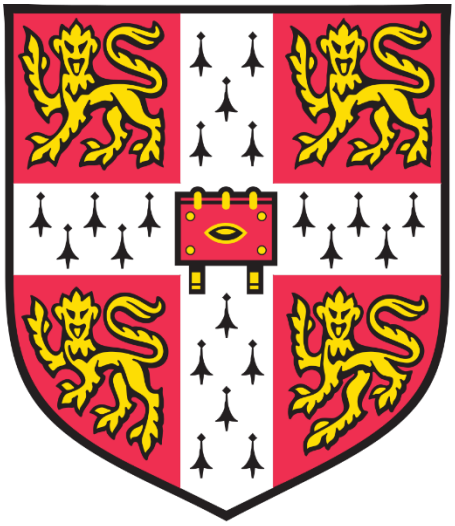
# Reading illustrated novels: exploring the medium through participatory case study



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January 2019

This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## Abstract

Reading illustrated novels: exploring the medium through participatory case study

Jennifer Aggleton

This thesis explores the opportunities that the medium of illustrated novels may provide for readers, through an empirical study of the responses of five children to three illustrated novels. The aim of this research was to create a new model of response to illustrated novels by exploring reading and meaning making processes, as well as the critical, creative, and aesthetic responses of children to illustrated novels. The research takes a sociocultural view of reading, and draws on theories of reader-response and social semiotics, as well as perspectives from research into illustrated novels, picturebooks, and theories of response to art.

The research was conducted as a participatory qualitative multiple case study, working with five 9-10-year-old children reading three illustrated novels: *The Imaginary* by A F Harrold and Emily Gravett, *The Midnight Zoo* by Sonya Hartnett and Jonathan McNaughtt, and *Not As We Know It* by Tom Avery and Kate Grove. The participants helped to choose the texts, the research methods, and to direct the avenues of exploration. The data collected was analysed using the constant comparative method and content analysis.

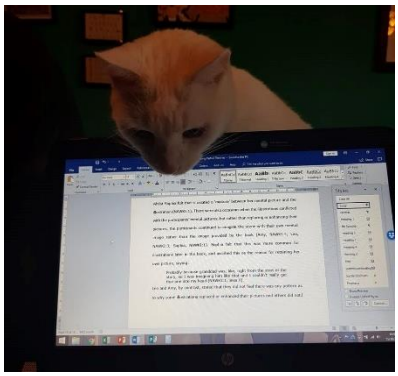
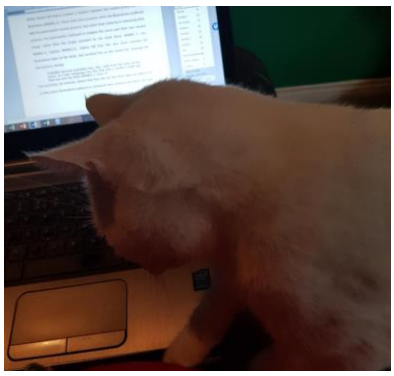
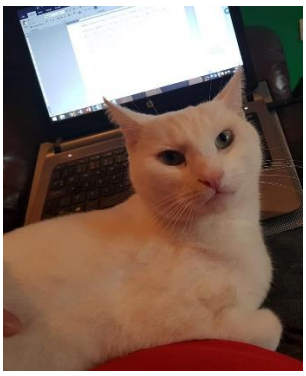
The model of response developed by this research suggests that illustrated novels, when approached as complete texts in which the writing and illustrations are considered interdependent and equally worthy of attention, have the potential to encourage readers to engage deeply through the creation of moments of pause which can provide space for reflection. The medium also holds the potential to prompt critical and creative responses when the juxtaposition of words and images results in the reader perceiving gaps, uncertainties, disagreements, or dissatisfactions. In addition, illustrated novels can provide aesthetic experiences, and prompt and develop aesthetic judgement. The research concludes that illustrated novels appear to hold enormous potential to prompt readers to engage in a variety of critical and aesthetic ways, and argues for a shift in the way in which this medium is perceived within scholarship and education in order to maximise that potential.

**Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I would like to thank my participants: Alexander, Amy, Leo, Nicole and Sophia. I am hugely grateful for their hard work, dedication of time, and most of all their brilliant insights. Without them this thesis would not exist. I would also like to thank their headteacher and class teachers, who allowed me to come to their school in order to conduct the research, and were hugely helpful and a pleasure to work with.

I also extend my thanks to my supervisor, Fiona Maine, and advisor, Zoe Jaques, who have been constant sources of help and support. In fact, the whole children's literature community at Cambridge has been amazing, from Maria Nikolajeva's inspiring PhD seminars (and tea parties), to Rosie at Homerton Library and Angela, Emma, Louisa, Hazel, Vicky and Ellie in the Education Faculty Library, who definitely win the award for Best Librarians Ever. I would also like to thank my mentor, Rachel Greene, for her incredible wisdom and friendship. Alongside the staff, my fellow students have been amazing. I would like to thank Meghanne Flynn for writing and tv days, Katy Day for always being able to make things fun, Dawn Sardella-Ayres for making me so welcome at the centre, and Anna Savoie for talks and walks with her lovely dog Ellie. Thanks also go to Eve Tandoi for all her advice and for reading my upgrade paper, and to Siddharth Pandey, for all the long conversations which introduced me to new ideas and made me think about old ideas in different ways. Maya Zakrzewska-Pim was a wonderful conference and coffee buddy, and a listening ear when I needed one, whilst Anna Purkiss provided both understanding and insight with difficult issues. Sarah Hardstaff has been an inspiration for the kind of scholar I want to be, and was always willing to go on a trip to the ballet. Nic Hilton helped me think about the future and the past, where I've come from and where I want to go from here (and that I want my own Alan and Steve to go with me). Other members of the children's literature centre have been excellent companions both in academic discussions and at formal halls, and I am very grateful to have done my PhD as part of such a wonderful community.

My personal support has also been phenomenal, and I would like to thank my parents, Sue and Pete, and my brother, Lawrence, for their help not just over the last three years, but all the years before which allowed me to get here. Enormous thanks also go to my flatmate Amy Theobald, another extraordinary librarian and the queen of methodology, for all her help both academic and personal. And lastly, I would like to thank Mogget, my constant companion, who always let me know when it was time to take a break.

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# 1. Introduction

For my sixth birthday I was given a copy of *Past Eight O' Clock*, a collection of short stories written by Joan Aiken and illustrated by Jan Pieńkowski (1986). Whilst I enjoyed the stories, it was the illustrations which really captured my imagination: stark silhouette figures and brightly coloured backgrounds which seemed to dance around the pages. I was fortunate enough to have been gifted many illustrated books as a child, but it was this book which really made me aware of the power of illustrations for the first time, and I have pored over illustrations ever since. Many years later, when I began my training as a teacher, I realised that whilst illustrations in picturebooks were often discussed in the classroom, illustrations in novels never seemed to be. It was not uncommon for teachers to read illustrated novels to the class and never show the pupils the illustrations, or to discuss the writing of illustrated novels in guided reading groups but never once refer to the images. In one encounter, I witnessed a teacher instructing a child not to bother looking at the illustrations as it would waste time if they were in an exam. I began to wonder about what the affordances of illustrated novels might be for child readers, if they were approached as a complete text, where the illustrations were considered to be of equal value to the words, and both modes were treated as interdependent. I therefore undertook my Master's thesis on responses to illustrated novels, and that project became the pilot study for this research.

When I began researching illustrated novels, I found that in scholarship the opposite emphasis to that of the classroom was often true – the authors analysed the illustrations down to the minutest brush stroke, but rarely considered the words. Nor was I alone in noticing this trend. Hodnett (1982) called for scholars to view illustrations in relation to writing thirty-six years ago, yet so little progress in this area has been made that in 2012 Goldman was still arguing for the need to define illustration studies in terms of viewing illustrations as part of a whole text, rather than as isolated entities (Goldman, 2012).

I also discovered that with the notable exceptions of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* books, very little children's literature criticism focused on illustrated novels. Victorian illustrated novels for adults have fared rather better, despite being fewer in number, but the focus of this scholarship tends to be historical, marking broad trends and changes in technology, or taking the form of literary

and artistic criticism of specific texts, rather than considering the illustrated novel as a specific medium. Whilst these studies are very illuminating in their own right, they did not help me to understand how a non-expert reader might approach these books, or what affordances the medium might have. *Alice* aside, the few mentions of illustrated novels I found in children's literature scholarship tended to be brief discussions in the context of other foci, either in overviews of illustrators, technical how-to books, or in relation to picturebooks. In these cases, illustrated novels are often mentioned briefly, and sometimes disparagingly, as a 'lesser' art form. Edwards and Saltman (2010), for example, view illustrated novels as inherently less collaborative than picturebooks, as a "static" (p.4) art form which lacks a totality of design.

In some ways it is not surprising that Edwards and Saltman take such a dim view of illustrated novels, as the role of the publisher in designing illustrated novels has also been neglected in recent scholarship. Klemin (1970) and Hodnett (1982) both discuss at length the vital role of the publisher in creating a total, cohesive design for illustrated novels, but I was unable to find any more recent scholarship in English which acknowledges this aspect of the creation process. Yet there is no doubt that the art departments of publishing houses still do take on this role, with illustrators Chris Riddell (2017) and Jim Kay (2015) both recently discussing the important role of publishers when creating their illustrated novels. Whilst the illustrator of a novel may provide their artistry after the words have been written, this is also the case for many picturebooks, and readers are still presented with a complete text which has been meticulously designed.

It is also possible that illustrations in novels may be viewed as merely "supportive or decorative" (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2000, p. 226) due to the manner in which they are approached by readers. Cook (2012) notes that each art form not only has formal characteristics, but is also laden with social conventions which dictate how that art form functions and how we interact with it. Thus, due to the predisposition in our society to value written communication over visual communication (Arizpe & Styles, 2016), readers may be more inclined to consider the illustrations as less valuable than the words, and therefore to pay less attention to them, as demonstrated by my experiences in the classroom. And the more these conventions are perpetuated through institutions like schools, the more likely readers are to consider illustrations subordinate to words in novels. Yet studies of illustrated novels suggest that illustrations do have a powerful

potential to communicate meaning. Jaques' and Giddens' (2013) study of the many incarnations of Lewis Carroll's *Alice* books concludes that different illustrators are able to "encode" the books with new meanings (p.200), and Cliff Hodges (2015) suggests that illustrations in novels may allow readers to explore texts in new ways. Enabling this exploration does, however, rely on a specific mindset when reading illustrated novels, one which views illustrated novels as complete texts, wherein both the words and illustrations are considered to have equal value and be equally deserving of attention, and the words and illustrations are approached as connected rather than separate.

When I came to conduct my own research into exploring the affordances that illustrated novels may have for readers, it was important to me to consider the experiences of reading beyond that of making meaning. Arizpe (2017) notes that empirical studies of reading by educators tend to focus on how to improve the reading process, whilst children's literature scholars tend to focus on aesthetic and literary features of texts but shy away from empirical research with readers. However, reading is both a meaning-making process and an aesthetic and literary experience, and as Nikolajeva (2005) points out, all literature is both a work of art and a didactic vehicle. Moreover, if we take a broader view of education than that which is reflected in the current English National Curriculum (Department for Education, 2013), the total experience of reading can be seen as having fundamental educational value. Aesthetic appreciation, literary appreciation and philosophical reflection can all be developed and improved through greater knowledge, understanding and practice (Arizpe, 2017), and all are common elements of the reading experience. Exploring not only the content and construction of texts, but also reflecting upon how we experience and respond to them, may enable us to increase our understanding of both ourselves and the world we live in. Each book, and each reading of a book, is an education in itself, and at least as much (and arguably far more) can be gained from the total experience of reading a book than can be gleaned from focusing solely on decoding, recalling events, inferring action, predicting outcomes, or assessing use of grammar and vocabulary.

Alongside drawing on aspects of reading more frequently considered by children's literature scholarship in order to illuminate potential educational outcomes, empirical work with children can also inform the study of children's literature from a theoretical perspective. By consulting children's views about

illustrated novels, each child is contributing their own reading of both the individual texts and their views on what these texts can tell us about the medium as a whole. They are bringing to children's literature scholarship a perspective which can be as informative as the 'expert' readings provided by children's literature scholars, by providing a non-expert perspective which may yield illuminating insights which are different to those which trained adult readers bring.

Due to my dual education and children's literature approach to this research, I felt it essential to consider not only what the affordances of the texts themselves might be, but also the processes involved in reading them. Studies of picturebooks (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001; Nodelman, 1988) demonstrate the value of exploring the aesthetic and literary characteristics of multimodal texts, whilst Mackey's (2011) work on medium highlights the importance of the processes by which readers engage with these texts. By exploring how a group of children approach the reading of illustrated novels, how they make meaning from the books, and how they respond critically, creatively, and aesthetically to these texts, I have developed model of response to illustrated novels which I hope will be of value to educators and children's literature scholars alike.

Following this introduction, I situate the project within a theoretical grounding which has been developed from existing research into illustrated novels, reader response, and other types of multimodal text. The theoretical grounding establishes a working definition of an illustrated novel, and then goes on to position the research within a sociocultural view of reading. Following this, key areas of consideration and avenues for exploration are highlighted, leading to the research questions. The research questions are followed by a discussion of the methodology and research design. I then introduce the findings by providing context to the cases, including 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973; Mackey, 2003) of the books, the school, and the participants' engagement with reading, as well as a discussion of the process of theory building. The findings are discussed over two chapters, the first of which explores the participants' responses to *The Imaginary* (Harrold & Gravett, 2015) in order to generate hypotheses of response. The second findings chapter applies these hypotheses to the participants' responses to *The Midnight Zoo* (Hartnett & McNaughtt, 2010) and *Not As We Know It* (Avery & Grove, 2015), and in doing so develops partial theories of response, which are then synthesised into a model of response to illustrated novels. The final chapter draws conclusions from the research, with particular attention given to

the scholarly contribution this project makes, a discussion of the limitations of the research, suggestions for further avenues of exploration, and the implications of the findings for professional practice.

## 2. Theoretical grounding

Due to the lack of previous scholarship in this area, there are no current theoretical perspectives which specifically examine the affordances of the illustrated novel as a medium. Existing scholarship which explores illustrated novels tends to fall into distinct categories: instructional texts on illustration which include details on how to illustrate novels (Male, 2007; Salisbury, 2004; Zeegen, 2009); overviews of the works of selected illustrators (Evans, 2008; Hamilton, 2010; Kenyon, 2016; Marantz & Marantz, 2013); histories of illustration (Doyle, Grove, & Sherman, 2018; Whalley & Chester, 1988; Zeegen & Roberts, 2014); and explorations of certain illustrated novels (with by far the largest amount of scholarship focusing on the varied illustration of *Alice in Wonderland*) (Davis, 1979; Jaques & Giddens, 2013). As such, I have supplemented these perspectives with theories from a range of related fields, including picturebook theory, art theory, and reader-response theory, as well as incorporating some aspects of social-semiotics, to place this research within a theoretical context. Alongside considering recent scholarship in these related areas, I have also returned to older key texts on illustration and reader-response which have informed approaches to other types of text, to examine what they have to offer to the study of the illustrated novel. In addition, I have included reference to my previous research on responses to illustrated novels (Aggleton, 2017), as that project acted as a pilot study for this larger piece of scholarship, indicating potential avenues of exploration which would benefit from further examination.

As this research takes a participatory approach, in which the participants shared decisions over research design, text selection, and avenues of enquiry, some areas which I had initially considered to be of great interest to me as a researcher, based upon the existing literature, were not significant to my participants. Similarly, other areas which I had not previously considered due to my own preconceptions and preoccupations have now been included as the participants felt they were key to their reading experiences. This theoretical grounding has therefore been adjusted from its initial form in order to provide the most relevant context for the following chapters.

### 2.1 Defining the illustrated novel

As this study examines the illustrated novel, it is important to have a working definition of what an illustrated novel is. Schwarcz (1982) comments that the

forms and functions of books are continually evolving, and that criteria and categories of definition can only ever be guidelines due to the complexity and variety of the art form of the book. Whilst this is undoubtedly true, demonstrated by developments such as ebooks which have evolved since Schwarcz was writing, working guidelines can serve as a useful tool to enable us to engage with issues of form and function. Therefore, I have established a working definition of an illustrated novel to create a level of consistency and clarity for my research.

Nikolajeva & Scott (2006) refer to a continuum of picturebooks, based on the quantitative ratio of illustrations to words, with the continuum beginning with wordless picturebooks and spanning through to an equal balance of words and images. The concept of a continuum equally applies to the illustrated novel. A novel may be illustrated with a single illuminated letter at the beginning of a chapter. It may begin each chapter with one small illustration, such as in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy (Pullman, 1995, 1997, 2000). Other illustrated novels contain a varying number of black and white or full colour plates, which may be presented either throughout the text, such as in Annie Fellows Johnston's *The Little Colonel* series (1895-1912), or gathered in the middle. Some novels place illustrations alongside writing on the same page, such as Quentin Blake's illustrations of Roald Dahl's works for children. Some novels include a combination of full page illustrations or double page spreads as well as illustrations placed alongside words, or in some cases, behind the words, and these may range from being occasionally dispersed throughout the text to appearing on almost every page, such as in the illustrated *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (Rowling & Kay, 2015). The illustrated novel ranges greatly in both the quantity and form of illustration it may include.

Regardless of the quantity and form of illustrations, however, by including both writing and illustrations, illustrated novels fall into the category of multimodal texts. Multimodal texts can be viewed as those which combine different forms (modes) of communication, such as pictures, written language, spoken language, or music (Bateman, Hiippala, & Wildfeuer, 2017). The key word in this definition is 'combine'. As Jewitt, Bezemer, and O'Halloran (2016) note, within some traditional disciplines there has been a tendency to focus analysis onto a single mode within multimodal texts, and that this tendency then neglects the importance of the ways in which the individual modes work together to create the whole text. It is important to recognise, therefore, that illustrated novels can be

more than the sum of their separate modes of writing and illustration, and that those modes can actively interact to create a distinct and whole medium. Of course, this does not mean that readers cannot read the individual modes present within illustrated novels separately. Within scholarship on illustration a focus on the single mode is particularly apparent (Goldman, 2012; Hodnett, 1982), and as such the relationship between illustrations and writing within illustrated novels has been largely neglected. Rather than defining the illustrated novel as a medium in which the two modes of communication must interact, therefore, I will instead define illustrated novels as a multimodal medium in which words and images have the potential to interact to create meaning. As a researcher, I am interested in the affordances of illustrated novels if they are treated as whole texts in which the writing and illustrations are considered to be interdependent rather than separate, and I will be directly exploring interactions with illustrated novels which include the mindset of viewing the illustrations and writing as symbiotic. However, to insist upon that interdependence as part of a working definition neglects the role of the reader in choosing how they interact with these texts.

Defining a novel, let alone an illustrated novel, is a far from easy task. Eagleton (2005) describes a novel as "a piece of prose fiction of a reasonable length" (p.1) and then goes on to problematise this definition at length, commenting on the nature of the novel to resist exact definition. However, to establish a working category, some boundaries must be drawn, particularly between the illustrated novel and the picturebook, hybrid novel, short story, and comic. The most straightforward boundary to draw is between the illustrated novel and the comic. The comic or graphic novel is not a combination of writing and pictures in the way an illustrated novel or an illustrated short story is, but rather a distinct medium with its own devices (Wolk, 2007). Comics are what McCloud calls "juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence" (McCloud, 1993, p. 8), and it is this juxtaposition of and movement through panels which separates the comic from the illustrated novel. Comics rely upon 'iconic solidarity' (Groensteen, 2007), whereby the images are recognisably part of the same whole, and the reader must infer the relationship between the images in order to follow the narrative (Groensteen, 2007; McCloud, 1993). In illustrated novels, images can be widely separated by large passages of writing, and highly variable in style, even within a single novel. The narrative does not necessarily rely on the reader to connect the images, as the writing frequently serves that

function. Visually, illustrated novels and comics are highly distinct, with comics generally employing a multiframe enclosing multiple panels and distinctly 'handwritten' writing (Chute, 2010), whilst illustrated novels are unlikely to employ a multiframe and generally include long passages of typed writing which is interspersed with illustrations rather than framed within a predominantly visual panel. These fundamental differences between comics and illustrated novels are likely to result in the two media having different affordances.

Similarly, hybrid novels, whilst also containing visual and linguistic elements, are distinct from illustrated novels in that they contain more diverse types of images, and may include no drawn or painted illustrations at all. Hybrid novels require readers to understand how to read many different types of visual and cultural material, and may potentially include comic strips, photographs, diagrams, newspaper articles, or screenshots. Hybrid novels also often play with design elements such as typography and paratext (Tandoi, 2018). As such, readers must be able to understand the social and cultural significance of a wider form of media than is present in illustrated novels to fully access hybrid novels. Reading a hybrid novel therefore requires readers to draw upon a different, although related, set of skills than when reading an illustrated novel.

Nikolajeva and Scott (2000) suggest that the boundary between a picturebook and an illustrated book is defined by the mode through which the primary narrative of the story is carried. They argue that once the words carry the primary narrative and the illustrations are "supportive or decorative" (p.226), the text has become an illustrated book, rather than a picturebook. However, Salisbury (2007, p. 110) suggests that rather than simply 'supporting or decorating' a novel, illustrations in novels have the power to "augment and embellish the reader's experience", suggesting that illustrations in novels play a highly active role, and may form part of the primary narrative. Moreover, Nikolajeva and Scott (2001) also discuss how illustrations for the short story *Thumbelina* by Hans Christian Andersen have the potential to "amplify different aspects of the text, which considerably affects our perception of the story and our reaction to it" (p.51). Similarly, Jaques' and Giddens' (2013) exploration of the many incarnations of *Alice in Wonderland* demonstrate the enormous influence illustrations can have over the experience of reading a novel. These studies seem to suggest that illustrations in novels may go far beyond 'supporting or decorating'. From a sociocultural view of reading (Gee, 2000; Snow & Sweet,

2003), which will be discussed further below, it is also arguable that a novel may not have one primary narrative, but that individual readers may co-construct their own narratives, drawing on the writing or the illustrations to varying degrees. As Hodnett (1982) notes, it is perfectly possible to read an illustrated novel by only looking at the illustrations, and similarly it is possible to read an illustrated novel and choose to focus solely on the writing and give no (or little) time to the illustrations. Whilst these experiences may not be the 'intended' way of reading the book, they are still complete reading experiences. This further problematises the idea that one mode of communication may 'carry' the narrative of a novel.

However, there is a level of logic which may be applied on the basis of ratio. Schwarcz (1982) comments that the greater number of illustrations there are in a book, the greater the impact of those illustrations is likely to be. Therefore, if a 300 page novel contains only 5 illustrations, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the primary mode of communication in the text is writing, and that the illustrations are likely to have a lesser impact upon the interpretation of the text than the writing is. As previously stated, however, the illustrated novel is a continuum, moving from the illuminated letter right up to a text with illustrations on every page. Therefore the extent to which illustrations are "supportive or decorative" (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2000, p. 226) is also likely to vary to a great extent, depending upon where the text lies on this continuum.

This wide-ranging continuum also complicates the relationships between the words and images within illustrated novels. Bird and Yokota (2018) note that unlike in picturebooks, where the relationships between words and images have been well-defined (they cite the work of Nikolajeva, 2005), the role of illustrations within illustrated books have far looser definitions. In particular, they argue that illustrations in books may not necessarily be representative of the text, but instead may be evocative, metaphoric, or poetic. They argue that illustrations in some books may be seen as a parallel story which represents the illustrator's responses to the writing, and are therefore an impression or interpretation rather than conveying what is present in the writing. However, as discussed in the introduction, the same could also be said of many picturebooks, given the many instances when production process involved an author writing the words to which an illustrator then later responded. Additionally, there are many illustrated novels which are illustrated by their author. As such, it is difficult to view illustrations in novels as simply impressions or interpretations when they are not viewed as such

in picturebooks. Bird and Yokota exemplify the multiple, complicated functions of illustrations in books by discussing a variety of functions for spot illustrations, including setting the scene, providing decoration, or providing visual balance. Their discussion demonstrates that whilst these functions are all possible within illustrated novels, none of them are necessarily required to create a working definition of illustrated novels, and that the functions which illustrations can potentially provide are numerous.

By contrast, in a much earlier work, Schwarcz (1982) explores the different roles that the relationship between illustrations and writing can play, not distinguishing between whether these are present in picturebooks or illustrated books. Schwarcz identifies only 4 categories of relationship: those of congruency, reduction, elaboration, and deviation; and these categories encompass both illustrations which depict the events of a texts as well as those which are more decorative or metaphoric. These categories will be explored in more detail below to consider their potential impact upon readers' experiences of illustrated novels, but in contrast to Bird and Yokota's views, Schwarcz's categories suggest that the combinations of illustrations and words can have specific functions within illustrated novels as well as within picturebooks.

As with the concept of whether the illustrations are integral and essential or supportive and decorative, it is difficult to make claims about the functional nature of the word/image relationship in illustrated novels before exploring how readers interact with these texts. Scholarship on the picture-text relationship in picturebooks by op de Beeck (2018) notes that the relationship between image and word is not stable or predictable, but instead relies upon the context both in which the picturebook was created, and in which it is read. As such, op de Beeck argues, contemporary picturebooks do not operate in the same way that picturebooks did in the past, even if they appear superficially similar. Given the importance of context, ideology, and culturally determined reading strategies, it is important to look beyond formalist, semiotic approaches, and instead view the picture-text relationship as fluid and adaptable. As similarly multimodal texts, but with an even greater variety in terms of formal characteristics such as word to image ratio and length, this caution should also be applied to any definition of illustrated novels. Taking this into consideration, whilst this research does make efforts to shed light on the relationship between writing and illustrations within illustrated novels, and the functions that readers employ this relationship for, I

will not be including any aspects of how illustrations are expected to function within novels as part of my working definition.

Nikolajeva and Scott's definition is further complicated by recent texts such as Brian Selznick's *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* (2007), *Wonderstruck* (2011) and *The Marvels* (2015), and Pam Smy's *Thornhill* (2017). These narratives are told through both words and illustrations, and would therefore seem to fall under Nikolajeva and Scott's definition of picturebooks. However, they all contain large sections of text where there are no illustrations to carry the storytelling (and also large sections where the narrative is expressed entirely through illustrations). In addition, all three books exceed 400 pages, whilst picturebooks typically contain 32 pages, with few exceeding 55 pages. This differing length is not insignificant, and whilst delineating solely based on page numbers is not something I feel is desirable, being at once too prescriptive and simultaneously not informative enough about the effect of this length, it is worth considering what Schwarcz (1982, p. 11) refers to as the "qualitative importance" of "quantitative proportions." Nodelman (1988) argues that the length of the picturebook compared to what he refers to as a "longer book" (p.69) is significant because of the level of detail provided by the words. Whilst he does not attempt to distinguish exactly where a "picturebook" becomes a "longer book", there is a distinction between the two, and this has a fundamental impact upon the nature of the book. It is also worth considering that novels are usually structured into separate chapters, unlike picturebooks or short stories, and that this enforced structure is likely to have an impact on the experience of reading.

Length is also relevant when separating the illustrated novel from the illustrated short story. Friedman (1958) discusses the distinction between the novel and the short story in terms of the *object* of representation and the *manner* of representation. In a short story, the action of the story may be smaller, and therefore require fewer incidents necessary to bring it about in a credible manner. However, a short story may also be short because the author has decided to omit incidents and leave them to inference, to create a certain artistic effect. Friedman also argues that a novel may be longer than a short story because it contains information that is additional to what is necessary for the narrative. This suggestion of additional information is rather vague, but it could be proposed that a novel is more likely to have subplots than a short story, and these could be seen as unnecessary for the primary narrative. Therefore, a distinction may be made

between the short story and the novel based upon the level of detail provided by the author. This distinction is not absolute, but it does suggest that a novel will provide more detail through the writing than a short story, and this detail is likely to have an impact upon a reader's experience of the text.

Drawing these considerations together, in this research, an illustrated novel is considered to be a multimodal book that contains both writing and illustrations, which have the potential to work together to communicate meaning. It must also be of sufficient length and detail to be reasonably distinguished from a picturebook or a short story. Based on advice from a publisher of children's novels (Bloomsbury editorial team, personal communication, October 22, 2016), I consider an illustrated novel to have at least 20,000 words and be structured into chapters. To examine how the frequency of illustrations may affect reading experience, I use novels which have differing ratios of words and illustrations, falling into three categories: books with less than 20% of pages containing illustrations, books with 20%-50% of pages containing illustrations, and books where more than 50% of pages contain illustrations.

## 2.2 Making meaning: a sociocultural view of reading

In considering how children may respond to illustrated novels, it is first important to discuss how readers create meaning from texts, both written and visual. The experience of reading begins with a reader making meaning from the text in front of them, so it is no surprise that the first aim of the current English national curriculum is to 'read easily, fluently and with good understanding' (Department for Education, 2013, np). A key aim of this research is therefore to understand how the children in this study make meaning from a selection of illustrated novels. As a separate medium from the novel, hybrid novel, short story, picturebook or graphic novel, the illustrated novel is likely to require methods of meaning-making which are distinct, though related, to other media.

This research takes a sociocultural view of reading, which positions readers as co-creators of meaning, whose interpretation of a text is influenced by their culture, personal history, and by discussions they may have about the text. Gee (2000) argues that the *situated meanings* which we acquire for objects and concepts are influenced by societal constructs, as well as our personal experiences. When we read, these *situated meanings* influence how we create meaning from a text. Similarly, Snow & Sweet (2003) consider reading to consist

of three elements of reader, text and activity, all of which are situated within a sociocultural context. For them, the sociocultural context influences how readers view themselves and the texts they are reading, and takes into account not only social norms but also the readers' personal backgrounds and the types of reading activities they engage in. Alongside this, empirical work by Maine (2015) suggests that discussion plays an important role in making meaning from texts. Following on from these perspectives, I take a theoretical approach which acknowledges the importance of the sociocultural perspective on reading, and allows me to consider the influence not just of the text, but also the individual reader, and their sociocultural context.

### 2.2.1 Key theories for the sociocultural perspective of reading

In order to explore readers' interactions with illustrated novels in a way which acknowledges the importance of the sociocultural perspective on reading, I use literary theories which pay particular attention to the role of the reader and their sociocultural context. I draw primarily from Rosenblatt's (1938, 1978) reader-response theory, Iser's (1980) theory of aesthetic response, and Barthes' (1977) concept of the Death of the Author. Whilst these theories were constructed with purely written texts in mind, work by Arizpe and Styles (2016) demonstrates that Rosenblatt's and Iser's work can also be relevant to picturebooks, and I believe that they are equally applicable to an exploration of responses to illustrated novels.

Reader-response theory positions the reader of a written text as not simply receiving information transmitted by the author, but as actively co-constructing meaning. Rosenblatt describes reading a written text as an "event" (1978, p.20) which occurs within a particular historical, environmental and personal context. As such, she argues that no two readers will experience a text in the same way, and implies that the same reader may experience a text differently at different points in their life, depending on their present preoccupation. This concept corresponds with Gee's (2000) sociocultural argument that situated meanings are not static, and adapt not only through the individual's experience, but also to the activity which they are currently undertaking. For Rosenblatt, reading is a "transaction" between the reader, and what the reader "senses the words as pointing to" (1978, p.21). Speer, Reynolds, Swallow, and Zacks (2009) expand upon this idea by arguing that the information available to readers when reading

a story is greater than what is supplied by the text, as readers also draw on their own knowledge and experience. Speer et al. use the example of a reading about a soccer game, where a reader with a basic knowledge of the sport is able to understand the meaning of the sentence "The midfielder scored a goal" even when the text does not actually state how or where the goal was scored (p.989). Meaning can therefore be seen as being co-constructed by both the text and its reader. As such, it has been necessary in this research for me to consider which aspects of the participant's responses seemed to be to be prompted by the texts, and how these interacted with the readers' sociocultural contexts.

Iser (1980) also proposes a theory of reading in which the reader plays an active role. The 'theory of aesthetic response' delineates between words, reader and text. For Iser, the text only exists in potential until the words are read in the context of the reader's individual knowledge (and sociocultural context), and it is the reading which creates their meaning. As such, during the act of reading, the reader is placed *inside* the text. Neither the words alone, nor the reader's psychology by itself are enough to inform us of the reading process, it is the interaction between the two and the actualization that occurs as a result of this interaction which must be considered. As with reader-response theory, an equal weighting can be seen to be placed between the content of the writing and the work of the reader. These theories highlight the usefulness of adopting an approach which considers not only the illustrated novels and their unique and shared characteristics, or only the readers and their sociocultural contexts, but also the ways in which these factors interact.

Another major thinker on textual response is Barthes (1977), whose perspective of multiple readings is worth considering at this juncture. Barthes can also be seen as taking a sociocultural view of reading, as he argues that texts can be furnished with multiple meanings which are located within the interpretation of the reader, rather than the author. For Barthes, the concept of the author of a text creating one meaning which must be uncovered by the reader limits interpretation, as it suggests that there can be one "final signified" or closed answer which enables the text to be "explained" rather than interpreted (p.147). It was worth considering this viewpoint when conducting my research, as if I did not make it clear to my participants that I was interested in exploring the variety of interpretations they might have had, I may have inadvertently narrowed their responses and encouraged them to seek a 'correct answer'. This was particularly

the case since my research was conducted at a school, where children are frequently asked to provide responses which are then deemed 'correct' or 'incorrect'. Research by Haynes and Murris (2012) shows that even when teachers or researchers are trying to create a 'community of readers', there is often still an attitude that the experienced adults are in control of what counts as truth and meaning, and that this can restrict readers from drawing on their own experiences to 'fill the gaps' in meaning when interacting with picturebooks. They argue that in order to fully explore texts, it must not only be the teachers, but also the learners, who lead the enquires and ask questions. My participatory approach to research was therefore crucial in addressing this issue of authority and encouraging my participants to engage in open explorations of the books, in which their own sociocultural positions were central to their reading experiences.

By adopting these theories as the basis for my research approach, I can explore the responses of the participants in a complex manner which acknowledges the importance of not only the individual illustrated novel, but also the position of the reader and the reading event.

### 2.2.2 Sociocultural theories of reading illustrations

Whilst Rosenblatt (1938, 1978) and Iser (1980) discuss texts without illustrations, their viewpoints can also be applied to the reading of illustrations, and of the illustrated novel. Art theory, which discusses responses to images, similarly recognises the role of the reader in creating meaning, with several scholars insisting that there is no one authoritative interpretation of a piece of art (Arnheim, 1992; Grigg, 2003; Mitchell, 1987). Manguel (2000, p. 17) sums up the position of the reader of art by stating that: "Every work of art grows through countless layers of readings, and every reader strips these layers back to reach the work on his or her own terms." In this statement, Manguel, like Snow (2002) and Gee (2000), acknowledges the sociocultural impact on a reading of a work of art. Alongside bringing their own personal experience to the reading of an artwork, Manguel suggests that it is likely that readers will also be influenced by the readings of others. By adopting Manguel's viewpoint, reading an image can therefore be seen as having a similar 'transactional' nature as reading a written text, consisting of an interaction between the image and the individual reader. Potter (1984) also identifies this phenomenon when exploring the reading of illustrations. He notes that readers do not always see in an illustration what an

illustrator intended, and that illustrative meaning is far from fixed, but rather relies upon the interpretation of the reader. As such, reader-response and aesthetic response can be seen as highly applicable to the exploration of responses to illustrations.

Work by other scholars also supports the use of Rosenblatt's and Iser's theories when looking at illustrations. Perkins (1994) describes the meaning-making process when reading images as the difference between perceiving the evidence of an image, and reflecting upon its meaning. In order to do this, he argues that one must look closely and carefully upon an image and actively deliberate upon its meaning. Therefore, reading an image can be seen as a highly active process which requires a great deal from the reader. This concept is similar to Iser's (1980) notion of ideation: the synthesising of information from writing along with the perspectives of the reader in order to create meaning from the text, a process which involves reflection and deliberation. Perkins' emphasis on attention also re-emphasises the importance of the taking an intentional approach towards reading illustrated novels which considers both the words and illustrations as interconnected and equally worthy of attention – without this deliberate approach it is possible that a reader may not reflect upon the meaning of the illustrations or the words.

Berger (1972) also discusses the importance of deliberation when reading an image, but he relates this to choice, suggesting that we choose what we look at in an image and relate it to our own interests. Berger and Mohr (1989) discuss that when interpreting an image, a reader must create links and make connections between what they see and what they already know, and that it is through the development of these links that meaning can be unfolded. Similarly, Goldsmith (1984) notes that children may be unable to interpret elements of illustrations not because they are unable to 'read' them, but because they lack the experience to understand them. These theories closely align with Rosenblatt's (1978) argument that interpretations are largely dependent upon the current interests and experiences of the reader, as well as her theory of the transactional nature of reading.

Recent empirical research by Unsworth & Horarik (2015) also reflects the applicability of Rosenblatt's and Iser's theories to the reading of images. They demonstrate that children in primary and secondary schools show highly variable responses to illustrations in picturebooks, based not only on their knowledge of

the stories depicted, but also their formal understanding of verbal and visual grammatics. The overlap between art and illustration theories on the construction of meaning and reader-response and aesthetic response is therefore considerable. As such, Rosenblatt's and Iser's theories are also useful in exploring the process of reading illustrations.

## 2.3 Cognitive approaches to reading

An alternative approach to exploring reading comes from the field of cognitive poetics. Cognitive poetics seeks to explore how findings from cognitive psychology and cognitive linguistics can shed light on our interactions with literature (Zunshine, 2006). As Peter Stockwell (2002) stresses, cognitive poetics is about "reading literature" (p. 1) – not simply looking at texts, or readers, but the processes of interaction between the two. Nikolajeva (2014a, p. 4) summarises this important facet of the approach by commenting that a cognitive criticism approach requires a rethinking of literary activity to include both the interaction between readers and literature as well as consideration of the ways in which texts are constructed to optimise reader engagement.

In drawing on cognitive science, cognitive poetics takes a strongly biological approach to reading, focusing not on the subsequent reported responses of readers, but on the cognitive processes taking place during the reading event which readers are unlikely to be aware of (Nikolajeva, 2014a). As Zunshine states, in order to understand our reading processes "we may have to go beyond the explanation that evokes our personal reading histories and admit some evidence from our evolutionary history" (2006, p. 4). One of the key ways in which cognitive approaches consider these processes is through the acknowledgement of the reader's embodiment: that all readers' experiences are rooted in their physical and material existence, and that this embodiment influences both the author's creation of the story and the way the reader makes meaning from that story (Stockwell, 2002; Trites, 2012). Another major thread is the application to literature of research around Theory of Mind, our 'mind reading' abilities, which are a group of cognitive processes which are used to engage in social behaviours and structures (Zunshine, 2006). Cognitive criticism considers a wide range of cognitive processes, including "perception, attention, empathy, memory, reasoning, decision-making, language, and learning" (Nikolajeva, 2014a, p. 4).

When specifically considering children's literature, Nikolajeva (2014a) notes that whilst individual children and adults will have differing cognitive development, it is important to note that cognitive and affective skills evolve during childhood and adolescence. As such, when considering which cognitive processes a text might engage or develop, the potentially limited cognitive and affective skills, as well as the limited life experience, of a child should be taken into account. In addition, the multimodal nature of illustrated novels is important when considering the potential of cognitive approaches (Kümmerling-Meibauer & Meibauer, 2013). In examining cognitive approaches to picturebooks, Kümmerling-Meibauer & Meibauer note the importance of considering not only existing cognitive processes but also cognitive development, and specifically the acquisition of the ability to understand pictures, writing, and the relationship between these two modes. Kümmerling-Meibauer & Meibauer anchor this view in the supposition that many of these books will be read by very young and possibly pre-(word) literate children, which is not the case with illustrated novels, which require more advanced word literacy skills. However, their concern with the specific requirements of being able to cognitively process images and the relationships between images and writing are highly relevant to consideration of the illustrated novel, especially given the lack of explicit teaching of visual literacy in most English classrooms.

One way in which cognitive approaches can increase our understanding of the reading of literature is through exploring which cognitive processes are being used when engaging with specific types of texts. For example, Shonoda (2012) has theorised on the role of cognitive processes in metafictional fantasy texts which require making meaning from intertextuality and metaphor, whilst Coates (2013) has examined the potential embodied and neurological processes involved in the reading of poetry. Kümmerling-Meibauer & Meibauer (2014) explore the specific figure of the matchstick man, and theorise on its potential to evoke cognitive processes such as sympathy, empathy, and perspective which can enable child readers to identify with characters. With more direct relevance to the exploration of illustrated novels, Nikolajeva (2018) has explored the potential impact of the ways in which the brain processes words and images on the making of meaning from picturebooks. She notes that verbal and visual information is processed by different parts of the brain and at different speeds, and as such, images are processed slightly more quickly than words, even if those words are being listened to rather than read. In addition, visual images may make a stronger

impression than words on a reader. Nikolajeva argues that this effect is particularly strong in younger readers, whose right, visual processing brain hemispheres are more fully developed than their left, verbal processing hemisphere. She posits that this may explain why older children become less interested in visual narratives as they grow and their left hemispheres become more developed, though she notes that this visual attraction always remains. Nikolajeva also notes that emotions are non-verbal, and that words are often not effective in representing them effectively. She argues that metaphors can increase the accuracy of this representation, but argues that visual representations, with their potential for sending a stronger and more immediate signal to the brain, may be more effective in conveying strong emotions. However, Nikolajeva does distinguish between basic emotions, such as anger or happiness, and social or higher-cognitive emotions such as love or shame. Social emotions do not necessarily engage the same cognitive processes as basic emotions, and they may not be as innate and can be culturally dependent. For these social emotions, Nikolajeva suggests that visual communication is difficult as they are not directly connected to external expressions. As such, different forms of emotions may be better communicated through different modes.

As well as identifying the cognitive processes which might be involved in interacting with literature, cognitive poetic approaches, particularly those which relate to children's literature, also speculate as to the potential for literature to train and develop cognition. Much of this theoretical scholarship draws upon the experimental work of Kidd and Castano (2013), who undertook five experiments which showed that reading literary fiction led to better performance on tests which required the use of affective and cognitive Theory of Mind. For example, Christensen (2014) argues that through following the experiences of a character, and how these experiences affect that character's personal development and sense of change, readers may be encouraged to reflect on these experiences and through that reflection acquire self-knowledge. Similarly, in a study of several picturebooks, Nikolajeva (2014b) suggests that fiction might encourage the development of empathy through a cognitive process where mirror-neurons can simulate the goals of fictional characters in the same manner as it simulates the reader's own goals. In addition, she notes that the ambiguity created by the gaps between the interacting words and images in picturebooks has the potential to stimulate the development of higher-order mind reading.

Through taking an approach to criticism which focuses on cognition, cognitive poetics also has the potential to encourage the reconsideration of texts which were previously presumed to be simplistic. Kümmerling-Meibauer & Meibauer's (2014) exploration of the figure of the Matchstick Man is an excellent example of this potential. They describe the Matchstick Man as a hybrid character, being both a prototype of a human character, and an object of a child's drawing, making this character simultaneously human and non-human. The ambiguity that this hybridity results in may be very cognitively attractive. It requires a child reader to enrich the character due to its incompleteness, and it may be capable of creating surprise, or humour. As a non-human character it can challenge the assumptions of a reader as to what the 'normal' world looks like, and therefore introduce or develop the concept of fictional space, whilst its human characteristics can encourage identification and empathy. Nikolajeva's (2014b) study of "straightforward" (p.137) picturebooks, which might not typically be considered complex due to their lack of features such as intertextuality or framebreaking, similarly demonstrates that cognitive critical engagement with multimodalality demonstrates the potential emotional complexity of these texts in a way that more traditional literary criticism might not identify.

As this discussion shows, a cognitive approach to reading literature can be highly fruitful. However, there are several aspects of cognitive poetics which are not compatible with the aims and principles of this research. One key aspect is that of cognitive criticism's abstract nature. As explored at length above, this research is situated within a sociocultural view of reading, which considers not only the text, but also the reading event and the individual sociocultural position of the reader as key components for understanding the experience of reading. As such, in sociocultural approaches, the reader is seen as an individual, with highly individual characteristics. Cognitive approaches focus instead on shared characteristics (Stockwell, 2002), and engage in speculation about "abstract, constructed" readers (Nikolajeva, 2014a, p. 15) rather than real readers within their individual contexts. As an educator, I find that understanding of the context of a real child is vital for educational practice. When utilising research in the classroom, it must always be adapted for the children and situation at hand, and knowing the real-life context of educational studies helps with this adaptation immeasurably. That is not to suggest that theoretical research is not also useful and frequently used in the classroom, but rather that it is far easier to utilise

effectively when empirical studies exploring that theory have been conducted and their context is made explicit. As this research aims to be of use to educators, I considered an empirical approach within a sociocultural view of reading to be more immediately useful than an abstract theoretical approach.

In addition, the generalist rather than individualist approach of cognitive poetics leads to a positivist interpretation of the reading experience rather than an interpretivist view, which has the effect of being homogenising and normative when dealing with real readers. As Alkestrand and Owen (2018) note, this does not allow for consideration of intersectional subject positions and neurological variations. As such, they argue that cognitive approaches are more productive when applied to individual characters within texts, rather than real readers. Alkestrand and Owen's concerns that cognitive approaches result in the normative homogenisation of real readers are unfortunately borne out through many examples in cognitive studies. They cite works by John Stephens, Roberta Silva, Roberta Seelinger Trites and Marek C. Oziewicz. To this list I would add a particularly troubling statement from Stockwell's (2002) much-cited work, which justifies an approach which centres embodiment by claiming we are all "seeing in the visible spectrum" (p.5), which clearly does not apply to blind readers. Additionally, even cognitive studies which do not so obviously position global north, white, middle-class, non-disabled readers as the norm still promote positivist interpretations of the findings of cognitive criticism. Even Nikolajeva, who is far more open and explicit about acknowledging the speculative nature of cognitive criticism and the need for experimental evidence to confirm the suppositions made by literary theorists than most cognitive scholars, suggests that cognitive criticism is able to provide "hard facts" (2014a, p. 9) about the benefits of reading. In education, where great attention is given to the needs of individual learners, there are few, if any, "hard facts". By contrast, sociocultural approaches which lead to interpretivist theory building can provide insights which take into account the differences between readers.

One of the key principles of this research is that children are experts in their own lives (Langsted, 1994), and that a great deal can be learned from listening to children's own views on their experiences. In addition, as Deszez-Tryhubczak (2016) points out, the scholarship of children's literature is dominated by the voices of adults, perpetuating a power imbalance within the field. As a participatory project, this research aims to directly address that power imbalance

by enabling children to have their views heard, in accordance with their right to participation (OHCHR, 1989). Cognitive poetics, as a theoretical approach which does not consider the position of the individual, would not allow for these voices to be heard.

On a personal note, I also do not feel that I have the necessary scientific training to effectively apply findings from cognitive science to literature. In their assessment of the transfer of knowledge from neuroscience and cognitive science to literature, Koepsell and Spoerhase (2009) note that much of the science which literary theorists are drawing upon, such as the work on mirror neurons, is in far too incomplete a state to be usefully applied to other contexts. In their article they discuss the "fallacy of the uninitiated" (np.) where results from science are transferred directly to literature without sufficient consideration of their soundness or applicability to different contexts. As a specialist in literature and education, without even a science A-Level to my name, I do not feel that I am qualified to accurately assess the results and applicability of scientific studies to literature. Acquiring such knowledge would take far longer than the three-year span of this PhD would allow for.

Cognitive poetic approaches can raise interesting questions about the nature of reading processes, and can form a starting point for the exploration of areas which reader-response approaches are not able to engage with, such as unconscious cognitive engagement and development. However, for the purposes of this study, whilst some cognitive theory will be drawn upon to identify areas for exploration, an overall cognitive approach is fundamentally incompatible with the aims and principles of this research.

## 2.4 Responding to illustrated novels

Making meaning from texts is only one facet of the reading experience. Readers also respond to what they have read in numerous ways. Protherough's (1983) study of children's responses to fiction sums up other aspects of the reading experience by stating simply that: "stories do things to people" (p.3). He notes that the children in his study responded to fiction in a wide variety of ways, which could be physical, emotional, relational, speculative and formative. When exploring young children's responses to being read stories, Sipe (2008) identifies five different types of personal responses, and recognises the capacity that literature has to enable us to explore our understanding of ourselves, others, and

our societies, whilst Mackey (2011, p. 221) recognises the potential of fictional narratives to "*attract* and *enhance* attention, expectation, and imagination". Similarly, whilst visual literacy is a highly contested term (Kim, Wee, Han, Sohn, & Hitchens, 2017), it is widely considered to be more complex than simply being able to "decode" pictures (Salisbury, 2007, p. 6). According to Avgerinou and Ericson (1997, p. 284), visual literacy can be defined as 'the use of visuals for the purposes of communication: thinking; learning; constructing meaning; creative expression; [and] aesthetic enjoyment'. These potential responses are an essential aspect of the power of literature and art, and therefore a study of the affordances of illustrated novels would be incomplete without considering how these texts might elicit responses.

In order to consider these potential responses, it is worth turning again to Rosenblatt (1938, 1978). She makes a distinction between *efferent* reading, or reading to gain knowledge, and *aesthetic* reading, which concerns the experience of the text: the emotional and personal response a reader has to a text. According to Rosenblatt, these different experiences of reading may occur individually or together, depending on the particular concerns of the reader at any one point. One of the key points of convergence between Rosenblatt's reader response theory and Iser's (1980) theory of aesthetic response is the potential for the reader to respond to texts in personal and individual ways, and the idea that these responses may encourage the reader to revisit their own ideas and reconfigure their constructions about themselves and the world around them. In this view of reading, not only does the reader construct the text, but the text also helps to construct the reader. Work by Wolf & Heath (1992) has shown that reflections upon texts can also turn into actions, with children responding to texts in a variety of creative ways. The importance of considering responses alongside meaning-making is supported by Cremin (2007). She notes that the English curriculum's focus on comprehension, structure and language has led to a neglect of considering the purpose of literature, and suggests that this has been a factor in the decline of reading for pleasure amongst children in England. Similarly, empirical research by Cliff Hodges (2010) argues that by neglecting the reasons that people read, educators and researchers are neglecting an opportunity to develop and consider one of the most important aspects of reading.

The importance of developing a culture of 'reading for pleasure' in schools was formally recognised and included in the latest National Curriculum document

(Department for Education, 2013), and as such, there is now a requirement in the profession to consider aspects of texts aside from those of meaning-making. However, Cremin (2015) has warned that this requirement to create a love of reading may lead to teachers demanding 'positive' attitudes and compliance towards prevailing views of books instead of encouraging children to genuinely engage with texts. This is especially complicated by the requirements of assessment, which are largely skills-based, and tend to take priority within the classroom. As Cremin states, balancing the teaching of reading with building communities of readers who genuinely interact with texts as a part of pleasurable engagement is a difficult task. Research which explores how illustrated novels may prompt children's responses to texts could therefore be highly useful for teachers trying to encourage a genuine reading for pleasure.

Drawing these ideas together, I therefore propose a view of response to illustrated novels which considers both critical and creative engagement and aesthetic responses. However, as Mackey (2007, 2011) and Sipe (2008) have noted in their studies of readers, these responses are likely to be both simultaneous and interdependent, and to be impacted by the processes of reading and meaning making. As such, although discussed separately, these categories should not be viewed as entirely distinct from one another.

### 2.4.1 Critical and creative engagement

Both critical thinking and creativity are contested terms (Kozbelt, Beghetto, & Runco, 2010; Maine, 2015), in part due to the extremely varied number of applications of both concepts. Distinctions between the two have been drawn by scholars such as Hudson (1966, 1968), who originated the terms 'divergent' and 'convergent', which he identified as processes related to creative arts and sciences respectively. However, critical thinking is cited as a starting point for several models of creativity (Gardner, 1997; Robinson, 2017; Runco, 2010). As such, it may be more productive to draw on Nickerson's (1998, p. 397) construction of creativity and criticalness as 'interdependent dimensions', with the process of criticality leading to a need for creative solutions, and the process of creativity requiring critical assessment. Therefore, rather than trying to simply explore separate critical and creative responses to illustrated novels, I will also look at how these processes might be interlinked.

Critical thinking has a long conceptual history, with the earliest recorded instance being Plato's account of the teachings of Socrates (Plato & Brown, 2014). Whilst there are several definitions of critical thinking, a frequent construction is the idea of set of critical thinking skills, as described in Scriven and Paul's definition:

> "Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action" (cited in Mulnix, 2012, p. 465).

The skills of conceptualising, applying, analysing, synthesising and evaluating evidence have potential to be part of the reading process if readers move beyond the basic process of making meaning from a book and begin to consider the implications of what they are reading or their responses. The children in Prothorough's (1983) study reported that fiction made them think critically about certain issues, changed the way they thought about things, or changed their minds about the issues that were being discussed. Similarly, Cliff Hodges reports a child commenting:

> Some books can make you think completely differently about something, like when I read *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* I thought completely differently about people with Asperger's and it made me…realise how hard their life is actually. Cos when you're reading a book you, you feel it from their point of view. (Cliff Hodges, 2010, p. 67)

In order to engage in these types of reflection, the readers in these studies were required to utilise many of the skills described by Scriven and Paul. It would therefore be worth exploring whether illustrated novels have the potential to prompt the engagement of these kinds of skills in the same way that non-illustrated fiction does, or if there are particular affordances to illustrated novels which lend themselves to the engagement of critical thinking skills.

Creativity is a similarly contested term, but theories regularly draw on ideas of originality and purposefulness, where the imagination is used to generate new, useful ideas (Gardner, 1997; Richards, 2010; Robinson, 2017). When prompted by texts to create new ideas, children may express and explore these new ideas in a number of ways, including discussion, roleplay, recreating stories in new ways, inventing new characters or creating artworks, as several empirical studies have shown (Bond & Michelson, 2009; Tobin, 2004; Wolf & Heath, 1992). These responses are significant not simply because of their creativity, but because of the

potential they have to impact reader's lives. Wolf and Heath's (1992) study of Heath's daughters' responses to children's books shows how the girls used their creative responses to navigate real-life scenarios, whilst Marsh (2005) argues that creatively responding to popular culture and media, which includes novels, can help children develop their identities. Bond & Michelson's (2009) study of children's creative responses to the *Harry Potter* series of books and films shows that creative responses such as writing fanfiction developed children's writing skills, whilst a significant number of children (and adults) have become political activists through the Harry Potter Alliance, which runs campaigns inspired by the social justice messages in *Harry Potter* and other popular fictional texts in order to "turns fans into heroes" ('The Harry Potter Alliance', n.d.). Exploring creative responses to illustrated novels may yield new insights into the ways in which multimodal literature can prompt these kinds of creative activities.

One key process in which the two concepts of critical thinking and creativity combine is that of 'possibility thinking', which centres around questioning and the generation of possibilities as a creative act (Craft, 2000). This concept is of particular interest to me as my previous empirical research (Aggleton, 2017) suggested that illustrations in novels may prompt consideration of alternative possible interpretations. A further exploration of this potential, with particular attention given to what elements of the text might prompt possibility thinking, could provide significant additional information as to the potential for illustrated novels to prompt critical and creative responses.

### 2.4.2 Aesthetic responses

Alongside responding critically and creatively to novels, readers are likely to have aesthetic experiences and responses to texts. Rosenblatt (1938, 1978) conceives aesthetic reading as an awareness of the experience of reading a text. However, studies of aesthetics distinguish between two forms of aesthetic responses: aesthetic experience and aesthetic judgement (Stecker, 2010; Strawson, 2004), both of which are likely to be prompted by the reading of illustrated novels. Aesthetic experience follows Rosenblatt's conception of aesthetic reading, and is strongly associated with emotions such as enjoyment or displeasure (Strawson, 2004). Whilst the idea of reading for 'pleasure' is acknowledged in the curriculum (Department for Education, 2013), pleasure is only one possible aesthetic experience which may result from reading. Tatar (2009) details the wide range of

aesthetic experiences cited by children and adults reflecting on their childhood reading, which include enjoyment, but also mention comfort, excitement, curiosity, empathy, and even fear. Similarly, Spufford's (2002) memoir of childhood reading shows how books can not only provide enjoyment, but may also serve as an escape. Indeed, the power of books to produce aesthetic experiences in readers may in some cases outweigh any critical judgements those readers may engage in (Protherough, 1983). The aesthetic experience a reader gains from a book can therefore be seen as one of the foremost aspects of the reading experience, and worthy of consideration by research.

This raises the question of whether aesthetic responses might be influenced by the specific medium of the illustrated novel, containing, as it does, both writing and illustrations. Arizpe and Styles (2016) have documented children gaining aesthetic pleasure from reading picturebooks, whilst Noble (2006), and Dorrell, Curtis and Rampal (1995) present evidence that illustrations in picturebooks and graphic novels can play a role in engaging and motivating children to read, and suggest that illustrations may of themselves have an attractive nature. Whilst there is no current evidence to suggest that the same may hold true for illustrations in novels, Nodelman (1988) suggests that illustrations in novels may help to add energy to a text, which may increase a reader's enjoyment of reading it. Additionally, it is important to go beyond the idea of illustrations provoking simply a positive response. It is possible that placing illustrations alongside writing may create shock, curiosity, confusion, or frustration, due to the differences of the two modes of communication or the content of what they are expressing. An exploration of the aesthetic experiences readers of illustrated novels have would therefore fill a gap in current scholarship and contribute to our understanding of the affordances of illustrated novels.

Alongside aesthetic experience, illustrated novels may offer opportunities for readers to engage in making aesthetic judgements. Aesthetic judgements can be viewed as a form of critical evaluation (Strawson, 2004) or the assignment of value (Stecker, 2010), and involve assessing something for its own sake rather than as a means to something else (Stecker, 2010). As such, aesthetic judgement for this research involves engaging with and appraising an illustrated novel as a material aesthetic object. This is a complex task, as Kant (2008) points out the inherent subjectivity of aesthetic judgement, commenting that "there is no science of the beautiful, only a Critique" (p.149). However, empirical work by Kim et al.

(2017) and theoretical work by Eisner (2004) has identified the value of developing aesthetic judgement, a combination of thinking and feeling, as a way of supporting visual literacy and "qualitative intelligence" (Eisner, 2004, p. 5) which can be applied to many different forms of judgement which cannot rely on strict guidelines for assessment. Research into picturebooks and visual literacy by Pantaleo (2013, 2015) has shown that interactions with multimodal texts can support the development of both visual literacy and aesthetic judgement, which are interlinked. It seems likely that illustrated novels may also offer the opportunity for readers to engage in aesthetic judgements due to their artistic and design elements, and as such this area of potential affordances of illustrated novels is worthy of exploration.

## 2.5 Reading process

### 2.5.1 Social semiotic considerations

In order to explore the participants' meaning-making and personal experience of reading illustrated novels, I have considered the particular affordances of this medium. Whilst the theories of Rosenblatt (1938, 1978), Iser (1980) and Barthes (1977) can be seen as equally applicable to both writing and illustrations, these two modes of communication do have important differences which must be taken into consideration. In order to explore the affordances of these different modes I draw on Kress's (2003, 2010) theory of social semiotics. This theory is particularly applicable to my research as it considers not only the nature of the individual modes of communication, but also their sociocultural basis. Kress suggests that writing, as a mode of communication, is framed in a sociocultural way which lends itself to communicating particular messages. In English, for example, writing is organised using words, sentences, clauses, punctuation etc., and arranged on a line which is read from left to right. This organisation creates what Kress (2003, p.143) refers to as a "reading path", the sequence of which creates additional meaning. By choosing to order a sentence in a particular way, an author can create a level of nuance which suggests a different meaning or emphasis to the reader. However, the reader will also contribute their own interpretation of the meaning of those words. For a reader, the writing provides a "prompt", the shape of which is constructed by the author, and which the reader must then "transform" into

meaning, which will differ depending on the sociocultural context of the reader, and relies upon the attention given by the reader to the prompt (Kress, 2010, p.36). This theory complements Iser's (1980) arguments of the construction of a novel, and the way in which elements such as switching perspectives and gaps in dialogue can encourage the reader to create connections and build meaning from the writing. These arguments highlight the importance of considering how the medium of the illustrated novel can present particular prompts for the reader to interpret.

As the illustrated novel contains not only writing, but also illustrations, the affordances of illustrations must also be considered. Kress (2003, 2010) points out that images are not restricted to the same organisation as writing. Rather, he argues that whilst meanings can still be suggested by the spatial arrangement of individual components within an image, there may not be clear "reading paths" within images, stating that though they might exist, "Reading the elements of the image 'out of order' is possible and often easy; it is truly difficult in writing." (Kress, 2003, p. 144). Similarly, Nikolajeva and Scott (2001) note that the iconic, representative signs of illustrations are non-linear, whilst the conventional signs of writing are narrative and linear. Therefore, it is possible that images may be open to a greater number of interpretive possibilities than writing, as they are not bound by a linear framework and can be explored in differing orders which may impact upon the interpretation of meaning. A counterpoint to this view comes from Kiefer (1995), who notes that both language and art have semantics and syntax. Art is organised through composition, the placement of lines and use of colours, and meaning can be expressed as much through style as through content, meaning that illustrations do contain their own sense of organisation. Whether readers have the fluency in reading illustrations to follow that organisation is another matter. An understanding of the syntax and semantics of writing is generally gained through the explicit teaching of literacy. However, as Arizpe and Styles (2016) note, comparatively thorough teaching of visual literacy is rare, despite an increase in understanding of its importance in recent years. Similarly, Pantaleo (2015, p. 114) has observed through empirical study that 'living in a visually rich world does not mean that youth are naturally visually literate'.

Due to the lack of organisation in images compared with writing, the physical process of reading the two modes is different. Kress (2010) argues that whilst reading writing in English the eye is forced to follow the line of the words

and progress in a sequential fashion. The same is not true of reading images. Arizpe and Styles (2016) found that when children read images, their eyes scanned and roamed over the whole picture, and that the children in their study were "piecing together the image like a puzzle" (p.124). According to Goldsmith (1984), this scanning activity increases with the level of complexity of the image; more complex pictures require a greater level of scanning than pictures which are constructed more simply. As such, when writing and images are placed together in one text, the reader must switch between one form of reading and the other. It is possible that this action of changing methods of reading may have an impact upon the reading experience.

Writing and illustrations, as different modes of communication, also have their own expressive possibilities and limitations. As such, some elements might be better conveyed through writing, whilst others may be better conveyed through illustrations (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). For example, Nikolajeva and Butler (2006) claim that illustrations are more effective than words in depicting characters, space and settings, whilst words are superior in conveying relationships, emotions and time. In this research it was therefore worth investigating whether the affordances of the different modes prompted the participants to respond in different ways depending upon their content.

### 2.5.2 Juxtaposition of writing and illustrations

As well as noting the differences between writing and illustrations, it is also important to consider how the two modes work together within the same text. As this study took place in England, this discussion focuses on writing and illustrations in English, and acknowledges that modes of communication do not work in the same way in every society, but are culturally specific (Kress, 2010).

As discussed above, writing and illustrations as modes have different affordances. Due to this difference in communicative possibilities, Kress (2003) argues that when the two modes are used together, each mode will carry only a part of the meaning or "informational load" (p.141). Bellorín and Silvia-Díaz (2013) highlight this division of labour in an empirical study of children reading picturebooks, noting that one of the participants stated that "through the illustrations you can see how characters are on the outside, but words tell us how each one is on the inside" (p.137). Due to this potential for each mode to communicate different types of information, it is therefore likely that illustrations

in novels may provide additional information which might not be possible to express through writing, and that this may impact the way children experience the story.

However, as well as each providing separate information, writing and illustrations also work together. Schwarcz (1982, p. 4) describes this interaction as creating conditions of dependence and interdependence, and points out that illustrations can only gain their full meaning in context. Indeed, it is context which separates the illustration from the work of art, with Male (2007), Zeegan (2009) and Whalley (2009) all discussing the importance of illustrations working with writing. Hodnett (1982), in frustrated response to the trend of illustration criticism to focus on illustrations in isolation, highlights the importance of mindset when exploring illustrations. Rather than focusing solely on the techniques used, the skill required, and the perceived aesthetic effects of illustrations, Hodnett insists that first one must consider the illustration in relation to its functions, which Hodnett summarises as representing, interpreting, and decorating (p.13). What all of these scholars highlight is the need to view illustrations as parts of a larger, complete text, which depends upon the *interaction* between illustration and writing, rather than viewing each mode in isolation.

Whalley goes so far as to claim that "where the pictures lack relevance to the text, or are ill placed and poorly drawn or reproduced – these are books with pictures rather than illustrated books" (p.300). Nevertheless, there are some illustrations which may be considered 'decorative' rather than 'illustrative'. Folio illustrations, which generally take the form of motifs surrounding page numbers or between paragraph breaks, may be considered as decoration rather than illustration. However, as Bland (1969) notes, historically decoration and illustration have not always been considered as distinct from each other, and both have the potential to impact upon the reading experience. Similarly, Hodnett (1982) insists that due to being part of the same whole text, "any picture in a book is an illustration" (p.1). Alongside this, Salisbury (2004) notes that illustrations in books are not only there to increase the reader's understanding, but may also play a role in the reader's appreciation and enjoyment of a book. Summing up these arguments, Schwarcz (1982) claims that even when 'decorative', an illustration can never be neutral, but will in some way affect the reading experience.

In addition to this, illustrations in novels may provoke greater reflection upon the events of the text. Salisbury (2007, p. 110) describes illustrations as acting as a "prompt or stimulus", and the potential for this was highlighted by my previous study (Aggleton, 2017) which compared responses to illustrated and non-illustrated versions of *A Monster Calls* (Ness & Kay, 2011). All of the children with an illustrated copy of the text discussed returning to certain illustrated moments after they had finished the book, and reconsidering the events of those moments. None of the children with a non-illustrated copy reported revisiting any moments of the text after they had finished. This suggests that illustrations may work alongside words to provide moments of particular interest and focus for readers. The relationship between illustration and text is therefore a vital aspect of the illustrated novel. It is not enough to simply consider each mode in isolation, rather I must examine how the two modes interact, and what influence this interaction has on the way the reader experiences the text.

## 2.6 Key areas for exploration

### 2.6.1 Opening up or closing down possibilities

The processes by which writing and illustrations influence each other are a matter of scholarly discussion. Nodelman (1988), drawing on Barthes's (1977) concept of relay, claims that illustrations *limit* the number of interpretive possibilities offered by writing, and that similarly the writing informs the reader of how to interpret the illustration. In doing so, he argues that "by limiting each other, words and pictures take on a meaning that neither possesses without the other" (p.221). By creating this new meaning, Nodelman argues that readers can be encouraged to consider an idea presented by a text more deeply.

In contrast, Hunt (2009) argues that by juxtaposing illustrations with writing, a multitude of interpretive possibilities may be *opened up*, encouraging the reader to consider alternative interpretations. Nikolajeva and Scott also take this view, but they qualify it by saying that it is only when writing and illustrations are providing different information or contradicting each other that this opening of possibilities occurs. They argue that when the illustrations present similar information to the writing, the reader's role becomes more passive, as they are left with less to interpret. In *How Picturebooks Work* (2001), Nikolajeva and Scott

expand on this idea, and describe how writing and pictures influence each other and provide expectations which can be revisited to produce new interpretations. Evans (1998) also feels that illustrations and writing can work together to create multiple meanings, and argues that due to the many potential different layers of meaning which can be created by this interaction, which she believes is heavily influenced by personal experience, readers of all ages can often read and understand books on different levels.

My research on responses to *A Monster Calls* (Aggleton, 2017) specifically addressed this issue of 'opening up' or 'closing down' interpretive possibilities, and found some empirical evidence which supported the position that illustrations 'opened up' interpretive possibilities. The participants with illustrated copies of the book discussed in detail how the illustrations suggested alternative interpretations to them. Nor were the participants' interpretations of the same illustrated moments similar, suggesting that rather than pointing to one specific interpretation of the writing, the illustrations were able to offer different possible interpretations for different participants. However, all of the participants were examining the same illustrations in the same book, and it is likely that different texts may produce different interpretive possibilities, which may open up or narrow down options depending on the content of the individual text and the sociocultural context of the reader.

### 2.6.2 Function and composition of illustrations

Schwarcz (1982) argues that the meanings created by the interactions between writing and illustrations depend heavily on the content of the illustration. He claims that illustrations can perform different functions depending on what they depict, and has created a useful framework. Some illustrations, for example, perform the role of "congruency", where the illustration parallels what is mentioned in the writing. However, Schwarcz insists that this is never redundant information, as "the picture is more concrete than the word" (p.14), and as such, the general description in the words has become very specific. This suggests the possibility that congruent illustrations may indeed narrow down possibilities, as Nodelman (1988) suggests.

Schwarcz also recognises that some illustrations can be simplified to the point of "reduction" (p.15), such as silhouettes, or indicative rather than representative illustrations in the cartoon style, which reduce features using

simple line work. That reductive illustrations could have the same level of potential for opening up interpretive possibilities as other types of illustrations seems unlikely, but this is a question which is worth exploring through this study.
Another category is those illustrations which perform what Schwarcz refers to as "elaboration" (p.15), where the image extends the situation depicted in the writing by providing additional information. In these situations, it seems more likely that the illustration would 'open up' the number of interpretive possibilities, as suggested by Hunt (2009) and Nikolajeva and Scott (2001).

A fourth role of illustration is that of "deviation" (Schwarcz, 1982, p. 16). In these cases, the illustrations do not follow the writing, depicting instead something either not mentioned, or possibly even countering what is stated by the writing. In picturebooks, this can be used to great effect as a form of "counterpoint" (p.16), with texts such as *Rosie's Walk* by Pat Hutchins actively playing with the dissonance between writing and illustration to create meaning. Whether or not this "counterpoint" effect could also be seen in the illustrated novel, with its greater level of detail from writing, is questionable. It is possible that rather than create an effective counterpoint, deviating illustrations in a novel may simply confuse a reader, or present them with possibilities which they do not see as feasible. However, it is also possible that deviating illustrations may encourage readers to reframe their construction of certain events within a text.

Alongside considerations of content and function, both instructional scholars such as Salisbury (2004) and critical scholars such as Jaques & Giddens (2013) comment on the role that technical elements of illustrations, such as line weight, composition, colour, perspective, and use of space may play in communicating meaning. Research by Frey, Honey & König (2008), for example, demonstrated that colour can play a significant role in attracting readers' attention, especially when it is considered to be informationally significant. Though it is unlikely that all readers will respond to these elements in exactly the same way, due not only to the sociocultural nature of reading (Gee, 2000; Snow & Sweet, 2003), but also to the individual level of fluency each reader may have with interpreting images, the role of these illustrative elements may well be significant when reading illustrated novels, and as such it is worth exploring whether the participants identify similar technical aspects as significant to their reading of the illustrations.

### 2.6.3 Picturing

One aspect of the reading process where the potential for illustrations to 'open up' or 'close down' possibilities may be especially relevant is that of picturing: the building of visual images inside the reader's mind. Paivio's (1978, 2007) dual-coding theory suggests that picturing what you read makes a text both more meaningful and easier to recall. Similarly, Fry (1985) claims that the picturing process is fundamental to allowing the reader to make sense of what they are reading, whilst Benton and Fox (1985) regard picturing as the most important way a reader brings a story to life in their imagination. The picturing process is generally regarded as similar to that of the reading process, in that mental images are prompted by the text, but readers also bring their own tendencies, knowledge, and experiences to their mental images, and recombines former experiences in order to create new pictures (Mendelsund, 2014; Sadoski, Goetz, Olivarez, Lee, & Roberts, 1990; Speer et al., 2009). It is important to note that the automatic process of picturing is not the same as the comprehension strategy of visualising, where readers are encouraged to pause and imagine the events, setting, and characters of a story as an aid to comprehension, requiring conscious effort on the part of the reader (Garnham & Oakhill, 1992; Keene & Zimmermann, 2007). As this research is taking an exploratory, rather than interventionist, approach, the focus will be on the automatic process of picturing rather than the deliberate strategy of visualising.

Despite the presence of a rapidly growing body of literature on the picturing process, there is very little literature which explores the process of picturing when reading illustrated novels. Most studies of picturing from the field of neuroscience focus on single-word or short passage experiments, which Sadoski et al. (1990), Kuzmicova (2014), Brosch (2017) and Rokotnitz (2017) argue neglects an understanding of the specific experience of picturing during narrative reading. These authors adopt instead a cognitive poetics approach to exploring the picturing process, and Kuzmicova (2014) has called for greater empirical exploration of the topic. The few scholars who have specifically discussed the role of picturing when reading illustrated novels tend to voice concerns about the illustrations being a negative influence on picturing. Bettleheim (1976), using an introspective methodology which reflects his personal experiences, argues that illustrations can restrict a reader's ability to create their own pictures, which he views as a highly undesirable outcome. Similarly, Marshall (1988) claims that

surveys have found that older children feel that illustrations in storybooks clash with their own images of characters, and she argues this may act as a deterrent to reading. However, she does not actually cite any of these surveys, or provide additional evidence to support her claims, so it is difficult to state that this argument has much validity. Mendelsund (2014), again using an introspective methodology, somewhat complicates these negative views by arguing that illustrations in novels only prevent a reader from forming their own pictures during the passages that are illustrated, though he acknowledges that this does not apply to books with illustrations on every page. Like Bettleheim, Mendelsund takes a largely negative view of the influence of illustrations on picturing, describing it as 'the imposition of another's imagination' (p.41). The implications of these views are important, as they suggest that illustrations in novels are likely to significantly impact upon the picturing process, and thus the experience of reading. However, the evidence provided by these scholars is tenuous at best, and therefore this study aims to address this gap in understanding by exploring the participants' own experiences of picturing when reading illustrated novels.

It is also important to note that not all readers naturally create clear mental pictures, and many readers may need to actively train in order to do so (Wilson, 2012). Indeed, picturing is a highly individual capacity, with readers having tendencies to image in differing frequencies, with varying levels of vividness and detail, (Brosch, 2017; Kuzmicova, 2014; Rokotnitz, 2017). However, Sadoski and Paivio (2013) demonstrate that is highly unlikely for a reader to never experience any degree of mental imagery at any point. The experience of picturing is also not consistent for a reader throughout an entire text (Brosch, 2017; Kuzmicova, 2014). Where readers are less likely or able to create their own mental images, Nodelman (1988) suggests that illustrations may support the development of the ability to picture. This supposition is supported by Graham's (1990) study of the use of Charles' Keeping's illustrations in the narrative poem *The Highwayman*, which concluded that illustrations could form a support for students with weaker picturing skills by helping them to create meaning from the text. As such, it is important to consider the individual picturing ability of the participants when exploring the impact of illustrations on picturing. It is possible that individuals with stronger picturing abilities may be more likely to find illustrations detrimental to their picturing, whilst those with weaker picturing skills may find them beneficial.

Another factor which may influence the picturing process is the genre of the text. Research by Dekker, Mareschal, Johnson and Sereno (2014) found that automatic picturing skills are developed over time, as they are much stronger in adults that in children, and are influenced by an individual's personal experience. Similarly, Sadoski et al. (1990) and Speer et al. (2009) both discuss the vital role that a reader's real-world experience plays when creating mental imagery. As such, readers may find it more difficult to picture unfamiliar aspects of a text, such as previously unencountered fictional creatures, which may be more likely to be present within texts which include fantastical elements. If this is the case, then the role that illustrations play in supporting or restricting the creation of mental pictures may be different depending upon the familiarity of the elements within the novel.

### 2.6.4 Narrative rhythm

Narrative rhythm may be affected by juxtaposing illustrations and writing. Nodelman (1988) discusses how the rhythms of illustrations and written narratives can clash. He points out that the rhythm of a narrative is essentially climactic, with one event leading to the next, encouraging the reader to keep turning the page to discover what happens. The presence of illustrations can, he argues, disrupt this climactic flow. As it is not possible to read both writing and illustrations at the same time, the reader must break from the sequential experience of reading the writing to stop and examine the illustrations, using the entirely different process of scanning, to do so. According to Nodelman, a picturebook addresses this conflict by using the pictures as individual beats which can replace the descriptive passages in a novel. However, in an illustrated novel, those descriptive passages are already present in the words. It is possible, therefore, that the presence of illustrations in novels may interrupt the climactic narrative flow, and that this interruption could have a distinct impact upon the reading experience.

Schwarcz (1982) points out that although the reading of words is a linear progression, as also described by Kress (2003) in his concept of reading paths, readers also connect the individual parts of the story as they go along. Readers thus think about the text as a whole *simultaneously* with moving forwards to discover what happened next. As such, the narrative flow of a novel is not only climactic. The illustrated novel also has built in moments of pause, which may be at the end of the paragraph, the page, or the chapter. Moreover, Whalley and

Chester (1988) note that illustrations, unlike pictures, tend to form part of a sequence of events rather than being isolated moments. As such, they can be seen as part of the forward movement of the narrative, rather than outside of it, though the content and placement of the individual illustration may alter this. It is therefore possible that the addition of images into the text may not interrupt the overall flow of the novel to the extent that Nodelman suggests.

The extent to which illustrations might disrupt the narrative flow of the text may also depend upon their spatial placement. Bland (1969) discusses the importance of what he refers to as '*mis en page'* (p.16) to the artistic impact of an illustration, and page layout may also impact significantly on narrative rhythm and engagement. In her study on the history of French book illustration, Yousif (2012) notes how the development of printing techniques which allowed for the integration of writing and images on the same page changed both writing and reading practices, and argues that it was this development that led to illustrations moving from a decorative to a narrative function. Integrated half page, quarter page, and spot illustrations may therefore have a different narrative impact to that of full page illustrations or double page spreads. My previous study (Aggleton, 2017) found that full or double page illustrations appeared to be preferable to readers than illustrations which were placed alongside writing. One participant found that switching between modes of reading was so disruptive that she began to simply ignore the illustrations which were placed alongside the text. Another participant did look at the partial-page illustrations, but expressed a strong preference for the full page or double spread illustrations. These findings suggest that the issue of placement is worthy of further investigation.

It is also important to consider what impact this potential disruption of narrative flow might have on the reading experience. The participants in my pilot research (Aggleton, 2017) framed the partial-partial page illustrations as "distracting" and less enjoyable than the full page illustrations, leading them to spend far less time looking at the partial-page illustrations than the full page illustrations. As such, they seem to have viewed their inclusion in a largely negative way. However, it is also possible that disrupting the narrative flow of a text and forcing the reader to pause may have a similar impact to Brecht's (1949) alienation effect. The alienation effect is a theatrical device employed by Brecht to remind his audience that what they were watching was not reality, but theatre. In doing so, he believed that the audience members would be encouraged to engage

with the play in a less emotional, and more critical manner. Harding (1962) and Britton (1970) have built on this idea and related it to literary texts, claiming that when a reader is placed in the position of the spectator, rather than the participant, the reader is no longer acting to create the text, and may instead detach from events and relate the reading event to their own system of information, beliefs, and values. This idea works alongside Iser's (1980) suggestion that during the act of reading, the reader is *inside* the text, creating it as they read. By forcing the reader to pause, and interrupting the climactic drive to find out what happens next, it is possible that an illustration may serve the function of reminding the reader that they are undertaking the act of reading, and may therefore encourage them to consider the text more critically.

## 3. Research questions

This consideration of current scholarship on reading and multimodal texts has demonstrated that, whilst there is a significant body of work on both reader response and on how child readers respond to picturebooks, there is a lack of research on how children respond to illustrated novels. I have been able to draw on other related fields in order to theoretically inform research into responses to illustrated novels, and the empirical approach I take directly addresses this gap in the research. This study therefore aims to extend understanding of reader response theory by exploring children's responses to illustrated novels, to inform scholarship and to gain insights which may be of use in the teaching of reading. My pilot study (Aggleton, 2017) highlighted some of the ways in which the participants interacted with an illustrated novel, as discussed above. This research develops those initial findings by creating a new model of the reading processes and potential affordances of illustrated novels. To achieve this aim, I examine the participants' responses in relation to the unique construction of each text. I therefore explore not only the role of the individual reading event but also whether the specific characteristics of the illustrated novels used shape the responses of the participants in any significant way.

The responses of the participants are explored in terms of reading process, meaning making, critical and creative engagement, and aesthetic response, within the understanding that these processes are in practice likely to be interdependent (Mackey, 2007, 2011; Sipe, 2008). These categories of exploration were developed out of a combination of consideration of the existing scholarship in this field, as presented in the previous chapter, as well as the priorities and interests of the participants, who took a significant role in directing the avenues of exploration for this study.

In consideration of the aim of this research of build a model of the reading processes and potential affordances of illustrated novels, I explore the following research questions:

- What do the responses of a group of year 5 children to three different illustrated novels suggest about the affordances of the medium of the illustrated novel?

- What do these reading experiences suggest about processes readers utilise when reading illustrated novels?

As this research takes a sociocultural view of reading, in exploring these questions I attend to the ways in which the individual and social context of reading affects the responses of the participants. In doing so, I aim to identify which aspects of responses appear to be prompted by the affordances of the texts themselves, and use those findings to build a theory of response to the illustrated novel. The importance of the elements of object (text), individual, and context to the epistemological and methodological framework of this research project will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

# 4. Methodology

In this section I discuss the methodological groundings for this research. I place my project within a philosophical approach and draw from this to create an outline of how I have conducted the research. I also explain how my methodological approach enabled me to address my research questions.

## 4.1 Participatory empirical approach

In order to explore the affordances illustrated novels may have for readers, I decided to take a participatory empirical approach which places children's voices at the forefront of my research. Due to the fact that reader-response is so heavily influenced by sociocultural factors, discussing the responses of actual children, placed within their context, is likely to highlight some of the ways in which children might respond to illustrated novels. Exploring the views of several children also allows me to ensure that I have not, as Mackey (2011) warns against, assumed that my own experience of reading is the same as that of others. This is particularly important as my experience as a trained reader is unlikely to reflect the reading experience of a school-aged child (Hodnett, 1982).

Additionally, several past empirical studies have demonstrated the power of listening to children's voices. Langsted (1994) famously pronounced that children are experts in their own lives, and studies discussed in the theoretical grounding such as those by Protherough (1983) and Arizpe and Styles (2016) show that asking children for their views on reading can effectively contribute to our understanding of the reading process. Alongside this, Fry (1985) demonstrates that adults are not always accurate in their opinions on children's reading, and therefore an empirical approach may lead to results that might not be anticipated by a theoretical approach alone.

Moreover, Greene and Hill (2005) have discussed that studying children as individual persons recognises their role as agents in their own lives. For a subject such as reading, where the reader takes such an active role in the process, the views of those who are constructing their own meanings should be heard. By listening to children's voices, we acknowledge their position as individuals who have perspectives which are of value to society; we construct children not as "human becomings" who will only be able to contribute in the future, but as "human beings", who have contributions to offer now (Qvortrup, 1991).

## 4.2 Research design

Research design is a highly complex task, with Denscombe (2014) noting that the foundations of research design are highly contested, and that different scholars within the social sciences advocate different approaches. Similarly, Crotty (1998) acknowledges that the terminology surrounding the philosophical underpinnings of research is frequently inconsistent between texts, and occasionally contradictory. Therefore, to ensure clarity of approach, I have adopted a specific framework for my research design. This framework is suggested by Crotty and has been selected because it has been designed to provide a "scaffold" for research design; that is, a clear structure to follow, but one which does not guide the researcher down particular philosophical avenues. The framework consists of four elements: epistemology (and ontology), theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods. These elements interact iteratively to form the research design, with the choices made within one element influencing the next. This chapter follows this structure, first discussing the philosophical underpinnings of the research, then examining how these lead into theoretical perspective, methodological choice, data collection methods, and methods of analysis. The chapter will also include a discussion of ethical considerations.

## 4.3 Epistemology

This research draws heavily on the reader-response theories of Rosenblatt (1938, 1978), and Iser (1980), who position reading as an active process, a "transaction" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 21) between the reader and text, where meaning is created both from the content of the text, and by the reader's personal context. Therefore, the meaning of a text is not consistent, but will change depending on the context of the reader. To explore this transaction, this research adopts a social constructionist paradigm.

Social constructionism grew out of constructionism. The constructionist view argues that meaning is not inherent within an object, but rather is actively constructed when a person interacts with that object. As such, meaning within constructionism is not 'objective', or true for all people, but is actively created anew by each person who experiences the object (Crotty, 1998).

However, meaning within constructionism is also not entirely 'subjective', or created entirely by each individual. As Crotty sums up: 'According to constructionism, we do not create meaning. We construct meaning. We have something to work with. What we have to work with is the world and objects in the world.' (1998, pp. 43–44). This is precisely the kind of interaction that Rosenblatt and Iser are describing with reader-response. Whilst the reader brings their own experiences and views to the reading, they also respond to what is presented by the book. In constructionism, the object is as important as the person interacting with it.

The meaning-making process that evolves from this interaction between object and person is referred to by Adorno as 'exact fantasy' (1977, p. 131). Adorno notes that whilst a person must use their imagination and creativity to make sense of an object, that imagination is guided by the object, leading to an 'exact' creative interpretation, rather than a totally open interpretation. This process has important implications for this research, as it suggests that the object being interacted with, in this case, three illustrated novels, may guide and limit the interpretations being created by the readers. It is therefore possible that the participants may be guided by the books into similar responses. However, due to the creative nature of the constructionist process, it is unlikely that those responses will be exactly the same. I have therefore examined the participants' responses not only individually, but also to see if broad patterns, prompted by the books, might be established.

Potential trends in the participants' responses may also be guided, not only by the books themselves, but additionally by the social context in which the research is taking place. Fish (1990) notes that we do not come to our interpretation of objects on our own, but are guided by social conventions. This viewpoint is an extension of constructionism, and is known as social constructionism. Crotty (1998) argues that we do not make sense of objects separately from each other, but rather that we are influenced by our historical and social context. He notes that we are born into a culture which has already created a system of symbols and meanings, and that this creates a lens through which we create meaning. This perspective is mirrored in the sociocultural view of reading discussed in the theoretical grounding of this research. Gee (2008, p. 2) argues that literacy must be viewed within its full range of 'cognitive, social, interactional, cultural, political, institutional, economic, moral and historical contexts', as all of

these factors contribute to the learning of literacy and the experience of reading. Additionally, work by Snow (2002) shows that sociocultural influences are a significant factor in children's reading comprehension, and that these influences largely come from home, school, and the surrounding community. As such, I take not merely a constructionist, but a social constructionist viewpoint. To do so, sociocultural factors such as children's backgrounds and reading habits have been considered when conducting this research. This includes providing both a comprehensive discussion of the sociocultural backgrounds of the participants, and an acknowledgement of sociocultural influence, both on the participants, and on myself, the researcher, in the data analysis and theory formation.

In adopting a social constructionist paradigm, I consider, as Crotty (1998) argues, that social constructionism works alongside an ontological position where meaning is both realist and relativist. Whilst meanings are constructed, they still have functional value within society, unlike an idealist perspective, in which meanings would only exist within the mind. However, meaning is also, at least partially, relative, being creatively constructed by the individual within a social context.

## 4.4 Theoretical Perspective

Having established an epistemology of social constructionism, I now place my research within a theoretical perspective and research tradition, which outline the philosophical context of the research (Crotty, 1998).

### 4.4.1 An interpretivist perspective

An epistemology of social constructionism naturally fits within an interpretivist perspective. Unlike a normative paradigm, which seeks to find or confirm universal theories, interpretivist approaches acknowledge the subjectivity of individuals (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Whilst social constructionism does not see knowledge as constructed entirely subjectively, nor does it consider meaning to be fixed and entirely external to the meaning maker (Crotty, 1998). As such, an exploration of individual knowledge construction, as emphasised by an interpretivist perspective (Bryman, 2016), will be necessary to understand the processes that the participants go through whilst making meaning from illustrated novels.

Another feature of the interpretivist perspective which has particular relevance for this research is its exploratory, inductive nature (Bryman, 2016; Cohen et al., 2011). Rather than applying a theory to research and testing to see if it is confirmed, an interpretivist paradigm allows for an approach which generates theory from the data provided (Cohen et al., 2011). This method of theory formation aligns strongly with the underlying belief of this research that children are agents in their own lives, and that children's voices are a highly valuable source of information when exploring children's experiences (Greene & Hill, 2005). The research outcomes from this project are driven by the data, rather than an external theoretical lens which reflects my own viewpoint, as opposed to the views of the participants (Cohen et al., 2011).

### 4.4.2 Research tradition

Within the interpretivist paradigm there are different research traditions. As this research seeks to explore its participants' experience of reading, phenomenology was initially considered as a tradition which might enable access to participants' experiences. However, phenomenology embraces a fully subjectivist epistemology which actively encourages a rejection of social constructions of meaning (Cohen et al., 2011; Crotty, 1998). For this reason, Crotty (1998) suggests that phenomenology is more closely aligned with constructivism, as opposed to constructionism. With this research utilising not only a constructionist, but a *social* constructionist epistemology, a tradition which actively rejects social constructions of meaning would be at odds with the epistemology of the research.

By contrast, the tradition of symbolic interactionism closely aligns with a social constructionist approach, acknowledging not only the importance of social and cultural influences on meaning making, but also emphasising the active role of the individual in constructing their own knowledge. This perspective is clearly demonstrated in the three central assumptions of symbolic interactionism, as set out by Blumer (1969, p. 2):

- that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that these things have for them
- that the meaning of such things is derived from, and arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows
- that these meanings are handled in, and modified through and interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters

These three tenets provide a particularly useful framework for this research. They create a focus on individual agency, and on the object itself, within its social context. As Pascale (2011, p. 88) states, in symbolic interactionism, 'the field of material culture is socially alive'. As such, symbolic interactionism reflects the transactional nature of reader response theory (Rosenblatt, 1978). Additionally, the first tenet of symbolic interactionism suggests that the meaning produced by an individual will impact on the way in which they interact with an object, which will necessarily affect their experience of that object. As such the principles of symbolic interactionism directly align with the research questions of this project.

The emphasis symbolic interactionism places on the individual and collective approach to meaning making extends to a preference for particular methodologies and data collection techniques. Mead (1934), one of the originating figures of symbolic interactionism, emphasised the importance of putting oneself in the place of the other in order to understand another person's perspective. As such, researchers within the symbolic interactionism tradition must constantly seek to consider situations from the point of view of the individual (Crotty, 1998). This suggests that a researcher in the symbolic interactionist tradition cannot be distanced from their participants. Rather, proponents of symbolic interactionism recommend that the researcher take on the role of active participant observer, and use qualitative approaches which explore not only the behaviour of the participants, but also the participants' own perceptions of their behaviours (Davetian, 2010).

As with many interpretivist traditions, symbolic interactionism emphasises theory generation from the data, and utilises a grounded theory approach to data analysis and theory formation (Dennis, 2011). However, symbolic interactionism is not identical to grounded theory, as it emphasises an iterative approach to theory formation which considers previous theoretical viewpoints, rather than building theory solely from data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In symbolic interactionism there is a constant awareness that due to the agency of individuals, some social norms will change over time, and the presence of those norms will play a role in an individual's negotiation of meaning. At any one time, some aspects of the social world will be changing, whilst others remain stable (Dennis, 2011). Due to this viewpoint, I employ a methodology which allows for a deep exploration of context, so that the extent of the impact of culture and society on an individual's interpretation can be examined.

Due to the influence of culture and society on meaning making, alongside the agency of the individual, theory formation in symbolic interactionism is neither entirely ideographic nor entirely nomothetic. Rather, symbolic interactionism seeks to generate theories which are not seen as 'total' (Dennis, 2011). This approach to theory formation supports a social constructionist epistemology where the medium of illustrated novels may lead to certain patterns in reading experience and meaning making, but acknowledges that all readers will not respond to all texts in exactly the same way. As such, I refer to the theories developed from this research as 'partial theories'.

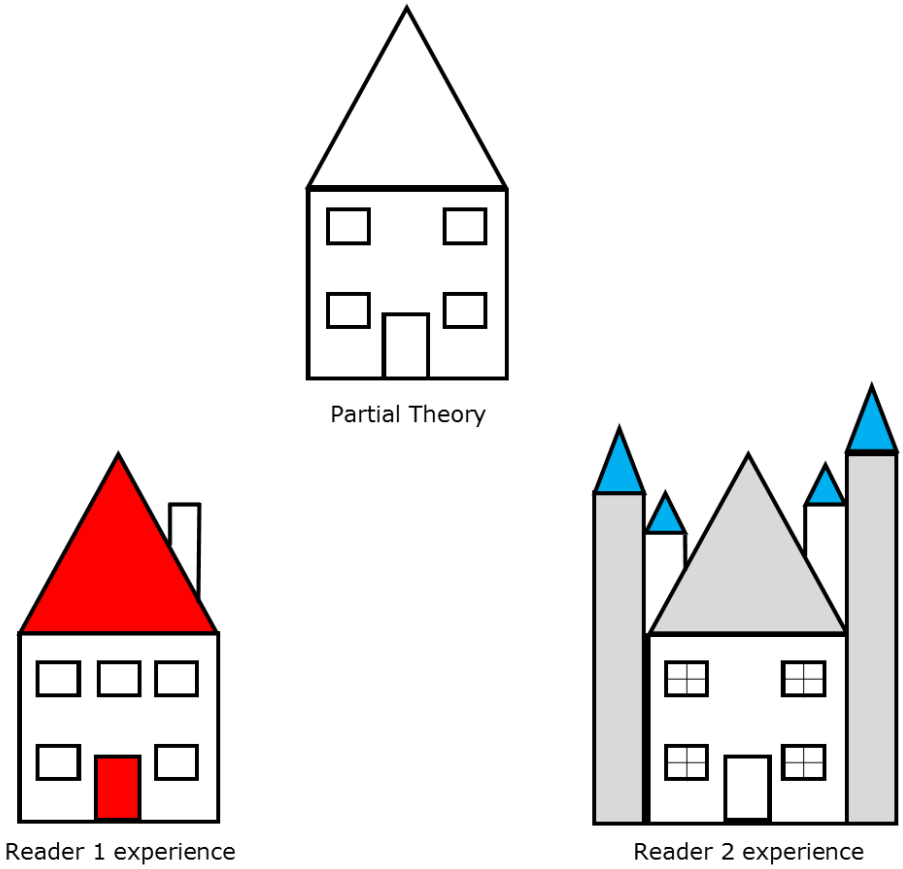



Figure 4.1: Partial theory building

This diagram shows that the partial theory provides a basic structure for the reading experience, but that the individual experience will be more complex than the theory can allow for. As such, the concept of a partial theory goes beyond Bassey's (1999) concept of 'fuzzy generalisations', which recognises that there are very few universal truths in education, but there may be many singularities which are likely to be found in similar situations elsewhere. The term 'fuzzy generalisations' was developed out a desire to balance the importance of

recognising the experience of the individual within educational research, whilst noting that it is possible that what applies in one situation may also apply in another. The concept of partial theories expands on the principle of fuzzy generalisations by creating a scaffold which will be applicable to but also adapted to each reading event. As such, partial theories must be understood as a useful basis for understanding the experience of reading illustrated novels, but not a complete representation of that experience.

## 4.5 Methodology

Having established a social constructionist epistemology and a symbolic interactionist research tradition, Crotty's (1998) framework now leads me to consideration of a methodology which allows me to explore the responses and viewpoints of individuals within a detailed context. As I needed to be able to look for both patterns and differences within the responses of participants in order to form theory, I decided that a multiple case study approach best served the needs of my research.

### 4.5.1 Case study

A case study is characterised by its boundaries. These boundaries create a case which is 'an instance in action' (Macdonald & Walker, 1975, p. 2). The researcher is therefore not trying to examine all or many instances of a particular phenomenon, but rather a specific instance. By using a specific instance the researcher is able to gain a depth and detail of analysis which would be difficult to achieve using other methods (Simons, 2009). This is particularly important when examining how individuals construct meaning from an illustrated text, and how these meanings impact upon their reading experience, as these are complex processes which require a great depth of examination in order to create some level of understanding.

Additionally, the examination of a particular case allows for a detailed discussion of the real life context within which the case is set (Yin, 2014). As the social and cultural context of the individual is a vital component in reader-response theory, social constructionism and symbolic interactionism, case study methodology is particularly suitable for this research project.

Stake (1995) discusses two distinct types of case study: intrinsic and instrumental. An intrinsic case study arises from a need to learn about a particular case, whilst an instrumental case study aims to come to a more general understanding about a phenomenon through the examination of a particular case. As my research is seeking to form theory which may be widely applicable, though not 'total', I have taken an instrumental approach to case study.

Due to working with a social constructionist epistemology to explore how readers experience illustrated novels, I have specifically examined three main elements: the object (the illustrated novel), the individual (the reader), and the readers' social context. A case study approach allows me the necessary depth to explore the individual and their social context, but in order to fully understand the impact of the object I will need to undertake not a single case study, but a multiple case study approach. The multiple case study approach allows a researcher to understand how a phenomenon operates in different situations (Stake, 2006). In my research, each case is an examination of the responses to a different illustrated novel. The cases are based on responses to the novels, rather than just the novels, or just the participants, in order to reflect the transactional nature of reading which is reliant upon both book and reader rather than one or the other (Rosenblatt, 1938, 1978).

By examining the responses of different individuals, with different contexts, looking at different novels, I explore how each element (object, individual, and context) influences the experience of reading an illustrated novel. From this examination, I build partial theory which seeks to both acknowledge individual experience, and explore patterns of common experience. The direct applicability of partial theories to education is particularly important for the aims of this research. By gaining a greater understanding of the experience of reading illustrated novels, I can make recommendations for reading pedagogy. However, due to the nature of reader response (and children's learning in general), these recommendations are unlikely to be applicable to every single reader. Therefore, providing not only partial theories which may apply to many situations, but also detailed descriptions and contexts of individual responses, which a case study approach requires, is particularly valuable in an educational context. If a student does not respond as suggested by the partial theories, examination of different, individual responses within a highly detailed context may help a practitioner to find an alternative way of engaging the student with illustrated novels.

## 4.6 Participatory approach

This research is based upon the principle that children are agents in their own lives, and should be acknowledged as individuals who have perspectives which are of value to society (Greene & Hill, 2005). This perspective on childhood has roots in feminist theory, specifically the importance placed on the value of individual experience, and the acknowledgement that it is the individual who can represent their own experience the most accurately (Greene & Hill, 2005). As such, the children in this study were not the subjects or objects of research, but active participants in the research process (Woodhead & Faulkner, 2008). The principles of participatory research are effectively summed up by Deszcz-Tryhubczak (2016, p. 224):

> Participatory approaches to studying children's literature…mean going beyond conventional empirical reader response research, which "allows" children to express their opinions within an adult-defined framework of their mental and emotional development or their best interests. Participation means that young readers confront and challenge the authority of adult professional readers and their assumptions.

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, an empirical approach is highly suitable for reader response studies. However, due to the exploratory, social constructionist nature of this research, it was important to, as Deszcz-Tryhubczak puts it, go beyond traditional adult led research. O'Kane (2008) notes that the development of phenomenology and symbolic interactionism has encouraged researchers to explore participatory methods of research, and as I am working within the symbolic interactionist tradition, a participatory approach to my research is highly fitting. When power within the research process is shared, participants are not restricted to the agenda of the researcher, but can also contribute to or change that agenda (O'Kane, 2008). This was particularly important to consider when researching children's experiences, as my preconceived ideas of what to look for and discuss may not have been same as those that the children felt had the greatest importance (Mackey, 2011), and this did indeed turn out to be the case. I therefore used flexible, participatory methods which were co-designed with the child participants.

As Moules and O'Brien (2012) note, participatory research can take many different forms and no one model can be applied to all settings. However, as Kirby and Bryson (2002) argue, it is vital to avoid token involvement, where children

are given very little real influence in the research process. I therefore adopted one of the approaches put forward by both Hart (1992) and Treseder (1997), in which research is adult initiated, but decisions are shared with young people. Whilst this form of participation appears in both the Hart and Treseder models, the two models suggest different values to this level of participation. Hart (1992) places adult-initiated research which shares decisions with young people at level six on his ladder of participation, well within the forms of research he considers to be truly participatory, but below child-directed and child-initiated research. Treseder (1997), by contrast, places different forms of participatory research within a wheel, rejecting the hierarchical nature of Hart's model. He notes that participatory research is both complex and context dependent, and that higher levels of child participation do not necessarily qualify as better research. Rather, Treseder argues that the level of participation should be appropriate for the context. This viewpoint is supported by Moules and O'Brien (2012), who go further to point out that poorly conducted research on the higher tiers of Hart's ladder is not inherently more valuable than well conducted research lower down the scale. Chawla (2001) complicates this further by noting that different participants may wish to participate at different levels during the course of the research, and it is important that researchers enabling participation allow them the ability to do so. As this research grew out of my previous study on children's responses to illustrated novels (Aggleton, 2017), the project was inherently adult-initiated. In the context under which this research was conceived, it was therefore most appropriate to locate the research as adult-initiated but with shared decisions with children, to maximise child participation, and therefore challenge my own preconceptions, within an already conceived area of investigation. It was also important to allow for flexibility within the research process, to allow the participants to engage at the participatory level at which they felt most comfortable, and felt best able to express themselves. Therefore, in this project, the participants chose some of the data collection methods, decided which novels we read out of a selection which fit the criteria established in the discussion of the cases (see section 5.1.1), and largely led the discussions in the individual interviews. The leading of discussions was not consistently child led, but varied according to the individual child's preferences. This variability is discussed further in section 4.8 which explores data collection methods.

Alongside supporting an exploratory approach to research, the participatory approach has a number of methodological and ethical benefits. Giving children the option to choose some of their methods of participation allows children to communicate in a mode with which they feel comfortable and in which they believe they can best express themselves (James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998). This flexibility of communication therefore supports my ability to achieve the symbolic interactionist aim of seeking to understand situations from the perspective of the participants (Mead, 1934).

Co-design also ensures that the data collection methods 'make sense' to the participants, which increases the reliability of the data as the results are less likely to be skewed by misconceptions about a task (Woodhead & Faulkner, 2008, p. 25). However, it is still very easy for researchers to misinterpret children's responses, particularly if they are visual or written (Piper & Frankham, 2007). I therefore followed Nieuwenhuys's (1996) recommendation that participatory methods must be accompanied by continuous dialogue with participants. This dialogue not only served as a method of checking that I was not misinterpreting the children's data, but also as a way of ensuring that the children were still happy with the research methods we had chosen and believed that they were still effective at representing their opinions. This dialogue was particularly important in the early stages of the research, when the children were less familiar with the data collection techniques, and less comfortable with rejecting certain techniques they didn't feel were useful. As the research progressed, the children grew in confidence and were soon able to not only choose the methods they felt were useful, but articulate why they had chosen some and rejected others.

Alderson (2008) notes that children's involvement in research is bound up with their *informed* choosing and using of methods, and it was therefore my responsibility as a researcher to ensure that the participants were fully informed about a range of research methods, as well as giving them the opportunity to come up with their own methods. In order to achieve this, an initial training session was undertaken, where different data collection methods were discussed, and modelled either by myself or the participant who suggested the method. The participants were also given the chance to try out some of these methods in practice before making any decisions about which ones they feel they might want to use, using a book of their own choice before we began reading our chosen texts.

A vital aspect of having active participants is ensuring that the participants' views are being accurately represented (Alderson, 2008). I therefore asked the children to give their views of the whole research process, and asked what they believed we discovered about reading illustrated novels, at key points during and at the end of the data collection process. I also returned to the school after analysing the data and drawing my findings, in order to get feedback from the children as to whether or not they agree with my conclusions, and to check that they felt they have been fairly represented (Hill, 2005).

Having children as active participants has also been shown to be effective in reducing the adult-child power imbalance, which is one of the greatest challenges for researchers working with children (O'Kane, 2008). Children can often find it difficult to disagree with adults or state viewpoints that they feel might be perceived as unacceptable, which can not only result in inaccuracies in findings, but also may lead to children feeling pressurized to take part in research (Hill, 2005). Sharing power over the research process helped to demonstrate that as a researcher I value the opinions of my participants, and this may have made them more willing to contribute their views and opinions. It is important to note, however, that even when children are given the status of active participants, the imbalances in power between adults and children are still present. O'Kane (2008) emphasises that researchers aiming to facilitate participatory research must utilise a number of strategies in order to demonstrate respect and a genuine desire to listen to and value children's views. As I conducted my research in a school setting, where power structures between adults and children are extremely hierarchical, it was particularly important that I establish from the beginning that I did not consider my views to have more value than the views of the participants. To support this, I chose not to conduct the research in a school where I have previously taught, as this would immediately establish a hierarchical position, with myself above the participants. I also introduced myself on a first name basis, demonstrating a level of trust, and followed Hill's (2005) recommendation to adopt informal language. Whilst these approaches went some way to reduce the adult-child imbalance, particularly after a few weeks when the children knew me better and I had consciously found opportunities to demonstrate my respect for their views, I also recognise my position as an adult did affect the ways in which we interacted. Whilst being willing to disagree with and contradict me as they felt necessary, all of the participants were noticeably polite and often showed a slightly

deferential respect, and this power imbalance will inevitably have influenced their responses.

It is also important to note that participatory research, whilst supporting an exploratory, symbolic interactionist approach, is limited in that it relies on the participants being self-aware of their experiences (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008). Much of what the participants experienced when reading was likely to happen on an unconscious level which they may not have been consciously aware of, or may not have been able to express (Lewkowich, 2016). It is unlikely that any one research approach would be able to access both the conscious and unconscious experience of a reader, and as such this research focuses on what the participants were conscious of and considered important, rather than any unconscious experiences which may also have been occurring.

## 4.7 Ethics

By including children as active participants and sharing power over the research process, I respected the children's rights to participate in decisions which affect their lives, as set down in article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (OHCHR, 1989). In addition to this, during the course of the research I operated a principle of continuous informed consent. I not only asked for informed consent and told the participants of their right to withdraw at the beginning of the project, but also reminded them of their right to withdraw temporarily or permanently on each research visit (Hill, 2005). Several of the participants took advantage of this offer, with many withdrawing temporarily for one or two sessions. This ability to temporarily withdraw was supported by the flexible approach to data collection and the decision to undertake individual, rather than group, interviews, which is discussed further in section 4.8 on data collection methods. Additionally, one child withdrew from the project altogether during the second case, and their data and information has not been included in this document. Informed written consent by adult guardians was also sought at the beginning of the project, in line with the British Educational Research Association 2011 guidelines (BERA, 2011) which were the standard when the data collection was undertaken, and in keeping with the newly updated BERA guidelines (BERA, 2018). An examples of the consent form can be seen in Appendix A.

Whilst it is common in educational research to anonymise participants, Hill (2005) notes that in participatory research children may wish to have their

contributions acknowledged. To balance safeguarding with recognition, I allowed the participants to choose whether to be referred to in the research by their own first names, or to choose their own pseudonyms. Last names have not been included, and the school is not identifiable from its description. This approach to anonymity was very carefully considered, is in accordance with the BERA 2011 and 2018 guidelines (BERA, 2011, 2018), and was approved through the Faculty of Education's ethical processes. In addition, all data was collected and stored in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (2018).

Care was also taken to ensure that the participants did not miss too much time in the classroom. The weekly research visits were scheduled in discussion with the participants' class teachers, and the participants did not come out of class in the same order each week, to ensure that they were not regularly missing the same part of the same lesson. The research visit days were also changed for each case, so that the same lesson was not missed each time. The time the participants spent out of class varied from 5 minutes a week up to 25 minutes a week, with the median time out of class per week being approximately 10 minutes. Over the full course of the data collection, each participant was out of class for between approximately three to three and a half hours in total for interviews, as well as undertaking a one hour training session at the beginning of the data collection process. Details of the length of interviews each participant undertook can be found in Appendix B.

## 4.8 Data collection methods

### 4.8.1 A qualitative approach

This research is based around the experiences, ideas, and opinions of the participants, and as such, I have selected a qualitative approach to data collection. Qualitative methods have been shown to be extremely effective at describing experiences in a level of detail which may not be present in a quantitative approach, as the discussions made possible by using qualitative methods can yield highly rich data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The discursive possibilities presented by qualitative methods can also enable children's own voices to be heard more fully than might be possible when using quantitative methods (Robson & McCartan, 2016). This aspect of qualitative methods makes them particularly

suitable for this project, as enabling children's voices to be heard and valued is a key principle of this research.

Additionally, as this is an exploratory study, the research is not interventionist in form. I have not therefore measured outcomes, and as such I believe that a qualitative approach is more appropriate than a quantitative one.

### 4.8.2 Flexible, multi-method data collection

Due to the principle of involving children in the decisions made about the research process, the methods outlined here were decided upon in discussion with the participants, and not all participants used all data collection methods. This helped to ensure that the participants used the methods which made sense to them and which they felt were useful, rather than simply using methods because they had been asked to do so (Woodhead & Faulkner, 2008). However, in line with case study methodology, a multi-method approach was encouraged. Exploring experiences through a number of different methods supports the building of a complex picture, as different methods may lend themselves to different types of expression (Taber, 2013). This is particularly important when considering a text which incorporates both images and words, as existing research on children's responses to illustrations in picturebooks suggests that it may not be possible to accurately communicate feelings about images through language (Arizpe & Styles, 2016).

As a participatory research project, the participants were actively engaged with the research questions and fully informed of what the research was trying to explore. As discussed in the section on participatory research, an initial meeting with the participants was conducted in which they were introduced to the research, and several different methods of data collection were discussed and modelled, either by myself or the participant who suggested the method. The following methods were proposed and practiced during this session:

| **Method proposed by me** | **Method proposed by participants** |
|---|---|
| Writing responses to the texts | Roleplay of contents of texts or ideas inspired by texts (following discussions with teachers it was agreed these could be filmed on school iPads) |

| | |
|---|---|
| Drawing responses to the texts | Filming thoughts about texts (following discussions with teachers it was agreed these could be filmed on school iPads) |
| Creating collages in response to the texts | Creating a game about the texts |
| Individual interviews | |
| Annotating illustrations | |
| Mind-mapping responses to the texts | |

Figure 4.2 Proposed data collection methods

The participants were then asked to try out any data collection methods that they wished with a book of their own choice over the half-term holiday, in order to give them an opportunity to practice using the methods before the research began (Alderson, 2008).

### 4.8.3 Participant journals

In order to allow for the participants to record responses through a variety of methods they were given a journal in which they could record their initial responses to the novels as they read them. These journals included both lined and blank pages. Photocopies of these responses can be found in Appendix D. Journals can be valuable for not only providing alternative ways for the participants to communicate their thoughts, but also for capturing the first impressions the participants had whilst they read. Arizpe & Styles (2016) found that their interview questions had the impact of encouraging their participants to think in different ways about the texts they were interacting with, and therefore an initial response before questioning was likely to detail different aspects of the children's experience of reading which may not come out through interview.

The participants decided individually how and when they would like to complete these responses, and were likely influenced by the data collection methods we explored during the training session. Exploring these methods was an important step in the process, as Hiemstra (2001) notes that when utilising journals, participants may initially struggle with what to record and how to record. Short, Kauffman and Khan (2000) argue that children naturally communicate through a variety of modes, and Kendrick and McKay (2004, p. 111) have identified that communications through these modes are not simply 'tack-ons' to

language, but can serve different communicative needs. Allowing the participants to choose their methods of communication in these journals enabled them to take advantage of these different modes as they felt was most appropriate.

One drawback of the participant journal method is that it is possible that the participants may not enjoy completing their responses, or may find that the need to respond may interfere with their experience of reading the books. Cliff Hodges (2015) found that participant journals were an unpopular method of data collection with some of her participants for this reason. My participants similarly showed a reluctance to complete their journal responses. Initially, most of the participants tried to complete a journal response each week, but after a couple of weeks all of them stopped completing the journals as a matter of course, and began to complete them only occasionally, when they had something they particularly wished to communicate through the journal. This changing attitude may have been reflective of the participants' increased comfort with the research process and with myself as a researcher. It demonstrated a move away from an attitude where they felt they had to complete a task because I had asked them to, and towards having greater confidence in their own decision making about which data collection methods they felt were most useful. As a result, journal responses were completed infrequently, and tended to be used more for drawing than for writing, as the participants felt that anything they wished to communicate in words they could tell me during the interviews.

It is also possible that the low level of engagement with the journals may have been partially due to the time provided to use them and the access the participants had to resources during this time. The participants were allowed to read the texts for the research project and fill in their journals during reading time in class, but were not provided additional dedicated time to complete their journals. This decision was made due to the ethical implications of requiring further time out of lessons in order to complete the research, or requiring the participants to give up portions of their break times to complete the tasks. It was considered unethical to utilise either of these options, however this may have discouraged the participants from spending extended periods of time completing journal entries. The participants reported that when they did complete the journal entries, they tended to do so either very briefly at school or at home. Whilst we had practiced using methods such as collage in the training session, the participants may not have had sufficient access to the materials required to use

such methods during the times they were actually completing their journals. This issue of dedicated time and resources for responses may also be why none of the participants chose to respond to the books through filming roleplays, filming their thoughts, or creating games based on the texts, despite all of these suggestions being popular during the training session.

Whilst this low level of engagement prevented me from gaining access to many of the initial responses of the participants, allowing the participants to lead on data collection helped to improve the quality of my data overall, and may have aided continued engagement with the project. Several of the participants commented that they did not find the journals useful for recording their views, and one commented that completing the journal interfered with her reading process. Had the participants been required to complete the journals, it is likely that they may have included inaccurate data for the sake of having something to write down, as several of them reported doing during the creation of the mind maps and rivers of reading when they were recording their reading habits. Additionally, the participants may have begun to dislike the research process, and either disengaged or chosen to withdraw.

### 4.8.4 Annotating illustrations

The participants were also given photocopies of some of the illustrations in the novels, and asked to annotate these, in order to provide the participants with an additional method of expressing their thoughts about the illustrations (Taber, 2013). The annotated illustrations can be found in Appendix D. Similarly to the journals, these photocopies were provided as a way of gaining a snapshot into the process the participants undertook as they read the illustrations, to provide another method of recording initial impressions.

The illustrations used for these annotations were chosen based on criteria which I felt might be significant after completing the literature review. The criteria were as follows:

- A double page illustration
- A full page illustration
- A partial page illustration

I also selected additional illustrations which I felt had interest specific to the individual book, such as examples of use of colour, illustrative technique, or style.

To support the participants in annotating their illustrations, we discussed what kinds of annotations could be made during the training session, which included labels identifying information, details of anything that the participants liked or disliked, and comments about how the illustration related to the words. Using these annotation types as a basis, I then modelled annotating an illustration as an example.

As a form of communicating their ideas and views, generally the participants did not find the illustration annotations particularly useful, and largely restricted their annotations to labels identifying information. However, several of the participants commented that they found annotating the illustrations useful as an exercise, as it encouraged them to look at the illustration more closely and in more depth, which had an impact upon their meaning making process. Therefore, whilst this method of data collection was not particularly successful as a method of communicating ideas, it may have pedagogical value for teachers using illustrated novels in the classroom.

### 4.8.5 Individual interviews

Individual interviews were conducted on a weekly basis, and the transcripts of these interviews can be found in Appendix D. These interviews were used to discuss the participants' responses to what they had read, exploring questions which were of interest to both myself and the participants. They were also used to discuss any journal entries the participants had completed, to guard against my misinterpretation of their responses (Piper & Frankham, 2007). Interviews allow for an in-depth exploration of a participants' viewpoint (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011) and are therefore very useful tools when undertaking symbolic interactionist research. The data collected during these interviews forms the vast majority of the total data collection for this research.

I chose to use individual interviews rather than group discussions or a 'book club' type structure due to the length of the project and the differing reading capabilities of the participants. Weekly individual interviews allowed the participants to read as quickly or slowly as they wished, without putting additional pressure on them to complete a certain amount of reading in order to be able to take part in a weekly group discussion, or having them potentially feel frustrated when parts of the books they had not yet read were being discussed. This allowed for changing circumstances during the course of the project and may have helped

to encourage continued engagement due to reducing the levels of pressure involved. I did consider having longer periods between reading groups to allow for the participants to reach similar points in the books, but decided that regular weekly interviews would be more valuable due to the possibility of the participants forgetting too much about their experiences of reading between sessions. Whilst this did mean that additional reflections on the texts which may have come out of a structured reading group were not available as a source of data, most of the participants did report having discussions about the books both with each other and with their parents, and the reflections which were prompted by these discussions were sometimes mentioned in the individual interviews.

The interviews were initially conceived as being semi-structured in nature, to allow for particular questions to be addressed without restricting the participants' responses to only those questions (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Both the participants and I brought up topics to discuss during the interviews, and the interview schedule was then co-constructed to ensure that both the participant's interests and mine were explored. By taking a semi-structured approach to the interview and co-constructing the interview schedule with the participant, I aimed to avoid the potential drawback of interviews being led by researcher bias (Cohen et al., 2011). After approximately two weeks however (with slight variations for individual participants), the interviews moved to an unstructured, participant-led approach. This was due to the behaviour of the participants, who, as they grew in confidence, soon began discussing their own ideas and interests as soon as the interviews commenced. Following the participatory principles of this research, I allowed the participants to take greater control over the direction of the interviews, and rather than creating an interview schedule of particular topics, switched to a chronological approach where we would discuss the section the participant had just read largely in the order that it came in the book, unless the participant chose to move the discussion onto particular topics or events in the book.

By moving to this more open style of interview, I allowed the research agenda to be led more by the participants than by my initial research questions, ensuring that the research was 'going beyond' my preconceptions as a researcher (Deszcz-Tryhubczak, 2016, p. 224), although I did not abandon my own research questions entirely. The interviews took on a strongly iterative quality, as comments one participant made influenced my discussion with another

participant. Similarly, questions that I raised led to the participants noticing different or additional things in their future reading, and discussing them in the interviews. Additionally, I sometimes inadvertently indicated when a response a participant made was of particular interest to me, and this will have led to me giving more value to some responses than others, which is likely to have influenced future discussions. The topics that were raised in any one interview therefore became a combination of the interests of the individual participant, my interests as a researcher, and the sum of the previous interviews with all of the participants. By undertaking this method of iterative, open interviewing, I was able to gain far greater insight into the views and thoughts of the participants than I might have had I stuck to a more structured interview style, and as such I was ensuring that I remained firmly within the symbolic interactionist tradition and the principles of participatory research. This method of interviewing was also valuable for my constant comparison approach to analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which I will discuss further in section 4.11.

It is important to note that a potential limitation of interviews is that participants may feel reluctant to discuss their views in an interview situation (Robson & McCartan, 2016). In the very early stages of the research, I drew on my experience as a teacher to aid me in establishing positive relationships, as well as following Hill's (2005) recommendations, as discussed in the participatory research section, for reducing power inequalities. Additionally, the time scales for this research allowed the participants to get to know me well enough that they appeared to feel comfortable expressing their views. This willingness to express their views was evidenced not only in the changing nature of the interview structures, but also in the participants' willingness to disagree with or contradict statements which I made - behaviour which was common for all participants. However, this should not be taken as a complete removal of the adult-power imbalance, which was still present and will have influenced the relationships I had with the participants and the responses they provided.

Alongside establishing positive relationships, I worked to increase the validity of the interviews by practicing communicative validation (Altrichter, Posch, & Somekh, 1993), which involves rephrasing and asking the participants to confirm or counter my interpretation of their remarks. Whilst this is not a perfect system, as there is still the likelihood that the participants may have wished to

agree with me due to the power dynamics, it does at least hopefully reduce the likelihood of total misinterpretation.

## 4.9 The research process

Due to the importance of mindset to this project, the participants were explicitly asked to consider the books as whole texts, and think about the experience of reading both the writing and the illustrations.

At the beginning of the research process, the participants were asked to contribute some data on their reading habits and their current views on illustrations in novels. Cliff Hodges (2010) notes that ways in which individuals chose to represent their identities as readers change over time, and are dependent upon who they are talking to and in what context. Therefore, I did not wish to restrict the participants' expressions of reading identity by asking them to communicate this information to me through one specific mode or method. Rather, they were asked to complete a mind map, a 'river of reading' (which allows the participant to consider not only their identity as a reader now, but also to represent how their reading habits have changed over time (Cliff Hodges, 2010) ), and to discuss their views and preferences in an individual interview. This allowed the participants the opportunity to think about their reading in a number of different ways, and they were asked to reflect on which methods they felt most accurately represented their views on reading. All participants stated that the interviews were the most accurate way of expressing themselves, as they felt that when completing the mind map and the river of reading, they ended up adding additional information which was not actually important to them in order to have more detail on the page. It is also possible that as the interviews were conducted after the other tasks, the participants had the opportunity to reflect on their thoughts and views before having to talk about them, which enabled them to provide information which they felt was more representative of their viewpoints. By conducting this initial exploration of reading habits in this manner, I was able to increase the validity of my data collection. In addition, I established from the beginning of the project that I was happy to follow the participants' own choices on data collection methods, and valued their feedback not only on the novels we were reading but also on the research project itself.

This initial data collection on reading habits provide detailed description which establishes the context in which the research is taking place. Mackey (2003,

p. 405), building upon the work of Geertz (1973), suggests that the complexity of the reading process requires 'thick description', which highlights the multi-layered nature of an interaction, in order to fully understand the contributing roles of text, reader and context. Gaining an insight into how the participants view not only the texts they read, but also how they imagine themselves as readers, contributes towards this 'thick description' and enables an exploration of how the features of text, reader and sociocultural context interact in the reading process.

This data also provided the participants with an anchor of their initial views, which they were asked to reflect upon at the end of the data collection process. Whilst this research is not intended to be interventionist in nature, Arizpe and Styles (2016) found when conducting similar research that the research process itself had an unavoidable impact on the ways in which their participants were responding to texts. The participants were therefore asked to reflect upon whether or not their experiences of illustrated texts changed throughout the research process, why they think this might have happened, and whether they or not they viewed this change in a positive light. By acknowledging the impact of the research journey, I am able to present a fuller picture of how the participants interacted with the illustrated novels.

After the initial data collection methods training and discussions of the participants views of themselves as readers, the participants chose an illustrated novel from a selection provided. Choice of book has been identified as an important part of the reading process (Hatt, 1976; Mackey, 2011), and Fry's (1985) study of children's reading preferences demonstrates that adults' and children's assessments of what makes for an enjoyable book are often at odds with one another. It is important to acknowledge that as the participants were all required to read the same books, and I provided a corpus of books to choose from (see appendix C), this was not a fully free choice. Rather it was somewhere between the freedom of individual choice to pick a book from a selection at home or at the library, and the experience of being in the classroom where reading choices are often made by teachers. I considered this to be a practical compromise which enabled the participants to have real input into the text selection whilst still allowing me to choose texts which would allow me to address my research questions. The participants were asked to rank the books in order from the one they would like to read the most, to the one they would like to read the least. Any book which a participant had already read, or which any of the participants stated

they really did not wish to read, was removed from the selection. The books were given a numerical score based on ranking (5 for the book they wanted to read the most, 1 for the book they wanted to read the least) and the scores were tallied. The book with the highest score was generally chosen, provided no participant had stated that they did not wish to read it (see Appendix C for details of the corpus and rankings). The participants were then given their own copies of the selected book, which they were allowed to keep as compensation for their work on the research project (Hill, 2005).

The data collection process worked on a cyclical basis as outlined in this diagram:

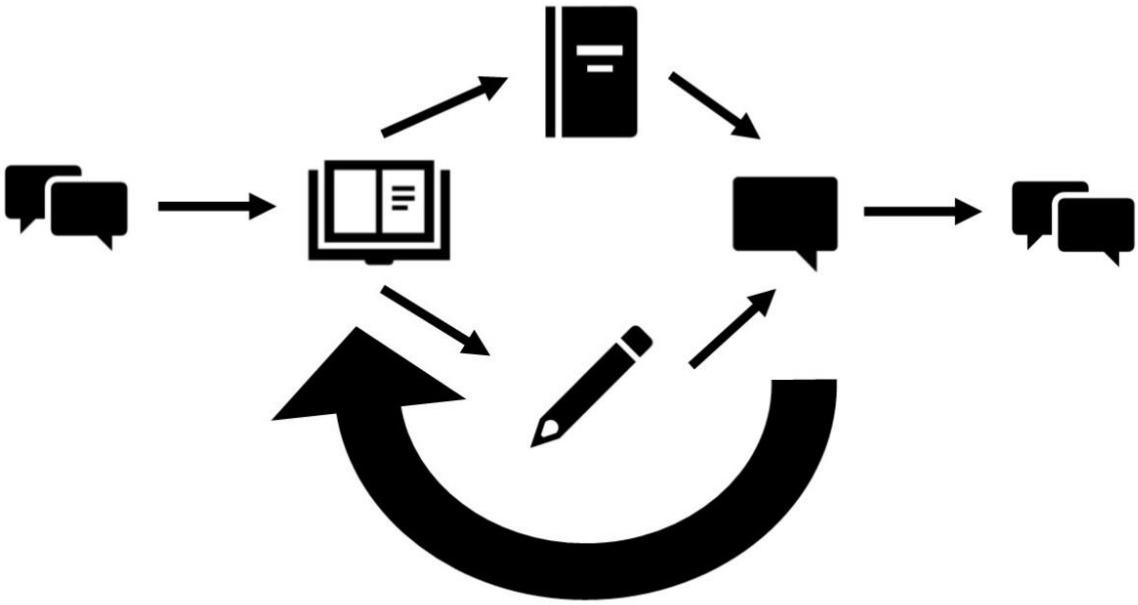


Figure 4.3: Data collection process

The first stage of the process included the initial training session, discussion of reading habits, and initial book selection. Following this, each participant read as much as they wanted to per week, and if they chose, recorded their initial responses in a journal they were given, as well as annotating a photocopy of an illustration from the section they had read. We then discussed their responses in individual interviews. The participants then read further in the next week, and we continued the cycle until each participant reached the end of each novel. We then reflected on what we felt we had learned so far about illustrated novels, and when applicable, chose the next book to read. Once all three books had been read, a

final individual interview was held to gain the participants' views on the project as a whole.

By taking this approach, the participants were able to engage with the research at their own pace, and this had several benefits. Firstly, as the participants were able to read as much or as little as they wanted to each week, they neither had to limit their reading, nor were they pressured into reading more than they had time for or wished to. This may have helped to prevent participants from getting bored with the project, and also allowed me to demonstrate to the participants that I was putting their needs and preferences first, which may have contributed to reducing the power imbalance between myself as an adult and them as children. Participants were also able to withdraw temporarily from the research, which was particularly useful as the data collection was conducted over a period of six months. In that time, participants were ill, went on holiday, and occasional events happened at school which they chose to attend rather than taking part in the research that day. By taking a flexible approach which allowed for temporary withdrawal, the participants were able to continue to engage with the research during changing personal circumstances.

## 4.10 Validity and Reliability

As this research does not aim to produce measurable results which can be easily replicated, I am following Guest, MacQueen & Namey's principle (2012) that for qualitative research, reliability is of far less importance than validity, and that reliability in qualitative research can be considered present provided that validity is sufficiently well established.

Due to the importance of validity, I have already discussed how my research design may impact on validity several times in this methodology chapter. This section therefore aims to synthesise and explicitly highlight these aspects. Primarily, by utilising an active participant approach as discussed above, I was able to minimise researcher bias, misinterpretation, and issues arising from power imbalances. Whilst it was impossible to remove these factors completely, and they will have had an impact on the validity of this research, the active participant approach seems to have significantly reduced the impact of these factors, demonstrated by the participants' willingness to abandon data collection methods or disagree with my ideas. I also used communicative validation (Altrichter et al., 1993) throughout the interviews, and the long timeline and large quantity of data

enabled me to recheck statements and track developing viewpoints. All interviews and initial discussions were audio recorded and fully transcribed, and I listened to the recordings whilst analysing the data to fully take into account additional cues which may not be easily represented through a transcript.

A key aspect of the validity of this research is the participants' choices of methods which resulted in the vast majority of the data coming from a single method: that of self-reporting in individual interviews. Whilst this has restricted the types of response which I am able to draw on for analysis and theory building and therefore also restricted the potential scope of the research, I believe that overall this approach has improved the validity of the findings. Whilst several scholars have identified the value that using multiple methods can bring to building a fuller picture of a phenomenon (Arizpe & Styles, 2016; Drever, 2003; Taber, 2013), this value is dependent upon the methods being used in a valid manner. During this study, the participants were free to communicate in the mode which they felt was most appropriate. As children do naturally communicate in a number of different modes (Kendrick & Mckay, 2004; Short et al., 2000), those modes were available for the participants to use, but they overwhelmingly felt that talking was the best way to express their views. Moreover, several participants reported completing written or drawn tasks early on because they felt they should, and commented that as a result the data they had provided was not actually representative of how they felt. By removing any sense of obligation to report using particular methods, the inclusion of spurious responses was minimised, improving the overall validity of the data.

A further aspect of relying on self-reported discussions is that initial responses to the books were not recorded. As a result, the interview data is restricted not only to the aspects of the reading experience that the participants are aware of, but also represents the participants' recent memories of the reading experience, which are likely to be somewhat different from their actual reading experiences (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008; Lewkowich, 2016). Rather than viewing the resulting data as representing a less accurate picture of the reading experience, I see this data as representing a different aspect of the reading event: the experiences which the participants have taken with them after the initial moment of physically engaging with the text. Whilst methods such as think-alouds (Charters, 2003) or eye-tracking might have provided more detailed data on the moment of reading which involves engaging directly with the text, they may also

have proven somewhat disruptive to the reading experience itself (this seems especially likely for this particular group of participants who reported completing the journals and illustration annotations as disruptive to the reading experience).

Focusing on the continued experience of reading after the initial physical experience allows an exploration of the overall impact of the reading event, which can be characterised not just by the physical engagement with the books, but also the reflections on the book and any discussions had with others about what has been read. Whilst this focus is particularly appropriate when considering the impact of illustrated novels through the facets of aesthetic experience and judgement, and critical and creative responses, it is possibly slightly less valuable for thinking about the processes involved in reading illustrated novels, which are more dependent upon the physical interaction with the books, and are therefore more likely to be affected by mis-remembering those interactions. However, the extensive amount of data collected allowed for internal validation through the cross-referencing of the participants' responses in relation to their reading and meaning-making processes. By exploring how the participants referred to their reading processes throughout the project, it was possible to identify a high level of consistency in the ways in which these processes were being reported by each participant, suggesting that their memories of the reading process were fairly accurate. In one case, that of Alexander, there was a distinct development in his reading processes, however this development did represent a progression in skill rather than indicating an inconsistency in reporting.

Drawing these threads together, I feel that by adopting a participatory approach which led to a large reliance on single-method reporting, I was able to significantly increase the validity of the research at the expense of narrowing its scope to the experiences of reading which the participants were aware of and remembered after the initial physical interaction with the books. However, given the incredible complexity of reading, it is highly unlikely that any one reading approach would be able to cover all aspects of the reading experience. This research therefore does not claim to be a definitive representation of the entire experience of reading illustrated novels, but rather contributes one highly valid perspective which centres and empowers the voices of child readers. Further research which takes different methodological approaches would be valuable in continuing to develop our understanding of the affordances of illustrated novels as a medium.

## 4.11 Analysis

### 4.11.1 Constant comparison

As I have taken a participatory, symbolic interactionist approach to this research, it was important that I tried to gain as clear an insight into the reading experience of my participants as possible (Dennis, 2011). This included following areas of interest which arose from the responses but fell outside of what I initially identified in the theoretical foundation. Considering other avenues of enquiry was also important as this research takes an exploratory rather than confirmatory approach, and must therefore be open to areas of interest which may emerge during the process (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Therefore, I conducted analysis of my data throughout the data collection process and built iteratively upon the findings by following up in the interviews on themes and ideas discussed by the participants that I had not initially considered. This approach followed Rose's (2012) recommendation to let the data which emerges guide both the investigation and the analysis. I also adopted a process of constant comparison during the analysis, as set out by Glaser and Strauss (1967). This calls for a joint process of coding and analysis, rather than coding the data first and analysing it subsequently, which limits the analysis of the data to previously constructed codes. This approach has allowed me to gain a greater understanding of the participants' experiences of reading illustrated novels than could be achieved by only analysing data and constructing interview schedules based on my own views of what factors may influence the experience of reading an illustrated novel.

### 4.11.2 Transcription and analysis software

During the data collection I recorded the interviews with a digital voice recorder and then fully transcribed them (Appendix D). I then entered these transcripts into NVivo (Bazeley & Richards, 2000). Using NVivo allowed me to manage the large amount of data I collected effectively, and its facility to run queries based on codes supported my search for patterns, aiding partial theory building based on 'fuzzy generalisations' (Bassey, 1999; Bazeley & Richards, 2000).

### 4.11.3 Content analysis

In order to combine the constant comparative method with the aim of directly addressing my research questions I followed Charmaz's (2014) approach of undertaking two phases of coding: initial coding and selective coding. Both rounds of coding utilised content analysis. Content analysis was a useful approach for my research as it allowed me to reduce the large amount of data I collected into a manageable quantity of data which focused directly on my research questions (Krippendorff, 2018; Schreier, 2014). The flexible nature of content analysis, which allows for codes to be built upon iteratively during the course of the research, facilitated the constant comparative approach I undertook and supported my exploratory approach to this research (Krippendorff, 2018; Schreier, 2014). As well as being flexible, content analysis is also highly systematic, requiring the researcher to examine the data and code it at least twice to ensure consistency of codes. As part of this process, I listened to the recordings whilst reading the transcripts, and removed a few responses in which I felt that my method of questioning had been too leading and had noticeably impacted on the response of the participant, or where the response showed clear signs of being based on the participant's desire to please rather than their genuine opinion. Whilst this process will not have completely removed instances where the power dynamics were impacting upon the participants' responses, it did allow for me to discount responses which seemed highly problematic in terms of validity.

Content analysis also supports the identification of patterns within the data. The codes can be analysed alongside each other to identify whether a particular aspect of the text appears to be producing a particular response across cases or participants (Richards & Morse, 2013), making it suitable for my multiple case study approach. The first case was analysed in order to generate hypotheses, and then these hypotheses were tested using the data from the subsequent two cases in order to develop partial theories. This allowed me to explore whether any partial theories could be developed which suggest affordances within the illustrated novel as a medium, as well as enabling me to identify where the nature of an individual book was providing affordances not found in the other illustrated novels.

### 4.11.4 Participant analysis

Alongside my own analysis, at the end the data collection cycle for each case, and at the end of the data collection process, I asked the participants to present their

views of how they believed illustrations have affected their reading experience. These analyses were incorporated into my own analysis and findings, in order to reflect the participants' experiences as accurately as possible (Mead, 1934). I also returned to the school after completing my analysis to check that the participants felt that my findings are accurate (Hill, 2005). This process of participant analysis increases the validity of my research by reducing the likelihood of my misinterpreting my participants.

# 5. Introduction to findings

This section provides context for the following findings chapters. In outlining the boundaries of the cases, I provide 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973; Mackey, 2003, p. 405) of the books, the setting, the participants and their research journeys, so that the findings can be viewed in the light of the circumstances of the research. I also detail the theory building process I undertook, outlining how I moved from analysis to findings.

## 5.1 The boundaries of the cases

### 5.1.1 The books

#### *5.1.1.1 Corpus selection criteria*

To form the three cases of children responding to illustrated novels, three novels were selected. These novels were chosen by the participants from a selection provided by me, using the voting system described in section 4.9. In taking this approach to text selection, I aimed to draw a balance between choosing novels which would help me to address my research questions, and allowing the participants to read books which they wanted to engage with. This was an important consideration given Fry's (1985) study of children's reading choices, which demonstrated that adult assumptions about which books children will enjoy are often incorrect. Additionally, as the experience of reading is not the same as the experience of re-reading, I wished to use novels which the participants had not read, and I therefore required the input of the participants in the selection process.

In selecting my initial corpus I considered the major issues surrounding meaning-making and personal responses, as discussed in my theoretical grounding, and selected books whose affordances I felt were likely to support discussions of these issues. In addition, I considered some practical issues of age and adaptation which were likely to have an influence on responses. These considerations led me to generate the following criteria for selection:

a) Ratio of words and images

I wished to explore novels which represented different positions on the spectrum of the illustrated novel as defined by this research. I therefore created three categories of illustrated novel which reflect different ratios of illustrations to

writing, and I built a selection of novels for each category. The first category are novels where fewer than 20% of the pages are illustrated; the second category contains novels where between 20% and 50% of pages are illustrated; whilst the third category contains novels where more than 50% of the pages are illustrated. Folio illustrations were not included in these counts, due to their small, repetitive, and decorative nature. By examining responses to three books on different positions on the spectrum of the illustrated novel, I was able to explore whether partial theories could be developed about the influence of the relative ratio of words and images on the experience of reading an illustrated novel.

b) Illustration content

To explore the effect of the content of illustrations, I selected novels with a wide range of illustrative content, based on Schwarcz's (1982) framework of illustrative function discussed in the theoretical grounding. By exploring illustrations which meet the different criteria contained in Schwarcz's framework I was be able to examine whether the relationship between the content of the writing and the content of the illustrations has an impact on the experience of reading an illustrated novel, and consider how this relationship might affect meaning-making and personal response.

c) Illustrative layout

I selected illustrated novels which included a variety of illustrative layouts. The books selected therefore included a mixture of illustrations placed alongside writing, full and double page illustrations, and illustrations which are integrated within the writing (such as illustrations placed behind writing or writing wrapped around illustrations). Selecting books with these affordances allowed me to examine how the different physical processes of reading writing and reading pictures might disrupt narrative rhythm and affect meaning-making and personal response.

d) Emotional and reflective themes

As this research initially intended to explicitly explore emotional and reflective responses to illustrated novels based on significant factors identified through a review of the literature, I selected novels which I believed were likely to produce emotional and reflective responses. Whilst these categories of analysis have developed throughout the research process due to the participatory approach, and have now been superseded by analysis of aesthetic experiences and aesthetic judgements, these considerations were at play during the initial corpus selection.

Unlike considerations of the number, content and positioning of illustrations, I was not able to establish clear criteria for these categories based on a quantitative approach, as each novel was suitable for different reasons. Whilst work using cognitive criticism approaches has suggested elements of texts which may be likely to prompt emotional responses (see, for example, Nikolajeva, 2014), as discussed in the introduction, cognitive approaches do not take account of sociocultural factors. I therefore used my critical judgement, based on my significant professional experience of reading with 9-10 year olds within similar contexts to that in which my research was conducted, in order to choose novels which I believed were likely to afford an emotional and reflective experience. Although I was also interested in the participants' critical and creative experiences of illustrated novels, I have not found any research which details any affordances of illustrated novels which might promote critical and creative responses. I therefore could not include this factor in my selection criteria, but by exploring how illustrated novels may prompt critical and creative responses in this research, I hope to be able to provide a theoretical model which may assist with further research in this area.

e) Familiarity and unfamiliarity

Based upon the research into picturing discussed in the theoretical grounding, which highlights the importance of drawing on real-world experience in order to develop mental pictures (Dekker, Mareschal, Johnson, & Sereno, 2014; Sadoski et al., 1990; Speer et al., 2009), I selected books which provided instances of characters, objects, or situations which I felt might be either familiar or unfamiliar to my participants. As such, several of the selected books contain fantasy elements. Whilst a fuller study of the impact of genre on the experience of reading illustrated novels would be illuminating, because of the participatory approach of this research I did not wish to be overly prescriptive in my selection and require my participants to select books in genres they might dislike reading. By including books with familiar and unfamiliar elements, however, I was able to explore the role of familiarity on the experience of reading illustrated novels.

Alongside focusing on books which the participants had not previously read, I also created exclusionary criteria based upon practical considerations. These exclusions were generated because of the additional factors they would bring which I did not have the scope to explore within this thesis.

a) Date of publication

Only contemporary novels (published from 2000 onwards) were selected, as many older illustrated novels have iconic characters which the children might already be familiar with, such as Roald Dahl and Quentin Blake's The BFG (1982). Previous familiarity with a novel, even if the participants have not actually read it, is likely to influence reading experience. In addition, older illustrated novels such as Kipling and Watson's *The Jungle Books* (1948) may have had linguistic structures that felt unfamiliar to the participants.

b) Adaptation

The novels must not have been adapted into or from a film, television show, or other form of media, as adaptation was likely to have an impact upon the way in which the participants interacted with the novel.

A full list of the corpus chosen can be found in Appendix C. This list details how each novel met the individual selection criteria, and also shows the total number of votes each book was awarded by the participants.

#### *5.1.1.2 The Imaginary*

The first book selected was *The Imaginary*, written by A.F. Harrold and illustrated by Emily Gravett (2015). This book falls is in the middle category for ratio (20%-50% of pages containing illustrations), with 34% of the pages containing illustrations.

*The Imaginary* tells the story of Amanda and her imaginary friend Rudger. Rudger appears in Amanda's wardrobe one day and the two soon form a friendship which includes both the fun of playing imaginary games together and the difficulties of falling out with each other. Into their lives comes Mr Bunting, the only adult in the book who can still see imaginary friends (called imaginaries in the book). It soon transpires that Mr Bunting eats imaginaries, and uses his own imaginary girl (never named) to help him catch them. When Mr Bunting attacks Rudger, Amanda intervenes to save him which leads to her being hit by a car and taken to hospital, leaving Rudger alone in the world. Without his human friend to imagine him, Rudger begins to fade. He is rescued by Zinzan, a cat who can see imaginaries, and taken to a library which acts as a holding ground for imaginaries looking for human friends. With help from the other imaginaries, Rudger finds another human friend who allows him to get to the hospital where Amanda is being treated. Mr Bunting and his imaginary also find their way to the hospital,

and after a battle between Mr Bunting and Amanda, in which they fight using their imaginations, Mr Bunting is defeated. Amanda and Rudger go home, and continue to play imaginary games together.

The story of *The Imaginary* is suspenseful and emotional, with action sequences and elements of horror, but also a good deal of humour and fun. Alongside the main action-driven plot there are strong themes of friendship, family, and nostalgia, mainly through the character of Amanda's mother and the imaginary dog she had as a young child. The book also contains themes of growing up and the separation of adulthood and childhood through imaginary play (adults, aside from Mr Bunting who uses nefarious means to do so, cannot see imaginaries). As such, the novel provides a great number of opportunities for emotional and reflective responses.

In design, *The Imaginary* has extensive paratextual features, including a fully illustrated front cover and partially illustrated back cover, endpapers, and title pages with illustrative vignettes. After the title pages there is a double page spread with a full page illustration on the verso page and the Christina Rossetti poem 'Remember' on the recto page, followed by an introduction which is a flash-forward to events that take place later in the book. These design features made this text particularly interesting in terms of exploring the reading process, especially in terms of navigation.

The illustrations in *The Imaginary* use a cartoon style which draws on the tradition of the clear-line style originated by Hergé in his Tintin comics (Apostolidès, 2009). This style reduces the details of characters to key features in simple line work with minimal shading, whilst providing highly detailed backgrounds (McCloud, 1993). Whilst the influence of this style can be seen in Gravett's illustrations, especially in the faces of her human characters, she also makes extensive use of shading which provides the figures with more depth than in the traditional clear line style. The use of shading is particularly notable in the non-human characters, with the animals being drawn in a far more representative style which provides texture to their fur. The character of Mr Bunting's imaginary friend also utilises shading to great effect, by combining long lines with fuzzy, indistinct features, giving the character the appearance of being not quite complete or present, as can be seen in figure 5.1.

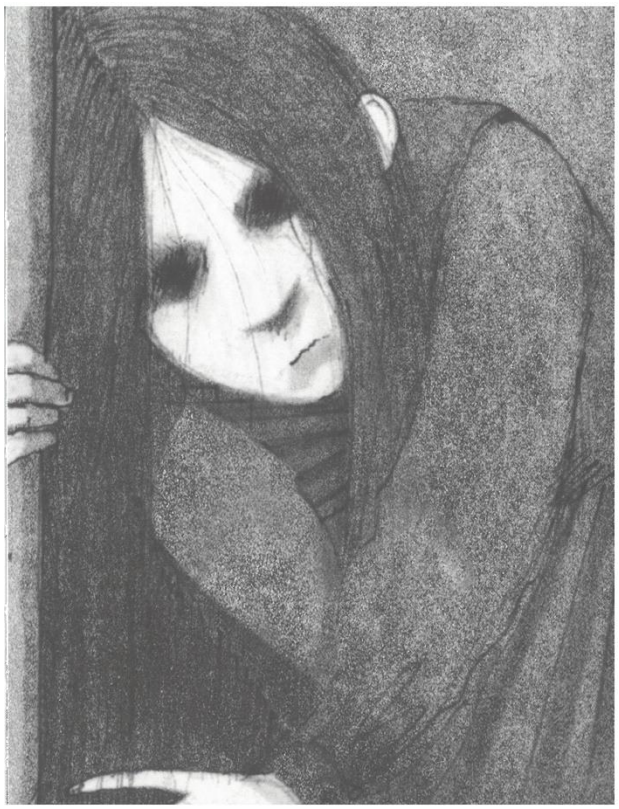
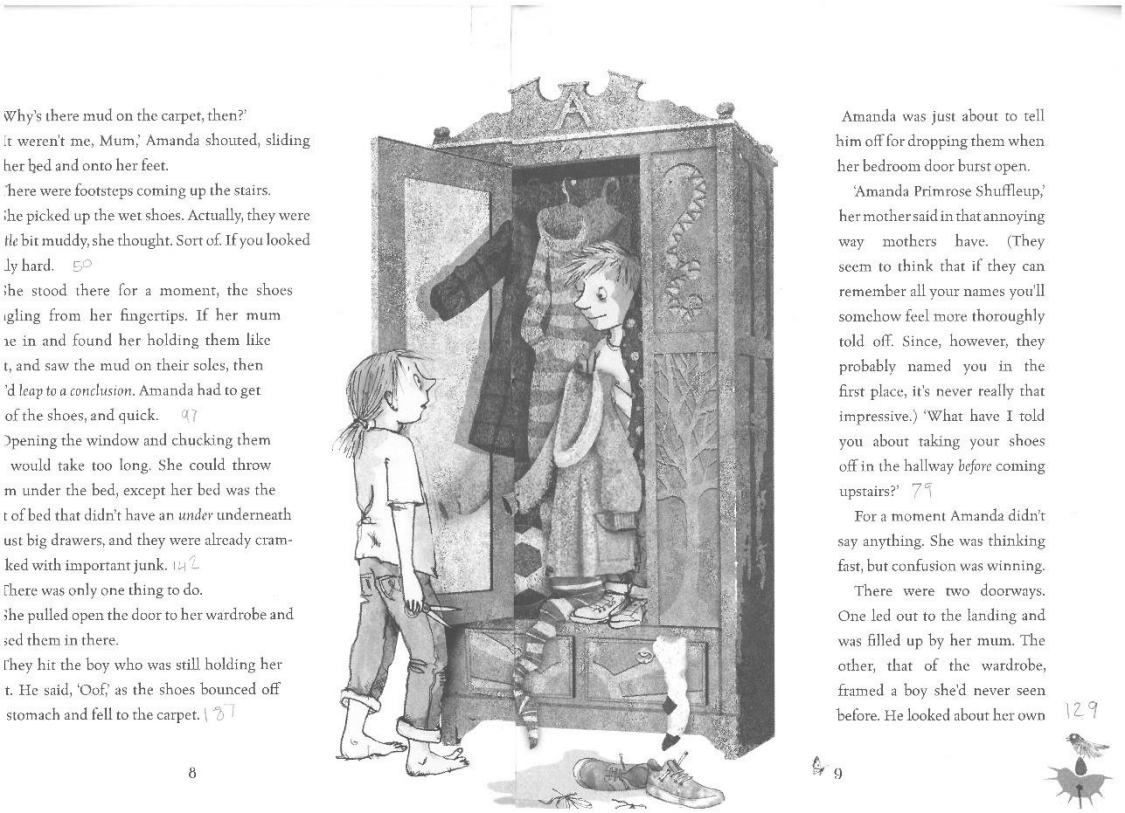


Figure 5.1, p.47, Mr Bunting's imaginary friend

Alongside simple, clear linework and complex shading, the characters often contain a high number of individual illustrative elements, so that although the linework itself is clean and the faces are generally reductive rather than representative, the illustrations offer a high level of detail. This can especially be seen in many of the backgrounds, which in the clear line tradition, are frequently highly detailed both in terms of shading and the number of illustrative elements they contain, as can be seen in figure 5.2. The illustrative style is therefore complex and multi-layered, and requires a great deal of attention to identify all of the individual elements, a feature which is likely to impact on the experience of reading the novel.



Why's there mud on the carpet, then?'
It weren't me, Mum,' Amanda shouted, sliding her bed and onto her feet.
There were footsteps coming up the stairs.
She picked up the wet shoes. Actually, they were *tle* bit muddy, she thought. Sort of. If you looked ly hard.
She stood there for a moment, the shoes gling from her fingertips. If her mum e in and found her holding them like t, and saw the mud on their soles, then 'd *leap to a conclusion*. Amanda had to get of the shoes, and quick.
Opening the window and chucking them would take too long. She could throw m under the bed, except her bed was the t of bed that didn't have an *under* underneath ust big drawers, and they were already cram-ked with important junk.
There was only one thing to do.
She pulled open the door to her wardrobe and sed them in there.
They hit the boy who was still holding her t. He said, 'Oof,' as the shoes bounced off stomach and fell to the carpet.

8

Amanda was just about to tell him off for dropping them when her bedroom door burst open.

'Amanda Primrose Shuffleup,' her mother said in that annoying way mothers have. (They seem to think that if they can remember all your names you'll somehow feel more thoroughly told off. Since, however, they probably named you in the first place, it's never really that impressive.) 'What have I told you about taking your shoes off in the hallway *before* coming upstairs?'

For a moment Amanda didn't say anything. She was thinking fast, but confusion was winning.

There were two doorways. One led out to the landing and was filled up by her mum. The other, that of the wardrobe, framed a boy she'd never seen before. He looked about her own

9

Figure 5.2, pp.8-9, showing reductive faces and detailed background reminiscent of the clear line style

Gravett also includes elements of colour into some, though not all, of her illustrations, which allows for a comparison of responses to colour and black and white illustrations. The colour in these illustrations is used deliberately and sparingly, which might draw the attention of readers to the construction of the illustrations in a way that might not occur in full colour illustrations or black and white illustrations.

Figure 5.3, pp.90-91, colour illustration

The book uses a variety of illustrative sizes and layouts, including double page spreads, full page illustrations, partial page illustrations, chapter heading illustrations, folio illustrations and paragraph break illustrations. On a few instances illustrations and writing are layered, so the writing runs over the top of the illustrations. In addition, there are passages where the page and writing colour is reversed, so the page is black and the writing is white. On these occasions, the text is often brief and placed in the middle of the page. The presence of these design features allows for explorations of the impact of different layout and design features, which enables an exploration of illustrated novels as complete works of art, rather than simply as a sum of two separate modes, the written and the illustrative.

#### *5.1.1.3 The Midnight Zoo*

The second book selected was *The Midnight Zoo* by Sonya Hartnett and Jonathan McNaughtt (2010). This book had the fewest illustrations, with 18% of the pages being illustrated.

*The Midnight Zoo* tells the story of Andrej and Tomas, two Romany brothers escaping persecution during World War II. Together with their baby sister Wilma, they find themselves in a village that has been destroyed by air raids, and take refuge in the local zoo. Here they discover that the animals in the zoo can talk, and they tell each other their stories. The boys tell the animals that their caravan was attacked and their parents killed. The animals tell the stories of how they came to be captured, and that they were abandoned when Alice, the daughter of the zoo's owner, left the village to become a freedom fighter. The village was targeted for air raids in vengeance because Alice and her fellow freedom fighters blew up a train, and during the course of the book, bombs continue to fall on the village. The stories the boys and the animals tell all discuss loss of family and freedom, and the boys decide to free the animals, though the ending is somewhat ambiguous as to whether they find a rescuer, or enter the freedom of death.

The writing and pace of *The Midnight Zoo* is lyrical, with the primary story taking place in the static location of the zoo. The book also makes extensive use of time slips as each of the stories are told, making this an interesting text in which to examine navigation and narrative rhythm. The discussions of freedom, family and war offer opportunities for reflective engagement with ideas, as well as providing prompts for potential emotional responses.

There are two main illustrative styles used in *The Midnight Zoo*, though both are largely reductive in nature, rather than being representative. The first style uses sharp, simple line work and block colour with no shading, which suggests rather than shows the things depicted, as can be seen in figure 5.4.

1 THE VILLAGE

If the old bell had been hanging in the steeple it would have rung to announce midnight, twelve solemn iron *klongs* which would have woken the villagers from their sleep and startled any small creature new to the village and unaccustomed to the noise. But the bell had fallen from its height weeks ago, and now lay buried in silence beneath rubble; no small creature foraged in corners, because every scrap had already been carried away in beak and mouth and paw; and no woken villagers lay grumbling, for the people, like their bell, were gone. Their homes stood ruined, their beds

7

Figure 5.4, pp.6-7, sharp line and block colour style

This style of illustration emphasises the darkness and unfamiliarity of the setting by providing very few details, reflecting Andrej and Tomas's lack of information about where they are. The illustrations of the animals also use this block colour style, leaving many informational 'gaps' (Iser, 1980) to which the reader must bring a large amount of their own knowledge in order to be able to make meaning. Alongside the reductive, non-representational style, the illustrations tend to have few individual illustrative elements, making them much less complex in style than the illustrations in *The Imaginary*, which is likely to have an impact upon the participants' experiences of reading.

The second illustrative style used is also reductive, but includes the use of internal line work, shading and a higher number of individual illustrative elements, making these illustrations slightly more representative than the highly reductive style, as can be seen in figure 5.5.

Figure 5.5, p.58

These differing illustration styles within the same book offer the opportunity to compare the participants' responses, and explore the impact of style upon the experience of reading illustrated novels.

The illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo* are largely full page or partial page illustrations, though there are also instances of double page spreads which incorporate writing as well as illustrations. There are relatively few additional design features in comparison to *The Imaginary*, with no illustrated endpapers, folio illustrations, chapter heading illustrations, or paragraph break illustrations. As such, *The Midnight Zoo* offers the chance to explore a more simply designed book, and draw comparisons with the experiences of reading the more heavily designed *The Imaginary*.

### *5.1.1.4 Not As We Know It*

The final book in the study was *Not As We Know It*, written by Tom Avery and illustrated by Kate Grove (2015). This book was the most heavily illustrated, with 57% of the pages containing illustrations.

*Not As We Know It* tells the story of twin brothers Ned and Jamie. The two brothers are extremely close, and often go exploring together, especially to salvage things from the nearby Chesil Beach after a storm. One day, they find an

unusual humanoid sea-creature who is hurt, and they take it home and keep in an old bathtub in the garage. Ned has cystic fibrosis and is too unwell to go to school, so both boys are home-schooled, and often learn from stories their grandfather, a fisherman, tells them. In the stories, their grandfather tells them about mermaids and mermen who helped people, and Jamie becomes convinced that the creature, who the boys have called Leonard after Dr Leonard McCoy in *Star Trek*, is a merman who is going to save Ned. Ned and Leonard appear to have a special bond which allows them to communicate, and after healing Leonard, Ned returns him to the sea, but almost drowns in the process. Whilst Ned is at the hospital, he tells Jamie that Leonard's world under the sea is amazing. Knowing his cystic fibrosis is incurable and that he will die soon, Ned escapes and runs to the sea, where he meets Leonard, and they swim away. Jamie is left behind, and must adjust to life without his twin.

*Not As We Know It* is very varied in the pace and drive of the narrative. There are several exciting, suspenseful, and dramatic scenes, but alongside these are moderately paced depictions of the boys' everyday lives, as well as slow, contemplative moments, where Jamie considers Ned's illness and the ramifications of losing him. There are regular breaks from the main narrative where the boys listen to their grandfather's stories, and these stories signify their separation from the main narrative visually. This variety of pace provides opportunities to consider the experience of narrative rhythm and navigation. Alongside this, the book's discussions of brotherhood, friendship, illness, death, and what it means to be saved, provide ample opportunities for reflective and emotional responses.

The illustrations in *Not As We Know It* vary significantly in style, making this an interesting book in which to explore the relationship of illustrative style and writing content and tone. The first of the three styles combines reductive silhouettes of characters with reductive, suggestive backgrounds which generally contain a large number of illustrative elements, as can be seen in figure 5.6.

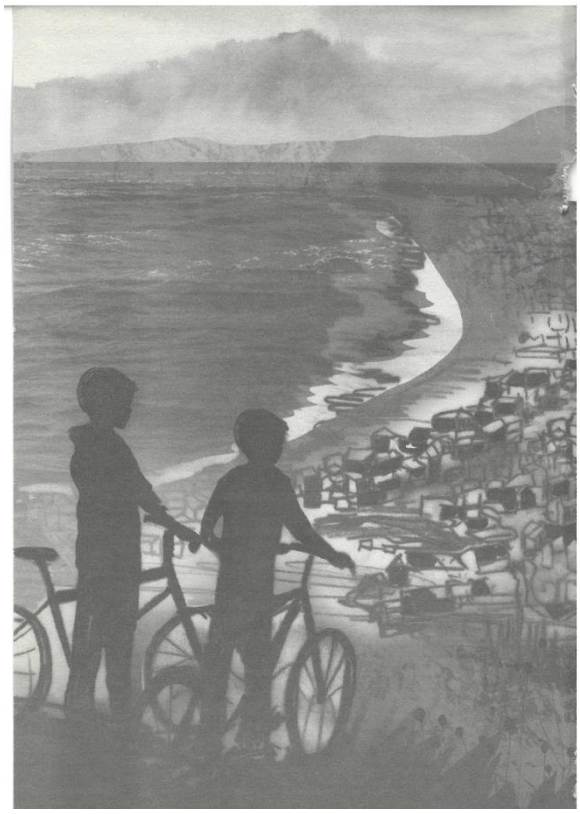


Figure 5.6, p.2, silhouette figures with detailed, reductive background

These illustrations use a wide variety of illustrative techniques, and have areas where the layering of different methods can be clearly seen. There are also instances of far more representative illustrations (see figure 5.7), which use detailed line work and shading, in contrast to the reductive nature of the other illustrations. The representative style is used not only for double, full, and partial page illustrations, but also for repeated illustrations of seashells which are incorporated next to the writing throughout the book.

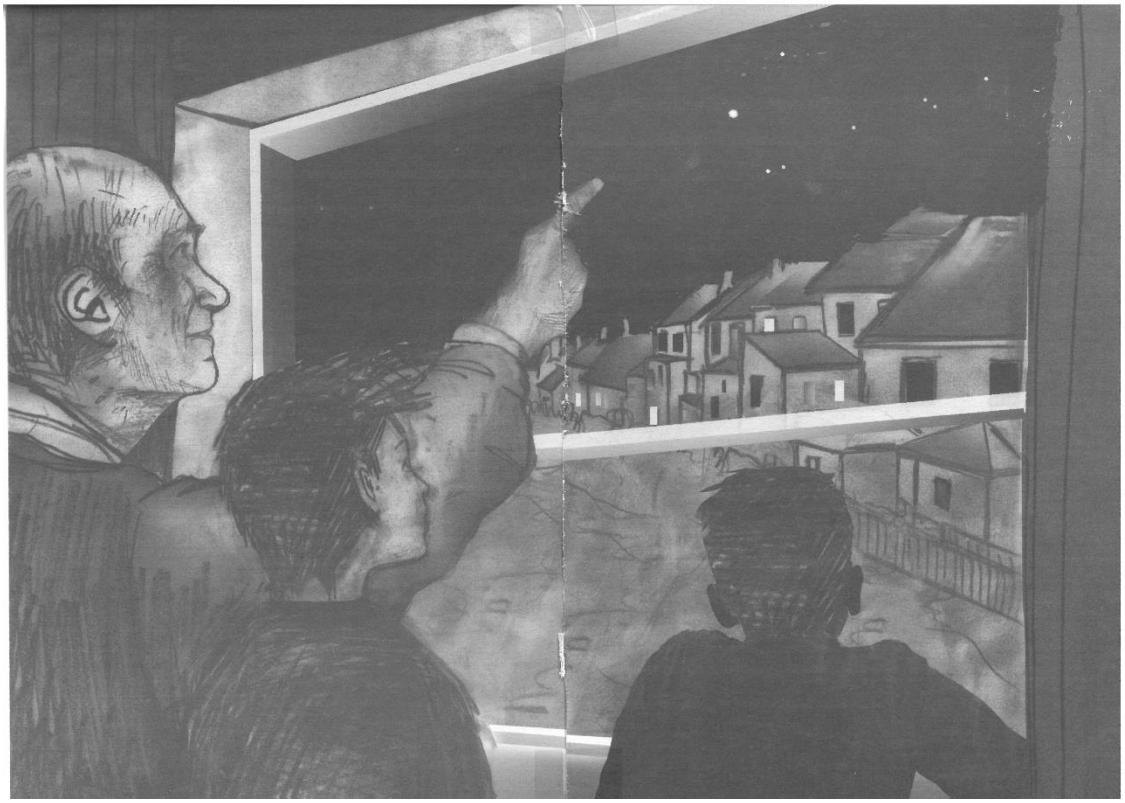
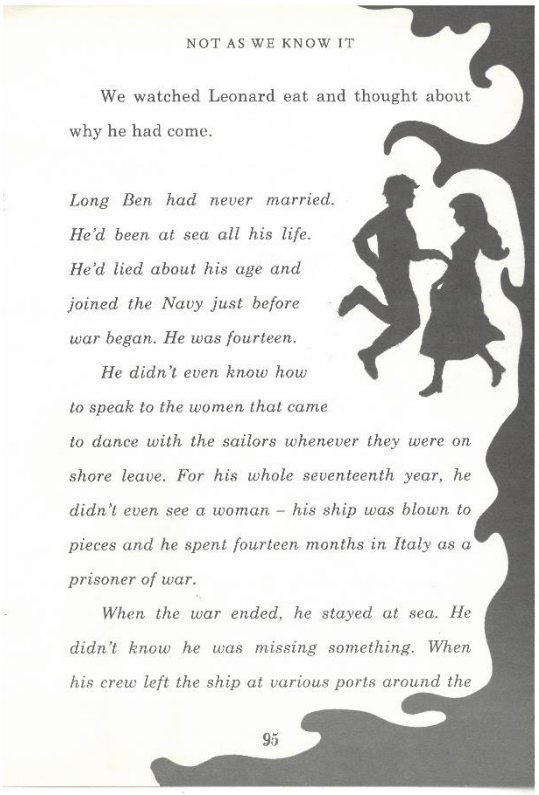


Figure 5.7, pp.152-153, example of representative drawing style using detailed line work and shading

Grandfather's stories offer an opportunity to explore the impact of yet another illustrative style, as well as considering design features in the broader sense. They are illustrated in a highly reductive, sharp silhouette style, surrounded by a dark, flowing yet highly distinct frame, and use an italic font for the writing, as can be seen in figure 5.8.



NOT AS WE KNOW IT

We watched Leonard eat and thought about why he had come.

*Long Ben had never married. He'd been at sea all his life. He'd lied about his age and joined the Navy just before war began. He was fourteen.*

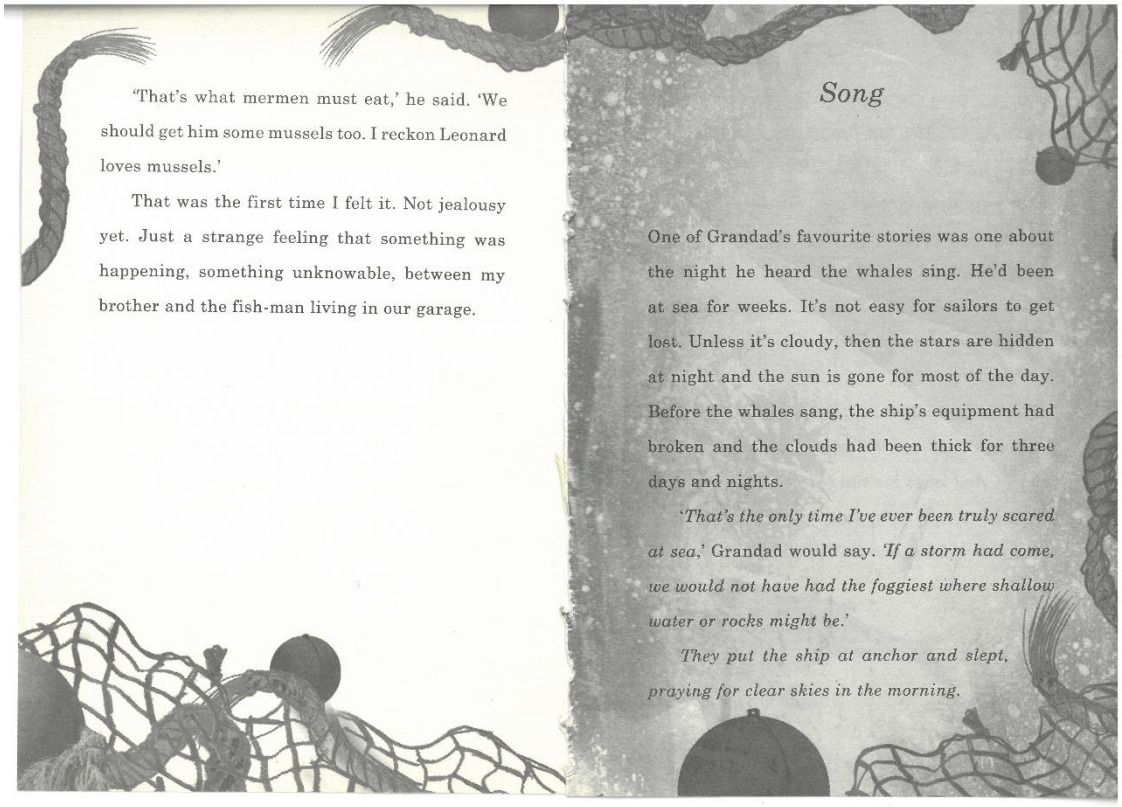
*He didn't even know how to speak to the women that came to dance with the sailors whenever they were on shore leave. For his whole seventeenth year, he didn't even see a woman – his ship was blown to pieces and he spent fourteen months in Italy as a prisoner of war.*

*When the war ended, he stayed at sea. He didn't know he was missing something. When his crew left the ship at various ports around the*

95

Figure 5.8, p.95, visual style used for Grandfather's stories

The final main style is that used for the illustrations which frame the first spread of each chapter. These incorporate both representative and reductive elements, with some aspects using silhouettes, others including detailed line work and shading, and the backgrounds providing additional texture (see figure 5.9). There are five different chapter heading frames, which are repeated up to six times throughout the book, though there are also two opening chapter spreads which use full illustrations rather than the repeated frames.



'That's what mermen must eat,' he said. 'We should get him some mussels too. I reckon Leonard loves mussels.'

That was the first time I felt it. Not jealousy yet. Just a strange feeling that something was happening, something unknowable, between my brother and the fish-man living in our garage.

*Song*

One of Grandad's favourite stories was one about the night he heard the whales sing. He'd been at sea for weeks. It's not easy for sailors to get lost. Unless it's cloudy, then the stars are hidden at night and the sun is gone for most of the day. Before the whales sang, the ship's equipment had broken and the clouds had been thick for three days and nights.

*'That's the only time I've ever been truly scared at sea,'* Grandad would say. *'If a storm had come, we would not have had the foggiest where shallow water or rocks might be.'*

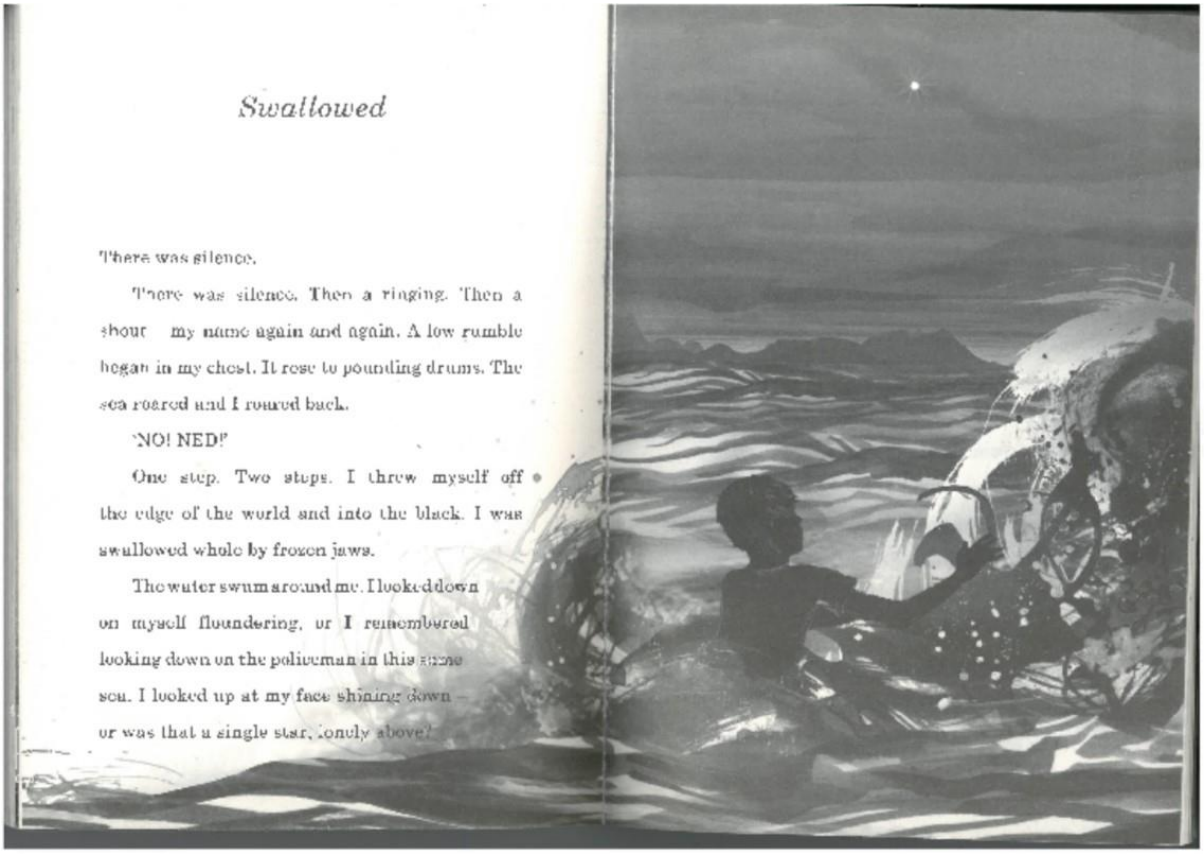
*They put the ship at anchor and slept, praying for clear skies in the morning.*

Figure 5.9, pp.48-49, chapter spread frame

As well as containing a variety of illustrative styles, *Not As We Know It* also contains a wide variety of layout features, including double, full, and partial page illustrations, as well as some instances of illustrations layered behind writing. The book also has several highly illustrated paratextual pages, including a dedication spread and a spread with a quote from *Star Trek*. In addition, there are a large number of repeated illustrations in the book, including several partial page illustrations of seashells which seem likely to be considered 'decorative', as they do not directly relate to the writing. This variety was likely to significantly affect the reading experience, providing opportunities to explore the impact of several features of illustrated novels that are not present in the other two books.

### *5.1.1.5 Example analysis*

As an example of the potential of these texts to provoke engaging responses, I have analysed the following spread from *Not as We Know It* (Avery & Grove, 2015, pp. 206–207).



*Swallowed*

There was silence.

There was silence. Then a ringing. Then a shout – my name again and again. A low rumble began in my chest. It rose to pounding drums. The sea roared and I roared back.

'NO! NED!'

One step. Two steps. I threw myself off the edge of the world and into the black. I was swallowed whole by frozen jaws.

The water swum around me. I looked down on myself floundering, or I remembered looking down on the policeman in this same sea. I looked up at my face shining down – or was that a single star, lonely above?

This spread comes towards the end of the book. Ned, knowing that he is dying, has chosen to join the merman Leonard in the sea rather than face a slow death, and has run away from the hospital. Jamie, realising what Ned intends to do, races to the beach on hearing that Ned has snuck out of the hospital, and sees Ned and Leonard in the water. Knowing why Ned has made this choice, but unwilling to let his twin go, Jamie jumps into the water.

This spread immediately attracts the attention as it deviates from the standard chapter opening frames which have been consistent from the second chapter up to this point. This different approach signals the importance of the moment, and invites the reader to look harder at the image in order to consider why this moment has been illustrated in this way. Whilst the spread is multimodal, the positioning of the image on the recto page, which the reader will see before the writing on the verso as the page is turned, places the illustration in a position of priority over the writing. The illustration is what Painter, Martin and Unsworth

(2014) refer to as 'unbound', in that it reaches to the edges of the page with no frame or margin, which they argue makes for a more immediate reading experience as no boundary is created between the story world and the world of the reader. Not only is the illustration unbound on the recto page, but it spills across onto the writing of the verso page. This further emphasises the importance of the image over the words, as the illustration can be seen as encroaching on the space allotted to the writing. Indeed, arguably this design puts the illustration and writing in conflict with each other, as where the two modes cross the writing becomes much harder to read. This conflict reflects the moment of conflict within the narrative, where Jamie understands the reasons for his brother's decision, but is not willing to let him go. The movement of the illustration from one page to the next also emphasises the power of the waves and Jamie's relative powerlessness before them, showing that he cannot fight his brother's death any more than he can fight the sea during a storm. The uncontainability of the illustration can also be read as a symbol of Jamie's grief, which is so all consuming that he is driven to risk his own life.

The turmoil of the water is also reflected in the structure of the writing, which uses short, sharp sentences to provide small snippets of what Jamie, the narrator of the book, is sensing: 'There was silence. Then a ringing.' (p.204). These slivers of insight reflect Jamie's inability to process everything that is happening at once, and his sense of overwhelming confusion is further conveyed through repetition which represents Jamie's thoughts as he tries to make sense of what he is experiencing.

The writing goes on to personify the sea, with the lines, 'The sea roared and I roared back', and 'I was swallowed whole by frozen jaws'. This personification increases the sense of immediacy and of Jamie's desperation, as his attempt to save Ned is turned into a personal battle with an active foe, a more tangible enemy that Jamie can fight than the slow death of terminal illness. The illustration echoes and reinforces this sense of struggle by positioning Jaime opposite a great wave, with his line of sight turned directly towards it, and the vectors of movement from the wave facing Jamie. As such, the focus of each element is on the other, demonstrating a powerful and conflicting relationship between the two. By presenting the active movement of the wave as directed towards Jamie, the sense of the sea as a personified agent created by the writing is confirmed by the illustration.

The illustration also demonstrates that this is not a battle between equals. Jamie is illustrated in a largely reductive style, almost fully silhouetted with brief, grey line work to indicate, though not fully represent, his features. This reductive style presents him as far less active than the highly detailed, swooping elements which go to make up the wave. Whilst Jamie is in a pose of activity, holding his arms up to the wave, his arms are bent at the elbow and his hands splayed as if asking the wave to stop, rather than held aloft with raised fists in an actively aggressive manner. This pose suggests timidity and supplication, and the acceptance that this is not a battle that Jamie can win, even if he did choose it by jumping into the sea. The wave, by contrast, is full of energy, with the multi-layered style giving a sense of chaotic, untameable force. It towers over Jamie from one side, using size to denote a power relation between the larger, more powerful wave and the smaller, powerless boy. On the other side, we get a sense of the wave rising again, encircling Jamie in a depiction of the writing's description of 'frozen jaws'. Jamie is trapped by the wave, and his relative lack of motion reflects his relative lack of power.

The positioning of the wave also clarifies the exact temporal moment from the writing which is being depicted. The illustration fills a gap between two sequential sentences: 'I threw myself off the edge of the world and into the black. I was swallowed whole by frozen jaws'. These two sentences move immediately from attack to defeat, from active aggression to submission. The illustration depicts the moment in between, where Jamie has the realisation that this is not something he can stop, and must accept it. As such, the illustration is providing a key moment of emotional development which is absent in the words. It is not just Jamie's inability to fight the sea which he must accept, but also the loss of Ned. The image represents that transition from active conflict to acceptance.

This transition is further emphasised by the third main element of the illustration, that of the star at the top of the page. In contrast to the wave's furious activity, the star feels utterly still. However, whilst Jamie's relative lack of action in comparison to the wave is a signal of lesser power, the stillness of the star represents not a lack of power, but an abundance of peace. The three elements of Jamie, the wave, and the star, create a circular focus group, with each element holding importance. This decentres the character of Jamie and places him in full relationship with his environment, both the actively moving danger of the wave, and the still serenity of the star above. The wave can be seen as representing

Jamie's anger and rage, both a threat to his safety and a depiction of his inner turmoil. The star can be viewed as the peace he can come to through acceptance of his brother's choice, and a sign that he can continue on alone. This notion of the star as Jamie standing alone is highlighted by the writing, which states 'was that a single star, lonely above?'. Both the writing and the composition of the illustration direct the reader's attention towards the star and emphasise its importance. Whilst the wave might tower over Jamie, the star shines above them both, and is centred in the page, demonstrating its importance. As a small, still element it may not be noticed first amidst the action of the wave, but the writing insists upon its recognition. As the last sentence on the page, this is likely to have the effect that the last element the reader will engage with is the image of the star, creating the notion that though Jamie has come to this point in anger and turmoil, what lies ahead is peace and acceptance.

This interaction between illustration and writing creates a powerful scene which has the potential to heighten the reader's experience of the moment of transition for Jamie from conflict to acceptance. Whilst each mode can be read and understood separately, it is the interaction between the two which helps to truly create the emotional journey of the moment.

Whilst this analysis suggests the potential of these texts to hold affordances for readers based on the interaction between writing and illustration, my position as a scholar immersed in multimodality and picturebook theories strongly influences my interpretation. Much of the language and elements of analysis I have employed comes from my familiarity with the work of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) and Painter et al. (2014), which my participants will not be familiar with. Instead, they will bring their own experiences and perspectives to their interactions with these texts, and through their discussions of these interactions I will be able to expand my own approaches to textual analysis beyond my traditional scholarly approach.

### 5.1.2 The setting

The research was conducted in a larger than average suburban primary school, with two classes per year group. At the time of the research the school was well rated by national inspection processes. The most recent inspection report (Ofsted, 2013) showed that pupils consistently achieved well in assessments and standardised tests. The majority of the pupils are from white British backgrounds,

with an average proportion of children from minority ethnic backgrounds and/or who have English as an additional language. The school has a lower than average proportion of pupils receiving Pupil Premium funding (for those from disadvantaged backgrounds), and an average number of pupils with special educational needs (Ofsted, 2013).

### 5.1.3 The participants

The research was conducted with year 5 (ages 9-10) children, drawn from two classes. This age group was selected as most children's illustrated novels are written for the 8-12 age range. Whilst this age range is by no means a definite indication of the ages of the children who read these books, it provides a useful guideline from which to select an appropriate sample. As the children needed to be sufficiently able readers to complete the reading tasks set as part of the research process, it was likely that there would be greater numbers of appropriately able children in a year 5 classroom than a year 4 classroom. Whilst there were likely to be even greater numbers of able readers in a year 6 classroom, due to statutory testing at the end of year 6, it was unlikely that I would be able to gain access to year 6 children for this project. I initially selected a sample of six children as this would have enabled me to gain a range of responses, whilst not being so large a number that it would prevent me from examining each child's response and context in depth. Six children also allowed for the possibility that one or two children might withdraw from the research, which was an important consideration as the research was planned to be conducted over the course of 6 to 9 months, depending on the preferred pace of the participants. During that time, it was possible that some children might move away or no longer wish to be involved in the project, and I felt that a minimum of four participants would still provide me with a sufficient range of responses to explore. Contingencies were put into place to recruit additional participants if more than two participants withdrew, or if participants withdrew very early on in the research process. Participants were chosen through theoretical sampling, where the children's teachers and I discussed the requirements and process of the project, and used our judgement about which children would be likely to manage the level of reading required, and would be likely to enjoy participating (Bloor & Wood, 2006). Three male and three female participants were selected. Whilst race, ethnicity and religion were not selecting factors, due to the relatively small pool available from

which to select participants, the participants did come from a diverse range of British backgrounds. None of the participants had disabilities, special educational needs, or spoke English as an additional language. Of the original six participants selected, two withdrew before the start of the research. One decided that they did not wish to take part, whilst the other did not gain parental consent. These two participants were replaced before the beginning of the project. Another participant withdrew a few weeks into the second case, and their data has not been included in the analysis.

The following section provides a sense of the of the individual participants in order to contextualise their responses. However, it must be noted that sociocultural context is highly complex, and each reading event is unique (Rosenblatt, 1978). The context provided below is not meant to indicate a reductive cause and effect between sociocultural context and response, but rather to provide a thick description (Geertz, 1973; Mackey, 2003) for each participant and their journey through the research process. The information in the sections below was provided by the participants. Included in each discussion is a diagram detailing the number of pages read and the interview length for each participant each week, to give a sense of how their reading practices affected their individual research journeys. For these diagrams, the purple lines indicate the initial and final interviews where we were not discussing a particular book, the blue lines indicate the reading and responses to *The Imaginary*, the green lines indicate *The Midnight Zoo*, and the yellow lines indicate *Not As We Know It*. This data is represented visually within this section in order to demonstrate relationships and comparisons in a clear format, and the details of the precise number of pages read and length of the interviews can be found in Appendix B.

#### *5.1.3.1 Alexander*

Alexander regularly read for pleasure before the beginning of the research. He often read illustrated novels, and especially enjoyed the *Captain Underpants* series by Dav Pilkey. He sometimes read with his parents or brothers, but strongly preferred reading alone. Alexander enjoyed reading non-fiction as well as fiction, especially books about science and space. He had use of a kindle, and enjoyed the different experience of reading on the kindle to reading physical books.

At the beginning of the research Alexander read infrequently, partially due to events at home and partially because he expressed a greater enjoyment of the later books. He missed two sessions due to illness and chose to temporarily withdraw on one occasion due to not having read much because of events at home. Whilst the length of his interviews generally corresponded roughly with the amount he had read, occasionally something would have particularly interested him in what he had read that week, and he would discuss that at length. By the fourth session, Alexander became more confident in his responses, responding at greater length to questions or prompts and being far more inclined to take direction over the course of the interviews.

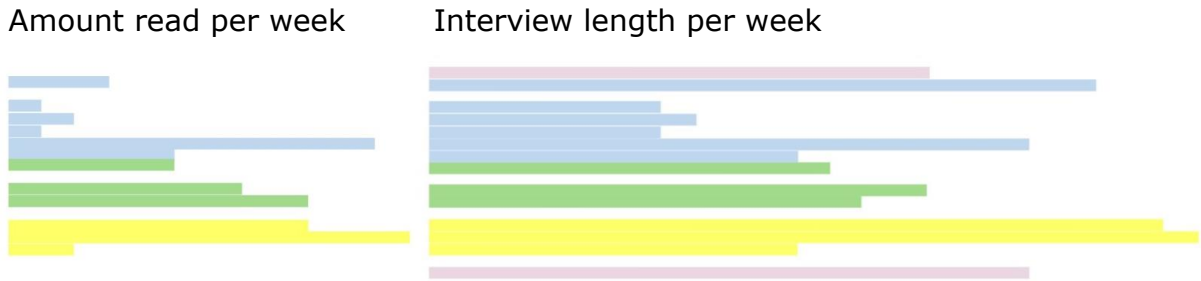



Figure 5.10, Alexander's research journey

In total, Alexander's interviews took 198.76 minutes. He spent 69.92 minutes discussing *The Imaginary*, 39.12 minutes discussing *The Midnight Zoo*, and 55.85 minutes discussing *Not As We Know It.* A detailed breakdown can be found in Appendix B.

Alexander rarely used his reading journal, only writing a brief comment after the first week of the project. His illustration annotations (see Appendix D) were similarly sparse, generally restricted to one sentence about aspects of the illustration he enjoyed.

### *5.1.3.2 Amy*

Amy was a regular reader, reading almost every night, although she didn't always read very much at a time. Amy particularly enjoyed funny books, or book with mysteries in them. Her current favourite books were *A Series of Unfortunate Events* by Lemony Snicket, and she enjoyed trying to work out the mysteries in the books.

Throughout the research, Amy's reading patterns were irregular. Often she would read very little in a week, and then other weeks she would read a huge amount. These differences were generally down to events at home, or whether she was reading other books at the same time. The amount she had read was usually reflected in the length of the interview discussion. Amy missed one week due to illness, but did not chose to temporarily withdraw. She was confident in her interview responses from the beginning, and often gave detailed responses to prompts or introduced new topics for discussion.

Amount read per week Interview length per week

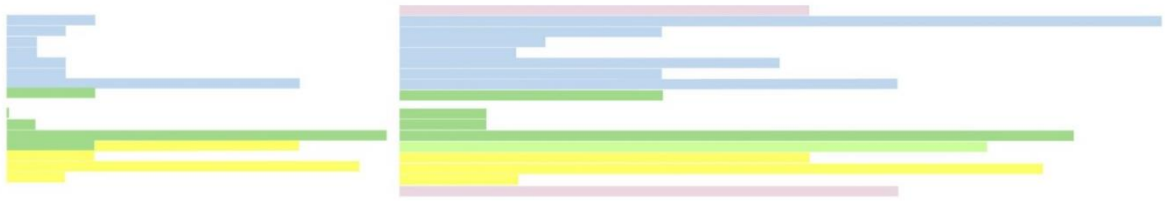


Figure 5.11, Amy's research journey.

In total, Amy's interviews took 207.72 minutes. She spent 81.87 minutes discussing *The Imaginary*, 36.49 minutes discussing *The Midnight Zoo*, and 59.47 minutes discussing *Not As We Know It*. A detailed breakdown can be found in Appendix B.

Amy initially chose to use her reading journal a lot, and she decorated and personalised it. During the first four weeks she would often come with drawings or notes she had either put directly into the journal or had stuck in (see Appendix D). After this time however, she stopped using the journal, as she felt it got in the way of her reading. This was partially because she was often reading in bed before going to sleep, and didn't want to have to put things in her journal when she was tired. Her illustration annotations (see Appendix D) were usually one-word labels of what she thought the illustrations were depicting, without comment as to her opinions.

### *5.1.3.3 Leo*

Leo read regularly in school, and occasionally at home before going to bed. He would sometimes read books with his mother if they were too hard for him to read on his own, such as *The Hobbit*. Leo particularly enjoyed fantasy books with monsters and action in them, including the *Harry Potter* series, and also liked the

*Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series. He preferred reading books with male characters, and disliked anything to do with romance. He had only recently started reading for pleasure.

Leo read at a fairly consistent pace throughout the course of the project, and at times became slightly competitive with Alexander as to who had read further. He withdrew temporarily on three occasions when he hadn't read much that week, preferring to discuss longer sections of the book rather than just a few pages. The length of his interviews generally corresponded with the amount that he had read that week. Leo was confident in his views and opinions from the beginning of the project, often bringing up new topics and frequently starting the discussion as soon as I saw him, before I was able to turn on the recording equipment.

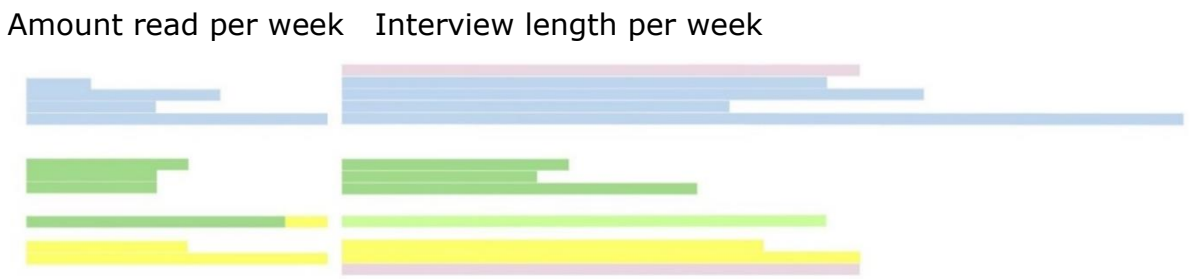



Figure 5.12, Leo's research journey

In total, Leo's interviews took 168 minutes. He spent 70.55 minutes discussing *The Imaginary*, 22.98 minutes discussing *The Midnight Zoo*, which he didn't particularly like as a book, and 43.58 minutes discussing *Not as We Know It*. A detailed breakdown can be found in Appendix B.

Leo initially used his reading journal very briefly to write down a few thoughts, which tended to involve emotional responses: things he liked or disliked, and moments he felt were creepy or shocking (see Appendix D). However, he stopped using his journal after a few weeks, as he didn't think it was particularly helpful in helping him to either explore or remember his responses. Leo did, however, find annotating the illustrations helpful, as he felt they encouraged him to look at the illustrations more closely and think about them more deeply. His annotations (see Appendix D) often went beyond simple labels, and included speculation about characters or events, links to the writing, or information about how long he spent looking at an illustration.

### *5.1.3.4 Nicole*

Nicole regularly read for pleasure, but she did not usually read books with many illustrations. She would read every day in the car on the journey to and from school, which was about half an hour's trip each way. She usually read on her own, rarely reading with parents. She particularly liked reading adventure and mystery books, and her favourite series' were *Harry Potter* and *Alex Rider*.

Nicole's reading patterns were different for each book, and this was reflected in both her interview lengths and the depth of her responses. She read *The Imaginary* over the course of five weeks; *The Midnight Zoo* over the course of three weeks, and *Not as We Know It* in one week over the half term holiday. The length of time spent reading each book corresponded fairly closely with the time she reflected on each book in interviews, as her interviews for *The Imaginary* took 60.41 minutes in total, her interviews for *The Midnight Zoo* took 27.71 minutes in total, and her single interview for *Not As We Know It* took 17.42 minutes. Her total interview time was 132.47 minutes (a full breakdown can be found in Appendix B). Correspondingly, her responses to *The Imaginary* were the most detailed and thoughtful, whilst her responses to *Not As We Know It* were relatively brief.

Amount read per week

Interview length per week

Figure 5.13, Nicole's research journey

Nicole missed one interview session due to illness, and did not choose to temporarily withdraw at any time. Of the five participants, Nicole was the least inclined to lead the interviews, and whilst she often commented in depth on topics and did bring her own perspectives to the interviews, she rarely introduced new topics for discussion.

Nicole chose not to use her reading journal to record responses, and was sporadic in her annotation of illustrations (Appendix D). She did not annotate all of the illustrations she was given, and the level of detail she included on her annotations was extremely variable. Nicole chose to only annotate two illustrations

from *The Imaginary*, but she annotated them in depth, including emotional responses, speculation about characters or events, and discussions about what she felt the roles of the illustrations were. For *The Midnight Zoo*, Nicole only annotated one illustration very briefly, with two labels identifying what she thought elements of the illustration were. Whilst her interview responses to *Not As We Know It* were fairly brief, Nicole annotated more illustrations for that book than either of the others, a total of six illustrations. Though her annotations for *Not As We Know It* were not as in depth as the ones for *The Imaginary*, they included labels, discussions of the roles of the illustrations and the type-setting for the words, speculation about things depicted in the illustrations, and questions where there were elements which she was unsure of.

#### *5.1.3.5 Sophia*

Sophia read for pleasure every day both at school and at home at night. She would often read with her parents as well as on her own, but generally preferred reading alone. She particularly enjoyed fantasy books and funny books, and her favourite authors were Roald Dahl and David Walliams.

Sophia read differing amounts each week, generally influenced by events at home and how much time she had available to read. She often read the books together with her mother, and they would talk about the books as they read them. Even when she had not read much in a week, she would often engage in great detail with what she had read, and as a result her interviews tended to be quite long. She spent the most time in interviews of any of the participants, and began leading her interviews from our second session together. Sophia missed one session due to illness, and did not choose to temporarily withdraw at any point.

Amount read per week

Interview length per week

Figure 5.14, Sophia's research journey

As with Nicole, Sophia read *Not As We Know It* in one week over the half term holiday, and therefore her interview time on that book was significantly shorter than the others. In total, Sophia's interviews took 214.37 minutes. Her interviews

for *The Imaginary* took 70.22 minutes, her interviews for *The Midnight Zoo* took 70.31 minutes, and her interviews for *Not As We Know It* took 33.20 minutes. A detailed breakdown can be found in Appendix B.

Sophia used her reading journal briefly for each book, and included a combination of drawings and writing to record her thoughts (see Appendix D). She included more thoughts on *The Imaginary* and *Not As We Know It* (which she really enjoyed) than *The Midnight Zoo* (which she enjoyed less and found a bit difficult to read). Her reflections generally relate to elements which she liked, though she also discusses aspects which confused her or which she found difficult. Sophia only completed a few illustration annotations for *The Imaginary*, which consisted of simple labels (see Appendix D), but soon stopped completing these as she didn't find them helpful.

## 5.2 From analysis to findings

### 5.2.1 The coding process

The initial round of coding was an open coding process, following the constant comparative approach recommended by Charmaz (2014) and outlined in section 4.11. During the initial coding process, 81 codes were produced (Appendix E). These codes were then analysed and reduced, by discarding any codes with fewer than three instances in the data; discarding any codes I had used purely for administrative, rather than analytical, purposes; combining any codes dealing with the same phenomena; and ensuring that the remaining codes would allow me to address my research question. This process resulted in 60 remaining codes (Appendix E), and also required me to reconsider my research themes. From my review of relevant literature, I had identified meaning making, emotional responses, reflective responses, and creative responses as key areas to explore. Following the initial coding, these were revised, and my key areas became reading process, meaning making, critical and creative engagement, and aesthetic response. This revision of my areas of focus was a direct result of my participatory symbolic interactionist approach, which allowed me to follow the priorities of my participants rather than restricting their responses to my own preconceptions. Following the initial coding and reduction of codes, I then undertook selective coding, so as to focus on the prominent themes developed through the first round

of coding (Charmaz, 2014). The responses in the participants' journals and the annotated illustrations were also analysed using this method, to provide a unified approach to analysis which allowed for the comparison of themes across different forms of data in order to build a fuller picture of the participants' responses to illustrations in novels (Richards & Morse, 2013).

### 5.2.2 Theory building

I undertook an iterative method of theory building, utilising a grounded theory approach of induction (Kelle, 2019): moving from specific empirical observations (codes) of the participants' responses to *The Imaginary*, which were networked in order to generate initial hypotheses which described or explained the observations. I then tested these hypotheses by exploring how they applied to the participants' responses to *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It*, particularly examining consistencies found across the responses to all three books as well as responses which seemed to be prompted by the individual qualities of each book and reading experience. This developmental process led to the creation of twenty-two partial theories of the affordances of illustrated novels. This method contrasts with that of deduction, where a researcher begins with a theoretical position and then 'descends' to the level of empirical observation in order to test the theory (Kelle, 2019, p. 81). As an exploratory study, this research began with the aim of building theory rather than testing theory, and as such has taken an inductive approach to theory building. From these partial theories I then developed a model to represent the theories in a way which highlights the key components and their connections (Shoemaker, Tankard, & Lasorsa, 2004).

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of this work, at this stage it is important to clarify the terms being used, specifically those of hypothesis, theory, and model. As Shoemaker et al. (2004) note, hypothesis and theory are often used somewhat interchangeably in popular discourse, as both aim to explain phenomena, and are never completely proven (when a theory has enough evidence to consider it to be proven, it becomes a law). However, there is a distinction between the terms. A hypothesis is a statement which asks to be tested, and as such lacks enough evidence to be considered a theory. By testing the hypotheses generated by the responses to the first case against the following cases, they can be raised to the status of theories by establishing the 'general principles' by which responses to reading illustrated novels can be described or explained (Kelle, 2019, p. 81).

Moving from hypothesis to theory can therefore be seen as a key stage in the inductive theory building process.

As discussed in section 4.4.2 of the methodology, I am not aiming to create 'total' theory, as I am drawing on the symbolic interactionist research tradition (Blumer, 1969; Dennis, 2011; Mead, 1934) and adopting the sociocultural view of reading (Gee, 2000; Snow & Sweet, 2003). Rather, I develop what I refer to as 'partial theories' (see discussion in section 4.4.2) which are presented as a scaffold for understanding the affordances of illustrated novels, within the understanding that each reading experience will be unique due to the individual nature of the book, the reader, and the reading event.

In addition, these theories can be described as mid-range in scope, as they engaging with the particular phenomenon of reading illustrated novels in an instrumental, rather than intrinsic, manner (Stake, 1995). Unlike micro-theories, which deal with a particular phenomenon within a particular situation, and are therefore common within instrumental case studies, mid-range theories are more broadly applicable than micro-theories and are therefore particularly useful in practice disciplines, such as teaching (Ayres, 2008). As such, the scope of these partial theories is particularly appropriate for this work which aims to support the development of classroom practice. Mid-range theories also remain testable, which make them appropriate for the symbolic interactionist aim of a continually developing approach to theory. This distinguishes them from 'grand theories', which aim to develop overall explanations for a discipline, and are often used as organisational frameworks or lenses through which to explore particular phenomena. As such, grand theories are untestable, but often prove valuable as foundations for mid-range theory development (Ayres, 2008). Examples of grand theories include Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977), and arguably also theories such as feminism and Marxism (Ayres, 2008). Within this research, the grand theory being used is symbolic interactionism, which supports the development of the mid-range partial theories on the reading of illustrated novels.

From these partial theories I created a three-stage model of response to illustrated novels. Unlike the ascending movement from codes to hypotheses to partial theories, this represents a sideways movement of theory building. Models are not the same as theories, but can be employed in order to represent theories, and provide a level of clarity about the ways in which the theories interact (Shoemaker et al., 2004). Given the large number of partial theories generated

through the research process, the model provides a useful overview which can form the basis of action for scholars or practitioners who wish to utilise it in their own work (Kelle, 2019).

# 6. Generating hypotheses

## 6.1 Introduction

This section discusses the findings from the first book we read, *The Imaginary* by A.F. Harrold and Emily Gravett (2015), and from these discussions hypotheses are generated. These hypotheses are then applied to the responses to *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It* in the next chapter, where partial theories of response are developed and a model of reading illustrated novels is constructed.

As described in section 5.2.1, this chapter explores four main themes: reading process, meaning making, critical and creative responses, and aesthetic responses. Within each theme, I explore each child's responses separately, in order to highlight the individuality of each reading experience, before bringing together the responses to summarise each theme within this case. These discussions are followed by a presentation of the hypotheses generated through the discussion of these findings. The differing lengths of each section are directly related to the amount of data provided by each child on each theme.

The discussions of *The Imaginary* were by far the longest, totalling approximately 5.8 hours, compared to approximately 3.3 hours for *The Midnight Zoo* and approximately 3.5 hours for *Not As We Know It* (a full, accurate breakdown can be found in Appendix B). This is likely to be partially due to the fact that, as the first book, I had a larger role in directing the course of the interviews for the first few sessions. I therefore asked more questions than later on within the discussions for *The Imaginary*, or in discussions for the other two books, by which point the participants were leading the interview discussions. However, it may also reflect the style and level of detail of the illustrations, which the participants discussed at length, and the length of time the participants took reading the book, which was generally longer for each participant than the later books. In taking longer reading this book, there were more weeks for us to discuss the book, which appears to have led to a more detailed discussion of the sections of the book the participants read each week.

The references provided indicate the transcripts of each interview, so TI:1 indicates *The Imaginary*, session 1, and TMZ:1 indicates *The Midnight Zoo*, session 1. As Alexander finished reading *The Imaginary* later than the other participants, the first interview we had about *The Midnight Zoo* also included some of his

thoughts on the end of *The Imaginary*. The participants did not all take part in interviews every week, so no child has interviews with all numbers (for example, Alexander did not participate in week 2, and therefore has no interview coded as TI:2); however, all interviews on *The Imaginary* have been included in this discussion. Full details of interview attendance and length can be found in Appendix B. Where discussions relate to specific illustrations in *The Imaginary*, page numbers have been provided. Quotes included in this discussion have been lightly edited for clarity.

## 6.2 Reading Process

### 6.2.1 Participant responses

#### *6.2.1.1 Alexander*

Alexander talked a great deal about the process of reading the book. He largely read the book in order, although he did not look at the internal paratext, including the poem, starting instead with the introduction (TI:1). He also spent some time flicking through the book to see what was to come, and reported wanting to read on to get to an illustration of Mr Bunting attacking an imaginary friend (TI:5). Alexander described two other occasions when he felt the content of the book was encouraging him to keep reading, such as in this comment:

> I thought that the first, when I did get to this page here (p.34), I wanted to keep reading cause of the picture. I thought the illustration wanted me to keep reading (TI:3, lines 71-73).

These comments demonstrate that, for Alexander, the book had a strongly forward moving narrative drive. It is interesting that he has specifically commented upon the illustrations as making him want to read further, as Nodelman (1988) suggests that because of the different reading processes involved in reading illustrations and reading writing, illustrations interrupt the climactic flow of writing rather than adding to the forward momentum. Whalley and Chester (1988), however, argue that illustrations, unlike pictures, are part of the sequence of narrative events and therefore contribute to the narrative flow rather than being separate to it. It is possible, therefore, that for Alexander, the sequential, narrative role of the illustrations was more significant to his experience of narrative rhythm than the differing physical processes of reading.

Alexander also commented that the illustrations constantly drew his attention. He frequently stated that when a page contained both writing and illustration, he always looked at the illustration first, even if only briefly. He was not certain why he did this, but speculated that the illustrations drew his attention because they were bold:

> Looked at the picture first, I'm not quite sure why I looked at it, it was just like a bold thing in the middle. So people normally want to look at the bold things, the clear things first (TI:1, lines 166-172).

These comments reflect Mackey's (2007) observations that texts play a key role in attracting the attention of the reader. In this case, it appears that the illustrations have provided a strong attractive force, which has significantly impacted upon Alexander's reading experience by directing his attention. This pull of attention he felt towards the illustrations was not always welcome, however. Alexander said he particularly disliked the illustrations surrounding the numbers at the beginning of chapters, which he frequently described as 'distracting'. Part of this negative response seemed to come from his feeling that whilst the illustrations drew his attention, he did not feel that they were always providing information which was necessary for the story, a dissatisfaction he reported multiple times. At other times, Alexander described looking between the writing and the illustrations as helpful because it allowed him to understand the story better. On these occasions he did not appear to consider the drawing of his attention towards the illustrations as a negative. This framing of the value of illustrations suggests that for Alexander, the most important illustrative quality was its functionality in supporting the narrative, rather than its aesthetic qualities. It is possible that this viewpoint reflects the valuing of primarily written narratives over visual images which occurs in English classrooms based on the priorities of the National Curriculum (Department for Education, 2014). It may also indicate a lack of visual literacy, with Alexander focusing his attention on the 'decoding' aspect of engaging with illustrations (Salisbury, 2007, p. 6), rather than considering the aesthetic qualities.

Alexander also felt that the page layout played a significant role in his reading process. He stated that when illustrations were layered behind the writing, both the writing and the illustration became extremely difficult to read, and on one occasion reported physically covering part of the page to make it easier for

him to focus on the writing (TI:1). He also disliked the paragraph break illustrations, commenting:

> The only other things was that these tiny pictures in between these lines, they kind of distract me because I got half way through a sentence once where there was a picture, but then I got distracted looking at the picture and I had to read the whole two last sentences to know what was happening again (TI:6, lines 325-329).

Alexander expressed a strong preference for illustrations which were distinctly separate from the writing, either as a double page spread, or a partial page illustration which did not cover the writing (TI:5,6; TMZ:1). It seems likely that these preferences may have been linked to the different reading processes involved in reading writing and reading illustrations, and the impossibility of reading both at once (Arizpe & Styles, 2016; Goldsmith, 1984b; Kress, 2010), as well as the very strong attractive pull that Alexander said the illustrations had on his attention.

Alongside layout, Alexander often stated that illustrations with a high level of detail, such as a patterned carpet (pp.42-43), and leaves on a tree (p.76), drew his attention to a degree which he found 'distracting'; though in another highly detailed illustration of a cat in an alleyway (p.82), Alexander reported that the attraction of the level of detail was 'helpful'. His distinction between whether the attraction of his attention was 'distracting' or 'helpful' seems to have been linked to his perception as to whether the information carried by the detail was important for the narrative. This distinction again indicates that Alexander may have been prioritising the narrative and decoding aspects of reading over the aesthetic experience (Kim et al., 2017), a supposition supported by his comments that he felt he spent longer looking at illustrations which he felt were important to the story than those which he did not. However, it may also reflect a level of difficulty in making meaning from the illustrations, as he regularly reported spending longer looking at the illustrations which he felt had a greater level of detail, and actively trying to work out what they represented. This suggests that difficulties in reading illustrations may be compounded by the level of detail the illustration contains, and highlights the potential impact of varying levels of visual literacy on the experience of reading illustrated novels.

Colour was also an important factor in attracting Alexander's attention. Discussing a highly-coloured double-page spread depicting imaginary creatures in a library (pp.90-91), Alexander commented:

> It kind of distracted me because I was used to having black and white pictures, but when it showed up in the book my eyes were just distracted and they were looking at everything that was colourful (TI:6, lines 120-123).

This direction of attention based on the unexpected inclusion of colour may at least in part be due to a human tendency to focus on objects which cause surprise or differ from our expectations (Itti & Baldi, 2009). Alexander also stated that his attention was drawn to illustrations of things which were unexpected or unfamiliar (TI:6), which is similarly characteristic of Becker, Pashler & Lubin's (2007) findings that people are more likely to focus on elements of an image which they find strange, unusual, or unexpected.

Alexander's characterisation of certain illustrations as 'distracting' may also have been in part due to his general lack of ease at switching between reading writing and reading illustrations. As well as his comments about the difficulty of reading illustrations beneath the writing, and paragraph break illustrations making him lose his place in the writing, he also stated:

> Sometimes when I look at pictures, when I read like the next page it gets a bit harder to read because I kept thinking of the picture (TI:6, lines 202-203).

As a result of this difficulty, he said he would have preferred the book to have fewer, simpler illustrations, and a greater level of description in the writing (TI:3,6; TMZ:1). Alexander's experience of difficulty with switching between reading writing and reading illustrations is likely to be reflective of the different processes involved in reading writing and reading illustrations (Arizpe & Styles, 2016; Goldsmith, 1984b; Kress, 2010), and it may also indicate that reading illustrated novels requires a particular form of fluency in switching between reading illustrations and reading writing.

Despite his difficulties with reading, Alexander said that did not feel the book should not have had any illustrations at all, as he did find them useful, particularly in scaffolding the picturing process (TI:1,4,5). He commented that he did not have naturally strong picturing abilities, and often found it hard to picture characters and settings in books he had not previously read (TI:1). By providing a mental picture for him, the illustrations helped to clarify details about the

characters, setting, and objects within the story (TI:1,4,5). These comments suggest that Graham's (1990) findings that illustrations of poems could support the picturing process may also be applicable to illustrations in novels, and that for those with weaker picturing skills, illustrations may be a useful scaffold which support readers to develop their own mental pictures.

#### *6.2.1.2 Amy*

Amy explored some of the paratext at the beginning of the book, including the illustrations on the title pages and the poem, though she did not spend time looking at the end papers (TI:1). Generally she read the book in order, though she did return to the illustration of the hand (p.2) after reading about Rudger fading away (TI:4). This suggests that Amy's experience of navigating the text was similar to Alexander's, in that she progressed through the book largely in keeping with the forward moving narrative, with the exception of one instance where the events of the book prompted her to revisit an earlier moment.

Like Alexander, illustrations seem to have drawn Amy's attention during reading. When a spread contained both writing and illustrations, Amy regularly said she felt that she would always look at the illustration first, and commented:

> I think that usually I would look at the picture first, no matter where it is, because it usually just catches my eye, and it's much bigger than everything else so I just, if I was looking at this, I would just see the picture straight away, and usually I would kind of look at it first, and then read the text and if it has some description about it, I'd read it, and then I'd go back to see if I'd actually missed it, and usually I do (TI:1, lines 308-314).

The way in which Amy describes the illustrations catching her eye may be a further reflection of the human tendency to look at things which are unusual (Becker et al., 2007; Itti & Baldi, 2009). When reading an illustrated novel, a large portion of time is spent reading writing, which in English follows a continuous left-to-right, top-to-bottom path (Kress, 2003). Illustrations provide an interruption to that path, and as such may attract attention due to them representing a difference from the current process. This attraction of the unexpected was also reflected by Amy's statement that her attention was also drawn by things which she felt were strange or unusual, and that she spent longer looking at those aspects of an illustration than aspects which she felt were familiar (TI:5).

Amy also reported looking back and forth between the illustrations and the writing on several occasions, and commented that this process allowed her to see more details on the illustrations. However, she stated that she did not do this with the illustrations at the beginning of chapters (TI:1), which she rarely mentioned. She also felt that she 'didn't really notice' the folio illustrations on the recto pages (TI:1, line 204), and only mentioned them when directly asked about them. As with Alexander's experience, this behaviour may represent a prioritising of the narrative function of illustrations over the aesthetic function (Kim et al., 2017; Salisbury, 2007). This prioritising of attention also highlights the importance of a reader's choice of where to direct their attention, reflecting Berger's (1972) assertion that when examining images, looking is an act of choice. Amy's choice to direct her attention more towards some illustrations that others indicates that the role of choice is not only crucial when examining images, but also when reading illustrated novels.

Detail was an important factor in maintaining Amy's attention, and she regularly reported spending more time looking at illustrations she thought were highly detailed than those she considered to have few details. She also commented more than once that sometimes the writing encouraged her to look back at an illustration for details she thought she may have missed on her first look. Unlike Alexander, who found switching between reading writing and reading illustrations difficult, Amy found alternating between the two different modes helpful, commenting:

> I think that it actually helps me understand what's going on and usually now, the more that happens to me, the more I start to look in more detail at the picture, so I feel like it's helping me (TI:1, lines 324-326).

These comments align with Perkins' (1994) assertion that reading images requires attention and deliberation. As such, it is not surprising that illustrations which Amy perceived to have a high level of detail required more time and attention to read than illustrations which are perceived as having a lower level of detail, as there will be fewer elements to explore and deliberate upon in less complex illustrations. Amy's comments about looking between the two modes also reflects Barthes' (1977) notion of relay and the potential confirmation of meaning which can be developed through the juxtaposition of writing and illustration (Nodelman, 1988), which will be discussed further in the next section on meaning making. However, they also highlight the difference in experience between switching between

reading writing and reading illustrations that Amy and Alexander had. This further suggests that the process of switching between reading writing and reading illustrations may be a skill which requires a certain level of fluency, and that this fluency plays an important role in the process of reading illustrated novels.

Alongside this, Amy often reported spending longer looking at illustrations when she was uncertain about their meaning. However, this attention due to uncertainty about what an illustration was depicting was not consistent, as she also commented about the chapter heading illustration at the beginning of chapter one (p.5):

> I looked at it, and I didn't know what was going on, so I just carried on reading (TI:1, lines 231-232).

This greater attention given to illustrations where the meaning was uncertain is again reflective of Perkins' (1994) discussion of the importance of deliberation in meaning making. It is also possible that the different roles played by uncertainty here was due again to Amy prioritising attention towards the illustrations which directly featured events that were also mentioned in the writing, as she discussed these illustrations in detail, whilst almost never mentioning the illustrations at the beginning of chapters (Kim et al., 2017; Salisbury, 2007).

Amy also felt that the illustrations influenced her picturing process. She often pictured the story when she read, commenting:

> Usually, if there's quite a lot of description sometimes, well I usually do all the time, but sometimes it's just quite hard, and then if there is actually a picture, I don't think that's what it looked like (TI:1, lines 43-45).

These discrepancies between her own mental pictures and the illustrations influenced her reading in a number of ways. On pages 8-9, the illustration of the wardrobe was similar to Amy's mental picture of it, but it provided further details which she hadn't pictured, such as the decorations on the wardrobe door (TI:1). In this instance, Amy said she found these discrepancies helpful to her in imagining the scene. However, in another case, the illustration of Mr Bunting and his imaginary friend (p.21), Amy dismissed the depiction in the illustration as she felt her mental picture was more accurate to the writing, and ascribed the difference to the technical difficulty of illustrating the scene, commenting:

> They probably just couldn't like, show it very well, since the sleeve's up there (TI:1, lines 479-480).

Amy also felt that in one instance, that of an imaginary gramophone (pp.90-91), without the illustration she would have had great difficulty in mentally picturing the character at all (T1:5). This difficulty in picturing the unfamiliar corresponds with the concept that mental pictures are largely developed from our real-world experience (Dekker et al., 2014; Sadoski et al., 1990; Speer et al., 2009), and indicates that illustrations may be particularly helpful in supporting the picturing of unfamiliar elements.

These differing responses to the interaction between Amy's mental pictures and the illustrations seem to be influenced by how confident she felt in her own pictures. Where Amy was confident that her mental picture was 'accurate', she was less likely to accept the visual depiction in the illustration. However where she was uncertain about her own mental picture, or where the differences augmented rather than conflicted with her picture, Amy was happy to accept the detail provided by the illustration. The interaction between her differing mental picture and the illustration did not always lead Amy to having a certain outcome about whether a depiction was 'correct' or 'incorrect', however, as she commented that she did not necessarily think one version was better than another (TI:2). These interactions with illustrations represent a very different consideration of the role of illustrations in picturing than that presented by Bettelheim (1976) and Mendelsund (2014). Rather than seeing the conflicting images as an imposition or barrier to the picturing process, Amy had a far more complex relationship with the illustrations. The illustrations were able to enhance her own pictures, sometimes she simply chose to ignore the illustration and retained her own picture unchanged, and she was also able to consider the two competing images in parallel, with neither taking precedence over the other.

#### *6.2.1.3 Leo*

Leo took a less linear approach to reading *The Imaginary* than the other participants. He began by scrolling through the book, and reported frequently flipping back and forth during the reading process. Leo looked briefly at the paratext, including the endpapers, when he first began reading the book (TI:1), but also returned to the cover, the blurb, and the back cover at different points in his reading (TI:1,2,4). Leo enjoyed the process of moving back and forth in the book, saying:

> It's kind of like, makes you more excited and you want to read on and think, is there more of this (TI:3, lines 364-365).

This difference of approach to navigation to that of Alexander and Amy highlights the importance of choice in the reading process (Hodnett, 1982). Where Alexander's and Amy's experiences suggested the importance of the forward momentum of the narrative in influencing navigation, Leo's experience demonstrates that despite this textual guidance, navigation is still an individual choice of the reader.

Like Alexander and Amy, Leo noticed the folio illustrations, but said he spent little time looking at them, as he felt they were there for decorative, rather than narrative, reasons (TI:1). This again demonstrates a value hierarchy of narrative over aesthetic function (Kim et al., 2017; Salisbury, 2007). Otherwise, Leo found the illustrations to be 'eye-catching', a term he used eight times over the course of four interviews. As a result he regularly stated that he always looked at the illustration first when there was both writing and illustration in a spread, mirroring the experience of Alexander and Amy. This tendency further suggests that the illustrations in illustrated novels are a key aspect of the way in which the medium attracts a reader's attention (Mackey, 2007). After initially looking at the illustration first, Leo frequently described switching between reading the writing and the illustrations, which he described as seeing how the two were 'related' on three separate occasions. As with Amy's experience, this behaviour not only reflects the role of relay between the two modes (Barthes, 1977; Nodelman, 1988), but also further demonstrates the importance of fluency in switching between reading writing and reading illustrations, as Leo reported no difficulties with this process, even when illustrations were layered beneath the writing (TI:2,4). He discussed this switching in positive terms, in contrast to the difficulties which Alexander reported.

Whilst Leo largely discussed his reading process in functional terms, he also made reference to aesthetic experience. He particularly enjoyed an illustration which had a powerful aesthetic impact as soon as the page was turned (p.47), as he said it made him more interested, so he then wanted to read more to find out about that illustration (TI:2). This comment highlights the interconnected nature of the reading experience (Mackey, 2007, 2011; Sipe, 2008), challenging the distinction between narrative function and aesthetic experience that appeared to be reflected in the responses of Alexander and Amy. In this instance, the aesthetic

impact of the illustration led to a narrative function, driving forward the narrative momentum (J. I. Whalley & Chester, 1988), rather than arresting it (Nodelman, 1988).

Whilst Leo felt that all of the illustrations immediately drew his attention, they did not all sustain his attention, and he spent much longer engaging with some illustrations than others. Colour was a particularly attractive feature for Leo, and he commented several times on the role of colour maintaining his attention, such as in this discussion:

> I loved like the colour in some of the pictures because, if you see some of the others they have no colour that much at all, but then in one of the pictures, it was like, really really colourful, and I looked at that one much much more cause it had more colour, and trying to find all the details (TI:3, lines 5-9).

Again, this comment represents the importance of aesthetic experience to the reading process. In this instance, it was the aesthetic pleasure that Leo took from the presence of colour which encouraged him to give more attention to the illustration, a behaviour which he regularly reported. This additional attention, based upon aesthetic enjoyment, demonstrates a wider consideration of the illustration than its narrative function, and suggesting a level of engagement consistent with a more developed visual literacy which goes beyond decoding (Kim et al., 2017; Salisbury, 2007).

As with Alexander and Amy, the level of detail that Leo felt an illustration had was another strong factor in maintaining his attention, as he stated that he spent less time looking at illustrations which he felt had fewer details (TI:3). Leo also spent time actively looking for details in several of the illustrations, and often mentioned details which none of the other participants commented upon, such as in this discussion of an illustration of imaginary gnomes (pp.128-129):

> One thing I actually forgot to tell you about, it's got look, it's got The Imaginary book there. […] cause you can see Rudger and Amanda on the front (TI:4, lines 121-127).

These observations again demonstrate the importance of choice and deliberation when reading illustrations (Berger, 1972; Perkins, 1994), as well as the importance of taking a highly active approach to engagement with images (Arnheim, 1992; Grigg, 2003; Mitchell, 1987). These active choices influenced not only Leo's reading process, but also his meaning making, as will be discussed further below.

Alongside colour and detail, Leo also often commented that he spent more time exploring illustrations which showed things he felt were unusual and less time on illustrations which he felt were what he would expect to see, further indicating the attractive role of the unexpected (Becker et al., 2007; Itti & Baldi, 2009). In addition, he reported spending longer exploring an illustration when he was uncertain about its meaning (TI:4), again reflecting the importance of deliberation (Perkins, 1994).

Leo mentioned on three occasions that he looked longer at illustrations which were different from his own mental picture of the characters and events as he wanted to explore the differences between his own imaginings and the illustrations. Similarly, where illustrations were very similar to his own mental picture, he reported spending far less time looking at them and did not search for any additional details. This suggests that illustrations which conflict with a reader's mental pictures may encourage greater attention, possibly again due to their unexpected nature (Becker et al., 2007; Itti & Baldi, 2009). Leo reported that he had strong picturing abilities, and as a result the illustrations were often in conflict with his own mental pictures. Whilst Leo felt that this conflict was often annoying when he read other books, he said that he enjoyed the differences in *The Imaginary* (TI:1,2), as he felt they were unexpected, again demonstrating that Leo valued aesthetic experience as well as narrative function (Kim et al., 2017).

Where the differences between his own picturing and the illustration were minor, such as with an illustration of the protagonist, Amanda's, wardrobe (pp.8-9), Leo said he didn't think that the illustrations made a big difference as to how he felt about what was going on in the book (TI:1). However, where the differences were more significant, Leo commented that the illustrations changed his views about the book, both in terms of what things looked like and in terms of what was happening (TI:2,3). This suggests that illustrations may be able to prompt a reconsideration of initial interpretations, a potential affordance which will be discussed in more detail in the section on critical and creative engagement. As he read the book, Leo reported incorporating the illustrations into his own mental picturing, so that characters began to be pictured in the same way they appeared in the illustrations (TI:2,3). Leo did not appear to view this as an imposition (Mendelsund, 2014), but rather as a natural development, reflecting the inconsistent nature of picturing throughout the experience of reading a book (Brosch, 2017; Kuzmicova, 2014), and the way in which readers recombine their

experiences in order to develop mental pictures (Mendelsund, 2014; Sadoski et al., 1990; Speer et al., 2009). In this case, Leo was using the very recent experience of the illustrations within the book, recombining with his original mental pictures to further develop his pictures throughout the course of the reading experience.

#### *6.2.1.4 Nicole*

Nicole discussed her process of reading in considerably less detail than many of the other participants. She took a highly linear approach to reading *The Imaginary*, although she skipped the paratext, beginning instead at the introduction (TI:1). Unlike the other participants, she said she did not revisit any part of the book either during or after the reading process (TI:5). As yet another different approach to navigation, Nicole's experience further emphasises the active nature of reading, and the importance of individual choice in the reading process, consistent with the sociocultural view of reading (Gee, 2000; Snow & Sweet, 2003). She also reported paying little attention to the folio illustrations, paragraph break illustrations, and the illustrations at the beginning of chapters (TI:5), again demonstrating a prioritising of narrative function over aesthetic function (Kim et al., 2017; Salisbury, 2007). Like the other participants, where a spread contained both illustrations and writing, Nicole said that the illustrations attracted her attention, and that she would look always look at the illustrations first, though in her case this was usually only briefly (TI:1,2,3). Rather than having her attention maintained by the illustrations, Nicole instead reported on several occasions that she only looked at them briefly as she wanted to read more of the writing. She also rarely reported looking back and forth between writing and illustrations which were on the same page, instead regularly saying that she would glance at the illustration, and then read the writing before moving on to the next page without looking back at the illustration. Nicole also twice commented that she didn't notice illustrations which were placed behind the writing (TI:1,5). This distinctly different approach to reading process indicates a strong prioritising of attention towards the writing rather than the illustrations, possibly reflective of the wider societal and educational hierarchising of words over images (Arizpe & Styles, 2016). Nicole's experience also reflects the importance of choice and approach when reading multimodal texts (Cook, 2012; Hodnett, 1982), as Nicole's prioritising of

attention onto the writing rather than the illustrations appears to have significantly influenced her experience of reading the book.

There were a few occasions where Nicole did spend time looking at the illustrations for longer than a brief glance. She stated that in general she looked for longer at illustrations which took up an entire double page spread, rather than those which shared a spread with writing (TI:5), which may once more be a reflection of the attractive quality of the unusual or different (Becker et al., 2007; Itti & Baldi, 2009), though may also be due to these pages not containing writing for her to prioritise her attention towards. She also commented on two occasions that she spent longer looking at illustrations which generated a level of uncertainty for her, such as an illustration depicting the imagination fight between protagonist Amanda and Mr Bunting (pp.188-189):

> I was confused, because and I couldn't find anything really, so I just continued looking at it to see if there was anything there, that I could see to work it out, and then I continued reading on (TI:5, lines 104-107).

Similarly, Nicole discussed not looking at an illustration for long because it represented content she was clear about and had already seen earlier in the book (TI:5). This attention due to uncertainty again highlights the importance of deliberation in understanding illustrations (Perkins, 1994). Only once did she report looking between the writing and illustration in order to help her better understand the illustration (TI:3), which again may be a reflection of valuing the information provided by the writing higher than the information provided by the illustration. She also commented on two occasions that colour had drawn her attention, and that she looked longer and more closely at illustrations which included colour, which in Nicole's case seem to be more likely a response to the unexpected nature of the colour (Becker et al., 2007; Itti & Baldi, 2009) than the aesthetics, as she did not make any comments related to the aesthetic experience of engaging with a colour illustration.

Nicole reported that she did not have strong mental picturing abilities, saying that she often did not mentally picture when reading, although she sometimes began to picture a book once she had gotten about half way through (TI:1), reflecting the individual nature of picturing and the inconsistency of picturing throughout a book (Brosch, 2017; Kuzmicova, 2014; Rokotnitz, 2017; Wilson, 2012). She felt that illustrations might potentially be helpful in aiding this process, commenting that they could:

> Show you what it looked like, if you didn't have an idea in your head, so you could actually see it, sort of a picture of it (TI:1, lines 204-206).

However, she did not feel that this had actually happened to her at this point during her reading, as she had not spent enough time looking at the illustrations for them to provide her with a mental picture of what was happening in the story (TI:1). This response suggests an amendment to the previously theorised idea that illustrations can support the picturing process when reading novels. It suggests that this may only be the case provided that a reader gives enough attention to the illustrations in order to be able to make use of the image as part of their own reconfiguring of experience when creating mental pictures (Mendelsund, 2014; Sadoski et al., 1990; Speer et al., 2009).

#### *6.2.1.5 Sophia*

Sophia spent a long time exploring the paratext before beginning to read, with the exception of the poem which she skipped as she wanted to get to the story (TI:1). She also regularly returned to the paratext whilst reading and reassessed her views of it, especially the front cover which she discussed several times. From this reported experience, it seems that each of the participants took a highly unique journey when navigating the same book, suggesting that in the case of navigation, the role of the reader may be more significant than the role of the text, further emphasising the unique nature of each reading experience (Gee, 2000; Snow & Sweet, 2003).

Sophia said she did not immediately notice the folio illustrations, but once she did realise they were there she commented that she spent some time thinking about their significance and was aware of them being on every recto page (TI:1). She also said that she spent time looking at the illustrations surrounding each chapter number, saying that these illustrations gave hints of what was to come later which made her want to keep reading to find out what was going to happen (TI:2). These choices suggest that Sophia may have been less inclined to prioritise the value of the writing over the value of the illustrations, taking a more equal approach to her interactions with both modes, in contrast to the priorities generally shown in English classrooms (Arizpe & Styles, 2016; Department for Education, 2014). Sophia's interactions with the chapter number illustrations also further emphasises the importance of taking this equal approach to both writing

and illustration. Without choosing to give her attention to the chapter number illustrations, Sophia would not have been able to make the narrative link between them and the following events of the narrative. This behaviour correlates with Hodnett's (1982) observation of the importance of considering illustrated novels as complete texts where the two modes of communication have equal importance and should be considered in relation to each other rather than separately.

Sophia stated on several occasions that her attention was always drawn first to any illustrations on a page. Taken together with the responses of the other participants, this supports the notion that illustrations may have a naturally attractive quality, corresponding with the findings of Noble (2006), and Dorrell, Curtis and Rampal (1995), in their studies on picturebooks and comics respectively. Sophia also said she tended to spend quite a lot of time exploring each illustration, however, she commented that she did not always notice every detail in an illustration immediately as she felt that some elements of the illustrations drew her attention more than others (TI:1,3). She also said that she thought that the writing could direct her attention towards parts of an illustration she had missed, such as in this discussion:

> Yeah, I didn't really notice the girl was there until the writing said she was, cause she's really, she really blends in with the picture and everything. But that really stands out so I just looked at that one (TI:1, lines 479-481).

These comments once more reflect the importance of the process of deliberation (Perkins, 1994), but also indicate the particular nature of the juxtaposition of the two modes in supporting that process. Where a spread contained both writing and illustration Sophia regularly stated that she tended to switch back and forth between the two modes a lot in order to compare the information which each contained. However, rather than simply discussing the combination of the two modes in terms of the impact of relay (Barthes, 1977; Nodelman, 1988) on meaning making, Sophia's comments indicate that the multimodal nature of the text may also play a role in directing attention. What is key here, however, is that Sophia is choosing to compare the two modes – her attention is not simply guided, she is actively seeking out and following that guidance, reflecting the importance of the reader's individual choices in the reading process (Gee, 2000; Snow & Sweet, 2003). However, when discussing the illustration itself, it does seem that certain elements of the illustration drew Sophia's attention significantly more than others. Sophia put this in terms of those aspects of the illustrations 'standing out',

and this variation between choice of attention and direction of attention highlights the dual role of both text and reader in directing attention during the reading process (Mackey, 2007).

Whilst Sophia said that she generally spent quite a long time looking at each illustration, she commented that she spent longer looking at illustrations which she felt were interesting or unusual, especially those which had colour, or where she was uncertain of what they contained and was trying to work out what the elements represented (TI:3). Similarly, she spent less time looking at an illustration of the dog, Fridge, (pp.202-203), because she felt it was straightforward and didn't provide much information. These reported influences on the sustaining of attention correspond closely with the comments of the other participants, further supporting the idea that aesthetic appreciation, unfamiliarity, or uncertainty play a key role in the process of reading illustrated novels.

Whilst Sophia reported that she did have mental pictures of the book, she said that she didn't always find it easy to picture on her own, and commented on several occasions that the illustrations supported her mental picturing, in accordance with the findings from the other participants and further supporting the argument that illustrations may be able to scaffold the picturing process (Graham, 1990; Nodelman, 1988). However, there were some aspects of the book which Sophia did find easy to picture, as she describes when discussing an illustration of Rudger in front of a tree (p.76):

> Well when it said under a tree, you can't really make a different tree to any other tree so [..] Trees look all the same so, you would have imagined a tree like that. Like the bushy bit at the top and the thing ((*gestures to trunk*)). But you could have imagined, because it said he was leaning against the tree, and having a rest, you've seen Rudger before in the book, so you could imagine what Rudger looked like, and then put him against the tree so you can make the picture in your head (TI:2, lines 379-399).

The familiarity that Sophia had with trees seemed to make it easier for her to picture this part of the book. Where there were elements of the story which were unfamiliar, however, such as the character of Mr Bunting, and the imaginary friends in the library, she found them very hard to picture and felt that the illustrations supported her ability to imagine what they looked like (TI:1,2). These reported experiences correspond with the current research on picturing which foregrounds the importance of personal experience in the development of mental imagery (Dekker et al., 2014; Sadoski et al., 1990; Speer et al., 2009). Sophia's

picturing appeared to get stronger as she went through the book and seems to have been based on the illustrations she had already seen, such as in the discussion of Rudger above. As such, when she reached a scene of Mr Bunting attacking Rudger (p.193) for which she did have a strong mental picture, and found that the illustration was in conflict with her own picture, she reported that she looked at the illustration for longer as she was trying to work out why the illustration was different from her own mental picture. Sophia's discussions of her picturing process further suggest that the current theories on the impact of illustrations in novels on the picturing process (Bettelheim, 1976; Mendelsund, 2014) are not nuanced enough to account for the individuality of picturing experience and the complexity of interactions between the illustrations and a reader's mental pictures.

### 6.2.2 Trends in reading process responses

From these responses it appears that whilst each participant had a distinct journey through the book, there are some trends which can be identified, and will be discussed in the following sections.

#### *6.2.2.1 Attention*

Mackey (2007) discusses the idea that, no matter the role the reader is playing in generating their own individual response, the text must to some degree attract the attention of the reader. In the case of *The Imaginary*, attention seems to have been regularly attracted by the illustrations. All the participants reported that their attention was immediately drawn to the illustrations, even if this was just a brief glance, and was frequently attributed to the 'bold' or 'eye-catching' nature of the illustrations. This attraction may have been in part due to the disruption of the regular, linear writing by a non-linear visual object, providing an element of difference which may have played into the human tendency to be attracted to the unusual (Becker et al., 2007; Itti & Baldi, 2009). This attraction of attention inevitably broke up the linear process of reading the words, arresting the forward movement through the book, even if only briefly, supporting Nodelman's (1988) assertion that illustrations interrupt the forward climactic narrative rhythm of the writing. However, there were also instances where the illustrations worked within the narrative flow to encourage the participants to read further, in accordance

with the work of Whalley and Chester (1988) which positions illustrations as part of the narrative sequence rather than separate to it. As such, the illustrations can be seen to have had both an arresting and a propelling influence on the narrative rhythm.

When it came to sustaining attention, the attractive factors were far more individual. Though there were a few illustrations which all participants discussed looking at for some time - notably the double page spreads showing the library (pp.90-91), the imagination battle between Amanda and Mr Bunting (pp.188-189), and the final spread of Amanda and Rudger playing (pp.222-223) - there were many occasions when one of the participants spent time on an illustration which others did not. Despite this individuality, however, there were some common elements which the participants reported sustaining their attention.

Colour was cited by all of the participants as an attractive factor, and regularly associated with providing extra information or highlighting details. The participants' responses on the role of colour in attracting and maintaining attention may go beyond simply the attractive presence of the unusual (Becker et al., 2007; Itti & Baldi, 2009), as they correlate with extensive research within the field of psychology on the role of colour in attracting attention (for an overview, see Dzulkifli & Mustafar, 2013). Moreover, it is possible that it is the distinction between the black and white pages of writing and the elements of colour in the illustrations in *The Imaginary* further increased the attractive role of the colour. Jamet et al. (2008) note that colour draws a greater deal of attention when it is locally contrasted, or different to the surroundings. The importance of local contrast may mean that colour plays a greater role in attracting attention in illustrated novels, which contain large monochrome passages of writing, than it does in many picturebooks, which often contain lower levels of local contrast.

The principle of coloured objects attracting attention may be heightened where colour is seen to be important for meaning (Frey, Honey, & König, 2008). In *The Imaginary*, not all of the illustrations contain colour, and those that do contain a mixture of colour elements and black and white elements, which all of the participants considered to be significant. This contrast between colour and black and white led to theorising about the meaning of the use of colour, and this consideration of possible meanings often led to the participants spending longer looking at the illustrations as they considered different possibilities. Due to this attribution of meaning to the colour elements of illustrations in *The Imaginary*, it

is possible that the colour attractiveness experienced by the participants was greater for this book than it might be for other illustrated novels.

Whilst all the participants discussed the colour elements of the illustrations as having a significant impact upon their attention, it is important to note that they did not all view this phenomenon in a positive light. For Alexander, the presence of colour caught and maintained his attention to the extent of limiting his choice of how to navigate the book. This suggests that the influence of colour attraction may be either desirable or undesirable to readers of illustrated novels, depending upon their individual preferences of how they wish to navigate the books, and may also be influenced by their individual levels of fluency in reading illustrated novels.

Alongside colour, the participants also frequently commented that the level of detail contained in an illustration was an important factor for sustaining their attention. All of the participants attributed a high level of detail in an illustration as a reason for spending a lot of time examining the picture. In most cases the level of detail was directly related to providing additional information. As was the case with colour, a lack of detail or information was also regularly mentioned as a reason for giving less attention to an illustration. However, this phenomenon is complicated by the fact that the participants did not have consistent views as to which illustrations contained a high level of detail. The illustration of Rudger fading in front of a tree (p.76), for example, was considered by Amy (TI, S5), Leo (TI, S3), and Sophia (TI, S2), to have little detail, whilst for Nicole (TI, S3) and Alexander (TI, S6) it contained a great deal of detail. These differing interpretations of how detailed the illustration is call into question the value of Schwarcz's (1982) framework and his categories of "congruency", "reduction", "elaboration", and "deviation". Whilst Amy, Leo and Sophia felt that the illustration was congruent with the writing, for Nicole and Alexander it fell into the category of "elaboration", providing additional detail which was not in the writing. It is therefore worth considering whether this framework is sufficiently nuanced to take into account the differing experiences of readers.

The level of detail contained within an illustration is further complicated by the role of choice in attention. Leo and Sophia both reported choosing to spend a long time exploring the illustrations, and as such they identified levels of detail which the other participants did not. This active choice to search for detail reflects Berger's (1972) assertion of the importance of choice in the reading process,

challenges essentialist ideas about the content of texts, and further supports the importance of taking a sociocultural view of reading (Gee, 2000; Snow & Sweet, 2003). In the case of *The Imaginary*, it seems that whilst detail played an important role in sustaining attention, this was not down to an inherent level of detail within an image, but rather a perceived level of detail which was influenced by factors such as individual perception and attention.

Alongside colour and detail, all of the participants reported occasions on which uncertainty resulted in them spending longer exploring one part of the text, and this often led to them switching their attention between the writing and the illustrations in order to gain clarity of meaning. Whilst this did not happen on every occasion the participants were uncertain, all the participants did report engaging in this behaviour. The influence of uncertainty on attention correlates with Perkins' (1994) assertion of the importance of deliberation when reading images, as the participants had to take time and pay close attention in order to clarify meaning. The tendency to compare information from the two modes of communication in these instances also indicates that the participants were utilising the concept of relay (Barthes, 1977; Nodelman, 1988), where one mode is able to clarify the meaning of the other, and this phenomenon will be discussed further in the section on meaning making below. The additional attention given to the illustrations at moments of uncertainty also suggests that when the meaning became unclear for the participants, they tended to pause the forward momentum of their reading in order to try to gain clarity. On these occasions it was not necessarily the presence of the illustrations themselves which was leading to this pause (Nodelman, 1988), but rather the perception of uncertainty generated by the writing and illustrations which required time to resolve.

The types and placements of illustrations appear to have played a role in attracting and sustaining attention as well, combined with the illustration's perceived importance to the narrative. Whilst once more there is not consistency between the participants, there are some distinct trends which can be observed. All of the participants reported spending longer looking at the double page spreads, which may in part be due to their large size increasing the participants' perceptions of how much detail and information they contained, and therefore increasing their need for deliberation (Perkins, 1994). Additionally, these spreads were usually in colour, which all the participants reported as a factor in sustaining their attention, as discussed above. These spreads also did not include any writing,

and therefore the likelihood of distraction through switching between different reading processes (Arizpe & Styles, 2016; Goldsmith, 1984b; Kress, 2010), or the valuing of words above images (Arizpe & Styles, 2016) may have been less likely to direct attention away from the spreads. These numerous factors make analysis of the attractive nature of double page spreads problematic, as it is not possible to distinguish the relative importance of the size, detail, colour, or layout of these spreads in sustaining attention.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, very little attention tended to be given to the folio illustrations which appeared on the bottom of the verso pages, or to the paragraph break illustrations. Most of the participants felt that they did not notice these illustrations until they were pointed out to them, and they were rarely mentioned during the interviews, and only when prompted by my questioning. The exception to this was Alexander, who brought up the paragraph break illustrations himself (TI, S6; TMZ, S1) because he found them distracting to his reading. This general lack of attention to these illustrations may have been in part due to their size, which was relatively small compared to the other illustrations, and in part due to these illustrations being perceived as unimportant to the narrative by the participants, and therefore less worthy of attention (Kim et al., 2017; Salisbury, 2007). Leo (TI, S1) additionally dismissed these illustrations on the basis of being familiar with other books which included folio illustrations for decoration in a way which he felt was not related to the story, thereby drawing on his social understanding of the role of folio illustrations to judge whether or not to give these illustrations attention (Cook, 2012).

In some cases the illustrations surrounding chapter numbers were given similar treatment, with both Nicole and Amy largely ignoring these on the basis that they perceived they were unimportant. However, attention to the chapter number illustrations was far less consistent than that to the folio illustrations, as both Leo and Sophia actively engaged with the chapter number illustrations and chose to direct their attention towards them. These competing attitudes reflect the general value judgements that the participants appeared to have about the relative importance of writing and illustrations, but may also be indicative of Sophia and Leo having a higher level of visual literacy, as they were able to go beyond 'decoding' these illustrations and value them for their aesthetic as well as narratively functional role (Kim et al., 2017; Salisbury, 2007). Alexander, by contrast, did not feel that the chapter number illustrations were narratively

significant, yet he still found his attention drawn to them in a way he found 'distracting'. This suggests that the inherently attractive nature of illustrations (Dorrell et al., 1995; Noble, 2006) may affect readers to different degrees, with the degree of attraction being far stronger for Alexander than the other participants. For the chapter heading illustrations, therefore, the importance of the sociocultural position of the reader (Gee, 2000; Snow & Sweet, 2003), and in particular the roles of individual choice, perceptions, skills and tendencies, appears to have been a more determining factor in sustaining attention than any inherent quality of the illustrations themselves.

When considering how attention was attracted, sustained, and directed in *The Imaginary*, it seems that individual perception and choice were an important factor, as would be expected when considering the sociocultural view of reading (Gee, 2000; Snow & Sweet, 2003). Alongside this we can see that the illustrations did have a strong ability to initially attract attention (Dorrell et al., 1995; Noble, 2006), though this was not always sustained. When it came to sustaining attention, colour, perceived level of detail, and uncertainty seem to have been the most important factors. All of these factors appear to have drawn attention to particular moments within the text, arresting the forward momentum implied by the linear progression of the writing (Nodelman, 1988).

#### *6.2.2.2 Navigation*

Navigating the text appears to have been dependent to a greater extent upon the individual choices and tendencies of the readers than attraction, in which there were common factors to the behaviour of all the participants. There was very little consistency as to how the participants navigated the text, including the starting place for reading and the progression through the book. Whilst Alexander (TI:1) and Nicole (TI:1) largely ignored the paratext, Amy (TI:1), Leo (TI:1), and Sophia (TI:1), all explored the paratext to differing degrees, with Leo and Sophia regularly returning to the paratext at different points throughout the book. Nor can any consistencies be found in progression through the book, as whilst Nicole approached her reading in a highly linear fashion and did not read ahead or revisit moments in the text, all of the other participants moved around within the book to differing degrees and at differing moments. This suggests that the navigation

of the book was guided to a far greater extent by the individual choices of the readers than by the text itself.

#### *6.2.2.3 Ease of reading and fluency*

Alongside the role played by layout in attracting and sustaining attention, layout also played a role in the ease of reading. For some of the participants, when an illustration was placed behind the writing (pp.18, 68-69, 70, 190-194), it became difficult to read either the writing or illustration. Alexander found this arrangement of words and images particularly disruptive, leading him to physically cover the book so that he could read the words. Leo, by contrast, did not find it difficult to read the writing or the illustrations when they were layered over each other. Amy did not comment on layout when discussing her reading process (though she did feel it was important when making meaning).

These difficulties likely stem from the different physical processes involved in reading writing and reading illustrations (Arizpe & Styles, 2016; Goldsmith, 1984b; Kress, 2010), and may have been partly influenced by the level of fluency of each reader. Leo was said he was extremely fluent at switching between reading writing and reading illustrations, and had no difficulty doing so at all. Alexander, by contrast, said that he found switching between the two modes very difficult, and reported losing track of his place in the writing and being 'distracted' by the illustrations regularly. The layered layout may have exacerbated these problems for Alexander, whilst Leo's fluency seems to have allowed him to read these aspects without difficulty. In addition, their differing experiences suggest that as well as fluency in reading writing and fluency in reading illustrations, fluency in switching between the two modes may be an important factor in the experience of reading illustrated novels. It is notable that Alexander, who demonstrated the least amount of fluency in switching between the modes, reported the most of all the participants on his reading process, but had relatively few critical and creative or aesthetic responses to the book. It may be that his difficulties in reading occupied him to such an extent with the process of reading that he was able to pay less attention to his thoughts about and reactions to the content.

#### *6.2.2.4 Picturing*

The participants reported that they had varied picturing abilities, as would be expected given the existing research on picturing (Brosch, 2017; Kuzmicova, 2014; Rokotnitz, 2017; Wilson, 2012), and these differing abilities impacted upon their responses to the illustrations. Where the participants struggled to picture the book for themselves, they often reported that the illustrations provided a scaffold for their picturing, in line with the theories of Graham (1990) and Nodelman (1988). This scaffolding appeared to be particularly useful in instances where the participants were unfamiliar with what was being described by the writing, and were therefore unable to draw on their own experience to develop their mental pictures (Dekker et al., 2014; Sadoski et al., 1990; Speer et al., 2009). The information provided by the illustrations also allowed those with stronger picturing abilities to reconfigure their mental pictures as they went through the book, incorporating the illustrations into their own mental pictures (Mendelsund, 2014; Sadoski et al., 1990; Speer et al., 2009). On other occasions the illustrative representations were not incorporated into the participants pictures, but ignored in favour of their own mental pictures, or accepted as an alternative without prioritising one representation over another. These findings indicate that the existing theories on the role that illustrations in novels have on the picturing process, which suggest that illustrations are an imposition which replace or prevent the reader from developing their own mental pictures (Bettelheim, 1976; Mendelsund, 2014), only describe one possible impact of illustrations on picturing. Whilst there were instances where the participants reported an illustration replacing their own mental picture, this was only one of a number of possible ways in which the participants' mental pictures and the illustrations interacted.

Having discussed the trends in response within the theme of Reading Process, this discussion will now move on to the theme of Meaning Making, the second key strand of exploration.

## 6.3 Meaning Making

### 6.3.1 Participant responses

#### *6.3.1.1 Alexander*

Alexander frequently described gaining understanding by looking at both the writing and the illustrations. Whilst he reported that his attention tended to be drawn to the illustrations first, he sometimes felt that he needed to read the writing in order to understand the meaning of the illustration (TI:1). On other occasions, the illustrations provided additional information which Alexander hadn't been able to gain from the writing, such as with an illustration of Amanda after she was hit by a car (p.71):

> I did spend like a bit of time looking at this picture, one because Amanda's body was like blurred out, and two because it was pouring down so I wasn't really, I didn't really know that it was going to be pouring down so I took like, 30 to a minute seconds of looking at this picture (TI:5, lines 110-113).

In these instances, the juxtaposition of writing and illustrations appears to have be working together in the process of relay (Barthes, 1977), clarifying meaning by narrowing down interpretive possibilities (Nodelman, 1988).

From his responses it seems that Alexander found detail and information which supported his understanding of the story (such as the rain on p.71) more likely to be less distracting and useful, whilst a high level of detail which he did not think was relevant to the story (such as the pattern on the carpet on pp.42-43) was more likely to be seen as distracting. However, too much visual information, even when relevant to the story (as with the fight on pp.188-189) was hard to understand and therefore distracting rather than useful (TMZ:1). These responses further indicate that Alexander had a tendency to prioritise narrative function over aesthetic function, as discussed in the previous section on reading process, a tendency which reflects classroom priorities in England (Department for Education, 2014).

The level of information Alexander gained from the illustrations or the writing seemed to be partially dependent on the relative position of the illustrative moment and its corresponding written moment. However, Alexander's response to these relative positions was not always consistent. When discussing a double page spread showing Amanda hiding from Mr Bunting's imaginary friend (pp.42-43), Alexander found the illustration useful as it provided additional information that had not been present in the previous illustration, and was not described in the writing until after the double page spread (TI:4). On another occasion where

the writing followed the illustration (pp.68-69) however, Alexander found the illustration confusing:

> I don't think it really made lots of sense. I liked this bit ((*gestures to glasses*)) where it showed what Mr Bunting was looking at, that kind of helped me with what Mr Bunting was looking at. And with his mouth I didn't really get it until I read here, it's like 'Bunting's mouth had become a pit', so it linked to another thing, it linked to something that would help me understand it. I think I should have like read this bit first and then looked at it (TI:5, lines 47-52).

Alexander's confusion may have come from the unfamiliar content of the illustration. In the illustration showing Amanda hiding under the desk (pp.42-43), Alexander did not have any difficulty in interpreting the image without the aid of the words, but he was familiar with all of the elements contained within the illustration. The image of Mr Bunting's mouth, however, was a fantastical element which Alexander had no prior experience of, and he felt he needed the information given by the writing to enable him to interpret the image. The relative ease of meaning making here therefore appears to reflect the sociocultural view of reading, in which meaning is made in a transaction between the information provided by the text and the reader's own knowledge and experiences (Gee, 2000; Iser, 1980; Rosenblatt, 1938, 1978; Snow & Sweet, 2003). In particular, Alexander's experience corresponds with Iser's (1980) conception of 'gaps' within a text, which the reader must fill with their own knowledge and understanding. In these instances, it may have been the case that Alexander did not have the knowledge and understanding to fill the gaps when presented with something unfamiliar, but did when he was engaging with something for which he had a frame of reference.

Alongside making meaning from distinct moments depicted by both illustrations and writing, Alexander said he also constructed meaning by making links between information provided throughout the book. He had encountered an imaginary friend appearing in a wardrobe several times in the story (pp.5, 8-9, 10-11, 107-108), so when that event occurred again (pp.138-139), Alexander drew on his previous knowledge and therefore spent less time examining the illustration in order to gain information, as he felt he already knew what had occurred (TI:6). This linking of information reflects Schwarcz's (1982) conception that readers not only connect individual parts of a story as they go along, but also simultaneously relate them to their understanding of the book as a whole.

Alexander also drew on his own knowledge and experiences to create meaning or give context to what he was reading (TI:1,4), in line with the sociocultural view of reading (Gee, 2000; Iser, 1980; Rosenblatt, 1938, 1978; Snow & Sweet, 2003). He drew on his knowledge of extras in television shows to ascribe importance to a character (TI:1), and credited motivations to Amanda's mother based on his views of mental health and hallucinations:

> I thought that her mum was probably trying to help her daughter get through seeing different things, get through seeing different people.[…] Cause it's not normal for people, to walk around the place and just see an image of someone in front of them (TI:1, lines 447-449).

Similarly, he stated he was able to feel sympathy and understanding for Amanda when she wasn't listening to Rudger (pp.55-57), as he drew on his own experiences of feeling scared and how that might make a person want to focus on themselves rather than those around them (TI:4). These comments highlight the individual nature of meaning making, demonstrating the importance of taking a complex approach to theories of reading which allow for the uniqueness of reading events.

Alexander said that he found some of the illustrations very clear and straightforward to understand, whilst he was more uncertain about others. Where he was uncertain about what an illustration was depicting, he said that he tended to spend longer looking at the illustration. These uncertainties appeared to arise from his perception of either a lack of clarity in the illustration or an informational gap in the illustration. Alexander described the different experiences of reading illustrations with gaps and illustrations which he felt were clear:

> Because on this picture [p.76] all the background made me think like, what would that be, what were those background bits, because it was just blank. […] And in this one [p.82] it actually gave me the full image of what it would look like and how it would be (TI:6, lines 51-53).

Where he felt that illustrations were less clear, Alexander said that he spent longer looking at the illustration and actively making meaning from them, which he didn't particularly like, expressing a preference for illustrations which he felt were 'clear' in their communication of meaning (TI:6). These comments reflect not only the active nature of making meaning from illustrations (Berger, 1972; Manguel, 2000; Perkins, 1994), but also the importance of visual literacy. As Arizpe and Styles (2016) note, visual literacy is still rarely taught in schools in England. Alexander's

difficulty in imagining what might fill gaps in illustrations reflects the importance of viewing visual literacy as more than the decoding of images (Avgerinou & Ericson, 1997; Salisbury, 2007), and suggests that visual literacy is an important skill to employ when making meaning from illustrated novels.

#### *6.3.1.2 Amy*

As discussed in the section on reading process, Amy reported that she regularly looked between the writing and the illustrations in order to increase her understanding of the events of the story. As well as using the information in the writing and illustrations to understand the story, she also used this information to make assessments about the characters. When discussing Amanda, she stated:

> I also thought that Amanda was like really really creative, because she one has an imaginary friend, and like, she has everything about him, she knows, like, almost everything, and she like, is imagining all of that stuff, and, to add to that, she's imagining like she's being astronauts, or like she's digging mines or something, like, very creative (TI:1, lines 569-574).

In assessing Amanda's character, Amy was employing critical thinking skills including analysing and evaluating information in order to create a belief (Mulnix, 2012). In doing so, she highlights the interdependence of the meaning making process and critical and creative engagement (Mackey, 2007, 2011; Sipe, 2008), and is engaging in both activities simultaneously. Similarly, commenting on the first illustration of Mr Bunting and his imaginary friend (p.21), she felt that Mr Bunting's imaginary friend must have been sad, because of her expression, and because she was dressed in black and had no colour, unlike Mr Bunting (TI:1). Amy also felt that the use of colour was communicating meaning when discussing the illustration in the library (pp.90-91):

> I think in the book only imaginary people are coloured, because Rudger has some colour on the front page, and so does she, but I think that's just because it's the front page, but if you look closely, the woman and the bookshelves are all like black and white, but then these people, I think she's imaginary, but all of them are in colour. And I think they're all the imaginary people. And things (TI:5, lines 33-39).

These comments demonstrate not only the importance of deliberation (Perkins, 1994), but also the impact of employing a range of skills associated with visual literacy (Avgerinou & Ericson, 1997). By going beyond decoding, Amy was able to build a fuller understanding of the characters and the world of the book than she

might have been able to by relying on the information provided by the writing and decoding the illustrations alone. Indeed, she described using the illustrations to gain extra information about the setting or characters on multiple occasions. Alongside this, she also used illustrations to engage with the plot, such as when she used an illustration of Mr Bunting (p.68) to predict the narrative, commenting:

> And then I also think that he, Mr Bunting, is going to eat him or kidnap him, because of his teeth, because they are really weird, and also he doesn't look that nice anymore. And I also thought that because of the girl standing next to him, I think it's imaginary and he's kidnapped her, or eaten her or something, and now it's always by him (TI:5, lines 25-29).

This statement also provides an example of Amy making links within the book, and reframing her earlier ideas. In doing so, she is reflecting Iser's (1980) assertion that we constantly reconceptualise and reframe our understanding of a text as we are provided with additional information, suggesting that we do not only make meaning from the present part of the text we are reading, but we also reimagine our past meanings and relate our understandings to the text as a whole. On this occasion Amy had made suppositions based on the earlier illustration of Mr Bunting and his imaginary (p.21), which this later illustration challenged. Similarly, Amy also constructed her view of what was happening to Rudger after Amanda was hit by a car (pp.70-74) not only by using the information provided by that event, but also by using the writing and illustration in the introduction (pp.2-4). She also reconstructed her view of the illustration at the beginning of the introduction (p.2) based on the writing of these later events (TI:4). Amy described enjoying revisiting these earlier moments and changing her views, and though she was not sure why she enjoyed the process (TI:4), this comment demonstrates the possibility for readers to engage in both efferent and aesthetic reading simultaneously (Rosenblatt, 1938, 1978).

As well as reconstructing her ideas about much earlier parts of the story, Amy also reconstructed her ideas when she looked at an illustration before reading the writing describing the moment being illustrated (TI:1,2). In the case of an illustration showing Amanda surrounded by numbers (p.34), Amy said she found this process a bit confusing (TI:2). However, an illustration of Amanda and Rudger playing imaginary games (pp.16-17), which Amy particularly enjoyed the look of, made her keen to read more and find out what was going on:

> I was like, oh that's pretty, um, and then I just carried on reading, to like, find out more about it (TI,1, lines 439-441).

Amy stated that she felt she spent more time looking at illustrations which came before the writing describing the moment shown in the illustrations than illustrations which came after the writing. This was because she tended to revisit the illustrations which came before the writing after reading the writing, and then reassessed her view of what was happening in the illustration (TI:2), demonstrating that Iser's (1980) reframing process may take place within short timeframes as well as across a book as a whole.

As was the case with Alexander, and is indicated by the sociocultural view of reading (Gee, 2000; Iser, 1980; Rosenblatt, 1938, 1978; Snow & Sweet, 2003), Amy frequently brought her own knowledge, experiences, and conceptions to her process of making meaning from the book (TI:1,3,5,6). When discussing Amanda's character, she compared her to a girl in her class (TI:1), and brought her own views on what she felt was important into an assessment of Amanda's behaviour towards Rudger (TI:3). This personal knowledge also influenced her critical and creative engagement and aesthetic responses to the book, as she assessed Mr Bunting's character based on her knowledge of human behaviour (TI:1), and felt shocked by an instance of Rudger's behaviour because of her own views on friendship (TI:6). Whilst most of these instances were related to characters or events within the book, she also brought her own conceptions to her assessment of the use of colour to depict the imaginary friends in illustrations:

> I think that's because the imaginary people are full of colour but sometimes the real world can be really dull (TI:5, lines 44-46).

As such, Amy brought her own ideas not just to the content of the novel, but also to her views on how the novel had been constructed, and used them to influence her aesthetic judgement of the book as a material object (Stecker, 2010; Strawson, 2004).

On a few occasions, Amy's meaning making was influenced by the discussions we had in the interviews, which encouraged her to rethink her initial ideas or to clarify ideas which she already had. When discussing a picture of Amanda after she had been hit by a car (p.71), Amy stopped describing what she thought was occurring in the picture, and started asking questions about it instead, as a way of trying to clarify her understanding (TI:5). On another occasion, a question I asked about an illustration of a cat (p.82) encouraged her to think about her understanding of the illustration in a different way, and theorise about what might be going on (TI:5). On both of these occasions, the act of

discussion encouraged Amy to reframe her original ideas, either through clarification, or to consider different possibilities. As such, these discussions were creating dialogic space (Maine, 2015), highlighting the potential of conversations to scaffold the meaning making process when reading multimodal texts (Arizpe & Styles, 2016). This scaffolding process reflects Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the zone of proximal development, which suggests that a learner can increase their abilities and understanding when guided by a more skilled partner.

#### *6.3.1.3 Leo*

Leo paid a great deal of attention to the illustrations, and used his detailed explorations to create additional meaning to that contained in the writing (TI:1,2,4), such as in his examination of an illustration of the legs of Mr Bunting's imaginary (pp.42-43):

> You can kind of see through her, which like says like she's an imaginary person, that's what I thought, like same as Rudger (TI:2, lines 31-36)

He similarly demonstrated a deep consideration of the writing, reflecting on the scene where Mr Bunting eats his imaginary in detail (TI:4). These instances reflect the discussion above about the interlinked nature of attention and detail. By valuing the illustrations and words and directing close attention to both, Leo was able to find additional details which the other participants who directed less of their attention may have missed, and was thus able to construct additional meanings. This process reflects many of the key themes already discussed, including the importance of ascribing equal value to writing and illustrations (Hodnett, 1982), the role of deliberation (Perkins, 1994), the importance of choice (Berger, 1972) and the role of the individual reader in the reading process (Gee, 2000; Snow & Sweet, 2003).

Leo also looked between the writing and illustrations and revised his understanding of the meaning of a scene based on the combination of the two modes (TI:1,2), such as when discussing the beginning of chapter 1 (pp.5-9):

> So I thought Amanda, and then I kind of looked around then I saw the boy and thought, 'oh that's what she meant by hanging the coat up', then I looked around and I saw, oh why is her lace been cut off, and then I read on and I see why she cut her laces off (TI:1, lines 248-252).

In doing so Leo not only utilised the relay between the two modes (Barthes, 1977; Nodelman, 1988), but also employed Iser's (1980) reframing of understanding. In

fact, Leo regularly created and reframed meaning by linking events within the book, moving back and forth both within the main narrative and between the narrative and the paratext (TI:1,2,3,4), such as on this occasion when he was unclear what was occurring in the story (pp.68-69):

> While I was reading it I kind of didn't understand what he was doing so I looked at the blurb quickly again to see. That's what I usually do when I don't understand a picture or something, to see if it explains a bit (TI:2, lines 487-493).

These instances of moving around the book were usually prompted either by uncertainty over the events of the story, such as in the example above, unexpected details which were different to Leo's own mental pictures (TI:S1), similarities between later and earlier events, such as the repetition of imaginary friends appearing in wardrobes (TI:3), or additional information at a later point which encouraged him to reconsider his earlier assumptions about characters' motivations (TI:3,4). Leo's non-linear navigation of the book also meant he regularly revisited earlier illustrations to examine them more closely in light of the new information he had gained (TI:1,2,3,4). In doing so, Leo maximised the possible meaning making implications of reframing (Iser, 1980) by being willing to take a non-linear approach to navigation. This behaviour again demonstrates how theories of reading must take into account individual readers and reading events, who may maximise or minimise the effects of certain processes based upon their personal choices (Berger, 1972; Gee, 2000; Snow & Sweet, 2003).

In a further representation of the sociocultural view of reading (Gee, 2000; Iser, 1980; Rosenblatt, 1938, 1978; Snow & Sweet, 2003), Leo also drew on his own knowledge and experiences to make meaning from the book, including his views on friendship (TI:2), gender roles (TI:4), and fictional tropes (TI:2,4). He used this knowledge to reflect upon the actions and motivations of characters, such as when discussing the final spread (pp.222-223) which showed Amanda and Rudger playing imaginary games, and included the snake from the imaginary battle with Mr Bunting and flowers which resembled the patterns on Mr Bunting's shirt. Leo felt these items were included because Amanda had experienced them, and they had affected her imagination:

> I mean you kind of, you always like, when you think, oh I'm not going to think about that any more, you kind of can't. You just think about it, so. But if they imagine something in their head it just appears (TI:4, lines 502-508).

As with Amy, Leo combined his own knowledge with critical thinking skills in order to create meaning, reflecting the interconnected nature of reading processes and experiences (Mackey, 2007, 2011; Sipe, 2008).

This interconnectedness was also highly visible in Leo's aesthetic enjoyment of the meaning making process. Although he frequently sought out connections within the book in order to clarify meaning, he was also content on occasion to remain temporarily uncertain, and at one point commented that he actively enjoyed a level of uncertainty in a book, saying:

> I like it when you read a book and then you think 'oh what does that mean?' but then later in the story you're like, 'oh, so that's what it means!' (TI:3, lines 278-280).

Leo's active enjoyment of the meaning making process may have helped encourage him to closely examine the illustrations, searching for details, and take a non-linear approach to reading, as he sought out links within the book.

#### *6.3.1.4 Nicole*

Nicole often commented that she felt confused by either events or illustrations in *The Imaginary* (TI:1,2,3,5). She reported reading further in the book as a strategy to aid understanding (TI:1,2), and this seemed especially true of illustrations she didn't understand:

> You can like read, and then know what's happening, and look at it closely after you've read it, so that you know what's happening, cause if you just look straight at the picture you won't, you might not really know what's happening (TI:1, lines 235-237).

Due to this difficulty of understanding illustrations without relating them to words, Nicole expressed a preference for illustrations which were placed after the writing which described them (TI:1). As Nicole did not usually read illustrated books, it is possible that part of this difficulty with understanding illustrations came from a lack of practice in engaging with them. However, it is difficult to separate an apparent lack of visual literacy from a lack of attention, as Nicole stated that she did not tend to spend very long looking at the illustrations. This lack of deliberation (Perkins, 1994) and apparent prioritising of writing over illustrations appears to have contributed significantly to Nicole's difficulty with making meaning from the book. However, she did occasionally comment on illustrations which had provided her with additional information to the writing (TI:2,3), showing that she was at times using the illustrations as well as the writing to generate meaning.

Like the other participants, Nicole also made meaning by linking characters and events within the book and combining these with critical thinking skills (TI:2,3,5), such as using the behaviour of Mr Bunting's imaginary friend to speculate about Mr Bunting's own personality:

> That the girl, who is Mr Bunting's imaginary friend I think, she was probably as bad as he also looked. She looked mean and she wasn't very nice to Rudger, so I thought if she was like that then Mr Bunting would be like that (TI:2, lines 5-8).

In addition to using information from throughout the text to aid with her meaning making process (Iser, 1980), Nicole also regularly drew on her own knowledge and experiences (TI:1,2,3,5) in order to understand events or speculate about character's motivations, such as drawing on her knowledge of heterochromia to explain why Zinzan the cat had different coloured eyes (TI:3). Sometimes, however, Nicole's own knowledge was in conflict with the events or representations in the book, which produced elements of confusion for her (TI:1,2,3,5). Nicole found it hard to accept that Amanda could imagine so many things, as she personally found imagining things difficult (TI:1,5). She also seemed to struggle to understand some of the fantasy elements of the text, such as Mr Bunting's inhuman mouth (TI:2), which may have been down to the book describing Mr Bunting's mouth in writing and illustrating it visually but not explaining why his mouth was like it was. The conflict between real and fantasy was exacerbated for Nicole by the style of illustration depicting the imaginary friends in the library (pp.90-91):

> I thought that like sort of looked like a real dinosaur and like a real library. But I thought like a dinosaur wouldn't be holding a cake, he wouldn't be able to fit in a library and, with all these things with like a music thing with legs, but they looked really real (TI:3, lines 52-58).

This conflict is interesting as Nicole was not unused to reading fantasy, having stated that the *Harry Potter* series were some of her favourite books. It is possible that having these fantastical moments illustrated may have drawn Nicole's attention to their unusual nature in a way that was not highlighted for similar fantastical elements in the *Harry Potter* series due to a lack of illustrative representation. Alternatively, it may be the case that Nicole was also confused by many of the fantastical aspects of *Harry Potter*, but that this did not prevent her from enjoying the books. Nicole's experience, however, provides a new facet of meaning making to consider. Unlike the other participants, who regularly drew on

their own knowledge to support their meaning making by filling in gaps in the text (Iser, 1980), Nicole's own knowledge frequently proved to be a complication to the meaning making process. Rather than filling gaps, it was conflicting with the information provided. As such, Nicole's individual sociocultural position (Gee, 2000; Snow & Sweet, 2003) appears to have frequently brought confusion rather than clarity to the meaning making process.

#### *6.3.1.5 Sophia*

Sophia regularly stated that she made meaning by comparing the information given in the writing with the information provided by the illustrations, and commented on how the illustrations helped her to understand the writing. She explained this process by saying:

> On a page it had lots of description, it's too much to think about, and then if there's a picture it helps, kind of think about what it would look like, if there was no picture it wouldn't really make sense (TI:1, lines 341-344).

This comment is a clear example of the process of relay, and the narrowing down of interpretive options (Barthes, 1977; Nodelman, 1988). As Sophia so regularly looked between the writing and illustrations in order to make meaning, she expressed a strong preference for illustrations to be on the same page as the writing they were describing (TI:2).

Sophia often created meaning by linking information within the book, including information provided by the paratext. She created meaning about Mr Bunting's imaginary friend by identifying links between an illustration within the text (pp.42-43) and one on the back cover (TI:1), and retroactively ascribed meaning to the illustrations surrounding the chapter numbers after later realising that they contained information related to what was going to happen in those chapters (TI:1). These instances provide further examples of Iser's (1980) concept of reframing. Sophia also drew on her own experiences or knowledge in order to ascribe meaning or motivation (TI:1,2,3), including her views on clothing (TI:1), her understanding of how imaginary friends worked (TI:3), and her own experience of trying to imagine things (TI:3). She also drew on her own knowledge and combined it with her understanding of Amanda's personality in order to make meaning from the folio illustrations, saying:

> I didn't really notice them at first, and then I realised that they were on every other page, so then I thought that it was because

> Amanda's not really a girly girl, is she, so she'd be out playing, in the outside, not doing colouring or something, and then like, she would play with conkers and birds and stuff (TI:1, lines 222-226).

As with Leo, Sophia combined her own knowledge and critical thinking skills with a high level of deliberation (Perkins, 1994), and gave equal attention to both writing and illustrations, rather than privileging attention to one over the other. As such, she continuously interweaved different aspects of the reading process and experience in order to create meaning (Mackey, 2007, 2011; Sipe, 2008).

### 6.3.2 Trends in meaning making responses

From the individual discussions on meaning making it seems that there were a greater number of commonalities between the participants' meaning making processes, with some variations within overall trends. Whilst they by no means came to the same conclusions about the meanings of the book, the methods they used in order to create meaning did generally follow a number of similar characteristics.

#### *6.3.2.1 Making meaning from words and illustrations*

All of the participants drew on the information provided by both the words and the illustrations to create meaning, a process that was supported by careful deliberation (Perkins, 1994). In addition, all of the participants described relating the information provided by the two modes in order to increase their understanding. On these occasions, the writing and the illustrations appear to have been performing the process of relay (Barthes, 1977) by informing the readers of each other's meaning, thus reducing the number of interpretive possibilities, and helping the readers to draw concrete conclusions. This is in line with Nodelman's (1988) view of the impact of the juxtaposition of words and images on creating meaning. However, whilst this was a common occurrence, not all juxtapositions of words and illustrations narrowed down and clarified meaning in this way, as will be discussed further in the section on critical and creative engagement.

It seems likely that choice of attention and visual literacy levels played a role in the participants' meaning making process. Nicole reported that she usually spent very little time looking at the illustrations, and it is therefore possible that due to this lack of attention, it was harder for her to make meaning from the

illustrations. Alexander, by contrast, spent a lot of time looking at the illustrations, but his difficulties in understanding them may indicate a lack of visual literacy when making meaning from images of things which he was not already familiar with. Alexander had little difficulty in understanding illustrations which represented everyday objects and scenarios, but struggled considerably more with depictions of fantastical or unfamiliar things, reflecting Iser's (1980) conception of the importance of drawing on personal knowledge and understanding to fill gaps in the information provided by a text. By contrast, Sophia, Leo, and Amy all drew on visual literacy skills beyond simple decoding to inform their meaning making, and regularly combined these with other reading processes. Additionally, Sophia and Leo gave a great deal of time and attention to both the illustrations and the writing, providing them with the opportunity to notice and consider details which the other participants had missed, and thus contributing an additional richness to their meaning making.

#### *6.3.2.2 Making links within the book*

Linking information from earlier in the book with the information currently being presented was a common meaning making method mentioned by all participants. This practice often went beyond Iser's (1980) suggestion that later information encourages the reframing of earlier information, as it also included Schwarcz's (1982) conception of connecting the individual parts of the story as it progressed with a simultaneous consideration of the book as a whole, as the participants often drew on earlier information to inform present information. This could be seen especially when characters reappeared after an absence, or when behaviour was repeated, such as the imaginary friends emerging from wardrobes.

Whilst all the participants made links within the book as part of their meaning making process, this practice was far more common amongst the participants who took a less linear approach to reading the book. Leo and Sophia, both of whom moved around the book considerably, regularly revisiting earlier illustrations and the paratext, made the greatest number of links within the book as a way of creating meaning. Nicole, who never revisited illustrations, even when thinking back to them to make links, reported the fewest number of instances where she had made meaning by creating links within the book. In addition, the level of meaning making when commenting on these links was not consistent, as

Sophia and Leo frequently used these links to engage critically and creatively with the text and explore multiple possibilities, as shall be discussed below, whilst Nicole's linking of information tended to be briefer and simpler assessments about the events of the book. Again, the level of attention may have played a significant role in these differences. By revisiting different parts of the book, Leo and Sophia were breaking out of the narrative rhythm, pausing the forward momentum of the story, and examining things closely in order to consider meaning. These variations in reading behaviour serve to once again underline the importance of reader choice to the experience of reading (Berger, 1972; Gee, 2000; Snow & Sweet, 2003).

#### *6.3.2.3 External scaffolds for meaning making*

As well as drawing upon and linking the information provided by the text, all of the participants brought their own knowledge and experiences into the meaning making process, as suggested by Rosenblatt's (1938, 1978) transactional theory of reading, Iser's (1980) theory of aesthetic response, and the sociocultural view of reading (Gee, 2000; Snow & Sweet, 2003). As would be expected, given that each participant has different knowledge and experiences, there were no correlations about what types of knowledge or experience the participants brought to their meaning making, or over which moments they applied their own knowledge and experience to. However, this was a common strategy for meaning making which was demonstrated by all participants, though in Nicole's case the process of drawing on her own knowledge sometimes led to additional confusion rather than clarification of meaning.

Additionally, meaning was often created or considered through discussion. Amy, Leo, and Sophia all asked questions and began discussions with me as a way of trying to assess possibilities and ascribe meaning, whilst there were instances with all of the participants where I asked a question about a topic they had not previously considered, and this led them to create or consider new meanings. This act of discussion can be seen as having created 'dialogic space', a gap between speech and response where meanings are constructed and re-constructed (Wegerif, 2011), and is in line with research by Maine (2015) which demonstrates the importance of discussion to making meaning from texts.

Having explored the trends in meaning making, the discussion will now move to the next key theme, that of critical and creative responses.

## 6.4 Critical and Creative Responses

### 6.4.1 Participant responses

#### *6.4.1.1 Alexander*

Alexander had two main types of response which demonstrated key features of critical and creative engagement. The first was that of 'possibility thinking' (Craft, 2000), a combination of critical assessment and creative speculation, where he drew on the events of the book to consider how the characters might feel. Alexander demonstrated this when discussing an incident in which Amanda blamed Rudger for breaking something which she had broken herself (pp.29-30):

> So Amanda could have taken at least a bit of the credit, so I thought that was a bit unfair and not really nice to Rudger. But on earlier, further into the book it said that it was Amanda's knight in shining armour, cause he takes the blame. So I thought that Rudger might have been okay with it (TI:3, lines 21-32).

As well as drawing on information from the writing, Alexander also drew on information from an illustration (p.47) when engaging in possibility thinking, as shown in this comment:

> It tells me that, because her eyes were like pitch black, it told me that she might have like a little bit of a problem with seeing, cause her eyes were pitch black (TI:4, lines 110-112).

Here, he was drawing on both the content of the illustration and his own knowledge about vision to consider a possibility about the character in the illustration which was not made explicit by either the writing or the illustration.

Alexander also exhibited critical and creative responses when suggesting alterations to the book. These responses included adding more detailed descriptive writing to a scene (TI:3) which he felt was too short. He also suggested changes to the layout of illustrations (TI,5; TMZ:1), as in this comment:

> On this picture (pp.68-69) when these bits were there ((*the flecks going onto the other page*)) it was distracting quite a bit, cause I don't really think that it should have been there, like the whole picture should have been on one page (TI:5, lines 146-150).

Alexander's critical evaluation of the layout of illustrations was related to his reading process, and whether he found the illustration to be 'distracting' (TI:5) or hard to understand because it contained too much information (TMZ:1). Similarly, he expressed a desire for illustrations to have had less detail (TI:4), or more detail (TI:4), and at one point suggested an alteration of content to provide more information:

> I thought that it could have been a little bit smaller. Cause then we could see like all of her, like all of her body, and her face (TI:4, lines 61-65).

These suggestions for alterations were all prompted by elements of dissatisfaction, where Alexander had critically evaluated an aspect of the book which he felt he disliked, and suggested an alternative which he believed would have made the book more satisfactory for him. As such, he was engaging in a simultaneously critical and creative process (Nickerson, 1998), where he used critical thinking skills of assessment and evaluation (Mulnix, 2012) followed by imaginative engagement to create new ideas with a specific purpose (Gardner, 1997; Richards, 2010; Robinson, 2017).

#### *6.4.1.2 Amy*

Amy demonstrated possibility thinking (Craft, 2000) in a number of different ways. She considered multiple possibilities when assessing Amanda's character near the beginning of the book, drawing on the information from the writing and illustrations, as well as from her own experiences with friends and classmates who she felt were similar to Amanda in character (TI, S1). She also considered possibilities by comparing Amanda to other characters in the book, including Amanda's friend Julia, and Amanda's mother, and considered possible futures where Amanda might forget about Rudger as she grew up (TI:1). When considering the character of Emily, the illustration (pp.90-91) seemed to open up multiple possibilities for Amy:

> I wondered who that was and then I still think it's an imaginary girl, I don't know if she is real or maybe just really friendly, or can see the imaginary people, maybe she imagined all of these people or something (TI:5, lines 312-314).

This process of considering multiple possibilities was also seen when exploring another illustration which Amy found unclear, where she dedicated some time to working out what the illustration represented, and drew on her own knowledge to

make suppositions. However, after reading the writing, these multiple possibilities were closed down to the single possibility suggested by the writing (TI:6). In Amy's case, uncertainty seemed to be the most frequent prompt for encouraging her to critically evaluate the information and then generate imaginative possibilities, following the models of creativity proposed by Gardner (1997), Richards (2010) and Robinson (2017).

Amy also reported critical and creative engagement prompted by dissatisfaction, suggesting ways in which the book could be improved. The first instance of this was with the illustration of Rudger turning up in the wardrobe at the beginning of the book (pp.8-9), which Amy found useful, but felt would have provided more information if it had been in colour (TI:1). On the second occasion, an illustration of Mr Bunting attacking Rudger (p.68), Amy chose to draw her own version of the illustration in her journal:

> I realised the thing in Mr Bunting's mouth isn't a web but it's his teeth and it's really weird that they kind of, it looks like they layer. And then it just goes, it's really weird. And then it said in the story somewhere that they were all the same size and shape, and then I also think that it could have some more colour because it's a bit boring, cause it's just in black and white, so I drew what I wanted it to look like and what I thought it could look like (TI:S5, lines 9-15, journal entry in Appendix D).

In both instances, Amy commented that she felt that the illustrations should provide more detail through use of colour. She stated that her dissatisfaction was due to her impression that they either did not provide enough information (TI:1), or were not interesting enough (TI:5), demonstrating an assessment of both the content and aesthetics of the book, and then producing creative responses based upon these evaluations.

#### *6.4.1.3 Leo*

Leo exhibited possibility thinking on a number of occasions (TI:1,2,4), and these seemed to be prompted by either uncertainty or perceived inconsistencies. Where he was uncertain about what was happening or why he speculated about possible reasons which might explain what he was uncertain about. Our discussions during the interview sessions occasionally prompted this thinking, when I asked Leo about something he hadn't thought about previously. These questions created new uncertainties, which Leo then assessed and imaginatively generated speculative answers to (Gardner, 1997; Richards, 2010; Robinson, 2017). Leo would also

speculate about possibilities where he felt there were inconsistencies, either between images or between the images and the writing, such as in this comment:

> She hides cause she sees him coming, but it kind of looks like he can see her through the desk. Cause the girl's looking and stuff. I kind of didn't know if he could see her, maybe he couldn't eat her because everyone was around (TI:4, lines 307-313).

Leo also exhibited critical and creative thinking by constructing parallels between Mr Bunting's clothing and his behaviour, relating the pattern on Mr Bunting's shirt, which he noticed contained skulls and a dragon eating, to Mr Bunting eating imaginaries (TI:3). Additionally, he inferred information from the text to create ideas about the motivations of characters, such as in this discussion of Mr Bunting's defeat:

> Well he had like kind of no point in life anymore. Because the girl was the only reason he was kind of eating, he needed the power to imagine his own imaginary friend (TI:4, lines 483-486).

On these occasions he drew on information from the book to critically consider why characters were behaving in a particular way, linking his assessment of their behaviour to possible creative explanations, demonstrating interdependent critical and creative thinking (Nickerson, 1998).

#### *6.4.1.4 Nicole*

Nicole regularly exhibited possibility thinking, and despite reportedly not spending much time looking at many of the illustrations, she commented that she felt that "the pictures made you think quite a lot" (TI:5). This statement seems to be borne out by the frequency with which Nicole's instances of possibility thinking were prompted by the illustrations, though they were also prompted by elements of the writing or her own views and ideas.

Uncertainties prompted Nicole to engage in possibility thinking on six occasions, such as when discussing an illustration of a noticeboard in the library where the imaginaries lived (p.97):

> I was starting to wonder how they got to those people and how they knew them, cause I think it said they were from their old owners, but I wondered how they had remembered them, put them up on the noticeboard, I was wondering how they were imagined. Like those things, or were they real? Um cause they looked real, but I didn't know if they were real (TI:3, lines 156-161).

On these occasions Nicole would consider possibilities to explain the things she was uncertain of, and would also sometimes generate further questions from her consideration of these possibilities. These uncertainties were prompted by both the writing and the illustrations, and, on two occasions, by my asking her questions about things which she had not previously considered (TI:2,5). However, not all elements of uncertainty led to possibility thinking, as on two occasions Nicole simply acknowledged the uncertainty without trying to explain what she was uncertain about, and on other occasions she chose to read further in the book to see if that would solve the uncertainty, rather than trying to come up with possibilities herself (TI:1,2,3). These instances demonstrate the active nature of critical and creative engagement, which may be prompted by a text, but requires a reader to choose to engage with the uncertainties rather than simply accepting them.

Nicole was also prompted to engage in possibility thinking when faced with what she perceived as inconsistencies in the text (TI:3,5). For example, she generated several questions to explore why John Jenkins was terrified by seeing Emily, when Nicole felt that Emily looked so unthreatening in the illustration that there was no need for him to be scared (TI:5). Similarly, when contemplating Rudger fading away without Amanda to imagine him anymore, Nicole commented:

> Well, I wondered why he had to fade away, because he could go with all the other imaginaries that had also been forgotten or that their person has been hurt, so I thought maybe, well I just thought of different ideas of how the imaginary friend could go away or something. I thought they could stay living and they could go around and whoever who saw them they could live with them and see if they took care of him and gave him what he needed and things, or he could just carry on finding whatever he could that he would need to survive (TI:3, lines 18-30).

These inconsistences were prompted not only by the content of the illustrations and the writing, but also by how Nicole thought the characters should behave, and as such were highly dependent upon Nicole's individual sociocultural position. When discussing an illustration of Mr Bunting attacking Rudger (p.193), for example, Nicole felt that it looked like Mr Bunting was shaking Rudger, but considered that Rudger was instead probably fading whilst Mr Bunting was eating him, because it wouldn't make sense for Mr Bunting to waste time shaking Rudger instead of just eating him quickly as this might have allowed Rudger to escape again (TI:5).

Nicole was also prompted to engage in possibility thinking when she felt the book did not provide her with enough information, such as when discussing Mr Bunting:

> I was wondering does he eat normal food or does he only eat imaginaries to fill him up, maybe he's been looking for them because that's his food, and why is he so mean, because Emily was just trying to be friendly, but then he just came along, and ate her for some reason, and I was confused <u>why</u> he eats them, even when they're not doing anything wrong or disturbing him or annoying him, he just eats them when, it's just confusing to me because he has his own, and the others are the same, but look different, the imaginaries, and why isn't he eating his own one instead of others, cause they're all like, well they have different faces and different clothes, but they're all imaginary, so I didn't really understand that (TI:5, lines 48-58).

Where Nicole felt there were gaps in the information provided by the book, she was prompted to ask questions to try to figure out the missing information (TI:5). As Nicole frequently felt confused by the book and struggled to make meaning on many occasions, as described above, it is possible that she perceived a very high number of uncertainties, inconsistencies, and gaps in the information provided by the book, and this is what prompted her to engage in a high number of instances of possibility thinking.

Nicole also engaged critically and creatively with the book by inferring or extrapolating from information provided by the text (TI:1,3,5). When discussing that Amanda's mother had also had an imaginary as a child, Nicole commented that Amanda's powerful imagination must have been inherited from her mother, and predicted that when Amanda got older she might forget her imaginary too (TI:1). Similarly, she speculated on how Rudger might be feeling after Amanda disappeared by drawing on information from the writing:

> Well if there are other imaginary friends it means other people have them as well so anyone could have them who has like a big imagination, and now he knew he was not alone so he could have other people who could see him and hear him talk and he could to them and ask them whatever he wanted. Cause the humans can't really hear them or see them, so I think he would be sad and happy at the same time, cause he can't see Amanda any more, but he has some other friends he can talk to and ask them for help (TI:3, line 243-250).

On these occasions, Nicole drew from the information provided by the book to then create new ideas not contained in the original text which had relevance for

the story, behaviour which the models of creativity discussed in this research (Gardner, 1997; Richards, 2010; Robinson, 2017).

#### *6.4.1.5 Sophia*

Sophia also engaged in possibility thinking on a number of occasions. When discussing the cover of the book, Mr Bunting's demise, and the final double page spread illustration (TI:3), it was Sophia's uncertainty about the meaning of elements or the reasons behind things which prompted her to assess the information present and consider a number of possible meanings which might explain the aspects she was uncertain of. Sophia was also prompted to consider alternative possibilities when faced with what she considered to be inconsistencies (TI:1,3). These included inconsistencies within the book, such as the depiction of Mr Bunting, which Sophia felt had changed from an early illustration to a later one (TI:3), and inconsistencies between the book and her own knowledge and expectations, such as Mr Bunting's clothing (p.21), which prompted Sophia to consider that he might be an imaginary:

> Cause what he's wearing, if he was a real person trying to take a survey or something he would be wearing something smarter than that (TI:1, lines 416-418).

After being prompted to consider a possible interpretation by a perceived inconsistency, Sophia went on to draw on her own ideas about imagination to further explore this possibility, saying:

> But he might be an imaginary, but he might have imagined her as an imaginary. And then it doesn't really make much sense, if I can put it like that. If you were an imaginary then you couldn't really imagine someone else (TI:1, lines 461-468).

This discussion exemplifies Nickerson's (1998) conception of the interconnectedness of criticality and creativity. Sophia has assessed the information and identified an inconsistency, then creatively generated a possible solution, which she has critically assessed in turn. Sophia also generated possibilities when she felt there were gaps in the information provided by the book which did not give her a full explanation for something, such as whether Rudger was always imaginary, or if he became real at points, assessing this possibility based on the evidence of which characters he interacted with (TI:2).

Sophia also used inference to generate possibilities (TI:2,3), such as when discussing Mr Bunting's imaginary going into Amanda's house:

> I think she's looking for Amanda and Rudger. And, because the man is able to be seen by other people so he can't go into the house himself. So she's doing it (TI:2, lines 163-173).

Sophia also spent quite a bit of time thinking about the illustrations on the front and back covers, and drew on both information within the book as well as her own knowledge and understanding to consider possible meanings for these illustrations (TI:2). Throughout her generation of possibilities, Sophia consistently drew on both critical thinking skills (Mulnix, 2012) and creative processes (Gardner, 1997; Richards, 2010; Robinson, 2017) in order to engage with and respond to the book.

### 6.4.2 Trends in critical and creative responses

*The Imaginary* prompted critical and creative responses from all of the participants, most notably by inviting possibility thinking, through which the participants critically analysed the information provided by the book (Mulnix, 2012) and then used their views on this information to imaginatively generate new ideas (Gardner, 1997; Richards, 2010; Robinson, 2017). In some cases the participants considered one or more possibilities without reaching conclusions, and on others they inferred meaning from the book and made imaginative leaps to come to a conclusion which they had confidence in. The participants demonstrated possibility thinking when they felt uncertain about the meaning of the information in the book, they felt that the information presented inconsistencies, or they felt that there was a gap in the information provided and they needed further information to explain something. However, these uncertainties, inconsistencies, and gaps were not entirely inherent to the book itself, as the same moments did not generate possibility thinking in all participants. The perception of whether the information was unclear, inconsistent, or incomplete was unique to each participant, and was often informed by their own understanding of the world which they felt the book was in conflict with, reflecting the transactional nature of reading (Iser, 1980; Rosenblatt, 1938, 1978). In addition, not all examples of uncertainty, inconsistency, and gaps resulted in possibility thinking, as on some occasions the participants noted these issues but did not attempt to clarify their understanding, highlighting that critical and creative engagement is an act of choice on the part of the reader.

However, it is notable that whilst the participants did on occasion demonstrate possibility thinking based on the writing alone, the overwhelming

number of instances of possibility thinking were generated by either the direct juxtaposition of illustrations and words, or the comparison of illustrations to the information provided by the book as a whole, such as in Sophia's and Leo's contemplation of the paratext. It is possible that on instances where the writing and illustrations did not straightforwardly inform the participants of how to interpret the other (Barthes, 1977; Nodelman, 1988), the two contrasting modes provided additional or conflicting information which opened up, rather than narrowing down, interpretive possibilities (Hunt, 2009; Nikolajeva & Scott, 2000, 2001). There are certainly examples of possibility thinking arising from discussions of the combination of writing and illustrations. However, the individual nature of what each participant perceived to be uncertain or inconsistent suggests that whilst the combination of illustrations and writing does have the potential to open up interpretive possibilities, the prompt arises from a reader's perception of additional or conflicting information, rather than a concrete level of information provided by the text.

Amy and Alexander additionally generated possibilities by suggesting alterations to the text based upon their feelings of dissatisfaction. These processes reflected those of possibility thinking, as they critically assessed what they felt was ineffective about the book and why, and then imaginatively generated new ideas which they felt would be more satisfactory. What was significantly different about these examples of critical and creative engagement was that they were concerned with the material construction of the book, rather than its meaning. Whilst only Amy and Alexander exhibited this level of engagement, it demonstrates the potential for dissatisfaction with an element of a book to be turned into a critical and creative response. If responses of dissatisfaction with texts are adequately scaffolded in the classroom, these moments could potentially be used to increase engagement with a text and improve critical and creative skills.

The discussion will now move on to the final theme, that of aesthetic responses.

## 6.5 Aesthetic Responses

## 6.5.1 Participant responses

### *6.5.1.1 Alexander*

Alexander had a variety of aesthetic experiences whilst reading *The Imaginary*, largely expressed through emotional responses, which were sparked by both the writing and the illustrations. He described it as 'shocking' (TI:1) when the introduction said that Amanda was dead, and felt that an illustration of Mr Bunting's imaginary (p.47) was 'creepy' (TI:4). He also responded with satisfaction to page layouts on several occasions. The emotional comments regarding the illustrations were always discussed in conjunction with Alexander's view of the 'usefulness' or 'helpfulness' of the image, such as in this statement about an illustration of Mr Bunting eating Emily (p.121):

> I thought it was like a bit gruesome, but it did help with like how he would do it (TI:5, lines 84-85).

This focus on whether the writing, illustrations, and layout served the story was consistent throughout most of Alexander's discussions, as he showed a significant prioritising of narrative function over aesthetic function, possibly in response to educational priorities in England (Department for Education, 2014). In line with this apparent priority, Alexander assessed what he felt the artistic effectiveness of the book was on two occasions. The first was a design element of a black page with white writing when the lights went out in the story (p.38) about which Alexander commented:

> I think that it like really works, because it really explains how the lights went out, and how black it would be (TI:4, lines 11-12).

He also comparatively assessed the content and composition of two illustrations which depicted Mr Bunting eating imaginaries, stating that the later illustration 'made quite a lot more sense' than the earlier one (TI:6, lines 168-169).

Despite Alexander's general tendency to view the elements of the book in relation to their 'usefulness' or 'helpfulness', he also expressed enjoyment of the folio illustrations on the recto pages, which he didn't feel were useful. Whilst on his first encounter with the book he didn't notice these illustrations (TI:1), in our last interview discussing *The Imaginary* he brought up the topic of the folio illustrations, stating:

> I liked that it did change, cause throughout all of the story it was just the same little picture, there, I liked that there was a change

> on what it was. It wasn't really relating to the story but I sort of liked about it, the fact of it (TMZ:1, lines 295-298).

This was an unusual comment for Alexander, especially given that part of what he disliked about the paragraph break illustrations was that they didn't appear to relate to the narrative (TI:6), and he made several comments about disliking illustrations as he felt that they didn't need to be there in order to understand the story. These occasions of dislike demonstrate the interconnectedness of reading process and aesthetic experience (Mackey, 2007, 2011; Sipe, 2008), whilst Alexander's responses show that whilst he was more concerned with narrative function than aesthetic engagement, the book was still able to provide aesthetic experiences and provoke aesthetic judgements from him.

#### *6.5.1.2 Amy*

Amy regularly responded to *The Imaginary* as an artistic object. On two occasions early on in the book she assessed illustrations and considered what the creative intention behind them might be (TI:1). On both occasions Amy was uncertain about why the illustration had been constructed as it was, and this led her to speculate about the creative intention, such as in this comment:

> I thought that it was kind of a bit strange, that that was the only proper colour, but then I realised that that's probably just what the author wanted to have, just a little bit of colour, just to catch the eye (TI:1, lines 513-516).

The use of colour was a theme which Amy brought up on several occasions, and she critically assessed its use within illustrations, commenting that the use of colour on an illustration was 'muddy' in comparison to the cover (TI:1), or that more colour should have been used within an illustration to make it more interesting (TI:5), demonstrating an aesthetic judgement of the value and effectiveness of the book (Strawson, 2004).

Amy also showed an appreciation for variety and the unexpected when discussing the black pages in the book (TI:1,2). When commenting on the first instance of the book using a black page with white writing (p.17), she said:

> I actually kind of liked the black page because it was quite interesting and I haven't actually seen that in another book before, and also, it's nice to have a change between the writing colour, because that's now white, and the other writing was black, I don't know why, and I feel like the white one stood out more to me and I wanted to read it more, for some reason (TI:1, lines 413-418).

In discussing her enjoyment of variety, Amy was engaging in aesthetic reading (Rosenblatt, 1938, 1978), and reflecting on her aesthetic experience of reading the book. Her reflections on aesthetic experience often centred around how the book made her feel, and her emotional responses to it. This was particularly the case with the illustrations of Mr Bunting's imaginary (pp.47, 51), which she characterised as 'creepy' and 'scary' (TI:2). A close-up illustration of Mr Bunting's imaginary (p.47) elicited a particularly strong emotional response:

> I couldn't see the eyes and it was so scary, and everything else in the picture was dark and, her hair also kind of creeped me out cause it's just so straight. It just feels like, I don't know why, but it makes it more scary (TI:2, lines 41-47).

Amy described enjoying the feeling of being scared by this picture at the time of reading, but also not wanting to keep looking at the illustration because of the emotional response she had to it (TI:2). Illustrations of things which were unexpected also elicited emotional responses, such as the illustration of a cat with two different coloured eyes (p.82) which Amy felt was 'creepy' (TI:5), and an illustration of an imaginary creature which was a gramophone with human features (pp.90-91) which Amy found 'weird' (TI:5). Other illustrations and design features, particularly the use of black pages where the lights went out in the story, also invoked positive emotional responses (TI:2), and Amy also described enjoying looking at an image of Amanda and Rudger engaged in imaginary play (pp.16-17), which she thought was pretty. As with Alexander, reading *The Imaginary* provided Amy with both aesthetic experiences and opportunities to exercise aesthetic judgements.

#### *6.5.1.3 Leo*

Leo often commented on the composition of the writing and illustrations, and frequently discussed the aesthetic effect he felt they were having. He discussed the position of elements within illustrations, the use or absence of colour, and the style and content of the illustrations on numerous occasions. In order to do this, Leo employed his visual literacy skills in order to make judgements about the aesthetic value of the illustrations, a connection which Kim et al. (2017) see as vital to the development of aesthetic appreciation. He also commented on the aesthetic impact of the black pages with white writing (pp.38, 40-41, 44-45, 48-49), saying:

> And then the lights went out, it was like special effects when it was just in the middle like that, that was cool (TI:2, lines 286-287).

In this comment Leo is integrating his feeling of the aesthetic experience with his assessment of aesthetic value when stating 'it was cool'. Eisner (2004) discusses the importance of integrating feeling and impression into aesthetic judgements due to the impossibility of establishing strict criteria for the assessment of art (Kant, 2008). In this instance, experience of reading *The Imaginary* has provided Leo with the opportunity to engage in critique which includes emotive feelings.

Leo regularly integrated aesthetic experience into his aesthetic judgements, such as in his discussion of dual illustrations, to which he ascribed a perspective, saying:

> I like it when it's from the perspective of what a normal person can see and then what people who can see imaginaries see (TI:4, lines 68-69).

With the exception of the first pair of dual illustrations showing Amanda's wardrobe, which was positioned across two spreads rather than one (pp.8-11), none of the other participants commented upon this idea of the illustrations showing a dual perspective. This difference in perception may have been due to the fact that Leo reported giving the illustrations a far greater amount of attention than the other participants did, providing him with greater opportunity to engage in these kinds of assessments.

Leo also frequently considered the intentions behind creative decisions, and commented on what he felt the effects of those decisions were, such as in this discussion of an illustration where Mr Bunting is attacking Rudger in the hospital (p.193):

> Yeah cause you can see him slowly levitating forward because he's sucking him into him […] It was a really good texture and it was really eye catching because it was what you see, it's shadows not the real them […] It kind of makes it more scary (TI:4, lines 383-389).

As well as discussing intention, composition, and effect, Leo also made assessments about where he felt the book was successful, including the illustrations of Mr Bunting's imaginary, the illustration of Mr Bunting attacking Emily, the book's ability to be 'scary' and 'creepy' (TI:2), and the realism of the depiction of friendship (TI:2). In doing so, Leo was employing both visual literacy and critical thinking skills, which enabled him to make effective aesthetic judgements.

Leo also reported having a large number of emotional responses to the book. He regularly expressed enjoyment of the story and the illustrations, frequently referring to things as 'cool'. He also found the book 'creepy' and 'scary' (TI:2,3), and referred to both the action described by the writing and the illustrations in these terms. Leo also found aspects of the book funny (TI:3,4), and other parts sad (TI:3,4). These responses reflect Tatar's (2009) findings that children gain many aesthetic experiences from books which go well beyond a simple 'enjoyment', and demonstrates that in *The Imaginary* these experiences could be prompted by both the writing and the illustrations.

#### *6.5.1.4 Nicole*

Nicole rarely engaged with the text on an aesthetic basis. Unlike the other participants, she didn't comment on any emotional responses she had, other than a general statement of having enjoyed reading the book (TI:5). She only reflected upon the style or composition of the illustrations three times, once commenting on an illustration of Mr Bunting's imaginary (p.47) which she felt portrayed the character as a bit scary, with a face which 'didn't look very nice at all' (TI:2, line 85), and twice commenting that the style of the illustrations made the contents look very real.

Nicole did engage with ideas around the intent of the creators when constructing the book on three occasions, such as this consideration of the use of colour in depicting Mr Bunting (p.21):

> I think the author wanted for you to see more clearly all those creatures with the sharp teeth and they look like, the others look like bones and things (TI:1, lines 352-354).

On all of these occasions Nicole gave thoughtful responses, however these responses were all prompted by questions which I had raised, rather than being thoughts which she freely volunteered.

Though it is not possible to say with certainty, it seems likely that Nicole's relative lack of aesthetic engagement is linked with the relative lack of time she spent looking at the illustrations. Of all of the participants, Nicole reported spending the least amount of time exploring the illustrations, and when she did look at them in more depth this tended to be due to uncertainties or inconsistencies in meaning, rather than a consideration of aesthetics. Whilst these uncertainties and inconsistencies prompted a number of critical and creative

responses, it may have been that in struggling to make meaning there was little space left for her to consider the aesthetics of the illustrations as well. It also seems likely that Nicole may not have had the tools to engage in aesthetic judgement given the apparent limits of her visual literacy skills, which Kim et al. (2017) and Pantaleo (2013, 2015) stress are vital for assessing aesthetic value.

#### *6.5.1.5 Sophia*

Sophia directed a lot of her attention at the illustrations and other design features, and regularly commented upon their style and composition. As part of her discussions, Sophia often talked about what she thought the creative process might have involved, or why she thought a particular creative decision had been made, such as in this discussion of an illustration of Mr Bunting attacking Rudger (p.193):

> It can make him look like, cause if you just went like that, like in a curve, then it wouldn't really look like he's like imaginary, so he's made more vicious (TI:3, lines 225-227).

In these assessments, Sophia was drawing on a number of visual literacy skills in order to make her aesthetic judgements (Avgerinou & Ericson, 1997). Whilst the majority of Sophia's assessments of the illustrations and design features were positive in nature, she was also critical of the size and layout of an illustration of Fridge the dog (pp.202-203):

> I think it's really cool but it is kind of a waste of paper because you've only got that much writing […] There's nothing really to see in it except from he's a dog. (TI:3, lines 346-359).

In this instance Sophia appeared to be making her judgement based upon the level of information she felt the illustration provided in relation to the words, seemingly prioritising her efferent reading over her aesthetic one (Rosenblatt, 1938, 1978).

Alongside aesthetic judgements, Sophia regularly described the aesthetic experiences she had whilst reading the book. On three occasions she expressed particular appreciation for aspects of the book which she felt were unexpected, and she also regularly discussed her enjoyment of the book. One illustration which elicited an especially strong emotional response, was the close-up illustration of Mr Bunting's imaginary (p.47):

> That was a really freaky one. When she screamed, I kind of wanted to scream myself (TI:2, lines 409-413).

Sophia's alignment of herself with the characters was also exhibited when discussing the scene where Amanda is hit by a car (pp.70-71):

> Sophia: That was exciting but at the same time a bit scary. And it didn't, it wasn't like scary, that much, but it was, it was quite empathising to read.
>
> Jen: So you felt, did you feel sorry for the characters?
>
> S: Yeah (TI:1, lines 541-546).

Sophia also described the book as scary when discussing her overall impressions during the first interview, but also noted that she enjoyed scary books, so for her this was a positive feature (TI:1). From these comments, it seems that *The Imaginary* was able to provide a wide range of aesthetic experiences for Sophia.

### 6.5.2 Trends in aesthetic responses

The participants regularly exhibited responses which can be seen to fall under either Rosenblatt's (1938, 1978) or Stecker's (2010) definitions of aesthetic response during their reading of *The Imaginary*, as they encompassed both the aesthetic experience of reading the book as well as demonstrating moments of aesthetic judgement.

The participants regularly reported strong emotional reactions to the book, with the exception of Nicole, who only once mentioned a general enjoyment of the book as discussed above. Whilst these responses did cover a variety of different moments, the same emotions were continually reported by all participants except Nicole: that of feeling scared or that something was 'creepy', and that of enjoyment or appreciation. This commonality suggests that these emotional responses were not wholly individual, but very much prompted by the book. In addition, all of the participants with the exception of Nicole had very strong and similar responses to two of the illustrations: the close-up illustration of Mr Bunting's imaginary (p.47), which was considered to be highly creepy, and the double page spread of the library (pp.90-91), which was considered to be highly enjoyable. These responses further demonstrate the 'transactional' (Rosenblatt, 1938, 1978) nature of the participants' reading experiences, which whilst integrating their own sociocultural positions, are also partially formed by the book itself.

In addition to these emotional responses, many of the participants responded to the artistic nature of the book by exploring the illustrations not only for meaning, but also to comment upon their composition and style, and to theorise about the creative process which had gone into their creation. The frequency of these comments relates closely to the amount of time each participant reported spending looking at the illustrations: Leo, who reported spending the largest amount of time exploring the illustrations, had by far the largest number of aesthetic responses, whilst Nicole, who reported spending very little time exploring the illustrations, had very few. This may reflect not only Perkin's (1994) assertion that time is required to understand art beyond a surface level of perceiving the evidence it presents, but also personal views on the relative value of illustrations as opposed to writing. For Leo, the illustrations were as important to the book as the writing, and so he spent time exploring and assessing the images as well as the words. Nicole rarely read books with illustrations, and tended to prioritise the information in the writing to that of the illustrations, thus giving her a different experience of reading the book which may have supported more of an efferent approach than an aesthetic one (Rosenblatt, 1938, 1978).

The participants who engaged in aesthetic judgement of the book often demonstrated critical thinking about what they perceived the effectiveness of a particular style or composition was, and drew on a range of visual literacy skills (Avgerinou & Ericson, 1997). Combined with the number of enjoyable aesthetic experiences reported by the participants, these aesthetic judgements suggest that if encouraged to explore and critically evaluate illustrations in novels not only on the basis of information but also on an aesthetic level, readers may be able to further develop their critical skills and enjoyment of books.

## 6.6 Hypotheses

From the participants' responses to *The Imaginary* I have been able to generate a number of hypotheses. The illustrations consistently attracted the attention of the participants, arresting the forward momentum of the narrative contained in the words, even if only briefly. This attention was more likely to be sustained if the illustration contained colour, was perceived to contain a high level of detail, or generated uncertainty about meaning. The presence of both writing and illustrations which depicted the same moments in the narrative often supported a clarification of meaning. Perceived uncertainties, inconsistencies, and gaps in the

book, which were most frequently prompted by the comparison of writing and illustrations, prompted critical and creative thinking. Assessments of the composition, style, and construction of the illustrative elements of the book prompted critical engagement and aesthetic enjoyment.

Alongside this, the reading experience was highly dependent on the individual participant's behaviour and characteristics. Choices around the direction of attention, perceptions of content, picturing abilities, and fluency at switching between reading writing and reading illustrations all seem to have impacted significantly upon each individual's reading experience. Participants actively engaged with the book by making links, drawing on personal knowledge and experiences, and engaging in discussion, none of which can be seen as inherent to the book itself. However, whilst some of these behaviours and characteristics can be seen as wholly down to choice or personal situation, others were modified to some degree by the book, and in turn, some of the affordances provided by the book were modified by the choices of the readers. There were also consistencies across behaviours, such as drawing on personal experience and making links within the book, which whilst they cannot be seen as affordances of this particular book, may prove to be common to the experience of reading illustrated novels.

Based on this discussion of findings, the following hypotheses have been generated:

- Where illustrations and writing were both present in the same spread, the reader's attention was likely to be drawn immediately to the illustration.

- Attention to illustrations was likely to be sustained if the illustration:
  - contained colour
  - produced an enjoyable aesthetic experience
  - was perceived by the reader to have a high level of detail
  - if the reader felt uncertain about the meaning of either the illustration or the writing which the illustration was depicting
  - if the reader felt the illustration was depicting the events of the story rather than being purely 'decorative'

- The readers commanded a great deal of choice over how long they sustained their attention on either the writing or the illustrations, and these

choices significantly impacted upon their experience of reading *The Imaginary*.

- Navigation through *The Imaginary* was highly dependent upon the individual choices and perceptions of the readers. When readers deviated from a linear approach to navigation this was likely to be prompted by a desire to clarify information or create meaning through linking information from different points in the book.

- *The Imaginary* appears to have a fractured narrative rhythm, with the forward momentum of the words interrupted by the illustrations which created moments of pause. The length of these moment of pause was highly individual to each reader, and the narrative rhythm could be further fractured based on individual methods of navigating the text. As such, each reader co-constructed the fractured narrative rhythm, and each reading was likely to have a different narrative rhythm.

- Illustrations in *The Imaginary* could scaffold the mental picturing process in readers with weaker picturing skills. Unfamiliar objects, creatures, and settings seemed to be harder for readers to picture, even when they had strong picturing skills, and illustrations were particularly helpful in scaffolding the picturing process in these instances.

- Illustrations which conflicted with a reader's own mental picture could replace, enhance, or run parallel to the mental picture of the reader.

- Readers were likely to spend longer looking at illustrations which conflicted with their own mental pictures than at illustrations which they felt were very similar to their own mental pictures.

- *The Imaginary* seems to require a level of fluency in switching between reading writing and reading illustrations. Readers with a low level of fluency in this area found reading the novel difficult. Readers with a low level of switching fluency found layouts which distinctly separated illustrations and writing easier to read.

- Readers drew meaning from both the writing and illustrations, and could use the combination of the two modes to clarify meaning.

- Readers were encouraged to engage critically and creatively with *The Imaginary* when they were faced with perceived gaps or inconsistencies in the information they constructed from the book, when they were uncertain about meaning, or were dissatisfied with an aspect of the book. Whilst these gaps, inconsistencies, and uncertainties were individual to each reader, they were most likely to be generated from the illustrations or the juxtaposition of writing and illustration.

- Illustrations may enhance the aesthetic experience of reading *The Imaginary* by prompting emotional responses to both the narrative content and appearance of the book. The more attention a reader gave to the illustrations, the more likely they were to report these aesthetic experiences.

- Illustrations could prompt aesthetic engagement, with critical explorations of illustrations resulting in aesthetic judgements about *The Imaginary* as a material object. The more attention a reader gave to the illustrations, the more likely they were to make aesthetic judgements.

In the following chapter, these hypotheses will be applied to the responses to *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It*, in order to develop partial theories (see section 4.4.2) and a model of response for illustrated novels.

# 7. Developing partial theories

## 7.1 Introduction

This chapter will take the hypotheses generated through the analysis of the participants' responses to *The Imaginary* (presented here in blue boxes for clarity) and explore how they apply to the responses to *The Midnight Zoo* by Sonya Hartnett and Jonathan McNaughtt (2010) and *Not As We Know It* by Tom Avery and Kate Grove (2015). In doing so, partial theories will be developed to account for consistencies across responses to the three books, as well as differences or additions in responses prompted by the specific qualities of *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It,* and the individual reading experiences of the participants. These partial theories will be presented in green boxes.

The length of the interviews for *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It* were similar, but significantly shorter than those for *The Imaginary*, at a total of approximately 3.3 hours for all interviews for *The Midnight Zoo* and 3.5 hours for *Not As We Know It*, compared to approximately 5.8 hours for *The Imaginary* (full breakdown in Appendix B). As such there is less data per book to draw on for these analyses. In addition, the interviews for *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It* were more consistently directed by the participants than the interviews for *The Imaginary*, and this is likely to have contributed to more time being given to discussions of aesthetic judgment, which I had not originally identified as a theme for discussion, and less time given to discussions around reading process and meaning making, which I had specifically been looking for from the beginning of the data collection process.

The references used indicate the interview session a discussion took place in, e.g. TMZ:1 stands for *The Midnight Zoo*, session 1, whilst NAWKI:2 stands for *Not As We Know It*, session 2. All interviews have been included in this discussion. Quotes included in this discussion have been lightly edited for clarity.

## 7.2 Attention

Attracting Attention

Where illustrations and writing were both present in the same spread, the reader's attention was likely to be drawn immediately to the illustration.

Whilst the participants discussed the direction of their attention far less in their responses to *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It* than they did in their responses to *The Imaginary*, their comments on immediate attraction of attention were largely consistent with the hypothesis. Nicole did not mention where her attention was immediately drawn to in her interviews, but Alexander, Amy, Leo, and Sophia all commented that, as with *The Imaginary*, their attention would be drawn first to the illustrations. Amy characterised this experience by saying:

> I think usually the pictures just always stand out to me. So, I always end up looking at the pictures first and then reading and then looking back at the pictures. (Amy, TMZ:4, lines 88-93)

As well as being consistent with the hypothesis, these findings are also consistent with those of Noble (2006) and Dorrell et al. (1995) which suggest that illustrations have an inherently attractive quality. Whilst these responses indicate that the role of illustrations in directing initial attention during reading was similar for the experience of reading all three books, on one occasion Sophia commented that she did not immediately look at an illustration first, which was unusual for her. When discussing why she thought this might have been the case, Sophia commented:

> Probably, well, one, because it's at the bottom of the page, and, two, because it's mostly grey, so it's quite light and I didn't really see it, because if something is dark in a light room, then you can see it easy. If it was dark on a light page, then you can see it easy (Sophia, TMZ:5, lines 176-179).

This comment further emphasises the importance of local contrast in attracting attention (Jamet et al., 2008) as noted in the discussion on colour and attention in the previous chapter. Whilst still indicating that illustrations may hold an inherent capacity to draw attention, this comment demonstrates that the style of the illustration, and in particular the level of local contrast that it contains, also plays a significant role in directing attention. Alexander also commented on the importance of contrast when discussing attention, noting that an illustration had caught his attention because it was dark (NAWKI:2). It is therefore likely that illustrations with a greater degree of local contrast are more likely to attract attention than illustrations with a lower degree of local contrast. As such, this hypothesis has been refined and develop into a partial theory:

Where illustrations and writing are both present in the same spread, a reader's attention is likely to be drawn immediately to the illustration. This is especially the case where the illustration contains a high degree of local contrast to the surrounding page.

Sustaining Attention

Attention to illustrations was likely to be sustained if the illustration:

- contained colour
- produced an enjoyable aesthetic experience
- was perceived by the reader to have a high level of detail
- if the reader felt uncertain about the meaning of either the illustration or the writing which the illustration was depicting
- if the reader felt the illustration was depicting the events of the story rather than being purely 'decorative'

The participants' discussions about which factors sustained their attention also corresponded closely with their responses to *The Imaginary*, citing level of detail (or a large number of elements to look at), uncertainty, and aesthetic enjoyment as reasons they spent a long time looking at an illustration. Similarly, all the participants reported lack of detail or an illustration being 'straightforward' or easy to understand as a reason for spending less time looking at an illustration. Whilst it is difficult to fully assess the impact of colour on attention in this study (neither *The Midnight Zoo* nor *Not As We Know It* have colour illustrations), all of the participants did comment on lack of colour as being a reason for spending less time looking at an illustration, comparing their experiences of the black and white illustrations to their experiences of reading *The Imaginary*.

Notably, all the participants commented that they spent far less time looking at the illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo* than those in *The Imaginary*. The reasons for this lesser attention were consistent amongst the participants: they felt that they looked at the illustrations for less time because they didn't have colour, they had fewer details, and were frequently (though not always) easy to understand or 'straightforward'. When the participants did report looking at an illustration for longer, this was almost always due to being uncertain about what was being represented by the illustration or by the writing the illustration was depicting, which all participants discussed doing at least once. These responses

again demonstrate the importance of Perkins' (1994) discussion of the role of deliberation in meaning making, as the participants reported that they had to devote additional time in order to clarify meaning, but did not need to do so where they felt the meaning was immediately clear. Occasionally each of the participants felt that an illustration contained a high level of detail or a large number of individual elements, and they also reported spending longer looking at these illustrations. In addition, Sophia, Amy, and Alexander all reported spending time looking at an illustration because it brought them aesthetic enjoyment.

These responses highlight the potential impact of the style of illustration upon attention. The illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo* are highly reductive in style, rather than being largely representative. McNaughtt makes extensive use of silhouettes, and frequently constructs the illustrations from simple lines. In addition, the illustrations generally contain low numbers of illustrative elements. This style is very different to Gravett's illustrations in *The Imaginary*, which use a mixture of simple and complex line work, extensive shading, high numbers of individual elements, and sometimes include colour. Although not fully representative, drawing on elements of the clear-line style (McCloud, 1993) for character's faces, these illustrations are considerably more representative and less reductive than those in *The Midnight Zoo.*

Whilst the participants still demonstrated differing perceptions about the level of detail contained within the illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo*, as they had in their responses to *The Imaginary*, the responses to the illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo* also demonstrated a general acknowledgement that these illustrations were less detailed than those in *The Imaginary*. It is therefore worth reconsidering the discussion of Schwarcz's (1982) framework from the previous chapter (section 6.2.2.1), which suggested that due to the role of individual perception when considering the level of detail an illustration contains, which influenced whether or not it might be considered elaborative or congruent, Schwarcz's framework might not be nuanced enough to account for the functions of illustrations. However, the participants' responses to *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It* suggest that whilst the level of detail an illustration contains is subject to individual perception, there may also be an inherent level of detail contained within an illustration based upon its style and composition. In this case, the sparser style of the illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo* was an oft-cited factor as to why the participants gave these illustrations less attention than they gave to

the illustrations in *The Imaginary.* This relative lack of attention was not continued in the participants' responses to *Not As We Know It*, where all of the participants with the exception of Nicole reported spending a long time exploring many of the illustrations, especially the full page illustrations and double page spreads. These larger illustrations used a variety of representative and reductive styles, but almost all contained a large number of individual elements. The complex style of these illustrations was frequently cited as a reason for sustaining the participants' attention, such as in this comment from Leo, discussing why he spent a long time looking at an illustration:

> Because it's massive and they're all running down. There's all the detail: the sea, you see the policeman, all the police and stuff, the grass, and I just wanted to see all of it in the picture. […] I just didn't want to miss any of the detail. (Leo, NAWKI:4, lines 128-136)

The responses of the participants across the three books suggest that illustrations with a complex style and a large number of individual elements may be more likely to sustain attention than illustrations with simple style and a low number of elements, within the understanding that the level of detail an illustration contains is not entirely inherent but also partially perceived. This is likely to be due to the need for greater levels of deliberation (Perkins, 1994) being required for more complexly constructed illustrations in order to process all the individual elements. Further research in this area which explored the relative impact of complexity of illustrative style and number of illustrative elements upon sustaining attention could well prove valuable in increasing our understanding of the affordances of illustrated novels.

This trend that more complex illustrations were likely to sustain attention was however complicated by the participants' responses to the repetition of illustrations in *Not As We Know It*. This book contains a large number of repeated illustrations, including frames around the first page of each chapter, and small illustrations of seashells which appear alongside the writing on many pages. All of the participants described taking time to look at the frames (which they generally described as borders) the first time they appeared, which they all ascribed to the level of detail contained in the frame illustrations, as well as uncertainty over what the frames were depicting. Once the frame illustrations started repeating, however, all the participants commented that they only glanced at the frames briefly, saw they were the same, and then continued reading without examining

them closely. Similarly, the participants felt that they did not spend much time looking at the repeated shell illustrations. However, all the participants except Leo commented that they did not look at the shells for long the first time they saw them either, as they felt that the shells were not especially detailed and were easy to understand. Alexander even appeared to discount the shells as illustrations altogether, commenting at one point that the book had not contained any illustrations for several pages, when the section he was describing did contain several small illustrations of shells (Alexander, NAWKI:3).

This lack of sustained attention for the repeated illustrations suggests that illustration complexity alone may not be sufficient to sustain attention, but rather that it may be the level of information provided by the more complex illustrations which is key to sustaining attention. This tendency to sustain attention on illustrations which provide high levels of information may further inform understanding of behaviour observed in the previous chapter, where the participants reported spending longer looking at the illustrations which directly linked to the narrative that they did looking at the folio and paragraph break illustrations, a behaviour possibly related to their experiences of the priorities of the English education system (Department for Education, 2014). In their responses to *Not As We Know It*, the participants frequently referred to illustrations as either 'useful' or 'decorative', and with the exception of Nicole, who commented that she looked at most of the illustrations for the same amount of time, the participants generally reported spending longer looking at illustrations they felt were 'useful' than illustrations they felt were 'decorative'. However, they did not all find the same illustrations to be purely 'decorative'. Describing the frames around the first page of each chapter in *Not As We Know It*, Amy commented:

> I feel like it kind of helps me understand the book a bit more. Like, even though sometimes it's not as related to the writing as it could be, it's still, I don't know why, but it makes me picture where they are and what kind of sea it was and stuff like that (Amy, NAWKI:1, lines 66-69).

Sophia, by contrast, felt that the frames were purely decorative, and weren't needed in order to 'make sense' of the story (Sophia, NAWKI:1, line). This suggests that whilst illustrations which directly depict the events of the narrative may be more likely to be considered 'useful' than illustrations such as the folio and paragraph break illustrations of *The Imaginary*, the distinction between

'useful' and 'decorative' is also reliant upon the perception of the individual reader, in line with the 'transactional' view of reading (Iser, 1980; Rosenblatt, 1938, 1978).

Given the additional information provided by the responses to *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It*, the hypothesis from the previous chapter has been developed, and the following partial theory created:

Attention to illustrations is likely to be sustained if the illustration:

- contains colour
- produces an enjoyable aesthetic experience
- is perceived by the reader to have a high level of detail
- if the reader feels uncertain about the meaning of either the illustration or the writing which the illustration is depicting
- if the reader feels the illustration is depicting the events of the story rather than being purely 'decorative'
- the illustration uses a complex style with a large number of elements
- the illustration is perceived to provide a high level of new information

Choice of attention

Readers commanded a great deal of choice over how long they sustained their attention on either the writing or the illustrations, and these choices significantly impacted upon their experience of reading *The Imaginary*

The factors discussed in the above section had a significant impact upon the sustaining of attention for the participants. However, the presence of one or more of these factors was not a guarantee of sustaining attention, due to the individual choices of the readers. In their responses to *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It*, almost all the participants (with the exception of Nicole) reported sustaining their attention on illustrations which they felt had a high level of detail, were aesthetically enjoyable, which they considered 'useful', or which generated a level of uncertainty about meaning. However, there were also occasions where the participants reported that they felt one of these factors was present, but they chose not to sustain their attention on the illustration, but to return to reading the writing instead. For example, Amy regularly reported spending a long time looking at illustrations when she was uncertain about their meaning, but also reported an instance of being confused by an illustration of the characters outside the gate of the zoo in *The Midnight Zoo*, and choosing to read further rather than sustain attention on the illustration to work out its meaning (Amy, TMZ:1). The individuality of these responses is to be expected, and an important facet of the

reading experience which highlights the active nature of reading as an interaction between reader and text (Iser, 1980; Rosenblatt, 1938, 1978).

The impact of this role of individual choice was highlighted most strongly through Nicole's responses to both *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It*. Nicole generally spent very little time looking at the illustrations in both of these books. Though there were occasions when she did stop to look at an illustration in more depth, she frequently chose not to sustain her attention on the illustrations, but to return to the writing after only a brief glimpse. As a result, Nicole had a very different experience of reading these books than the other participants, and felt less able to judge the value of the illustrations, commenting:

> Because I didn't really look at them I don't know if they really did help or not (Nicole, NAWKI:1, lines 29-30).

It is also notable that Nicole had far fewer critical and creative or aesthetic responses than the other participants, and it seems likely that this was due, at least in part, to the lack of attention she gave to the illustrations (the role of illustrations in prompting these types of responses is discussed in more detail below).

The role of choice in attention is therefore significant for two main reasons. Firstly, it demonstrates that whilst there are many factors which are *likely* to encourage readers to sustain their attention on an illustration, these factors will not inevitably lead readers to sustain their attention. This importance of individual choice further emphasises the need for these theories of the affordances of illustrated novels to always be viewed as partial theories, likely to be applicable in many cases, but not total theories, applicable in all cases. Secondly, Nicole's experience brings us back to the issue of viewing illustrated novels as complete texts, in which the illustrations hold as much value as the writing, as called for by Hodnett (1982) and Goldman (2012). The approaches we take to forms of media significantly impact on the ways in which we interact with them (Cook, 2012), and Nicole's choice to focus her attention almost exclusively on the writing led her to have a distinctly different experience of reading *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It* than the other participants. The coming discussions on critical and creative responses, aesthetic experience, and aesthetic judgement, show how this prioritising of the written mode and discounting of the visual mode seems likely to have reduced the ways in which Nicole was able to engage with the books. The findings from the responses to *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It* have

confirmed rather than altered or developed this hypothesis, the partial theory reflects this confirmation, stating:

> Readers command a great deal of choice over how long they sustain their attention on either the writing or the illustrations, and these choices significantly impact their experience of reading illustrated novels

## 7.3 Navigation

> Navigation through *The Imaginary* was highly dependent upon the individual choices and perceptions of the readers. When readers deviated from a linear approach to navigation this is likely to be prompted by a desire to clarify information or create meaning through linking information from different points in the book.

As with the participants' responses to *The Imaginary*, the responses to *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It* highlighted the importance of individual choice when navigating through the books. All of the participants took slightly different journeys, which appear to have been prompted by their individual priorities and perceptions of the books. For example, Nicole, as discussed above, generally prioritised the writing over the illustrations, and took a highly linear approach to reading both texts. By contrast, Sophia reported a number of instances where she looked back at earlier illustrations or the covers in order to gain clarity of meaning where she felt the information provided by the books was unclear, incomplete, or inconsistent. However, alongside these individual journeys there were some trends in navigation which suggest that the specific characteristics of the books may have prompted certain reading behaviours.

One of these behaviours was the attention given to the paratext. None of the participants reported looking at the internal paratext of *The Midnight Zoo*, and only Sophia discussed the front cover. For *Not As We Know It*, however, the participants' responses were more individual, and reflected the responses they had to the paratext of *The Imaginary*. Both Leo and Sophia took time to explore the internal paratext, whilst Amy discussed looking at the internal paratext briefly but also spent time exploring the blurb and the front cover. Nicole and Alexander both described skipping past the internal paratext as quickly as they could in order to get to the story. Alexander also reported looking at the illustration on the front cover.

It seems probable that the lack of attention given to the paratext of *The Midnight Zoo* is a further reflection of the role of illustrations in attracting and sustaining attention (Dorrell et al., 1995; Noble, 2006). Unlike the paratext of *The Imaginary* and *Not As We Know It*, the internal paratext of *The Midnight Zoo* is not illustrated, and this may be why none of the participants reported spending time exploring it. The relative lack of attention given to the cover illustration of *The Midnight Zoo* in comparison to the attention given to the covers of *The Imaginary* and *Not As We Know It* may also be a reflection of the overall lesser attention given to the illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo*, which appears to be a result of their sparser style. This suggests that whilst the attention given to paratext is highly dependent upon the individual reader, the reader's attention may be more likely to be attracted and sustained if the paratext is illustrated and if the illustrations are complex in style or contain a large number of individual elements.

The second notable trend in navigation behaviour was that of looking back and forth within the books, revisiting illustrations or paratext. In the responses to *The Imaginary*, Nicole and Alexander took a largely linear approach to reading, and described few or no instances of revisiting illustrations or paratext, whilst Amy, Leo and Sophia all described looking back or forwards at various points, as an aid to their meaning making process. The responses to *Not As We Know It* reflected these behaviours closely, with Nicole and Alexander reporting no instances of revisiting or looking at the paratext, whilst Amy, Leo and Sophia all reporting doing so on a number of occasions. For instance, Amy described looking at the blurb when trying to predict what would happen next, and revisiting an earlier illustration of the main characters when she felt that there were inconsistencies in how they had been portrayed visually. In contrast, all of the participants appear to have taken a largely linear approach to reading *The Midnight Zoo*. Only Sophia discussed returning to the cover image at one point, and Amy revisited the opening illustration (p.6) once to compare it to a later illustration of the main characters (p.15). Otherwise, none of the participants seem to have revisited any illustration, with the notable exception of a pair of illustrations, one at the beginning of chapter 13 and the other at the beginning of chapter 14. These illustrations depict the same location: the cage of the eagle. In the first illustration, the eagle is in the cage, and in the second, the eagle has been set free and is flying away. Alexander and Sophia both commented on this pair of

illustrations and revisited the earlier illustration to compare the two, whilst Nicole commented on the similarity but did not revisit the earlier illustration. For this pair of illustrations, the desire to revisit seems to have been to draw comparisons, a behaviour which also appeared in the revisiting of illustrations in *Not As We Know It*.

The general lack of revisiting seen within the responses to *The Midnight Zoo* may be due to the style of the illustrations, which the participants commented were not very detailed and largely easy to understand. Amy discussed this issue, saying:

> No, I don't think I did that [looking back at illustrations] as much as in *The Imaginary*. I think I did it, like, once in this. […] Probably because most of the pictures were quite straightforward (Amy, TMZ:5, lines 904-920).

This suggestion that the lack of revisiting illustrations was due to their straightforward style seems to link closely to the motivations behind revisiting the illustrations of paratext, which seem largely to be due to a desire to clarify information. In the responses to both *The Imaginary* and *Not As We Know It*, the participants used revisiting as a way of generating meaning by making links within the books, a process identified in the theories of Iser (1980) and Schwarcz (1982), and discussed in detail in the previous chapter (section 6.3.2.2). As discussed above, the general lack of sustaining attention on the illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo* appears to be linked at least in part to the participants' perceptions that they were not very detailed, and as such contained less information. The illustrations were also frequently perceived to be easy to understand, and may therefore have been less likely to generate the uncertainties which seem to have spurred some of the participants to revisit illustrations or paratext. As such, it seems likely that the sparser style of the illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo* meant that they were less likely to encourage non-linear navigation of the book than the more complex illustrations of *The Imaginary* and *Not As We Know It*. Taking into account the

influence of illustrative style, this hypothesis has been developed, and the partial theory states:

> Navigation through an illustrated novel is highly dependent upon the individual choices and perceptions of the reader. When readers deviate from a linear approach to navigation this is likely to be prompted by a desire to clarify information or create meaning through linking information from different points in the book. As such, novels which are illustrated with a sparser style may be less likely to encourage a non-linear approach to navigation than novels which contain complex illustrations with a large number of individual elements.

## 7.4 Narrative rhythm

> *The Imaginary* appears to have a fractured narrative rhythm, with the forward momentum of the words interrupted by the illustrations which created moments of pause. The length of these moment of pause was highly individual to each reader, and the narrative rhythm could be further fractured based on individual methods of navigating the text. As such, each reader co-constructed the fractured narrative rhythm, and each reading was likely to have a different narrative rhythm.

The responses of the participants to *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It* largely support the hypothesis generated from the analysis of responses to *The Imaginary*. The writing in both books appears to have created a forward momentum, with Alexander, Amy, and Nicole all commenting on wanting to continue reading the writing to find out what would happen next. Alongside this, the illustrations seem to have created moments of pause for all the participants, even Nicole who only glanced at them briefly. These responses therefore support Nodelman's (1988) suggestion that illustrations arrest the forward momentum of the climactic written narrative. The role of choice in attention, as discussed above, also supports the idea that each reader co-constructs the fractured narrative rhythm of the book.

However, the responses to *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It* also indicate that this hypothesis requires further development. From the above discussions about style, repeated illustrations, and the idea of illustrations being perceived as 'useful' or 'decorative', and how these factors influence the sustaining of attention, it seems likely that certain factors can make the narrative rhythm of an illustrated novel more or less fractured due to the likelihood of them resulting in sustained attention on illustrations. It seems probable that illustrated novels

which have a sparse illustrative style, a high number of repeated illustrations, and more illustrations which are likely to be perceived as decorative (such as folio or paragraph break illustrations) than illustrations which are likely to be perceived as useful (such as illustrations which depict the events of the story and have a large number of elements), would have a less fractured and more climatic narrative rhythm than an illustrated novel with a large number of illustrations with a complex style and a large number of elements.

It is also worth considering the potential effect of this fractured narrative rhythm on readers. The moments of pause created by the illustrations offer opportunities for readers, which they may or may not take up. Leo described these opportunities, saying:

> Well, it just gives you more to think about while you're reading, so you're not just reading and reading and reading and reading. That's what I love about picture books, because you're not just reading, reading, reading, reading, reading, reading and reading. You have some stops, you know, to take a breath, and then just admire them and get more in your head about the picture and stuff, so you're not just plain old, just pages and pages of white and black (Leo, NAWKI:4, lines 346-355).

These 'stops', as Leo describes them, appear to provide thinking time for the reader, with all of the participants reporting engaging with the books aesthetically, critically and creatively during moments when they paused the forward momentum of reading the words in order to consider the illustrations. As such, these moments reflect the theories of Harding (1962) and Britton (1970), who - building on Brecht's (1949) principle of alienation - suggest that when a reader is placed in the position of the spectator, rather than the participant, they are no longer acting to create the text, and may instead detach from events and consider their significance. Whilst readers are still co-creating the text when they read illustrations, the 'stops' that Leo described which come from arresting the forward movement of the written narrative (Nodelman, 1988) and switching from one physical process of reading to another (Arizpe & Styles, 2016; Goldsmith, 1984b; Kress, 2010), appear to create an opportunity for pause in the co-creation process, which generates the space for the participants to consider the book aesthetically, critically and creatively, alongside the meaning making process. Importantly, the participants did not take up all of the opportunities for reflection generated by the illustrations. Amy, for example, commented on more than one occasion that she chose to just continue reading rather than stop and consider. However, it does

seem that the pauses in forward momentum brought about by the illustrations do contain the potential to encourage deeper engagement by providing thinking time, though it is up to the reader to make use of those opportunities. Given the additional information provided by this discussion, this hypothesis has been developed into the following partial theory:

> The illustrated novel appears to have a fractured narrative rhythm, with the forward momentum of the words interrupted by the illustrations which create moments of pause. The length of these moment of pause is highly individual to each reader, and the narrative rhythm may be further fractured based on individual methods of navigating the text. As such, each reader co-constructs the fractured narrative rhythm, and each reading is likely to have a different narrative rhythm. Novels which contain a large number of unique complex illustrations are likely to have a more fractured narrative rhythm than novels which contain fewer unique illustrations or use a simpler style of illustration.

An additional partial theory has also been generated from discussion of the responses of the participants to all three books:

> The moments of pause generated by the fractured narrative rhythm of illustrated novels provide the opportunity for readers to engage in more depth with the text by providing thinking time. However it is up to the individual reader to make use of these opportunities.

## 7.5 Picturing

Scaffolding picturing

> Illustrations in *The Imaginary* could scaffold the mental picturing process in readers with weaker picturing skills. Unfamiliar objects, creatures, and settings seemed to be harder for readers to picture, even when they have strong picturing skills, and illustrations were particularly helpful in scaffolding the picturing process in these instances.

The participants' comments on picturing in *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It* were starkly different. There were very few references to picturing in the responses to *The Midnight Zoo*, with Alexander, Amy and Leo each discussing it once, whilst Nicole and Sophia did not discuss it at all. In contrast, all of the participants discussed picturing in their responses to *Not As We Know It*, with Alexander, Amy, Leo and Sophia mentioning it multiple times.

These differing responses appear to be due to the different extent to which the illustrations supported the participants' picturing processes. The responses to *The Imaginary* supported Graham's (1990) research which indicated that illustrations have the potential to aid the generation of mental pictures. When discussing *Not As We Know It*, Alexander and Amy both commented on the illustrations supporting their mental picturing several times across the interview sessions. In their responses to *The Midnight Zoo* however, Alexander only once commented that an illustration had supported his mental picturing, whilst Amy felt that she did not have a mental picture of the events of the book whilst reading *The Midnight Zoo* at all. Leo commented that one illustration in *The Midnight Zoo* was different to his own mental picture, but did not discuss the illustrations supporting his picturing process. By contrast, Leo frequently mentioned the illustrations in *Not As We Know It* supporting his picturing process, as did Sophia, who did not comment on picturing during her responses to *The Midnight Zoo*. Nicole reported that she did not tend to have mental images when reading, though she did not think this was a problem for her reading or comprehension. She did, however, commented that an illustration in *Not As We Know It* helped her to imagine what the scene looked like, whereas she did not make any comments about picturing in her responses to *The Midnight Zoo*.

The illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo* may have been less successful in supporting the picturing process due to their more reductive and less representational style. When discussing the illustrations in *Not As We Know It*, which include detailed representational illustrations but also reductive silhouettes, Amy commented that early silhouette illustrations had not given her a mental picture of the characters, but that later representational illustrations had (NAWKI:3). In discussing a representational illustration which she felt contradicted an earlier one, and interfered with her mental picture, Amy even commented:

> Like, once you've had one big reveal it's probably better to have it less detailed, if it's not the same picture every time (NAWKI:3, lines 701-706)

Similarly, Leo stated that it was easier for him to imagine something if the description and the illustration were detailed, as he felt he was only able to partially imagine the character of Leonard from a silhouette (NAWKI: 1). These comments indicate that, for Amy and Leo at least, the more complex and

representational illustrations were more successful at scaffolding their picturing process than the less detailed and more reductive illustrations were. This difference may be due to the relative amount on information provided by the differing illustrative styles. The production of mental pictures relies on a reader's ability to recombine known information and former experiences in order to generate a mental image (Mendelsund, 2014; Sadoski et al., 1990; Speer et al., 2009). Given the sharp distinction between the large number of comments in responses to *The Imaginary* and *Not As We Know It* which described illustrations supporting picturing, and the single comment from Alexander reporting that an illustration had supported his picturing in *The Midnight Zoo*, it seems likely that the reductive illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo* were less successful at providing the necessary information to support picturing than the more representational illustration of *The Imaginary* and *Not As We Know It*. Alongside the style of the illustrations, it is also possible that the relative lack of comments about picturing partially reflected that *The Midnight Zoo* had fewer illustrations than the other books. Alexander commented that he would have preferred for *The Midnight Zoo* to have more pictures to make it easier to understand (TMZ: 1), whilst Amy commented on *Not As We Know It* that:

> I like how they have a lot more pictures so I can kind of imagine it (NAWKI: 1, lines 52-54).

However, only Amy and Alexander made comments about the number of illustrations influencing picturing. Sophia and Leo, who both have strong picturing abilities, did not find the relative lack of illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo* problematic (Sophia, TMZ:5; Leo, TMZ:1), whilst Nicole, who rarely had mental pictures, but did not feel that picturing was an important part of her reading process, also did not think it hindered her reading to have fewer illustrations (TMZ:1,3). It is therefore possible that a greater number of illustrations is helpful for readers with weaker picturing skills who value picturing as part of the reading process, as they provide information which can then be reconfigured into mental pictures (Mendelsund, 2014; Sadoski et al., 1990; Speer et al., 2009).

The discussions of picturing in responses to *Not As We Know It* supported the hypothesis that illustrations were particularly useful in supporting the picturing of unfamiliar objects, characters, and settings, which could be harder for readers to picture without visual prompts, due to the importance of personal knowledge and experience in generating mental pictures (Dekker et al., 2014; Sadoski et al.,

1990; Speer et al., 2009). Alexander and Leo both commented on an illustration of a Walkman being particularly helpful, as they had never seen a Walkman and so found it hard to imagine without an illustration (Alexander, NAWKI:3; Leo, NAWKI:4). Amy discussed finding it difficult to imagine the character of Leonard, who was a fantastical creature which was half man and half fish, and therefore unfamiliar to her (NAWKI:1), and Sophia also discussed finding it difficult to picture Leonard because he was not the same as mermaids she was familiar with from other media (NAWKI:1). Alongside this, Sophia discussed forming her mental pictures from familiar spaces:

> Sophia: I normally imagine it in a place that I know, because, like, sometimes, when I imagine classrooms, it seems to be in my house, and when I, imagine outside, it seems to be in the forest and by a hill.
>
> Jen: Right, okay. So you usually put it into a scene that you're familiar with.
>
> Sophia: Yeah, so I can imagine more of it. (NAWKI:1, lines 242-253)

This ability to call on familiar spaces to support the picturing process reflects the findings of existing scholarship on picturing (Sadoski et al., 1990; Speer et al., 2009), and further suggests that illustrations are more useful at supporting picturing when a reader is unfamiliar with an object, character, or setting. Whilst the locations depicted in *Not As We Know It* were not entirely the same as the ones Sophia was familiar with, as will be discussed in more detail below, she was often able to draw on her ideas of similar settings which were familiar to her in order to support her picturing process. Due to the impact of style on the picturing process discussed above, the hypothesis has been further developed into the following partial theory:

> Illustrations can scaffold the mental picturing process in readers with weaker picturing skills. Unfamiliar objects, creatures, and settings seem to be harder for readers to picture, even when they have strong picturing skills, and illustrations are particularly helpful in scaffolding the picturing process in these instances. Complex, representational illustrations may be more likely to be successful in supporting the picturing process than simpler, reductive illustrations.

Conflicting illustrations and mental pictures

Illustrations which conflict with a reader's own mental picture could replace, enhance, or run parallel to the mental picture of the reader.

Alexander, Amy, Leo and Sophia all reported occasions during their reading of *Not As We Know It* where an illustration was in conflict with their own mental picture of a scene, and Leo also reported this happening on one occasion during his reading of *The Midnight Zoo*. The responses to these occasions support the hypothesis developed from the responses to *The Imaginary*, and expand significantly on the existing theories of the interaction between the picturing process and illustrations in novels (Bettelheim, 1976; Mendelsund, 2014).

For Alexander, the illustrations always replaced his mental pictures if there was a conflict, and generally he found this to be useful as he felt it helped him to imagine the story more accurately. On one occasion, he felt that his mental picture of Leonard, the half-man half-fish character, was better than the one in the illustration, which he felt was a bit simple. However, even though he thought that his mental picture was better, he also characterised it as 'completely wrong', and commented:

> Yeah, because I was thinking about what the sea creature would have been like, and my idea of it; but when I saw like the sea creature itself it completely pushed my idea away (NAWKI:2, lines 287-289).

For Alexander, the illustrations were extremely formative for his mental pictures, to the point that they always subsumed the pictures he had generated from the descriptions. As such, Alexander's experience reflected that of the introspective research of Bettelheim (1976) and Mendelsund (2014), who consider illustrations in novels to be an imposition on the reader's own mental pictures, and a hindrance to the picturing process. However, unlike Bettelheim and Mendelsund, Alexander did not necessarily view the replacement of his own mental pictures with the illustrations in the book as a negative experience.

Amy, Leo and Sophia had a more mixed experience with conflicting illustrations. They all reported instances where the illustrations had replaced their own mental pictures, but they also discussed times when the illustrations had enhanced rather than replaced their own pictures by adding details (Amy, NAWKI:3; Leo, NAWKI:3; Sophia, NAWKI:1). Leo described this experience as the illustration 'expanding' what he had already imagined (Leo, NAWKI:4, lines 27-

29), whilst Sophia felt that it created a 'mixture' between her mental picture and the illustration (NAWKI:1, line 368). These responses reflect the role of 'recombining' in the picturing process (Sadoski et al., 1990; Speer et al., 2009), as the participants appear to have been drawing not only on the information from the illustrations, but also their existing pictures generated from their own knowledge and experience. In this way, the picturing process also reflects Iser's (1980) notion of reframing understanding of a book based upon new information, as the participants were recreating their mental pictures in light of new information, just as they altered their ideas about the characters and narrative as they progressed through the books.

There were also occasions when the illustrations conflicted with the participants' mental pictures, but rather than replacing or enhancing their pictures, the participants continued to imagine the scene with their own mental image rather than the image provided by the book (Amy, NAWKI:3; Leo, TMZ:3, NAWKI:3; Sophia, NAWKI:1). Leo felt that these conflicting images - which neither enhanced or replaced his own picture - were providing an alternative perspective, commenting:

> Yeah, it's sometimes just a different way of looking at it, and that one, I kind of ... well, you can't imagine wrong, what you imagine is what you imagine (TMZ:3, lines 168-169).

Unlike Alexander, who felt strongly that the illustrations in the book were the 'correct' version, Leo was more likely to consider them as a suggestion. It is possible that this attitude towards the authority of the text is why all of Alexander's mental pictures were replaced whilst only some of Leo's were, but it is not possible to assert that with any confidence based on the limited data available from this study.

Sophia felt that retaining her own picture was more common for illustrations later in the book, saying:

> Probably because grandad was, like, right from the start of the story, so I was imagining him like that and I couldn't really get that one into my head (NAWKI:1, lines 898-899).

Sophia's experience reflects research into picturing by Brosch (2017) and Kuzmicova (2014), who note that picturing ability varies throughout the reading process, and can develop as the book continues due to the acquisition of additional knowledge which supports the development of mental pictures. However, Leo and Amy stated that they did not feel there was any pattern as to why some

illustrations replaced or enhanced their pictures and others did not, suggesting that the position of the illustration within the book may only have been significant for Sophia. From the available data there were no clear patterns as to why some conflicting illustrations would replace a reader's own picture, whilst others enhanced or ran parallel to the reader's picture from my own analysis. As such, from the data available from this study, it is possible to retain the existing partial theory of the relationship of illustrations and mental picturing, but not to explain why this might be the case. More research in this area would be desirable to further illuminate the influence of conflicting illustrations on mental picturing. This discussion supports the hypothesis generated from the previous chapter, and therefore the partial theory states:

Illustrations which conflict with a reader's own mental picture can replace, enhance, or run parallel to the mental picture of the reader.

Picturing and attention

Readers were likely to spend longer looking at illustrations which conflicted with their own mental pictures than at illustrations which they felt were very similar to their own mental pictures.

Due to the lack of reporting on picturing in *The Midnight Zoo*, there was no evidence from the responses to that book which supported or challenged this hypothesis. The responses to *Not As We Know It*, however, present a less consistent picture than provided by the responses to *The Imaginary*.

Whilst on one occasion Sophia stated that she did feel she had looked at an illustration for longer due to the fact that it conflicted with her mental picture, as well as spending little time looking at another illustration because it was very similar to what she had imagined (NAWKI:1), the other participants did not comment that they had consistently followed this pattern. Amy reported one occasion on which an illustration was very different to her own picture, but said she did not spend much time exploring the illustration to see the differences (NAWKI:3). Leo and Alexander's comments about illustrations which were in conflict with their mental pictures ascribed the time they spent looking at the illustrations to the details within the illustration, rather than to exploring the differences between their images and the ones provided by the book (Alexander, NAWKI:1,2; Leo, NAWKI:3). This is very much in contrast to the responses to

conflicting images in *The Imaginary*, where the participants explicitly described looking at illustrations for longer in order to compare the differences between their own mental pictures and the illustrations. As this behaviour does not appear to have been consistently repeated across reading experiences, this hypothesis cannot be considered applicable to illustrated novels in general, and as such I am discarding it.

## 7.6 Fluency

*The Imaginary* seems to require a level of fluency in switching between reading writing and reading illustrations. Readers with a low level of fluency in this area found reading the novel difficult. Readers with a low level of switching fluency found layouts which distinctly separated illustrations and writing easier to read.

As with the responses to *The Imaginary*, the responses to *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It* highlighted both the role of individual fluency and the importance of layout when it came to switching between reading writing and reading illustrations. Alexander again reported frequent difficulty with switching between writing and illustrations, and these difficulties were often ascribed to issues around the layout of the writing and illustrations. Alexander expressed a strong dislike for illustrations which were layered beneath words, or placed very closely next to writing, whilst he expressed enjoyment of layouts such as double page or single page spreads where the illustration was very distinct from the writing and therefore not 'distracting' (TMZ:1,3, NAWKI:1,2,3). Whilst the other participants did not generally express difficulties with switching between reading writing and reading illustrations, Amy and Leo also both expressed a preference for double page spreads as they stated it was easier not to have both writing and illustration on the same page (Amy, NAWKI:3; Leo, NAKI:3). This did not mean that they disliked illustrations being integrated with the writing however, as both also expressed an aesthetic appreciation of layouts which included both writing and illustrations (Amy, NAWKI:1,2; Leo, TMZ:3, NAWKI:1,3). These responses support the hypothesis that readers with a low level of fluency at switching between reading writing and reading illustrations may find reading illustrated novels difficult, and that, in these cases, layouts which distinctly separate the two modes may support ease of reading.

Alongside layout, Alexander frequently commented on the level of detail contained within an illustration as being more or less 'distracting'. Alexander regularly stated that he enjoyed the simplicity of the illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo* as they required less time to understand, such as in this comment:

> I was happy with this amount of time that I spent of the picture because it was like simple, done and I could just get on with the reading. Unlike some of the things in *The Imaginary* because they wasn't really that simple (TMZ:3, lines 62-67).

Alexander's appreciation of the simplicity and clarity of the illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo,* due to the fact that he found them less distracting, supported his earlier assertions that it was partly the high level of detail contained within the illustrations in *The Imaginary* that made them distracting and therefore made the process of switching between reading writing and reading illustrations more difficult. However, Alexander's responses to the illustrations in *Not As We Know It* demonstrated a slightly different framing. Alexander perceived many of the illustrations in *Not As We Know It* to have a high level of detail, but he stated that this did not always result in them being distracting, as shown by this comment:

> I really liked this bit on page 20 'cause it, this bit really helped me. […] 'Cause there was like a fair amount of detail, and it didn't like really distract me and it was just really clear about what was happening and the background it gave me a little picture of what the background would have looked like (NAWKI:1, lines 43-59).

In this comment and several other responses to *Not As We Know It*, Alexander identified not the perceived level of detail as the distracting factor, but rather the clarity of the illustration – how easily he felt he could understand it. It is possible that this factor of uncertainty was also at play in his difficulty with switching between illustrations and writing in *The Imaginary*, as he did on occasion refer to an illustration he perceived to be highly detailed in *The Imaginary* as 'useful' rather than distracting. This suggests that Alexander's difficulty in switching between reading writing and reading illustrations may not have been purely down to the different physical process involved in reading the two modes, as identified by Goldsmith (1984b), Kress (2010), and Arizpe and Styles (2016), and magnified by the attractive nature of a perceived high level of detail within an illustration. Alongside these differing physical processes, the role of gaining and processing information from images may also play an important role. Given the importance of actively creating meaning from images (Berger, 1972; Goldsmith, 1984b; Perkins, 1994), and the requirement for proficiency in visual literacy to do so

(Arizpe & Styles, 2016; Avgerinou & Ericson, 1997; Kim et al., 2017), it is possible that Alexander's difficulty in switching between reading writing and reading illustrations was at least in part due to his difficulty in creating and processing information from some of the illustrations. The importance of the role of visual literacy in this switching process seems especially likely to be key to Alexander's fluency in light of the fact that Alexander did not lack practice in the physical processes of reading writing and reading illustrations, as he frequently read illustrated books.

It also appears to have been the case that Alexander became more proficient in creating information from the illustrations through the course of the research. This may have allowed him to generally respond more positively to the illustrations in *Not As We Know It* than to the illustrations in *The Imaginary*, when both sets of illustrations tended to contain a very high number of components and a complex style. Certainly, Alexander commented far more frequently in his responses to *Not As We Know It* that complex illustrations were detailed but useful, when he was far more likely to describe the complex illustrations in *The Imaginary* as 'distracting'. It is also notable that Alexander talked considerably less about his reading process in his responses to *Not As We Know It*, and had a far larger number of aesthetic, critical and creative responses to this novel than he did to *The Imaginary*. This may suggest that the reading process had become easier for him, as he appeared less preoccupied with the process and more interested in discussing his engagement with the content of the book. I cannot be certain that Alexander was becoming more fluent in reading illustrated novels as a whole, rather than that he simply found *Not As We Know It* easier to read than *The Imaginary*, just as he stated that he found *The Midnight Zoo* easier to read due to its simpler illustrations and distinctly separate layout. However, due to the similarly complex style of *The Imaginary* and *Not As We Know It*, and the notable difference in responses to the two books, it does seem a likely possibility. The process of interpreting and using images to create understanding and meaning has been shown to improve visual literacy (Kim et al., 2017), and Alexander was explicitly asked to undertake this process throughout the research project. Additionally, Arizpe and Styles' (2016) research into children reading picturebooks demonstrated that the multiple discussions they held with their participants helped to develop their visual literacy, and the discussions between Alexander and I were very similar in nature to those had by Arizpe and Styles and their participants. If

the ability to confidently generate and process information from illustrations is part of what promotes fluency at switching between reading writing and reading words in multimodal texts, as Alexander's responses suggest that it may be, then this suggests that increasing visual literacy may significantly improve fluency at reading illustrated novels. Further research which explicitly explores this connection could prove highly valuable to our understanding of both the fluency required to effectively read illustrated novels, and ways of developing and improving that fluency. However, given the inconclusive nature of the data from this study, it is not yet possible to modify the hypothesis with any level of confidence, and as such the partial theory states:

> Illustrated novels seem to require a level of fluency in switching between reading writing and reading words. Readers with a low level of fluency in this area may find reading illustrated novels difficult. Readers with a low level of switching fluency may find layouts which distinctly separate illustrations and writing easier to read.

## 7.7 Making meaning

> Readers drew meaning from both the writing and illustrations, and could use the combination of the two modes to clarify meaning.

The participants' responses to both *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It* confirmed this hypothesis. All participants reported on multiple occasions that they had created meaning from the writing and from the illustrations, and there were also multiple instances of the participants comparing information from the two modes in order to clarify meaning. There were discussions both of using the illustrations to clarify the meaning of the writing, and of using the writing to clarify the meaning of the illustrations, in line with the notion of relay (Barthes, 1977; Nodelman, 1988) discussed in the previous chapter.

As discussed above, there was a strong feeling amongst all participants that the illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo* were generally easier to understand and make meaning from than the illustrations in *The Imaginary* and *Not As We Know It*. This 'straightforwardness' of the illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo* was directly related to the illustrations being perceived as 'less detailed', which may be due to the simpler use of line work and generally lower number of individual elements contained in each illustration. However, it is notable that whilst these illustrations were reported to be easier to make meaning from, they do not appear to have

prompted the readers to engage with them in depth, as there were far fewer critical and creative responses and aesthetic judgements reported about *The Midnight Zoo* than the other two texts, as will be discussed in more detail below. It seems likely that as the participants felt these illustrations were easy to understand, they did not engage in deliberation (Perkins, 1994), and as such did not generate the longer moments of pause which appear to have offered opportunities for further reflection and engagement (7.4).

Alexander, Amy, Leo and Sophia all distinguished between illustrations they felt were 'useful', which contributed to their meaning making, and illustrations they felt were 'decorative', which did not contribute to their meaning making. Whilst there was not a complete consensus as to which illustrations were useful and which were decorative, the 'usefulness' of an illustration was often related to the amount of information it was perceived to provide, and the relative ease of understanding the writing. Alexander and Sophia both found aspects of the writing of *The Midnight Zoo* difficult to understand, and this influenced their views of the usefulness of the illustrations. Sophia commented that:

> They're not as useful as at the start of the book because at the start of the book it was quite complicated so you kind of needed pictures. But now it's not as complicated so they're not as useful (TMZ:3, lines 259-265).

Alexander had similar views on the illustrations as particularly useful due to the difficulty of understanding the writing, commenting:

> So with this book there were some bits I didn't really get cause there weren't that many pictures so I didn't really get it. So when I did finally get to see some pictures it actually made quite a lot more sense (TMZ:1, lines 24-31).

In these instances, Sophia and Alexander were both relying on the illustrations to provide meaning that they were unable to find in the writing. However, where Sophia found the writing easier to understand, she reported drawing on the illustrations to a lesser extent in order to create meaning. This suggests that whilst readers can acquire meaning from all illustrations, as was demonstrated from the responses of all participants to all three novels, they may rely more heavily on illustrations to create meaning where they are finding it more difficult to create meaning from the writing, and at these point the role of relay becomes more important (Barthes, 1977; Nodelman, 1988). The relative 'usefulness' of illustrations can therefore be seen as related both to individual perception, and to individual experiences of the ease of reading writing.

There were a few occasions where the participants commented specifically on the mode of illustration as being particularly powerful in creating meaning. When discussing one of the framing images in *Not As We Know It*, Leo commented:

> It's really detailed with all the dirt in the corner and stuff and all the seaweed; that's definitely *convincing* you that it's under water (NAWKI:1, lines 188-190, emphasis Leo's own).

This idea of the illustrations providing a highly concrete meaning, which was somehow more certain than the meaning provided by the writing, was also reported by Alexander, Amy and Sophia. It is possible that these responses reflect Paivio's (1978, 2007) 'dual coding' theory, which suggests that images tend to be more meaningful than writing. However, Nicole did not comment at any point that she gained more concrete information from the illustrations than the writing. This may be linked not only to the relative lack of time she spent looking at the illustrations, but also the fact that Nicole very rarely generated mental pictures, and did not feel that these were necessary for her understanding of the books. The other participants, by contrast, all commented on the importance of having a mental picture in helping them to understand and imagine the books. This suggests that images, whether the illustrations in the books or mental images, may have been less central to Nicole's meaning making process, and as such the illustrations may not have been an especially meaningful form of information for Nicole in the way that they were for the other participants. Whilst this lack of importance of mental picturing to meaning making challenges the assumptions of Fry (1985) and Benton and Fox (1985), who position picturing as vital to meaning making, Nicole's experience is reflective of a more recent understanding of picturing, which acknowledges that readers have highly individual picturing abilities and decentres the importance of picturing to meaning making (Kuzmicova, 2014; Rokotnitz, 2017). It is also worth remembering that whilst the illustrations were often highly 'convincing' for the other participants, this did not mean that they were always viewed as having a single or conclusive meaning. On several occasions all the participants except Nicole discussed the multiple meanings present in a single illustration, and Amy, Leo and Sophia all described discounting the meaning they created from an illustration in favour of a meaning they had previously developed through their own mental picturing process. This suggests that whilst illustrations may create more concrete meanings than writing

for readers who process information visually, these meanings still have the potential to be highly polysemic (Barthes, 1977).

Alongside the concrete nature of illustrations, Alexander, Leo and Sophia all mentioned occasions when they felt the illustrations had remained in their minds in a way that the writing did not. Sophia summed up this difference between the writing and illustrations by saying:

> I think it, like, adds to the story, because if it had a whole page of writing, it wouldn't really get in my head as well as a picture would (NAWKI:1, lines 942-943).

Whilst Leo discussed this phenomenon in the following comment about the final illustration of *Not As We Know It*:

> When someone says Not As We Know It, I would just think of that (NAWKI:4, line 323).

These comments may reflect the 'picture superiority' effect, which indicates that pictures are generally easier to remember than words (Defeyter, Russo, & McPartlin, 2009). This effect appears to have led to an element of prioritising the information generated from the images over the information generated by the words for Alexander, Leo and Sophia, once they had finished reading, due to them remembering the illustrations more clearly than the words. Taken together with the participants' comments about the concrete meaning created by certain illustrations, this indicates that there may have been significant differences in the experiences of making meaning from the two different modes of communication. These distinctions are not surprising given the theoretical literature around multimodality and the relative roles of words and images in meaning making (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Nikolajeva, 2006). Nevertheless, what they indicate is that for the participants who sustained their attention on them, the illustrations were playing a distinct role in the creation of meaning from illustrated novels, a role that goes beyond being merely 'supportive or decorative' (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2000, p. 226). However, this theory is somewhat complicated by that fact that the idea that the illustrations provided a more concrete meaning than the words was only mentioned once by Amy in her response to *The Midnight Zoo* (Amy, TMZ:5, lines 301-304) and not at all by the other participants. Additionally, the experience that the illustrations were more memorable than the writing was not reported in any response to *The Midnight Zoo.* Whilst this does not necessarily mean that the participants did not have these experiences, it does suggest that they may not have been as significant in terms of their meaning making compared to their

experiences of the illustrations in *Not As We Know It*. This may partially be accounted for by the fact that there were fewer illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo* than in *Not As We Know It*, but it may also be a reflection of the lesser amount of attention given to the illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo*, and possibly also their more iconic and less representational style. The differing responses to the two novels raise interesting questions about the importance of style and ratio of illustrations in the meaning making process that cannot be answered from the data provided by this study, but would be worthy of further exploration.

From this discussion, the following hypothesis may be considered a partial theory:

> Readers draw meaning from both the writing and illustrations, and can use the combination of the two modes to clarify meaning.

Alongside this, discussion of the participants responses to all three books has led to the generation of this additional partial theory:

> For readers who spend time engaging with the illustrations, illustrations can play a distinct role in the creation of meaning from illustrated novels. Illustrations may create more concrete meanings than writing for readers who process information visually, though these meanings still have the potential to be highly polysemic. After the reading event, the information generated from the images may be prioritised over the information generated by the words due to the fact that illustrations are likely to be remembered more clearly than words.

## 7.8 Critical and Creative Engagement

> Readers were encouraged to engage critically and creatively with *The Imaginary* when they were faced with perceived gaps or inconsistencies in the information they constructed from the book, when they were uncertain about meaning, or were dissatisfied with an aspect of the book. Whilst these gaps, inconsistencies, and uncertainties were individual to each reader, they were most likely to be generated from the illustrations or the juxtaposition of writing and illustration.

The responses of the participants to both *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It* demonstrated multiple examples of critical and creative engagement as defined by Gardner (1997), Nickerson (1998), and Robinson (2017), and discussed in the previous chapter. As with the responses to *The Imaginary*, these engagements

were overwhelmingly prompted by perceived gaps, inconsistencies, uncertainties, or dissatisfactions, which led to a critical analysis of the cause, followed by a creative response, often in the form of possibility thinking (Craft, 2000).

Whilst the same general processes were reported in responses to all three novels, supporting the hypothesis generated from the responses to *The Imaginary*, there were also some important distinctions in responses to the different books, and between the participants.

The most notable difference was in the number of critical and creative responses the participants reported to each novel. Whilst both *The Imaginary* and *Not As We Know It* seem to have prompted a very high number of instances of critical and creative engagement, there were significantly fewer instances of critical and creative engagement with *The Midnight Zoo*. It seems likely that this relative difference was down to a number of factors.

Firstly, *The Midnight Zoo* has fewer illustrations than the other two novels. Given that the participants reported critical and creative engagement with illustrations, or the combination of illustrations and writing, far more times than they reported critical and creative engagement from writing alone, this relative lack of illustrations seems likely to have resulted in a lack of prompts for critical and creative engagement. Sophia discussed this tendency for illustrations to provide prompts for possibility thinking in her discussion of *Not As We Know It*, saying:

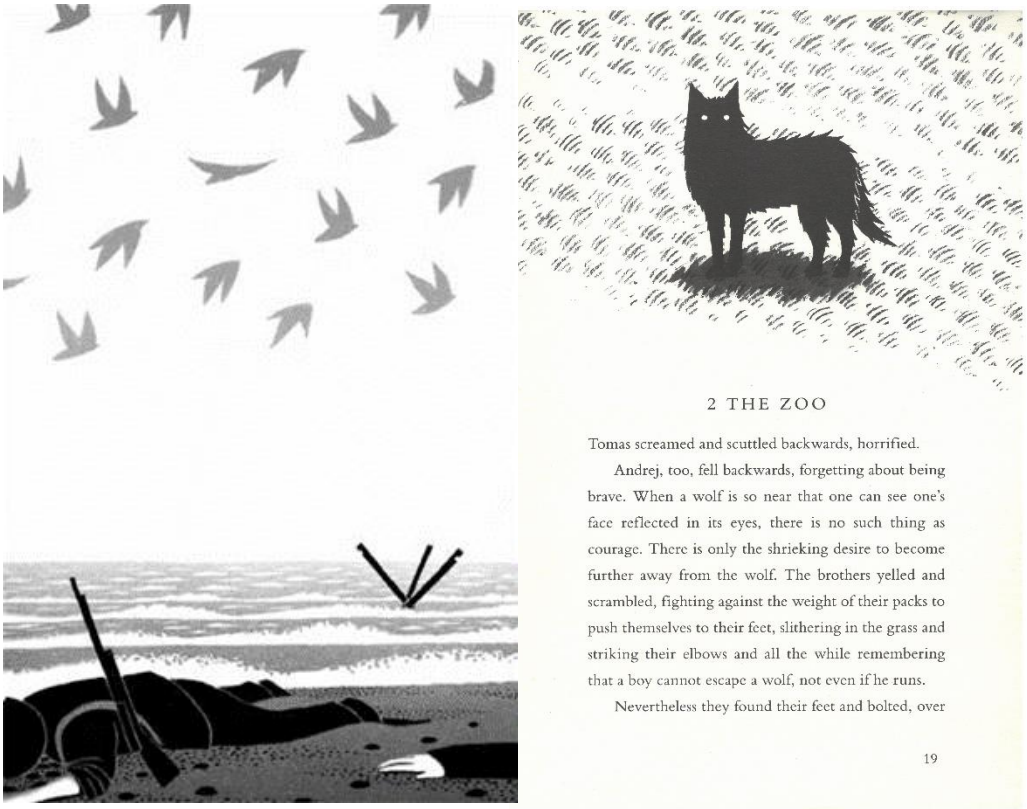
> It's a nice way, imagining, like, how other things are in the book and stuff. […] I do most of them with pictures, but not as much words. I do do it with words (TMZ:1, lines 990-1000).

The instances of critical and creative engagement reported by the participants support Sophia's impression that illustrations were more likely to prompt possibility thinking than the writing alone, and as such it is unsurprising that the novel with the fewest illustrations would prompt the fewest critical and creative responses.

In addition to this, the participants generally reported perceiving the illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo* as 'straightforward', which seems to have resulted in fewer instances of perceived gaps, inconsistencies, and uncertainties, which seem to have been a primary cause of critical and creative engagement. Bound up with the illustrations being perceived as 'straightforward', the participants generally reported spending less time looking at the illustrations in *The Midnight*

*Zoo*, and as such may have generated fewer pauses of a sufficient length to engage in reflection (see section 7.4). Amy, Sophia, Leo, and Nicole all reported occasions during their reading of *The Midnight Zoo* when they were uncertain about the meaning of an illustration, but rather than being encouraged to look more closely and consider possibilities, they chose to continue reading the writing instead. This resulted in them moving forward in the story rather than stopping to engage critically and creatively with the moment of uncertainty. It is also noteworthy that Nicole, who spent the least amount of time looking at the illustrations of all of the participants, reported the fewest instances of critical and creative engagement with *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It*. This is particularly significant, as it reflects the importance of readers taking the time to stop and think when engaging critically and creatively with novels. Whilst individual novels may be likely to prompt these pauses to a greater or lesser extent based on the number and style of their illustrations, the decision to pause and engage critically and creatively is also one which is personal to each reader and each reading event. As such, reading mindfully and deliberately allowing time to pause and engage, or scaffolding these moments of pause for other readers in situations such as guided reading lessons, may support critical and creative engagement with an illustrated novel.

As discussed above, the relatively lesser amount of attention directed at the illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo* appears to be at least in part based on the simplicity of the illustration style. It therefore seems logical that the fewer number of critical and creative responses to this novel may have been partially due to the generally sparse style of the illustrations, which may have led the participants to feel that they were more likely to gain further information from the writing than by closely examining the illustrations. However, none of the participants explicitly reported that being the case. Analysis of critical and creative responses to *The Midnight Zoo* also complicates the supposition that illustrations with a sparse style are more 'straightforward' than illustrations with a more complex style, because the illustrations which *did* prompt the participants to engage in possibility thinking were overwhelmingly the most reductive and simply drawn. Whilst all the illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo* tend to use simple line work and a low number of distinct elements, some of the illustrations are more reductive and less representative than others, using block outlines with no internal shading of individual elements.



2 THE ZOO

Tomas screamed and scuttled backwards, horrified.

Andrej, too, fell backwards, forgetting about being brave. When a wolf is so near that one can see one's face reflected in its eyes, there is no such thing as courage. There is only the shrieking desire to become further away from the wolf. The brothers yelled and scrambled, fighting against the weight of their packs to push themselves to their feet, slithering in the grass and striking their elbows and all the while remembering that a boy cannot escape a wolf, not even if he runs.

Nevertheless they found their feet and bolted, over

19

Figure 7.1, comparison of illustrations within *The Midnight Zoo* (Hartnett & McNaughtt, 2010, pp. 58, 19). The left image shows the more representational illustrative style which includes internal line work and shading on elements, the right image shows the more iconic illustrative style with block colour and no internal line work or shading on elements.

The highly reductive illustrations were the ones which prompted the largest number of critical and creative responses to *The Midnight Zoo*, and were also the ones which the participants generally found harder to understand. Amy discussed this issue in the following comment:

> I think I actually might have looked at the block colour ones a bit more because they were harder to understand since it wasn't as detailed as these. 'Cause they've got, eyes and stuff so it's pretty easy to figure out that that's some sort of animal. However if it was, say it was like that one (p.84) you wouldn't know if it was a bear or, like, a wolf or something (TMZ:5, lines 71-86).

This indicates that it is not straightforwardly the case that a less complex style of illustration is easier to understand and therefore less likely to result in critical and creative engagement. Rather, the responses to the more iconic illustrations in *The*

*Midnight Zoo* indicate that there is likely to be a scale of illustrative complexity which impacts upon how easy the illustration is to decode. If an illustration is highly complex, with a great deal of shading, complicated line work, and a large number of distinct illustrative elements, it is likely to be more difficult to decode. However, if an illustration is highly reductive, it may similarly be difficult to decode because of the lack of representational elements. These areas of difficulty are likely to stem from two differing requirements. Where an illustration is highly complex, it is likely to require a greater amount of deliberation (Perkins, 1994) in order to engage with all the differing elements and levels of detail. Where an illustration is highly reductive, however, it relies on a reader's own knowledge and experience in order to fill the informational 'gaps' (Iser, 1980) in the image, and a reader may not have the required knowledge to be able to do this. Alexander discussed this importance of the ideal level of detail in an illustration a great deal in his responses to all three books, and on more than one occasion explicitly discussed the need for enough detail to provide information, but not so much as to become 'distracting' (TMZ:1,2; NAWKI:1). Whilst there may be a general trend that highly complex or highly reductive illustrations are more likely to be challenging to decode, based respectively on the need to process a great deal of provided information, or provide a great deal of already known information to fill the informational 'gaps' (Iser, 1980) within the image, it also seems likely that the ease or difficulty of decoding any individual illustration will be highly dependent on the individual reader. For Alexander, who had a relatively low level of visual literacy and fluency in reading illustrated novels, the level of complexity of an illustration was extremely important. For Leo, by contrast, who was very visually literate and highly fluent at reading illustrated novels, the issue of illustration complexity appears to have been far less significant, and was not something which Leo often mentioned in terms of understanding (though Leo did mention the level of complexity of illustrations a great deal in terms of aesthetic experience and aesthetic judgement). Alongside individual issues of fluency, sociocultural issues are also likely to greatly influence a reader's ability to decode an image, given the socioculturally situated nature of communication (Kress, 2010). Given these factors, the relative ease of decoding images must be seen as being influenced by a combination of the level of complexity of the image itself and the individual position of the reader. Within this understanding, it does seem that illustrations which readers find more difficult to decode are more likely to prompt critical and

creative engagement than illustrations which readers find easy to decode, due to their tendency to prompt gaps, inconsistencies, or uncertainties in the reader's perception of information.

The reduced style of some illustrations also prompted a different type of possibility thinking from Amy, as shown in this interview extract:

> Amy: I said to my sister, look, there's a tiger with a spotlight on it in my book, and she was like, 'oh my god, yeah!'. And she was like 'really? Let me see what it says' and I was like, uh, no, not really. (laughs)
>
> Jen: (laughs) So did you think that it's not very clear what it
>
> Amy: At first I like kind of knew that it was the moon, I think that's what it is. But, the more you look at it the more you think of other things that it could be, that's why I thought it was a tiger (TMZ:1, lines 31-43).

Although Amy felt fairly certain about the intended meaning of the illustration, and acknowledged that it was the moon when considering the illustration as part of the narrative, she also spent time imagining other possible meanings for the illustration which were entirely divorced from the narrative. Amy engaged in this kind of play on four occasions during her responses to *The Midnight Zoo*, and twice with silhouette illustrations in *Not As We Know It*. On one occasion in *The Midnight Zoo*, she turned the book upside down in order to look at the illustration from a different angle, which she said she was prompted to do by the look of the illustration, rather than any confusion about meaning. Amy commented that she only tended to play with the illustrations in this way when they were less detailed and she could imagine them as multiple things, and related these illustrations to optical illusions, saying:

> It's kind of like an optical illusion, you love them. And then it's kind of like the same thing: you want to imagine what it is (NAWKI:1, lines 735-736).

Amy's playing behaviour was therefore closely linked to her understanding of how to interact with optical illusions, which the simpler illustrations reminded her of. As such, she was drawing on her experience of interacting with other forms of media and applying it to her interactions with these books in a very active and deliberate way, as described in this comment:

> This one, I kind of was, like, 'Wait, is, is that kind of like an illusion? Are you not supposed to see the girl?' And then I tried covering

> the eyes, and then seeing where the eyes join, and it's kind of seaweed or something or like a fish. But then I was like, 'No, I don't think so. I think it's just like that,' so I covered it and I was, like, 'Oh yeah, you can kind of see a girl's hair' in the seaweed here (NAWKI:2, lines 559-572).

These interactions, where Amy treated the illustrations as optical illusions, resulted in many creative ideas about possible alternative meanings for the illustrations. Engaging in this kind of behaviour also significantly enhanced Amy's aesthetic experience of reading the books, as she reported gaining enormous enjoyment from this form of play. Nor was Amy the only participant to draw on her understanding of different types of media in order to engage with the illustrated novels. Leo also discussed searching illustrations for 'Easter eggs' hidden in the backgrounds, a behaviour he had learned through playing video games. In searching for Easter eggs, Leo explored the illustrations much more closely and critically than the other participants, and these explorations often led to him engaging in possibility thinking. These interactions suggest that drawing on behaviours more typically associated with other forms of media may be a method of encouraging greater critical and creative engagement with illustrated novels, and further research in this area could prove highly valuable.

Given the additional perspectives offered in the participants critical and creative responses to *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It*, the hypothesis is now a partial theory stating:

> Readers are encouraged to engage critically and creatively with illustrated novels when they are faced with perceived gaps or inconsistencies in the information they construct from the book, when they are uncertain about meaning, or were dissatisfied with an aspect of the book. Whilst these gaps, inconsistencies, and uncertainties are individual to each reader, they are most likely to be generated from the illustrations or the juxtaposition of writing and illustration.

In addition, the following partial theories have been generated from an analysis of responses to all three books:

> There seems to be a scale of illustrative complexity which impacts upon how easy an illustration is to decode. If an illustration is highly complex or highly iconic, it is likely to be more difficult to decode, though this is also dependent upon the fluency and sociocultural position of the reader. Illustrations which readers find more difficult to decode are more likely to prompt critical and creative engagement than illustrations which readers find easy to decode, due to their tendency to prompt gaps, inconsistencies, or uncertainties in the reader's perception of information.

Drawing on behaviours more typically associated with other forms of media may be a method of encouraging greater critical and creative engagement with illustrated novels.

## 7.9 Aesthetic experience

Illustrations may enhance the aesthetic experience of reading *The Imaginary* by prompting emotional responses to both the narrative content and appearance of the book. The more attention a reader gave to the illustrations, the more likely they were to report these aesthetic experiences.

The participants' responses to *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It* not only confirmed this hypothesis, but provided additional data to develop it further. All of the participants reported having emotional responses to the narrative content of both the writing and the illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It*, just as they had to the narrative content in *The Imaginary*. In addition to this, all of the participants reported enjoying the presence of the illustrations in the books in a way that was completely separate from whether or not they found them easy to read or felt they were useful in terms of providing information. Alexander, Amy, Leo and Sophia all commented that they enjoyed illustrations which they felt were 'decorative' and not related to the story, simply because they were nice to look at. Nicole, who spent relatively little time looking at the illustrations, commented that she enjoyed having the illustrations in the books and felt they made the books a bit better, even though she felt they didn't really need to be there in order to understand the stories (NAWKI:1, lines 497-510). Alexander also drew this distinction between aesthetic value and other considerations such as ease of reading several times, exemplified by this comment about an illustration of a constellation which was layered behind the writing:

> So, but I also liked how it was in the background because, because it kind of like, I'm not sure why but I just liked how it was in the background but it was also a little distracting sometimes (NAWKI:1, lines 549-551).

Despite the fact that Alexander felt that the layout made it difficult to read the writing, he still enjoyed the illustration because he felt that it looked nice (Alexander, NAWKI:1). This aesthetic appreciation in spite of the difficulties of reading was in stark contrast to Alexander's responses to the illustrations in *The Imaginary*, in which ease of reading or level of 'distraction' was distinctly prioritised over any kind of aesthetic response. In fact, throughout Alexander's

responses to *Not As We Know It* he regularly reported taking aesthetic pleasure from the illustrations (and also reporting to aesthetically dislike some of the illustrations) in a way he had not reported in his responses to *The Imaginary*, and only occasionally reported in his responses to *The Midnight Zoo*. This may have been partially due to his potentially increased fluency in reading illustrated novels, as discussed in section 7.6, or was possibly due to the greater number of illustrations in the book commanding more of his attention. Whilst I cannot draw any concrete conclusions about Alexander's increased number of responses about his aesthetic experience, his responses, along with the responses of all the other participants, do demonstrate that the illustrations provided the opportunity for aesthetic experiences which were entirely separate from meaning making or ease of reading.

One frequently mentioned factor in terms of aesthetic experience was that of variety. Alexander, Amy, Sophia and Leo all mentioned the idea of variety several times, and commented that they felt that variety made books more interesting. Sophia, Leo and Amy discussed variety in terms of the ratio of writing and illustrations, and all expressed a preference for a large number of illustrations to increase variety. Leo commented:

> I prefer these because I usually get bored when I just read empty pages, empty pages without some detailed pictures. That's why I really prefer picture books. But I can deal with normal books. […] Because it's just boring if there's nothing to look at; there's just pages of writing (NAWKI:1, lines 382-396).

Alongside variety between writing and illustrations, Alexander and Sophia also reported enjoying a variety of illustrative styles within a book, whilst Amy commented that she enjoyed that the illustrative style of *The Midnight Zoo* was very different to other books she had read (TMZ:3, lines 88-89). Alexander discussed his feelings on variety of style in this statement:

> I feel like it's nicer to have different types of pictures. Because with the different types of pictures it wouldn't just be the same, like you'd be used to, you'd know what's coming up on a picture. You'll know the like the basic set out of the picture. Yeah, like it's nice to have like someone unique or pictures that are unique (TMZ:4, lines 262-269).

This enjoyment of a variety of styles was also discussed in terms of other design elements, such as layout and font. Sophia discussed enjoying the layout of the illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo* because they were different to what she normally saw in books (TMZ:1, lines 9-15), and both Sophia and Amy commented that they

liked the variety of font use in *Not As We Know It* (Sophia, NAWKI:1; Amy, NAWKI:1). Linked with an aesthetic preference for variety also came a general aesthetic dislike of illustrative repetition, which Alexander, Amy, Leo and Sophia all commented upon. Amy said:

> I feel like now they're getting a bit more boring because they're just kind of like repeating them. At first, they were a bit more interesting, because you want to kind of explore and see what's there, but now they're just repeating and it's getting boring! (NAWKI:3, lines 376-383).

The idea of variety being interesting and lack of variety being boring was frequently repeated by the participants across both *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It*. This suggests that visual variety in illustrated novels can enhance the aesthetic experience of reading them, and that this variety can be achieved through the use of a high number of illustrations, a variety of fonts and layouts, and by not repeating illustrations throughout a book. Sophia summed up this aesthetic experience of variety in the following comment:

> I like that it changes something. Like you're reading the same thing and then you come to something differently, that's a bit nice because it's got something different (TMZ:3, lines 293-295)

The inclusion of colour in illustrations was also mentioned as an aesthetic preference by all of the participants. Nicole and Sophia both stated that they preferred the illustrations in *The Imaginary* to those in *The Midnight Zoo* because of the use of colour (Nicole, TMZ:1; Sophia, TMZ:5), whilst Alexander, Amy, Leo and Sophia all expressed enjoyment of the use of colour at various points across the interviews. On two occasions, Amy explicitly linked her preference for colour to illustrations having a higher level of detail which she also preferred (NAWKI:1, 2). Alongside colour, this aesthetic preference for illustrations which were perceived to be highly detailed was also expressed by Nicole, Leo and Sophia on multiple occasions. Alexander did not comment on level of detail from an aesthetic perspective, which may have been due to his extremely strong opinions about level of detail from an ease of reading perspective. These comments suggest that the aesthetic experience of reading illustrated novels may be enhanced by the inclusion of colour and complex illustrations. Moreover, however, they demonstrate that reading illustrated novels can both provide enjoyable aesthetic experiences, and encourage readers to reflect upon their aesthetic experiences and preferences. The ability of illustrated novels to provide enjoyable aesthetic experiences not only enhances the process of reading for individual readers, but

may be particularly significant when considering ways of promoting reading for pleasure. Cremin (2015) notes that many teachers are uncertain of how to promote reading for pleasure. Part of this uncertainty is likely due to teachers having very little time to read, and being unsure of which books to recommend (Cremin, Mottram, Collins, Powell, & Safford, 2009). Knowing that illustrated novels offer the opportunity for enjoyable aesthetic experiences may aid teachers with book selections, adding an additional dimension to reading for pleasure, that of the aesthetic experience, which they may not have previously considered.

Prompting readers to reflect upon their aesthetic experiences and preferences is also highly significant when considering the training of aesthetic judgement, which the next section will focus on. Eisner (2004) discusses the importance of feeling to both assessing and creating works of art, which are idiosyncratic and cannot be judged according to strict criteria. Due to the highly individual nature of each work of art, it is important to develop the ability to integrate feeling and thinking when approaching art, considering not only the details of the construction, but also the experience of interacting with the art work. This ability is one which Eisner believes can be developed, and through which we can become more 'qualitatively intelligent' (p.5). The responses to this research suggest that illustrated novels, and specifically discussions around aesthetic experiences of reading illustrated novels, can provide excellent opportunities for developing this sense of artistic feeling through reflection on the aesthetic experience and the development of aesthetic preferences.

Based on this discussion, the hypothesis has been developed into the following partial theory:

> Illustrations appear to enhance the aesthetic experience of reading novels by prompting emotional and aesthetic responses to both the narrative content and appearance of the book. The more attention a reader gives to the illustrations, the more likely they are to report these aesthetic experiences. The ability of illustrated novels to provide enjoyable aesthetic experiences not only enhances the process of reading for individual readers, but may support the promotion of reading for pleasure.

In addition, the following partial theories have been generated:

The aesthetic experience of reading illustrated novels may be enhanced if the novel contains a high proportion of unique illustrations, a variety of illustrative styles and design features, incorporates colour, includes a high number of individual elements within the illustrations, and does not repeat illustrations.

Discussions around the aesthetic experiences of reading illustrated novels can provide opportunities for developing a sense of artistic feeling through reflection on the aesthetic experience and the development of aesthetic preferences.

## 7.10 Aesthetic judgement

Illustrations could prompt aesthetic engagement, with critical explorations of illustrations resulting in aesthetic judgements about *The Imaginary* as a material object. The more attention a reader gave to the illustrations, the more likely they were to make aesthetic judgements.

One of the most noticeable differences in the responses to *The Imaginary* in comparison to the responses to *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It* was the frequency and nature of the aesthetic judgements the participants made. With the exception of Nicole, who reported only one instance of making an aesthetic judgement each about *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It*, the participants' aesthetic judgements notably increased in both number and sophistication over the course of the responses to the three books.

One apparent reason for this increase was that the participants began to compare the aesthetics of the novels, not only to each other, but also to other books they had read and art styles they were familiar with. For example, Alexander (TMZ:1) discussed how different the illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo* were to the illustrations of Tony Ross in *Gangster Granny* (Walliams & Ross, 2013), and Amy compared an illustration of birds to origami (TMZ:5). These comments were particularly common in responses to *The Midnight Zoo*, which Alexander, Amy, Sophia and Leo all commented had a style of illustration that was very different to what they usually saw in books. This distinctiveness of style may have been part of what encouraged the participants to pay more attention to the aesthetics of the book than they had to the aesthetics of *The Imaginary*. The illustrations in *The Imaginary* were created by Emily Gravett, a prolific illustrator of children's books whose work the participants were likely to have seen before, whose style of illustration has developed from the long-standing illustrative

tradition of the clear line style, and who has many imitators in the current children's illustration market. Considering the noticeably greater number of aesthetic judgements about the illustrations in *The Midnight* Zoo, and how many of these comments were explicitly linked to how different the illustrative style was compared to the books the participants were used to reading, it is possible that the familiarity of the illustrative style in *The Imaginary* did not prompt the participants to examine the aesthetic composition to the same degree as a style which they felt unfamiliar with. This attraction towards the unfamiliar is reflective of the earlier discussion on the role of the unusual and unfamiliar in attracting attention (Becker et al., 2007; Itti & Baldi, 2009), and may have led to a closer lever of consideration.

The participants' comparisons of illustrations led to a close examination and assessment of the composition and style of the illustrations, resulting in critical engagement and aesthetic judgements about whether the participants felt that the illustrations were effective or successful. For example, Amy made this comment about some silhouette illustrations in *Not As We Know It*, comparing the use of black and white to the use of colour in *The Imaginary*:

> So I kind of like that bit. I think it's more, you don't really need to see their faces, so it's more interesting, because if that bit was in colour, it would, I don't know, I kind of feel like it would look better in black. Some bits would look better in black and then some bits would look better in colour. […] You know how sometimes shorter sentences are more effective? I feel like without colour it, t could be quite effective (NAWKI:2, lines 526-549).

This use of comparison to engage in aesthetic judgement corresponds to a recent study on enhancing children's art appreciation and visual literacy (Kim et al., 2017), which found that comparison of artistic works was a useful tool in developing aesthetic appreciation. Together, these findings suggest that explicitly engaging in comparisons of illustrative style may increase critical engagement with illustrations and help to develop aesthetic appreciation and visual literacy.

As well as drawing comparisons, the participants frequently engaged in detailed assessments of illustrations as a whole and their individual components. For example, Alexander made this assessment of the final illustration of *Not As We Know It*:

> I liked how the boy just was standing – the boy was sitting on the rocks and the mountain was in the background as well with all these sharp bits, so I kind of liked how it gave me a good image of the sea and all around it. […] I didn't really like how all these

> bits were just swirly lines, looking like rock […] and not like circles that's just been bunched together. […] Because like it's not like the actual earth. It's not like the actual earth because I never go to like places and see rocks which are just swirly. […] I did like how the stars were quite bright, like nearly brighter than the writing. […] 'Cause that is like real life, 'cause normal stars that I see, they are not like darkish, they are quite bright and then the moon is around near the stars. So like I kind of liked that bit, how that was like life and earth. […] I thought that it looked all right because it was kind of good because it gave me an image of what it would look like. But kind of bad because it – it wasn't like earth that really (NAWKI:3, lines 91-132).

These assessments demonstrated that the participants had spent a great deal of time exploring the illustrations and making critical judgements. Whilst the criteria for their judgements were quite individual – Alexander tended to value realism quite highly, whilst Leo most enjoyed illustrations which contained a lot of detail or he felt conveyed a lot of emotion or atmosphere – the processes of making these judgements were quite similar. This involved an establishment of what the participant felt the image portrayed, and a critical assessment of what elements the participants felt were effective or ineffective, with reasons for their assessments. These assessments demonstrated a high level of critical thinking (Mulnix, 2012), and became notably more sophisticated over the course of the research. These responses therefore suggest that exploring the illustrations in novels in detail can not only provide opportunities for readers to engage in critical thinking, but that critical assessment of illustrations may help to improve readers' visual literacy and art appreciation skills over time. Further research which explicitly explores the development of artistic judgement and critical thinking through reading illustrated novels could prove highly valuable in establishing methods to best utilise the potential of illustrated novels to develop aesthetic judgement.

When discussing the style of the illustrations, the participants sometimes considered whether or not the style was effective given the context of the book. Leo, for example, said that although he preferred the greater level of detail of the illustrations in *The Imaginary* to the simpler style of *The Midnight Zoo*, he felt that the darker, less detailed illustrations suited *The Midnight Zoo* because the story was largely set at night-time (TMZ:1). Similarly, Amy felt that black and white illustrations were more appropriate for *Not As We Know It* than illustrations with colour, because of the sad emotional tone of the book (NAWKI:3), and Sophia also

commented that the style of the illustrations in *Not As We Know It* suited the book (NAWKI:1). These discussions highlight the potential for illustrated novels to be engaged with aesthetically as a complete, multimodal medium, where the combination of the writing and the words opens up possibilities for aesthetic engagement which would not be present by viewing the illustrations in isolation from the writing. By viewing the illustrations as part of a larger text and assessing their aesthetic effectiveness within that specific context, illustrated novels provide opportunities for aesthetic engagement and the development of aesthetic appreciation specific to the multimodal nature of the medium.

Another multimodal aspect the participants regularly assessed in terms of aesthetic effectiveness was the layout of the books. Whilst much of the discussion of layout surrounded how this impacted upon ease of reading, Alexander, Amy, Leo and Sophia all also discussed the layout of the novels in terms of aesthetics. These assessments included both positive and negative judgements. Sophia commented that she particularly enjoyed the layout of *The Midnight Zoo* as she felt the layouts were very different to what she usually saw in books, and she highly valued variety and novelty (TMZ:1). On the other hand, Leo expressed criticism for one particular page layout in *The Midnight Zoo*, which he felt had compromised the effectiveness of the illustration in order to prioritise the presentation of the writing, saying:

> I didn't kind of get it, because that's the bars that you can see and then he's there, but then where do the bars go here? I was just thinking there that he just didn't want to ruin the writing (TMZ:3, lines 105-109).

As with the assessments of the illustrations themselves, these aesthetic judgements of layout demonstrated a high level of critical engagement, and suggest a further way in which illustrated novels provide potential opportunities for readers to make aesthetic judgements.

Amy, Leo and Sophia's responses to *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It* demonstrated critical aesthetic engagement with not just the style, content, and composition of the illustrations, but also with the process by which the illustrations were constructed. These responses ranged from consideration of the thought processes of the authors and illustrators, the practical considerations of creating the illustrations, and the techniques which might have been used. All three participants considered the difficulty of constructing particular illustrations, and incorporated their feelings about the level of difficulty into their assessments of

how effective the illustrations were. Frequently, the discussions around construction considered what effect the participants thought the authors and illustrators were aiming for, such as in these comments:

> But it was really really good, I liked how they put the fire there, you know, so the boys stand out (Leo, TMZ:1, lines 38-39).

> And it's kind of… I like what the author does; he doesn't just, like, leave a whole page or two and just literally put a picture on there. I like how he finds a place where it could go and look quite nice. And yeah, it's kind of a lot more interesting than just a page (Amy, NAWKI:1, lines 359-363).

> I think they chose to put it on the front because it makes people, like, pick up the book and say, 'This look interesting and I want to read it.' (Sophia, TMZ:2, lines 53-58).

Whilst each of these assessments deal with different elements of construction, each of the participants has considered the link between the deliberate choices of the creators and the impact they were trying to achieve. In doing so, they have demonstrated not only an aesthetic judgement of the final artistic object, but also engaged aesthetically with the process of creation. Kim et al. (2017) have described this type of engagement as an important facet of visual literacy, which explicitly considers the communication involved in art. By considering the creative intention behind the books, the participants were able to directly access and assess this important aspect of visual literacy.

Alongside this idea of communication, Sophia also considered the possible techniques used to create the illustrations on three occasions, such as in this discussion:

> And that their bikes, they're like, they look like they've been cut out or something, because, like, they've got all white around here and the rest of it is grey. So it's kind of weird. […] It was really weird how that bit was really round and then the sea was weird shapes. […] it's really clever how they got all the cloud in it as well. And the hill behind it. […] They probably didn't draw it, they probably did some of it on computer (NAWKI:1, lines 135-174).

Eisner (2004) discusses the importance of considering the methods of construction of all things which are made, regardless of whether they are theoretical and practical, as a vital aspect of learning and development of skill. By speculating about the methods involved in the creation of the illustrations, Sophia was not only finding another level on which to engage with the aesthetics of the books,

but was potentially improving her understanding of the construction of the illustrations and the skills required to create particular effects. Whilst Sophia was the only participant who did explicitly consider the artistic tools the creators had used, her responses demonstrate the potential within illustrated novels for these kinds of engagements. It seems likely that facilitation of these kinds of engagements with construction by educators could allow readers to further develop their visual literacy, artistic understanding, and aesthetic engagement with illustrated novels.

The responses of the participants demonstrate that illustrated novels have significant potential to prompt aesthetic judgements, and develop visual literacy and the skills required for aesthetic assessment. However, there was more than one occasion on which each of the participants, with the exception of Nicole, who made only two brief aesthetic judgements, struggled to express exactly what they meant when assessing the illustrations, as exemplified by this comment from Alexander:

> Like the ones in *The Midnight Zoo* they were quite – they were quite like kind of… I'm not sure how to say it but these ones they were more attractive than the ones in *The Midnight Zoo* (NAWKI:3, lines 173-175).

This comment, and similar comments from other participants, highlighted the necessity of readers having adequate vocabulary in order to make and communicate aesthetic judgements. This importance of vocabulary in engaging with multimodal texts has long been championed by researchers such as Walsh, Asha & Sprainger (2007), Arizpe and Styles (2008), and Pantaleo (2013). Whilst as a participatory, exploratory study, it was not appropriate for me to provide the participants with new vocabulary, their difficulties in this area does highlight the importance of explicitly teaching readers the vocabulary of art and design in order to maximise the benefits they can obtain from engaging with illustrated novels. However, it is important to stress that teaching vocabulary should not also mean teaching readers to make aesthetic judgements based on strict formula or criteria, which in the educational age of relating vocabulary to 'success criteria' can be a danger. Eisner (2004) warns of the dangers of applying rules to artistic judgements, which can eliminate the importance of nuance and remove the ability to judge in the absence of rule. The aesthetic judgements of the participants of this study to these illustrated novels demonstrates how much potential illustrated novels as a medium contain for enabling readers to engage aesthetically on many

different levels, and the highly beneficial role of encouraging aesthetic experience and aesthetic judgement to reflect personal feelings and assessments in an unstructured way. Whilst effective communication through the acquisition of relevant vocabulary is likely to support this process, linking that vocabulary to strict criteria is likely to stifle it.

This discussion confirms the relevance of the exiting hypothesis which is now the following partial theory on aesthetic judgement:

> Illustrations can prompt aesthetic engagement, with critical explorations of illustrations resulting in aesthetic judgements about illustrated novels as material objects. The more attention a reader gives to the illustrations, the more likely they are to make aesthetic judgements.

In addition, the following partial theories have been generated after a consideration of responses engaging with aesthetic judgement across all three books:

> Engaging in comparisons of illustrative style may increase critical engagement with illustrations and help to develop aesthetic appreciation and visual literacy.

> Exploring the illustrations in novels in detail can provide opportunities for readers to engage in critical thinking, and may help to improve readers' visual literacy and art appreciation skills over time.

> Illustrated novels provide opportunities for aesthetic engagement and the development of aesthetic appreciation of specific multimodal facets such as layout and the relationship of illustrative style to narrative tone.

> Through engaging with the construction of illustrated novels, readers may be able to develop their visual literacy, artistic understanding and aesthetic judgement.

## 7.11 A model of response for illustrated novels

Through the analysis of the responses to *The Midnight Zoo* and *Not As We Know It*, the hypotheses generated from the analysis of the responses to *The Imaginary* have been confirmed, developed, or discarded, in order to generate the partial

theories above. In the process, a few new partial theories have also been generated, based on comparisons which could only be drawn across texts or which reflect the varying levels of data available for the different books.

From these partial theories I have developed a three-part model of response to illustrated novels. By having three parts to this model, I am able to provide an overview of the experience of reading illustrated novels, as well as directly address the key aim of identifying both the reading processes and potential affordances of illustrated novels. The first part of the model is a tapestry which synthesises the individual partial theories and demonstrates the interconnected nature of the experience of reading illustrated novels.

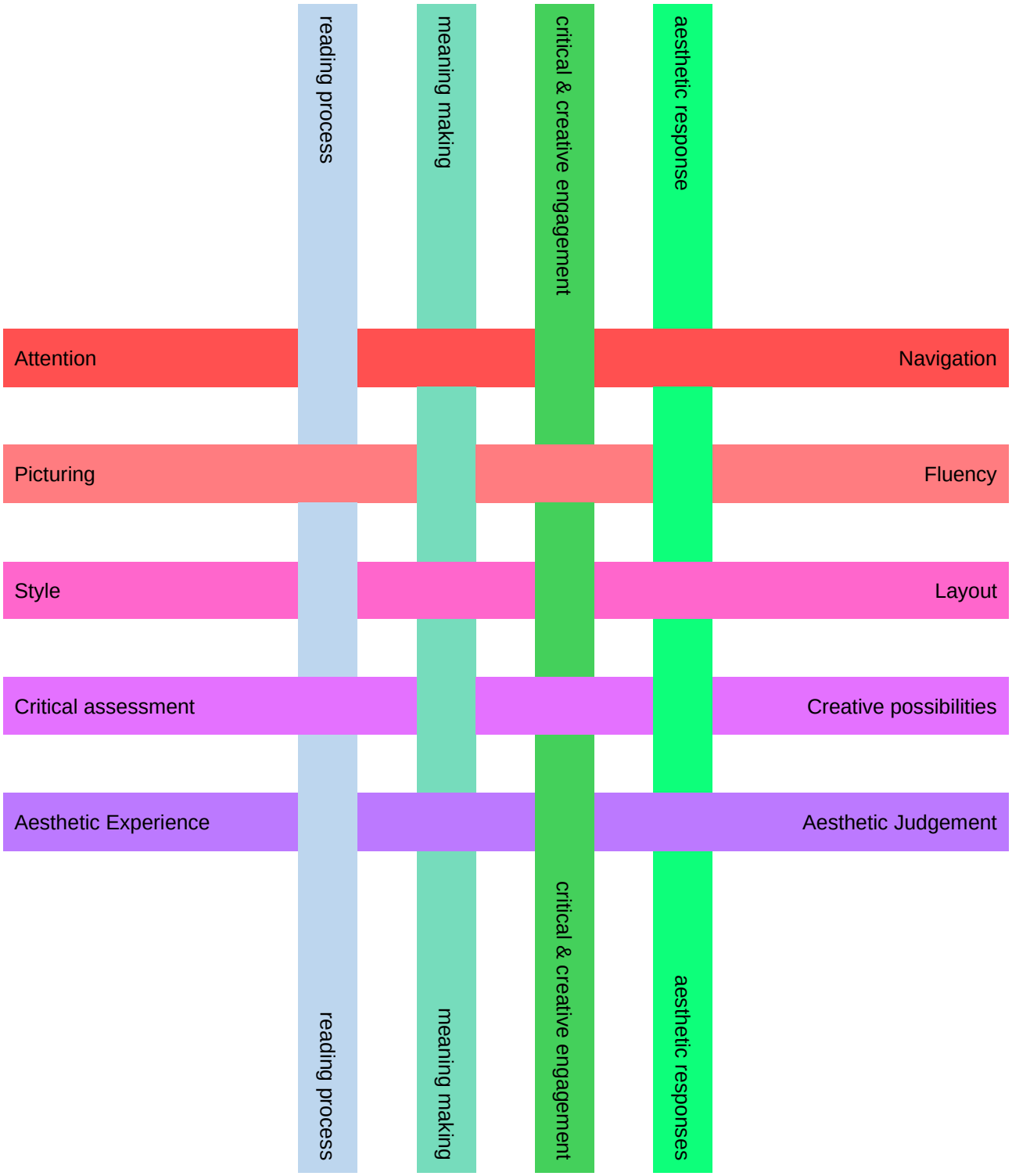



Figure 7.2, tapestry of the experience of reading illustrated novels

This tapestry presents an overview of reading illustrated novels, including consideration of both reading process and readers' responses. The key factors of the reading experience are presented, and as such this tapestry effectively

synthesises the affordances of the illustrated novel as a medium, highlighting some of the key elements which influence reading experience.

The second part of this model is the skills and processes model. This model focuses explicitly on the processes and skills which are undertaken when reading illustrated novels, as well as the skills which reading illustrated novels may help to develop.

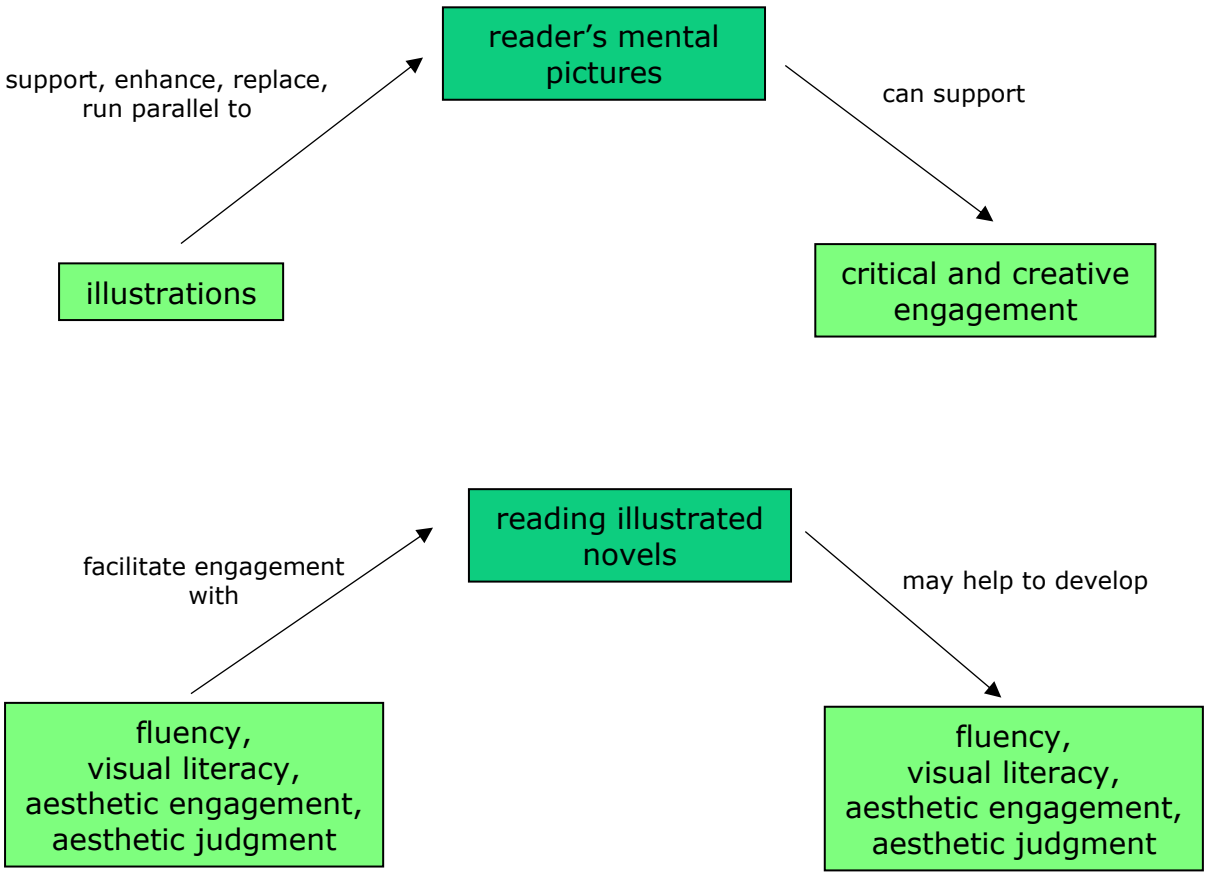



Figure 7.3, model of skills and processes involved in reading illustrated novels

Whilst the tapestry, as a synthesis, provides an overview of response to illustrated novels, the skills and processes model highlights trends based on key factors which are involved in the reading process. This part of the model is likely to be of use to educators as a support for the teaching of reading illustrated novels, as it highlights the skills and processes which readers may draw on whilst reading, as well as the skills and processes which may be developed through engagement with the medium.

The third part of the model demonstrates the potential affordances of illustrated novels, with particular reference to the influence that characteristics of individual books and individual readers.

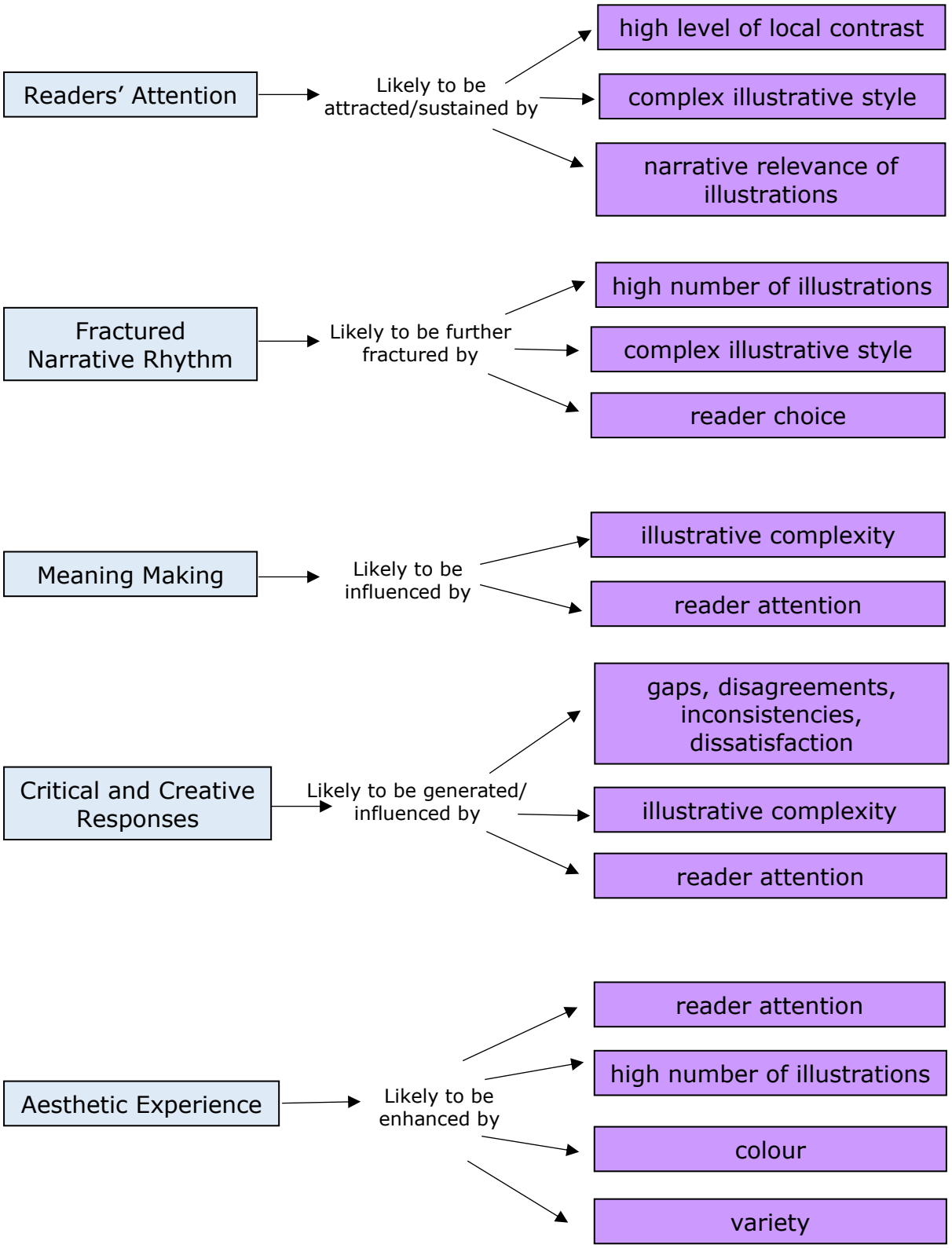



Figure 7.4, model of affordances and characteristics

As with the skills and processes model, the model of affordances and characteristics can serve as a scaffold to assist with both the selection of illustrated novels and the facilitation of effective engagement with illustrated novels.

Taken together, this three-part model represents a new theory of response for the medium of the illustrated novel. As with the partial theories developed in this chapter, this model should not be taken as 'total' theory (Dennis, 2011), but as a scaffold for understanding within the context of individual novels and individual reading events studied and reported (see section 4.4.2). The significance, limitations, and applications for this model will be explored further in the following chapter.

# 8. Conclusions

## 8.1 Introduction

This research has succeeded in its aim of creating a new model of the reading processes and potential affordances of illustrated novels, as presented in the preceding chapter. In this section, I will explore how this research contributes a new understanding of the medium of illustrated novels and discuss how the findings allow for the development of existing theories. I will also discuss the implications of the findings of this research for producers of illustrated novels and educators, and how this project has highlighted the need for further avenues of research into the affordances that illustrated novels may have for readers.

## 8.2 New contributions to understanding of the medium

The twenty-two partial theories and the three-part model of response developed by this research provide a significant contribution to our scholarly understanding of the medium of illustrated novels. By exploring the responses of child readers, I have been able to provide a perspective on illustrated novels which is very different than that presented by the previous theoretical, historical, or instructional approaches to the topic (Hodnett, 1982; Mackey, 2011). In particular, this research highlights the variety of experiences that may be prompted by the same texts, as well as the unique affordances of different illustrated novels. As such, the research has been able to acknowledge the active nature of the reading process, and view the medium of illustrated novels as one which has not only its own distinct characteristics and affordances, but is made up of a multitude of individual books and interacts with numerous unique reading events. This nuanced approach moves away from authoritative scholarly interpretations, by acknowledging the limits of theoretical applicability and celebrating the diversity of individual experience. Alongside this, the generation of the three-part model provides a basis from which illustrated novels can be usefully explored and used by scholars, educators and readers. The model provides a scaffold which will not apply in all cases but is likely to apply in many cases, and which can be adapted for the individual context. This research therefore takes neither a wholly particularist nor a wholly generalist view, and as such provides a distinct approach which differs greatly from previous scholarship.

In addition, by exploring the experience of reading illustrated novels whilst giving attention to the reading process and the aesthetic experience of reading, and by considering both the individual positions of the readers and the individual characteristics of each of the three novels, this research has contributed to both the fields of children's literature and education scholarship. In this way the research has balanced the concerns of both fields, considering both the readers and the texts, and acknowledging the interdependent and transactional nature of reading, which is neither solely attributable to books nor to readers (Iser, 1980; Rosenblatt, 1938, 1978).

Moreover, this research has created the space for children to provide their own views on children's literature, challenging the authority of adult-led approaches and addressing the current power imbalance in children's literature research (Deszcz-Tryhubczak, 2016). In taking a participatory approach, I have respected children's right to have their views heard on matters which concern them (OHCHR, 1989). I have also been able to improve the quality of my research by challenging my preconceptions as an adult researcher, and allowing my participants to communicate in the manner they felt most accurately expressed their thoughts (James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998). By sharing decisions with my participants, rather than conducting traditional adult-led empirical research, the findings represent a view of the experience of reading illustrated novels which is very different to that provided by trained adult readers (Hodnett, 1982), and thus provides a valuable additional perspective to the understanding of the medium of illustrated novels.

In addition, whilst this research was exploratory and not interventionist in nature, by encouraging my participants to reflect not only on their reading experiences but also on the effectiveness of the data collection methods we used, the research provided an opportunity for my participants to develop their own skills. This development could be most clearly seen in Alexander's apparent increase in visual literacy and fluency in reading illustrated novels, but all participants were encouraged to reflect upon their reading process and consider the books in detail, which is likely to have assisted them in developing as reflexive readers. As Arizpe and Styles (2016) found with their non-interventionist research on children reading picturebooks, the very process of discussing and reflecting upon books had a positive impact upon the participants' reading. The additional inclusion of research skills training and reflection on data collection methods

further extended this benefit and is likely to have supported the participants' critical thinking skills, particularly their skills of analysis and assessment.

## 8.3 Development of existing theories

The responses of the participants in this study and the partial theories developed from those responses bring additional light to several existing theories. The first of these is Schwarcz's (1982, pp. 14–18) framework of illustration categories. Schwarcz identifies four main categories of illustrative function: "congruency", which parallels and concretises what is presented by the writing; "reduction", which sketches only the very basic idea of what is being presented by the writing, for example through the use of silhouette or simple line drawings without shading; "elaboration", where the illustration provides additional information to that provided by the writing; and "deviation", where what is presented in the writing is not what is presented in the illustration, a functional category which is sometimes used to great effect within picturebooks to create 'counterpoint', such as in John Burningham's (1977) *Come Away From The Water, Shirley*. The findings from this research challenge the essentialist nature of these categories as ones which exist only on the basis of the content of the illustration and the writing. Rather, it is important to consider not only the content of the illustration and the writing, but also the position of the reader. Certainly, there was a universal agreement amongst the participants that the "reductive" illustrations of *The Midnight Zoo* were less detailed than the illustrations in *The Imaginary* and *Not As We Know It*, and a feeling that these illustrations did not provide much in the way of additional information that was not contained within the writing, unlike the illustrations of the other two books. However, there was no consensus as to which illustrations in the two more complexly illustrated books were "congruent" and which were "elaborative", and on more than one occasion the same illustration was considered "congruent" by some participants and "elaborative" by others. These differences of opinion on the functionality of the illustrations reflect the sociocultural nature of reading (Gee, 2000; Snow & Sweet, 2003), which resulted in the participants making different meanings from the writing and illustrations, drawing on differing personal knowledge and picturing abilities, and giving the illustrations differing amounts of attention. These responses suggest that Schwarcz's framework should be amended to acknowledge that whilst the relative

content of illustration and writing influences which functional category an illustration falls within, the function of an illustration is also dependent upon the individual reader and the individual reading event.

Another existing theory which may be extended from this research is that of the narrative rhythms of different book media. Nodelman (1988) identifies a climactic narrative rhythm for novels, where a reader follows the linear progression of the writing in order to find out what happens next, and a narrative rhythm of a sequence of beats for picturebooks, where each double spread provides a single beat. To these theories can be added that of the narrative rhythm of the illustrated novel, which appears to be a fractured narrative rhythm, where the forward momentum of the writing is interrupted by the pauses of illustrations. Unlike a picturebook, there does not appear to be any regularity to these pauses, though this might be different for a novel which has very regularly spaced illustrations. The length of these pauses is also highly individual to the reader and the reading event, and as such each reader co-constructs the fractured narrative rhythm of each reading of an illustrated novel. The fractured nature of the narrative rhythm of illustrated novels also appears to encourage critical engagement by providing the reader with additional thinking time to consider a moment within the text, rather than purely following the climatic linear narrative rhythm of the writing. As such, Nodelman's (1988) theory of narrative rhythm can be extended to include the fractured narrative rhythm of illustrated novels.

The findings from this research also contribute significantly to the current theories around the picturing process which occurs during reading. Of the limited current research which explores picturing in illustrated novels, primarily that of Bettleheim (1976) and Mendelsund (2014), picturing is approached through an introspective methodology. As noted by Mackey (2011) and called for by Kuzmicova (2014), an empirical approach which expands our frame of reference beyond our own experience has the potential to significantly enrich our understanding. Having undertaken this participatory research, Bettleheim and Mendelsund's theories can be widely expanded upon. Whilst there were instances in which the participants reported the illustrations replacing their own pictures, as Bettleheim and Mendelsund have attested, these replacements were not always viewed as negative, in contrast to Bettleheim and Mendelsund's experiences. Rather,

illustrations were often seen as a welcome support for the picturing process, confirming the speculations of Nodelman (1988) and mirroring Graham's (1990) findings that illustrations supported the picturing process when reading Alfred Noyes' poem *The Highwayman*. In addition, the participants regularly mentioned enjoying the illustration's differences, or viewed them as an improvement upon their own pictures, rather than seeing them as an 'imposition' as Mendelsund (2014, p. 41) does. Moreover, the illustrations in the novels did not always replace the participant's own mental pictures, but were able to enhance or run parallel to them as well. Alongside this, illustrative style was found to be significant, with representative illustrations being more effective at supporting picturing than reductive illustrations. These findings demonstrate that the interactions between illustrations in novels and the picturing process are more complex than they have previously been viewed.

In addition, the findings from this research have expanded upon research by Dekker et al. (2014), Sadoski et al. (1990) and Speer et al. (2009) which discuss the importance of personal experience to the ability to picture. This research empirically corroborates these researchers' findings from the fields of neuroscience and cognitive poetics, as the participants reported finding it more difficult to picture unfamiliar fantastical elements which they did not have previous experience of. Alongside corroborating the importance of personal knowledge and experience to the ability to mentally picture, this research has demonstrated that in such cases where readers are faced with unfamiliarity in novels, illustrations can support their mental picturing process.

The potential for the juxtaposition of illustrations and writing to open up or close down interpretive possibilities was a key area of investigation for this study, and these findings help to further develop our understanding of current theories on this issue. Nodelman's (1988) theory that words and illustrations in picturebooks narrow down each other's interpretive possibilities by instructing the reader how to interpret each other (a theory developed from Barthes' (1977) concept of 'relay') also seems to be applicable to the process of reading illustrated novels. All of the participants described using both the writing and the illustrations to clarify the meaning suggested by the other mode at various points during the research. However, this was not the only meaning making process which occurred when the readers were faced with a juxtaposition of writing and illustration. There were also

several instances in which the participants felt that the juxtaposition of writing and illustration opened up interpretive possibilities, and led to the participants engaging in 'possibility thinking' (Craft, 2000). On these occasions, the results of the juxtaposition reflected not Nodelman's theory of closing down possibilities, but Nikolajeva and Scott's (2000, 2001) theory that where illustrations are providing contradicting information to that provided in the writing, multiple interpretive possibilities are opened up, and that these possibilities may be revisited and revised by the reader. However, whilst the generation of multiple possibilities certainly occurred, and the participants did undertake revision of their initial interpretive ideas, it is difficult to link this solely to instances where the information in the illustrations and the writing was contradictory. As discussed in the above section exploring Schwarcz's (1982) framework, the distinctions of when illustrations and writing are providing congruent, elaborative, or deviating information is not solely based on the content of the illustration and writing, but also upon the perceptions of the reader. In this study, the instances when the juxtaposition of illustration and writing led to the consideration of multiple possibilities were characterised by the participants' perceptions that there were gaps or inconsistencies in information, if they felt uncertain about meanings, or if they felt dissatisfied with the text. These gaps, inconsistencies, uncertainties, and dissatisfactions, whilst prompted by the novels, were unique to each reader's perceptions and personal knowledge. The participants did not consistently engage in possibility thinking about the same juxtaposed illustrations and writing.

When considering Nodelman's (1988) and Nikolajeva and Scott's (2000, 2001) theories about the juxtaposition of illustrations and writing and the influence on interpretive possibilities within the context of illustrated novels, it appears that these theories can be further developed based upon the findings of this research. In illustrated novels, the juxtaposition of writing and illustrations can lead either to a closing down of interpretive possibilities where readers use the two modes to clarify meaning, or an opening up of interpretive possibilities where the juxtaposition prompts the readers to perceive gaps or inconsistencies, or to feel uncertainty or dissatisfaction.

## 8.4 Implications for professional practice

### 8.4.1 Implications for producers and publishers of illustrated novels

Whilst each reader, reading experience, and illustrated novel is unique, a few common preferences were cited by the participants in this study which may be of interest to producers and publishers of illustrated novels. The first of these was a distinct preference in terms of layout. All of the participants expressed a preference for double page spreads not only in terms of aesthetic enjoyment, but also for ease of reading. Conversely, even those participants with a high level of fluency in switching between reading writing and reading illustrations, such as Leo, found that illustrations placed behind writing made it difficult to read both the writing and the illustration. For some, such as Alexander, this layout was particularly intrusive to his reading process, whilst for others such as Sophia and Nicole this led to the illustration being ignored entirely in favour of the words. Alongside layout preferences, all of the participants expressed a strong aesthetic preference for illustrations which included colour. There was also a general enjoyment of variety, which included a preference for a large number of illustrations, and a dislike of repeated illustrations. Producers and publishers of illustrated novels looking to increase the readability and enhance the aesthetic experience of reading their books may wish to take these preferences into account.

### 8.4.2 Implications for educators

The findings of this research also have a number of implications for educators. One of the key findings was the potential of illustrated novels to prompt critical and creative responses in readers. The juxtaposition of writing and illustrations regularly led to the participants perceiving gaps, inconsistencies, uncertainties, or dissatisfactions, and these perceptions often led the participants to engage in a critical evaluation of the text followed by creative solution building, often in the form of possibility thinking. The novels also provided opportunities for the participants to engage in aesthetic judgement. As well as discussing the effectiveness of colour, composition, style, and technique, which could be engaged with through an exploration of any image, the illustrated novels also provided the opportunity to engage in aesthetic judgements of layout, narrative effectiveness, and the appropriateness of illustrative style for the emotional tone of the book.

Whilst the books themselves provide the potential for these engagements, the quality of aesthetic, critical and creative engagement can be effectively supported through discussion. The participants often asked questions as a springboard for their engagements with the books, and the back and forth conversations about interpretive possibilities or aesthetic effectiveness created dialogic space (Maine, 2015; Wegerif, 2011) which enabled the participants to further develop their thinking. As such, educators may wish to take the time to scaffold discussions of individual illustrated moments when reading illustrated novels in order to maximise their potential to encourage aesthetic, critical and creative engagement.

Illustrated novels may also be of particular value to educators who are seeking ways of encouraging reading for pleasure. As Cremin (2015) notes, whilst reading for pleasure is now required by the national curriculum (Department for Education, 2014), many teachers are unsure of what reading for pleasure looks like and how to facilitate it. The findings from this research suggest that illustrated novels have the potential to prompt aesthetic enjoyment through providing variety and breaks from reading words, as well as the opportunity to aesthetically enjoy the material nature of the book, through examination of the illustrations and layout. By providing a selection of illustrated novels for pupils to read, and encouraging them to spend time appreciating the illustrations as well as reading the words, educators may be able to use illustrated novels as a way of facilitating reading for pleasure.

The greater understanding of the picturing process gained from this research also has implications for educators. For those with weaker picturing skills, illustrations in novels may support the generation of mental pictures, aiding understanding and engagement for those readers who process information visually. Additionally, due to the highly individual nature of picturing, discussions of reader's differing pictures, especially when they are in disagreement with the illustrations provided by the novel, may be a way of prompting further critical and creative engagement through the assessment of multiple possibilities.

Another aspect of reading illustrated novels which has implications for educators is that reading illustrated novels does appear to require a particular form of fluency in switching between reading writing and reading illustrations. Whilst further

research into this area would help to clarify the skills needed to effectively read illustrated novels, it appears from this research that visual literacy is a key aspect of the process. As such, educators should not expect that their pupils will automatically be able to fluently read illustrated novels, even if they have a high degree of fluency when reading words. Specific attention given to reading illustrations, which moves beyond merely 'decoding' images and includes other aspects of visual literacy such as using illustrations to communicate, prompt and guide thinking, create meaning, and evaluate artistic expression and enjoyment (Avgerinou & Ericson, 1997) may assist in this process, alongside opportunities to practice switching between reading writing and reading illustrations. In turn, it seems likely from this research that reading illustrated novels with active attention given to the illustrations as well as the writing may be an effective way of improving visual literacy, especially when scaffolded by discussion. Though more research is needed to clearly establish the potential of illustrated novels to improve visual literacy, the findings of this research together with the Arizpe and Styles' (2016) findings of the improvement of visual literacy through discussions of illustrations in picturebooks do suggest that discussions of illustrations in illustrated novels are likely to help improve the visual literacy of readers.

All of the findings of this research which indicate the potential of illustrated novels to be beneficial to a wide variety of educational outcomes are based on the principle of illustrated novels being read in a way which gives equal value to the illustrations and the writing, and views the two modes as interdependent rather than separate. As demonstrated by Nicole's research journey, it is possible to read illustrated novels and give very little attention to the illustrations, but by doing so, much of the potential value of the medium is lost. As such, it is important that educators approach illustrated novels as complete texts, rather than as novels which happen to have illustrations. By including discussions of illustrations as well as writing in guided reading sessions, and taking time to explore illustrations in novels during whole-class reading, rather than simply reading the writing, educators can significantly increase the potential educational impact of the books. Additionally, as Cook (2012) argues, we engage with different media according to social conventions. If we teach children to ignore illustrations when reading illustrated novels, that is likely to be the way in which they engage with the medium outside of school as well as within. However, if we consistently approach

illustrated novels in the classroom as complete, fully-designed texts, wherein both modes have equal value and work together, then we will be contributing towards a social convention which approaches illustrated novels in a manner which is likely to maximise, rather than minimise, the potential of the medium.

## 8.5 Limitations

Whilst there are many advantages in taking an empirical, participatory approach, as with any method, there are also limitations. One of the primary limitations of this research is that in relying on my participants to report their experiences, I am only able to explore the aspects of their experiences of which they are self-aware (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008). Given that many of the processes of reading are likely to take place at an unconscious level (Lewkowich, 2016), there are many aspects of reading illustrated novels which this study will have been unable to access.

In addition, the research process relied upon the participants recalling their experiences, rather than reporting them as they occurred. There were sound methodological choices for this decision, as adopting a method which asked participants to report their experiences as they went through them, for example through the 'think-aloud' approach (Charters, 2003), was considered to be too disruptive to the reading experience. However, by opting instead for a recall approach, acknowledgement must be made of the likely fallibility of the participants' memories in recalling their experiences (Mackey, 2011).

The participants' responses will also have been impacted by the inherent power imbalance in child-adult relationships, and whilst the participatory approach is likely to have lessened this imbalance, it has not removed it. The participants' responses are therefore likely to reflect their desire to please me as an adult researcher, and whilst there were many occasions on which the participants disagreed with or contradicted me, there will have been other occasions on which a desire to please is likely to have influenced their responses.

Another limitation on this research is the context in which it was undertaken. Working within an English context, with the influences of the English schooling system and cultural norms at play, as well as the social semiotic considerations of English as a language (Kress, 2010), will have inevitably impacted upon this research. Whilst the creation of partial rather than total theory

(Dennis, 2011), and the provision of detailed 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) aims to mediate this impact and assist with the adaptation of the three-part model to other contexts, the influence of context still remains.

## 8.6 Avenues for further research

Alongside the partial theories and three-part model generated by this research, the discussion of findings highlighted several areas which could benefit from further research in order to increase our understanding of illustrated novels.

One key area which would benefit from additional research would be a further exploration of the impact of illustrative style upon capturing and sustaining attention. The participants' responses to the three different illustrative styles in this research suggested that illustrations with a complex construction and a high number of illustrative elements were more likely to be perceived as highly detailed and considered to provide a high level of information, and as such were likely to sustain attention. In contrast, the largely reductive illustrations of *The Midnight Zoo* which utilised less complex construction and fewer illustrative elements were more likely to be perceived as being less detailed and containing less information, and as such were less likely to sustain the participants' attention. Whilst the findings from this research indicate an influence on attention of the complexity of illustrative style, it did not explore other potential aspects of illustrative style. Further research which explored comparisons between different illustrative construction methods, such as the use of watercolours or collage, or the specific influence of composition, could extend our understanding of the influence of illustrative style on the experience of reading illustrated novels.

Alongside the impact of illustrative style on attention, further research into the effects of illustrative style and ratio on meaning making would also be valuable to our understanding of the affordances of illustrated novels. The participants in this study created meaning from illustrations in significantly different ways in their reading of *The Midnight Zoo* than their reading of the other two novels, being less likely to report that the illustrations in *The Midnight Zoo* were more concrete than the words, or particularly memorable, than in their responses to *The Imaginary* and *Not As We Know It*. Whether these differing responses were due to the reductive illustrative style, the relative lack of attention paid to illustrations in *The*

*Midnight Zoo*, the lower ratio of illustrations to words, or due to the individual reports of the reading events is impossible to establish. However, the distinctly differing responses do raise interesting questions about the role of illustrative style and ratio in meaning making. As such, further research which explicitly focused on the relationship between style and ratio and how these impact upon meaning making could be very valuable in increasing our understanding of these issues.

This study has been able to contribute significantly to research on the picturing process which occurs whilst reading illustrated novels, by identifying that illustrations in novels can support picturing, or replace, enhance, or run parallel to reader's own mental pictures. However, due to the participatory methodology used, which relies on the readers' self-awareness and recollection of their experiences, it has not been possible to theorise why these processes occur, or what might prompt an illustration to replace rather than enhance a reader's own mental picture, for example. Further research into the process of picturing whilst reading illustrated novels that could illuminate these issues would prove highly valuable to our understanding of the picturing process.

From the participants' responses to the three novels it appears that visual literacy is an important factor in developing fluency when reading illustrated novels. It also seems likely that reading illustrated novels with attention to the illustrations may support the development of visual literacy. However, given the exploratory nature of this research, it was not possible to fully explore this potential within this study, without the research becoming interventionist in nature. As such, further research exploring the relationship between visual literacy and illustrated novels, particularly as relates to fluency and the potential for illustrated novels to support the development of visual literacy, would be highly beneficial to our understanding of the affordances of the medium.

Alongside the potential of illustrated novels to develop visual literacy, intervention-based research which explored the potential of illustrated novels to develop reader's aesthetic judgement and awareness of their aesthetic experiences would also prove valuable. The findings from this research demonstrate that illustrated novels provide excellent opportunities for readers to practice aesthetic judgement and have aesthetic experiences, and also suggest

that specific use of illustrated novels as part of arts education could improve proficiency in these areas. As such, it would be worth researching the extent to which illustrated novels can support aesthetic development and developing a pedagogy which would maximise the potential of this medium for arts education.

An unexpected finding from this research arose from two of the participants approaching illustrated novels through the conventions they had learned from other forms of media. When Amy treated illustrations like optical illusions, and Leo used his knowledge of gaming conventions to search for 'easter eggs', both participants were able to engage critically and aesthetically with the books in new ways. These interactions suggest that drawing on behaviours more typically associated with other forms of media may be a method of encouraging greater critical and creative engagement with illustrated novels. Further research exploring this possibility could potentially increase our understanding of illustrated novels, and also develop new methods of engagement with this medium which have significant educational and personal benefits for readers.

## 8.7 Final thoughts

In order to gain the full benefits of the potential affordances that illustrated novels have for readers, we must change the way in which we conceptualise the medium. Scholarly conversations which view illustrated novels as a 'lesser' artform than picturebooks (Edwards & Saltman, 2010), or position illustrations in novels as merely 'supportive or decorative' (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2000, p. 226), contribute towards a wider cultural attitude which discourages illustrated novels from being read as complete texts. That this attitude is pervasive in our society is epitomised by the lack of credit awarded to illustrators of novels, whose names rarely appear on the covers of their books, and often not even on the title pages. This is an injustice which illustrators are currently fighting, most notably through the #picturesmeanbusiness campaign spearheaded by illustrator Sarah McIntyre (Horne, 2016), and this campaign has important implications not just for illustrators, but also for readers of illustrated novels. It is, of course, possible to read an illustrated novel with barely a glance at the illustrations, or to only explore the illustrations without reading the words. However, this is also possible with picturebooks, as demonstrated daily during quiet reading time in primary

classrooms around the country. Yet in public and scholarly discussion illustrations are frequently seen as more integral to picturebooks than to illustrated novels, and these discussions together with curriculum recommendations (Department for Education, 2014) appear to be contributing towards a situation where children in classrooms are more likely to be encouraged to engage with the illustrations in picturebooks than they are to be encouraged to engage with the illustrations in novels. As this research has shown, illustrated novels have a wide range of affordances for readers in terms of reading process and narrative rhythm, the construction of meaning, as prompts for critical and creative engagement, as vehicles for aesthetic experience. However, all of these affordances remain as mere potential without the active participation of the reader. The fractured narrative rhythm of the illustrated novel provides opportunities for pause, reflection, and engagement, but only if the reader seizes those opportunities. Explorations of the relationship between the writing and illustrations can prompt deep critical and creative engagement, or result in powerful aesthetic experiences, but only if the reader gives their attention to the illustrations as well as to the words, and considers how the two modes interact. As scholars and educators, we play a key role in the creation of social conventions of media engagement (Cook, 2012), and as such we should be celebrating the potential of illustrated novels as complete artistic works, in order to turn the numerous potential affordances of the medium into concrete benefits for readers.

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# Appendix A – Consent form

This section contains an example of the cover letter and consent form used to ensure that the research was conducted in accordance with the BERA (2018) ethical guidelines.

Dear Parent / Guardian,

Your child has been invited to participate in a research project I am undertaking for my doctoral research at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge. The aim of this project is to learn more about how children engage with illustrations when reading novels, with the goal that the research will contribute towards developments in the teaching of reading. This research is being funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

Participation in the project is completely voluntary, and all participants will be anonymised in the finished research. The research involves the children being given a total of 3 books to read at home. As they read, they are requested to complete a journal to collect their views on the book and any creative responses they may have, such as drawings or stories. The children may complete this journal in any way they choose. Alongside this, they will be asked to take part in an individual interview of approximately 20 minutes each week to discuss their reactions to the books, and to annotate an illustration from the books each week. The children will choose the books we will read themselves, from a selection of age-appropriate illustrated novels which I will provide. They will be allowed to keep these books at the end of the research. The maximum length of time to read each book will be one half term (though it may be less depending on the length of the books chosen), and as such the project may take up to a maximum of three half terms to complete. I will also ask the children to participate in a reflective interview at the end of the project, and then again in the next academic year. These interviews should take approximately 20 minutes.

Whilst this research project is not being run as an intervention, I expect the project to be of benefit to the participants in several ways. As a qualified teacher I am very aware of the importance of the children making progress, and they will therefore be working towards curriculum goals by participating in the research. Spending dedicated time responding to and discussing books should increase the children's critical reading skills, and have a positive effect on their attainment in reading. Participation in the project will also provide the children with the opportunity to have their views included in recommendations for teachers, giving them a say in how they feel they can best be taught. The project also aims to be an enjoyable experience for the children, and to give them an insight into what is involved with conducting a professional research project.

I really appreciate you taking the time to consider participating in this study. If you are willing for your child to participate, please complete and return the attached consent form.

If there are any further questions about the research at any stage, please contact me by email at ja479@cam.ac.uk.

Consent Form

Your child has been invited to participate in a research project about engagement with illustrations. Participation is entirely voluntary and it would be greatly appreciated if you and your child agree to take part.

The research would involve:

- Your child reading 3 books
- Your child recording their initial reaction to the books in a reading journal
- Your child annotating illustrations
- Your child taking part in individual and group interviews which will be recorded with a digital voice recorder, *with your specific consent*.*

It is also important to note that:

- All data collected will be used exclusively for research purposes.
- All data analysis is completely anonymous. Each child will be given a code for identification. Only age, gender, year in school, and data authorised by parents/guardians will be linked to the code.
- Short excerpts of dialogues may be used in publications or at research conferences, *with your specific consent*.*
- You and your child are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without explanation.

---

Have you received sufficient information about the study? YES NO

Do you agree to your child taking part in this study? YES NO

* Do you give your consent for the use of digital voice recorder? YES NO

* Do you give your consent for the use of anonymous excerpts of data in future publications and research conferences? YES NO

Parent/guardian's name in capital letters:
_____

Child's name in capital letters:
_____

Male Female

Child's date of birth: _____

Contact email: _____

Contact telephone number: _____

School name: _____

Date and the Signature of the Parent/Guardian:
_____

# Appendix B – Reading journeys

This appendix contains details of the amount each participant read each week and the length of each interview.

## Amount read per session

The Imaginary

| | Alexander | | Amy | | Sophia | | Leo | | Nicole | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | page number | no. of pages | page number | no. of pages | page number | no. of pages | page number | no. of pages | page number | no. of pages |
| w/b 7/11 | p.28 | 28 | p.28 | 28 | p. 43 | 43 | p.16 | 16 | p.28 | 28 |
| w/b 14/11 | | | p.52 | 24 | p.186 | 143 | p.72 | 56 | p.72 | 44 |
| w/b 21/11 | p.34 | 6 | p.61 | 9 | p.228 (end) | 42 | p.109 | 37 | p.104 | 32 |
| w/b 28/11 | p.58 | 24 | p.68 | 7 | | | p.228 (end) | 119 | | |
| w/b 5/12 | p.72 | 14 | p.92 | 24 | | | | | p.228 (end) | 124 |
| w/b 12/12 | p.180 | 108 | p.107 | 15 | | | | | | |
| w/b 9/1 | p.228 (end) | 48 | p.209 | 102 | | | | | | |

The Midnight Zoo

| | Alexander | | Amy | | Sophia | | Leo | | Nicole | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | page number | no. of pages | page number | no. of pages | page number | no. of pages | page number | no. of pages | page number | no. of pages |
| w/b 16/1 | p.45 | 45 | p.31 | 31 | p.25 | 25 | p.45 | 45 | p.65 | 65 |
| w/b 23/1 | | | | | p.47 | 22 | p.86 | 41 | p.119 | 54 |
| w/b 30/1 | p.117 | 72 | p.33 | 2 | p.96 | 49 | p.121 | 35 | p.205 (end) | 86 |
| w/b 6/2 | p.205 (end) | 88 | p.45 | 12 | | | | | | |
| w/b 13/2 | | | p.175 | 130 | p.205 (end) | 109 | | | | |
| w/b 27/2 | | | p.205 (end) | 30 | | | p.205 (end) | 84 | | |

Not As We Know It

| | Alexander | | Amy | | Sophia | | Leo | | Nicole | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | page number | no. of pages | page number | no. of pages | page number | no. of pages | page number | no. of pages | page number | no. of pages |
| w/b 27/2 | p.88 | 88 | p.67 | 67 | p.231 (end) | 231 | p.62 | 62 | p.231 (end) | 231 |
| w/b 6/3 | p.208 | 120 | p.100 | 33 | | | | | | |
| w/b 13/3 | p.231 (end) | 23 | p.215 | 115 | | | p.108 | 46 | | |
| w/b 20/3 | | | p.231 (end) | 16 | | | p.231 (end) | 123 | | |

**Length of interviews** (in minutes)

Key:
Purple – initial and final interviews
Blue – *The Imaginary*
Green – *The Midnight Zoo*
Yellow - *Not As We Know It*

| | Alexander | Amy | Sophia | Leo | Nicole |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 15.41 | 13.55 | 8.27 | 15.56 | 14.56 |
| | 20.22 | 26.05 | 26.21 | 15.02 | 18.46 |
| | | 8.56 | 21.51 | 18.00 | 11.26 |
| | 6.45 | 5.18 | 22.50 | 11.45 | 13.33 |
| | 8.15 | 3.54 | | 26.08 | |
| | 6.65 | 12.92 | | | 17.36 |
| | 18.03 | 8.55 | | | |
| | 10.42 | 17.07 | | | |
| | 11.49 | 9.18 | 13.17 | 6.55 | 8.11 |
| | | | 27.11 | 6.05 | 7.56 |
| | 14.47 | 2.41 | 12.54 | 10.38 | 12.04 |
| | 13.16 | 2.52 | | | |
| | | 22.38 | 17.49 | | |
| | 22.14 | 19.51 | 33.20 | 14.49 | 17.42 |
| | 23.25 | 14.31 | | | |
| | 10.46 | 22.24 | | 13.02 | |
| | | 3.41 | | 16.07 | |
| | 18.46 | 16.34 | 32.37 | 15.33 | 12.37 |
| Total | 198.76 | 207.72 | 214.37 | 168.00 | 132.47 |
| CS total | 164.89 | 177.83 | 173.73 | 137.11 | 105.54 |
| TI total | 69.92 | 81.87 | 70.22 | 70.55 | 60.41 |
| TMZ total | 39.12 | 36.49 | 70.31 | 22.98 | 27.71 |
| NAWKI total | 55.85 | 59.47 | 33.20 | 43.58 | 17.42 |

Total time *The Imaginary*: 352.97 (5.8 hours)
Total time *The Midnight Zoo*: 196.61 (3.3 hours)
Total time *Not As We Know It*: 209.52 (3.5 hours)

# Appendix C – Corpus selection

## Category 1: <20% of pages illustrated

| Title, author and illustrator | Percentage of pages with illustrations | Content of illustrations | Placement of illustrations | Themes/features which may produce emotional or reflective responses | Votes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Wee Free Men (2003) Author: Terry Pratchett Illustrator: Paul Kidby<br><br>Corgi | 7% | Congruency, elaboration, reduction (border) | Full page at start of book; Before writing at start of chapter (middle of page); border along bottom of every page | Sibling rivalry, responsibility, child vs adult, being different. Humour, action, fast-paced adventure, magical elements. | 17 |
| Wolf Brother (2004) Author: Michelle Paver Illustrator: Geoff Taylor<br><br>Orion | 15% | Congruency, elaboration, reduction (between paragraphs) | Before writing at start of chapter; tree symbols to show time passing/change of location between some paragraphs | Grief and overcoming grief, being an outsider, belonging, companionship and friendship, overcoming difficulties, identity. Suspenseful, action, fast-paced adventure, magical elements. | 19 |
| The Willoughbys (2008) Author and illustrator: Lowis Lowry | 13% | Congruency, elaboration | Before writing at start of chapter | Sibling relationships, parental relationships, belonging, feeling wanted, adventure, humour, realistic. | 16 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Boxer Books | | | | | |
| Wilma Tenderfoot and the Case of the Frozen Hearts (2009)<br>Author: Emma Kennedy<br>Illustrator: Sylvain Marc<br><br>Macmillan Children's Books | 17% | Congruency, elaboration and reduction (border, frozen hearts) | Map at beginning; border; full page; above text at start of chapter | Child adult relationships, achieving against the odds, being valued. Humour, mystery, suspense, action, fast-paced adventure. | 16 |
| The Midnight Zoo (2010)<br>Author: Sonya Hartnett<br>Illustrator: Jonathan McNaughtt<br><br>Walker Books | 18% | Congruency, elaboration and reduction | Almost double spread at beginning of chapters – one full page, one above; above text; in the middle of text; below text. Instances of black page with white writing. | World War II, animal rights, human rights, nature of mankind, family relationships, loss.<br>Sad, flashbacks, philosophical | 22 |

**Category 2: 20% - 50% of pages illustrated**

| Title, author and illustrator | Percentage of pages with illustrations | Content of illustrations | Placement of illustrations | Themes which may produce emotional or reflective responses | Votes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Behind the Bookcase | 35% | Congruency, | Full page, above | Moving, grief, sibling | 18 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Author: Mark Steensland Illustrator: Kelly Murphy<br><br>Yearling | | elaboration, deviation | writing, below writing, beside writing (writing wrapped around) | relationships, child parent relationships, child adult relationships. Mystery, spooky, adventure, magical elements. | (discounted as one participant really didn't want to read it) |
| Brilliant (2014) Author: Roddy Doyle Illustrator: Chris Judge<br><br>Macmillan Children's Books | 20% | Congruency, elaboration, reduction (border) | Map at beginning; alongside writing, below writing, above writing, border (moves position and changes as book progresses), full page. | Depression, economic hardship, love, community. Sad, humour, adventure. | 17 (discounted as one participant really didn't want to read it) |
| The Doldrums (2015) Author and illustrator: Nicholas Gannon<br><br>Harper Collins | 20% | Congruency, elaboration | Full page (colour), above writing, next to writing (writing wrapped around) | Freedom, mental health, adult-child relationships, friendship, ambitions. Humour, adventure, mystery, surreal elements. | 9 |
| The Imaginary (2014) | 34% | Congruency, | Full page; double | Friendship, loss, bravery, identity. | 17 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Author: A.F. Harrold Illustrator: Emily Gravett<br><br>Bloomsbury | | elaboration, reduction (border) | spread; middle of two pages; beside text; below text; above text; selective use of colour | Scary, suspenseful, adventure, fantastical elements. | (all participants but one selected this as their second choice, none selected it as last choice) |
| Sleuth on Skates (2013) Author: Clementine Beauvais Illustrator: Sarah Horne<br><br>Hodder | 32% | Congruency, elaboration, reduction (folio illustrations) | Full page; double spread; middle of two pages; beside text; below text; above text | Friendship, family, working together. Humour, adventure, mystery, suspense. | Discounted as one participant had already read it |

**Category 3: >50% of pages illustrated**

| Title, author and illustrator | Percentage of pages with illustrations | Content of illustrations | Placement of illustrations | Themes which may produce emotional or reflective responses | Votes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Frank Einstein and the antimatter motor (2014) Author: Jon Scieszka | 58% | Congruency, elaboration, reduction (repeated | Full page, above writing, below writing, next to writing (writing wrapped | Friendship, competition, familial relationships, humour, adventure, | 7 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Illustrator: Brian Biggs<br><br>Amulet | | border motifs) Diagrams | around), in the middle of writing. | science-fiction elements. | |
| Not as we know it (2015) Author: Tom Avery Illustrator: Kate Grove<br><br>Andersen Press | 57% | Congruency, elaboration, reduction (some repeated background motifs) | Full page, behind writing, next to writing (in gaps in writing), double page. | Illness, bereavement, jealousy, sibling relationships, parental relationships. Mystery, adventure, sad, fantasy elements. | 18 |
| Demolition Dad (2015) Author: Phil Earle Illustrator: Sarah Ogilvie<br><br>Orion | 51% | Congruency, elaboration | Full page, above writing, below writing, next to writing (writing wrapped around), in the middle of writing. | Father-son relationships, depression, friendship. Humour, adventure. | 8 |
| Goth Girl and the Ghost of a Mouse (2013) Author and illustrator: Chris Riddell<br><br>Pan Macmillan | 74% | Congruency, elaboration, reduction (illuminated letters) | Full page, double page, illuminated letters, above writing, below writing, next to writing (writing wrapped around), some with captions and borders. | Bereavement, parent-child relationships, animal welfare, friendship. Humour, adventure, mystery, fantasy elements. | Discounted as one participant had already read it |
| The Last Kids on Earth (2015) | 79% | Congruency, elaboration, | Full page, next to writing (writing wrapped | Friendship, loss, peril, independence, | 17 |

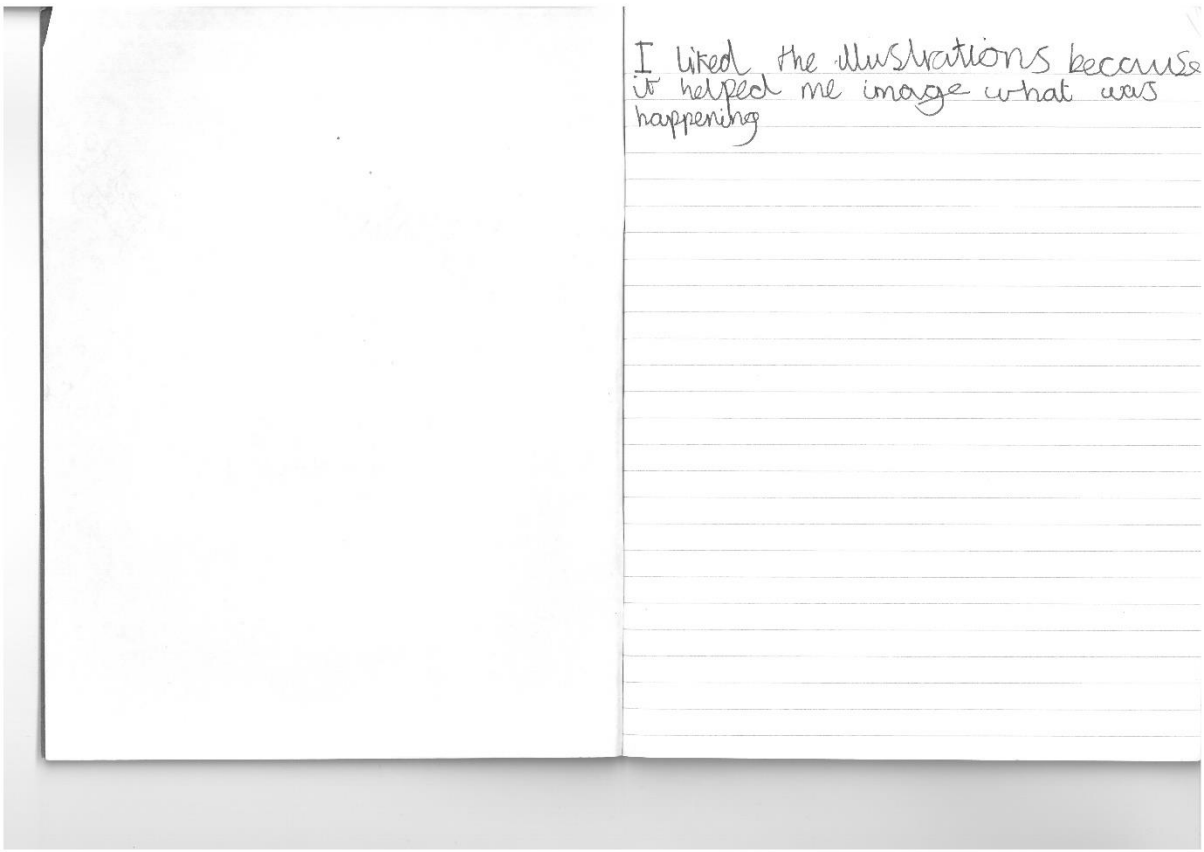
| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Author: Max Brallier<br>Illustrator: Douglas Holgate<br><br>Egmont | | comics features e.g. speech bubbles | around), above writing, below writing, in the middle of writing. | adventure, humour. | |

# Appendix D – Participant responses

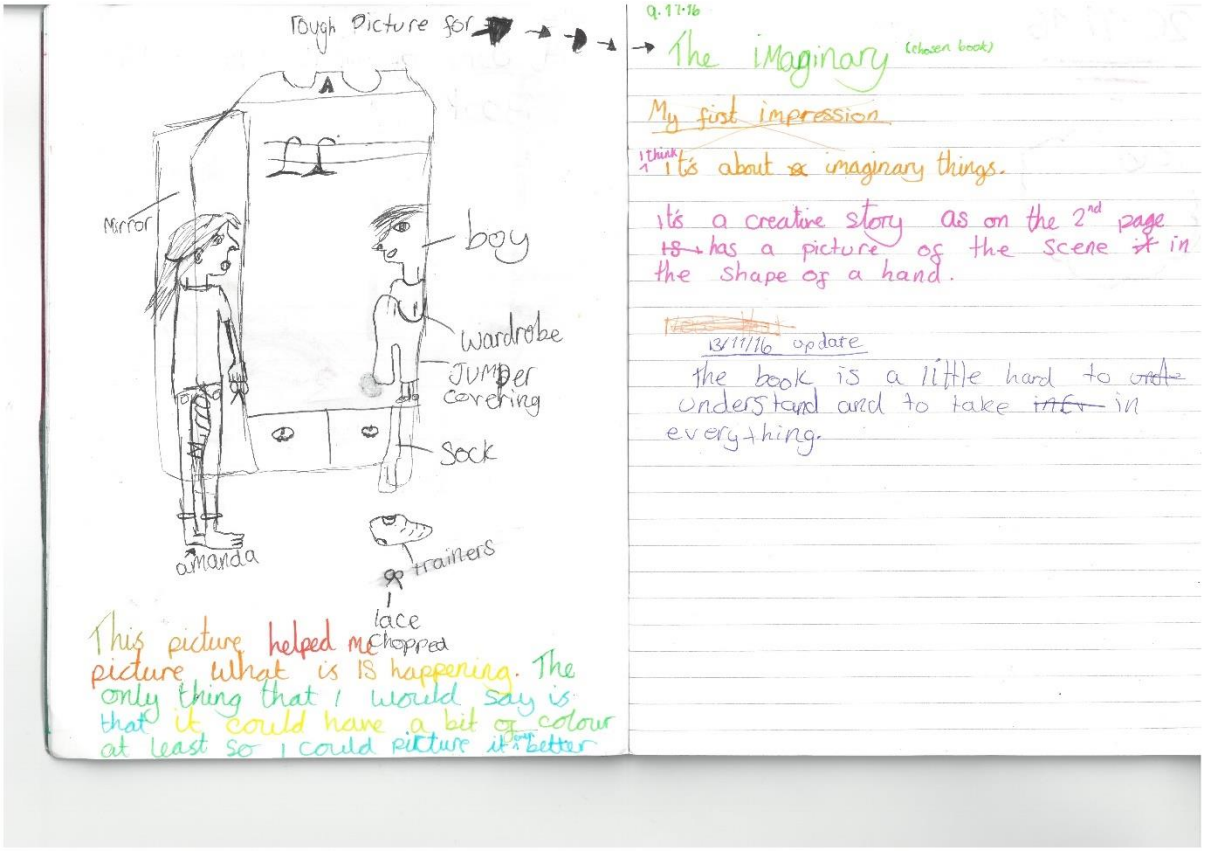
This section contains copies of the participants' journal responses, illustration annotations, and the interview transcripts.

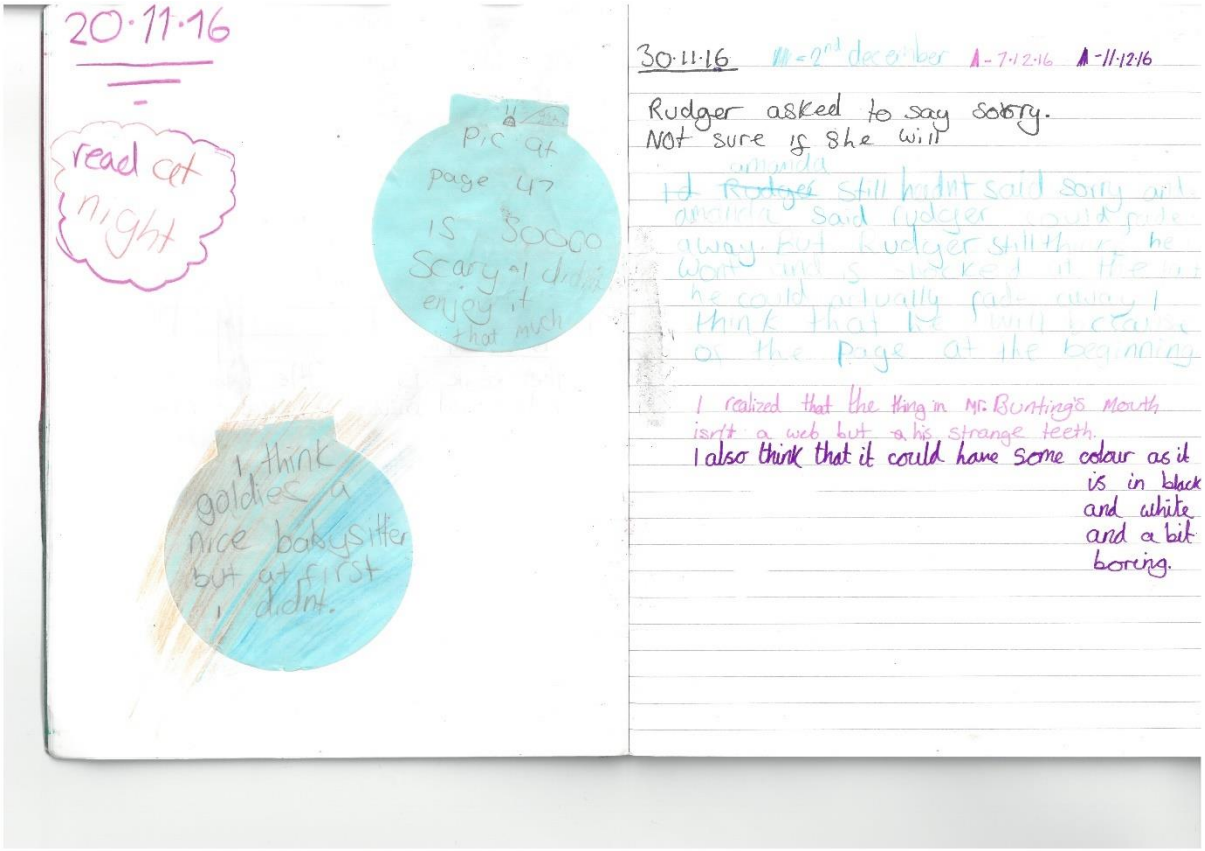
## Journal Responses

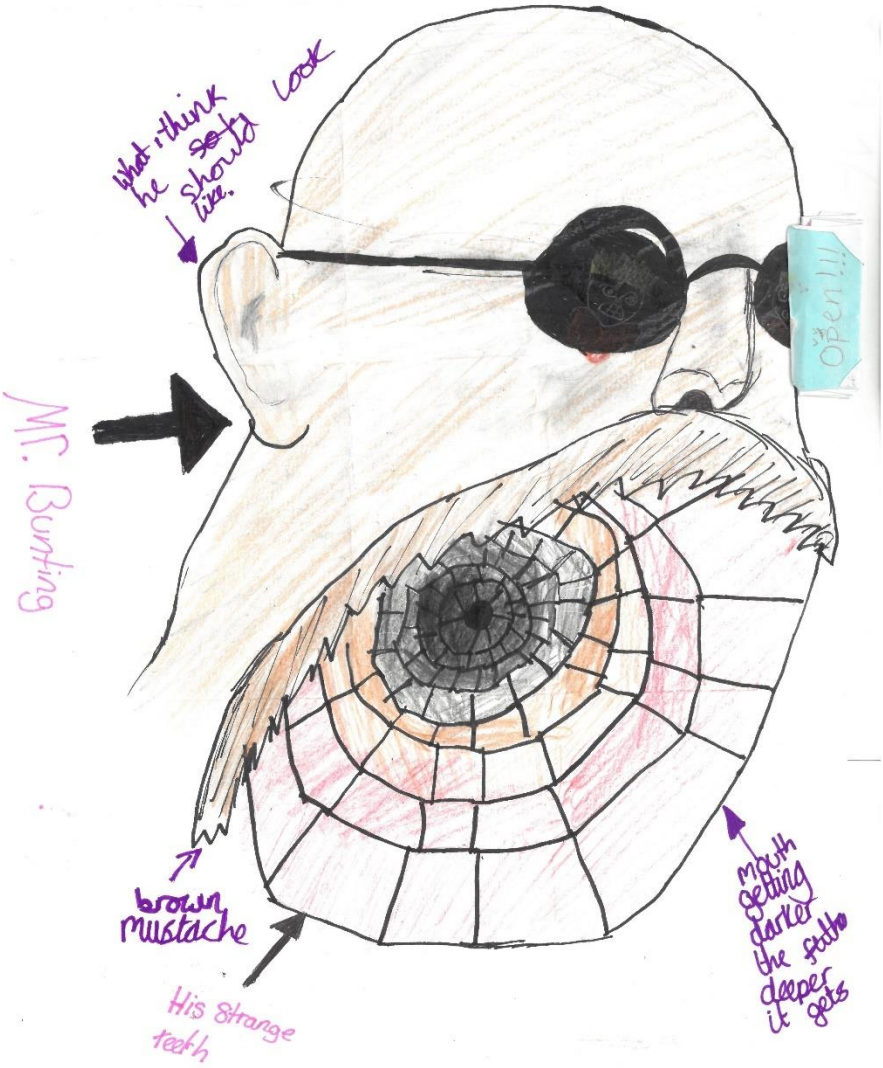
Alexander


I liked the illustrations because it helped me image what was happening

Amy

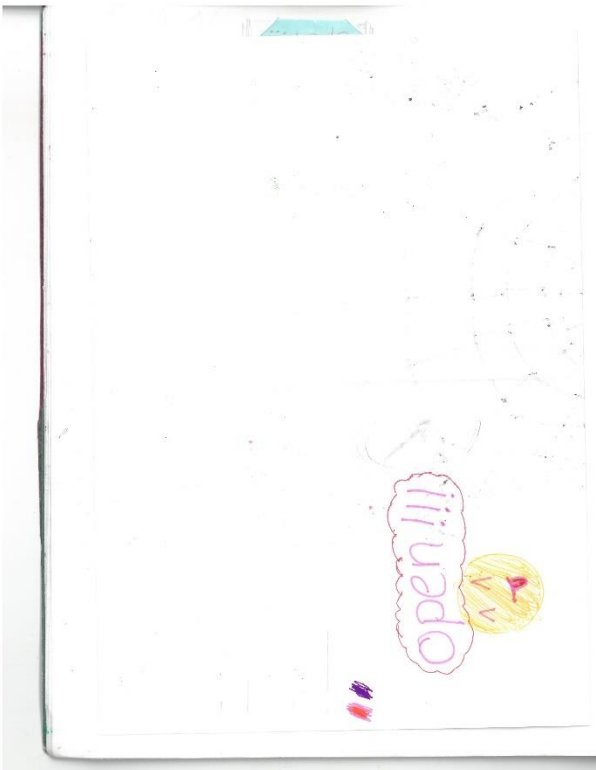

Rough Picture for
Mirror
boy
wardrobe
Jumper covering
Sock
amanda
trainers
lace
chopped
This picture helped me picture what is IS happening. The only thing that I would say is that it could have a bit of colour at least so I could picture it better
9.11.16
The imaginary (chosen book)
My first impression
I think it's about imaginary things.
It's a creative story as on the 2nd page has a picture of the scene in the shape of a hand.
13/11/16 update
the book is a little hard to understand and to take in everything.


20.11.16
read at night
Pic at page 47 IS SOOOO Scary I didn't enjoy it that much
I think goldie a nice babysitter but at first I didn't.
30.11.16
Rudger asked to say sorry.
Not sure if she will
I realized that the thing in Mr. Bunting's Mouth isn't a web but his strange teeth.
I also think that it could have some colour as it is in black and white and a bit boring.




I think he is going to eat Rudger or kidnap him.

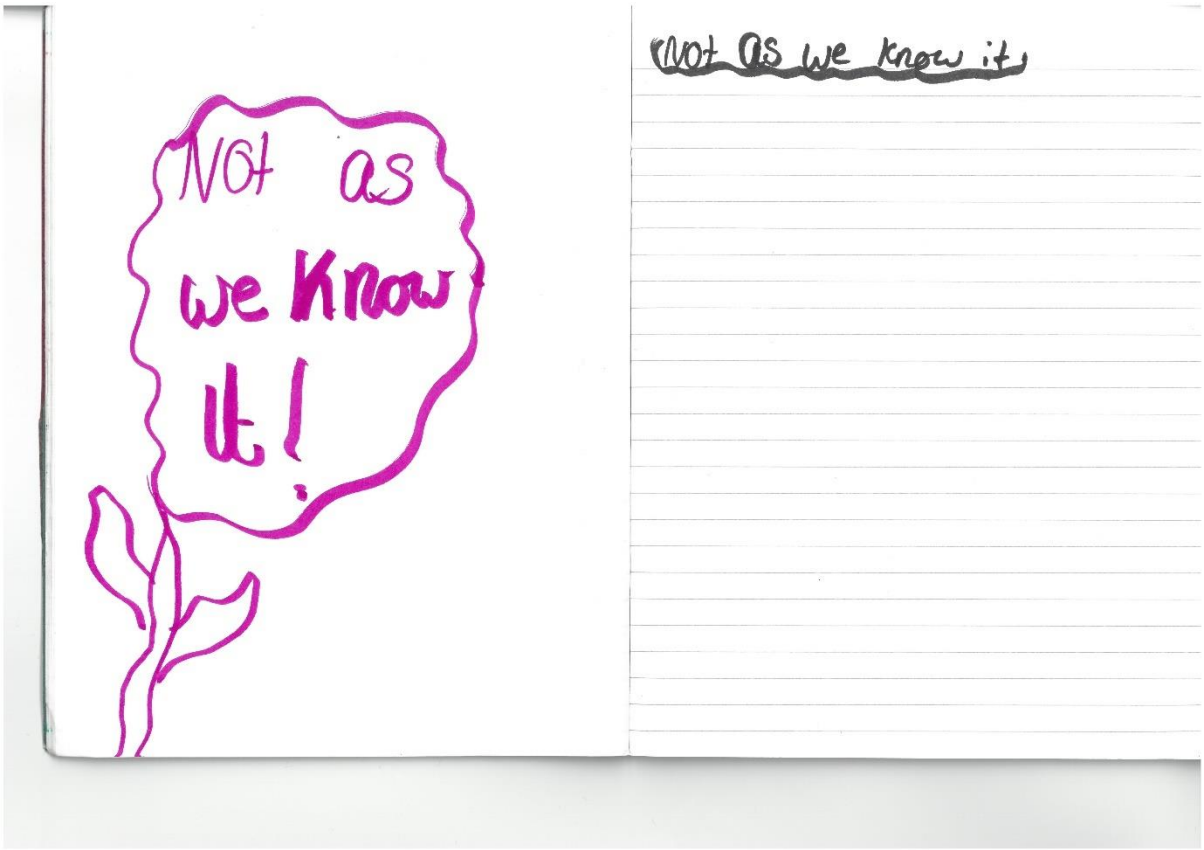

ry people



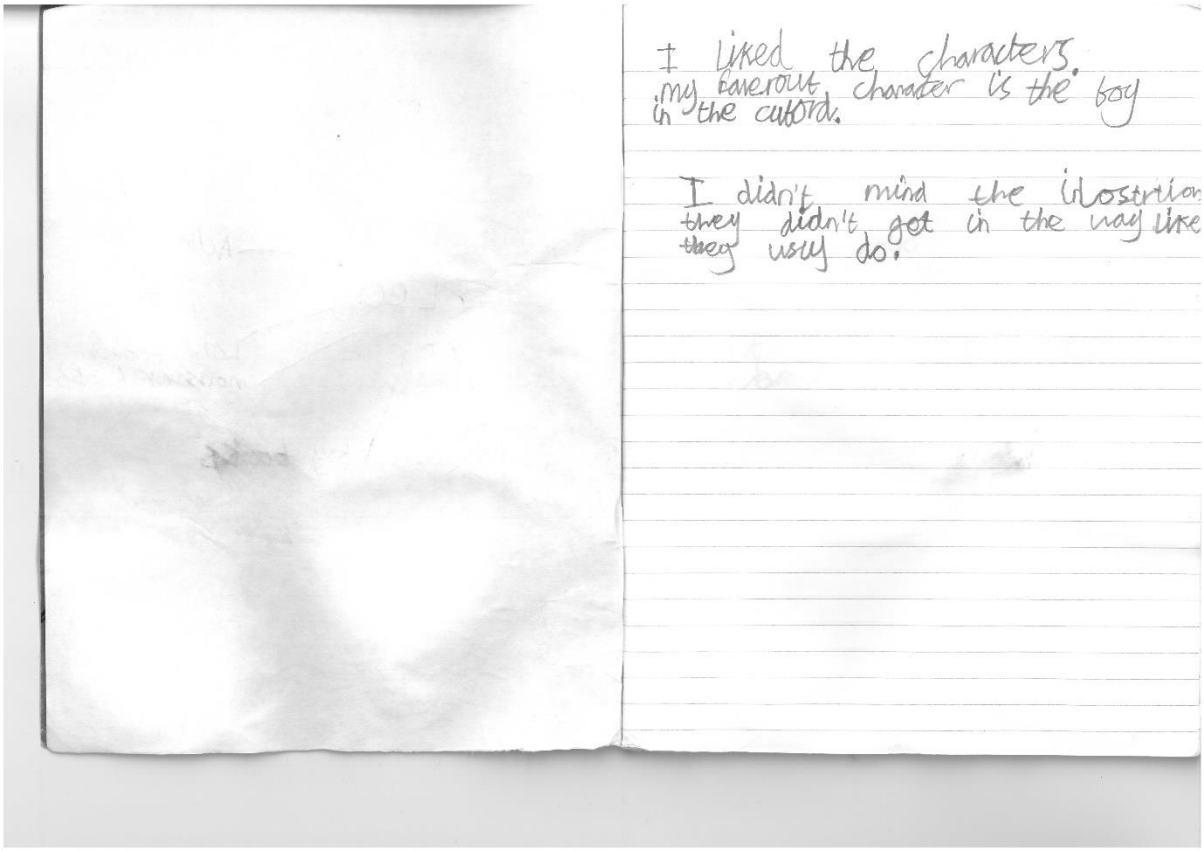

I think in the book only imaginary people are coulored.

[redacted]-14.12.16 My imaginary friend!


I think that this book is a little hard to understand and is quite confusing


Not as we know it!
Not as we know it

Leo


I liked the characters.
my favorout character is the boy in the cuford.
I didn't mind the ilostration they didn't get in the way like they usuy do.

It was very very Creepy
I was werried ~~all~~ when
~~hardbunding~~ was eating Ryger
and that other gill
in the power cut.

the illustrations relly got
me into the book
most of the ~~stuff~~ I
wouldn't of ~~a~~ imagined,

it was very shocking
when Amander Died.

So I loved the colour
in some of the pictures,

it relly made you look
coresly and see all
the details

Nicole

Nicole chose not to use her journal

Sophia

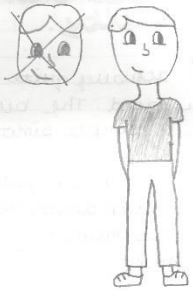
At the moment I am reading fantastic Mr. Fox. I love roald Dahl and books because they are amazing.


I love the imaginary so far. It reminds me so much of drop dead fred. I love amanda's personality.

It is actually quite scary but it's really good. The bit that freaks me is simple simon.

The picture on page 20 or 21 I think he's written down his name and is showin amanda's mum. He might be looking for Rudger!

I think it's a really good idea that when Mr Bunting eats his own Imaginary he dies.



I would like my imaginary friend to be a boy because I have lots of girls in my family and I just kind of wanted it to be a boy. My Imaginary friend would have brown hair and blue eyes. It would be pretty simple. He would have change of clothes aswell the change of clothes would be what ever I can imagine them to be. He would look like this.

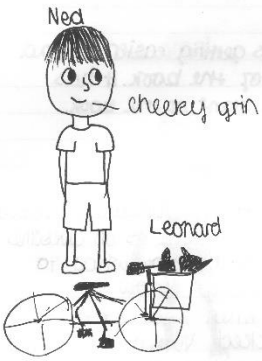

I think the midnight zoo is quite hard to understand but I quite like it. I like the illustrations and the way they are layed out.

10.2.17

I think the midnightzoo is getting easier to read now i'm nearing the end of the book. It has changed a lot since the start of the book.

17.2.17

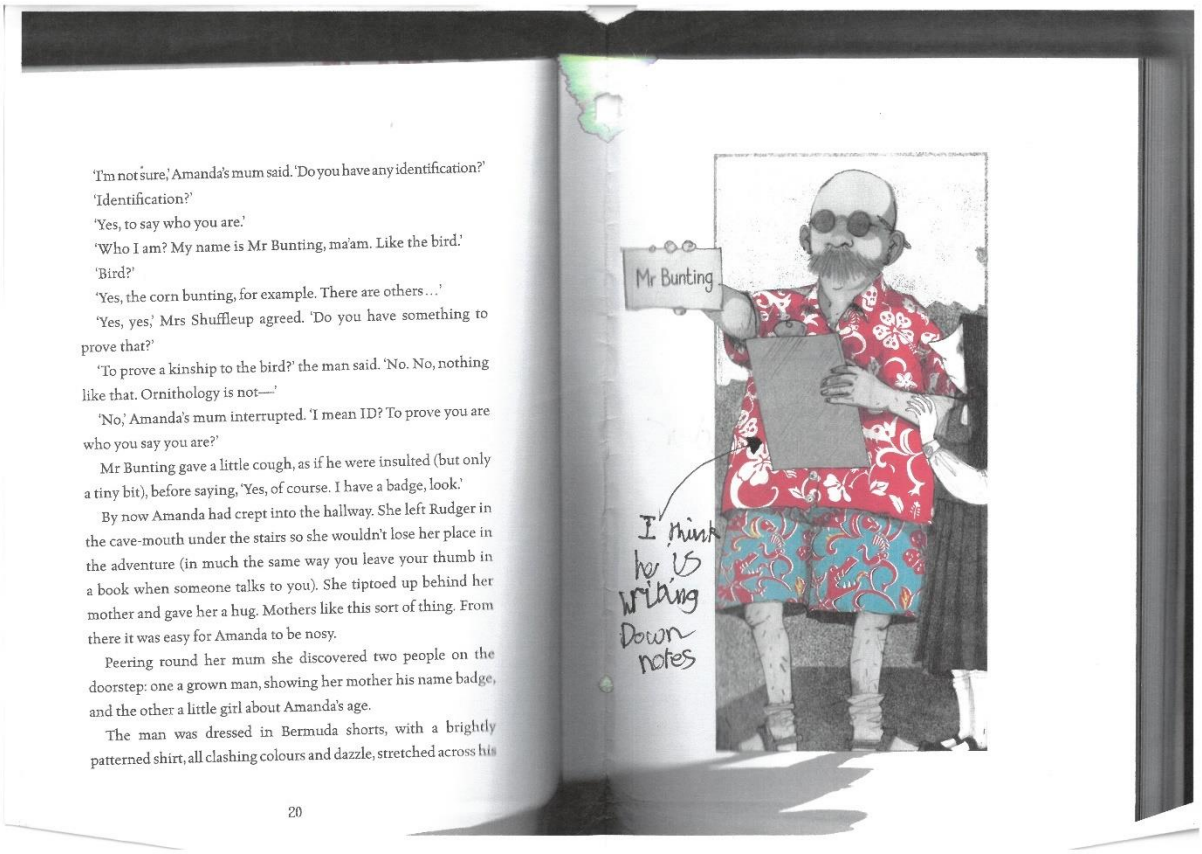
I loved not as we know it sooo much. Mainly because of the suspense. Tom Avery I think is an awesome author. Leonard, I didn't really know what to feel for him. I didn't really know if he was good or bad. When Ned left the hospital I was so shocked. When they had the funeral, I was a bit confused because I through he would be alive ~~but~~ because he was in the sea with Leonard. I really want to get 'My Brother's Shadow' because I loved not as we know it so much. I think this book and the Imaginary are some of the best books ever. My mum is now going to read it ~~bec~~ and my brother because of what I told her.




I think it's nice that the story their grandpa told actually comes to life.

## Illustration annotations

Alexander



'I'm not sure,' Amanda's mum said. 'Do you have any identification?'

'Identification?'

'Yes, to say who you are.'

'Who I am? My name is Mr Bunting, ma'am. Like the bird.'

'Bird?'

'Yes, the corn bunting, for example. There are others…'

'Yes, yes,' Mrs Shuffleup agreed. 'Do you have something to prove that?'

'To prove a kinship to the bird?' the man said. 'No. No, nothing like that. Ornithology is not—'

'No,' Amanda's mum interrupted. 'I mean ID? To prove you are who you say you are?'

Mr Bunting gave a little cough, as if he were insulted (but only a tiny bit), before saying, 'Yes, of course. I have a badge, look.'

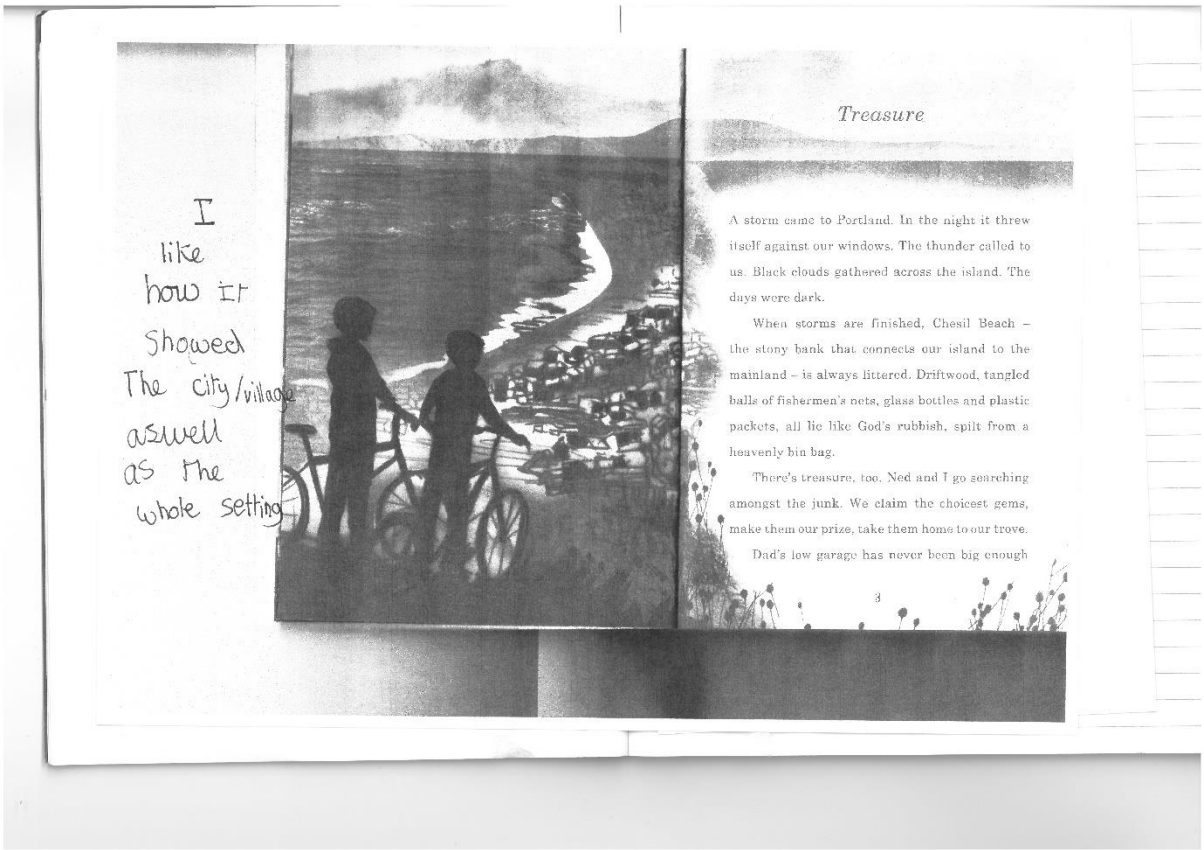
By now Amanda had crept into the hallway. She left Rudger in the cave-mouth under the stairs so she wouldn't lose her place in the adventure (in much the same way you leave your thumb in a book when someone talks to you). She tiptoed up behind her mother and gave her a hug. Mothers like this sort of thing. From there it was easy for Amanda to be nosy.

Peering round her mum she discovered two people on the doorstep: one a grown man, showing her mother his name badge, and the other a little girl about Amanda's age.

The man was dressed in Bermuda shorts, with a brightly patterned shirt, all clashing colours and dazzle, stretched across his

20







*Treasure*

A storm came to Portland. In the night it threw itself against our windows. The thunder called to us. Black clouds gathered across the island. The days were dark.

When storms are finished, Chesil Beach – the stony bank that connects our island to the mainland – is always littered. Driftwood, tangled balls of fishermen's nets, glass bottles and plastic packets, all lie like God's rubbish, spilt from a heavenly bin bag.

There's treasure, too. Ned and I go searching amongst the junk. We claim the choicest gems, make them our prize, take them home to our trove.

Dad's low garage has never been big enough

3

I like how the edge forms ~~in to~~ into a picture

another mermaid story for you. Happened right there, in Zennor. Do you remember Gin?'

We'd never met him, but we remembered Gin. He was first mate on Grandad's first captaincy after leaving Long Ben in Manila, a fishing boat out of Plymouth.

*'Well, he had a story for me once. Said it was about his great, great, great-grandfather's brother or some such. A man by the name of Mathew Trewella.*

*'You wouldn't have heard of him, Gin said. But in Zennor and round abouts, his was a famous name. Even more famous in his day. It's said that Mathew had the most beautiful voice imaginable. He sang wherever he went, through the village and about his work as a carpenter, always singing. Every Sunday he sung in the church in Zennor. Everyone*





*stopped when he sang.*

*'But they say that his voice changed. Over the course of a year, his joyful singing became a sad dirge. Still beautiful. But now, instead of bringing a smile, it brought tears.*

*'They started saying, in Zennor, that Mathew was bedevilled. They whispered that he'd been seen on the cliffs around the village with a mysterious lady in black. They muttered about witchcraft and wondered whether it was right to have the man sing in their church.*

*'Mathew had a brother – Gin's great, great, great-grandfather, older than Mathew, living in another village. When this older brother heard these whispers,*

I liked how it gave me an image of undersea

'That's what mermen must eat,' he said. 'We should get him some mussels too. I reckon Leonard loves mussels.'

That was the first time I felt it. Not jealousy yet. Just a strange feeling that something was happening, something unknowable, between my brother and the fish-man living in our garage.

## *Song*

One of Grandad's favourite stories was one about the night he heard the whales sing. He'd been at sea for weeks. It's not easy for sailors to get lost. Unless it's cloudy, then the stars are hidden at night and the sun is gone for most of the day. Before the whales sang, the ship's equipment had broken and the clouds had been thick for three days and nights.

*'That's the only time I've ever been truly scared at sea,'* Grandad would say. *'If a storm had come, we would not have had the foggiest where shallow water or rocks might be.'*

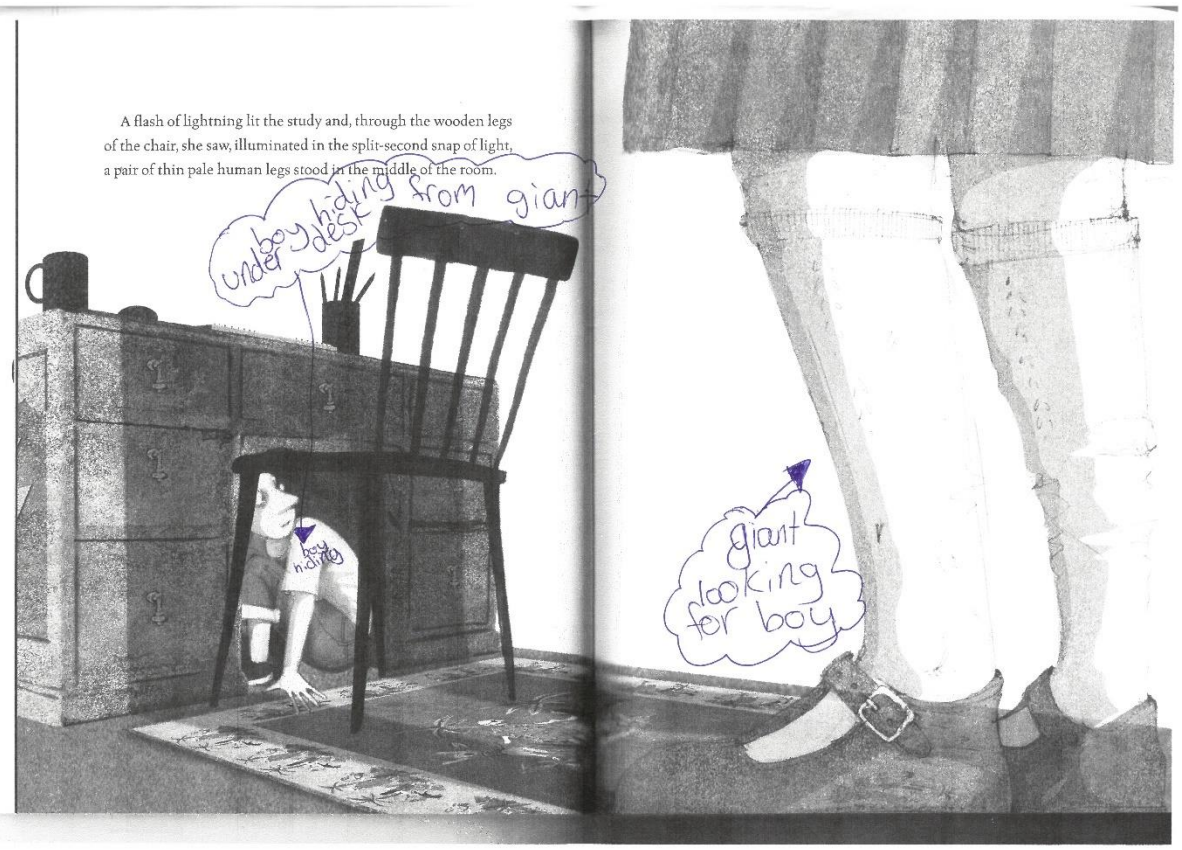
*They put the ship at anchor and slept, praying for clear skies in the morning.*


I really like how it's double page
I like how theres a fair amount of Detail

Amy


in a library
everyone is hiding from the dinosaur

A flash of lightning lit the study and, through the wooden legs of the chair, she saw, illuminated in the split-second snap of light, a pair of thin pale human legs stood in the middle of the room.




'I'm not sure,' Amanda's mum said. 'Do you have any identification?'

'Identification?'

'Yes, to say who you are.'

'Who I am? My name is Mr Bunting, ma'am. Like the bird.'

'Bird?'

'Yes, the corn bunting, for example. There are others…'

'Yes, yes,' Mrs Shuffleup agreed. 'Do you have something to prove that?'

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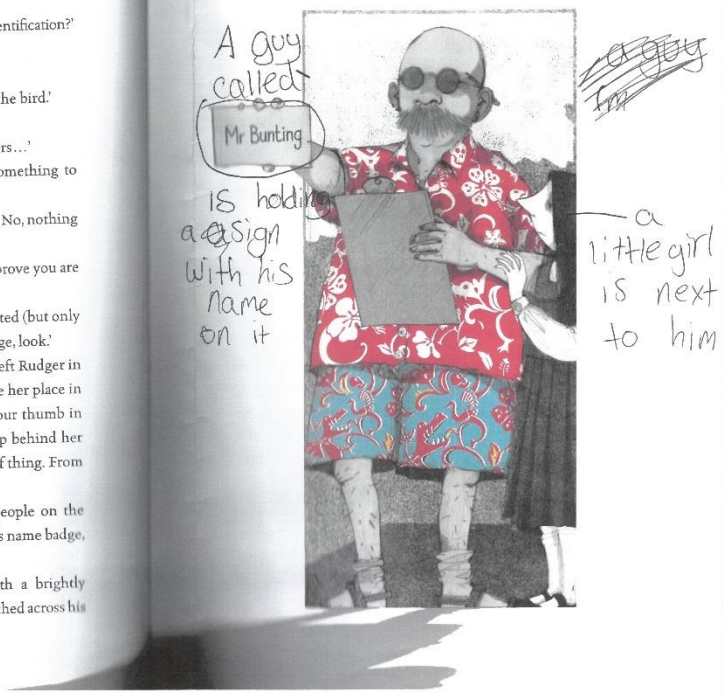

Before Amanda could move warm ropes of snake curled round and across her arms and legs and waist and neck. She was caught.

'You're not the only one with an imagination, little girl.' Mr Bunting chuckled sourly. 'Now, I'm hungry. I've been hungry for hours and I need to…*borrow* your friend, if you don't mind. Bring him here.'

The girl dragged Rudger off the snake-bed, pulled him back into the middle of the room, wrenched him into an upright position.

There was nothing he could do. He felt so tired, and the cold grip of her fingers dripped despair into his brain. He could hardly be bothered to struggle at all.

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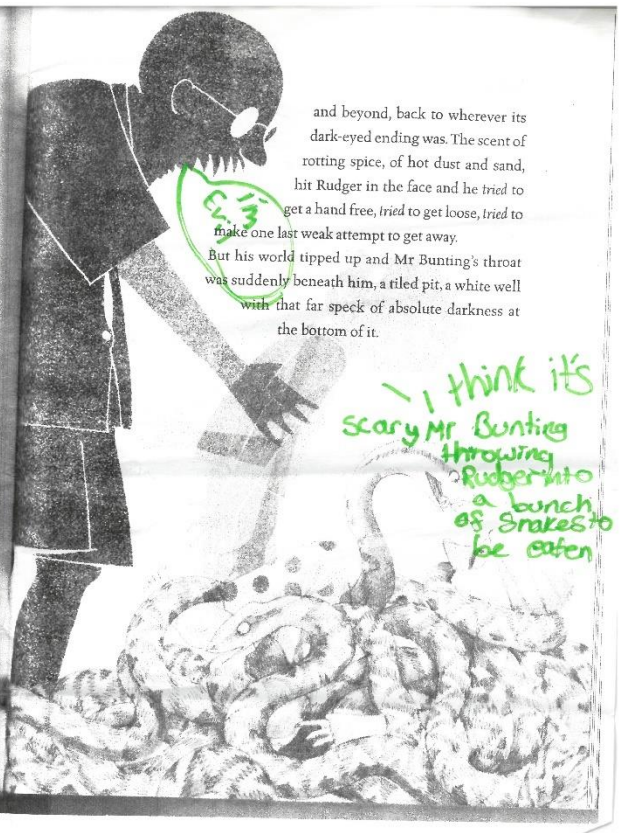

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But his world tipped up and Mr Bunting's throat was suddenly beneath him, a tiled pit, a white well with that far speck of absolute darkness at the bottom of it.

Ex 3

I think it's scary Mr Bunting throwing Rudger into a bunch of snakes to be eaten

A group of a dozen tiny men dressed as gnomes who leapt on him from a bookcase shouting,

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GNOMES HAVING GATHERING OR PARTYING

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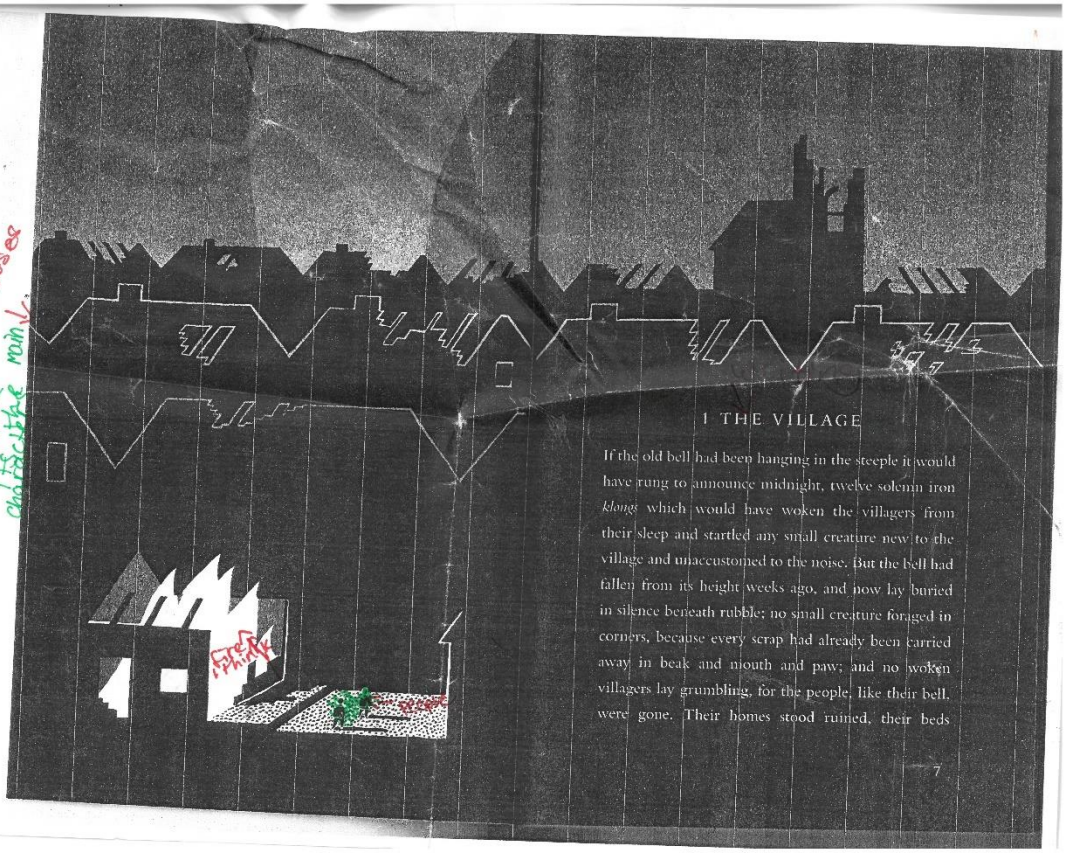


## 1 THE VILLAGE

If the old bell had been hanging in the steeple it would have rung to announce midnight, twelve solemn iron *klongs* which would have woken the villagers from their sleep and startled any small creature new to the village and unaccustomed to the noise. But the bell had fallen from its height weeks ago, and now lay buried in silence beneath rubble; no small creature foraged in corners, because every scrap had already been carried away in beak and mouth and paw; and no woken villagers lay grumbling, for the people, like their bell, were gone. Their homes stood ruined, their beds



their protection, she was growing up fast. "There's our Alice," people would remark as she sauntered by, already tall and beautiful, as her mother had been, her fingernails chipped and blackened, as her father's often were. "How's our Alice today?"

And of all the places she loved in her small, cobbled version of the world, Alice's favourite place was her zoo. *Her* zoo, for it had been built by her great-grandfather and passed down to her father, and one day it would be owned by Alice herself. Of course, she had to share it: every day the wrought-iron gate was opened to the public, who dropped a brown coin into a tin in exchange for the chance to stare at, and be stared at by, a



beast. Alice knew the zoo needed the money the visitors brought, but she didn't like the visitors. They were noisy and, she gradually realized, idiotic. They talked too loudly, made absurd remarks. Alice preferred it when the zoo was empty but for herself and her animals and her father. Every morning before school she walked the circle of cages, murmuring private messages to the creatures behind the bars, passing little treats to them, touching them if they stood within reach. The sight and sound of her was familiar and peaceful, and the animals liked her. Some of them were almost her pets, having arrived at the zoo as infants and been raised in the kitchen of Alice's home until they were strong enough to live in the zoo.

As Alice grew older, so too did the animals. The years brought things new and wonderful to her; for the animals it bore no such gifts. No challenges or adventures unfurled their horizons for them. The jaguar, the gibbon, the wildcat, the deer: all these woke each morning, as Alice did, and likewise went to sleep each night, but time gave them only old age and eventual death. The badger she'd adored as a toddler turned grey by her tenth birthday, and passed away. The peacock was discovered one evening lying in a

passed through it. Andrej wandered among the trees, his bare arms going to gooseflesh as he moved away from the reach of the sun and into the verdant shadows. The undergrowth compressed beneath his feet with ancient sighs. His fingertips skimmed saplings, twiggy branches, grizzled catkins, flimsy leaves.

He walked so deeply into the woods that the clearing was smothered from view and the sky criss-crossed by pearly branches before he realized that he knew what he was looking for, and that, if he kept walking, he would find it.

The soldiers had driven their prisoners into wilderness. They hadn't taken them down a road or a trail because it didn't matter where they were going, they weren't going somewhere or anywhere. They were going to a place that was nowhere.

boy walking



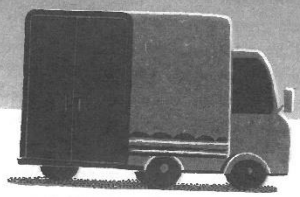
Andrej stopped, and his hands floated down to rest on the frail peak of a birch yearling. In every direction gaped silence. The trees clustered round him like sad narrow ghosts. He rocked on his toes, said soft words to himself. He was empty and helpless and afraid, a statue of a boy thrown into the sea or left behind to be swallowed by the desert.

It was the thought of Tomas and Wilma that got him moving again. They would be hungry and fretful. But the strange thing was that Andrej suddenly craved to return to them. He needed to see his brother and sister with a desperation that sang. He turned on his heels and ran.

In the clearing he moved quickly, ducking from caravan to caravan salvaging anything he could find that seemed useful. He found tins of beef that the soldiers had overlooked, and a net-bag of apples and beans. He found a pan of water in which stood a jug of still-fresh cream. He found coats and boots that would fit boys, and the necessities of babies. In secret compartments in each caravan, he found money. He found a keen folding knife, and wares he might trade, bangles and earrings and hatpins. He packed two sacks until he had as much as he could carry. He gave no thought to those who had



bear



## 7 THE GIFT

"And has she come back?" asked Tomas.

"She has not," replied the wolf. "The moon has grown big and small and big again, but she hasn't returned."

"Lovely Alice," sighed the llama. "Everything is wrong since Alice went away."

"Where has she gone?" puzzled the kangaroo.

"She's forgotten us," said the unhappy bear.

"She hasn't forgotten us!" bleated the chamois. "She was *our* daughter too! She was the daughter of the zoo. She won't forget us. She'll come back as soon as she can."

Andrej saw what it was they shared: a determination to endure.

He shifted Wilma until she was sitting in his arms, the shawl peeled back from her face, her tiny hand tucked away. Then he lifted her up to the bars, so near that her forehead knocked the iron. The lioness was there instantly, all lashing tail and shivery muscle and cool, secretive eye. She pushed her face against the bars, her whiskers and jaw and heavy brow, her black lips and scarred snout and snowy chin. This near to her, Andrej

smelt an ochre heat rising from her body, as if she'd spent a long day languishing beneath a searing sun.

Her nose was tawny and angular, as wide as a



man's palm. It nudged Wilma's face and the bristling muzzle must have tickled, because the baby grimaced and snuffled. The lioness breathed in the infant's scent and breathed it out again loudly, ruffling the baby's sparse hair. Once more she breathed, and Andrej felt the warm air gale past him – air that had been inside a lion, had moved through her heart and mind.

Her muzzle wrinkled, and Andrej saw a glimpse of teeth and pale tongue. "They smell the same," the lioness murmured. "My cubs smelt as she does. Like pollen." She breathed deeply again, and Andrej saw the missing cubs returning to her on the wings of the baby's perfume. "All young ones must come from the same place," she said; then sat down on her haunches, seemingly satisfied.

Rope ends

'That's what mermen must eat,' he said. 'We should get him some mussels too. I reckon Leonard loves mussels.'

That was the first time I felt it. Not jealousy yet. Just a strange feeling that something was happening, something unknowable, between my brother and the fish-man living in our garage.

Rope

## *Song*

One of Grandad's favourite stories was one about the night he heard the whales sing. He'd been at sea for weeks. It's not easy for sailors to get lost. Unless it's cloudy, then the stars are hidden at night and the sun is gone for most of the day. Before the whales sang, the ship's equipment had broken and the clouds had been thick for three days and nights.

*'That's the only time I've ever been truly scared at sea,'* Grandad would say. *'If a storm had come, we would not have had the foggiest where shallow water or rocks might be.'*

*They put the ship at anchor and slept, praying for clear skies in the morning.*

Twins

## *Treasure*

A storm came to Portland. In the night it threw itself against our windows. The thunder called to us. Black clouds gathered across the island. The days were dark.

When storms are finished, Chesil Beach – the stony bank that connects our island to the mainland – is always littered. Driftwood, tangled balls of fishermen's nets, glass bottles and plastic packets, all lie like God's rubbish, spilt from a heavenly bin bag.

There's treasure, too. Ned and I go searching amongst the junk. We claim the choicest gems, make them our prize, take them home to our trove.

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another mermaid story for you. Happened right there, in Zennor. Do you remember Gin?'

We'd never met him, but we remembered Gin. He was first mate on Grandad's first captaincy after leaving Long Ben in Manila, a fishing boat out of Plymouth.

*'Well, he had a story for me once. Said it was about his great, great, great-grandfather's brother or some such. A man by the name of Mathew Trewella.*

music notes

humans sale

*'You wouldn't have heard of him, Gin said. But in Zennor and round abouts, his was a famous name. Even more famous in his day. It's said that Mathew had the most beautiful voice imaginable. He sang wherever he went, through the village and about his work as a carpenter, always singing. Every Sunday he sung in the church in Zennor. Everyone*





*stopped when he sang.*

*'But they say that his voice changed. Over the course of a year, his joyful singing became a sad dirge. Still beautiful. But now, instead of bringing a smile, it brought tears.*

*'They started saying, in Zennor, that Mathew was bedevilled. They whispered that he'd been seen on the cliffs around the village with a mysterious lady in black. They muttered about witchcraft and wondered whether it was right to have the man sing in their church.*

castle

*'Mathew had a brother – Gin's great, great, great-grandfather, older than Mathew, living in another village. When this older brother heard these whispers,*

joy-filled and free. And that song was sung by a voice I knew. It was an answer.

Those knotted doubts unfurled. I looked up and out, away across the sea. There was life out there.

Away south, one star still shone, Fomalhaut, the mouth of the fish. Lonely it was. And, in its loneliness, brave, bright, bold.

I breathed deep. I smiled once more. Somehow life would continue. I knew now, as certain as the sea's song.

'Boldly go,' I whispered, holding the whale tightly, and I turned back towards home, towards life.

Jaime on beach where he died

Leo

'I'm not sure,' Amanda's mum said. 'Do you have any identification?'

'Identification?'

'Yes to say who you are.'

'Who I am? My name is Mr Bunting, ma'am. Like the bird.'

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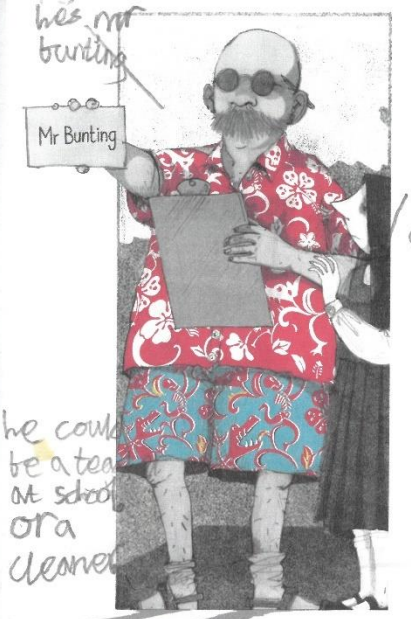


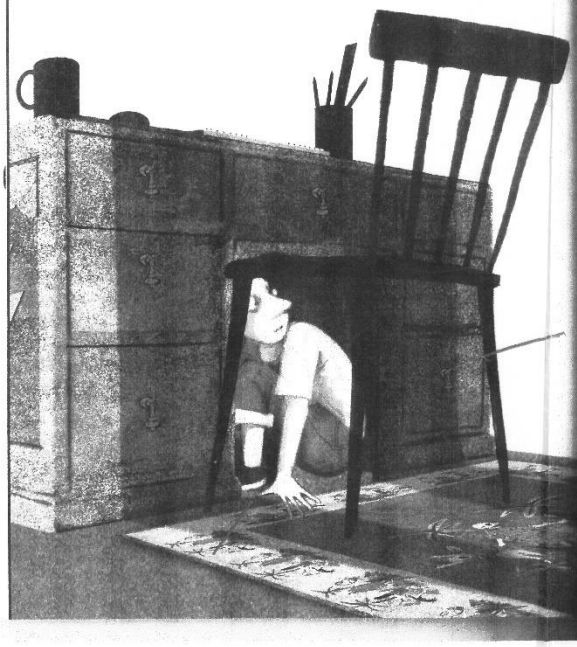

it says he's mr bunting

She looks dead.

he could be a teacher at school or a cleaner

there was a power cut.

A flash of lightning lit the study and, through the wooden legs of the chair, she saw, illuminated in the split-second snap of light, a pair of thin pale human legs stood in the middle of the room.



very creepy

she is hidding because she was playing

Surprise attack

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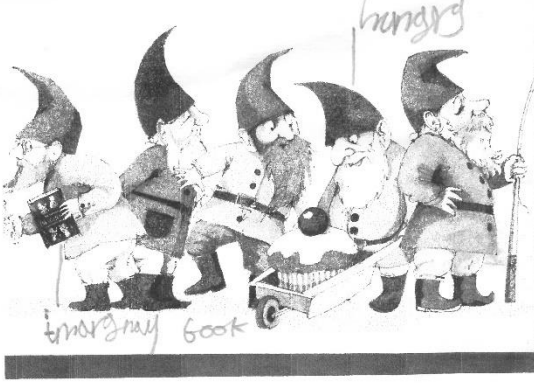

hungry

imaginary book

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He turned to find an imaginary dog behind him.

expression change

Funny

changes from fire to snake

Before Amanda could move warm ropes of snake curled round and across her arms and legs and waist and neck. She was caught.

'You're not the only one with an imagination, little girl.' Mr Bunting chuckled sourly. 'Now, I'm hungry. I've been hungry for hours and I need to… *borrow* your friend, if you don't mind. Bring him here.'

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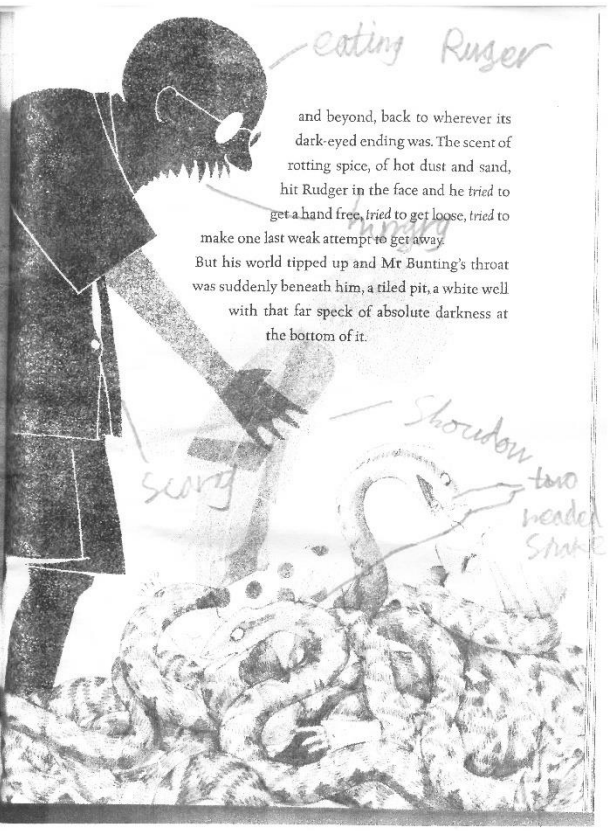


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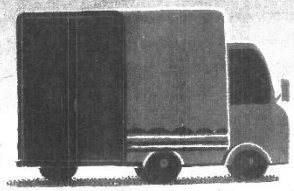
In this illustration you can see the tower ~~with~~ wich used to have the bell.

In this illustration you can see the two main characters.
~~it is dark and gloomy~~

I ~~tan~~ is dark and gloomy

[redacted]



the gift

sad lion because they took the cubs

## 7 THE GIFT

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stroking land

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dirt and ~~sea~~ sea weed

## Song

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*They put the ship at anchor and slept, praying for clear skies in the morning.*

net with fish in it

Elster thing



Place

left. Officer Taylor peered into the night at my brother, then me.

Ned swore loudly.

'Ned!' I shouted.

'Lads,' the policeman called, but we were gone, flying downhill.

I left the road and joined the path as the headlights lit upon me again.

'Ned! Jamie!' Officer Taylor shouted.

I could not see my brother. I could still hear his hacking cough, though. The path was slick. Mud spat up as my wheels slithered beneath me. I glanced back.

Jamie

'Come on, boys. You'll break your necks,' I heard on the wind. I didn't stop.

I pictured Leonard's huge eyes squinting ahead. As the rain fell heavier still, I pedalled harder and missed the spot I was looking for.

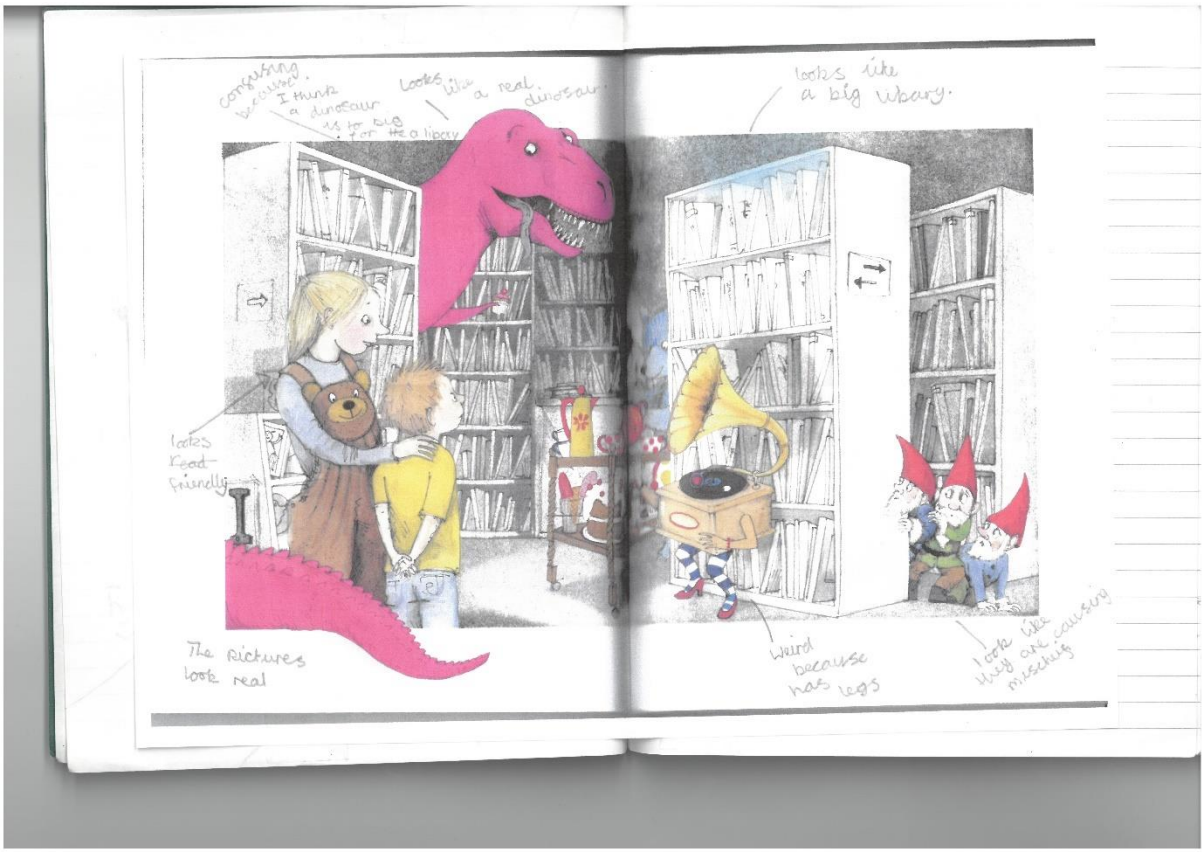
ned



I spent about 5min


Bath
tub
Leonard
is in it.
red
was thinking
about the
reason that Leonard came

Nicole


confusing because I think a dinosaur is for old for the a library
Looks like a real dinosaur
looks like a big library.
looks Read friendly
The Pictures look real
Weird because has legs
looks like they are causing missing

risky because it is a bit dangerous

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looks high

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lots of them

look like doing mischeif

huge cake

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for spilling the two pragrahs

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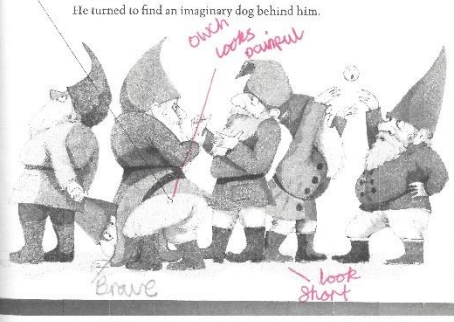
He turned to find an imaginary dog behind him.

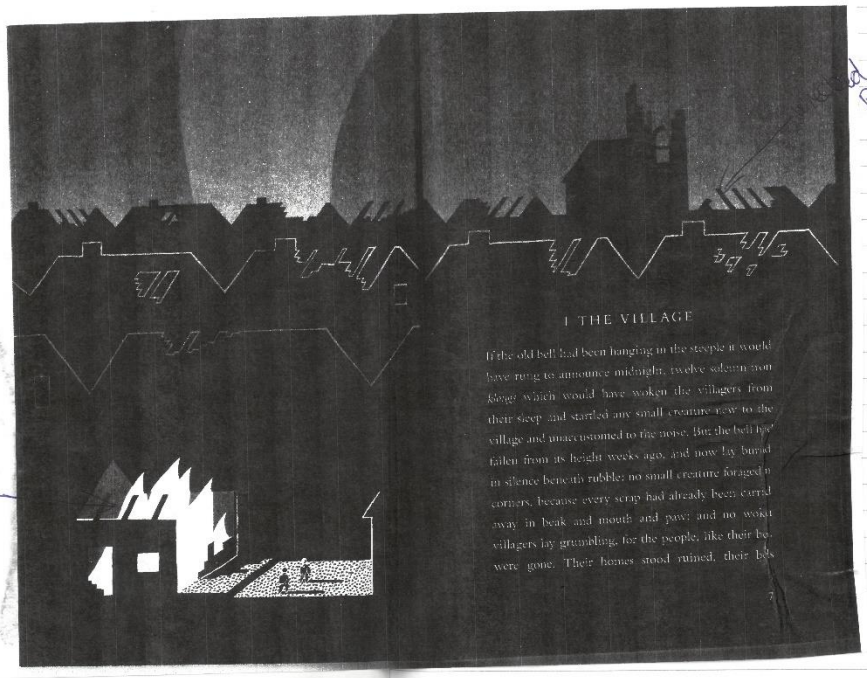
owch looks painful



Brave

look Short

These pics helped me to know ~~what~~ more about characters

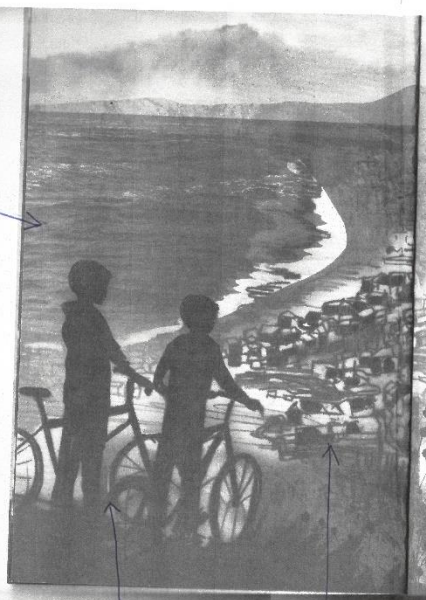


1 THE VILLAGE

If the old bell had been hanging in the steeple it would have rung to announce midnight, twelve solemn non *gongs* which would have woken the villagers from their sleep and startled any small creature new to the village and unaccustomed to the noise. But the bell had fallen from its height weeks ago, and now lay buried in silence beneath rubble; no small creature foraged in corners, because every scrap had already been carried away in beak and mouth and paw; and no wolfish villagers lay grumbling, for the people, like their bells were gone. Their homes stood ruined, their bells

Building

Bigger



sea

Brothers

houses

## Treasure

A storm came to Portland. In the night it threw itself against our windows. The thunder called to us. Black clouds gathered across the island. The days were dark.

When storms are finished, Chesil Beach – the stony bank that connects our island to the mainland – is always littered. Driftwood, tangled balls of fishermen's nets, glass bottles and plastic packets, all lie like God's rubbish, spilt from a heavenly bin bag.

There's treasure, too. Ned and I go searching amongst the junk. We claim the choicest gems, make them our prize, take them home to our trove.

Dad's low garage has never been big enough



'That's what mermen must eat,' he said. 'We should get him some mussels too. I reckon Leonard loves mussels.'

That was the first time I felt it. Not jealousy yet. Just a strange feeling that something was happening, something unknowable, between my brother and the fish-man living in our garage.

I think it is something to do with the sea

I don't know what this is

## Song

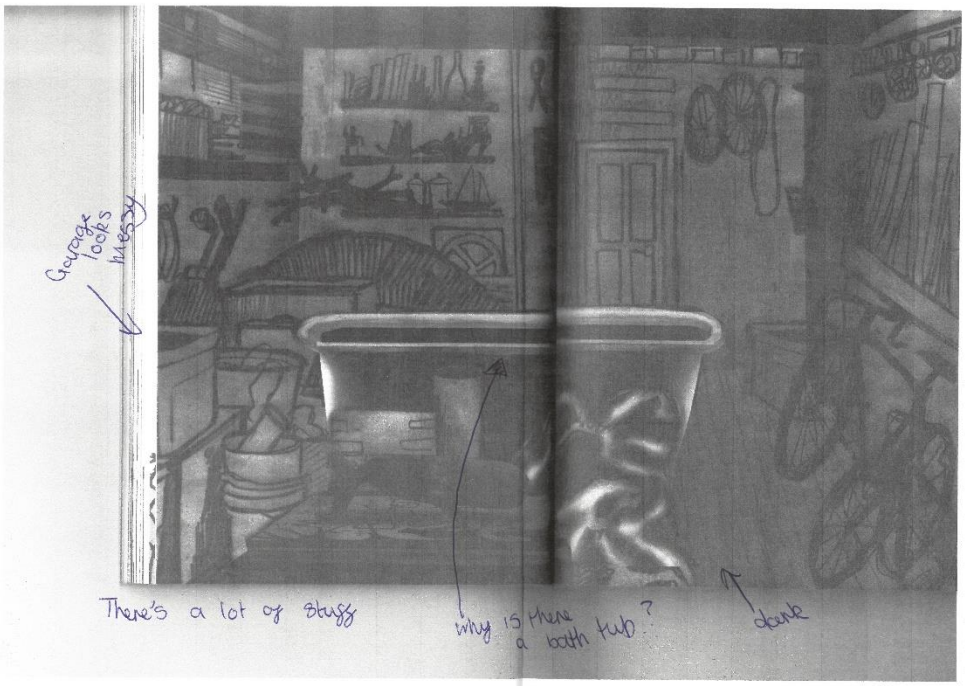
One of Grandad's favourite stories was one about the night he heard the whales sing. He'd been at sea for weeks. It's not easy for sailors to get lost. Unless it's cloudy, then the stars are hidden at night and the sun is gone for most of the day. Before the whales sang, the ship's equipment had broken and the clouds had been thick for three days and nights.

*'That's the only time I've ever been truly scared at sea,'* Granded would say. *'If a storm had come, we would not have had the foggiest where shallow water or rocks might be.'*

*They put the ship at anchor and slept, praying for clear skies in the morning.*

He's telling the story

net for fishing



Garage looks messy

There's a lot of stuff

why is there a bath tub?

dark

another mermaid story for you. Happened right there, in Zennor. Do you remember Gin?"

We'd never met him, but we remembered Gin. He was first mate on Grandad's first captaincy after leaving Long Ben in Manila, a fishing boat out of Plymouth.

*'Well, he had a story for me once. Said it was about his great, great, great-grandfather's brother or some such. A man by the name of Mathew Trewella.*

*'You wouldn't have heard of him, Gin said. But in Zennor and round abouts, his was a famous name. Even more famous in his day. It's said that Mathew had the most beautiful voice imaginable. He sang wherever he went, through the village and about his work as a carpenter, always singing. Every Sunday he sung in the church in Zennor. Everyone*



different lettering because the story has began



*stopped when he sang.*

*'But they say that his voice changed. Over the course of a year, his joyful singing became a sad dirge. Still beautiful. But now, instead of bringing a smile, it brought tears.*

*'They started saying, in Zennor, that Mathew was bedevilled. They whispered that he'd been seen on the cliffs around the village with a mysterious lady in black. They muttered about witchcraft and wondered whether it was right to have the man sing in their church.*

*'Mathew had a brother – Gin's great, great, great-grandfather, older than Mathew, living in another village. When this older brother heard these whispers,*

story pic

left. Officer Taylor peered into the night at my brother, then me.

Ned swore loudly.

'Ned!' I shouted.

'Lads,' the policeman called, but we were gone, flying downhill.

I left the road and joined the path as the headlights lit upon me again.

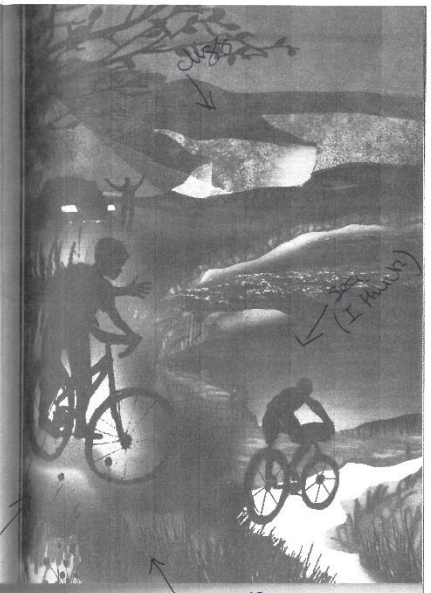
'Ned! Jamie!' Officer Taylor shouted.

I could not see my brother. I could still hear his hacking cough, though. The path was slick. Mud spat up as my wheels slithered beneath me. I glanced back.

'Come on, boys. You'll break your necks,' I heard on the wind. I didn't stop.

I pictured Leonard's huge eyes squinting ahead. As the rain fell heavier still, I pedalled harder and missed the spot I was looking for.






joy-filled and free. And that song was sung by a voice I knew. It was an answer.

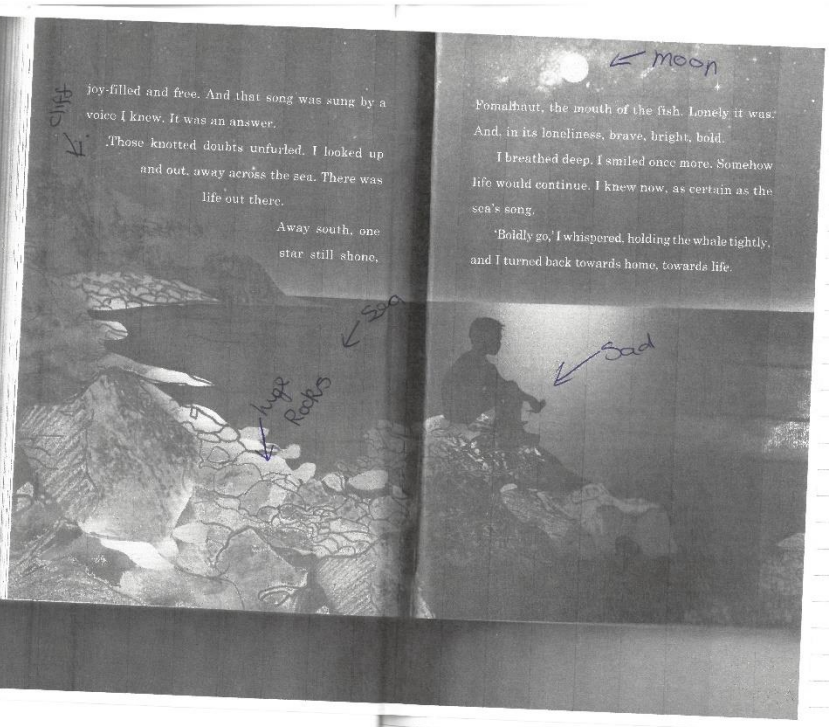
Those knotted doubts unfurled. I looked up and out, away across the sea. There was life out there.

Away south, one star still shone,

Fomalhaut, the mouth of the fish. Lonely it was. And, in its loneliness, brave, bright, bold.

I breathed deep. I smiled once more. Somehow life would continue. I knew now, as certain as the sea's song.

'Boldly go,' I whispered, holding the whale tightly, and I turned back towards home, towards life.



Sophia

'I'm not sure,' Amanda's mum said. 'Do you have any identification?'

'Identification?'

'Yes, to say who you are.'

'Who I am? My name is Mr Bunting, ma'am. Like the bird.'

'Bird?'

'Yes, the corn bunting, for example. There are others…'

'Yes, yes,' Mrs Shuffleup agreed. 'Do you have something to prove that?'

'To prove a kinship to the bird?' the man said. 'No. No, nothing like that. Ornithology is not—'

'No,' Amanda's mum interrupted. 'I mean ID? To prove you are who you say you are?'

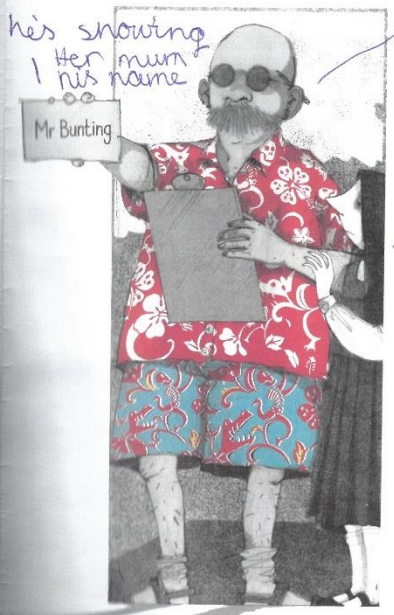
Mr Bunting gave a little cough, as if he were insulted (but only a tiny bit), before saying, 'Yes, of course. I have a badge, look.'

By now Amanda had crept into the hallway. She left Rudger in the cave-mouth under the stairs so she wouldn't lose her place in the adventure (in much the same way you leave your thumb in a book when someone talks to you). She tiptoed up behind her mother and gave her a hug. Mothers like this sort of thing. From there it was easy for Amanda to be nosy.

Peering round her mum she discovered two people on the doorstep: one a grown man, showing her mother his name badge, and the other a little girl about Amanda's age.

The man was dressed in Bermuda shorts, with a brightly patterned shirt, all clashing colours and dazzle, stretched across his






A group of a dozen tiny men dressed as gnomes who leapt on him from a bookcase shouting,

'Surprise attack!'

didn't remember her either.

The Friend who looked like an old Victorian schoolmaster, The Great Fandango, requested that Rudger stop wasting his time. He was trying to read a book, he said it was very important, and even though he had it open upside down and had been snoring when Rudger had nudged him, Rudger didn't argue.

Emily had been forgotten by *everyone*.


He wished Snowflake were here. The dinosaur was as big as an elephant and elephants never forget. But maybe even Snowflake would have forgotten Emily.

He'd thought he'd get help at the library, but it looked like he'd been wrong. All he'd found was a roof to hide under and some free food to eat while he tried to come up with a plan of his own to put an end to Mr Bunting's feeding.

Could he do that? Was that really what he wanted to do? Wouldn't he rather just hide away and be safe himself? Wouldn't that be more sensible?

Probably, but Amanda would never have forgiven him.

As he made his way to the hammocks later that night he was stopped by a bark.

He turned to find an imaginary dog behind him.

# Appendix E – Analysis codes

This section contains the initial and reduced codes used for the analysis process.

## Initial codes

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| aesthetic response | amount of information | author illustrator intention | chapter heading illustrations | choice of focus |
| colour | composition | congruency | cover | creative response |
| critical engagement | decoration | deviation | disagreements | dissatisfaction |
| distraction | double page illustration | ease of reading | elaboration | emotional response |
| endpapers | enjoyment | extrapolation | eye catching | fitting not fitting |
| fluency | folio illustrations | full page illustration | gaps | iconic solidarity |
| illustration annotation | illustration behind writing | illustration content | importance | inference |
| interesting | internal consistency | journal response | layout | level of detail |
| links to other media | links within the books | looking between writing and illustrations | looking closely | meaning making |
| moving around the book | multiple possibilities | narrative rhythm | opinions on the book | paragraph break illustrations |
| page turn | partial page illustration | picture after writing | picture before writing | picturing |
| playing | predicting | questioning | ration of words and images | reading behaviour |
| recall | reflective | relating to own life | relating to real world | relationship of words and images |
| repeated illustration | scaffolding | skipping | speculation | spot illustration |
| style | suiting story | technical discussion of illustration | technical discussion of writing | time |
| un/certainty | understandable | unexpected | unfamiliarity | usefulness |
| variety | | | | |

## Reduced codes

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| aesthetic response | attention | author illustrator intention | chapter heading illustrations | choice of focus |
| composition | critical & creative response | decoration | disagreements | discussion |
| double page illustration | ease of reading | emotional response | enjoyment | eye catching |
| folio illustrations | full page illustration | gaps | illustration after writing | illustration before writing |
| illustration content | importance | inconsistency | information | interesting |
| level of detail | links within the book | looking between writing and illustrations | meaning making | multiple possibilities |
| own knowledge or experiences | page break illustration | paratext | partial page illustration | picturing |
| predicting | questioning | ratio of words and images | reflecting | relationship of words and images |
| revisiting | scaffolding | skipping | style | technical discussion of illustration |
| time | un/certainty | unexpected | un/familiarity | usefulness |
| aesthetic response | attention | author illustrator intention | chapter heading illustrations | choice of focus |
| composition | critical & creative response | decoration | disagreements | discussion |
| double page illustration | ease of reading | emotional response | enjoyment | eye catching |
| folio illustrations | full page illustration | gaps | illustration after writing | illustration before writing |
| illustration content | importance | inconsistency | information | interesting |
| level of detail | links within the book | looking between writing and illustrations | meaning making | multiple possibilities |
| own knowledge or experiences | page break illustration | paratext | partial page illustration | picturing |