it's just one page - this one is two pages, but look at what they've done at the bottom. They put -

Adam: They made like a little border at the bottom.

Child: Yeah.

Mrs. Jay: Then look at this one.

Adam: Border all around the page.

Mrs. Jay: Okay.

Children: (Comments)

Mrs. Jay: So the pictures are rectangles. They're rectangle pictures - but some are two pages - - -
some are one page — and some are part of one page — but they always keep the rectangle size. Did Mr. Sendak worry about putting the border around his pictures?

Children: No. No. No.

Mrs. Jay: Not like in What Amanda Saw. All right. What about his placement of words? What did you notice about the words — any special things that he did? I noticed — I noticed some things right at the beginning. Meg?

Meg: His dog looks — his dog looks pretty — uh — pretty much real.

Mrs. Jay: Save that for type. Let's talk about the words — placement of the words.

Meg: Okay.

Mrs. Jay: Sean, did you notice anything about some of the ways he placed the words?

Adam: He placed most of them like on the bottom — the bottom of the page.

Sean: He uses as much as he could on one line.

Mrs. Jay: All right. Let's — since he did three different types of illustrations. What did he do with his words — when it was a two-page illustration? Kate?

Kate: Ummm. He put a little frame around it.

Mrs. Jay: All right. He framed it — doesn't he?

Child: He wrote inside the frame.

Mrs. Jay: Notice at the very beginning he said, 'Papa was away at sea and Mama (pause) in the arbor.' He framed them, didn't he?
Stella: Both the same. They're both the same - except he just changed like Mama and the blah blah blah

Mrs. Jay: When he did one page - Jimmy, how would you describe what he did on one page? He did the picture on one side. What's on the other?

Jimmy: Writing? Words.

Mrs. Jay: Okay. So when he did one page he'd use one page for words.

Jimmy: The other page for the picture.

Child: - - - the dog - that special dog -

Mrs. Jay: Okay. And what did he do? Ned? When you have a page where the pictures were just partial -

Ned: - - - words on the bottom -

Mrs. Jay: He used the bottom to ------ we have three different types of pages with the shape or size. Look at the last thing we decided to look for - the type of illustration -

Mrs. Jay: Now here we're looking to see if they're lifelike - - or if they're fantasy like.

Child: Life.

Mrs. Jay: Okay. We've got a lot of opinions on this. Amanda?

Amanda: They kinda look real.

Mrs. Jay: Do the characters look real or fantasy?

Children: Real!

Mrs. Jay: Many of you commented on this particular character.

Children: The dog. The doggie.
Child: Arf! Arf! Arf!

Mrs. Jay: Okay. So the characters look real.

Child: Arf! Arf!

Mrs. Jay: Would you say - what else looked real in the story - a lot of you commented on that?

Stella: Jake, you don't have to bark.

Mrs. Jay: What looks real on this page? Anne?

Anne: The babies?

Mrs. Jay: The babies. A lot of you commented on the -- about the babies -- (pause) All right. Now the feeling that I got when I read the story was that -

Child: Bad -

Mrs. Jay: These things look real. There's something about what the illustrator did - did you feel like this is something that you would see? (pointing to goblins)

Children: No. No.

Mrs. Jay: So, even though -

Adam: It's impossible.

Mrs. Jay: (continues) characters and draws real real things - the boats, the sailors - it's still gives you a fantasy-like picture - a make-believe type picture.

Sean: -- -- the little baby goblins are --

Mrs. Jay: Do you see what I feel? Do you feel the same way? When I read the story, did you feel like it was a real story or a make-believe story?

Children: Make believe.
Mrs. Jay: Make-believe story. So he wanted to create maybe a feeling of fantasy.

Children: (comments)

Anne: Goblins come and take their baby.

Mrs. Jay: So he's combined both. Okay. Were there any other comments?

The discussion which followed the reading of the other books followed a similar format. Mrs. Jay questioned the children about Lobel's use of color and media in On Market Street:

Mrs. Jay: All right. First of all let's think of our use of - what about the use of color in On Market Street? Timmy?

Timmy: Like it's kinda bright.

Mrs. Jay: Do you think they're bright colors? And, Kate, didn't you say something about how they matched?

Kate: Yeah.

Mrs. Jay: All right. Do you think the use of colors went with - for example, would you see a drum with maybe red?

Children: Yeah.

Mrs. Jay: Do they look real? Noodles?

Children: Yeah.

Mrs. Jay: Okay. What about ribbons?

Children: Yeah - they're colorful.

Mrs. Jay: Okay. So they went with the object. All right. What do you think Anita Lobel used to make the pictures? Adam?
Adam: I thought she might have used - like -
Child: Oil crayons.
Adam: Like felt. Felt or oil crayons.
Mrs. Jay: Does it look like it could be a 3-D?
Children: No. Yes.
Adam: Yes, in some ways.
Timmy: Oh, I know what it is.
Mrs. Jay: Timmy?
Timmy: I think it might be paint and markers.
Mrs. Jay: You think it's paint?
Stella: I think they could take chalk and then paint it.
Mrs. Jay: All right. This is not paint in the background. All right. What about size and shape - size and shape? Meg?

From these comments she chose words or phrases which she then filled in on the chart. For Lobel's "use of color" she wrote "colors match, bright, went with object" and for "media" she filled in "colored markers."

Mrs. Jay encouraged the children to read the books in their free time and displayed copies on the chalkrail where children had easy access to them. After all the books had been read and discussed, the children were given three ballots. One asked for "My vote for the best story and why," the second asked for "My vote for the Caldecott and why," and the third for "My vote for the honor book and why." Following the voting, Mrs. Jay listed the outcomes
of the class vote and then the books the Caldecott committee had chosen.

These teacher directed activities, the structure provided by her questions, and her organization of the curriculum as well as the more subtle influence of peers provided the human context for the children's response to picture books. The availability of a variety of books, the time in which to respond to them, and the physical environment of the classroom were also part of the setting in which variations and changes occurred in children's response to picture books and in which the response of each child to a particular book took on its own very personal meaning.

**Variations in Children's Response to Picture Books**

**How Children Choose Books**

The children in Mrs. Jay's class had many opportunities to choose books which they wanted to read. There was an extensive classroom library consisting mainly of from 100 to 200 paperback books all housed on shelves, spine forward, in the reading corner. The teacher regularly visited her public library for supplementary materials which tied in with particular themes the class was working on. These were displayed, cover forward, on the chalkrail and on a wooden display rack. The children also visited the school library frequently. They were free to check out books from 8:30 to 9:00 each morning and the whole class visited the library every Monday afternoon.
In the weekly library session, children were not given much leisure time in which to select their books. Several children mentioned the need to choose books quickly: "She (the librarian) only lets us have like nine minutes to get our books. You know how there's all the books in there but you don't know which ones to get out," reported Stella. Indeed, on one visit the librarian announced loudly that it was book choosing time with the statement: "You have eleven minutes to select your books." Consequently, there was a rush to the selves—boys to the non-fiction and girls to the fiction.

When choosing their books, the children often quickly leafed through the pictures. Timmy stated: "We're really not supposed to be reading that much in the library so I always look through the pages of the book before I take them out. You have to spend most of your time finding books." Several children explained that they chose their book because Mrs. Jay or the librarian had read it to them. Another child picked his information book on practical horse breeding because he liked horses, and because it was on the same shelf as his friend Adam had picked from. Several girls chose biographies, the theme currently being studied in their classroom. Rose selected her book because "I just liked it. I read a little and I liked it."

In the classroom, the children had more time and opportunity to choose their books. The books which were
displayed as part of the theme the children were working on usually disappeared first during free reading time. Books from the classroom shelves or which had been ordered from a commercial book club were also circulated and read.

Some children seemed to have little trouble deciding what to read. Several days after Mrs. Jay had introduced the Caldecott books and displayed them for the children, Rose headed straight for On Market Street, picked it up and returned to her desk to look through it. Other children were more deliberate in their actions. Ned stood staring at the book display for some seconds. Then he reached out and ran his finger over the dark shape on the cover of Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain. Finally, he picked the book up and began to read it as he walked back to his table. Several other children agreed that looking at the pictures is the first step in choosing a book. Ellen said, "I look at the pictures first because the pictures kind of say if it's a good book." Others report that this first look tells them if the book is too difficult for them to read. Meg confided that "usually I just look through it and then say I don't want to read this cause it would look too hard."

The children gave a variety of reasons for wanting to read a book. After Mrs. Jay had showed the Caldecott books to the class I asked each child which book they wanted to read first, and why.
Nine of the children chose *On Market Street*, four of them because "it looks kinda funny." Two mentioned liking the ABC's. Janie, a second grader, liked Arnold Lobel books, and Christie just couldn't tell me *why* she wanted to read it. Several of the children mentioned some element of style—John liked "how they made the pictures kinda light and kinda dark." Five of the children wanted to read *Outside Over There*: two because they liked the goblin babies, one because it seemed like a "nice book," and another because it looked "good" and "it was going to be easy to read." Sean, like Christie, was not yet ready to say why he chose it. Stella wanted to read *Where the Buffaloes Begin*: "I think it's good cause of the drawing on the cover." Adam wanted to read it because "I like buffalo, and anyways bison used to live in Ohio. That's the reason why I want to learn about buffalo." Nina picked the book when Stella whispered, "I picked Buffalo." Jake chose *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain* because it "had animals and stuff," while Amanda wanted to read *What Amanda Saw* because it "looked interesting," and Ned chose *Jumanji* because "it looks sort of good from the cover, like it will be funny." Rose, however, said she wanted to "think about it some more" before she decided which book she would choose.

**How Children Look at Books**

Many children looked at books in order to help them *choose* the ones they wanted to spend more time with. Stella
reported, "Most kids, if they know a book or not, they take it over to the table and sit down and look at the pictures or read and look at the pictures." In addition to helping them choose books, the ways these children look at books may be a part of the response process.

When the children read in group situations they exhibited a variety of behaviors. When Mrs. Jay read to the children many seemed to have a favorite spot where they sat each time. Rose was often at the teacher's feet, and the boys sat toward the back of the group on the teacher's right. Lisa and Christie showed no preference for place in the circle as long as they sat together. As the story was read, some children would watch the teacher or look at the book for short periods, then look away. Others would strain to see the illustrations--head forward, eyes moving back and forth across the page. It was difficult to identify individual patterns of "looking." Mrs. Jay often read books while holding them in her lap, and then showed the illustrations to the group. Thus the children may have been used to looking at the book and then looking away when the pictures were removed.

As I observed the children during their free reading period, and as I listened to them read, I was not able to identify any regular "looking" patterns for individual children. Before they read, many children looked at the pictures in the book; but once they started they did not
spend much time looking at the picture—either before reading each new page or after reading. Children often looked at the picture when they came to a word they did not know. Margie reported, "By the way the pictures are you can sometimes figure out what the title is. Sometimes if there's anything in the background...if you have trouble like on the word...sometimes the pictures give you a help by what it has in it." I could not identify this as a regular strategy with any of the children, no matter what their reading ability.

When I asked the children what they did with a book they had not seen before, nine (8 first graders and 1 second grader) said they liked to read right away. The other twelve children reported that they looked through the book first. Adam, a second grader, stated that "I look at the pictures first to get a feeling what the book looks like inside." Ned, also a second grader, explained that looking at the pictures "will tell you the exciting parts - you know, it could just show you the exciting parts and then you could read about them."

How Children Talk About Books

What they say. In Mrs. Jay's class children were constantly encouraged to talk about books—in group discussions, with the teacher, and with each other. The bulk of the data from this study concerned what children had to say about the picture books, how they talked about them, and why they
talked about them.

I found that children used a special register when they talked about picture books—a register that was at once that of the "critic" yet uniquely their own. Many of the children seemed comfortable using vocabulary like "illustrations," "illustrated," and "primary colors" to describe the illustrations. Adam, for example, explained that he liked the way Vidal "designed" the animals in Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain. Meg pointed out that Peter Spier used "India ink" in his pictures; and most of the children were ready to state that an artist might have used such media as chalk, charcoal, watercolor, or oil crayons in his pictures.

At times, the children's understanding and use of these technical terms did not always match the adults'. First grader Anne asked, "Does illustrated mean did the pictures or did the writing?" Several children seemed confused about terms like "bright" and "dull" and described intense colors as "light colors" or "dark colors." Some children did not know what Mrs. Jay meant by the term "medium" when she asked, "What medium did the artist use?" Still other children altered technical terms slightly—Nina, also a first grader, spoke of "all the little patternings" in Domanska's designs, and Sean (grade one) referred to the "framery" Diamond put around her pictures. Several of the children had remembered hearing their art teacher use the term "expressionism," but used the terms "in press," "impressions," and "expression"
instead. Second grader Janie explained that Domanska's illustrations for the Bremen Town Musicians were "what our art teacher called expression - like you wouldn't find a red cat." The children often used more everyday terms to talk about picture books. To describe Spier's use of small vignettes instead of full-page illustrations Janie stated: "He divided the pictures." Ned (grade two) referred to Steig's "splotches in the waves" in Amos and Boris, and Kate (grade two) pointed out that Spier used "curls" as well as "skinny lines" in The Tin Lizzie. In fact, Adam (grade two) assured the class that books like The Tin Lizzie were "prehistoric books - something that happened a long time ago in history."

An attempt to relate the unknown to the known was shown, I believe, in the frequent use of figurative language as children talked about books. Several children felt that the buffaloes in Where the Buffaloes Begin looked like clouds. Sean referred to the birch trees in Plume's The Bremen Town Musicians as "paper trees." Kate suggested that the sky in Sendak's Outside Over There was like a fairyland. Meg (grade two) said that the paper in A Visit to William Blake's Inn looked like "coke spilled on it." (It was painted to resemble parchment.) Sean remarked that a bright waving river in Domanska's What Do You See? "looks like birthday whipped cream. You know, like those little squirts that come out."
Why they talk. Children used these words and phrases -- their own and those supplied for them by adults -- for many different purposes, and as the data were examined, categories concerning these "functions" of talk began to emerge. I have adapted these categories from Halliday's (1975) *Functions of Language* using only those functions which seemed to apply directly to the response situation. These categories included: "Informative" - language meant to convey information, "Heuristic" - language used for finding things out, "Imaginative" - language used to create a world of one's own, and "Personal" - language used to express one's individuality, to give personal feelings and opinions. (These systems of categorization will be discussed more fully in Chapter V). Once these categories were identified, data were organized according to further subcategories (see Figure 3).

Informative talk - children used language to report information about picture books. At times, this concerned the content of the pictures. As Jimmy (grade one) looked through *The Bremen Town Musicians*, he pointed out the characters: "That's the donkey (pause) and this is the hound (pause) the donkey, the hound and the cat." Rose (grade one) mentioned what was included in the picture: "Here's the hen on the roof," and what wasn't: "This has no stars." Timmy (grade one) and others told a story as they looked at the pictures in *What Do You See?: "The water's sorta dark,
1. Informative
   1.1 Report the contents of the picture
   1.2 Compare what is in the picture to some aspect of the real world.

2. Heuristic
   2.1 Wonder about events in pictures.
   2.2 Infer cause of pictured events or preparation of illustrations.
   2.3 Predict outcomes or events from pictures.

3. Imaginative
   3.1 Enter the world of the book
   3.2 Create figurative language.

4. Personal
   4.1 Associate personal experience with book.
   4.2 Express feelings.
   4.3 Evaluate.

Figure 3. Functional categories for children's verbal responses to picture books
and the background is sorta dark, and they have him diving in...and then they're on the boat." Other children talked about stylistic elements: "This is dull," "This is bright," "There are zig zigs in the umbrella," "It's kinda like smooth." Several reported what the artist had done. Janie mentioned that Diamond "gave a border to the picture." Sean pointed out "the guy that makes the donkey always made him growl."

Informative language also served the function of comparing as well as pointing out. Children related information about the pictures to information in other books: Lisa (grade one) compared the house in Plume's *The Bremen Town Musicians* to one she had seen in *Hansel and Gretel*; or in the same book, "This page," stated Timmy, "is like the cover" in *We Be Warm Till Springtime Comes*. Many children spoke about pictures in terms of their own experience—comparing Domanska's expressionistic animals, for example, to what they knew about "real" cats and donkeys. "Cats aren't usually pink and orange," stated first grader Anne. Rose agreed: "I never seen a purple donkey." Still other children used analogies to compare what they saw to what they knew. Amanda reported that the end pages in Diamond's *The Bremen Town Musicians* looked like cardboard. Sean thought that the hair on Diamond's cat looked "rough." Shelly (grade one) felt that the patterned umbrella in Domanska's *What Do You See?* looked "like wood" while Amy
reported that Domanska's turtle looked like a zebra.

Heuristic talk - the children in Mrs. Jay's room were active explorers of the world of picture books, constantly questioning what they saw. Some of these questions were speculative—simply wondering about relationships in pictures or stories. Looking at a robber in Domanska's The Bremen Town Musicians Scott said, "I wonder what he's doing." Timmy asked, "What's happening - is he carrying him?" When Amanda was asked what she was thinking about as she looked at Domanska's illustrations she stated, "I was thinking how the things were made." When Ida flew out her window in Sendak's Outside Over There Adam asked, "How could she fly?" Sean wanted to know why Vidal made "his pictures look like the end of the world?"

There was usually someone ready to answer these queries. Sean assured Adam that Ida could fly "because it's (the mother's cloak) a special raincoat." Such conclusions were common as children talked about books. Many such inferences were concerned with what was happening. Ned looked at a bird in What Do You See? and stated: "Right here the bird is singing...cause his beak is open." Several children mentioned the hazy images Diamond had placed among the trees toward the end of The Bremen Town Musicians: "They're devils cause in the one you [the interviewer] read they thought the noise they made were devils." Nina stated that they were "the faces what he said about."
Many more inferences concerned the way in which the artist executed his/her illustrations. Stella (grade one) thought she knew why Domanska had done "weird pictures" in *What Do You See?:* "the artist drew weird because he thought it would be fun for adults and kids just to look for different things that are weird about the animals. Other children speculated about how the pictures in books had been done. Meg said of *We Be Warm Till Springtime Comes:* "it looks like they've been painted. You can see the brush coming down," while Elizabeth (grade one) remarked, "it looks like he used his fingers or his hands." Nina and Amanda discussed Domanska's *The Bremen Town Musicians:*

Amanda: I was thinking how they were made out of construction paper.

Interviewer: What makes you say that?

Amanda: I think - I think of the shapes, I think of - -

Nina: I think of paint - crayons or marker or scissors are for outling and I don't think that. They didn't use scissors. They might of torn or something.

Interviewer: And you think they used paint?

Nina: Yeah - because it's smooth.

While many children reported that they liked to look at pictures in books in order to predict what would happen in the story, I found few children wondering aloud about what they thought would happen in the pictures. An exception was Ned (grade two) who had confided that book
illustrations helped him tell the exciting parts and used the pictures in *What Do You See?* to predict subsequent events:

Ned: It's about these flies that are trying to escape and everything - because frogs and spiders eat flies.

Interviewer: Oh. Uh huh. That's right, they do.

Ned: And on this page it just looks like the spiders are just hanging there (turns page).

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Ned: You know, it seems like they're getting caught in the web (turns page) and then he's going to come over and get him.

Imaginative talk - talk in which children entered into the world of the book was less prevalent than some other forms of talk, but enough instances were recorded to include imaginative talk as a separate category. Some children approach the imaginary world very tentatively. Sean seemed fascinated with Bloom's depiction of glass jars. He looked at them for some time and then remarked, "It looks like I could touch it." Adam, who struggled throughout the period of observation with a definition of what looked real, gave in to his imagination when he heard *The Bremen Town Musicians* read. "When I heard the story," he reported, "I thought of something like a real story of real animals and that (Diamond's black and white illustrations) was the story, but then I asked my mind to change it into color." Other children are quite ready to suspend belief and become one
with the story. As Amanda silently looked through Domanska's *The Bremen Town Musicians*, I asked her what she was thinking about. "I'm thinking that I'm one of the people," she answered, "I'm thinking that I'm the donkey - no - I wanna be the dog." Later, as she and Nina looked at Diamond's version, she changed characters:

Nina: Look at the dog - it's like a different dog.

Amanda: Yeah - I think I wanna be the cat now. What do you want to be?

Nina: I wanna be the dog - cause the cat's different than the cat here (in the Plume version).

Often this imaginative function comes very close to metaphor, as in Meg's statement while listening to *Jumanji*: "I feel like I'm in a dream." In fact, the figurative language which children create in response to picture books may be an attempt to imagine their own world into the world of the books, as in Gail's (grade one) comment about *We Be Warm Till Springtime Comes*. She looked at Jimmy Jack lying in his bed and stated, "That's like an imaginary blanket waving there, like he's laying in the clouds."

Personal talk - another category of talk about picture books concerns talk that serves a personal function. Children often had personal experiences that they associated with picture books. Sometimes the illustrations reminded them of something familiar. Shelly remarked that the patterns in *What Do You See?* were "like our bathroom," and
"we gotta blanket colored like that," as she looked at We Be Warm Till Springtime Comes. Anne assured me that cats weren't really like Domanska's in The Bremen Town Musicians: "We have a cat and our cat doesn't go around with his teeth hanging out." At other times, events in the story give rise to personal reflection. Amanda, who so easily assumed the role of the dog in The Bremen Town Musicians explained: "I love dogs. They're cute. We were gonna get one but my Grandma hadda come cause she kept on messing up the house." As she looked through We Be Warm Till Springtime Comes, Meg applied the characters' longing to her own:

Cause, you know, they were wishing spring would come, but it was winter. Just like I'm hoping spring will come - that's when my communion is and that's when my birthday is....It's going to be a communion and so on cause I'm inviting lots of people and I hope it will be good weather - cause we're probably going to go to Da Vinci's and it's probably gonna be very expensive.

Children also expressed feelings which arose from picture books. Sometimes these statements were spontaneous:

"That makes me feel cold" Ellen (grade two) said of Jumanji. More often, the children would express feelings when asked, "How did that make you feel" or "What kind of story is it?". They replied that it made them feel "sad," "warm," "happy." Nina assured me that What Do You See? gave her a "bright and cheery daytime feeling." Janie seemed confused by the question. She replied that Domanska's illustrations made her feel "interesting."
Many verbal responses that comprised the data could be categorized as personal opinions about picture books. These responses often came in answer to the teacher's queries. As the class discussed their decisions regarding which of Peter Spier's and William Steig's books had won a Caldecott, Mrs. Jay said, "Timmy, you voted for Amos and Boris, what did you like that the other three didn't have?" Timmy replied, "I liked how he made the stars." Jake chimed in, "I like how he made the boat." Other comments during this session showed children's opinions were often linked to a single element of the book. Margie (grade two) pointed to a page in Tiffky Doofky: "He has so much right in front - and the sky - he has so many colors." Meg agreed, "I like it too." But Meg did not care for Spier's depiction of single eyes in People: "I don't like People." When she was asked why, she pointed to the picture: "I don't like this - I just think it's gross."

When I asked children what they were thinking as they looked at books I often received opinions in reply. "This part looks cute," "the colors are pretty," "the background is neat," they told me. "This doesn't look too fun," said Stella about Diamond's version of The Bremen Town Musicians: "Look at his nails. This is sick - I think this page is very gross" (the "devil's" faces are depicted among the trees). Ellen "liked" What Do You See? "Cause it has lots of detail," while Shelly thought it was "a good book because
I liked it." Janie gave more thought to her answer as she looked at Plume's illustrations:

   It looks great the way the rest of the house is - the way he drew lines in the book to make it. I like how he made the lines red there - it looks real - instead of just brown.

Other functions of language - as children carried out assignments with picture books, their talk took on additional functions. Mrs. Jay asked the children to "pick out different fairy tales" and try to "copy the pictures." As Meg and Margie worked together, they used language for social purposes:

   Meg: Oh, gee - this is hard.

   Margie: How do you think I feel - look - I have to cross the legs over...

   Meg: It's Thumbelina. Do you think that's good, Margie?

   Margie: Yeah - yes, that's good.

   Meg (later): This is - isn't it beautiful? - we're doing it beautifully.

Adam had the opportunity to supervise as well as socialize with his friend Jake during the same activity. Adam, busy drawing the bird in Burkert's version of The Nightingale, told Jake to work on the background:

   Jake: Now what should I do?

   Adam: Good - you smeared it. You need to add more of that chalk. Yeah - that's good - that's good... Yeah - now add some down here, then you can start doing the trees.
On another occasion I stopped to listen to Beth and Amanda as they looked through *On Market Street*, an alphabet book in which a character is composed of objects which begin with a particular letter. As each page was turned, they would take turns being the first to point to (and "get") an object in the figure:

**J** for jewelry - Amanda: I want this ring, and this, and this.

**K** for kites - Beth: I want this kite.

**S** for shoes - Amanda: I know what shoes I want.

Beth (chooses first): Okay, I pick these.

Amanda: No, I get to go.

**W** for wig - Beth: I pick this one.

Amanda: I want this one - and I get to pick a ribbon.

Beth: Me too.

Amanda: No, cause you already have one.

**Y** for yarn - Amanda: You get two things.

Beth: All right, that's all.

Amanda: No, now you pick only one thing. I'm gonna pick first cause this was my page.

In this case the two friends had developed an elaborate game with its own implicit rules as to whose turn it was or how many objects they could "keep."
What Children See in Picture Books

Children's talk about the illustrations in picture books is revealing of what they see in pictures and what understanding they may have of the stylistic qualities in the art work.

Pictorial content. As noted above, children saw stories in pictures and often talked about the illustrations by means of retelling. Some children found subplots imbedded within the pictures. Ned noticed a tiny mouse who reappears throughout Spier's Gobble Growl Grunt. "I like the little mouse he kept drawing who kept coming and stealing all the food," he stated. Stella suggested that pictures may contain many stories. "See, there are two things you can figure out," she said as she looked at What Do You See? She pointed to a fly and a moth flying near a "moon" halfway through the book, and then showed me that on the last page they had changed positions: "Well - it looks like there's a fly, but then he moves - he was over here - now he's over here."

I found other children noting small details they found in pictures. Anne pointed out that the robber's socks in Domanska's The Bremen Town Musicians were different colors. Meg said of Spier's pictures: "You can see things in the windows, and the grass has little cloves in it." Stella explained that for her the "best pictures" had "some things" hidden in them, pointing to a tiny cat in De Paola's
Big Anthony and the Magic Ring. Rose agreed: "You have to find different things, like a rabbit wouldn't be running around in a house."

At other times, children's talk reflected not what was on the page, but some image that they held in their minds: such as Adam's insistence that he ordered his mind to change pictures from black and white into color as he thought about The Bremen Town Musicians. Throughout the data collection period, I found children referring to black and white as "colors." In most cases they corrected themselves or each other. Meg stated that Diamond's black and white drawings were in "plain colors," while Stella argued that "It can't be plain colors cause those aren't colors--black and white." Nina referred to the black and white illustrations in We Be Warm Till Springtime Comes as "colorful." When I asked her to explain, however, she answered:

Nina: Oh, I don't know why - because - kind of - like the pictures are dull and white and black an' - well, white's not really a color, it's just - uh - and black is a color, but it's - um - kind of like something like white - and that's all.

Interviewer: That's all, huh?

Nina: Ummm - I don't know why I think - Margie also seemed confused. "The black and white looks real by the eyes. He puts like black and white in. He puts all the color correct," she pointed out. Shelly
seemed more assured. "These aren't really colors, she explained, but in the next breath pointed to Jimmy Jack's quilt. "We gotta blanket colored like that," she confided. These comments were typical of others heard throughout the observation period as children seemed to be attempting to accommodate adult definitions to their own experiences. Nina and Amanda finally ignored the "facts" and gave in to their imaginations as they compared Diamond's drawings with those in Jumanji (both books are in black and white). They looked silently through the two books, frowns of concentration on their brows. I asked, "Now what are you thinking?"

   Nina: They look pretty different.

   Interviewer: They do, don't they? How are they different?

   Nina: Because this (pointing to Jumanji) has a little bit of more colors in it - like - I asked her what she meant by colors (expecting correction to come from either Amanda or herself). Instead, they both pointed to the picture where the two characters (Judy and Peter) are seen from above, seated at a game board. Both girls pointed to the board. "See, the game - the board - " they stated.

   Amanda: It looks like all different colors, doesn't it?

   Interviewer: Uh huh.

   Nina: And like when you just turn it and you can see white - and you can see a little bit red. You can see the shelf got some white.
Amanda: White -

Nina: (turning the pages) and look at the lamp. It looks like a apple.

Ned may have had the explanation for this phenomenon when he stated that it made no difference to him that pictures were in black and white and not color "because you sort of picture the colors in your mind and that."

**Stylistic awareness.** Children's talk centered not only on the content of the pictures, but also on aspects of the artist's style and technique. Many of the children's comments centered on the media the artist used. At times, they showed an understanding of the properties of certain media which allowed them to make logical inferences about what the artist had used originally. Sean, for example, stated that the Provensen's used paint in *A Visit to William Blake's Inn* because "you can see through the dragon's body." Nina decided that Domanska used paint because "it has little dark spots and little light spots." Jimmy was able to give a detailed explanation for why Plume used paint in *The Bremen Town Musicians*: "I think he took a little thing - he took crayon and some water paint and let it dry for a few days and took this little thing - a stick maybe - and made lines." Stella discussed the landscape in *We Be Warm Till Springtime Comes*: "He may have used cotton. He has to like pull it apart into strings and just make it really thin like, and you would know how when you pull it apart there's all these strings in the middle - you could
use those and lay it around and push it down."

Other children were unwilling, or unable, to explain their choices for the type of media an artist might have used. Children were quick to guess that chalk or charcoal had been used for *Jumanji* and *Where the Buffaloes Begin*, but did not give their reasons. At times, the children's guesses were idiosyncratic. Adam, for instance, stated that Lobel had used felt and oil crayons for *On Market Street*, and Sendak had used felt and colored pencil in *Outside Over There*. Ned, when asked why he thought Van Allsburg had used oil crayons for *Jumanji*, replied, "It just looks like it."

The children also spoke about other technical choices made by the artist. During the class discussion of Caldecott books, the children mentioned such matters of layout as placement of pictures and words. When I interviewed them several children talked about Bloom's variation of black and white type in *We Be Warm Till Springtime Comes*. Janie mentioned the sizes of the pictures and the variation in Diamond's layout in *The Bremen Town Musicians*. Several children mentioned (and stroked) the smooth paper used in many of the books, and Amanda and Nina discussed the endpapers in Diamond's book.

Elements of design most often talked about by the children were color and line. As discussed above, black and white illustrations were the focus of many discussions.
The children also talked about illustrations in terms of "bright colors," "light colors," or "plain colors." Two children mentioned the fact that color was a recent invention. While looking at We Be Warm Till Springtime Comes Stella suggested: "I think about the old days like -- because it is in black and white, and black and white aren't colors. And in the old days they didn't have most colors, they just had black and white like." Jimmy made a similar statement about Diamond's black and white drawings:

It's black and white - and that's how they used to do it. They didn't have color. They - it's never - no one invented color yet. Because black and white isn't color - it should be called what it is. Cause they knew it was called the color of black and white. They don't know if it was going to be a color or not a color, and they never heard of color in their life --

Much of the comparison of Spier and Steig centered on the element of line. Lines were referred to as "straight," "squiggly," "twisty," and "skinny." Gail pointed out that Spier did "good pictures - because they were straight lines. He drew around it (a garbage can) and they were straight." Only occasionally did a child mention texture or value. "This cat's hair looks rough. So does the donkey's mane," said Sean as he looked at Plume's The Bremen Town Musicians. Ellen began a discussion of What Do You See? by referring to "details." When asked to explain she pointed to the frogs and said, "the texture." Meg declared that the "light on the faces" in We Be Warm Till Springtime Comes was "pretty."
Children also attempted to use terms which relate to pictorial conventions. As mentioned above, several children were aware that Domanska's use of color in *The Bremen Town Musicians* could be called "expressionism." More often, however, the children talked about "realism." Some of the children had difficulty sorting out the term "real" - meaning it could really happen, and "real" - applied as a stylistic term, "realistic."

During the discussion of Caldecott books, the teacher asked children to categorize illustrations by "type:" "Do they look real or do they look fantasy?" This proved to be a source of controversy or confusion. Meg explained that in *On Market Street* "some of the pictures look real, except like the person made out of trees couldn't be true, but the pictures look kinda real." Adam thought all the Caldecott books looked real. As the class discussed *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain*, a book that uses decorative two-dimensional figures, Adam insisted that the pictures looked real: "I like the way he designed the animals. They really looked like they were real." The children argued that animals didn't really look like that. He insisted: "Giraffes have big spots. Don't giraffes have big spots? Well, anyway, some do." During a discussion of Domanska's *What Do You See?* (another book with abstract, stylized designs), he again insisted the pictures looked real. Pointing to the bird he reasoned: "It's got the normal colors that a bird
has." Shelley perhaps came closest to the adult notions of realism. As she looked at *We Be Warm Till Springtime Comes*, she stated, "This looks real cause he copied offa someone" (he looked at real people when he drew).

While the teacher's stated purpose for several activities was to focus on artists and their styles, the children's comments about the artists usually remained egocentric. Kate's written comparison of Spier and Steig is typical of the comparisons I recorded. "I think Peter Spier did the pictures because the illustrations look like them and they look different than William Steig's." The children were willing to make judgments, but not to say why they made the judgments. In fact, it is not clear if the children saw the artist as a creator, able to make choices which might contribute to meaning. Except in written exercises, the children seldom called the artist by name--referring to all artists as 'he,' "the guy" ("that makes the donkey"), and even more ambiguous "they" ("they take a crayon or whatever and make em hard"). When asked if the three *Bremen Town Musicians* were by different artists, Jimmy assured me they were, and read their names from the covers. Timmy had other reasons for thinking the artists were different. "They're from different towns," he stated. When pressed to explain he showed me the copyright pages. "This is from New York, and this one is the United States of America, and this one is made in New York, New York." When I asked
if the two from New York were the same, he thought for a while and replied, "Ummm, they're not the same - cause this is a black and white one and this one is colorful." When I asked other children why they thought the three books were so different, they usually replied, "Because they didn't want it to be the same," or "maybe he just didn't want to make them the same way."

Many children commented on the unusual colors Domanska used for _The Bremen Town Musicians_, but when I asked why she might have chosen these colors, they replied, "to make it colorful." Adam simply stated that he didn't know why Domanska chose the colors she did. I asked him if he ever chose colors that aren't real colors. "Yes," he answered, "with Leggos - when they don't have any brown ones I just use red ones, like for brown horses I use red." His choice came from necessity and not artistic license.

Despite the reluctance of the children to take an objective stance when looking at works of art, several comments seemed to indicate that while children may have difficulty verbalizing their understanding about style, they are nevertheless responding to it. Anne mentioned that the Van Allsburg pictures in _Jumanji_ looked "like clay," a response, perhaps, to the artist's highly modeled drawings and his background as a sculptor. As Sean first looked through _Outside Over There_, I asked him why he had picked it up. Several girls chimed in, "because of the goblins."
Sean said, "No," and thought for a while. "Because they're Jesus babies," he declared, "they look like Jesus babies." I later learned that their art teacher had shown reproductions of Renaissance paintings of the Nativity before Christmas and Sean may have been connecting Sendak's dramatic style with these early works. Anne looked carefully through Diamond's impressionistic black and white illustrations of *The Bremen Town Musicians*:

Anne: Oooh, this gives me the feeling of just watching them instead of reading the book.

Interviewer: Just watching them?

Anne: Uh huh - just following them.

Interviewer: How is that different from reading the book?

Anne: Well - like I could feel as if I were right there watching them do all this.

Interviewer: You mean it makes you forget it's a book and you feel like you're really there?

Anne: Yeah!

Gail may also have been responding to the artist's style when she said that Bloom chose black and white "because it's a sad story." "Does black and white make you feel sad?" I asked. "Yes," she replied.

**Additional Behaviors and Products**

In addition to talking about picture books, children also responded to books with laughter and with sound effects as well as with physical movements. As Mrs. Jay
read to them the children would often scoot closer together as the story progressed. Those children who were looking around the room began to focus more of their attention on the pictures in the book as the climax approached. At times, several children (often the boys) would provide sound effects. As the teacher read the text: "and she charmed them with a captivating tune," in *Outside Over There*, the boys chimed in with a rhythmic "duh, duh, duh."

This musical accompaniment carried on for several more pages. When the class discussed Sendak's rendering of the dog, Timmy responded with several cheerful "arf, arf"'s. Looking at the cat in Domanska's *The Bremen Town Musicians*, Adam made cat fight noises: "meow - trrrsk - meow - meow."

Children also created art work in response to books, although the kind of project was assigned by the teacher. These projects were carried out with books close by, but the finished products were not always direct copies of the book illustrations, nor did children attempt to use similar media even when told to copy a page the way the artist might have done it. Rose picked chalk to draw the ship in Shulevitz's *The Fool of the World* because "I liked the feeling of it." Lisa's mouse was very different from the character in *The Elephants and the Mice* except for it's eyes, although she showed me "the mouse I made" in the book. She changed her own mouse because "I couldn't make the kind of dress she had on in the book." Meg and Margie used oil
crayons and doilies to "copy" Jeffers's Thumbelina. They chose black crayons for the background because "the mole was down in the ground." Adam used chalk to execute his mural of The Nightingale. When I asked him why, he replied that it "looked like he used chalk - the way he made the nightingale and all that." He would not elaborate further.

Children also wrote in response to books. This was a result of an assignment by the teacher, and the writing reflected these assignments. Asked to write who they thought did the pictures for The Cow Who Fell in the Canal and why they thought so, their responses ranged from Amanda's (first grade)

because the celr (color)
to Stella's (first grade)

Peter Spier - the peter spiers book thare (there) are vare colorfool picrese and very good drolen (drawings).

to Janie's (second grade)

I chose Peter Spier because of the small pickchers and the details in them he had details in the grass and the leaves on the trees he would try to draw every single little leaf. I saw that on his fences' he drew the line of the wood that mad it look real the waves look very pretty.

When the first graders completed their art work for the folk tale they had read, they were assigned to write about their favorite part, favorite character, or things that happened in threes. Anne constructed a character from Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky and wrote:
My character is Mr. Water in Why the Sun and the Moon live in the sky. He said to the sun that he would have to make a big house. The sun said ok. Well so he went home to his wife. The moon they built a big house because the water pushed them out.

Chrissy constructed a large cat and wrote:

Who is your favorite character and why.
My favorite characters are the cat and the mouse because no cats and mice are friends and the cat and mouse became friends.

Jimmy made a diorama with a scene from Rum Pum Pum.

He wrote:

I like the black bird because I like how he plays rum pum pum on his drum. He ment a cat and the black bird.

The writing I examined most often took the form of transaction (reporting about the book or retelling the story), and expressive (providing feelings about the story or illustrations). During the time I observed the class, I was not able to identify any elements from the books which showed up in the children's stories.

Finally, a description of children's responses would be complete without mentioning the children who remained silent. Chrissy rarely spoke to me, and then only in the presence of her friend Lisa. Rose did not appear shy as much as reluctant to commit herself. When I asked both girls which of the Caldecott books they thought they'd read, Chrissy looked like she was thinking hard. Finally, she said, "alphabet," but just could not express a reason
for her choice. Rose had no answer for me either—she was going to "wait to make a decision." These two children may represent very different response styles and may need time in order to formulate or verbalize responses. Their reactions are as important to the long-time process of response as are the articulate or long-winded ones of the other children in the study.

**Changes Over Time**

Rose's reluctance to talk about her choice of book until she had time to think indicated that time was important to the response process. On occasion children wanted time for repeated readings of a book. I asked Beth, Amanda and Anne why they liked to hear books read over and over again. Anne reported, "I like ones with smaller words and then my Mommy reads them first and then I read them." Beth also seemed to tie emotional concerns to repeated readings: "Well, it makes you feel kinda cuddled up and makes you feel comfortable. All books do." For Amanda, however, only the best books deserved repetition. "I don't like to hear books over. Just the ones I like. Cause they're good books."

For some children associations from the past influenced choices in the present. Janie wanted to read Lobel's *On Market Street* because "last year we studied reptiles. We had a bunch of Arnold Lobel books cause of Frog and Toad. I liked their books." Other children seemed to need
time to make connections. Several weeks after the Caldecott books had been discussed, one of the children showed a game she had made as part of her biography project. As she explained the rules, Meg popped up with "Like Jumanji" and the other children laughed in agreement.

The passage of time seemed to help Sean make a connection between art materials he used and those the artist might have used. I observed him working busily on a figure of a camel--part of a project for his folk tale unit. He had Glen Round's Nine in a Line and was shading the brown paper he was using with the side of a piece of chalk. The texture on his camel looked very similar to Round's drawing, and I pointed to the illustration in the book, mentioning that they looked alike. I asked what he thought the artist might have used. "I don't know," he replied. When I suggested that perhaps the artist had used chalk, too, he disagreed, "Umm, paint." Several weeks later, while we looked at We Be Warm Till Springtime Comes, he inspected the textured background of white over gray on one of the pages and stated: "It looks like it's made by chalk--it's kinda smoothed out." Understandings gained from his own experience with the medium may have allowed him to make this inference logically (though incorrectly) at a later time.

The teacher's focus on Caldecott books allowed me to investigate possible changes over time more methodically.
After Mrs. Jay had introduced the books to the children she displayed them on the chalkrail. I asked each child privately which one they thought they'd want to read first, and then tried to elicit their reasons. As mentioned above, nine of the children chose On Market Street while Jumanji and What Amanda Saw were chosen only once. After the books had been read aloud and the children had looked at them daily during individual reading, the children voted for the Caldecott winners, runners up, and their favorite story. What Amanda Saw received the most votes when all three categories were combined (14 votes). On Market Street and and Jumanji received the next highest number (12 and 11 votes respectively). Several weeks later, Jumanji and Outside Over There and On Market Street were still being read during free time.

These numbers do not indicate individual changes in response. Originally, Timmy said he wanted to read On Market Street. He discovered Where the Buffaloes Begin sometime during the week and couldn't wait to have Mrs. Jay read it. When Beth said, "I don't think I want to hear this book, Timmy assured her, "it's not sad or scary." He sat (eyes wide, mouth slightly open) during the reading, pointing out "those buffaloes look like clouds." Following the reading, Mrs. Jay asked the children about the artist's use of color. Timmy gasped, and his hand shot up, "black, white and gray," he called out. Mrs. Jay said, "Timmy
knows this story, I have a feeling." "Yeahh," he smiled. The book which he had not considered on that first day received his vote for the best story, and a week later he included *Where the Buffaloes Begin* on his evaluation sheet as "my favorite book this week."

Children also seemed to need "digestion" time—to think about a book before they are willing to commit themselves out loud. As I interviewed children, their first response to "what are you thinking" was often "I don't know," a shrug of the shoulders or silence. But soon more thoughtful comments would follow. Lisa began by saying, "Oh, that's cute" and "those are pretty colors" as we talked about *The Bremen Town Musicians*. As she talked about the books, however, she began to make connections, comparing Domanska's illustrations to a version of *Hansel and Gretel* she had read. She then confided to me that she had had a dream about the book the night before: "I was pretending I was in the woods—and then—I was really tired—and then I saw a house and went over there and—like when I was going there, I met a little donkey and then—like see—we scared the donkey."

These changes in children's responses occurred over the course of several minutes or days and represented changes in reactions and understandings about books on what seemed to be a fairly superficial level. Although I had hoped to identify more long-term changes similar to
Amy's response to *The Grey Lady and the Strawberry Snatcher*, and although I made more systematic efforts to do so, I did not observe what I felt to be any significant deepening of response. Mrs. Jay did not reread books while I was in the room nor did I often observe her connecting or comparing current books and themes with those studied previously. She seemed to be in a hurry to have the children complete assignments in order to move on to the next planned experiences. Although she noted Timmy's enthusiasm for *Where the Buffaloes Begin* at the end of her unit on Caldecott books, for example, I did not observe any attempts to extend or prolong his interest in the book.

**Summary**

The variations in children's response to picture books and the changes in these responses which occur over time as reported here, indicate that the response process is, indeed, a complex one involving variables inherent in each individual child as well as variables present in any one particular book. Moreover, the context in which child and book come together may also exert a subtle influence on the direction response will take. During the twelve weeks spent observing the first and second graders in Mrs. Jay's classroom, I found the following range of behaviors as children responded to picture books:
Choosing Picture Books

Children chose a picture book because

1. the teacher had read it or talked about it
2. their friends had read it
3. the pictures told an exciting story
4. the cover was attractive
5. they liked the author/illustrator
6. they liked the subject matter
7. the pictures looked interesting
8. the words were not too difficult to read

Some children seemed to want to hold a book and to touch the pages before they made their decisions.

Looking at Picture Books

While there was no pattern of reading/looking that children used consistently, the following approaches were observed:

1. some children looked at all the pictures first
2. some children looked at pictures as they read
3. some children needed the pictures to help them read

Talking About Picture Books

Children's talk about picture books was purposeful and seemed to fall into the following functional categories:

1. Informative - children conveyed information about the picture books
2. Heuristic - children investigated and wondered about the picture books

3. Imaginative - children created new worlds through the picture books

4. Personal - children related their own experiences to the picture books

What Children See in Picture Books

Children's talk often centered on what they saw in the illustrations in picture books and occasionally on the mental images which arose from the story or illustration.

1. children recognized content of pictures

2. children saw relationships between objects in pictures

3. children saw small details in pictures

4. children described colors which they "see" in black and white illustrations

Children's Stylistic Awareness

Children responded to aspects of style from a viewpoint that remained close to the self. Children were aware of

1. elements of design in the illustration such as line, shape, and color

2. technical aspect of the book such as layout, paper, endpaper design, typography and some original media.

3. content of the illustrations
Children were often confused by

1. the role of the author/illustrator
2. elements of design such as value, intensity, and texture
3. stylistic terms such as "realistic," "expressionistic" or "abstract"

Additional Behaviors and Products in Response to Picture Books

In addition to talking about picture books children

1. responded physically
2. produced sound effects

As a result of direct assignments children

3. created products such as paintings, dioramas or mobiles
4. wrote about their books
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The Problem of the Study

Previous research into children's reactions to picture books has often been conducted for commercial purposes—to provide information about what children like for "those who purchase books and those who prepare books for children" (Smerdon, 1976). Other researchers have attempted to discover the function of the pictures in the process of learning to read, most often asking whether illustrations inhibit word recognition abilities and comprehension (Gibson and Levin, 1975). Most of these studies have removed illustrations from the context of the book in the interests of scientific rigor. These methods have failed to consider the picture book as an art form which "hinges on the interdependence of pictures and words" (Bader, 1976, p. 1). Moreover, artificial testing situations reflect children's reactions at a single moment in time. Researchers have thus neglected to consider theoretical understandings regarding literary and aesthetic response (Purvis and Beach, 1972), a process which may differ with individuals, and change over time.
Procedures

In order to examine the responses of primary children to picture books in the light of these problems, I assumed the role of a participant observer in two combination first and second grade classrooms, both in the same upper middle-class school district. A total of 40 primary children participated in both studies, 26 second graders and 18 first graders. The two classrooms were in alternative schools which modeled instruction on the British "informal" approach to education. The curriculum was organized around themes in which picture books played a major role. Picture books were also the basis for reading instruction; no reading textbooks were used in either classroom.

During the pilot study, which covered a ten-week period in the spring of 1981, themes emerged for the initial organization of data. These themes concerned changes--changes among children, between books, and over time, all occurring in a specific context. These themes allowed the formulation of questions to guide the study (see Chapter I) and initiated the collection of data at the second site during a twelve-week period in the winter and spring quarters of 1982. As data were reviewed, the original themes were modified and eventually organized into a descriptive framework which centered on three themes or domains:

1. Variations in children's response to picture books
2. Changes in children's response over time

3. The context of response

These themes were used to organize the data from the second site and to reexamine the data from the first site in order to report findings and draw conclusions regarding the response of primary children to picture books.

Findings

Response to picture books among primary children takes the form of a variety of behaviors and products:

1. Children vary in the reasons they give for choosing books. Often, the teacher or a friend has an influence on which book a child will choose to read.

2. Children vary in the way they look at picture books. Many children look at the illustrations before they read to help them make predictions about the story or look at pictures while they read to help them with the written text.

3. Children vary in the way they talk about books. Their talk serves many purposes: informative, heuristic, imaginative, and personal, as they attempt to bring meaning to picture books. In addition, they use a special register to talk about picture books with terms garnered from the adult world as well as vocabulary which uniquely reflects their own understandings.
4. Children vary in the things they see in picture books. Many children note small details and look for subplots or "secrets" which might be contained in the illustrations. Some children see images which do not appear on the printed page, but rather reflect an inner eye which changes pictures into something uniquely their own. While children respond to stylistic elements in the illustrations, they often do so on their own terms. They may be confused by adult categories of evaluation which are abstract in nature. While they are aware that the illustrator (and author) has a hand in the creation of the book, the artist's role in making stylistic choices which express meaning is not always clearly understood.

5. In addition to talking about picture books, children respond to books with other behaviors and products. They reread, act out or write about books. They create pictures, murals, dioramas or displays. Physical response is also in evidence—they move, hum, sing or create sound effects. At other times response may occur in their silence or in the motion of their hand as they gently run their fingers across the length of a page.

Children's response to picture books changes over time:- Time is necessary for all these variations in children's responses, time for each child to look at a book,
time to think about the book and time to make connections to events both past and future. The amount of time needed for response to develop can range from several minutes to several years, although this long-term response may be more difficult to nurture or identify.

Several aspects of the context may make possible the variations in children's response and these changes over time:- The variations in children's response to picture books and the changes in these responses over time occurred in the context of two special classrooms. In both classrooms:

1. Picture books in a variety of styles and genre were available to meet the needs and interests of individual children.

2. The structure of the program allowed the children freedom to read often, and to talk together as they read or worked. Materials were readily available for children who wished to extend their reading through other experiences.

3. Peer interaction both influenced children's choices and provided a sounding board for their thoughts and feelings about books.

4. The teacher played a key role in the shaping of response. The books which a teacher read and talked about are the books children seemed to choose most often. Then, in addition to providing
children with information about stories and pictures, the teacher directed their attention to aspects of books they had not previously considered or helped them to make connections between books and their experiences. The teacher also helped children to use their own understandings to develop insights and to think critically about picture books.

Conclusions

The descriptive framework developed through observations of primary children involved with picture books in a natural setting which were organized around the above themes, suggests that artificial testing situations and artificial instruments used in the past have only provided a superficial assessment of children's capabilities and understandings with regard to response, reading behaviors, visual literacy and stylistic awareness. The findings of this study have allowed me to draw the following conclusions regarding problems and questions raised at the outset of this paper.

Variations in Children's Response to Picture Books

Choosing picture books. Contrary to many preference studies which seemed to assume that children choose picture books in a vacuum, this study showed children's choices were influenced by a variety of factors. In the two classrooms studied, style of illustration such as full color or
black and white, realistic or abstract, did not appear to be as much a factor in choice as adult or peer recommendations. Most often, children would choose books that an adult (a teacher or librarian) had read to them, talked about, or displayed forward in an attractive manner. Peer enthusiasm also influenced children's choices, and once one child discovered a good book it was often passed around the room. When children are left on their own to choose books, especially when forced by time constraints, children use the illustrations and format to help them decide "if it's a good book." Here, the story-telling qualities of the pictures, the amount of detail, the possibility that "secrets" might be found, the size and layout of the type, and, finally, the interests and abilities of the individual child, are factors which may influence their choices.

Looking at picture books. Individual children displayed different mannerisms when they looked at picture books, and strategies which they used in groups were often different from those used when they read by themselves. Observations conducted during the pilot study indicated that looking at pictures might serve as a successful predicting strategy for emergent readers; a strategy which more fluent readers left behind. I was not able to identify any specific patterns or strategies in the readers observed during the present study, however. Mrs. Jay often held the book in her lap as she read, displaying the pictures only
briefly as she finished the text so that children who might have studied the pictures throughout the reading were not able to do so. In addition, the children in Mrs. Jay's class seemed more easily distracted than those in Mrs. Hall's. During individual reading they might read a page, attend to a friend's conversation and then return to the book. Although I did not observe children who regularly relied on the illustrations as part of a consistent strategy, many children reported that illustrations helped them when they read.

**Talking about books.** These young children had much to say about picture books, and their verbal responses were often tied to "self." Like the children in Applebee's (1978) study, these children often responded by centering on one feature of the picture book--"I like how he made the sky" or evaluating the book in terms of their feeling for it--"It was a good book because I liked it." Other children had begun to categorize their responses: "it's funny," "it's gross," "it's colorful." These categories, while an indication of concrete operational thinking, all remain subjective--linked to the child's view of the world.

It was for this reason that the children's verbal responses to picture books were not categorized according to traditional response systems (in Purvis and Beech, 1972) which assume a degree of objectivity in the reader. These children seemed intent on making their own meaning, taking
instruction from the teacher or adult only when it fit in with an already established schema. Thus Halliday's (1975) suggestion that children use language for different purposes in the course of "learning how to mean" seemed appropriate for describing these children—telling, wondering, imagining, and sharing feelings about picture books as they broadened their understanding of a variety of genre and styles.

These categories of talk were useful not only for describing the range of individual responses, but also for identifying personal response styles. Timmy and Sean's talk, for example, often fell in the Heuristic category. They wondered about, inferred, and predicted in response to books. Amanda and Nina, on the other hand, made many personal statements about books, expressing their feelings or recalling experiences.

Not only did individual styles begin to emerge as children talked about books, but instructional approaches of teachers also seemed to elicit talk for different purposes. Mrs. Hall, who used open-ended questions or remained silent following her reading to children, seemed to elicit many heuristic comments from children, while Mrs. Jay, whose questions were more focused, seemed to receive many more informative statements in reply.

Reading the pictures. The children's comments often concerned what they saw in pictures and there can be no doubt that not only were they able to recognize objects in
pictures, but many also understood more complex relationships in the illustrations. Janie, for instance, realized that facial images among the branches of the trees in Diamond's *Bremen Town Musicians* represented the characters that the robbers thought had attacked them. Other children correctly interpreted relationships and events in *We Be Warm Till Springtime Comes* without having heard or read the story.

The children's talk was also revealing of what they saw in picture books—the content and the style of illustration. Like children in previous perceptual studies, these children often mentioned tiny details which adults might overlook. Contrary to suppositions that this focus on detail is developmental and seems to indicate an inability in younger children to search pictures efficiently (Mackworth and Bruner, 1970), it would seem that Coles, Sigman and Chessell's (1977) proposal that children might be attempting to "answer different questions" as they focused on details is supported by my observations. Perhaps this phenomenon is a part of the child's search for meaning. The children in Mrs. Hall's room (the majority were second graders) who were encouraged to look at detail—"to look beneath the surface"—were the children who most often talked about "secrets" or other hidden details in books, not the younger children in Mrs. Jay's class as might be expected according to Mackworth and Bruner's (1970) conclusions.
The children's awareness of stylistic qualities in the pictures was also evident from their talk. Unlike the youngest children in Gardner, Winner and Kercher's (1975) study who thought that paintings could be made in a factory or painted by any animal with a tail, most of the children in this study seemed aware that the picture books had been created by a person; but the artist's identity remained hazy and ambiguous for many of them. They seemed unsure of the artist's ability to make stylistic choices in order to express a particular meaning or enhance the feelings evoked by the story. Differences in style were attributed as much to the city in which the book was published as to the artist's individual manner of expression; and most children did not seem to connect choices they themselves made in the process of creating a work of art with the artist's ability to do so.

Because of the idiosyncratic nature of the children's talking and looking at books, adult categories of stylistic classification were often inadequate and confusing. The more abstract these terms, the greater difficulty children had in applying them. Several children in Mrs. Jay's class were able to connect Domanska's unusual use of color to what they knew of their world. Their statements: "You wouldn't find a red cat" or "You wouldn't see a purple donkey," showed them attempting to apply the term "expressionism." When it came to deciding if pictures looked real, however,
they were often at a loss. Like the children in Applebee's (1978) study the worlds of "real" and "make believe" had not been clearly sorted out in the minds of these children. Yet Joshua's insistence that the stylized, flat animal shapes in *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain* looked "real" may have been as insightful a stylistic appraisal as it was a "wrong" answer in adult terms. The patterned, decorative giraffes he mentioned were a highly suitable match for the rhythmic, repetitious words of the African folk song and, as such, Vidal's pictures extended and enhanced Aardema's text.

These children, then, while not always able to deal with aesthetic qualities of the illustrations in adult terms, were nevertheless aware of style in their own terms. Their descriptions of Sendak's illustrations as "lushy," "antique," and "like Jesus babies," or of Van Allsburg's forms as "clay-like" or "cold," represent a variety of responses which get to the heart of the artist's style. In addition, their talk about elements and principles of design like color, line, and layout; and their mention of technical matters such as paper, typography and media show an awareness of stylistic matters which could be extended and deepened by the teacher who is sensitive to the meaning-making capacities of the children and who is not attempting to impinge her own meaning upon minds which are not ready to deal with objective, highly abstract evaluative categories.
Other behaviors and products. While the children's discussion about books accounted for most of the data collected during both observation periods, other behaviors in response to books must also be considered as part of the response process. As Hickman (1979) noted, younger children often respond to books physically as well as verbally. This seemed to occur most often with boys in both classes who would pantomime many actions in a story, or bounce in response to the rhythm of a poem. Sound effects were also produced, not in an effort to be funny, but perhaps in order to enter more fully into the world of the book.

Writing, drama and art work may have helped children to rethink stories or illustrations as they transformed a book through their products. It would seem, however, that allowing and expecting children to follow their own directions may have produced a greater depth of response than teacher organized assignments.

Children in Mrs. Hall's class who chose to create a mural after being involved with the "secrets" of *Ms. Glee Was Waiting* were involved in planning and execution from the very beginning. They were not asked to copy the artist's style nor did they wish to do so. Instead, they returned to the book again and again to decide upon key scenes and elements of the story that should be included. In addition, the design of the mural and the decision of what media to use, involved them far more deeply in the artistic process
than copying would have. On the other hand, children in Mrs. Jay's room who were assigned to copy the artist's style for their fairy tale mural, spent only a day or two completing their mural. They did not read the story nor did they seem to think very deeply about the artist's approach to the illustrations. Meg and Margie, for example, chose doilies and black crayon to "copy" Jeffers highly detailed, linear style in Thumbelina, a choice which did little to enlighten them as to the artist's thinking, nor did it seem to involve their own thinking very deeply.

Thus, Mrs. Jay's propensity for asking children to copy the artist's style and to direct the children's attention to the media used by the artist did not seem to be highly productive. The children often seemed to be confused—which is not surprising since the printed pages of the book are often very different from the medium used to create the original illustrations. Adam suggested that "felt" had been used in several of the books discussed for Caldecott awards, a seemingly random guess; and often the children exhibited very little understanding about the qualities of certain media. It would seem more appropriate to give children experience with a variety of media, and to talk about qualities of the media as they are actively involved with them—the transparency of watercolor or the texture of thick paint. As they gain an understanding of the materials they are using, they may begin to make
connections as they look carefully at illustrations. It might also be helpful if publishers would routinely include information about the artist's techniques and media in the colophon. Thus teachers and children could concentrate not on what an artist used, but why the artist chose a medium.

Changes Over Time

Many previous studies of children and picture books asked children to decide what they like at a brief moment in time—sometimes only five seconds. Most often, the answers were provided on a written answer sheet to which children needed only to apply a pencil check. The present study has shown that even when formulating initial reactions to a book, children need time to think. During their first contact with a book, as they begin to talk through their feelings and ideas, these initial reactions may undergo a change. Had I left the children in Mrs. Jay's room after I asked them which of the Caldecott award books they wished to read first—before they had heard the stories read or had time to hold the books and look through them—Rose, who just was not ready to decide, would have become a "non-respondent." I would have counted Timmy as preferring On Market Street, and missed his love affair with Where the Buffaloes Begin. And once more, I would have concluded that the black and white illustrations in Jumanji and What Amanda Saw were least popular, when a week and a half later
they received a majority of the children's votes for "favorite story" or "best picture book."

The time needed for response to a picture book is not a simple matter of hours or days, however, and the teacher must often step in to insure that the response process will continue to deepen and change. As I conducted observations in Mrs. Jay's class, I attempted to be systematic in keeping track of children's reading over time in order to describe any changes that took place. I was not able to document any long-term changes, however, as I did with Amy in Mrs. Hall's class. Mrs. Jay did not spend more than one or two weeks on any one theme, and books which were highlighted during a unit did not remain in the classroom when the unit was completed. Nor did I observe Mrs. Jay reread any book during the period of the study. Mrs. Jay's mimeographed assignment sheets may also have limited or prevented a child from responding to a book according to his own inclination. On the other hand, Mrs. Hall spent the entire ten weeks of the observation period on one theme. During that time she often reread books or brought back books which she had read earlier in the year. Most of the books also remained in room. In addition, when Amy initially responded to *The Grey Lady and the Strawberry Snatcher*, Mrs. Hall was there to step in with a question that sent Amy back for another look. Mrs. Hall also brought in another Mollie Bang book so that Amy might compare the two books. Mrs. Hall shared Amy's growing enthusiasm and extended it to the
other children in the room; giving Amy time, support, and recognition rather than direction, in order to nurture her response to the book.

A Context for Response

The setting for response. The settings for the present study were atypical primary classrooms, yet the descriptive framework they have provided for children's response to picture books has applications for other classrooms. The curriculum in both rooms centered on literature and instruction in subject areas was integrated into themes — allowing children to be active constructors of their own learning. The classrooms were arranged so that children were free to move about and free to use art materials, the puppet theatre or the writing tables in response to books.

Both classrooms studied had between 300 to 500 picture books available to the children. These included paperbacks and hardbacks, informational books as well as works of fiction. Many books were part of a permanent classroom library, but others came from the school and public library as well as from the teachers' own collections. These volumes provided a broad base of comparison for children with different reading abilities and interests, and increased the possibility that appreciation for a wide variety of literary and artistic styles would be fostered.

The teacher's role. Teachers in these classrooms did more than simply provide books for their children; they
took an active role in nurturing children's responses. They displayed books attractively, in every available space - cover forward, inviting children to pick them up and take a further look. They displayed books according to particular themes or grouped them together by illustrator or author, allowing children to make comparisons and connections. They took time to read to children, and to allow them to talk about their reactions to books; and they made time for the children to read and talk with each other. They seemed to feel that books that were highlighted in these ways were the books most often remembered by children. They encouraged children to experience books through a variety of modes by providing encouragement, time and materials for expression. The way teachers talked about books seemed to influence what the children saw and how they talked about books. The teachers in this study used vocabulary relating to stories and illustration which was often picked up by the children—although they did not always have the same understanding of these terms that teachers did. Both contexts provided children with a broad range of possibilities for response to picture books.

I noted differences, however, in the depth of response exhibited among the children in these two rooms. The children in Mrs. Jay's class responded widely to books. They moved from book to book like butterflies stopping for a brief glance but seldom returning to go below the surface.
Mrs. Hall's children, on the other hand, seemed to respond more deeply. Like little bookworms, they more thoroughly digested the contents of the book as they inched their way through it. These differences may have been due to the fact that the majority of children in Mrs. Hall's class were second graders while there were more first graders in Mrs. Jay's room. I believe the data shows, however, that the two teachers took different approaches to education, which may also have accounted for the differences in response.

Mrs. Jay seemed to see her role as imparter of information. As she talked with children, she had definite ends or agendas in mind, and responses which did not follow these agendas were sometimes ignored or redirected. Her stated goals did not always match the lessons she provided for the children. Although she stated that she wanted children to become critical thinkers, and informed the children that they were to look carefully at an artist's style and to choose a book they thought represented his best work, she more often asked, "What did you like?" When she introduced the Caldecott books to the children she told them:

So what I want you to do the next couple of days and into next week is to look at the books. Don't just pick it up and look through it real fast. If you were on the committee and it was your job to select the best book, what would you be looking for?

Her statement implies that critical judgments would be made, yet the categories she developed while perhaps useful for
looking at one book, were not helpful in making critical comparisons between books. In addition, when she asked children to choose the Caldecott winner, she made no mention of how they might make use of the categories. Neither did she remind them that they were evaluating books objectively. Instead, she made this task even more difficult by asking them to vote for their favorite story first and then to choose the one which won the Caldecott award.

Mrs. Hall, on the other hand, seemed more interested in learning from children than in imparting a specific body of knowledge. She encouraged many more comments as she read aloud to the children, stopping for long periods at the end of a page and waiting to hear what they had to say. Rather than ignoring comments which didn't follow her agenda, she seemed to be listening for comments, asking questions in response to the children's statements rather than expecting answers to her own. Her questions were meant to uncover ideas rather than preferences. As a result, I found children ready to think more carefully and critically about a book and more willing to spend time taking a second, third, and even a fourth look.

Recommendations for Teaching

What the teacher can do. While the nature of ethnographic studies make generalization to other contexts difficult, the findings regarding children's responses, the context in which they occur, and the importance of time,
taken with conclusions reached in other studies (Hickman, 1979; Hepler, 1982) suggest that teachers play an important role in the development of response and that teachers can take specific steps in the process of broadening and deepening children's response to picture books. Because researchers of picture book preferences described similarities rather than differences in children, these researchers also recommended that book publishers and purchasers prepare books which met their generalized findings—colorful, realistically illustrated pictures with familiar subject matter. The present study has provided a description of a broader range of possible responses to picture books. To meet the needs of individual children and to broaden their interests, then, it would seem more appropriate to provide a wide range of picture books in the primary classroom—books in a variety of genre, illustrated in a variety of artistic styles. However, teachers cannot simply leave books on shelves in the hope that children will become discriminating readers on their own. To deepen as well as broaden primary children's response to picture books teachers should:

1. **Display books attractively**, cover forward, in places that are accessible to children. These displays could focus on a particular theme, on a single author or illustrator or on a comparison of several authors or illustrators.
2. **Read to children often.** The books which the teacher reads aloud achieve a special status. Children often choose these books for more personal attention. The teacher's interpretation as she reads and the children's comments during a discussion may reveal nuances which might have been otherwise overlooked by a child.

3. **Talk to children about books.** Teachers can help children to make connections between books by making frequent comparisons—from one book to another and from a book to experiences in the real world. They can help children to understand the author or illustrator's role in the creation of the book by referring to them by name and by highlighting the books of one author or illustrator in special displays or units. Teachers may help to expand the child's range of knowledge about stylistic factors by using stylistic terms in the course of the discussion, as the need arises. More important, however, the teacher needs to make statements like "Tell me what you are thinking," or ask questions like "How did that make you feel?" which invite the child to develop his own insights in his own time which grow out of his own particular experiences and understandings.
4. **Listen to what children have to say about books.** Primary children seem to be active constructors of meaning—in aesthetic factors as well as cognitive ones. The match between the adult's perceptions of the world and the child's perception of the world is not always a perfect one. Teachers need to listen to what children have to say, to negotiate meaning with children, as Jerome Bruner has suggested, rather than to direct it; and to learn with children rather than teach to them.

5. **Provide for individual differences.** Teachers need to recognize that not all young children will respond in the same way to a book nor will they be able to articulate their responses in adult terms. Thus, primary children should have a variety of outlets for their reactions—physical as well as verbal—through a variety of symbolic systems: talking, writing, drawing, music, and movement.

6. **Provide children with time to respond to books.** Children need time—to think about books, to look at books, to talk about books, and to respond to books—in groups, in pairs, and by themselves. Teachers should recognize that the response process is an ongoing one. To deepen response, teachers need to return to books as children's
experiences allow them to bring new understandings to a book and to become tuned to an individual's enthusiasm for a particular book so that a child's early response may be extended during the passage of time. Teachers also need to become aware that because of developmental constraints children need time to work toward adult structures of criticism rather than to have these frameworks imposed on their construction of the world.

7. Give children time to look at the illustrations. Reading the book with the pictures facing the class whenever possible may allow children to thoroughly investigate the illustrations with their eyes as their ears absorb the verbal text. In addition, the teacher can encourage children to look beneath the surface in picture books by highlighting picture books with many levels of meaning.

What teachers should know. The findings of this study indicate that teachers play an important, perhaps central, role in helping young children choose books, and in directing them back to books. While previous researchers have recommended that teachers give children only what they like, I would argue that teachers must also assume a critical role, presenting those books to children which meet the highest standards of excellence. By providing children with the very best in picture books--books in a variety of styles
and genre—teachers may not only provide for individual interests, but may also deepen sensitivity and heighten awareness of aesthetic factors in books.

It may be that teachers who understand the syntax and semantics of written texts are often not as well versed in visual matters. Teachers need to become aware that the authors make choices regarding elements of plot, characterization, setting, and theme; the artists also make stylistic choices in order to express meaning. The artists' choices, however, involve matters of technique and pictorial elements and principles of design, content, and conventions of depicting. (A discussion of style in picture books as well as categories of choices the illustrator makes in expressing meaning is presented in Appendix D.) As teachers become knowledgeable about style in picture books, they can become more critical in selecting books representing artistic quality as well as reflecting children's interests. In addition, they can use their own understanding of style in picture books to extend and deepen the child's own individual response to meaning in the illustrations in picture books, guiding the child toward aesthetic insights made more profound because they grow out of the child's unique vision of his world.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

The conclusions regarding children's response to picture books which have been drawn as a result of this study
have, I believe, added to knowledge previously gained from empirical studies. At the same time, these new insights have raised new questions about children's symbolic processes which grow out of and lead back to the picture book. The following suggestions may provide further understanding in these areas:

1. **Replication in other environments** - the descriptive framework developed for children's response to picture books, specifically the functional categories for children's verbal responses might be useful in other classroom contexts to
   a. compare response patterns across age groups in order to identify developmental differences
   b. identify response patterns which result from specific educational approaches in teaching styles
   c. compare response patterns within age groups in order to identify individual response styles

2. **The role of illustrations as a predicting strategy in emergent readers** - the present study found many children using pictures in order to predict content of the written text. Further study may:
   a. identify this as a strategy used by successful readers
b. identify the extent to which the teaching of such a strategy might improve reading ability

3. The role of picture books in developing visual literacy - previous research has found that some minority children lack the ability to sort pictures according to abstract categories. Further study could identify the extent to which repeated and regular reading of picture books in which children took notice of relationships within pictures and to the text, might improve this ability.

4. Teacher training in stylistic categories - as a result of the framework developed for children's response to picture books, categories were established to help teachers look more critically at picture books. The training of teachers with these categories may help them to develop children's stylistic awareness more deeply.

Summary

The results of observations conducted in these two primary classrooms has revealed that while children talk about preferences in the course of their interaction with a book, their response is much more multifaceted; varying with the individual and changing over time. It was found that children look at books in different ways: in groups, with other children, and by themselves. One child may
attend carefully to pictures in group reading while another child may glance only occasionally at the book. Some children seem to need to look at all the pictures before they read while others want to begin reading immediately. There are many ways in which children talk about books, and a special vocabulary that grows out of their familiarity with a wide range of picture books. In addition, the children in this study seem to have special areas of focus when they look at picture books, often seeing small details (that I had overlooked) or focusing on similarities (like similar type) which might not be singled out by readers of a different age group. Following their first reading of a book, children choose a variety of ways in which to respond. They reread, talk about, or write about the book. They reexperience the book through other art forms as well.

Moreover, it is the setting in which these responses occur that seems to influence the richness and depth of those responses. Children seem to need time and talk with each other to clarify their thinking. They need many books with similar themes, books by the same authors and illustrators, and books executed in diverse styles in order to be able to note similarities and differences. Important to the broadening of response is the influence of the teacher. It is the teacher whose enthusiasm for a book helps children decide what to read. It is the teacher whose language gives children the tools for talking about picture books.
Most importantly, it is, I believe, the teacher who is willing to listen to children and who has the patience to wait weeks or months for their answer who will deepen response as well as broaden it. It is this teacher who will direct or redirect the children's attention to qualities and subtleties at first overlooked. And it is this teacher who can focus attention on stylistic qualities which grow out of the children's capabilities, yet which can lead to more profound and sensitive responses to meaning in the picture book. This is the teacher who, like Mrs. Hall, will help children like Amy discover the secrets waiting to be found in picture books.
APPENDIX A

FACSIMILE SAMPLE OF

ON-SITE FIELD NOTES
Tues. May 26, 1981

Marlene asks children to share what they've been reading - "How many of you chose a poetry book?" and, "Kit "Bugs" (I knew Victoria Chess did the illustrations for the Queen of Fen as well.)
Marlene asks who does the illustrations for Bethusky. The children aren't sure.

M: Did anyone read folktales?

Taddy: Fionn McCool knew it was a folktale because there's giants in it and a magic finger.

M: "Folktale from what country?" T: "Ireland."

M: "I like how Jonie DePaola shows exactly what happens, what his words are saying."

Taddy talks about "Four Books for Four Seasons."

M: Can you think of another story where many people were in a boat and it tipped over?

Children: "Medieve" "Niceup" "Pippi Longstocking"

M: "You're thinking about ones I haven't even thought about. Was it John Cunningham?"

I was thinking about Mr. Dumpky.""

Kit retells story.

Taddy: I also read Bill and Alle

M: By whom?

T: Jonie DePaola
"If Jerome Defacto's name wasn't on that book would you know who'd done it?" "children, yes"
M: "How?" "Julie "the pictures"
S: "I looked over and I knew (points to page) he sorta does certain weird shapes."
M: "Who hasn't read that book? Jedy would you recommend that book to others?" "Yes"
S: "Why should they read it?" "It's funny"
M: "Did anyone read a wordless picture book?" Laura: "I did" (Taylor Goodell) "Someone: "she didn't really read it" Laura: "half pages" "pages to make one whole picture"
M: says something about pictures telling a story
Jedy: "also you could make up words you could write your own stories."
Laura: "tell's story looking at pictures"
M: "What kind of media does he use?" "Someone: watercolors"
M: "How can you tell?" Laura: "way the pictures are smooth." M: "How can you tell?" Jedy: "lighter not as dark." M: "Dark as what?" "As regular paints." M: "How to pursue this. Someone says acrylic"
M: "Often they're vortex. Who would you contrast that to? Someone who uses acrylics." (pauses
to Wildsmith: Teddy: "He gets wild with color."
Laura tells about Hurley and his dog
M: "Would you recommend that book to others?"
Laura: "yes!"
M: "The pictures are really worth your time."
"Are there any pictures you'd show to the class?"
"Hard to choose - pictures are all beautiful."
Laura shows dog and weeds
M: "What would you say about this picture?"
Robbie: "He doesn't know what to do." [point to dog]
M: "Look what Amy's got (Grey lady). Would you identify Amy with that look?"
Amy: "There's a book snatchers. We can't find it."
M: "Are there a book snatchers around? Have you discovered anything new?"
Amy: "I thought that I didn't discover anymore but I just found something else."
M: "Special pictures" show us one you liked especially."
Four children haven't looked at it yet [Marlene asked for a show of hands]
M: "You're missing a treat". Children discuss fact they can't find it when they want it. Amy holds up the last double page spread.
Melissa: She "uses a lot of color." Heather: "uses a lot of Grey."
Wednesday, February 10, 1982

Mrs. Jay is reading *Farmer Palmer's Wagon Ride*.

First Elizabeth reads her story. "The Koala and the Cat," and shows her island. "I say the cats appear in many of the children's stories - she says she shouldn't have read The Little Island."

Chüssie shows her island. "I: What is your island called? Chüssie: 'Blue Island.'"

She reads then stops in mid sentence.

Elizabeth: "She always stops it after the good part. [No says the same later."

Riese reads "The Far Far Away Week Island."

[All of them read then stop and hold up their picture.]

J: "Picks up Farmer Palmer reads the dedication. Joshua says no one voted for it."

[I had listed the four story books on a chart and the children were to sign their name under the title they thought had won the Caldecott.]

J: "You're right," she holds the book at her right
Sheeran facing the children and reads:
"Anyone know what I keekeen? Not like the
leak in your sink its like a wild onion.
Later Josh asks "what's a maggin?"
[Other questions to children]- what's assemble
meah? gawking? you're letting those
words go by like you understand them.
She reads again, points to name on marker:
"Tony Delapua", Josh says "Tony Delapua no
one else picks up.

They discuss heists of burden. As
climax approaches all look at picture then
some look away again - J: Chris Lisa Kate
Shannon. "J: Finally Palmer kissed the ground.
Do you think he did it because he loved it? "No"
They look at bicycle parts. Jay looks away
then back at "locked him in a safe embrace"
looks away then back at "Ros Palmer"
Josh: Did they bring the tool chest?
Following reading J: asks "What did William Steg
use? What did we decide?" children "artifed."
J: "What else did we think?" child: "chalk" "clay/paste"
"markers" J: "How?" child: "paint water
over them."
I mention the Caldecott award. "They look at all the books in the year. The winners were up against all the other books. Amos and Andy was written in 1974. It was up against all the other books."

States that Amos and Andy received 8 votes.

J: "Timmy, what did you like that the others didn't have?" Tim: "How he made the stars." J: "This nighttime picture. Do you like that picture?"

Josh: "Because I like the illustrations."

J: "Anything special?" [gives suggestions.]

Josh: "The animals are pretty unusual."

J: "The animals don't look real." They "the mouse doesn't." Other children agree they look real.

J: "Not like a photo - he changes them slightly."

Not: "If you look at the inside - see those splotches in water for the waves, rain. That's what I liked.

Gay: I liked the part - the boat."
APPENDIX B

SAMPLE RESPONSE TO A CHILD'S
FIRST LOOK AT A NEW BOOK
Sample Response to a Child's
First Look at a New Book

Ned: I look at the first page - and see if it's starting starting out to be a good book and I would like to read it. (He picks up Domanska's What Do You See?)

Int.: Uh huh.

Ned: If it is then I will check it out from the library - and then -

Int.: How can you tell if it's going to be a good book? What are some of the things that tell you that it's going to be a good book?

Ned: Ummm - like - ummm - if it reads something that's interesting.

Int.: Uh huh.

Ned: And - you know - if it's about interesting things.

Int.: Um hmm - what are some of the things that interest you? What do you like to read about?

Ned: Sort of like to read - ummm - exciting stories.

Int.: Um hmm. So you read the first page. Do you look through the pictures or do you like to start reading right away?

Ned: I look through the pictures.

Int.: Uh huh. Show me how you look through them and maybe talk a little bit about them as you look.

Ned: I just look around - and around - and look for - like - umm - and look for like pictures you can sort of tell if it's a good book too.

Int.: Yeah. And what do the pictures tell you about a good book?

Ned: In - umm - it tells you that - like - umm - it would - like - um - it would be - it would tell you the exciting parts.

Int.: Oh. Uh huh.
Ned: Like the - um - like - you know - the exciting parts - you know - it could just show you the exciting parts and then you could read about them.

Int.: Uh huh. What do you think about this book?
Ned: It looks sort of exciting.
Int.: What do you think it's about?
Ned: Uh - about these flies that are trying to escape and everything - because frogs and spider - eat flies.
Int.: Oh. Uh huh. That's right, they do.
Ned: And on this page it just looks like the spiders are just hanging there.
Int.: Umm hmm.
Ned: You know it seems like they're getting caught in the web - and then he's going to come over here and get him. Right here it looks like bats - like a bat is chasing all these butterflies and then here's - the bat's still chasing around and they go out around - and they're still flying away - that's like the end - and then here - ummm - (interruption).
Int.: Now somebody new is in the story, huh?
Ned: The big ones are grasshoppers - blowing horns.
Int.: That's strange - did you stop and read the words?
Ned: Yeah.
Int.: Do you do that sometimes when something doesn't - when something puzzles you - you stop and have a read?
Ned: Yeah - uh huh. (pause) And here - more of them are going around here.
Int.: Um huh.
Ned: Going around -- going around (mumbles) - here it looks like the bird is singing.
Int.: What makes you think he's singing?
Ned: His beak is open and everything - and the sky.
Int.: Uh huh.

Ned: And the frogs are climbing on the turtles - and one of the turtles are swimming - and all the frogs are holding umbrellas.

Int.: Um Hmm.

Ned: Over them.

Int.: What kind of story - do you think this is a - well, you tell me - see if you can pick a word to describe the story - what kind of story do you think it is?

Ned: A different one.

Int.: Okay. How is it different - yeah - you go ahead - you said it's not like what?

Ned: It's not like - well - a story that I've read - it's different.

Int.: What are some different things in it?

Ned: Umm - all the different stories going around at once.

Int.: That's right - would you like to go back and read now? - see what it is? - see what's really happening?

Ned reads the book.

Int.: Is it different than what you thought at first?

Ned: Yeah.

Int.: How is it different?

Ned: It's sort of - rhyme to it - and all the different animals are fighting about which it is.

(Interruption)

Int.: Now would you call that a scary story? - or a - a funny story?

Ned: Sort of a - a poem story.

Int.: A poem story - okay. Do the pictures - are the pictures kinda like the story too?

Ned: Yeah.

Int.: How?
Ned: Umm - right here it said - it's dark.

Int.: And the picture's dark - uh huh.

Ned: And here - 'it's clear to me you've much to learn, the world is green, said the swaying fern' - and here everything's green - and here - 'it's full of spiders and very dry' - and here it's full of spiders and very dry - 'the world is dark, I know I'm right, said the little bat who flies at night' - and then flying around - and then it's dark - and he's flying around and everything.

Int.: Um hmm. How do you - do bats really look like that?

Ned: No.

Int.: Why do you think the artist made a bat look like that, then?

Ned: Because he wanted it to show up.

Int.: Uh huh.

Ned: Just because bats are either - brown or black - he wanted this bat to show up so he made like that.

Int.: Sure - uh huh. How about the frog? - do frogs really look like that?

Ned: No - because he doesn't want them to be all one color -

Int.: You mean he wanted to do some decorating?

Ned: Yeah.

Int.: Is that okay? - for an artist to change things?

Ned: Yeah - cause it really -

Int.: What?

Ned: It really looks nice, you know - uh - I like what he did to the turtle - you know - and -

Int.: What do you like especially about that - that turtle?

Ned: I like the pattern that he has on him - just all one pattern.
Later, Ned picks up *We Be Warm Till Springtime Comes* and reads the first page aloud.

Ned: This looks like a good book.

Int.: Why do you think that might be good?

Ned: Because the - it starts out and - it says - like - that he really - he really doesn't like winter.

Int.: No.

Ned: And he wants to be warm again - and it's probably gonna be sorta - story -

Int.: It's probably going to be what kind of story?

Ned: And exciting story or something.

Int.: Do you want to look through the pictures?

Ned: Yeah.

Int.: Now - would you - would you continue to read or would you stop now and look through all the pictures? - if you were in the library, for instance.

Ned: I would - well - see - really, we're not supposed to be reading that much when we're in the library - uh - so - I always look through the pages on the when I - before I take them out.

Int.: Well, that's a - I think that's a smart thing to do. Why aren't you supposed to be reading too much in the library?

Ned: Because she wants you to get out some books - you know - that really -

Int.: You - just not time to read then?

Ned: Yeah - you have to spend most of the time finding your books - and then you can spend about five minutes reading them.

Int.: So what you would do then is maybe read the first page and look through the pictures?

Ned: Yeah.

Int.: Uh Huh.
Ned: And then if it's a good book - then I would check it out.

Int.: Check it out - now that you've had a look - well, why don't you look through this a little bit more and tell me if you think you'd check either one of those out.

(pause)

Ned: I would check this book out (We Be Warm Till Spring-time Comes).

Int.: How come?

Ned: Cause it seems like an interesting book and everything.

Int.: What was especially interesting to you - you've looked at some of those pictures - what made you think it was gonna be a good story?

Ned: Mmmm - I forget where it was (pause) - Oh, right here - it looks like he's goin' out at night and that looks - and he has this lantern - and it looks exciting you know - and he goes out - (pause)

Int.: So that one looked like an exciting picture - any others that you saw that made you think you wanted to read the book?

Ned: This one - sort of.

Int.: Where is he, do you suppose?

Ned: Mmm - sort of down in the hole - or something - (pause ) that makes it seem like an exciting story.

Int.: Uh huh. What do you think they're doing there?

Ned: I don't know - just looking around and at this here.

Int.: Uh huh. Now these pictures are - how would you describe these pictures? What do you see?

Ned: They're bright.

Int.: Uh huh. And what about these? We Be Warm Till Spring-time Comes.

Ned: Dark.

Int: Does it make any difference to you whether the pictures are black and white or whether they're in color?
Ned: No - not really - because you sort of picture the colors of your mind - and that -

Int.: How did these black and white pictures make you feel?

Ned: It makes me feel like it's dark.
APPENDIX C

SAMPLE RESPONSE TO A COMPARISON
OF THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS
ILLUSTRATED BY THREE ARTISTS
Sample Response to Three Versions
of The Bremen Town Musicians

Int.: Now these are the three books. You're going to look at the Diamond one first.

Sean: This one looks like it was made in a box.

Int.: Which place? - show me - Oh, the title page.

Sean: I mean - why did he like to make them like that?

Int.: Why do you think?

Sean: I think they just make different illustrations.

Int.: Why do they do that?

Sean: I don't know. Look's like he's - like - in some places he's made it light - and then in other's he's made it dark spots - and some are light spots.

Int.: Un huh.

Sean: And - and sometimes he makes small dots.

Int.: Show me.

Sean: There.

Int.: Un huh.

Sean: I wonder why he put dots on this page - he put dots on the window (pause) - and his hair - it still has dots in it.

Int.: His hair has little dots at the end there.

Sean: This one has dots too (picks up the Plume version).

Int.: That has dots too?

Sean: It has like curved dots.

Int.: Un huh.

Sean: The paper trees don't have dots on them.

Int.: The what?
Sean: The paper trees don't have dots.

Int.: The paper trees?

Sean: Yeah.

Int.: What do you mean by paper trees?

Sean: Ummm - well - see - it's like paper bark - and you peel it off.

Int.: Oh, yeah - like birch - birch bark?

Sean: Yeah.

Int.: Uh huh.

Sean: His hair looks a lot of rough.

Int.: The cat's hair looks rough?

Sean: Yeah - and it sorta feels rough.

Int.: It feels rough too?

Sean: And the girl's dress - some part of it's light and dark - I think this part - good - (points to the sunset).

Int.: Why?

Sean: Because it looks like he mixed it.

Int.: Okay.

Sean: And it also looks like he mixed the sun.

Int.: Uh huh. How do you mix it? - how do you think he mixed it? - what do you mean by mixed?

Sean: Well - I think he put the purple in the background.

Int.: Uh huh.

Sean: He put stuff around the purple and then he put the yellow on it - and that looks really dark.

Int.: Uh huh. Is that how you do it?

Sean: Uh - yeah. Um mmm - he didn't do anything there - he just put yellow in that stuff. This is the book Mrs. Huffman had - this one looks like - this doesn't look rough.
Int.: The dog doesn't look rough?
Sean: Yeah.
Int.: Not like the cat?
Sean: No - but this part does.
Int.: Show me.
Sean: The donkey's mane looks rough. Yeah.
Int.: Uh huh.
Sean: This looks like a red sea.
Int.: On the rug? - it looks like a red sea? - what makes it look like a sea?
Sean: Oooh - because it looks like it's been painted up.
Int.: Up?
Sean: Sorta like up (gestures).
Int.: Uh huh.
Sean: This (picks up the Domanska version) looks like they cut out the paper and they put it - oh, I got it - he puts a framery around the picture.
Int.: Uh huh.
Sean: It doesn't look like it has very much things here.
Int.: Very much what?
Sean: Things there - and he puts things over here.
Int.: Oh, it doesn't have very much things in the picture?
Sean: Yeah - it just looks like paper.
Int.: It just looks like paper.
Sean: And he has things over here.
Int.: Uh huh.
Sean: And it also looks like it's been watercolored - the paper's been watercolored.
Int.: Uh huh - yeah.
Sean: And this looks like it's been watercolored (points to motif appearing under the printed text).
Int.: The purple flowers?
Sean: And this looks like it's been - just paper (points to illustration on the opposite page).
Int.: It looks like paper? - what looks like? -
Sean: This picture - this whole picture.
Int.: That one does - uh huh.
Sean: Ooh!
Int.: Oh, what?
Sean: Mmmmm.
Int.: What were you thinking when you looked at that?
Sean: This - it looks like they're all growling.
Int.: It does?
Sean: The donkey - this looks like ?? - yeah - the guy that makes the donkey always makes him growl.
Int.: He does - huh? - you can't tell there, can you?
Sean: No - I wonder what he was doing? - I wonder that - is that the robber?
Int.: The guy with the pink coat? - you wonder what he's doing?
Sean: Oh, I bet he used toothpicks for those.
Int.: You bet what?
Sean: Toothpicks where the donkeys kicking - uh huh.
Int.: When I read this, how did you feel? - when I read this story to you.
Sean: Ooooh. Uh - mmmm - it's hard.
Int.: Yeah. Was there more than one feeling?
Sean: Well, there wasn't any feeling because - I've heard it a lot of times.

Int.: You've heard it a lot of times?

Sean: Yeah.

Int.: If I said - if I said some words, could you pick it out? - is it like a scary story? - is it a funny story? - is it a sad story? - do any of those match up with this story?

Sean: Nooo.

Int.: No? Could you think of a better word?

Sean: Uh - I almost - no.

Int.: No. Okay. Why did - these are all very different - why do you think the artist chose to do different pictures?

Sean: Cause that's made out of paper. (Domanska)

Int.: That's made out of paper?

Sean: And this one's sort of made out of - that's made out of colored dots. (Plume)

Int.: Colored dots?

Sean: This is made out of - just dots. (Diamond)

Int.: Just dots - uh huh. Why do you think they chose to do it differently?

Sean: Because - they didn't want it to be the same.

Int.: Um hm. Do any of these books match up with the pictures you thought about when you heard the story?

Sean: No.

Int.: No? You had your own pictures, huh? Okay - thank you, Sean.
APPENDIX D

STYLE IN PICTURE BOOKS: WHAT
THE TEACHER NEEDS TO KNOW
Introduction

The concept of style as it relates to picture books is a complex one. It is a term applied often to illustrations and artists, but it is seldom clearly defined or dealt with in depth. For example, in Kingman's *The Illustrators' Notebook* (1978) the word "style" is mentioned on only nine different occasions. Louis Slobodkin, in discussing the work of Ernest Shepard, states that "although his style is built on long tradition, it is his own" (p. 57); a statement, I believe, meant as a compliment. Fritz Eichenberg, however, seems to think a recognizable style is less praiseworthy:

> what emerges finally from the crucible may, at its best be a daring innovation, an artist's most personal and revelatory expression, and, at its most trivial a style easily recognized, catalogued, evaluated and imitated (p. 2).

This lack of agreement regarding a concept of style is not uncommon in books that purport to be about children's picture books—in fact, in many the term "style" is not considered important enough to include in an index.

Of seven recent books which deal specifically with picture books (Bader, 1976; Cianciolo, 1981; Cullinan and Carmichael, 1977; Glazer, 1981; Kingman *et al.*, 1978; and MacCann and Richards, 1973) only MacCann and Richards and Cianciolo make any attempt to examine a concept of style. MacCann and Richards deal with style within the chapter
entitled "Graphic Elements." Even here, the term "style" is used in an ill-defined manner, often interchanged with the phrase "artists' interpretation." In Picture Books for Children, Cianciolo (1981) defines style as

a term which refers to the configuration or gestalt of artistic elements that together constitute a specific and identifiable manner or form that is recognizable in an artist's work because of his or her particular and consistent treatment of details, composition, and handling of a medium. Also style refers to the manner that has developed and become standard within a culture or during a particular period of time (pp. 7-9).

For Cianciolo, then, style seems to serve to describe illustrations. She mentions formal properties or elements and includes the mention of styles of particular eras and cultures as well as of individuals. But she does not explain how these features might relate to meaning or how it is that these elements might enhance or extend the meanings of the text. Yet the meaning-enhancing role of style might be equally as important as its descriptive role.

To further define the concept of style as it relates to picture books, therefore, theories in the fields of art history and aesthetics will be discussed. I will then attempt to relate these understandings to the particular art object that is the picture book.

**Style in Art**

The term "style" is defined in the Random House Dictionary of the English Language (ed. Steine, 1973) as a "particular distinctive or characteristic mode or form of
construction in any art or work" (p. 1412). The McGraw-Hill
Dictionary of Art (1969) defines style as

The configuration of artistic elements that
together constitute a manner of expression
peculiar to a certain epoch, people or
individual. The manner developed within
a culture considered standard for that time
or culture constitutes its specific artistic
character or style. For example, the dif-
ference in relative dimensions and ways of
interpreting space distinguishes the Roman-
esque Period from the Gothic. Individual
characteristics and idiosyncracies of an
artist make up his personal style. It may
be a particular treatment of details, com-
position or handling of materials that
remains a constant in his expression and
indicates his individual manner of working
(p. 280, Vol. 5).

Schapiro (1953) states "by style is meant the constant
form—and sometimes the constant elements, qualities, and
expression—in the art of an individual or group" (p. 289).

The use of the term "style" in the arts has been the
subject of considerable attention and argument. Not only
have the components of style been debated, but the variety
of uses to which the term has been put has further obscured
its meaning. "Style" is used when describing the work of
individuals and of cultures and eras as well. Novitz (1976)
attempted to clarify meanings of the term by differentiating
between pictorial styles, artistic styles and personal
styles. Pictorial styles, he tells us, are distinguished
by certain "umbrella conventions or widely accepted pro-
cedures of depicting" (p. 336). Pictorial styles would
include perspectival methods of depicting or impression-
istic perceptions. Artistic styles might involve a change
in emphasis or subject matter but not in overall method of depiction—the Renaissance style as opposed to Mannerism. Individuals might work in the same pictorial and artistic styles but "idiosyncratic features" would help the connoisseur distinguish one artist's picture from another.

These references to artistic elements and manner of depicting recall Cianciolo's definition of style and these elements are indeed often used to designate the form and function of the parts of the work and might include such features as design elements and principles, techniques of depicting, or subject matter content. While such objective categories may be useful to art historians for answering questions like Who? What? When? they do not always help us understand the significance of the role of style in creating and conveying meaning. Marantz (1977) states: 'Art objects are important because they have the potential for producing a transcendent experience, a state of mind where new and personal meanings can take shape' (p. 151). Genova (1977) argues that "to focus only on identification benefits of a style is to elevate disproportionately a valuable by-product of stylistic studies and thus lose sight of style as an aesthetic property" (p. 316). Several recent theories in the field of aesthetics may help to explain the importance of understanding Why? as well as Who?, What?, and When?

Hellman (1977) proposed that components of style might be considered in two ways, the syntactic and semantic. This approach grew out of developments in the semiotics of art—
the viewing of art as symbolic systems (see Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art*, 1968). The syntactic components could be defined as the objective, more formal systems of classification. But Hellman argues that "Purely formal characterizations are inadequate. The interdependence of the syntactic and semantic components is much greater than one would surmise from formalist style analyses" (p. 289). He proposes that we recognize both exemplified or literal properties such as the organization of lines and colors in painting as well as expressed or metaphorical properties. This would enable us to describe color, for example, in formal terms such as "red" or "blue" and describe them in metaphors such as "warm," "cool," "angry," "quiet."

Genova (1977) proposes a "meaning-expressive model" for style. She theorizes that "style can individuate; a stylistic analysis will often answer the questions Who? Where? When?" (p. 324). In addition, she acknowledges a variety of sources for style "ranging from psychological to cultural and aesthetic ones" (p. 324), and that style is the result of unconscious as well as conscious choices. She stresses that her crucial point, however, is that style is symbolic of meaning (p. 324). We should not ignore the subtle influence that style has on meaning. The two are "inextricably interwoven; they reflect, express and constitute each other" (p. 323).

The previous discussion is intended not to resolve the question of meaning of style or its significance, but
to show the difficulties involved in discussion of style. One point of consensus which seemed to emerge in these readings, however, was the **dual** quality of style. Wolflin (1932) refers to "the double root of style," Hellman (1977) discusses "exemplified" and "expressed" properties (syntactic and semantic). Perhaps the terms "objective elements" and "subjective elements" could be applied to style. Any consideration of style, therefore, should consider not only the formal objective properties of style but those subjective properties which lead to an interpretation of meaning.

**Style in Picture Books**

Articles or books about picture books which consider the concept of style usually begin and end with a discussion of syntactic or formal properties. MacCann and Richard (1973) describe design elements — "Color, Line, Shape and Texture;" a principle of design — "Composition;" and properties associated with eras or cultures — "Academic, Realistic, Trompe L'oeil, Abstract and Expressionism and Impressionism" (pp. 26-32). Cianciolo limits herself to a discussion of pictorial characteristics of style — "surrealistic, representational, expressionistic, impressionistic, folk art, cartoon art or naive art" (p. 8). This apparent lack of desire to tackle the problems of style in picture books in more than a superficial way may be due in part to the tremendous complexities of the task.
It has been noted above that art historians and aestheticians have not agreed upon a proper definition of style after centuries of argument. Added to the problems of defining style as it might be related to a single picture, the art object that is the picture book presents added difficulties. Bader (1976) explains "its aesthetic force derives from the continuity of images, from the relationship of the pages as they are turned" (p. 1). Therefore it is necessary to look at style as it relates not just to a single image, but a succession of images. Furthermore, we must include as formal properties of this succession of images not only the traditional visual elements of design such as color and line, but also typography and text and then consider all these elements as they express meaning.

In addition, when we consider the purpose of the picture book, the meaning-enhancing potential of style takes on added importance. Picture books even more than paintings are created to express some specific meaning or narrative, sometimes in the company of verbal text, sometimes not. Style alone is not responsible for conveying this meaning—symbols can convey meaning irregardless of the style they are presented in, but style may enhance and extend the meaning. Marantz (1977) explains that "good picture books have the potential to pique curiosity, to extend viewpoints, to refresh wonder, to be experienced again and again, each time with a tangibly different delight" (p. 151).
In order to better understand this potential, it seems appropriate, therefore, to return to previous definitions of style, but to rid them of unnecessary wordiness regarding formal elements in order to focus on the core of these definitions - "a manner of expression." The meaning of the word "express" - "to make known; reveal; show" (Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, p. 514) is more in keeping with the dual nature of style which is discussed above. Style can best be defined, I believe, as a manner of making known. The word "manner" can be understood to encompass all those conscious as well as unconscious choices (see Genova, 1977) which the artist makes in order to "make known." Aspects of style such as formal elements, techniques, content, and pictorial conventions represent a field of choices the artist has available to accomplish his primary purpose of making known; just as an author makes choices concerning setting characterization, plot, theme, and language in order to convey an overall meaning. This concept of style seems especially relevant to the art of the picture book. I have chosen, therefore, to categorize and discuss the kinds of choices which picture book artists have available to them and to discuss the meaning-expressing potential of these choices. These categories may be helpful to the teacher who would enhance and extend a child's initial response to a picture book to a richer, more "personal reactivation of the book experience, each time a bit
different as the metaphors grow richer" (Marantz, 1977, p. 151).

Categories of Stylistic Choices

1. Choices in Design

1a. Elements of Design (from Ocvirk et al., 1962)

Line

Line is frequently found in picture book illustrations; often more than any other element of design. Perhaps this is because "black-on-white drawing is a traditional mode of graphic illustrations" (MacCann and Richards, 1972, p. 36) and perhaps because of the factor of printing costs. Line has great expressive potential. It can convey repose when it is horizontal, stability if vertical, and action or a feeling of motion when it is diagonal. Angular lines can create a feeling of excitement while curving lines often express rhythmic, more peaceful qualities. Thin lines appear delicate and transient while thick lines convey stability or weight.

Children's book illustrators often use the expressive power of line to enhance the meaning of the text. M. B. Goffstein's delicate linear characters in Brookie and Her
Lamb (1967) reflect her simple yet universal childhood themes. Marc Brown's alternately thick-thin, curving lines in Why the Tides Ebb and Flow (Bowden, 1979) create a feeling of swirling, fluid movement. In Willie's Fire-Engine, Keeping (1980) uses the solid verticals of a locked gate to emphasize the delicate fragility of his two characters. Marcia Brown's feathery broken lines in Cinderella (1954) reinforce the magic qualities of the story and the delicate sumptuousness of the French court. Domanska repeats thin, curving lines in a surging pattern in If All the Seas Were One Sea (1971) and thereby recalls the action of the life force.

Shape

Shapes have the capacity to convey solidity or delicacy, movement or repose. Geometric shapes may more often represent inanimate objects while biomorphic shapes may convey natural qualities.

In many of Ezra Jack Keats' stories, his cutout shapes echo the rectangular solidness of a typical city scene. On the other hand, the angularity of shapes in Domanska's The Bremen Town Musicians (1980) conveys a
feeling of wild abandon and excitement as the animals attack the thieves. On the other hand, Peter Parnall uses biomorphic, almost womblike shapes to enclose his characters in Baylor's Your Own Best Secret Place (1979), a choice which may express a feeling of intimacy with nature.

Texture

Texture in visual art can convey a sense of reality or interesting visual contrasts or patterns which can suggest movement and action. In addition, textures can express human qualities such as roughness or delicacy. They can also enhance awareness of the artist's original medium.

Leo Lionni manages to suggest the very real feeling of rocky soil in Alexander and the Wind-Up Mouse (1969) in contrast to the abstract representation of objects and characters. Wildsmith manages to convey a feeling of movement and action with his contrasting textures in Hunter and His Dog (1979). Keeping creates a feeling of tension in Joseph's Yard (1969) by playing one texture against another.
Color

Color is one of the most expressive elements of design. It can convey temperature (warm and cool colors), emotion (red for angry, blue for melancholy), or personality traits (in the American mainstream culture purple is often noble, white considered pure innocent, and black considered evil). In addition, the combination of certain colors can evoke serenity (monochromatic schemes) or action (complementary schemes). Intensity of color can also evoke a feeling of energetic vibrancy and excitement while dull colors are less lively and can even express weariness or boredom.

Eric Carle's brilliant and contrasting colors convey a feeling of action and movement in The Grouchy Ladybug (1977) which helps to reinforce the passing of time and theme of a journey. Stevenson's contrasting though softer tints in Zolotow's Say It! (1980) nicely express the windy ruffling of the pond's surface. Shulevitz's monochromatic blues and greens in Dawn (1974 reinforce the quiet stillness of the early morning and make more dramatic the contrast of the risen sun.
Value

Value, the amount of light or dark in a given shape, line or color has expressive qualities also. Depicting natural or artificial lighting on forms (as in chiaroscuro) often emphasizes a feeling of reality. A wide range of values in a picture can also create drama or movement. Absence of contrast can, on the other hand, lessen realistic aspects of a picture or create a quiet, solemn mood.

Lloyd Bloom's illustrations in Chaffin's We Be Warm Till Springtime Comes (1980) use contrasts of light and dark to emphasize the dramatic nature of the family's plight and also to contrast the coldness of the snow with the warm brightness of the fire. The vividly modeled planes of the faces of mother and son as they sit in the reflection of the fire's light emphasizes the warmth of their relationship. The lack of natural lighting in Vidal's Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain (Aardema, 1981) creates a patterned design often found in folk or "primitive" art, yet contrasting values provide a rhythmic pattern which echoes the refrain of the text. This
match between pictures and words may be the reason several children in this study felt the pictures looked "real." In Duvoisin's *Hide and Seek Fog* (1965) the lack of contrast enhances the misty, mysterious quality of a foggy day. In Ungerer's *Moon Man* (1967) contrasting values as well as colors infuse his simple shapes with a feeling of energy.


The elements of design do not, of course, exist in a vacuum; each often contains elements of another and they can interact together in varying ways to create a design. This organization, often called composition, can be responsible for the underlying purpose of design, the creation of unity or a meaningful whole. To accomplish this unity, the artist can use pattern or repetition to achieve visual harmony and balance or he can introduce variety in order to set up more involved oppositions and progressions. Through either of these approaches, transitions can be developed which lead the eye from one point to another—forcefully or subtly.
The principles of design are relevant to the composition of a single picture and to the overall design of the book as well. It is especially important to consider the principles of design in preparation of the entire book in order to create a unified whole. This means that cover design, text placement, typography, endpapers, illustrations, and empty space should all be considered as elements of the total design. The arrangement and sequencing of these elements can move the eye effectively through the story or destroy its continuity. In the picture book contrasting values, colors, shapes, and lines can produce variety. By creating tension or imbalance the artist establishes excitement and a feeling of movement. On the other hand, rhythmic qualities of pattern and repetition can convey a feeling of harmony and balance. The arrangement of text and pictures can inhibit or enhance the rhythm and movement of the continuing story.

The alteration of pictorial shapes and text in *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain* (Vidal, 1981), as well as contrasts in value,
creates a rhythmic pattern that echoes the cumulative refrain of the text. This pattern is interrupted by double-page spreads which lend variety to the repetition, yet the after-image is one of unified design.

Briggs creates vignettes in a variety of rectangular shapes in The Snowman (1978). The shapes get larger as the climax of the story nears, then begin a return to previous patterns. This arrangement creates a rhythmic progression which unifies the underlying story.

In Willie's Fire-Engine, Keeping changes color and intensity to build the story to a climax. The story begins in dull, neutral colors but gradually changes to intense reds as the climax approaches.

Endpapers also contribute to the overall design and can reinforce themes (or create an anomalous situation). The patterns in Shulevitz's endpapers in The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship (1968) are picked up later in the story as the action nears completion. Hogrogian's single-leafed pear in Sir Ribbeck of Ribbeck of Havelland (1969)
adds an element of surprise to the rhythmic meter of the poetic narrative.

2. Choices of Technique

2a. Original Media

The medium in which the artist works can have a subtle influence on the reader's understanding. Watercolor is particularly appropriate for Shulevitz's *Rain* Rain Rivers (1969), for example. The transparent, color-bleeding nature of the medium is the essence of the rain itself. Lionni's use of collage allows for patterns of texture and shape which add variety to his simple tales. The meticulously detailed pen and ink drawings of Sendak's *The Juniper Tree and Other Tales From Grimm* (1973) serve in part to reinforce the psychological complexities of the tales and also their air of somber fantasy. Blair Lent's cardboard cuts from *The Wave* (1964) recreate the linear stylized qualities of Japanese art in a fresh and unusual manner.

2b. Typography

The choice of type and its arrangement on the page can enhance or destroy the unity of design and underlying theme. The delicacy of script or calligraphy can reinforce a tale
with a gentle theme or with a setting in the past. More modern alphabets lend themselves to many modern, realistic stories. The sans-serif type in Carle's *The Grouchy Ladybug* (1977) is appropriate for the simple abstract forms. Steel's *Tattercoats* (1976) is set in Goudy Old Style—an appropriate type for this English version of Cinderella. Sidjakov's *Baboushka and the Three Kings* (Robbins, 1960) uses an oriental style similar to an "Ondine" which is appropriate to the Russian origins of this tale. Burkert's interpretation of *Snow White* (1972) is accompanied by typography reminiscent of medieval manuscripts.

2c. Paper

The paper chosen for the book can increase the effect of the artist's medium or particular elements of design and thus enhance expression (or it can clash with medium and mood of the book in a disturbing way). Wildsmith's brilliant colors in *Puzzles* (1970) seem more brilliant in the light reflected from the shiny page. Watercolor or pencil drawings on the other hand can be enhanced by a matte-finished, textured page. The subtle
texture of the paper in Van Allsburg's *Jumanji* (1981) must be very similar to that in the original. This gives the drawings a three-dimensional quality, as if the Conte dust might rub off if one were to touch the page.

3. Choice of Pictorial Content

3a. Subject matter

The aspect of the story which the artist chooses to picture can reflect important themes and reinforce them, or can distract attention from the meaning of the story. In Burkert's illustrations for *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (Grimm, 1972), for example, the stepmother's face is never portrayed, while Hyman's depiction (1974) of the stepmother's growing descent into madness gives an added dimension to the story.

The subject matter of the pictures can lead us into the story and help it build to a climax. Shulevitz accomplishes this with *Dawn* (1974) by beginning with a small vignette of a barely discernible lake, moving from the portrayal of landscape to pictures of animals and people. Finally, four pictures show similar views of the characters in a
boat—the first a close-up, the last a tiny dot in the magnificence of the sunrise.

3b. Point of view

The artist's point of view can also extend and heighten the underlying theme of the story. The Carricks picture far-away views of the scenes in Ben and the Porcupine (1981). This makes the sudden close-up of the dog's muzzle shot with porcupine quills all the more dramatic. The introductory view in Burkert's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1972) shows us the characters through a window in a massive castle wall—an unconscious reference, perhaps, to psychoanalyst Bruno Bettelheim's contention that children want to keep the true nature of these tales at a distance. Van Allsburg alternates perspective in Jumanji (1981) between two-point, bird's-eye view, and worm's-eye view. These changes heighten the air of mystery and intimacy. The viewer has the feeling of hiding in the room and watching the drama unfold.

4. Pictorial Conventions

Part of the problem with the concept of style lies in the fact that the term has been applied
to individual artists, eras and cultures. Novitz (1976), mentioned above, suggested that widely accepted "procedures for depicting" be called "umbrella" or "pictorial" conventions and that the term might be useful for describing broad changes in style. These umbrella conventions he discussed included Renaissance perspectival methods, methods of lighting which began with della Francesca or Impressionist understandings of perception. Because of wide acceptance and familiarity, these conventions have become associated with certain eras or cultures.

Since the stylistic choices available to a picture book artist often include elements of these accepted procedures of depicting, I have chosen to categorize them as such and to discuss a few of the many such conventions which often occur in picture books. When these conventions are used to reinforce themes or settings of stories they can be particularly effective in expressing meaning. (My main sources were The McGraw-Hill Dictionary of Art (Vol. 1-5, 1969) and H. W. Janson's History of Art (1963).)

4a. Early Christian Art

In this era the task of the artist became the conveyance of a religious message. In
order that this message was clear and uniform, dramatic movement and three-dimensional form were subdued for repetition of motifs and conventional, undifferentiated symbols. The art of book illumination echoed these characteristics and the repetition of motifs and patterns and the use of stock symbols were found in books as well as paintings. These conventions have become associated with many Eastern European and Russian cultures into the present day. Islamic or Middle Eastern art has also been characterized by highly decorative conventions.

Illustrators such as Chris Conover (The Little Humpbacked Horse (1980) and Le Cain (The Three Gifts (1980) have used these conventions in their versions of these Russian folk tales. Janina Domanska's illustrations for King Krakus and the Dragon (1979) recall the tale's Eastern European heritage. De Paola uses Celtic symbols to retell the legend of Fin M'Ccul (1981). The Dillons use conventions often found in Persian miniatures to retell a Middle Eastern tale, Two Pairs of Shoes.
4b. Late Gothic art

This period in art may be characterized by a movement away from stylized, two-dimensional depicting toward a renewed interest in realism. Beginning with Giotto, the wealth of Medieval or Early Christian symbolism survives, but in increasingly realistic form, culminating with the work of such Flemish masters as Jan Van Eyck.

The figures in many of De Paola's tales set in Italy recall the frescoes of such masters as Giotto or della Francesca in both pose and softened values. Burkett's careful rendering of figures as well as her inclusion of medieval symbols in her illustration for the Grimm's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs recall Van Eyck's "Marriage of Giovann Arnolfini."

4c. Renaissance Art

During the Renaissance in both Italy and Northern Europe, the style of painting moved away from the abundance of conventional motifs to a view of the world which was more in line with what could actually be. The preoccupation with forms, proportioning of space, and emphasis on dramatic lighting was
apparent in magnificent landscapes and detailed portraits. While the financial limitations of book publishing do not often allow painting on such a grand scale, the work of artists like Sendak in *Outside Over There* (1981) is reflective of certain Renaissance conventions. French's *Matteo* is set in the Italian Renaissance and accurately reflects pictorial conventions then in use. Le Cain's first full-page illustration in Andersen's *The Snow Queen* (1979) must pay homage to Brueghel's 'The Hunter in the Snow.' The Northern European origin of the original seem appropriate for Andersen's own cultural heritage.

4d. Baroque art

During the Baroque period emphasis moved away from Renaissance preoccupation with classicism to a more grandiose, richly ornamented, often extravagant style. The style was characterized by Rubens' dramatic compositions which had the effect of making the beholder feel that he participated in the action. Dramatic qualities were emphasized by the use of chiaroscuro or great contrast in lighting while genre painting of the
Dutch masters increased the viewer's feeling of intimacy with the subject matter.


4e. Impressionism

The impressionists were concerned with the properties of light and color. Their art is characterized by broken color, optical mixtures, and softened contours, and gives a momentary and spontaneous view of a scene rather than a sharp detailed description. Much of Maurice Sendak's work, especially Zolotow's *Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present* (1962) has been compared to Impressionistic conventions.

Stevenson's illustrations for Zolotow's *Say It!* (1980) are reminiscent of Monet while Burningham recalls Sisley's work in *Would You Rather* (1978). Mitsumaso Anno's *Anno's Journey* (1977) is not only executed in an
impressionistic manner but it contains references to several impressionist and post-impressionist paintings: Seurat's "Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte" and "The Bathers" and Van Gogh's "Drawbridge of Arles."

4f. Expressionism

Expressionistic conventions, while originating in Germany, have been used to characterize emotionally rooted, intense themes. Aspects of Expressionism include intense, often shocking colors, and rough, rapid brushwork. Wildsmith's Puzzles (1970) reflects certain expressionist conventions. The rough strokes and brilliant colors of Steptoe's Stevie (1969) pay homage to the paintings of French artist Georges Rouault. Much of Keeping's work seems to echo expressionistic intensity. The flowers in Joseph's Yard (1969) are as vibrant as Kokoschka's "Bouquet of Autumn Flowers."

4g. Twentieth Century art

The diversity of styles in twentieth century art make generalizations regarding the manner of depiction most difficult. There are several picture book illustrators,
however, whose work often recalls the style of individual artists. The collages of Lionni and perhaps Keats and Carle are reminiscent of Matisse's bold contrasting forms. Anno often uses optical illusions in a manner similar to M. C. Escher. And at his best, I believe, De Paola's soft-toned dream-like figures in *When Everyone was Fast Asleep* (1976) are not unlike Chagal's nostalgic fairy-tale figures.

4b. Comic art

The term "cartoon" is often applied to illustrations in books in a derogatory fashion, but the tradition of Comic art and Caricature is a respected one. The work of Paul Klee is perhaps the epitome of Comic art. His delicacy of line and sensitivity to every aspect of life have influenced others such as Saul Steinberg and Picasso. Much of Picasso's graphic art was characterized by the economy of form and humorous reference common to this medium. William Steig certainly makes good use of these conventions in such books as *Tiffky Doofky* (1978) and *Gorky Rises* (1980). Edward Gorey, Raymond Briggs and Tomi Ungerer also follow conventions of Comic
art in many of their humorous, sometimes cynical, drawings. Kent's *The Fat Cat* (1971) recalls Searle's rotund feline also called "Fat Cat."

41. Primitive art

This is a broad category usually used to refer to the arts of rural or tribal societies which have no written records and who perpetuate themselves by custom and tradition. While Primitive art takes many forms, it is usually characterized by simplified abstracted forms--symbols of plant, animal or human forms. Wood carvings, painted designs and patterns, and highly abstract masks are common. Haley based the forms in her African tale *A Story A Story* (1970) on African masks. McDermott's highly abstract shapes in *Arrow to the Sun* (1974) are reminiscent of American Indian symbols. Paul Goble's illustrations of Indian tales recall the hide paintings of Plains Indians in form as well as color.

Another form of primitive art, often referred to as folk art, is characterized by a "state of mind which reproduces the mind's image of things with small concern
for conventions or so-called real appearances" (Larkin, 1964). This folk art style is often found in self-taught painters such as Rousseau or Grandma Moses as well as Early American limners.


4j. Oriental art

Both Chinese and Japanese painters have for centuries worked with water-based inks and colors which they applied to silk or rice paper with a variety of brushes. Because this method allows no opportunity for change or correction, the exploration of linear effects has come to outweigh concerns of composition or accuracy of depiction. Brush strokes are strong and spontaneous and arrangements are often simple and uncluttered. French makes effective use of these conventions in The Blue Bird (1972) as does Young in Ziner's Cricket Boy (1977). Burkert sets
The Nightingale (1965) in a typically oriental context. Mayer's forms and colors also recall Chinese screen paintings in Everyone Knows What a Dragon Looks Like (1976).

While these categories and examples are by no means inclusive of the wide range of styles found in picture books, they may help those interested in the art of the picture book to begin to understand the kinds of choices available to the artist when he attempts "to make known." Taylor (1957) states that the relationships of style are quite complex and that we might ask many questions of a work of art. "While the search for the answers to such questions could, on the one hand, carry us away from the work we are considering, it might, on the other hand, also clarify the unique quality of the work and render more profound its meaning" (p. 132).

This study of primary children's response to picture books has shown children hard at work creating meaning, and it has shown teachers who have extended and deepened these meanings. By helping these teachers to understand style in picture books in terms of its meaning-expressing potential, I believe we can help teachers to help children become increasingly sensitive to aesthetic qualities in picture books.
APPENDIX E

CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOKS MENTIONED IN THE STUDY


Ben and the Porcupine by Carol Carrick. Illustrated by Donald Carrick. New York: Clarion, 1981.


Bo Rabbit Smart for True: Stories from the Gullah by Priscilla Jaquith. Illustrated by Ed Young. New York: Philomel, 1981.


The Bremen Town Musicians by Grimm Brothers. Translated by
Elizabeth Shub. Illustrated by Janina Domanska.

Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain by V. Aardema. Illus-

Brookie and Her Lamb by M. B. Goffstein. New York: Farrar,

Clocks and More Clocks by Pat Hutchins. New York:

Cinderella by Grimm Brothers. Illustrated by Nonny

Cinderella by C. Perrault. Illustrated by Marsha Brown.


The Comic Adventures of Old Mother Hubbard by Tomie De Paola.

The Cow Who Fell in the Canal by Phyllis Krasilovsky.

Cricket Boy by F. Ziner. Illustrated by Ed Young. New York:

Dawn by U. Shulevitz. New York: Farrar, Straus and
Giroux, 1974.

Din Dan Don It's Christmas by Janina Domanska. New York:
Greenwillow, 1975.

The Elephants and the Mice: A Panchatantra Story by

Everyone Knows What a Dragon Looks Like by J. Williams.

The Fat Cat by Jack Kent. New York: Parents Magazine

Fee Fi Fo Fum by Raymond Briggs. New York: Coward McCann,
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