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**Molly Bang's Award-Winning Illustrations;
Breakdown of Elements and Techniques Used in The Story "When Sophie Gets
Angry- Really, Really Angry..."**

"When Sophie Gets Angry- Really, Really Angry..." is a children's book both written and illustrated by Molly Bang. This children's book was published in 1999 by The Blue Sky Press, and won the Caldecott Honor Award in 2000 for the illustrations done by Bang. The following is how Bang used Conventions of Picture Art, Design and Meaning, along with Artistic Style and Media, in her illustrations to shape and develop her award winning picture book.

Conventions of Picture art

Line

Bang's use of illustrated lines in this book are most prominent. Readers immediately notice the thick, jagged, zig zag lines that outline both the characters and objects in the book. Sophie and her sister's lines are thick, rounded and jagged representing movement. While the cat and the gorilla the girls are fighting over has sharp zig zag lines, representing excitement.

The cat's excitement comes from the interest in the scene being displayed between the two sisters, while the gorilla is the object that is creating the excitement in the story. Along with the objects and characters having prominent lines, the spoken text does as well. When Sophie's sister claims it to be "MY turn" the words are rounded indicating a calm quality. When Sophie speaks, it is in anger, so the lines are harsh and zig zagged.

Color

The colors used by Bang, go hand and hand with the lines in her illustration. The thick lines outlining the character's and objects in her book, are painted several different colors. Each color representing the character's different emotions along with the changing tones of the scene. The main colors used to show these different emotions are red, orange, yellow, green, light blue, and purple/violet. Red and orange symbolize anger, rage and frustration, with red being the most intense of the two; also connected to fire and hot-tempered. Yellow, in this book, symbolizes fun and happiness; showing warmth and light. Green symbolizes being balanced; emotions are neither angry nor joyful, just content. Blue/ light blue gives the emotion of calmness; representing the blue sky or the soft waves of the ocean. And purple/violet being the harmony and mental stability; coming out of red into blue. Purple also symbolizes an awareness of natural spirituality and thinking rationally and calmly.

All of these emotions are displayed through Sophie. While playing, herself and her gorilla are both yellow; happy having fun, her sister is outlined in green; content, with the background also being green. On the first page, all emotions are balanced and happy. The second page is when emotions start to change. The sister's spoken text, while grabbing the

gorilla, "My Turn" is green with blue outline. Sophie's outline turns red with anger when this happens. During Sophie's outburst of rage, her outline stays red/orange and so does her spoken text, as well as the objects around her. During the midpoint of the story, Sophie turns from red to dark orange, and the objects around her start to turn purple; transferring from red to blue, indicating sadness, no longer rage. Transforming through the story, the scene's and object's emotions of color, turn to harmony, calmness, happiness, with Sophie's color changing as well. By the end of the story she is back in her house with everything outlined in yellow, including herself.

Shape

The shapes used by Bang, have a rounded quality to them. The roundness of the shapes used in this book suggest a " spontaneity and a natural quality" (David L. Russell p. 107). Examples of these shapes are the two girls, the cat, gorilla, trees and other life in the forest, and the wavy lines of the water. The only direct geometric shapes illustrated in the book are inanimate objects that are solid with no mobility or life, such as the rectangle floor boards, toy blocks and the body of the truck, (the tires are rounded and jagged showing movement).

Texture

By using paint along with simple brush strokes, Bang was able to give her illustrations life and movement. With quick brush strokes and unclean lines, the pictures show texture and dimension. The pink rug in the book is a perfect example of this. Using quick strokes in every direction, form different shades when drying. The paint becomes over lapped which causes multiple layers and more depth to the color, while one layer of paint, is lighter and more

transparent. Painting in different directions, with messy rounded lines evokes a thick, soft feel to the pink rug.

Another example of showing texture is with the hard wood floor. This technique is the complete opposite of the one used for the pink rug. Bang wanted to show the solid, sleek, hardness of the floor so she used clean lines and even color. By using different techniques with the same medium, Bang is able to show the texture difference between the objects. This technique is displayed throughout the book, using soft quick strokes for three-dimensional texture, and movement, while using strong clean even lines for solid inanimate objects.

Space

In Bang's story, her illustrations take up most of the page. The illustrations are simple and big, becoming the main focus. Another aspect that is shown using space is the emotion of Sophie. When the focus is on how "angry" Sophie is, the character stands out, consuming most of the page (or pages) with a solid background color. During the story when Sophie feels sad and overwhelmed, she becomes smaller with the objects around her becoming the focus, (the trees and rocks in the forest) covering up the page with little empty space. As Sophie starts to calm and become more passive to the situation, she starts to take up more space, equal to her surroundings.

In Bang's illustrations, the main object in each part of the story overwhelms the page(s), taking up the majority of the space, and what-ever space is left over is filled with either a solid background or a scenery, depending on the message of emotion. Young children who are learning to read, or cannot read, need to look at simple, big pictures to help understand the

story while also using the background objects to keep their attention. For example, the cat that tends to be in every page while in the house, or the small forest animals and background trees while in the forest. By taking up the space with smaller objects, you are able to keep the attention span of the child longer while reading, as well as exercising their mind and eyes by searching the pages for the objects.

Design and meaning

Rhythm and Movement

The rhythm and movement in Bang's book is all about the action in the pictures. Because the pictures are large and colorful, your eyes are immediately drawn to the situation that is occurring. When we rely on the pictures over text it is causing an "interrupted rhythm" (Russell p. 117). This story displays the back and forth rhythm Russell talks about; the reader looking at the picture, then finding and reading text, then back to the picture, before turning the page. The action and spoken text also draws your eyes in first; large, colorful, painted to demonstrate the action and meaning of the verb. For example, on page 12, the word "EXPLODE" erupts from the floor boards like a volcano, in bold red and orange letters, showing the meaningful action of the word. The "juxtaposition" (Russell p. 117) design aspect used by Bang, allows for the book to be an effective story for children.

Tension

Tension in Bang's story transpire in multiple ways. Ellipses is one-way Bang creates tension, allowing for the reader to pause, building up the cause and effect factor. For example, on page 4 of "When Sophie Gets Angry-Really, Really Angry...", the text at the top of the page reads " As her sister snatched Gorilla away...", your eyes then follow through to the large picture of the action taking place and then to the text on the bottom of the page "...Sophie fell over the truck." By breaking the sentence apart, this allows the child to see the cause and effect of an action.

Another way Bang uses tension is by using one or two sentences per page. By doing this the reader only consumes a portion of the situation, leaving the yearning of "what happens next?". The last example of tension, is the plot itself. Sophie becomes angry and runs away into the woods. With most children only walking through a wooded area maybe once or twice with an adult, running into the fairly unfamiliar woods by themselves is an unnerving idea. The feeling of the unknown, creates lots of tension, grasping the child's attention with the wanting to see if Sophie will be alright in the end.

Page Layout

The shape of this book is almost a perfect square, with the size of the book being on the larger side, compared to a novel. The shape and size are appropriate for the reader's age, not overwhelmingly big that it is hard to hold, but big enough to allow for larger scenes and landscapes; exhibiting as a picture book and not a complex reading book. As a picture book, Bang uses informal borders. Her illustrations reach beyond the end of the pages allowing for a perception of continuation throughout scene of the book. For example, on pages 19 and 20,

Sophie comes upon a giant white tree, the tree is so big that it consumes two pages with the branches reaching off the page. The child looking at this tree comprehend how big this tree really is in comparison to Sophie who is much smaller on the page. Another element of this books design is the typography. To allow for easy reading, her text is larger and more casual. The text is also placed in an informal way, moving around from page to page, incorporated in the picture.

Artistic Media and Style

Artistic Media

Bang's technique used in her illustrations of the book is the Painterly Technique. The medium used appears to be acrylic paint applied by a paintbrush and perhaps a sponge in some places, (walls, leaves outside, sky). I believe this to be acrylic paint based on the opaque, bright colored result you would receive by using this type of paint. I can also tell by the different depths (along with overlapping of colors) and the unclean lines, that Bang used paint with a paintbrush. On page 7, there is a perfect display of the painting technique being used; overlapping of bright colors, unclean lines.

Artistic Styles

Since acrylic paint was developed in the twentieth- century, I believe Bang to be influenced by this time period. The style she uses in her illustrations are a combination of Naïve Art (child-like drawing and paintings) and Realism. Naïve Art is illustrated in a way to resemble a child's art work. The people in the story are painted with bright colors, unclean lines, lack of detail in faces, much as a child would paint them. The Realism comes into play with the scenes

of outdoors. Even though bright colors and unclean lines are being used, there is a lot more detail, with correct proportions and realistic colors.

Combining all the aspects and techniques listed produce a brilliant illustrated picture book for children. The artistic media and style paired with the thoughtfulness of the page layout grab the attention of children right away. The use of lines and colors help children perceive the message and story while the added tension of the text and rhythm keep the story exciting. After breaking the illustrations of this story by Bang down, you can see why it has won, not only the Caldecott Honor Medal, but the Charlotte Zolotow Award as well.