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■ Ronia Revisited

Enhancing children's crossover narratives
and themes through illustration

A MASTERS THESIS IN VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN

BY CLAUDIA BERGSDORF



Abstract

In this project I argue that recurrent universal themes such as death, time and identity are integral to the continuum of crossover children's fiction*. Through a close reading of my favourite crossover book *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* (1982), and by correlating key moments from my personal history with identified themes I will show how this genre is able to communicate the universal and the personal. My thesis examines how illustration can enhance the universal and the personal and thereby make the concept of the continuum explicit.

Many books intended for children appeal to both adults and children alike. This genre is described as crossover fiction. As an illustrator I am interested in how illustration can enhance this literature and the themes contained in the narrative text. My research focuses on commonly appearing themes (for example death, nature and time) identified by scholar Maija-Liisa Harju (2009). By conducting a comparative analysis of crossover literature case studies and a formal aesthetic analysis of their illustrative content I

investigate how these themes can be enhanced through illustration. I analyse how cultural context such as exemplified by the illustrative work of Antony Browne can help shape universal themes, thereby adding a personal dimension to the narrative text. In this investigation I identify how formal elements (colour, line, motifs and composition) and visual metaphor can be implemented as a design strategy in visually communicating the resonance between my own life story and the universal themes specific to Astrid Lindgren's *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* (1982).

* *Crossover fiction*: Fiction enjoyed by a readership of many ages. Essential components of a crossover book are: diverse address, complexity in form and/or theme, evidence of diverse readership (Beckett, *Crossover Fiction: Global and Historical Perspectives*, 2009)

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1 Introduction

Crossover children's fiction appeals to an audience of all ages because of a complexity of themes addressed in the narrative text (Beckett, 2009).

As Maija-Liisa Harju (2009) states, childhood and adulthood are not two separate points in time but a continuing succession of personal experiences characterised by universal themes such as death, nature and time. Can illustration highlight these themes and shape them through a personal context to enhance the experience of crossover narratives? Illustration has the ability to make the themes dominant to fictional texts more explicit (Mallan, 1999). It is also able to infuse the narrative with a personal subtext. According to illustrator Gregory Rogers this subtext adds an

“...entirely new dimension to something that almost doubles the impact, doubles the importance, doubles the speaking power that you would have if it were just a literal translation. (cited in Mallan, 1999, p. 87) ”

By showing aspects of their own interpretation of a story, illustrators can acknowledge the close connection that readers may form with a text. The case study for this investigation is my favorite children's book *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* by Astrid Lindgren (1982). In developing a case for a visual communication strategy that functions to symbolise crossover fiction's continuum, my research explores the inter-relationship between the universal and the personal.

First I will outline the background of this investigation, followed by a definition of crossover fiction based on my research into the scholarly writing focusing on this genre of literature. I will then discuss the significance and aims of this project.

In the methods section of this project I will conduct a comparative literature analysis of my case study and five similar examples of modern children's crossover fiction, identifying Harju's themes in support of my argument. A formal analysis of the illustrations created for these six narratives will

establish the illustration techniques used and how these techniques enhance the visual depiction of universal themes.

I analysed Anthony Browne's illustration work in order to determine a visual communication strategy that considers visual metaphor, symbolism and the use of metonyms (things that represent or are associated with an idea, concept, or character (Velasco, 2002)) in highlighting universal themes, and that allows me to show personal experience through illustration. Browne thus serves as a model for how illustrated subtext can function to contextualise my own experience.

At the end of the methods section I will summarise all findings in a visual research summary and outline the set of criteria, or 'crossover guidelines' I have established. These were implemented as a visual communication strategy in creating the final design object. This will then be followed by a discussion of the object and the application of the strategy. In the conclusion I will summarise the project, evaluate its effectiveness and suggest points of departure.



2 Background

I was born in East-Berlin in the early 1980s. Ever since childhood one of the great joys in my life has been reading.

My mother used to read the great Russian and German fairytales to me and my bookshelf was lined with titles which included the classics *Robinson Crusoe* (Defoe, 1983), and *Gulliver's Travels* (Swift, 1986) and multiple works by Jack London (1876 – 1916). These were the books my parents had read as children and had kept for me.

My favorite children's book to this day is *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* by Swedish author Astrid Lindgren, who is internationally renowned for her books featuring the beloved character Pippi Longstocking. Lindgren's *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* is a modern chapter book and belongs to the low

fantasy genre (Nadelman, 1995). It is aimed at children between 8 to 12 years of age and is beautifully illustrated in ink by Ilon Wikland. As a child I would imagine myself running through the woods free of care just as the little protagonist does in the novel. Over the years I have often returned to this story and it has never failed to touch me. Every re-reading would remind me of my childhood but also evoke new associations and images at the same time. As a teenager it had a certain resonance for me because I, like the heroine, had a strained relationship with my father. As a young adult I found that I could similarly respond to her independent decisions and the desire to free herself from her family's conventions and expectations. When I moved to New Zealand in 2003, *Ronia the Robber's Daughter*

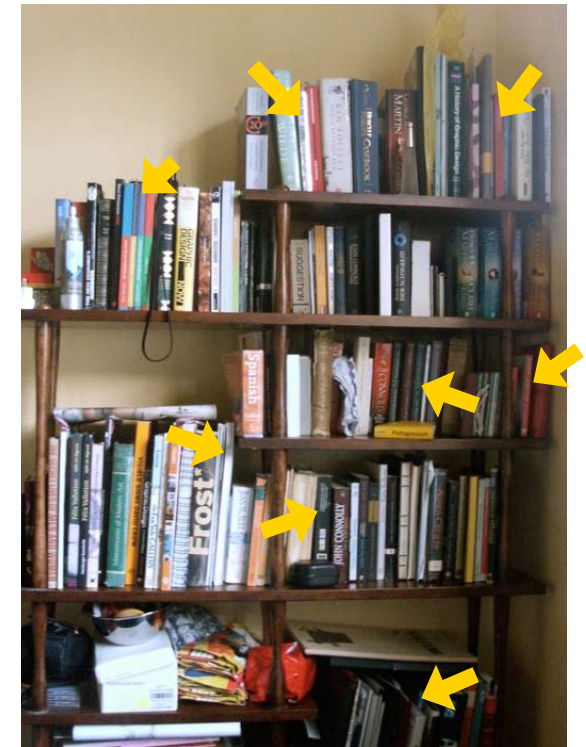


Figure 1 Children's books in my bookshelf here in New Zealand

was one of a few select books that made the journey with me. Even today the children's section of local bookstores remains the primary source of many of my new purchases. Phillip Pullman delighted me with *His Dark Materials* (2008) and I happily admit that I adored J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* (2009).

I have often wondered what it is about these books that also attracts an adult readership. Why do we love some stories and their illustrations more than others? Why do we keep visiting them, even though we have moved past the designated reading age? What inspired my parents to hold on to their illustrated copy of *Gulliver's Travels* over other stories from their youth? In the following quotation the renowned fantasy writer Ursula Le Guin claims that

Many of us have at least one book or tale that we read as a child and come back to now and then for the rest of our lives. A child or grandchild to read aloud to provides a good excuse, or we may have the courage to return, quite alone, to Peter Rabbit, for the keen pleasure of reading language in which every word is right, the syntax is a delight in itself and the narrative pacing is miraculous. Revisiting a book loved in childhood may be principally an indulgence

in nostalgia; I knew a woman who read *The Wizard of Oz* every few years because it 'made her remember being a child'. But returning to *The Snow Queen* or *Kim*, you may well discover a book far less simple and unambiguous than the one you remembered. That shift and deepening of meaning can be a revelation both about the book and about yourself. (Le Guin, 2006, p. 86)

The ideas contained in this excerpt regarding a story's deepening of meaning over time, became the starting point of my investigation. Initially my research was concerned with genres, audiences and reader motivations. However the more I looked the clearer it became that the focus of my investigation was on the illustrative enhancement of crossover literature. This type of fiction has an audience of all ages and displays a complexity in themes. (Beckett, 2009).

I realised that here was an opportunity to add to the existing body of literature on crossover fiction by studying the role of illustration in communicating the themes and personal appeal embedded in these narratives. I saw a chance to analyse the visual and creative implications of this form of literature by examining my continuous relationship with *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* as a personal example.



3 What exactly is crossover fiction and how does it affect the reader?

3.1 Crossover fiction

Mallan (1999) and Beckett (2009) claim that some children's books are appealing to readers of all ages due to the familiar nature of the themes portrayed in the narratives.

In the field of children's literature, books with a following of varied ages are classified as crossover fiction. These are books written for one age group, but which are appreciated by a much larger audience. The evolution of children's crossover literature has been studied extensively by scholars like Beckett (2009) and Falconer (2009). One of their aims, relevant to my study, has been to determine how this form of fiction impacts on the development of child readers and why it holds significant appeal for an adult audience. Beckett (2009) notes the following characteristics as essential components of a crossover book:

1. Diverse address
2. Complexity in form and/or theme

3. Evidence of diverse readership

Narrative complexity in form and theme are of particular interest to this project because of its potential to inform a visual interpretation of stories belonging to this genre. Furthermore the themes discussed by Beckett are one of the key reasons to account for a diverse readership according to Harju (2009).

3.2 Readers' experience of crossover fiction

It is a well established concept that readers relate their own experiences to the fictional narratives they read. Robert Alter (1989) contends that fictional characters are the key link between literature and reality, and that readers are unlikely to finish a novel unless they can identify with the characters described. This claim makes a strong case for the importance of character design in an illustrative approach to enhance crossover novels. Alter's views are supported by Kenneth Quinn's research into literary experience. Quinn (1982) claims that a literary text possesses an individual significance for the reader. He goes

on to say that at one level the readers extract the contents of the story and at another they bring their personal beliefs and past experiences to that reading. Quinn states that

We read to sharpen our awareness of social issues. To understand what it feels like to be involved in the crisis of human existence: love, death, murder and the rest. [...] Literature attempts to represent these crises in their shattering, catastrophic individuality. (Quinn, 1982, p.192)

While this view may be somewhat pessimistic, it does highlight the notion that readers make emotional and personal connections with the universal themes in the stories they choose to read. Victor Nell (1988) conducted a complex experiment into the psychology of reading where he tested the emotional and physical arousal of his research subjects as they read passages of a fictional text. His investigation concluded that the subjects were significantly aroused as they came across favoured passages in the stories. These studies informed this research and the premise that readers relate their personal history to the themes and ideas contained in the narratives.

3.3 The continuum between child and adult

Harju (2009) contends that the complexity of themes in a story, like those mentioned by Quinn (1982), is key to the appeal of crossover literature and has analysed commonly occurring issues and themes specific to this genre.

In a recent article in children's literature journal *The Lion and the Unicorn* (2009), she argues that the life experiences evident in the narratives of crossover books reflect a continuum between child and adult readers. In this essay Harju employs a tree-ring analogy to further explain this concept. Just as humans transition through life stages, trees add rings as they grow. Childhood and adulthood, she maintains, are not two separate points in time but a continuing succession of experiences. Furthermore she claims that adults do not visit children's books to re-experience their youth, as this is an impossibility, but rather because they have a keen awareness of the connection between their child and adult selves.

She goes on to say that humans consistently face existential questions throughout their lifetime and that these comprise key issues frequently appearing in children's books with a large adult following. These issues are identified as:



- Issues of identity
- One's position in the natural world
- Individual neurosis
- Antisocial behavior
- The process of time
- Environmental catastrophe
- The inescapable promise of death

Harju argues that more often than not crossover books incorporate a combination of these issues, and hence display a complexity and maturity appropriate to a variety of ages. As the reader's context and age change over time so does their experience of these issues.

In studying these texts on crossover fiction, I chose to use Harju's findings regarding universal themes as a theoretical framework in this research project.

4 Significance of this Investigation

This research project investigates how illustration and a personal context can highlight universal themes in a modern crossover children's book and add a personal subtext, thereby adding another dimension of meaning and understanding to these stories.

Currently there do not appear to be any comprehensive studies on the illustrative treatment of universal themes in crossover fiction. This is a missed opportunity because crossover books are often developed into graphic novels, feature films and illustrated children's chapter books, and are marketed to both children and adults alike.

Recent examples of visual interpretations of crossover stories include the well-known Harry Potter series of movies and Spike Jonze's recent film adaptation of Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things are* (2009). The New York Times interviewed Jonze about his film and the creative approach he had taken. In the article the journalist states that: "An implicit question

precedes his (Jonze's) artistic choices: Wouldn't it be cool if...?" (Knafo, 2009, p.10). As is evident in the example of Jonze's film, some visual interpretations of crossover narratives are already very personal and intuitive. Those with an interest in interpreting crossover stories and themes through illustration could therefore benefit from an investigation into the visual communication possibilities of this genre.

By conducting a close critical analysis of text and illustrations I aim to develop a set of guidelines and a visual communication strategy that enhances the continuum of a reader/viewer's experience of crossover fiction. The findings of this research could have the potential to be developed into a resource for illustration students in identifying and visually interpreting universal themes from their personal point of view.



5 Research Aims

A key aim of this project was to create a design approach based on Harju's universal themes.

The case study *Ronja Räubertochter* from 1982 (*Ronia the Robber's Daughter*, 1985)* will be used to develop a strategy that identifies and visually enhances the universal themes and my personal interpretation of these. By selecting books that are similar in genre and format to my childhood favorite as case studies, I will identify narrative characteristics first and then the visual techniques and strategies used by illustrators. By cross-referencing these characteristics and applying Haju's model I anticipate that I will be able to develop a visual language that can be employed to express the parallels between my personal life experiences and Ronia's journey, thereby acknowledging

Quinn's (1982) claim that readers bring their personal beliefs and past experiences to the reading of a story.

I aim to:

- Clarify how illustration can be applied to highlight universal themes and communicate personal subtext
- Identify illustration techniques that can be employed to enhance these themes in my chosen example of children's crossover narratives
- Investigate how the themes can then be modified to reflect the personal subtext through visual metaphor and symbolism

The scope of this study does not embrace the analysis of reader behavior. Instead it acknowledges that readers do have a personal relationship with these books and investigates illustration techniques that can acknowledge this phenomenon and enhance the personal experience of these stories.

* **Note:** For the purpose of this research project I used the illustrated German version of the book (1982) to conduct the illustration analysis. To analyse the text I used the English version (1985), which unfortunately was published without illustrations.

6 Research Methods

To solidify my inquiry and to develop an appropriate visual communication strategy I conducted the following analysis and methods:

- A formal comparative literature analysis of six modern crossover books to identify commonly appearing universal themes
- A formal visual analysis of the illustrative content, illustrative techniques and symbolism of the six case studies
- A comparative visual analysis of illustrations by Anthony Browne and those of two crossover books to investigate the use of visual metaphor as a strategy in creating personal subtext
- ‘Reflection in action’– an intuition and knowledge based evaluation of my visual experimentation

I chose to conduct a comparative literature analysis of six crossover books in order to determine the commonality of universal themes as well as to determine narrative characteristics that could inform an illustrative approach. Mutch (2005) recommends this method in order to establish key messages and themes in original texts. She suggests a step-by-step approach in which the texts are constantly compared and contrasted in order to discover similarities

and differences and to make speculations about the meaning and significance of the findings.

To identify illustration techniques employed in the illustrative content of my six case studies and in visual precedents like Anthony Browne’s work, Mutch recommends the method of visual analysis. This method similarly focuses on establishing similarities and differences in order to find common strategies and techniques employed in the illustrative material.

For both methods Mutch suggests the use of tables and the development of categories in order to be able to constantly compare and evaluate the data. These research methods are common to information science and allow for a very thorough investigation of the content appearing in crossover narratives and illustrations.

How formal elements function to support the meanings implicit in the narrative is inextricably linked to an illustrator's intuition as well as their personal and professional experiences. In order to evaluate the visual



experiments developed as part of the research strategy I used a method proposed by Donald Schön (1983) and called 'reflection in action'. Schön's method acknowledges professional experience and intuition as a source of knowledge that enables the practitioner to evaluate their own experiments through a constant process of hypothesising an outcome and then testing it and making alterations. Schön states that:

When the practitioner reflects-in-action in a case he perceives as unique, paying attention to phenomena and surfacing his intuitive understanding of them, his experimenting is at once exploratory, move testing, and hypothesis testing. The three functions are fulfilled by the very same actions. And from this fact follows the distinctive character of experimenting in practice. (Schön, 1983, p. 147)

This practice will be made clearer in sections 7 and 8 in which I discuss the research findings resulting from what Schön refers to as 'controlled experimentation' and which are subsequently implemented in refining my visual communication strategy. This approach offsets the criticism of subjectivity that could be potentially leveled at this personally informed

research project. By using analytical methods, such as outlined in the following pages, a rational and objective assessment of possible design directions can be determined and applied in synthesising the universal and the personal.

6.1 Comparative literature analysis

Harju's (2009) findings regarding the universal appeal of common human themes and issues in crossover fiction act as a theoretical framework in this research project. For the purposes of this inquiry these issues have been simplified into the following six themes:

1. Identity
2. Nature
3. Individuality
4. Time
5. Disaster
6. Death

The criteria identified for the literature analysis were based on my reading of *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* and informed by Yates & Gamble (2008) on children's literature:

- Western chapter books aimed at children 8–12 years of age
- Modern, (written between 1950 and 1990)
- Classified as low fantasy genre
- Feature black and white illustrations

The paradigm created through these criteria was essential to establishing the scope of the research, to ensuring that the study was achievable, and minimising any tendency to generalisation. Using comparative analysis techniques outlined by Yates & Gamble (2008) and Mutch (2005) I determined commonalities and differences of Harju's universal themes as well as other literary and format characteristics such as style and narrative structure.

Case study selection

Based on these criteria I chose the following books:

- *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* (1985) by Astrid Lindgren, published by Puffin Books, and *Ronja Räubertochter* (1982), published by Oetinger, illustrated by Ilon Wikland

Ronia the Robber's Daughter is the story of a little robber's daughter, who befriends Birk, the son of a rival robber gang. When the children's forbidden friendship is found out they decide to run away together and live in a bear cave in the woods for a year. The forest is inhabited by magical creatures and wild animals. Through their engagement with these creatures, and through their experiences in the woods the children learn the importance of balancing personal relationships and independence. The emotional pain resulting from the children's absence unites the two robber clans into one. At the conclusion



of the book Ronia returns home in time to support her grieving father when robber elder Noodle Pete passes away.

- *Momo*, (1985) by Michael Ende, published by Penguin Books, illustrated by Michael Ende

Momo is the story of a little girl who possesses the gift of being able to listen to people's problems and ideas with infinite patience. When the men in grey try to take over the world and steal all of human time, Momo is the only hope for human kind.

- *Matilda*, (1988) by Roald Dahl, published by Jonathan Cape Ltd., illustrated by Quentin Blake

Matilda is a young girl who is much smarter than the average child her own age. She teaches herself reading and writing and can do complicated mathematical calculations without any learning aids. Her parents do not support Matilda and think she is stupid. Luckily the girl meets a friendly schoolteacher, Miss Honey. When Matilda discovers that she has supernatural powers and can move objects with her mind, she uses these to help Miss Honey defeat the evil schoolmistress Miss Trunchbull.

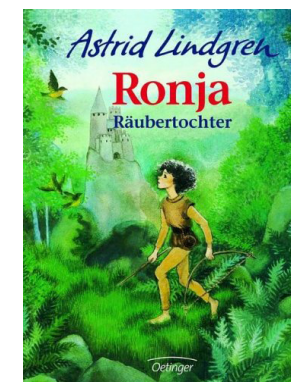


Figure 2 Book cover: Lindgren, A. (1982). *Ronja Räubertochter*. Hamburg: Oetinger.

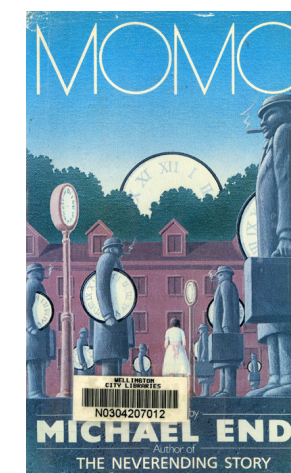


Figure 3 Book cover: Ende, M. (1985). *Momo*. Stuttgart: Doubleday and Company Inc. and Penguin Books Ltd.

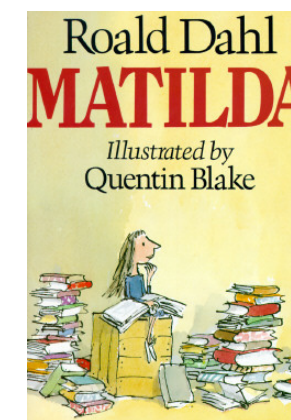


Figure 4 Book cover: Dahl, R. (1988). *Matilda*. London: Jonathan Cape Ltd.

- *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase*, (1962) by Joan Aiken, published by Dan Yearling, illustrated by Patricia Eleanor Howard

Bonnie's parents go on a journey abroad and leave the little girl and her cousin Sylvia at their Victorian mansion, Willoughby Chase, in the care of evil nanny Mrs. Slighcarb. The nanny is a scheming character who wishes to take possession of the family's entire wealth. Slighcarb places Bonnie and Sylvia in an orphanage from which they soon escape. They then seek help to reveal Slighcarb's true character and win back the family fortune.

- *The Children of Green Knowe*, (1954) by Lucy M. Boston, published by Harcourt Brace, illustrated by Peter Boston

Tolly is a little boy who suffers from the fact that his father lives abroad with his step mother. He is packed off to spend his holidays with his great-grandmother at her home Green Knowe. There he encounters the ghosts of his ancestors as well as magical spirits. As Tolly gains confidence in the fact that the ghost children and his grandmother will always be there for him, he also learns to handle his fear of abandonment.

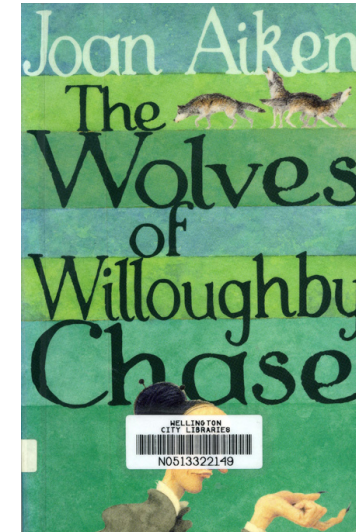


Figure 5 Book cover: Aiken, J. (1962). *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase*. New York: Dell Yearling.

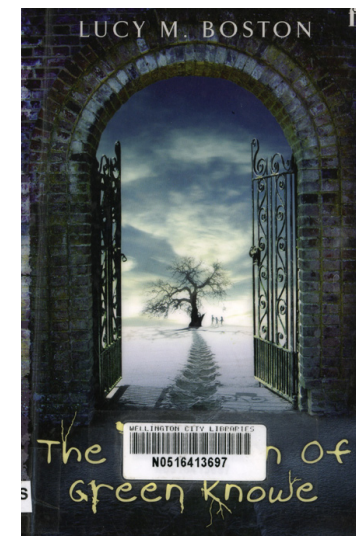


Figure 6 Book cover: Boston, L. M. (1954). *The Children of Green Knowe*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace.

- *The World Around the Corner*, (1980 by Maurice Gee, published by Oxford University Press, illustrated by Gary Hebley

Caroline lives in a New Zealand small town. One day she finds a pair of magic spectacles in her father's secondhand store. She discovers that the inhabitants from another world need these glasses to defeat their enemies, the Grimble. Caroline has to outsmart these goblins to ensure that the world around the corner survives.

All of these works fulfill the paradigm established earlier.

They also cover a range of different western nationalities, which means that the analysis took into account the cultural context of these narratives.

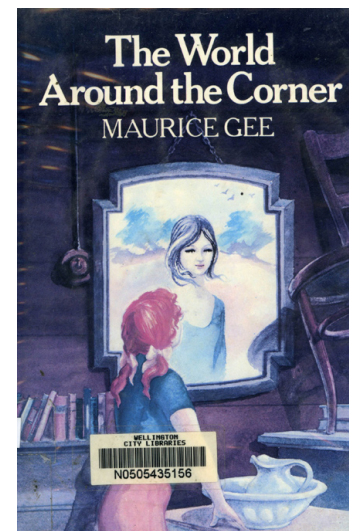


Figure 7 Book cover: Gee, M. (1980). *The World Around the Corner*. Wellington: Oxford University Press.

Formal analysis structure

The formal analysis involved examining the following criteria

- Design and format
- Genre
- Narration
- Structure and plot
- Representation of characters
- Subject and themes
- Universal themes as defined by Harju (2009)
- Language
- Cultural signifiers including:
 - Culturally specific language
 - Locations
 - Characters, creatures and animals
 - Time and weather

This formal analysis adheres to recommendations made by Mutch (2005) and the research methods outlined by Yates & Gamble (2008). In their

informative book Yates and Gamble give a set of definitions for narrative characteristics, in particular themes, plot structures, genre, narrative styles and the placement of illustration in children's literature. They describe clearly how to identify and analyse narrative characteristics in children's books.

This part of the methods section focuses on the narrative techniques employed by the author. A thorough analysis of the illustrations was conducted separately and will be discussed later in section 6.2.1.

As recommended by Mutch, I listed all the findings from this literature analysis into large tables as part of the research process, these can be found in appendices 1, 2 and 3.

Below are the findings resulting from this comparative analysis.

Format and layout

These two elements define the books' size and shape, as well as the arrangement of illustrations and text (Doonan, 1993). *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* (German edition), *Momo* and *Matilda* are vertical hardcover books with full-colour sleeves, while the other three have laminated full-colour covers. All books have a page count between 100 and 300 and are accompanied by black and white illustrations. Some include a table of contents and author's notes



(*Momo* and *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase*). Every case study is set in a serif font and adheres to a one-column grid. In the example of *Matilda* the text is partly integrated and sometimes flows around small spot illustrations. Similar arrangements can be found in *Momo* and *Ronia the Robber's Daughter*. In the remaining books text and image are entirely separated.

Genre

The genre of a story is a category that is set up to determine textual characteristics and reading practices which shape the meaning that readers can elicit from a text (Mallan, 1999). My chosen case studies are classified as low fantasy. This genre is characterised by magical phenomena and events in the story that do not obey the rules of nature (Yates & Gamble, 2008).

In Dahl's *Matilda* the girl's extraordinary power to psychically move things combined with her intellectual abilities symbolise the fantastic element in the story. In contrast to this character Ronia lives in a world that is inhabited by magical creatures. Unlike Matilda, Ronia has no 'super' powers. Instead she is depicted solving problems on her own without the aid of magic. In *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* and *The Children of Green Knowe* the fantastic is symbolised by man-eating wolves, ghost children and a cursed tree. The low fantasy genre is evident in the remaining case studies through secondary

characters like the men in grey in *Momo* and the alien characters from another world that appear in *The World Around the Corner*.

The latter story also features an entire separate world. Normally when a story is set in a fantastic reality, such as in another world, the genre becomes a high fantasy (Yates & Gamble, 2008). Although Gee's story is predominantly set in rural New Zealand, the other world is alluded to by the protagonist's dreams. Thus his story is also categorised as low fantasy.

Narration

Narration is defined as how a story is told to an audience (Yates & Gamble, 2008). Narrative analysis positions the author within the crossover story. Harju argues that the appeal of crossover fiction lies in the author's ability to negotiate universal themes. Therefore in analysing these works the author's reflection on these themes, and how these shape the story need to be taken into account.

There are different styles of narration. My chosen case studies are narrated in the third person. This type of narration (also referred to as omniscient narration) allows the author complete access to the thoughts and actions of the characters in the story (Yates & Gamble, 2008). Third person narration can be intrusive or un-intrusive. When intrusive, the author will make

personal judgements about the character's actions throughout the story and may address the reader directly. In un-intrusive third person narration the author tells the story without making any obvious judgements and never acknowledges their presence to the reader. *Ronia the Robber's Daughter*, *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* and *The Children of Green Knowe* are examples of un-intrusive narration, whereas *Momo* and *Matilda* are intrusive. This is particularly evident in Roald Dahl's *Matilda*. Dahl frequently uses the words 'we' and 'us' to align himself with his audience. Yates and Gamble argue that intrusive narration can often adopt a tone of authority (Yates & Gamble, 2008). However, the way Dahl tells the story is very light-hearted, and, in places, reads like a first-person narration where the author could be another character in the story. Ende's *Momo* takes a more subtle approach in this regard. Like Dahl this author frequently addresses the reader directly, but he does not use language that suggests that he sees himself as equal to the reader. Ende once said:

“It is for this child in me, and in all of us, that I tell my stories [...] my books are for any child between 80 and 8 years. (cited in Senick, 1988, pps. 95, 97) ”

Ende's empathy with his readers may explain his style of narration and occasional direct address. It also highlights the very personal connection

between the author's experiences and the stories that they shape. This suggests that Harju's themes may be reflected upon by the author when creating a crossover narrative.

In addition to the narrative, the structure and plot of a story can inform the choice of scenes that an illustrator might select to interpret as part of their design strategy. Because of this it is important to discover whether or not universal themes correlate with important structural elements and events in the story.

Structure and plot

In a book structural elements take the form of an exposition (an introduction to the characters and setting), the climax (a highlight or turning point in the story), and a conclusion, where open questions may be answered and potential problems resolved. In some cases a coda (the reiteration of a narrative's moral) may be revealed as the story is concluded. The structure can vary from book to book. In some instances we may find more than one climax, while in others an open ending may replace a solid conclusion so that a central question remains unanswered (Yates & Gamble, 2008).

My analysis of the case studies showed that the different structures of the stories adhere to a fairly similar pattern. I found that elements such as



exposition, developing conflict, climax, denouement (the final unravelling of intricacies in a plot) and conclusion are common to all books. *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* for example, is introduced by an author's note explaining the time and setting of the story. In contrast to this, the narrative structure employed in the other books allows time and place to unfold naturally within the first chapters.

Ronia the Robber's Daughter and *The Children of Green Knowe* stand apart from the other works surveyed in that the main antagonists are internal struggles rather than an evil that needs to be defeated. The issue that is core to Lindgren's story is Ronia's conflict with her father, who she loves. Their reconciliation and his forgiveness of his daughter is also the climax of the story. This structure resembles aspects of a Bildungsroman. The focus of this genre, which was made popular by J. W. Goethe in the 18th century, is on the relationships inherent in family structures, as well as social responsibility and friendship. Typically the protagonist moves from dependence to independence. This attention given to an internal rather than an external struggle is particularly common in German novels that belong to this genre (Yates & Gamble, 2008). In *The Children of Green Knowe* Green Noah, an evil spirit, is struck by lightning. This may be determined as the climax. However the story does not evolve around Tolly's conflict with Green Noah, but rather

his loneliness and fear of abandonment. Tolly's overcoming this fear is the true turning point in the story and very much part of the individuality theme. This again resembles aspects of the Bildungsroman, and, more importantly, supports Harju's view that universal themes are integral to crossover narratives.

To analyse the plot structure I looked at the model of the mythic circle, proposed by Joseph Campbell (1949) and the seven basic plots method argued by Christopher Booker (Yates & Gamble, 2008, p. 67). Campbell's model claims that there is always a common structure in a hero's quest where the hero goes out into the world, faces death or a big conflict, and return home where a reward awaits. Many aspects of this structure are evident in the case studies, particularly the idea of a journey and the struggle with a central conflict.

In addition I chose to use Booker's method because it was tailored to the individual nature of each case study and it helped in identifying commonly appearing themes and ideas. Booker claims that seven dominant structures prevail in children's literature. Two examples of these are entitled 'voyage and return' and 'overcoming the monster' where the child protagonists either go on a long journey of self discovery or fight an evil force or character (Yates & Gamble, 2008). *Momo* and *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* can be clearly classified as 'overcoming the monster' stories. Others, like *Ronia the Robber's*

Daughter and *Matilda* are a combination of plot structures such as ‘voyage and return’ and ‘comedy’. It became apparent in my reading and analysis of the material that universal themes often overlap with significant structural moments within these plots. Conflicts between characters like Ronia and her father are characteristic of themes like individuality and identity, while Tolly’s fear of abandonment is characteristic of individual neurosis.

The conflicts between key characters also highlight the fact that my selected stories are character-driven. This means that the author places characters into situations that create conflict. Therefore individual character portrayal in the narrative text is important to each story in order to support or even direct the plot and narrative structure. An example of this is the birth of baby Ronia at the beginning of Lindgren’s book and the death of wise elder Noodle Pete at the very end. Lindgren uses the two contrasting characters to frame and structure the story (Yates & Gamble).

The next point in this section is dedicated to my critical analysis of these and other characters and how they function in my case studies.

Representation of characters

As argued by Alter (1989), readers must be able to relate to a fictional character in order to resonate with a story. This is why character design is an

important factor in the illustration of narratives. By critically analysing how the characters are portrayed in my key texts I aim to find commonalities in their descriptions that can inform my visual communication design.

Typically a story has a protagonist or protagonists (for example in *Ronia the Robber’s Daughter* the central character is Ronia), antagonists (characters or forces of evil in conflict with the protagonist), flat and full characters (flat characters are not fully developed, full characters are, but are not central to the story) (Yates & Gamble, 2008). In order to discover how characters are portrayed in a story, Yates and Gamble suggest using a set of criteria.

These criteria involve analysing good and evil characters, children, adults, animals. Authors define characters either explicitly (descriptions of their appearance) or communicate their personality implicitly through actions, dialogue and thoughts.

The stories analysed contain strongly developed good and evil characters.

Characters in *Ronia the Robber’s Daughter* are multi-layered and they are portrayed as having positive as well as negative qualities. The books surveyed show that a variety of values are attached to the protagonists, which in all instances are children. In Ende’s story the focus is on humility and patience, and poverty does not equate with misery. In *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase*, on the other hand, Sylvia’s poverty is illustrated as a grim reality. In this narrative



text Sylvia is explicitly portrayed as sickly and implicitly as very good natured and humble while Bonnie is healthy and strong, but possesses a temper. Thus *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* idealises bravery and action over humility and shyness. In *Matilda* the emphasis is on intelligence. The author's negative comments are directed at stupid children while Matilda and other characters like the librarian, are praised for their wisdom.

My analysis of the six crossover books also demonstrated that throughout the different case studies the children gain a sense of independence and often aid adults in their conflicts. One trademark of modern children's literature is that children will make their own choices and win their own battles, often without guidance (Beckett, 1997). Moreover in this literature adults are likely to be flawed and their negative qualities, actions and attitudes exaggerated. Characters like nanny Miss Slighcarp or Matilda's parents are obvious antagonists and function in the narrative as personifications of negative qualities that children may be able to relate to (for example negligent parents or cruel teachers).

The contrast between the children's humanity and the evil nature of some antagonists may inform the character design and, for instance, influence the symbolic use colour. Therefore explicit and implicit descriptions of characters and their moral values can be factors in the illustrator's design of key figures.

Similarly animals can be used to support key themes because they often carry symbolic meaning and play a significant role in many children's narratives (Yates & Gamble, 2008). The description of animals in a narrative may translate into visual metaphors and symbolic motifs in illustrations. Animals are often symbolic of good and evil. Geese, for example, and wolves, are referents for good and evil in *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase*, while a peacock appears as a premonition of evil in the *Children of Green Knowe*. In *Momo* Casiopeia the turtle represents wisdom and is depicted standing apart from humans and their problems. In Lindgren's book, animals, and the kindness shown to them by the protagonist, are symbolic of the key character's unity with nature. Therefore animals may become significant motifs when illustrating scenes with the universal theme of nature at their core.

Toys also play a symbolic role in some of the books and are useful props in an illustration context. In *The Children of Green Knowe*, toys are symbolic of the protagonist's connection with the ghost children, whereas the disappearance of toys in *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* is symbolic of the sudden turn of fortunes and the state of poverty the children are reduced to. In *Momo* an expensive doll represents a society in which imagination is dead and money replaces parental attention. This shows that toys can carry metaphorical meaning and may act as motifs in an illustrated scene.

Subject and theme

Subject and theme are terms that describe what the story is about (Yates & Gamble 2008). I have identified specific issues common to the case studies. Many of these relate to each other and can be seen as components that form Harju's universal themes. I found that these issues are not absolute, but shift depending on the context of the story. For example 'good versus evil' in *Mathilda* may belong to the overall theme of individuality, while in *The World Around the Corner* it may come under disaster. To demonstrate these shifts I have arranged issues common to all case studies and how they relate to universal themes in Figure 8. Issues that relate to more than one theme in the case studies have been given a colour other than black.

Disaster	Identity	Individuality	Nature	Time	Death
good versus evil conflict of nature and urbanisation, loss	search for social and cultural values the power of imagination	dependence and independence, acquisition of wisdom the power of imagination abandonment	conflict of nature and urbanisation ancient and modern	ancient and modern acquisition of wisdom	death loss abandonment

Figure 8 Issues and how they combine to create universal themes

Figure 8 shows that a unique combination of issues can determine how major universal themes are composed in the story. To further illustrate the presence of universal themes, Figure 9 shows their frequency in the case studies using

colour saturation. The bright yellow signifies the most frequently appearing theme while the pale yellow represents those that are least frequent.

Death	Evident in all six case studies
Identity, time, individuality	Evident in five case studies
Nature	Evident in four case studies
Disaster	Evident in three case studies

Figure 9 Frequency of universal themes in crossover case studies

This diagram demonstrates that Harju's themes are indeed integral to these crossover books. Furthermore my research indicated that universal themes often overlap with key moments in the story. Figure 10 illustrates this finding and shows how universal themes relate to key scenes in *Ronia the Robber's Daughter*.

Key universal themes	Ronia the Robbers Daughter
Identity	Ronia disapproves of robbing
Nature	Ronia's relationship with Matt's forest
Individuality	Ronia decides to leave, Matt experiences anger and depression
Time	Ronia experiences the seasons in the forest
Disaster	The castle is split in half in a thunderstorm
Death	Noodle Pete dies

Figure 10 Overlaps between universal themes and key moments in *Ronia the Robber's Daughter*

These overlaps are an important factor in planning the visual communication strategy because they inform the scenes illustrated in the final design. The findings tabled in this chart also demonstrate that *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* incorporates all of Harju's themes. This makes the story a suitable choice for my final visual solution and enables me to create a comprehensive visual articulation of my theoretical framework.

Another important factor in determining the themes and the tone of my chosen narratives is language.

Language

The way in which an author uses words gives a story its rhythm, order and tone (Doonan, 1993). The complexity or the simplicity of the narrative language are key to communicating a story to an audience. The dialogue between characters and the way in which they are described helps the reader to establish their personality. For an illustrator language is similarly significant in influencing the style of illustration appropriate to a particular mode of language.

The language in *Matilda* is what Yates and Gamble (2008) refer to as casual and conversational. This is characterised by short sentences, simple wording and a lot of dialogue. *Momo*, *The World Around the Corner*, *Ronia the Robber's*

Daughter and *The Children of Green Knowe* on the other hand employ a comparatively complex, but still comprehensible style. These books use a mix of long and short sentences with occasionally sophisticated wording. Some of the terms used in *The Children of Green Knowe* are biblical and may be unrecognisable to some contemporary readers. *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* references Victorian modes of writing and is, at times, very sophisticated in its use of complex adjectives and foreign or period terms. Yates and Gamble argue that this type of language is purposely used to create a "feeling of the past" (Yates & Gamble, 2008, p.141).

The Victorian mode of language used in *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* or the humourous lighthearted tone characterising *Matilda* can inform an appropriate visual response. Doonan states that "artists can adapt their style or try different media to suit a story." (Doonan, 2008, p. 29). Language therefore helps define the cultural and historic context of a story and is an indicator in determining tonal and stylistic choices in addition to the unique style an illustrator may have.

Evidence of cultural signifiers

Yates and Gamble argue that apart from language, cultural context is indicated by the choice of settings and locations, characters and their clothing, animals, weather-conditions, and time (for example the typically European

seasons and settings appearing in *Ronia the Robber's Daughter*). Cultural context also informs the case study illustrations which will be assessed later.

My close reading of the selected books resulted in discovering definite cultural connotations such as the political and cultural undertones implicit in Ende's *Momo*. The following quotation is one example. Here Guido Guide, one of the full characters in *Momo*, mocks American tourists with their fear of communism:

“It is, of course, common knowledge, even in your own fair, freedom-loving land, dear ladies, that the cruel tyrant Marxentius Communis, nicknamed ‘the Red’, resolved to mold the world to fit his own ideas.”

(Ende, 1973, p. 37)

This extract has an interesting cultural colouring. In it Ende references Marx, a German philosopher who helped define modern communism (Columbia Encyclopedia, 2008). The obvious reference to this philosopher and ideology demonstrates that cultural context plays a large part in the framing and shaping of crossover narratives and affects the way in which key themes are communicated. For instance, Ronia's relationship with nature is universal but also cultural. In one example she speaks of wanting to burst with joy because

spring has come and has lit up the forest. Ronia's experience of spring is quite different to that of a New Zealander because of the greater contrast between the seasons. Nevertheless, I maintain that the overwhelming feeling of being completely surrounded by forest or bush, is an experience that people from many different cultures can relate to. Therefore an illustrative approach can highlight the universal appeal of this scenario, but also the possible personal and cultural associations.

From studying the narrative content of these case studies I found that my illustration solution and character design should acknowledge narrative style and cultural context. Narrative texts are also full of implicit and explicit descriptions and symbolism that can help the illustrator in designing primary and secondary characters' appearance and in developing visual metaphors representative of central figures and themes. In addition the tone and complexities of the language can inform a suitable illustration style. The analysis showed that themes may be universal but they are nonetheless composed of individual issues and are therefore subject to interpretation by both the illustrator and the reader of these narratives. Moreover the cultural setting of the book is relevant because it can affect the way in which universal themes are communicated to the audience.



6.2 Key Terms in the formal analysis of illustrations

This section discusses key findings resulting from the visual analysis of the illustrative content of my six case studies.

This analysis drew on the writings of Mallan (1999), Doonan (1993) and Braid (2008).

Their investigation into the use of illustration in children's literature helped me establish the following set of criteria for unpacking the illustrative treatment of my case studies.

By applying these criteria to the illustrated content I aimed to find commonalities and differences in the illustrative treatment of crossover books.

The findings of this analysis were used in defining a set of illustrative techniques and strategies to show the continuum of universal themes and the personal context of the narrative in the example of *Ronia the Robber's Daughter*.

Colour – An illustrator uses colour to isolate and draw attention, to make connections and give weight to visual objects. It is used to create focus and mood. Symbolic value is attached to certain colours, for example green represents new growth (Braid, 2008).

Composition – The arrangement and organisation of the objects and figures in an illustration (Mallan, 1999).

Layout – The organisation of various components in a book, for example text, images and typefaces (Mallan, 1999).

Line – Line gives shape, movement and identity to things, it expresses meaning through direction, thickness and style (Braid, 2008).

Medium – Also known as pictorial means. The material used by the artist to create the illustration (Mallan, 1999; Doonan, 1993).

Metonymy – A thing representing or intimately associated with an idea, concept, or character (Velasco, 2002).

Motif – A recurring visual feature (Mallan, 1999).

Perspective – The methods employed by the artist to give the idea of relative positions, the size and distance of visual objects (Mallan, 1999).

Shape – Created by line, either drawn or suggested. Different shapes create different meanings. Round shapes are comfortable and friendly, square shapes suggest a lack of emotion and are rigid, triangular shapes can create balance or imbalance. Composition is also based on the use of various shapes (Braid, 2008).

Subtext – Ideas that are not explicit but lie beneath the surface content (Mallan, 1999).

Symbolism – Elements or objects used by the illustrator to represent something else (Mallan, 1999).

Text and image relationship – How words or narrative text and image work together to form the reader/ viewer's interpretation of the illustration (Braid, 2008)

Tone – The amount of lightness, darkness, light and shade of a visual object (Mallan, 1999).

Viewpoint – “The vantage point of the viewer in terms of the point of view of the subject within the picture” (Mallan, 1999, p. 54).

6.2.1 Formal analysis of crossover illustrations

Medium

Five of the books feature a mix of in-text, single-page and double-page spread illustrations.

The medium used in producing these is ink.

The World Around the Corner, illustrated by Gary

Hebley, is the only example that features detailed pencil illustrations. *Matilda*, illustrated by Quentin

Blake, has by far the largest number of images.

Unlike the other case studies Blake employs the medium of ink-wash to create an abstract and caricatured style that resonates with the light-hearted language employed in the narrative text.

Layout and composition

Matilda differs from the remaining case studies because of the juxtaposition of illustrations within a double-page spread. In this book Blake uses the parameter of the format in a playful and

he seemed to stifle. He became very quiet. There was a silence. Then he said, "Say that again."
"Four thousand three hundred and three pounds fifty," Matilda said.



There was another silence. The father's face was beginning to go dark red.

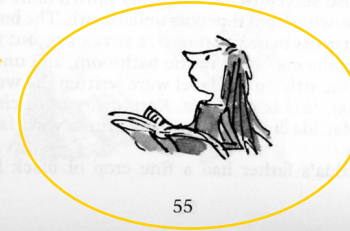
"I'm sure it's right," Matilda said.
"You . . . you little cheat!" the father suddenly shouted, pointing at her with his finger. "You looked at my bit of paper! You read it off from what I've got written here!"

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and a liar!"

At that point, the mother came in carrying a large tray on which were the four suppers. This time it was fish and chips which Mrs Wormwood had picked up in the fish and chip shop on her way home from bingo. It seemed that bingo afternoons left her so exhausted both physically and emotionally that she never had enough energy left to cook an evening meal. So if it wasn't TV dinners it had to be fish and chips. "What are you looking so red in the face about, Harry?" she said as she put the tray down on the coffee-table.

"Your daughter's a cheat and a liar," the father said, taking his plate of fish and placing it on his knees. "Turn the telly on and let's not have any more talk."



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»Kjageteder, so oder so, mag's hier schon geben«, sagte Borka. »Aber in der Borkafeste hab ich mich festgesetzt, und da bleibe ich auch.«
»Das wird sich zeigen«, sagte Mattis, und alle seine Räuber murrlen. Sie wollten auf der Stelle zur Armbrust greifen. Aber auch die Borkaräuber waren bewaffnet, und ein Kampf am Höllenschlund konnte für alle nur übel enden, das sahen sowohl Mattis als auch Borka ein. Deshalb trennten sie sich



»Dieser Auerochse«, sagte er, »den du bei den Hörnern packen und in den Höllenschlund stoßen wolltest, wie war das denn? Das gab wohl einen tüchtigen Rums, möcht ich meinen, so daß es in der ganzen Mattisburg gedreht hat?«
»Iß du deine Grütze, wenn du sie überhaupt kauen kannst, und überlaß mir die Auerochsen«, sagte Mattis. »Mit denen werd ich schon noch fertig, wenn die Zeit da ist.«
Da aber die Zeit noch nicht dazusein schien, machte Ronja



Figure 11 *Matilda* (1988), Roald Dahl, illustrated by Quentin Blake, pages 54/55

Figure 12 *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* (1982), Astrid Lindgren, illustrated by Ilon Wikland, pages 52/53

humorous way. While the placement of imagery in the other books follows a fairly rigid grid, Blake's images stand in direct relation to each other. An example of this are the spot illustrations in Figure 11, which show Matilda's father pointing at her across the page. The illustrations created by Wikland for *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* are similarly composed. Figure 12 is an example of a double-page spread in the German edition. Here there is a clear interaction between the two parts of the illustration. The gutter of the book has also been used in an innovative manner and symbolically represents the rift between the clans.

Wikland also employs illustration as a framing device (see Figure 13). This treatment is simultaneously an example of typography and image relationship, where the gutter and border space are used as a device to support the message contained in the image.

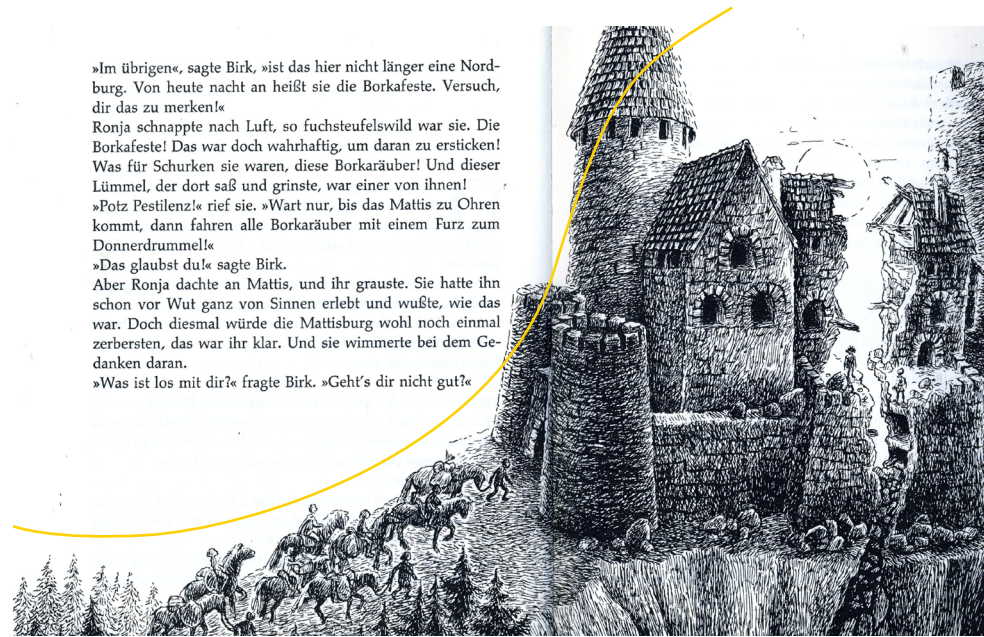


Figure 13 *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* (1982), Astrid Lindgren, illustrated by Ilon Wikland, pages 34/35, illustration functions as framing device

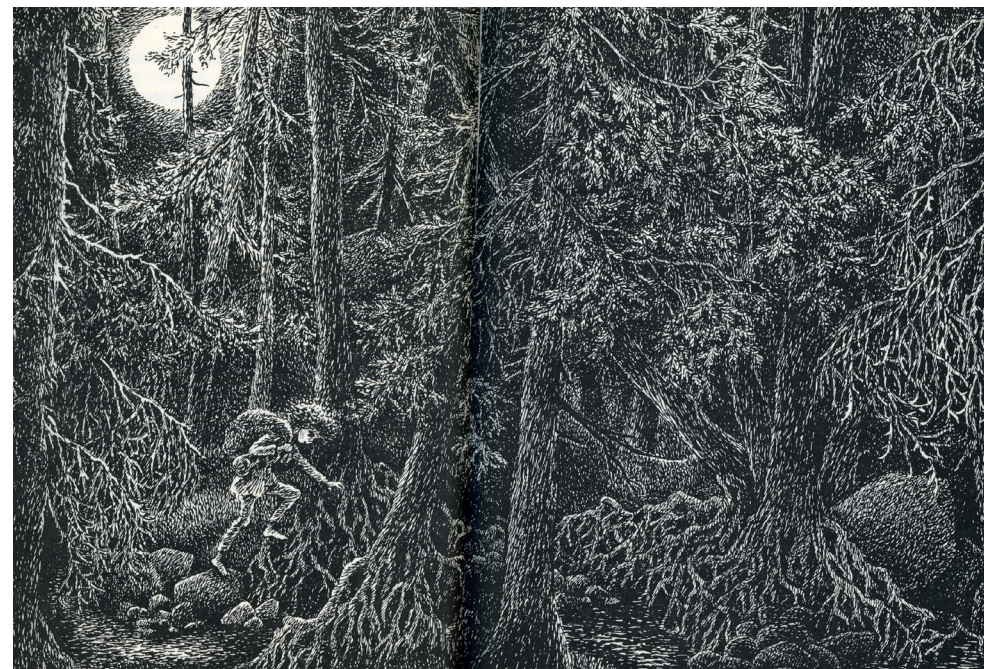


Figure 14 *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* (1982), Astrid Lindgren, illustrated by Ilon Wikland, pages 142/143

In some instances the illustrations created for Lindgren's work are very dense and occasionally take over the whole double-page spread. This treatment is evident in Figure 14. In this scene Ronia runs away from home and is depicted in the midst of the dark forest. By using the whole double-page spread the illustrator may be trying to communicate the emotional state of the protagonist and the overwhelming presence of the forest. It is an interesting example of how format can be used to communicate underlying themes like individuality.

In contradistinction the illustrations created by Peter Boston for *The Children of Green Knowe* are placed in a more static manner. Figure 15 demonstrates that the illustrations do not really suit the layout of this edition of the book as the reader has to turn the book in order to fully appreciate the image.

The illustrations created by Patricia Eleanor Howard for *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* work better in this respect. The illustrator makes use of the single page



Figure 15 *The Children of Green Knowe* (1954), Lucy M. Boston, illustrated by Peter Boston, page 64

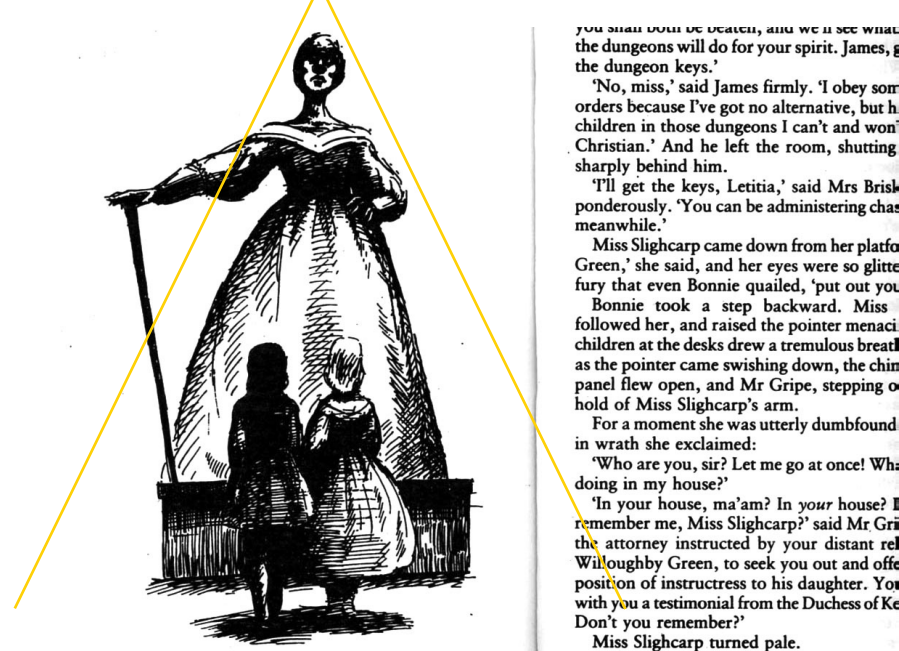


Figure 16 *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* (1962), Joan Aiken, illustrated by Patricia Eleanor Howard page 180, triangle composition highlighted

you shall soon be beaten, and we'll see what the dungeons will do for your spirit. James, get the dungeon keys.'

'No, miss,' said James firmly. 'I obey some orders because I've got no alternative, but children in those dungeons I can't and won't Christian.' And he left the room, shutting sharply behind him.

'I'll get the keys, Letitia,' said Mrs Brisson ponderously. 'You can be administering champagne meanwhile.'

Miss Slighcarp came down from her platform Green,' she said, and her eyes were so glittering with fury that even Bonnie quailed, 'put out your Bonnie took a step backward. Miss followed her, and raised the pointer menacingly as the pointer came swishing down, the chin panel flew open, and Mr Gripe, stepping on hold of Miss Slighcarp's arm.

For a moment she was utterly dumbfounded in wrath she exclaimed:

'Who are you, sir? Let me go at once! What are you doing in my house?'

'In your house, ma'am? In *your* house? I remember me, Miss Slighcarp?' said Mr Gripe the attorney instructed by your distant relative Willoughby Green, to seek you out and offer you a position of instructress to his daughter. You will find with you a testimonial from the Duchess of Kent. Don't you remember?'

Miss Slighcarp turned pale.

provided and employs scale and perspective in a way that is quite unique compared to the styles used in the other books. This can be appreciated in Figure 16, where the character Miss Slighcarb towers over the children. Her scale has been exaggerated so that it metaphorically conveys her threatening personality. This effect is also due to the central composition and pyramid shape of the illustration. In this example the composition functions similarly to the use of the whole double-page spread in Figure 14. One conveys a feeling of being overwhelmed, while the other communicates intimidation. Both compositional devices were considered when planning the visual communication strategy for this thesis.

Viewpoint

The illustrations created for *The World Around the Corner* by Gary Hebley feature unusual viewpoints to signify the perspective of the protagonist (see Figure 17). In this story a little girl is observing a scene from

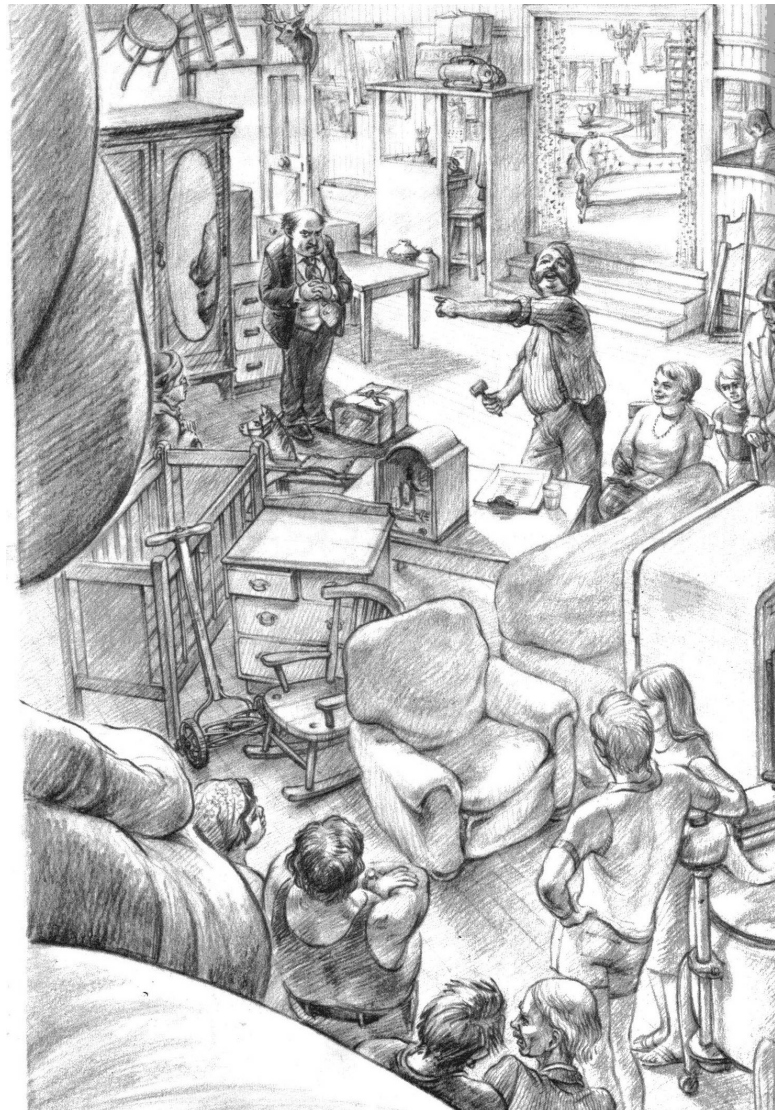


Figure 17 *The World around the Corner* (1980), Maurice Gee, illustration by Gary Hebley, page 23

a hidden spot in the ceiling and so the illustration depicts the scene from her point of view. The interesting viewpoint employed in *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* (see Figure 16) similarly evokes a sense in the reader of looking up at the nanny Slighcarb. This compositional device connects the viewer with the protagonist and offers interesting possibilities in the visual communication of specific emotions and themes as, for example, fear and intimidation.

Tone and line

The illustrations in Boston's *The Children of Green Knowe* employ an abstract and somewhat naïve linear style that is characterised by a lot of cross-hatching. Boston's artwork bears a resemblance to some of the illustrations in *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* in the way they feature diffuse light and a density of line (see Figures 14 and 15). The illustrative treatment of *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* (see Figure 16) also shows how silhouettes and tonal contrast can be used in a sparing and interesting way.

Metonymy and illustrated type

As defined in the key terms, a metonym is a thing representing or intimately associated with an idea, concept, or character (Velasco, 2002). *Momo*, illustrated by the author Michael Ende makes use of metonymy and illustrated typography. Both are useful illustrative devices for the planning of my design

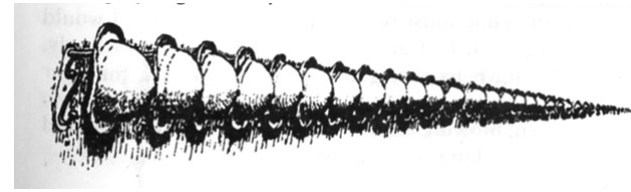
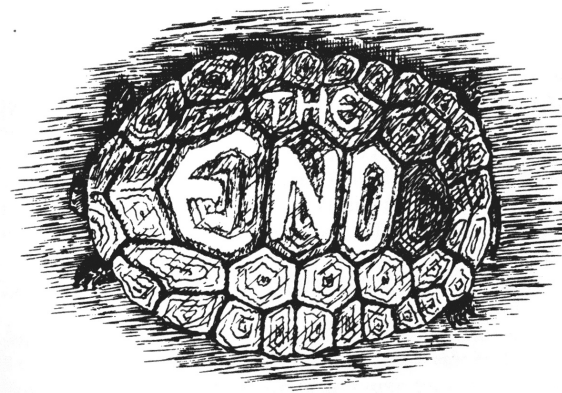


Figure 18 *Momo* (1985), Michael Ende, illustrated by Michael Ende, pages 114/115

corner. She tucked her head and legs in, and very slowly, in letters visible only to those who have read this story, her shell spelled out two words:

Figure 19 *Momo* (1985), Michael Ende, illustrated by Michael Ende, page 225



strategy. Metonymy allows Ende to use figurative devices to visually represent ideas or characters from the narrative text. This treatment is exemplified by the row of hats depicted in Figure 18 where the hats are metonymic for the men in grey. As the author/illustrator Maurice Sendak wrote:

“You never illustrate exactly what is written. You must find a space in the text so that pictures can do the work.”

(cited in Yates & Gamble, 2008, p. 160)

While metonymy is one of Ende's tools, he also incorporates messages in his illustrations. In Figure 19 'The End' is written across the tortoise shell and marks the final page of the book. The author states that only those who have read the story can see the writing. This treatment is not addressed in the layout section of this analysis, because the text in this example has been treated in an illustrative manner and has thus become part of the drawn image. Through directly integrating typography and the illustration of the tortoise the reader is given the sense that they have become part of the story.

Ende's use of these devices is significant to the design strategy of this thesis.

Metonymy, visual metaphor and illustrated typography may be useful in enhancing concepts and themes specific to crossover fiction and thereby directly engaging the viewer/reader.

Overlap of illustrations and universal themes

As discussed in section 6.1 many significant points in the plot structure (climax, denouement and conclusion) overlap with Harju's themes. These themes are disaster, identity, individuality, nature, time and death and can be mapped out in many of the illustrations in the case studies. An example of this is Figure 14 where Ronia runs away, asserting her individuality. Mallan (1999), Doonan (1993) and Braid (2008) discuss how particular themes and the tone of a situation can be emphasised through illustration. Braid, for example, claims that low light, vertical line work and a lack of contrast are techniques for conveying sadness and death. She also suggests that disjointed and diagonal lines visually communicate action and conflict while sweeping lines as well as panoramic compositions communicate the theme of nature. These techniques are evident in the case studies, but it is not clear if they were used to specifically highlight key themes or as part of a deliberate strategy.

Based on these findings I conclude that the illustrations created for *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* as well as the other case studies demonstrate how illustrative techniques can inform the design strategy of this research project and can be applied to metaphorically convey feelings such as intimidation. Hebley's illustrations employ interesting viewpoints while illustrations created for *The*

Children of Green Knowe and *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* are interesting for their use of tone and line. Ende's illustrations in *Momo* show how metonymy can be employed to reference ideas from the story through visual narrative. Furthermore *Momo* is an interesting example of how illustrated typography can convey messages and can engage the viewer with the story. In my design strategy these techniques could be used in a targeted manner to enhance the communication of the underlying themes.

The following section is dedicated to discussing how an illustrator can infuse their own reading of the text through the use of visual metaphor and symbolism.

6.3 Comparison of the case study illustrations with the work of Anthony Browne

The illustrative treatment of narrative text to communicate universal themes and personal context is demonstrated in the work of Anthony Browne.

Mallan (1999) considers his illustrations exemplary as regards the use of visual metaphor to communicate underlying themes and personal experiences.

Braid states that artists like Browne “borrow and combine styles and images

to expose underlying political meaning, involve humour, parody, intertextuality and layers of meaning.” (Braid, 2008, p.30). By studying and comparing Browne's strategies and techniques with those evident in *Momo* and *Ronia the Robber's Daughter I* I aim to discover how visual metaphor can add another dimension to the illustrative treatment of crossover narratives and themes. Examples of Browne's strategies include the use of geometric shapes as compositional elements, cultural references in the visual context, colour, as well as the symbolic use of tone and line.

In designing the illustration component for *Ronia the Robber's Daughter I* I need to take into account the metaphorical and didactic elements of the story. The didactic part of an illustration retells what is already described in the story whereas the metaphorical component adds additional, and often personal meaning. Browne employs both at a sophisticated level.

Although Browne's illustrated books are not crossover stories, the illustrator treats narrative text in a way that emphasises primary themes and adds meaning, thereby making them approachable for a dual audience.

He achieves this partly by using line work similar to the case study illustrations, and also by adding colour and symbolism in a very deliberate way (Braid, 2008).



In addition to evaluating the symbolic value of design elements such as viewpoint and composition, style and tone, I investigate how symbolism and personal subtext are achieved through the use of motifs and metonymy.

Viewpoint and composition

Browne's use of viewpoint and composition appears to be very deliberate. In *Hansel and Gretel* and in his later book, entitled *Into the Forest*, scenes that are set inside a room or house are usually viewed front on and the perspective employed is predominantly central. As his characters move from the known environment to the unknown the viewpoint changes. This is particularly evident in *Into the Forest* where Browne shows the character, as if he is being followed (see Figure 20). The reader is thus given the impression that he/she is the follower. In this illustration the viewpoint has metaphorical meaning.

Moreover Browne, as does Wikland, employs panoramic views to evoke the overwhelming effect of the

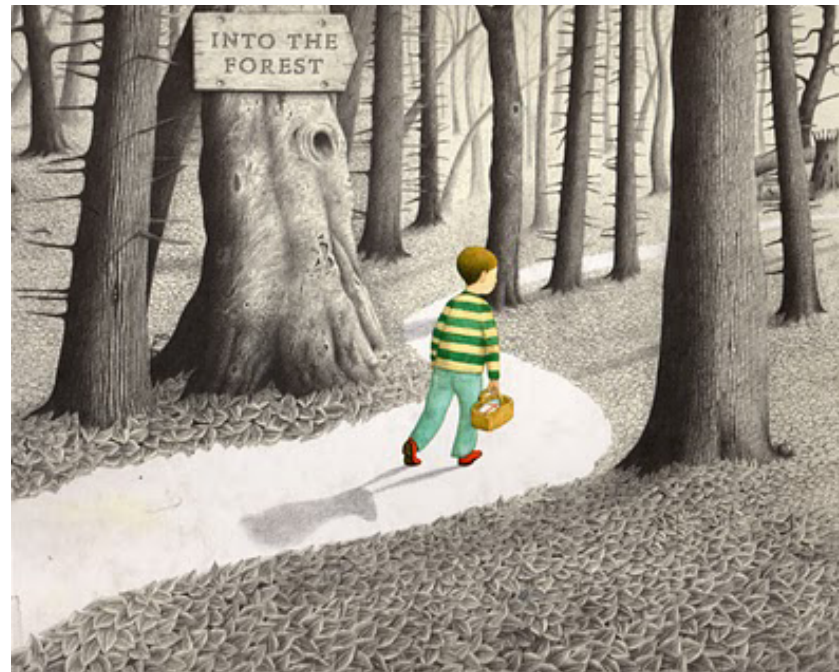


Figure 20 *Into the Forest* (2005), Antony Browne, illustration by Antony Browne, cover

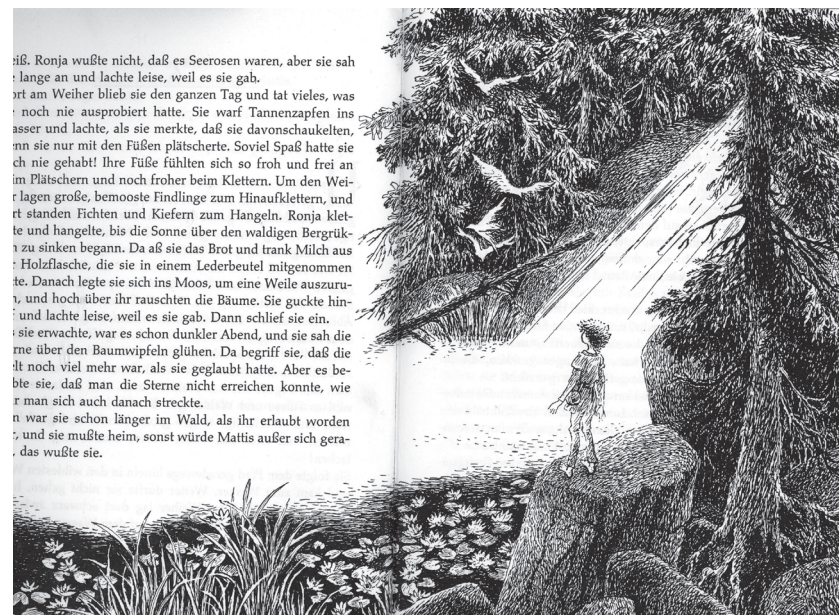


Figure 21 *Ronja Räubertochter* (1982), Astrid Lindgren, illustration by Ilon Wikland, pages 20/21

environment. Figure 21 shows evidence of this treatment where Ronia stands on a rock, awed by the beauty of nature. This demonstrates that compositions and viewpoints employed by the illustrators function symbolically in communicating underlying emotions.

Layout

In some instances, when text and image are not clearly divided, passages of narrative text have been incorporated in a very organic way and as a single word or phrase. To achieve this type of organic fusion Browne will often create a container for a word or phrase that he wants to showcase. Such a container can be a signpost, as seen in Figure 20, a note or another surface that can contain text. Generally the narrative text is set opposing the illustrations, though in *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* the illustrations sometimes act as a framing device.



Figure 22 *Hansel and Gretel* (1981), Antony Browne, illustration by Antony Browne, page 24

Context

Browne's work is rich in metaphorical and underlying meaning. The context in which he sets his illustrations also adds additional meaning to the didactic properties of the story. For instance Hansel and Gretel are poor and live in a British mining town. The book was illustrated in the 1980s, when British miners went on strike to protest against the down-scaling of the industry (Beatty, Fothergill & Powell, 2005). It is likely that the author was witness to these political developments and chose to reference them in the subtext of this book. This example is particularly interesting because it suggests how my own personal context can be infused into the final design object through the reference of culture-specific clothing and architecture as well as in the design of characters and settings.

Tone

Tone is similarly used by Browne and Wikland to emphasise and highlight the protagonist and key characters (see Figures 20 and 21). In *Into the Forest* Browne takes this a step further by changing the lighting so as to symbolise the changing mood of the protagonist. While tone is a predominant feature in the case studies and in Browne's work he also uses colour as a signifier.

Colour and line

Browne attributes certain colours to specific characters, so that every time the reader comes across one of these colours he or she will associate it with the character. A key example of this are the pink objects belonging to the stepmother in *Hansel and Gretel*. The colour pink is symbolic of femininity, excitement and fun (Ambrose & Harris, 2005). In this example it is deliberately used to signify the stepmother's excessive spending and contrasts the otherwise dull colours of the poverty stricken household.

In *Into the Forest* Browne employs black and white to symbolise the unknown and bright colours to symbolise the familiar and safe. The illustrations created for *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* operate in a similar way though achromatic, the density and detail of the line used to portray the Scandinavian forest is similar in denoting a feeling of being overwhelmed.

Line is also employed by Browne to create texture and to hide shapes or symbols. His intense application of linear detail means that the viewer can spend a long time exploring the images and thereby discover more and more meaning in the many visual layers that Browne creates.

Shapes and symbolism

In the illustrations created for the selected case studies organic and inorganic shapes are used to emphasise narrative themes. To symbolise confinement and the man-made world, for example, Browne employs windows and houses that are exaggeratedly bare and square, and contrasts these with the round happy faces and forms of familiar items and characters.

In addition shadows and silhouettes are sometimes used to symbolise the scary and unknown. In *Into the Forest* Browne further utilises the symbolic. In Figure 20 the boy's shadow is shown in the shape of a bunny, while in Figure 22 dead baby-birds are hidden in the roots of the trees. These secondary elements are metonyms for the issue of the vulnerability central to both texts. In *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* white doves, a well known symbol of peace, have been added by Wigland to signify the emotions the heroine experiences when immersed in nature (see Figure 21).

These uses of symbolism and metonymy are worthwhile strategies for the visual articulation of my personal context in the subtext. They support the idea that I can use such strategies to reflect the continuum between *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* and my personal experiences in the subtext of my final design object.

My analysis, summarised in appendix 4, highlights areas within crossover illustration where Browne's visual strategies can extend the illustrative treatment of themes. These areas are argued as colour, tone, viewpoint and composition. Browne's work shows how personal subtext can inform style, illustrative treatment and the selection of motifs, shapes and key colours. These strategies will be used in my design work and my illustrative treatment of historical and social references. I will use them to reference East-German clothing in my design of characters and introduce motifs of flora and fauna characteristic of Europe and New Zealand.



7 Summary of findings and visual communication guidelines for final design object

7.1 Summary of findings

My analysis of the case study narratives shows that universal themes are integral to crossover children's fiction. The narratives are rich in implicit and explicit descriptions that can assist the design of characters. Furthermore narration, plot structure and language can inform layout, the choice of viewpoints and illustration styles in developing the visual communication strategy.

The review of the crossover book illustrations shows that a variety of visual techniques and strategies such as line, composition and tone are applied by illustrators to support key themes and issues. Examples of this are the dense line work used in Wikland's double-page spread illustration to symbolise the overwhelming presence of nature, and the viewpoints employed in *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* to represent intimidation. The analysis also suggests that these techniques could be used in a more targeted manner.

Browne's artwork for *Into the Forest* and *Hansel and Gretel* demonstrates how key themes and personal subtext can be highlighted through cultural context, symbolic shapes, colour, viewpoints as well as visual metaphor. His illustration strategies show how visual metaphor can be used to extend the universal themes identified in *Ronia the Robber's Daughter*. Furthermore his illustrations exemplify how personal subtext can add another layer of meaning to a story.

This section summarises all these findings into a set of visual criteria, which I have named 'crossover guidelines'. These will be used to develop a visual communication strategy to illustrate my favorite crossover children's book *Ronia the Robber's Daughter*.

The criteria selected for the guidelines are a synthesis of my comparative analysis findings and the approaches suggested by Mallan (1999), Doonan (1993) and Braid (2008). The guidelines are divided into sets of illustration criteria for each of the universal themes identified. They also include strategies

for the use of motifs and cultural context in shaping each theme as related to my personal subtext. In order to determine how this subtext can be integrated I have listed scenes from *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* corresponding to the universal themes defined by Harju, as well as moments from my personal life. These guidelines are displayed as a visual research summary and can be found as Figure 26 in appendix 5.

7.2 Crossover guidelines – universal themes

Disaster

The World English Dictionary (2009) describes a disaster as an unexpected occurrence that causes great destruction or distress.

Braid (2008) suggests that this theme profits from tonal as well as colour contrast. Cold dull colours combined with bright colours create tension and drama and can aid to communicate distress or

destruction. According to Braid the colour red communicates danger, one of the issues often associated with this theme.

Braid recommends a disjointed and diagonal linear treatment to create tension and dramatic movement. She also suggests using the character's gaze to direct the viewer through the illustration. In analysing *Hansel and Gretel* I found that characters' actions can direct the viewer through the picture frame and create additional movement.

Browne's illustrations also showed that dynamic shapes with jagged or spiky edges can add to communicate danger and uncertainty. This strategy can be observed in Figure 23, where Browne has illustrated trees with twigs like spikes.

Viewpoints that look up and emphasise the scale of objects suggest intimidation, as demonstrated in my critical analysis of the illustrations for



Figure 23 Detail – *Into the Forest* (2005), Antony Browne, illustration by Antony Browne, cover

The Wolves of Willoughby Chase. Flora and fauna motifs native to a specific location, and their relationship to the environment (for example a tree almost uprooted by wind) can act to enhance the idea of disaster.

Browne often uses square shapes to contain scenes that have negative connotations.

In my design this could translate into vertical and horizontal grid to represent entrapment.

Additionally Doonan (1993) recommends asymmetrical triangles as compositional shapes to represent instability. In my composition shapes could be superimposed on the underlying grid to make the image more dynamic.

Identity

Identity has several meanings. In the context of the universal themes identified it refers to the identification of oneself (World English Dictionary, 2008).

My critical analysis of the case study illustrations shows that in a crisis of identity the absence of colour and darker tone are relevant illustrative techniques for representing the low mood of the protagonist. Browne's illustration of the black and white forest in *Into the Forest* shows how this treatment can represent the protagonist's unease when confronted with uncomfortable or unfamiliar situations.

Furthermore crosshatching in the line work can support the issue of unhappiness, associated with this theme by adding heaviness and weight.

Browne frequently uses static poses to focus the attention on the character and their internal struggle while scale can assist in emphasising exaggeration. As demonstrated in Figure 24 square and contained shapes add to the idea of entrapment. A two sided composition, which Braid (2008) refers to as 'unsettled', may enhance



Figure 24 *Into the Forest* (2005), Antony Browne, illustration by Antony Browne, page 5

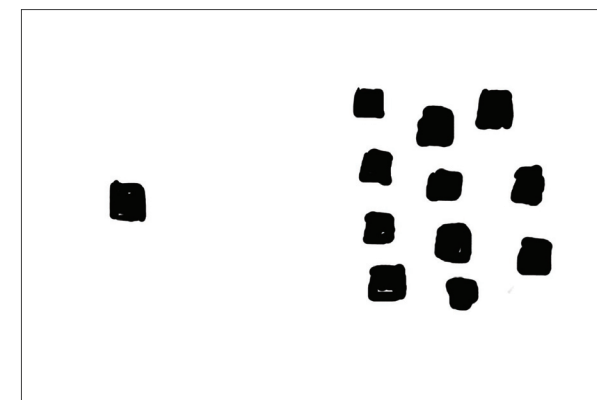


Figure 25 Sketch of two-sided composition

the idea of having to assume a position or to take side in the struggle for identity (see Figure 25). Therefore the overlay of compositional shapes on a rigid, square grid structure may aid in emphasising the idea of the protagonists' entrapment in an unpleasant situation.

Individuality

Individuality is described as the state of being a separate entity, or as the unique characteristics that set a person or thing apart from others (World English Dictionary, 2008).

Individual neurosis or 'separate entity' can be represented compositionally through static poses, directional lines and a central perspective, as well as the depiction of the character within large spaces (Braid, 2008). Browne for example employs this frequently in *Into the Forest*. When the protagonist struggles with his internal fears, Browne positions him in the large unfamiliar forest.

The anger and frustration that the character may be experiencing and their withdrawal from the company of others is often represented through cool colours and bright cool light (Mallan, 1999) while a lack of line and predominantly horizontal lines can be representative of the state of isolation.

Furthermore Browne's portrayal of Hansel and Gretel's step-mother shows that a character's direct gaze can enhance the idea of individual confrontation and anger. Square and jagged shapes can also aid this metaphorical strategy.

Nature

Nature, in the context of universal themes, describes natural scenery, plant and animal life that is distinct from man and his creations (World English Dictionary, 2008). In the case studies this theme that was often positive in its connotation, but it also connoted danger.

In representing the positive, Mallan (1999) suggests that colours should be warm and active, the tone warm and supported by round shapes and sweeping lines (Braid, 2008). If the illustrator wants to show nature as more foreboding (as happens in *Into the Forest*, and in some scenes described in *Ronia the Robber's Daughter*) the illustration should be tonally darker and employ denser line work.

In addition central perspective and birds-eye view can enhance the emotional state a character may experience when surrounded by nature. Wikland's and Browne's illustrations show how depicting the character as small and surrounded by motifs of flora and fauna can add to this notion.



Time

Time is the “continuous passage of existence in which events pass from a state of potentiality in the future, through the present, to a state of finality in the past”. (World English Dictionary, 2008).

Mallan (1999) states that duo or trio tone colours can help in symbolising the continuous nature of this theme. Doonan (1993) also suggests that a rhythmic flow between dark and light can represent a continuum of differing experiences. Browne uses this strategy in *Into the Forest*. Here the passing of time is evident as the forest gets progressively darker throughout the book. Doonan additionally claims that flowing lines as well as thin parallel lines imply movement and may help to signify the passing of time.

Moreover in communicating this idea, shapes or motifs can be repeated sequentially and move through the picture space (Braid, 2008).

My analysis of Browne’s work shows that square compositions and containers are omitted as his protagonist moves through the forest. In my design the compositional grid could open and become circular to indicate the passing of time.

Death

Death is defined as the permanent end of life (World English Dictionary, 2008) and is symbolised in the case studies by one of the characters passing out of the story. This theme is, more often than not, associated with the emotion of sadness.

In western cultures cool and desaturated colours are symbolic of a low mood and sadness (Mallan, 1999). Browne’s illustrations, and those created for *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* indicate the illustrators’ awareness of tone in communicating this theme. According to Braid (2008) vertical lines are also representative of sadness.

Depending on how the theme of death is portrayed compositions can be either asymmetrical, which imply tension, or symmetrical, resulting in a more peaceful scene (Braid, 2008). Furthermore Braid talks about closed and open compositions, where either everything is contained in the picture frame or, alternatively, visual elements are cropped. These factors were also taken into consideration when designing the dominant layout structure.

7.3 Visual communication guidelines – subtext

Motifs in the communication of personal subtext

In this research project I set out to show that illustrations for crossover fiction can communicate the universal and also the personal. My analysis of Browne's illustrations suggests that multiple strategies allow the illustrator to incorporate a personal subtext.

Motifs and their symbolic application are a key factor in depicting the personal in the subtext of the illustrated narrative. As evident in *Hansel and Gretel* motifs can have cultural connotations and be significant in defining a personal context.

Other examples of flora and fauna specific to a certain geographic location are exemplified in the illustrations for *Ronia the Robber's Daughter*.

The design of clothing may be influenced by a certain period or culture and may act as metonyms

for larger ideas such as political beliefs. In *Hansel and Gretel* Browne dresses the children in clothing of the English working-class. He also references the mother's greed by dressing her in expensive pink outfits.

The linkage between scenes from *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* and moments from my life is crucial to this case study because it aids the creation of the personal subtext in the final illustration. The subtext documents my reflection on universal themes and results in a parallel flow between Ronia's journey and my own life experiences, which in turn add a more personal dimension to the artwork. The following list represents this synthesis of universal themes in the key text and my personal life story. The captions are taken from the original text and are used to illustrate the relationship between the universal and the personal.

1 Disaster Ronia is born on the night the robbers' castle is split in half by lightning.

Personal subtext: The Berlin Wall falls.

Possible caption: 'Your young life has gotten off to a grand start.'

2 Identity Ronia disapproves of her family's occupation and swears that she will never be a robber.

Personal subtext: I decide not to follow in my lawyer father's footsteps but to pursue a career of my own.

Possible caption: 'My father was a robber chief and so my grandfather and my great-grandfather as you know. And that's what you're going to be.' 'Me?' (shouted Ronia) 'Never!'

3 Individuality Ronia runs away from home. Matt, her father, condemns this action of hers and mourns the loss of his child in isolation.

Personal subtext: I decide to move to New Zealand and further gain my father's disapproval.

Possible caption: 'I have no child.'

4 Nature Ronia and the robber boy Birk enjoy their new-found freedom and explore the woods together.

Personal subtext: I explore the different New Zealand environment.

Possible caption: 'And the spring came like a shout of joy to the woods. There was rustling and creeping and stealing among the moss.'

- 5 **Time** Ronia realizes that she and Birk cannot survive winter in the woods. As the seasons pass she becomes more anxious and misses her family.

Personal subtext: I experience a change in seasons, and the constantly worry about my relatives in Germany and their potential passing in my absence.

Possible caption: 'How lovely it was to live in the freedom of the forest, by night or by day, under the sun, moon and stars and through the slow passage of the seasons.' (...) 'But in Winter...'

- 6 **Death** Ronia returns home in time to console her father over the passing of Noodle Pete, one of the elders in the robber gang.

Personal subtext: I experience my family's worry for my ailing grandmother's health.

Possible caption: 'Comfort me Ronia, help me in my grief.'

7.4 Visual research summary

Once the guidelines were established I created a visual research summary (see Figure 26 in appendix 5). This large scale diagram displays all the visual criteria relating to how I might use colour, tone, line quality, motifs and composition. It also includes the captions and lists the primary crossover themes, and correlates them with scenes from *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* and moments from my personal life.

The summary includes some visual experiments and iterations that were conducted in addition to composition examples, format considerations as well as character designs. In this working document (which I installed on my studio wall) I trialled my ideas in response to my research findings and refined my reflective commentary by crossing things out, adding post-it notes, and by pinning new illustrations to the wall (see Figure

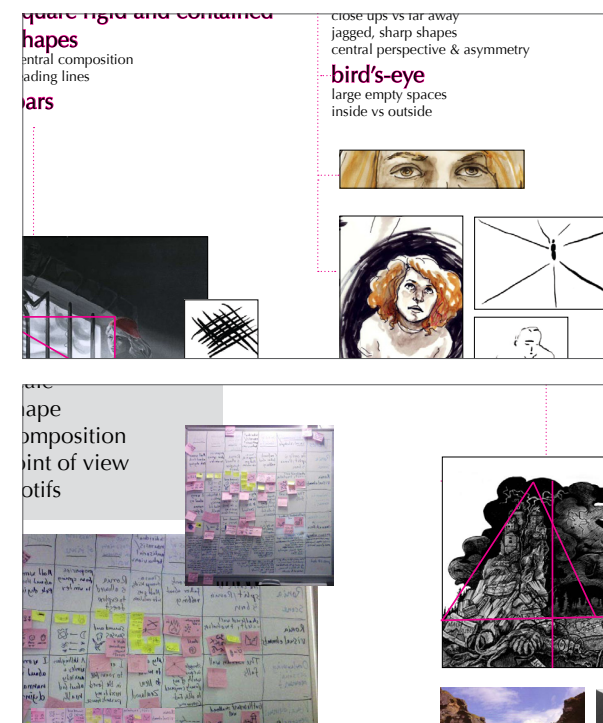


Figure 28 Detail of the research process documented in the visual research summary

27 in appendix 6). This ‘controlled experimentation’ or ‘reflection in action’ (Schön, 1983) relied on my ability to reflect on my intuitive and professional knowing while working. I found that photographs were a useful method for documenting this reflective practice.

The visual research summary was pivotal to developing and refining my visual communication strategy because it allowed me to stand back and review the collective research, draw new connections and rule out non-essential material.

In working with this summary I proceeded to develop a focused design strategy which became the basis for creating my final illustration which demonstrates how my identified visual criteria can be applied.



8 Development of visual communication strategy

To test the guidelines resulting from my literature and illustration analysis I set out to answer the following questions in order to determine how my identified visual criteria could best be used in a visual communication strategy.

- 1 Using the visual guidelines, how can formal elements (such as colour, tone and composition) be used to enhance the universal themes specific to *Ronia the Robber's Daughter*?
- 2 How can these guidelines be used to create personal subtext, that is evidence of changes in my personal experiences and cultural context?

To answer these questions I conducted a number of quick concept illustrations, applying strategies identified in my guidelines. As part of this process

I selected one of my chosen scenes and proceeded to create several gestural drawings, focusing on some of the identified elements. For example, in the scene for individuality the sub-themes are individual neurosis and antisocial behavior. Here Matt, the robber chief and Ronia's father, locks himself away because of his grief over Ronia's decision to run away (see Figure 29). In this design experiment I paid particular attention to tone and colour as well as composition.

I also experimented with the use of recurring motifs, such as flowers thrown to the ground to symbolise the character's anger. In another scene, dealing with a different universal theme, the same flower may be intact and sit on a window sill.



Figure 29 Individuality – quick study of colour and composition

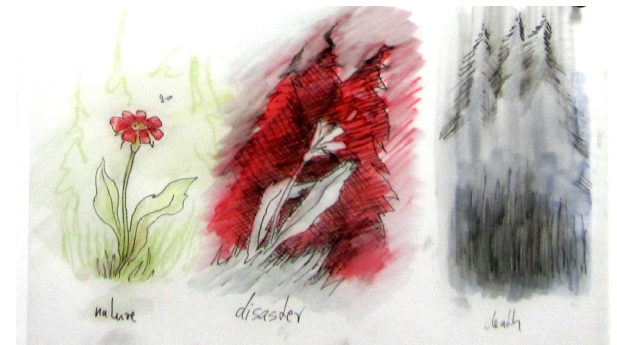


Figure 30 Recurring motifs – flower in nature, disaster and death; focus on colour, movement and line

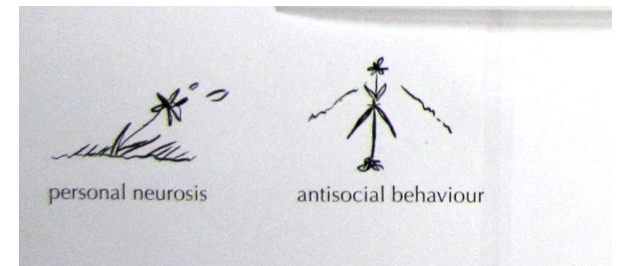
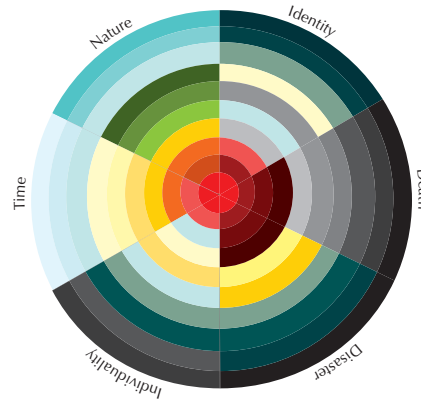


Figure 31 Continuous motifs – flower and composition

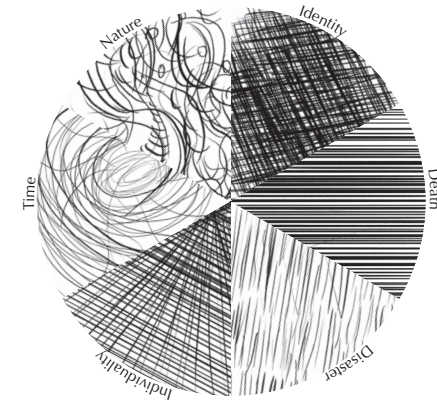
Some of the strategies identified in the guidelines were more successful than others when applied to the specific example of *Ronia the Robber's Daughter*. Later in the process I decided against using recurring motifs too frequently because they became very rigid to work with and did not have the same metaphorical power as some of the other identified visual methods, namely colour symbolism and more personal, culture-specific motifs.

Based on these visual investigations, and the guidelines I developed circular diagrams for colour, line and tone in order to support my strategy. These show how the formal design elements used in illustrating crossover fiction change according to the universal theme they are describing. The diagram for lighting through tone informed a diorama I built, and which simulated a castle chamber, a motif which appears a number of times in the key case study *Ronia the Robber's Daughter*.

Visual Theme Colour Map



Visual Theme Line Quality Map



Visual Theme Light Map

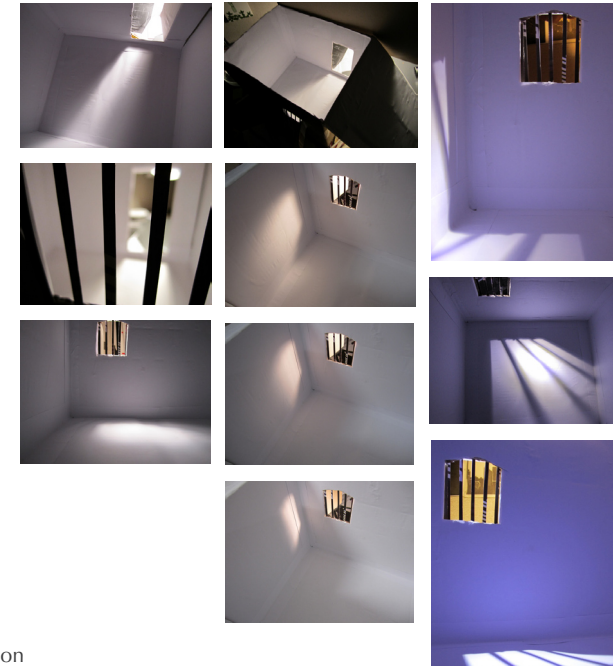
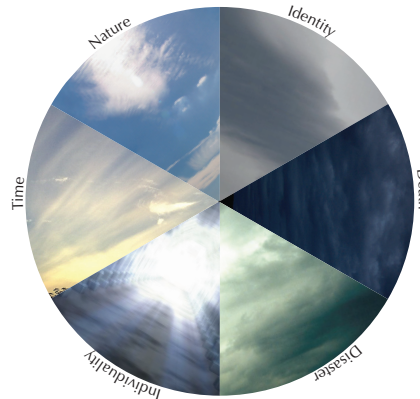


Figure 32 Visual theme maps and diorama documentation

This device allowed me to create the lighting appropriate to a number of scenes, as identified in the light map (see Figure 32). As part of this process I took photos and filed them as reference material to use in tonal studies. In addition to the gestural drawings these diagrams were a pivotal part of my process and were designed to act as a visual checklist and I often referred to them when I was conducting a concept illustration.

Sometimes I found that it was better to only use aspects of the strategies displayed in the maps. For example, the linear treatment of the nature scene could not be made up entirely of flowing lines and still be consistent with the other illustrations. However I found that by using them in compositionally dominant areas they still created the symbolic effect that I wanted. These findings and decisions were a large part of my reflective practice.

Adding tone, line and colour

Figures 33 and 34 are examples of my continued experimentation towards finding a satisfactory solution to the disaster themed first scene of the illustration. Here I tested, line, tone, composition and different colour applications, using my visual theme maps as a guideline.

In the linear study I found that an excessive use of line was overpowering and limited the application of other strategies like colour. The theme map



Figure 33 Sketches of disaster scene with focus on line quality, composition and tone

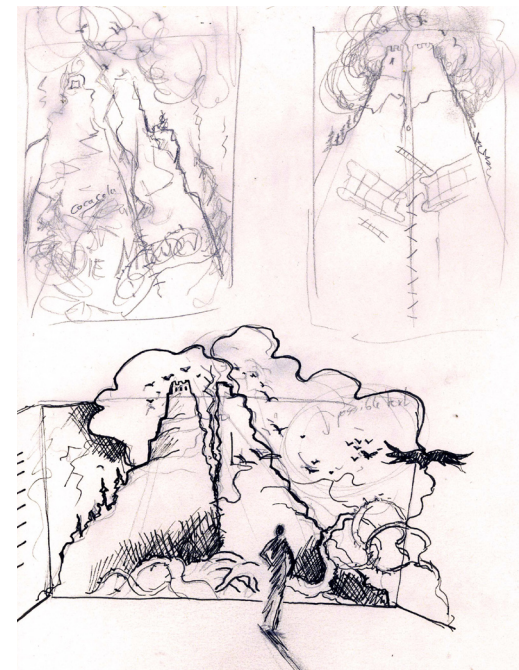




Figure 34 Colour studies for disaster scene

highlights the contrast between bright colours, like red and yellow, with pale colours, like light blues, greys and greens, as characteristic for the theme of disaster.

In Figure 34 I experimented with the application of one dominant colour for the whole image.

However I found that this put too much emphasis on one particular issue. In later experiments I tried to use combinations of colours that would reflect the exact nature of the disaster theme in *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* more accurately and in accordance with the visual colour map.

Subtext

In order to create personal subtext I used the guidelines to experiment with the use of visual metaphor. Figure 35 is an example from these studies. Here I tried to incorporate a hand-shake into tree roots, representing the unification of Germany. To enhance this I also placed fragments of the German Wall into the background.

I found that many of these approaches became too obvious and dominant. Cultural and geographical references like flora and fauna motifs and the design of settings and character's clothing



Figure 35 Motif experimentation

were not as intrusive but still represented my personal point of view.

These concept illustrations assisted me in identifying possible solution from the variation of design elements identified in my research. Rather than focus on all strategies at once, my experiments deliberately concentrated on specific techniques and strategies that would be combined into the final illustration. The results of these initial experiments allowed me to be quick but also to acknowledge the complexity in planning the multiple layers of the final illustrations.

To determine which solutions were more successful than others I would constantly refer back to my guidelines, but also use Schön's 'reflection in action' approach (1983), which allowed me to draw from my illustration experience and intuition.

Format

The format of my final solution had to fulfill several criteria:

- Reflect my personal experience and support the use of personal subtext
- Be representative of crossover fiction's universal themes
- Visually evoke the passing of time and the ongoing relevance of crossover fiction for readers of all ages

These criteria led me to consider the visual potential of scroll formats.

The scroll is a suitable format because its length allows continual narrative flow. McCloud (1994) recommends this format because it allows for the uninterrupted reading/viewing of a visual narrative.

In addition this format accommodates the occasional overlap between themes.

It thereby enhances the reader's visual experience of the narrative without being hindered by the creases of a French fold or the leafing through a book as possible format alternatives.

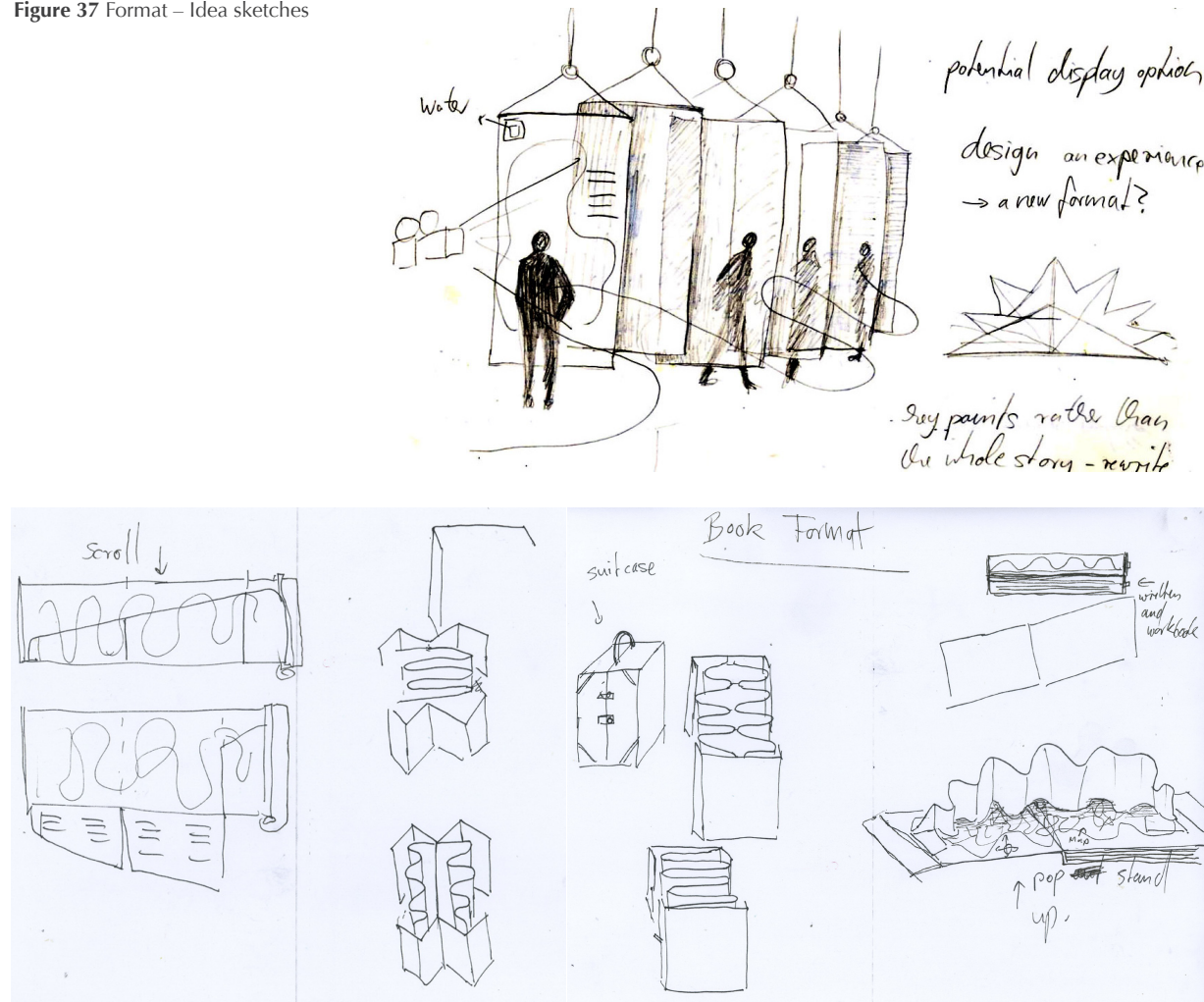


Figure 36 Exhibition Design, Upsetters Architects. Design Tide. 2007. Digital Print on Bent Metal.

A powerful example of how this experience can be achieved in the context of the Master of Design Exhibition is a design piece for the exhibition Dual City Sessions 2007 entitled *Design Tide*. Here the designer chose to print his plans and drawings on bent metal in a scroll format that flowed freely through the exhibition space (see Figure 36). This and similar examples informed my concept diagrams exploring how the illustrations might be displayed.

The final choice of the scroll was evaluated as a suitable vehicle for the visual articulation of my research findings. The format meant that my final illustration would be one long image in which the scenes from the story, universal themes and my personal subtext would unfold sequentially.

Figure 37 Format – Idea sketches



8.1 Implementation of visual communication strategy

The criteria resulting from the research findings, and the subtext noted in the guidelines provided me with the contextual and thematic content for composing and designing the design component of the thesis. This content was then synthesised in my visual communication strategy and scroll format.

Grid, composition and directional lines

In the composition design I drew on Browne's use of rigid forms to represent entrapment and soft forms to imply safety and freedom. To maximise this approach I employed a grid that starts off as a square and linear structure as expressive of

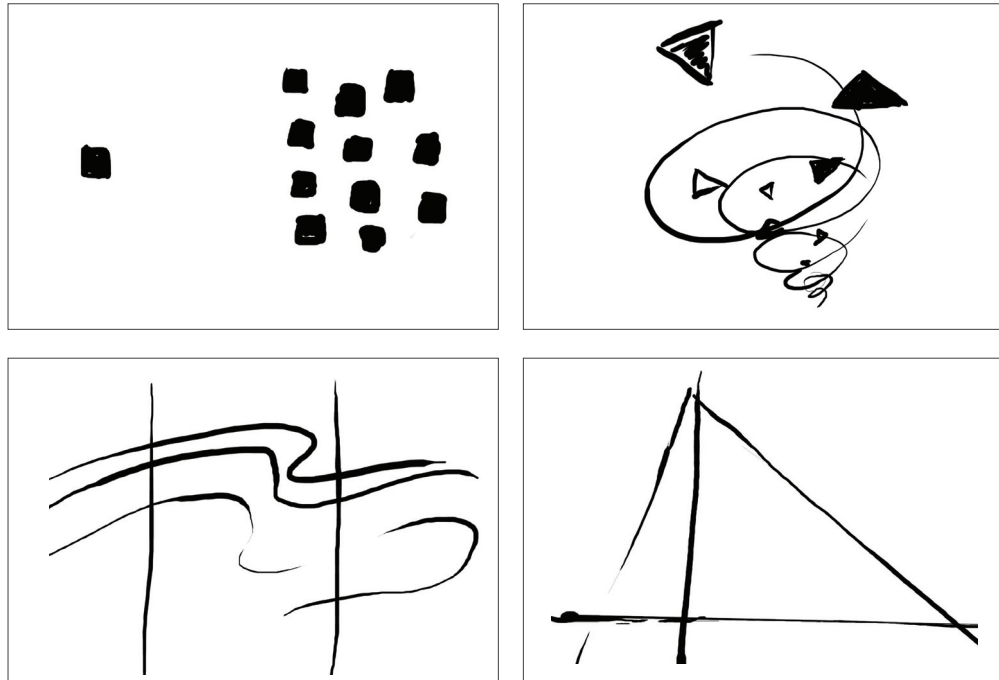


Figure 38
Compositional decisions – from top left to bottom right: quick sketches of different compositional arrangements for Identity, time, nature and disaster

Ronia's feeling of entrapment while at home.

The grid then becomes a circular structure as

Ronia runs away. As the heroine comes home to

farewell the dying elder Noodle Pete, the grid

returns to its former rigidity to imply the emotion

of sadness and stillness.

In addition to this grid I used my research findings

to establish how each individual theme would

have to be composed to enhance a specific

universal theme. For example, the theme identity

required a two-sided composition to enhance the

idea of separation and division, while disaster

required to an asymmetrical triangle composition

as well as opposing directional lines. These final

compositional directions can be seen in Figure 38.

Placing these compositions sequentially in the

scroll format helps contrast the themes with each

other and makes their differences more apparent.

Figure 39 Directions – Character's gaze leads viewers eye to the right of the picture plane

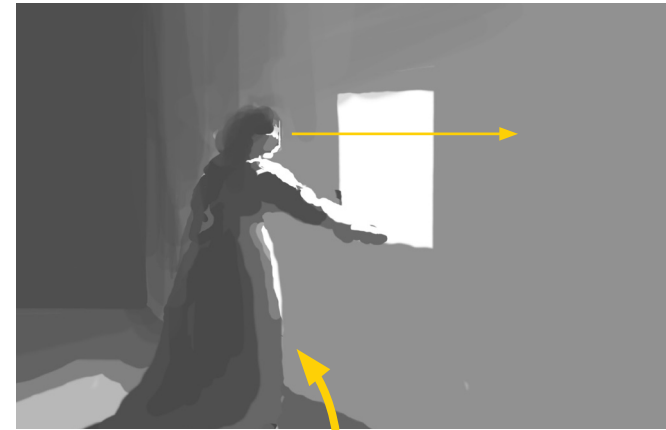


Figure 40 Compositional sketch that considers the composition of each scene as well as movement and directions, the yellow arrow indicates where Figure 39 sits within this plan



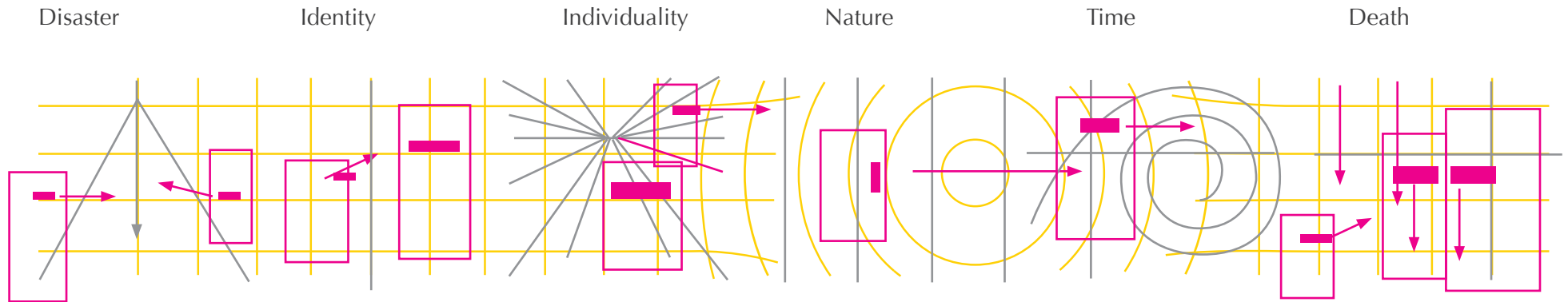


Figure 41 Grid Structure, compositional forms and directional lines – as Ronia escapes from home into the wood, the structure becomes circular. The more static, rigid portions of the grid are associated with stress and uncertainty. The pink boxes and arrows represent characters and the direction of their movements and gazes. The grey graphics are basic compositional structures. The order of the themes is chosen according to their appearance in the original text.

The findings also suggested that characters' gazes could be used to show movement in the plot. An example of this implementation is a detail from my sketches for the individuality scene (see Figure 39). In this sketch Ronia's mother gazes out the window and so directs the viewer's eye towards the next scene. In order to synthesise these findings into the format of the scroll I created sketches similar to Figure 40. This sketch demonstrates my process and shows how I combined movement, composition and directional lines.

Figure 41 is a culmination of my findings regarding grid, composition and directional lines. This compositional structure became integral to the design layout of my final piece and was extremely helpful in mapping out Harju's universal themes. The colour yellow shows the grid, pink represents character gazes and movements, while grey highlights the compositional choices.

Subtext

The final design object needed to show that illustrations for crossover narratives can

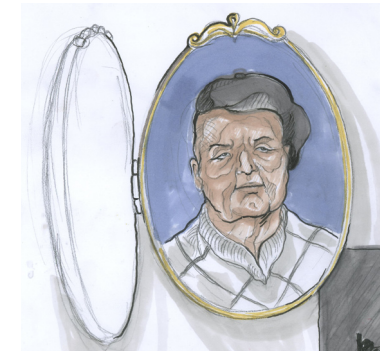


Figure 42 Character design, study of Noodle Pete

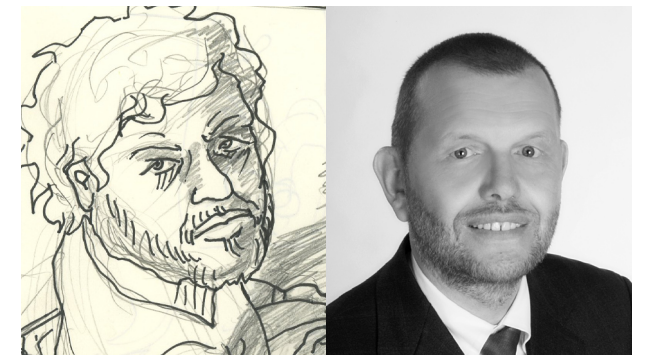


Figure 43 Character design, study of Matt and a photo of my father

communicate the universal and the personal.

In the final design object it is my personal context that shapes Harju's universal themes and adds another dimension of meaning. To ensure the successful incorporation of my personal reflection on universal themes into the subtext of the illustrations, I implemented the strategies resulting from my analysis of Browne's work and focusing on the inclusion of symbolic motifs, culturally connoted settings and the development of key characters. My character design was consequently influenced by my immediate family in order to show the parallels between Ronia's journey and my own. This is why Noodle Pete references my grand-mother's distinctive face (see Figure 42) while Matt is inspired by my father (see Figure 43). Figure 44 shows the character design for Ronia and is based on my own features. To further establish my personal and cultural context I looked at the style of medieval Europe as



Figure 44 Character design, study of Ronia at different ages and from various angles



Figure 45 Character design, study of Ronia's neck scarf, reference to East-German pioneer scarfs that were worn by children at school



Figure 46 East-German coat of arms



Figure 47 Incorporation of East-German coat of arms in window frame design

influencing Wikland's character designs and also considered typical East-German clothing as a reminder of my past there. This consideration is evident in the pioneer scarf worn by Ronia in Figure 45.

In *Hansel and Gretel* Browne demonstrated how settings can carry cultural connotations and thus contribute to the personal subtext. To implement this strategy in the design of the fortress described in the key text, I collected imagery of old European castles similar to the ones in the area of Germany that I grew up in.

I also looked at symbolic patterns like the coat of arms on the East-German flag (see Figure 46) to use as a decorative detail in parts of the architecture, namely the frames of windows (see Figure 47). Images of the Berlin wall further influenced my illustrative treatment of the crumbling rock when lightning strikes Ronia's

castle. The splitting apart of the fortress seemed an ideal moment in the narrative to incorporate the personal subtext referencing the East- West German divide while highlighting Harju's disaster theme.

My guidelines established that flora and fauna can be symbolic motifs for denoting specific geographical locations. Pine forests are a typical feature of the German landscape, so I planned to set the castle in a similar environment.

When Ronia runs away into the depth of the forest and asserts her individuality, I myself travel to New Zealand. To signify this connection in the subtext of my illustration I investigated how motifs of animals and plants function as metonyms for the two countries. Thus in Figure 48 the pine trees are visually countered by the New Zealand bush and a German crow is countered by a Tui.

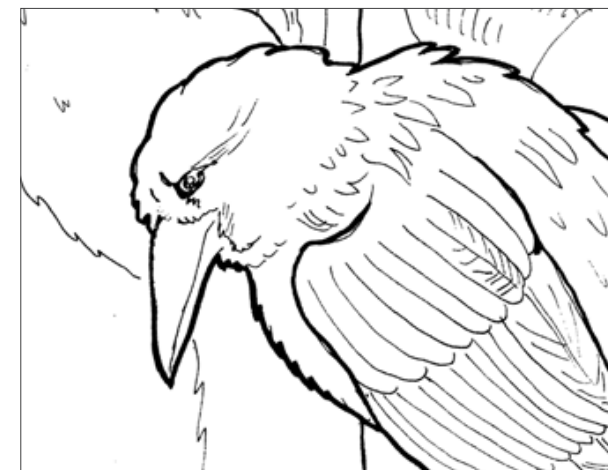


Figure 48 Motif Details – Top: Tui bird, Salmon and detail of Kowhai Tree act as metonyms for New Zealand; Bottom: German crow acts as a visual metaphor for Germany

Layout plan

Once I was satisfied with the conceptual design for each scene and its over-arching universal theme, I developed a layout plan for the whole illustration (see Figure 49 in appendix 7). This plan incorporates all the findings regarding composition, grid format and the design of characters and settings (see plan overlaid with the grid in appendix 8, Figure 50).

I also ensured that the scenes were fluidly interwoven through motifs and directional lines where the scenes overlap within the continuous format of the scroll. This fluidity was particularly important where the themes of nature and time come together because it is in these scenes that Ronia embraces her freedom.

In contrast with these scenes, those of disaster and individuality are linked in a more linear and structured manner. This structure is the result of

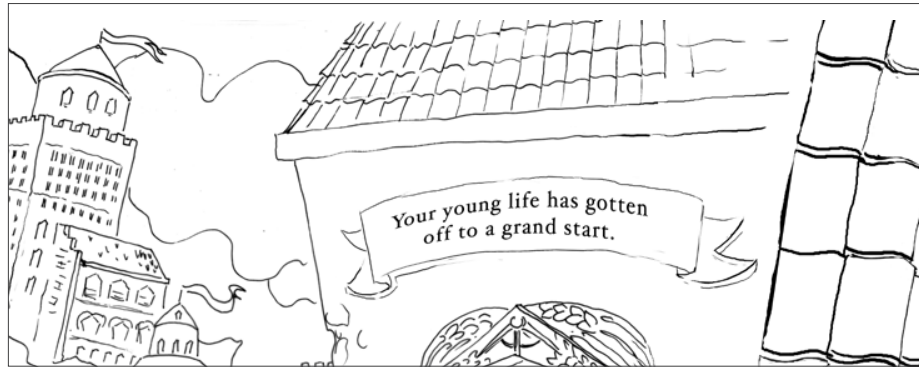


Figure 51 Design Template – detail of text and image, the banner allows the text to integrate with the image

the type of grid, which is deliberately designed to enhance the feelings of tension and disconnectedness that are characteristic of this part in Ronia’s personal journey.

Furthermore my plan also takes into account the integration and placement of key captions relevant to each scene’s individual theme.

Text and image

One of the challenges in the layout was to fuse the text in the imagery in a harmonious way.

Browne often places objects like a signpost in his illustrations to give the text a definite location

and make it part of the artwork. The integrated captions selected from the original text help a viewer that is unfamiliar with this story to follow illustrative narrative. Furthermore they reflect and enhance my personal relationship with these key themes. In addition to using Browne’s strategies I also employed those identified in Wikland’s work, namely the use of composition and image placement as a framing device for the text.

The typeface employed in this layout is a basic serif font, Hoefler Text, chosen for its elegance and simplicity. The serif references the

predominant use of such fonts in chapter books and does not have the overpowering presence of some more contemporary display fonts.

Colour, line and tone

Once the design layout was complete I applied the research findings regarding the communicative and symbolic function of the design elements colour, line and tone.

My more successful rough studies and visual maps justified my application of colour choices and tone. Figure 52 depicts details from the death themed scene of my illustration. Here I combined dark silhouettes in the foreground with minimal colour application to show how colour symbolism was used to evoke the mood of sadness.

My investigation of directional lines and composition informed my design of the drooping head of the crow, a motif that is repeated in the pose of Ronia's father. The downward direction

of the two heads acts as a visual metaphor and is intended to emphasise the emotion of sadness. This is a key example of how cultural motifs, like the German crow, and compositional strategies can be fused in order to create a result that communicates a universal theme and my personal subtext.

The composition in this scene features strong vertical lines and square shapes to which I applied my research findings regarding tone. The consequence of this was dull lighting and dark shapes as shown in Figure 52.

Once I was satisfied with the overall effect of these combined elements, I put aside the original template and applied ink line work on top of the painting. This method of working allowed me to judge where line would be effective. It was also the most efficient way to ensure that all compositional and tonal design elements were well balanced.

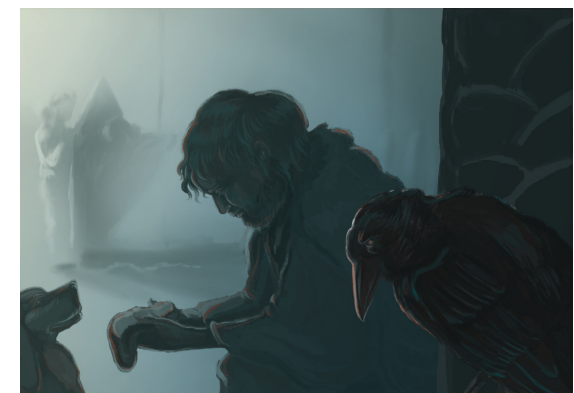


Figure 52 Process Detail – from template to tone, to colour

The line work conforms to the research findings regarding this dominant design element as, for example, more vertical lines for sadness and diagonal lines as well as cross-hatching for agitation. It also ensures that a cohesive aesthetic is maintained. Furthermore my linear treatment references the line work used by the illustrator of *Ronia the Robber's Daughter* and is thus acknowledged in my work as a subtext element. Consequently it is a referent for my memory of place and identity as well as being a referent for my attachment to this text.

The final design solution is a long unfolding full-colour illustration that interweaves the most effective variations of the visual methods identified in my critical reading of key crossover texts and illustrations. A small reproduction can be found in appendix 9. The design object exemplifies how illustration can create a continuum for a crossover story by highlighting universal themes and a personal reading of these within a format that allows the uninterrupted flow of the visual narrative. The final illustration therefore allows the viewer to experience my personal interpretation of universal themes in *Ronia the Robber's Daughter*. To enhance this experience the illustration was created on a large scale (65 cm x 600 cm) and attached to a long wall as part of an exhibition setting. This setting forced the viewer to walk along the

illustration in order to experience the narrative. As a result the viewer had to literally go on a journey alongside Ronia in order to see the story unfold. An image of this viewing process is documented in appendix 10. This scale also allowed for a lot of detail and made it possible to view linear complexities and small motifs.



9 Conclusion

This research project was inspired by my love of crossover children's fiction. Based on my research into the literature I created a model for how Harju's theory on universal themes and a personal appreciation of these might be interpreted through illustration. Harju's theory argues that universal themes like death, nature and time appear frequently in crossover narratives. Because of this readers can relate to these books and find connections between the narratives and their own life experiences, no matter what their age.

After establishing this model I conducted a literature analysis of six crossover books and a formal analysis of their accompanying illustrations. The next step involved comparing these with those illustrated by Anthony Browne.

This was to learn how formal design elements can be used in communicating personal subtext.

The findings from these research methods resulted in a set of criteria entitled 'crossover guidelines' and a visual research summary. These informed a number of visual tests which were evaluated using Schön's 'reflection in action' method

(1983). The guidelines were also used to create visual theme maps, which in turn helped establish my visual communication strategy.

With this in place the final design object was planned and created based on my key text, the crossover novel *Ronia the Robber's Daughter*. The object is a result of my reflective practice in considering how formal elements like composition, colour and tone can make the key meanings of the personal subtext explicit to the reader/viewer. Furthermore the final illustration is evidence of my personal background and thereby shows how illustration strategies like visual metaphor, symbolism and metonymy can be used to create personal subtext.

The formal approach identified in the visual communication strategy meant that restrictions applied in the creation of the illustrations. This may be seen as a disadvantage to those who value creativity and intuition as core to illustration practice. In my attempt to follow the guidelines created for this project I discovered that I could not follow my creative impulses as freely as I would have liked at times. This is one of the reasons why I restrained

from overusing recurrent motifs, even though I found them to be useful in the communication of universal themes. However I set out to apply all my methods as accurately as I could so that my final design object could best demonstrate how this set of criteria might be used.

Readers of this thesis with an interest in practicing illustration may benefit from this investigation, but choose to only apply some of the methods established in the research process. They may also feel that their personal reflection upon the themes should not feature in illustration and ignore that particular part of the research. In hindsight I maintain that the personal is a very important element in crossover illustration. This approach acknowledges the personal experience of the viewer thereby creating an additional dimension of empathy between the reader/viewer and the illustrator. Moreover the research makes explicit the usually intuitive autobiographical input by the illustrator and offers strategies as to achieve this in a more conscious manner.

The study underscores the importance of universal themes and the cultural context in informing the personal subtext. Despite the lack of research into readership behavior, the design solution acknowledges readers' life experiences and their appreciation of crossover stories.

This research project has highlighted some very interesting avenues for the dialogue between crossover narratives and illustration. The findings have the potential to be developed further into a resource for students in the disciplines of illustration and visual communication.

Overall I feel that this investigation was successful in answering the research question. The final piece is a synthesis of my research findings and my reflective practice. It successfully demonstrates my ability to use visual metaphor, to interweave the personal with the universal and to make the continuum tacit in crossover fiction explicit. Although this is also communicated by the large-scale exhibition format, I acknowledge that more research needs to be conducted to test how the finished illustrations, that make use of the outlined methods, function in enhancing the reading experience of such narratives.



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- Fig. 3** Artist Unknown. Title Unknown. Mixed Media Illustration.
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- Fig. 4** Quentin Blake. Title Unknown. Mixed Media Illustration.
From *Matilda* (cover), Dahl, R. (1988). London: Jonathan Cape Ltd.
- Fig. 5** Artist Unknown. Title Unknown. Mixed Media Illustration.
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1 Comparative literature analysis overview

	Design and Format	Illustrations	Narration	Subject and themes	Structure and plot	Representation of characters	Genre	Language
<p><i>Ronia the Robber's Daughter</i> (1981) Astrid Lindgren Sweden</p>	<p>237 pages, 18 chapters, hardcover, aimed at children 9-12 years of age. Illustrations – 33 in ink, 11 more complex pieces, some double-page spreads, full colour illustration sleeve</p>	<p>The ink illustrations are very detailed and realistic. The line-work is looser and evokes a great sense of freedom – This is appropriate to the light-hearted and adventurous nature of Lindgren's story.</p>	<p>Omniscient third-person narration, author does not address reader directly and makes no judgements – unintrusive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facing and overcoming fear - Acquisition of wisdom - One's position within nature - Abandonment - Search for social and cultural values - Interpersonal relationships - Death - Loss - Secrecy and honesty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Climax: No defeat of evil, instead Matt begs Ronia to come home <p>'Character against society' – The character breaks the established rules of the society they live in.</p> <p>'Voyage and return' – The character is on a journey of selfdiscovery.</p> <p>(Yates & Gamble, 2008, p.72),</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good and evil are not clearly defined - Weaknesses: Pride and an unwillingness to compromise - Strengths: Independence, the ability to change, relationship with nature - Child characters: Independent, learn through fail and error - Adults: Strong women, wise elders, choleric males 	<p>Low Fantasy: Events in the story do not obey the rules of nature, magical phenomena play a significant part (Yates & Gamble, 2008, p. 117). Magical creatures, but protagonist does not use magic to solve problems and conflicts.</p>	<p>The story is told in the past tense and uses a combination of direct speech, inner monologues and third person narration. The sentences vary in complexity, but are generally easily understood. The wording mimics how children might speak in places and is a combination of casual and traditional language.</p>
<p><i>Momo</i> (1985) Michael Ende Germany</p>	<p>225 pages, hardcover, aimed at children 9-12 years of age. Illustrations – 29 in ink, 26 small sketches, 3 more complex pieces, full colour illustration covers front and back cover</p>	<p>Minimal, often allude rather than portray: example – a row of hats hung up on a wall rather than an illustration of the men (p.116). No illustrations of actual characters, just settings and objects – allows for imagination, something often stressed as a valuable asset. Sometimes directly incorporated in story. Page 225, the last words of the story are written on the turtle's shell.</p>	<p>Omniscient third-person narration, author also addresses audience directly, intrusive narration. 'Anyone can listen, you may say – what's so special about that? – but you'd be wrong.' (Page 11)</p> <p>Story is told in past tense but set in a present day society. To establish this the author uses present tense when he sets the scene.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good versus evil - Facing and overcoming fear - Acquisition of wisdom - Conflict of nature and urbanisation - Abandonment - Search for social and cultural values - Interpersonal relationships - The power of imagination - Loss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Book has three parts, made up of twenty-one chapters - Climax: defeat of evil <p>'Overcoming the monster' – The character has to fight an evil force or character.</p> <p>'Character against society'</p> <p>(Yates & Gamble, 2008, p.72)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The 'good' in the story are people who make time, the 'bad' is saving time in order to earn money - Children: Innocent, not pressed by time, neglected by adults - Adults: Easily influenced, come to Momo the child for advice, wise elders <p>Men in grey: Cigars and suits, more references of capitalism</p>	<p>Low Fantasy: The men in grey and the space beyond time are the fantastical element</p>	<p>Sophisticated but still easily comprehensible style. Mix of long and short sentences with occasionally sophisticated wording. Some culturally and politically tinted choices of names, eg. 'Marxentius Communis' (page 37)</p>
<p><i>Matilda</i> (1988) Roald Dahl Britain</p>	<p>240 pages, hardcover, aimed at children 9-12 years of age. Illustrations – 93 small in ink, contents page, 21 chapters, large point-size</p>	<p>Very loose and playful ink illustrations with ink washes and ink line work. The figures are gestural and caricatured. Almost every second page has one or multiple small images, some images correspond with each other across spreads.</p>	<p>Omniscient third-person narration, author also addresses audience directly, intrusive narration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good versus evil - Secrecy and honesty - Dependence and independence - Acquisition of wisdom - Abandonment - Interpersonal relationships - The power of imagination 	<p>Two main conflicts: Matilda versus parents and Matilda versus Mrs Trunchbull,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Climax: defeat of Trunchbull, - Dramatic ending, could be argued as a second climax <p>'Overcoming the monster'</p> <p>'Comedy' – The story may tackle serious issues, but maintains a humourous, light tone. (Yates & Gamble, 2008, p.72)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Matilda is an ideal, notably she is the one who helps herself and the adults, so she displays a great amount of independence. - Strengths: Honesty and intelligence - Weaknesses: Dishonesty, anger and stupidity - Children: Cannot be generalised, stupid, smart, victims... - Adults: Flawed, wise elders 	<p>Low Fantasy: Matilda's power to move things and generally her abilities are the fantastic element in the story, everything else is grounded in a very realistic environment</p>	<p>Simple and casual language, very conversational. No long, complex sentences, vocabulary is simple and modern.</p>

1 Comparative literature analysis overview (continued)

	Design and Format	Illustrations	Narration	Subject and themes	Structure and plot	Representation of characters	Genre	Language
<p><i>The Wolves of Willoughby Chase</i> (1962) Joan Aiken Britain</p>	<p>Paperback - laminated, aimed at children 9-12 years of age, front cover illustration, hand-drawn type, 11 chapters (numbered), no contents page, 18 ink illustrations</p>	<p>Loose ink illustrations, very dark and dense, gestural, work with silhouettes, underline the black and white representation of evil and good in the story. Illustrations are used in key moments of the story, potentially to help the reader identify these as important. Faces are hardly ever illustrated in detail, interesting viewpoints and lighting are employed to create drama.</p>	<p>Omniscient third-person narration. Very traditional, author does not appear in the story, makes no judgements and does not address readers directly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good versus evil - Facing and overcoming fear - Conflict of nature and urbanisation - Loss - Interpersonal relationships - Greed - Deception - One's position within nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Author's note (a little awkward) - Climax: defeat of antagonist 'Overcoming the monster' 'Rags to riches' – The character is poor, but proves himself and emerges better off at the end of the story. Yates & Gamble, 2008, p.72) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obvious evil characters in the story, their biggest sin is greed - Children: Independent, contrasting qualities in the two girls, Simon most independent. Important virtues are humbleness and bravery - Adults: Either good or evil, one-dimensional, sometimes naïve - Animals: Symbolic qualities – wolves are evil, geese are good 	<p>Low Fantasy: Story is set in a period of English history that never happened, where packs of wolves have migrated through the Channel Tunnel from Dover to Calais. The wolves and their unrealistic portrayal (extremely ferocious) are the fantastic element in the story.</p>	<p>Style of traditional Victorian novels, though simpler. Uses words that may be unknown to children, but used to add to the tone and the time in which the story is set (example: timidously, page 31). Descriptive adjectives are used to establish the scenes and the mood, the light is often referred to as well to achieve this effect (note: the first words of the story are 'It was dusk...')</p>
<p><i>The Children of Green Knowe</i> (1954) Lucy M. Boston Britain</p>	<p>Chapter book, aimed at children 9-12 years of age, belongs to the fantasy genre and can be classified as an example of early modern children's literature.</p>	<p>Black and white ink, abstract or tribal quality to shapes and figures, not very realistic and sometimes busy. Loose line quality but at the same time dense and detailed</p>	<p>Omniscient third-person narration, does not address the audience directly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good versus evil - Nature - Dependence and independence - Acquisition of wisdom (grandma) - Abandonment - Loneliness and companionship - Death - Loss - Ancient and modern - Interpersonal relationships - The power of imagination - Spirituality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Book has no chapters, but headings for stories within the story - Climax: defeat of evil 'Overcoming the monster' 'Voyage and return' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full characters in the story are explored through a lot of reflection on the past - Children: Partly real and partly ghosts, ethereal quality, contrasted by the conclusion of the story when Tolly gains a 'real' friend. - Adults: Wise elders, negligent parents - Animals: Indicators of evil, Noa's Ark 	<p>Low Fantasy: The overlaps of past and present and the supernatural and magical characters place this story in the low fantasy genre.</p>	<p>The language resembles traditional English narration, not unlike Victorian novels. Nevertheless the language is still easy to follow and hardly uses complex wording. Many descriptive words are used, scenes and environments are described in great detail. A lot of dialogue is used throughout the story. Sentence structures vary from short and simple to fairly long and complex.</p>
<p><i>The World Around the Corner</i> (1980) Maurice Gee New Zealand</p>	<p>Chapter book, 72 pages, hard-cover, full-colour sleeve, 9 pencil illustrations, contents page, nine chapters</p>	<p>9 pencil illustrations, none integrate with the text but each takes up a whole page. All illustrations are very detailed and mirror the written text. Some use birds-eye perspective trying to reflect as much of the scene as possible. The illustrations have a large tonal variety and make use of shading as well as pointed line-work. The figures are caricatured but also have a strong sense of realism, more so, than any of the other books in this analysis.</p>	<p>Omniscient third-person narration. Very traditional, author does not appear in the story, makes no judgements and does not address readers directly. A lot of the story is conveyed through the protagonist's thoughts and observations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good versus evil - Facing and overcoming fear - Loss and sacrifice - Identity - Greed - Deception - Independence - One's position within nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two climaxes, Caroline escapes the Grimble and secures the glasses; Moon-girl defeats the dragon. The latter could also be seen as part of the conclusion, but has enough drama to count as a smaller climax. 'Overcoming the monster' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weaknesses: Greed, no respect for nature - Strengths: Modesty, harmonious relationship with nature - Children: Modesty and independence versus stupidity and domination, Moon-girl represents self-sacrifice for greater good - Adults: Varied, some good and bad, wise elders, some purely evil - Animals: Represent good/evil – black versus gold and silver cats 	<p>Low fantasy: The story does not take place in the other world but is grounded in rural New Zealand. The other world is only ever explored through Caroline's dream.</p>	<p>Descriptive adjectives, enumerations, local language reflected in dialogue and observations through character. Dislike of posh English language reflected by Arthur's negative response to Grimble. (political colouring to the story, English = urbanisation = evil?)</p>

■ 2 Evidence of universal themes overview

Crossover Book	Themes as outlined in Harju's theory	Crossover Book	Themes as outlined in Harju's theory
<p><i>Ronia the Robber's Daughter</i> (1985) Astrid Lindgren Sweden</p>	<p>identity nature individuality time disaster death</p> <p style="text-align: right;">6/6</p>	<p><i>The Wolves of Willoughby Chase</i> (1962) Joan Aiken Britain</p>	<p>nature individuality time identity death</p> <p style="text-align: right;">5/6</p>
<p><i>Momo</i> (1985) Michael Ende Germany</p>	<p>identity individuality time death</p> <p style="text-align: right;">4/6</p>	<p><i>The Children of Green Knowe</i> (1954) Lucy M. Boston Britain</p>	<p>identity nature individuality time death disaster</p> <p style="text-align: right;">6/6</p>
<p><i>Matilda</i> (1988) Roald Dahl Britain</p>	<p>identity individuality death</p> <p style="text-align: right;">3/6</p>	<p><i>The World Around the Corner</i> (1980) Maurice Gee New Zealand</p>	<p>identity nature time disaster death</p> <p style="text-align: right;">5/6</p>

Death

Evident in all six case studies

Identity, time, individuality

Evident in five case studies

Nature

Evident in four case studies

Disaster

Evident in three case studies

■ 3 Cultural signifiers overview

	Language	Location	Characters, creatures and animals	Time and weather
<i>Ronia the Robber's Daughter</i> (1981) Astrid Lindgren Sweden	Names are Scandinavian	Matt's forest, European fortress	Harpies, trolls, spirits (Swedish mythical creatures), illustrations depict typical scandinavian architecture, clothing, creatures)	Bitter winters, very defined seasons, reflected in clothing illustrated (furry jackets)
<i>Momo</i> (1985) Michael Ende Germany	Names not typically German, but Italian. Criticism of facism and capitalism? References to German philosopher Marx, and the strong political views typical of German culture	Italian (Amphitheatre)	Men in Grey wear suits and have cigars, typical businessmen, again criticism of capitalism and reference to Marx	Fog, smoke and grey - references large cities
<i>Matilda</i> (1988) Roald Dahl Britain	British colloquial, names	England, English town, Miss Honey's Cottage, red brick house (all typically English)	Father and head mistress are typical caricatures of English middle class, the newt is a creature very specific to the British fauna	– No mention
<i>The Wolves of Willoughby Chase</i> (1962) Joan Aiken Britain	Victorian style (very traditionally British), names	Fictional England, very clearly defined, typical period house, English woods	Doctor, lawyer, Lords (all typical for British Victorian upper class) Wolves (European), illustrations reference Victorian clothing	Typical British winter and spring, seasons defined
<i>The Children of Green Knowe</i> (1954) Lucy M. Boston Britain	Language (Victorian undertones), Names, Christian references	Typical English village, trees, river, old castle (European)	Evidence of many generations, British/ European animals, mention of gypsies, illustrations reference British architecture and nature	Rain, flood, snow (typical English weather conditions)
<i>The World Around the Corner</i> (1980) Maurice Gee New Zealand	New Zealand dialect evident as well as political aversion to Britain and urbanisation	New Zealand, native bush	Native animals and plants, illustrations have cultural undertones (typical stubbies in one of them)	Weather, from rain to intense sunshine within a short period of time = island weather

■ 4 Illustration analysis between works from two crossover books and illustrations by Anthony Browne

	Context	Viewpoint and composition	Symbolism	Style and patterns	Shapes	Use of tone	Colour	Text and image
<p><i>Ronia Räuber-tochter</i> (1982) Astrid Lindgren</p>	<p>Set in a typically Scandinavian setting, the forest is described and illustrated in great detail. The architecture of the castle is symbolic of the cultural context. The creatures mentioned and illustrated are typical of Swedish folk tales.</p>	<p>Most illustrations place the characters in large overwhelming environments, which can be seen as an interpretation of how the child experiences new surroundings. (It would be an interesting experiment to see how the opposite approach may work.</p>	<p>The birds in the picture (Figure 1) are an addition, and are not mentioned in the text. Though they may signify nature and life, they do look remarkably like white doves and may have been added to symbolise the state of peace and happiness that Ronia experiences when at the pond.</p>	<p>Dense, loose line work reflects the overwhelming effects the woods have on Ronia. The texture makes the woods appear fuller and creates movement. In the text Ronia listens to the rustling of the trees. The illustration is designed so that the reader can imagine these sounds.</p>	<p>The illustrations are not contained in traditional shapes (squares or circles), instead they often act as framing devices. Illustrations and text come together organically. Most shapes are organic and have a fleeting quality, which underlines the strong theme of nature in the story.</p>	<p>Strong directional light in predominantly landscape formats. This not only indicates the journey and helps focus the viewers attention on particular objects in the picture.</p>	<p>Black and white and tones of grey are achieved through the line work.</p>	<p>The illustrations are closely informed by the text. Seldom are additional elements added to further inform the text. Through the use of composition, texture and the reference of artistic periods (Romanticism) they do however create emotional context. Although the illustrator doesn't add meaningful elements, which may move the images into a metaphorical realm, he still achieves meaningful connotations through more subtle techniques.</p>
<p><i>Momo</i> (1985) Michael Ende</p>	<p>Set in a presumably Italian city, but written by a German anti-capitalist author. Italian setting reflected through classical architecture. Modern, western architecture used to depict the grimness of the city once men in grey take over.</p>	<p>Only snippets of scenes or single objects shown in most illustrations. If a whole scene is depicted, central perspective is employed.</p>	<p>Metonymy – the hats on the wall reference the men in gray and symbolise institutional power. The architecture and ornaments in the illustrations reference the classical (Greek) period</p>	<p>Loose line work layered to create density and contrast. There are no hidden signs or odd additions that add meaning. Certain connotations are present through very basic cultural and historical references.</p>	<p>Many geometrical shapes are used and contrasted with organic forms signifying nature versus industrialisation.</p>	<p>Lighting is not very prominent. It aids the description of form but does not enhance the symbolic reading.</p>	<p>Black and white and some tonal range is achieved through the layering of line work and crosshatching.</p>	<p>In the illustration of the tortoise image and text form a symbiosis and inform each other. Often the illustrations add additional meaning and context by depicting scenes not described in the narrative text.</p>

■ 4 Illustration analysis between works from two crossover books and illustrations by Anthony Browne (continued)

	Context	Viewpoint and composition	Symbolism	Style and patterns	Shapes	Use of tone	Colour	Text and image
<p><i>Hansel and Gretel</i> (1981) Anthony Browne</p>	<p>Modern context has been added here, the illustrator references a British mining family through clothing the architecture and supporting visual material.</p>	<p>The viewpoint is always front-on. The geometric shapes appear static and hostile because of this. Before the death of the witch we always see the characters' facial expressions. after she dies we only see them from a distance or with their backs turned. This makes the images less confrontational while the viewpoint does not shift. The illustrations do not use a lot of perspective or depth of field except for the end, where a panorama view of a lake is shown. The barren trees at the beginning of the book are replaced by flowers. The stepmother is likened to the witch through similar features and composition. Both women appear in a window in two different illustrations.</p>	<p>Extremely rich in symbolism. Metonyms are used multiple times to reference the stepmother (make up, perfume). The trees are used as tropes and will take on shapes like the hand to reference the approach of danger.</p>	<p>The watercolour / line work illustrations are extremely detailed and appear to have been painted with a very fine brush. They are stylistic rather than figurative, naive rather than realistic. Fine line work or paint daubs create texture and tone.</p>	<p>The illustrations are an interesting combination of organic and geometric shapes. Containers such as houses, the cage and beds are overly square. The trees and plants are occasionally contorted and at other times straight. Certain forms are repeated to create a symbolic function. The bars on the parents' front door are reflected in the bed post in the witch's house and again in the cage in which Hansel is trapped. Also at the beginning of the story bar-like trees or chimneys stand behind the parents' house. These as well as the bars in the door are gone in the last spreads of the book, emphasizing the liberation of the children but also the defeat of poverty. Similar to <i>Into the Forest</i> Browne hides shapes inside shapes to signify the subtext.</p>	<p>Directional light and tonal contrast emphasise the tone of the narrative.</p>	<p>The colour scheme is dominated by subdued grey and ochre colours. These emphasise the poverty and desperation that the family is experiencing. The only exception to this, are clothing and other items belonging to the stepmother. These are represented in pink or other bright colours. These uses imply that it is her profligate spending that has resulted in the family's poverty. Browne uses red and white consistently throughout the book to create highlights and break up the otherwise subdued colour scheme.</p>	<p>Most meaning is created through illustration. The narrative text provides a framework for the story and the illustration adds all the connotations. Text and illustration do not integrate. Each illustration is a self contained piece set opposite to the text.</p>

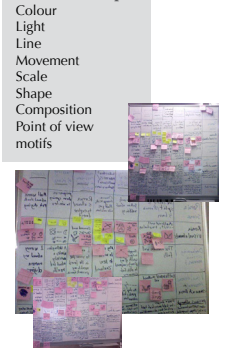
■ 4 Illustration analysis between works from two crossover books and illustrations by Anthony Browne (continued)

	Context	Viewpoint and composition	Symbolism	Style and patterns	Shapes	Use of tone	Colour	Text and image
<p><i>Into the forest</i> (2004) Anthony Browne</p>	<p>The family is western modern. The story is a contemporary version of little red riding hood. The illustrator/author mixes semiotically typical fairy-tale components with contemporary clothing and also language.</p>	<p>While we, the readers, are in his home we look at the boy front on. In the forest through the use of linear emphasis we are put into the position of a follower. This adds to the feeling of unease, which Browne is trying to communicate. The boy believes he is being followed. We have become the follower. Is he afraid of us now? The leaves on the forest ground function as a tapestry and support linear emphasis.</p>	<p>Extremely rich in symbolism. Metonyms are used to reference the different fairy tales (wolf ears on the grandmother's house). Hidden in the trees are unexpected shapes which reference danger. These tropes include distorted faces and actual objects such as clubs. These give the illustrations a surreal quality.</p>	<p>Very dense pencil drawings combined. Line is used sparsely and with deliberation. Forms are generally created through tone and shading. The drawings are incredibly detailed. This allows Browne to hide characters and objects in the dense foliage of the background.</p>	<p>Shapes are deliberately used. Hostile things are sharp and twisted. Browne's use of trees is an excellent example of this as are his sharp shadows when he is emphasising loneliness. In contrast friendly objects and figures are very round and simple. His family has extremely round faces and are a little plump and exaggerated. These shapes are employed to evoke feelings of familiarity and safety.</p>	<p>Directional light is a frequent feature of the illustrations. The forest also gets progressively darker the further the character penetrates it. The successive application of tone symbolises the unfolding drama.</p>	<p>Colours, when used are very saturated. Key colours are red and blue. The unknown is metaphorically represented by the lack of colour. Whenever the boy is scared the colours are grey and desaturated. This is why the whole forest is drawn in black and white. The boy is always represented in colour as are the things that offer safety, like the red coat he finds.</p>	<p>Meaning is conveyed through the illustrations. Sometimes the text is inserted in the illustration and in other instances is set opposite in a white page.</p>

5 Visual research summary

Themes	Disaster	Identity	Individuality	Nature	Time	Death
Sub themes	Environmental/social catastrophe	Crisis of identity	Individual neurosis/ antisocial behaviour	One's position in the natural world	The passing of time	The inescapable promise of death
Scenes Ronia (The story of Ronia is primary, my story is the secondary element)	The castle is split Ronia is born	Confronts father about robbing	Ronia runs away / Matt gets depressed	Ronia explores forest with Birk	Progression from spring to winter, anxiety about winter	Matt worries about Noodle Pete dying
Scenes Personal	The Berlin wall falls	Struggle with family's wealth versus general unemployment	My move to new Zealand and father's unhappiness	Exploring forest at home, exploring NZ bush	A Wellington year, anxiety about winter	My worry about nanna dying in my absence

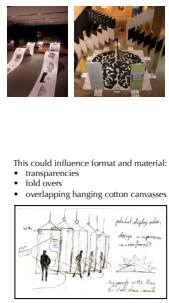
Previous attempts



Possible text

Format

- installation = illustrations can be experienced, the way they are displayed will aid the understanding of the themes and the idea of a continuum
- book = copyright issues, possible compromise may be a summary of the story then select the chapters relevant to the illustrations, there could be an appendix to each chapter that explains the illustration and highlights methods applied; therefore the book would be a visual tool to understanding my thesis and the illustration applications which I have established through the study.



- This could influence format and material:
- transparencies
 - fold overs
 - overlapping hanging cotton canvases

Use of sequence

- potentially useful to convey the idea of a continuum and the passing of time
- this may be applied through the format in which illustrations are displayed
- sequence within an illustrated spread; this would possibly allow for the two sides to run parallel to each other



red = danger
low light in contrast with high lights
vertical lines and disconnected lines
direction of gaze
large versus small
triangles, jagged edges

composition: triangle + asymmetry
looking up - small
clouds and rocks as possible motives

absence of colour
low light - low mood
cross-hatching - heaviness, weight
static, central poses
two sides

square rigid and contained shapes
central composition
loading lines
bars

cool colours
anger = bright cool light
lack of lines, horizontal lines
= sad, still

direct gaze = confront
jagged, sharp shapes
central perspective & asymmetry

bird's-eye
large empty spaces
inside vs outside

warm, active colours
warm light, contrast
highlight on main focus (character?)
sweep of lines = energy
wind, objects moving
small vs grand
round shapes
rule of thirds
mid/long shot

birds/leaves/trees as motifs that change according to location

warm, duo or trio-tone colours
spatights, haze
flowy lines, curves
sequences
equal sizes repeated or graduation in sizes
round, flowing shapes
Rule of thirds or leading lines
long shot

wind, clouds, **growing plants**
repeating elements

cool, dark colours
low light, shadows
vertical/diagonal lines
= tension, anxiety

use of perspective and character's gaze
small but near, lurking danger
long square shapes
asymmetry
mid shot
earth as motif, writing plants,
bed in shadow despite the light

"Your young life has gotten off to a grand start," said Louis, as she stood by the shatterered wall with the baby in her arms.
looking at the disaster.

"My father was a robber chief and so my grandfather and my great-grandfather as you know. And that's what you're going to be."
'Mel' (shouted) 'Never!'

'I have no child'

And the spring came like a shout of joy to the woods. There was rustling and creeping and stealing among the mosses.
>Rustle<

How lovely it was to live in the freedom of the forest, by night or by day, under the sun, moon and stars and through the slow passage of the seasons.
But in Winter...
Summer had died slowly

'You stop that about dying!'
You can't just go and die behind my back."
"Comfort me, help me in my grief." "Soon it will be spring again."

Merging of text and image to highlight significance of moment

Merging the two sides, let them 'cross over', while communicating the overall theme of the scene

Possible constant motifs which change according to theme

- (As often used by Anthony Brown)
- Water (frozen, wild, calm)
 - Skycape (cloud pattern, calm versus threatening)
 - Plants (flowering, wilting, changing according to geography)
 - Animals - e.g. a bird may always be in the picture, but may be caged in one image, but flying freely in another
 - **Characters: similar design, different faces, according to person I reflect upon at the time**



Character design, my families features



Acknowledgement of the senses

- Sound: use of onomatopoeias, gestural lines to imply noise and movement
- Smell: use the movement of wind to and colours to evoke memories of smell, e.g. a crisp spring morning

Design of clothing and objects

- Merge of the style used in original 'Ronia' illustrations and the context (geographic, cultural, time-specific) in which I was when the reading took place

Figure 26 Visual research summary

6 Visual research summary as working document



Figure 27 Work space, evidence of investigation and synthesis of findings

7 Layout plan

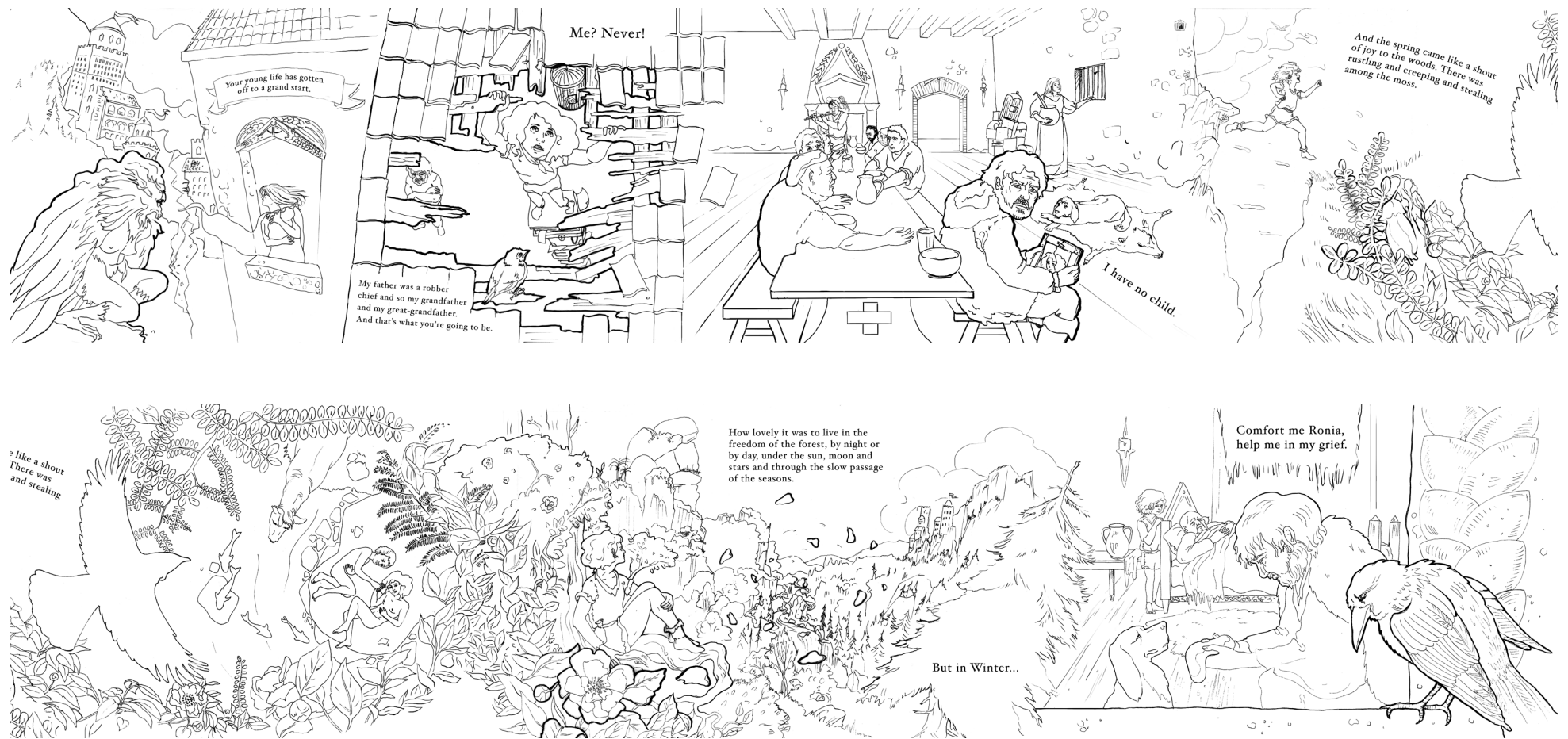


Figure 49 Layout plan – rough flow of illustrations and inclusion of key phrases from the original text (please note that this would usually run in one straight image)

8 Layout plan overlaid

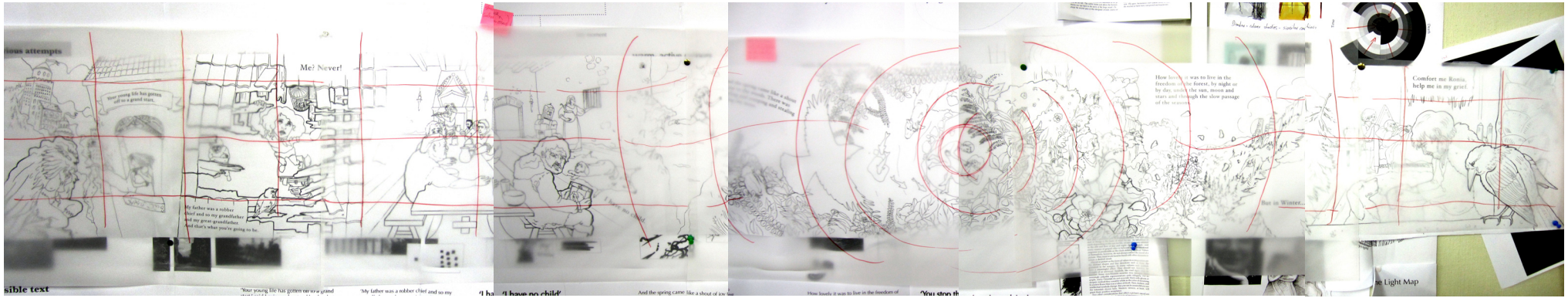


Figure 50 Layout plan overlaid with grid and compositional structures On the right: Appendix 9, Figure 53 Final illustration as fold-out

■ 10 Final illustration in exhibition setting



Figure 54 Illustration displayed at 'This Way Up' masters of design exhibition 2011 at Massey University Wellington



Thesis DECLARATION

Author's Name (student):	Claudia Bergsdorf
Title of Thesis	Ronia Revisited
Student number	03372243
Degree	MDes
Year	2010/11

Except where specific reference is made in the main text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material extracted in whole or in part from a thesis, dissertation, or research paper presented by me for another degree or diploma and has not been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

No other person's work (published or unpublished) has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

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I hereby consent to the above report being consulted, borrowed, copied or reproduced in form time to time in accordance with the provisions of the Library Regulations made by the Academic Board. (underline)	YES
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Candidate name: Claudia Bergsdorf

Claudia Bergsdorf

Candidate signature:

Date: 17/02/2011