

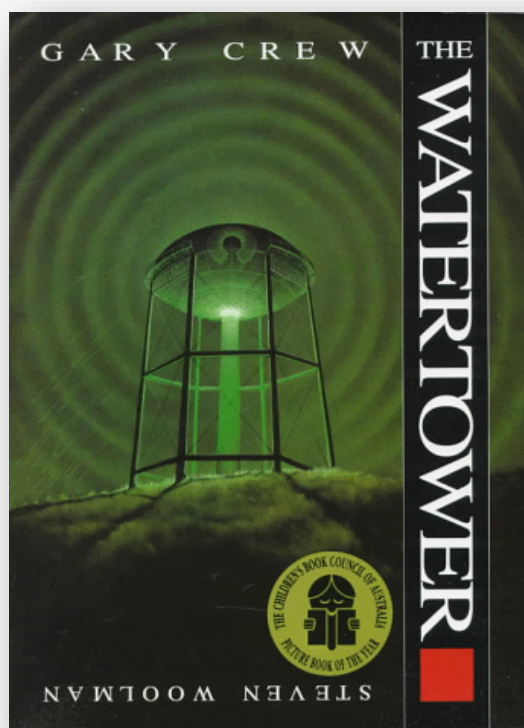
Title: The Watertower

Author: Gary Crew

Illustrator: Steven Woolman

Publisher: Crocodile Books (Australia)

Year: 2011 (First published 1999)



Research Background

The research challenge was to create a Sci Fi illustrated narrative responding to Maurice Sendak's statement: 'Never illustrate exactly what is written.' (Sendak in Lanes 1984) and to appeal to reluctant readers more likely to respond to solving a puzzle posed by sophisticated 'hyper-realistic' images than to print text.

Research Contribution

The Watertower challenges the reader to create new and original narratives arising from the (apparent) conflict of illustrative and print text. The realisation of this contribution is evidenced by Anstey and Bull (2000; 155): 'In *The Watertower*, symbolism and motif take on a new dimension in both written and illustrative text...leading to "multiple meanings being "written" with the potential for many different stories to be "read"'. The following review encapsulates the book's success with the target audience: 'I used this book for a creative writing session with 10 and 11 year old reluctant writers. The response was phenomenal.'

Research Significance

First published in Australia (1994 – present); the United States (2011), Denmark (1997) and Wales (2003), now distributed world-wide; an eBook with Apple and Google Play and the interactive website in2Era as *Eerie Tales*, *The Watertower* was Australian Children's Book of the Year, 1994. Rouse and Burgess have successfully presented an operatic version at the Malthouse (Melbourne) with positive reviews by Matthew Lutton (Associate Director). The international success of the book is evidenced in 'Beneath The Surface: A Critical Analysis of a selection of Gary Crew's Picture Books' CJ Baker (2005) Master of Education Thesis; University of Cambridge.

References

Anstey, M & Bull G, 2000. *Reading The Visual: Written and Illustrated Children's Literature*. Harcourt Brace. Sydney

Lanes, S 2003 *The Art of Maurice Sendak*. Harry Abrahams. New York.