

TEXTUAL REALISATIONS:

*A comparison of meaning in children's picture story books, comics,
photonovellas, film/television/videos and computer books*

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this thesis is my own and that it has not been submitted for the purpose of any academic award at any other institution.

Judith Leah Cross

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Abstract

The images in children's texts are vessels in which meaning is codified. Images are codified by their creator and decoded by the reader/viewer. This coding varies depending on the format of the text, the audience and the relationship between text and its context. Video versions of children's stories, may initially appear similar to their printed counterparts, but their meanings are usually significantly different. The reading/viewing experience of various realisations is, in fact, essentially different although this may not be immediately apparent to the child reader/viewer.

The profiles of ten children's stories are described in order to compare and contrast how the 'personalities' of these picture stories change depending on whether they are realised in comic book form, photonovella, picture story book, film/television/video or computer format. These profiles are arrived at via the application of systemic-functional grammar as developed by Michael Halliday (1985a) and adapted for the analysis of images by Kress and van Leeuwen (1990). The various media presentations of these stories position the reader/viewer differently and thereby determine how the texts will be read/viewed even though the titles of these various stories may remain unchanged from their original face-to-face (oral) versions. A comparison of children's picture story texts, a comparison which involves analysing a variety of adaptations, is detailed in this thesis. This comparison is one which describes both the different and the similar ways in which a person reads or views image texts depending on the semiotic system of presentation.

Also emphasised in this paper is the importance for educators and those concerned with children's literacy, to bear in mind that picture story books, photonovellas, comics, films, television, videos and books on computers are not translations, transcodings or substitutes for their original versions. They are more appropriately conceived of simply as different texts, thoroughly different realisations of a similar plot and, moreover, differentiated in often unacknowledged ways. The various textual realisations can be seen to require specific visual competencies, specific ways of reading and thinking about how images mean.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. A. & S.B.
The Angel and the Soldier Boy
2. W.W.T.
Where the Wild Things Are
3. Alex.
Alexander and the No Good, Terrible, Horrible, Very Bad Day
4. Mad.
Madeline
5. Leopard
How the Leopard Got His Spots
6. BB
The Berenstain Bears Get in a Fight
7. CGC
The Crab with the Golden Claw
8. SU
The Secret of the Unicorn
9. L.K.
The Lion King
10. P.P.
Peter Pan
11. J.B.
The Jungle Book