



SELF Metaphors in the Picturebook *Hey, Al*

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Received: May 13, 2023

Revised: June 12, 2023

Accepted: June 16, 2023

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ABSTRACT

Choi, Youngju. 2023. SELF metaphors in the picturebook *Hey, Al*. *Korean Journal of English Language and Linguistics* 23, 448-460.

Lakoff (1996) claims that a person is conceptualized as two different entities, SUBJECT and SELF. In the expression *I am not myself today*, the subject *I* and the self *myself* are expressed as two different entities. Lakoff's claim has been further investigated in English, Japanese, and other languages, but it has not been pursued in other modalities. In this paper, in order to determine whether the same metaphors are observed not only in verbal but also in other modes, the picturebook *Hey, Al* is analyzed, exploring the DIVIDED PERSON metaphors and other SELF metaphors. The analysis reveals that, around its main theme, *finding one's true identity*, the picturebook *Hey, Al* demonstrates diverse SELF metaphors, such as the DIVIDED PERSON metaphor, the OBJECTIVE-SUBJECT metaphor, the INNER SELF metaphor, the SPLIT SELF metaphor, the ABSENT-SUBJECT metaphor, the TRUE-TO-YOURSELF metaphor, the SELF-AS-COMPANION metaphor, the LOSS-of-SELF metaphor, and the TRUE-SELF metaphor.

KEYWORDS

DIVIDED PERSON metaphor, SELF metaphors, picturebooks, *Hey, Al*, visual and verbal texts

1. Introduction

Lakoff (1996) and Lakoff and Johnson (1999) argue that a person is conceptualized as two different entities, the SUBJECT and the SELF. The SUBJECT is relevant to our consciousness, values, and judgement, and the SELF to our body, our past, and religious belief. In (1), we can see that the SUBJECT and the SELF are separable.

(1) In my dream I was playing piano.

In one reading, the speaker is playing the piano and he knows that he is playing the piano. In the other reading, the speaker is in the audience watching himself playing the piano. In the latter case, the speaker’s body (SELF) is performing piano, and his consciousness (SUBJECT) is separated from his SELF and watching what his SELF is doing.

The conceptualization that a person is composed of two entities, SUBJECT and SELF, explains why *I kissed me* in (2) is grammatically correct and *I kissed myself*, which is a correct form in a regular context, is not acceptable here. The person who constructed the sentence is Jim McCawley.

(2) I dreamt that I was Brigitte Bardot and I kissed me. (Lakoff 1996, 93)

In the dream, the subject, *I* in *I kissed me* is the combined form of McCawley’s consciousness (SUBJECT) and Brigitte Bardot’s body (SELF). The object, *me* in *I kissed me* is McCawley’s body. The subject and the object indicate two different bodies, the former being Brigitte Bardot’s and the latter being McCawley’s. Therefore, in the expression, *I kissed me*, the coreference between *I* and *me* is blocked. This explains why the reflexive form, *myself*, is not allowed.

Very similarly, *I* in *I’d hate me/myself* in (3) is the combination of I’s SUBJECT and You’s SELF, as shown in Figure 1.

- (3) a. If I were you, I’d hate me.
- b. If I were you, I’d hate myself.

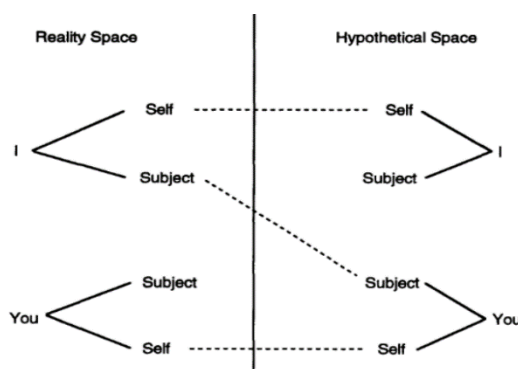


Figure 1. DIVIDED PERSON Metaphor (Lakoff 1996, 94)

In the hypothetical space, I’s SUBJECT is projected to You’s SELF and *I’d hate me* indicates that the subject and the object are two different people, namely two different bodies. *I’d hate me* means that You’s SELF with I’s

consciousness would hate I's SELF. Figure 2 explains the situation more intuitively.

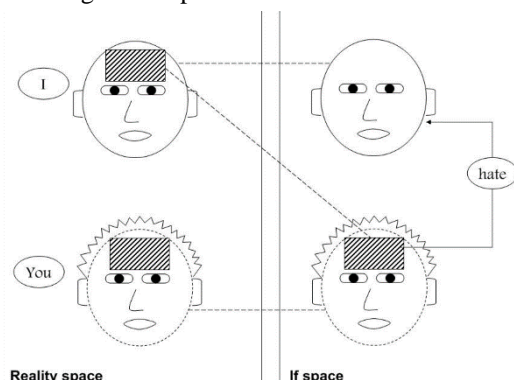


Figure 2. *If I Were You, I'd Hate Me* (Lee 2001, 112)

This picture shows that I's consciousness, which is represented by a striped rectangle in the reality space, is connected to You's consciousness in the hypothetical space. And You's body, which is represented by a hairy face, is connected to You's body in the hypothetical space (if space). As a result, in the hypothetical space, 'You' is the person whose body is combined with I's consciousness. And the person 'I' would be judged from the perspective of I's consciousness in the body of You. In that case, the emotion *hate* would arise.

On the contrary, *I'd hate myself* indicates that *I* and *myself* are the same person. It means that You's SELF with I's consciousness would hate You's SELF. In the hypothetical situation, You is a person whose SELF is combined with I's consciousness. From the perspective of I's consciousness in the body of You, the person You would be judged as a bad person worthy of hate.

The contrast shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3 shows why the coreference diverges in the two sentences of (3). In the hypothetical space, the combined entity would judge the other person in Figure 2 and the same entity would judge himself in Figure 3.

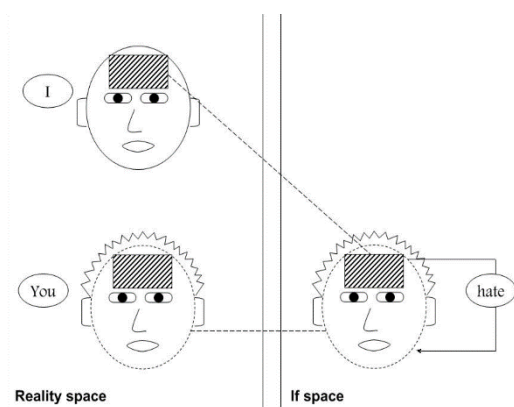


Figure 3. *If I Were You, I'd Hate Myself* (Lee 2001, 111)

This conceptualization is called the DIVIDED PERSON metaphor since a person is divided into two entities, the SUBJECT and the SELF. Based on the DIVIDED PERSON metaphor, Lakoff further argues that the concepts of the SUBJECT and the SELF are metaphorically understood in various ways, as in the OBJECTIVE SUBJECT

metaphor, the TRUE SELF metaphor, the MULTIPLE SELVES metaphor, and so on. He demonstrates how these metaphors are linguistically manifested in English. Barnden (2005), Ahren (2008), and Moser (2007) follow Lakoff in exploring linguistic manifestations of the SELF-related metaphors in English. Hirose (2002) and Hasegawa and Hirose (2005) delve into Japanese conceptualizations SELF using the reflexive form *zibun*. Slingerland (2004) and Pritzker (2007) examine Chinese conceptualizations of the SELF.

Unlike the linguistic investigations, the observation of the SELF metaphors in other genres has not been conducted yet, to the best of my knowledge. As an attempt to determine whether the linguistic observation of the those SELF-related metaphors are also observed in other genres, this paper explores the SELF metaphors in a picturebook.

Picturebooks are good candidates for the exploration of metaphorical conceptualization since in many cases, themes of picturebooks are constructed through metaphors that authors unconsciously or subconsciously make use of. Furthermore, in picturebooks, visual metaphors as well as linguistic metaphors can be observed, since the picturebooks provide visual images as well as verbal texts and the interplay of the verbal texts and the visual images create, construct, and reconstruct meanings of picturebooks (Nodelman 1988, Nicolajeva and Scott 2000, Sipe 1998, Pantaleo and Sipe 2012). As a case study, this paper examines the picturebook *Hey, Al* whose main theme is discovering one's true identity.

2. Linguistic Manifestations of SELF Metaphors

We have seen that a person is conceptualized as being divided into two entities, SUBJECT and SELF. The divided entities are located in the same place in most cases, but sometimes they are separated as shown in (4). Here, the SUBJECT is out of its container, the SELF, and when it is outside, it can observe the SELF more objectively. The examples in (4) are explained by the DIVIDED PERSON metaphor and the OBJECTIVE SUBJECT metaphor.

- (4) a. You need to step outside yourself.
 b. You should take a good look at yourself.
 c. I've been observing myself and I don't like what I see. (Lakoff 1996, 103)

When outside the SELF, the SUBJECT can be objective, but sometimes when the SUBJECT and SELF are not in the same location, the entire person is considered to be insane, as in (5a). The SUBJECT and the SELF being in the same location is important for a person to function normally. If they are not, as in (5b), the person is construed as being out of his or her mind, i.e. mentally unwell.

- (5) a. I'm beside myself.
 b. Are you out of your mind/head/skull. (Lakoff 1996, 111)

The SUBJECT can be out of a bounded region, as in (5), but sometimes it moves up vertically, and the upward movement is interpreted as a lack of conscious SELF-control, as in (6). The examples manifest the ABSENT-SUBJECT metaphor.

- (6) a. He's got his feet on the ground.
- b. I kept floating off in lecture.
- c. She reached new heights of ecstasy. (Lakoff 1996, 111)

As in (5) and (6), the absence of the SUBJECT in a normal location is interpreted as being unconscious. Similarly, the absence of the SELF is also interpreted as being unconscious. The LOSS-of-SELF metaphor is observed in (7) and (8).

- (7) a. I lost myself in dancing.
- b. Only in meditation was she able to let go of herself.
- (8) a. I don't know what possessed me to do that.
- b. He's in the grip of an intense hatred. (Lakoff 1996, 104)

Normally, the SELF is interpreted as a possession of the SUBJECT and the concept of POSSESSION serves as a source domain for the concept of CONTROL. Therefore, when the SUBJECT lost its SELF, it does not have control over its SELF. Examples in (7) show that the SUBJECT loses control over its SELF in a positive way. Examples in (8) show that the SUBJECT loses control over its SELF in a negative way.

Two different desires or needs in a person are conceptualized as two different SELVES. The two SELVES are not located in the same place. So, when people are compatible with a SELF, they are conceptualized as being in the same place with the specific SELF. When their values change, they are conceptualized as moving to a different place.

- (9) a. I keep going back and forth between my scientific self and my religious self.
- b. I keep returning to my spiritual self.
- c. I keep going back and forth between the scientist and priest in me. (Lakoff 1996, 105)

Incompatibility of the values of different SELVES is interpreted as people being at war with themselves, as in (10), demonstrating the SPLIT-SELF metaphor.

- (10) a. He is at war with himself over who to marry.
- b. He is struggling with himself over whether to go into the church.
- c. He's conflicted. (Lakoff 1996, 106)

One's SELF is sometimes his friend and other times his servant. The SELF-as-COMPANION metaphor is shown in (11) and (12).

- (11) a. I think I'll just hang out with myself tonight.
- b. I talk things over with myself before I do anything important.
- c. I convinced myself to stay home. (Lakoff 1996, 113)
- (12) a. I have to get myself to do the laundry.
- b. I told myself to prepare for the trip well ahead of time. (Lakoff 1996, 114)

Lakoff argues that we conceptualize SELF as being divided into inner and outer. The INNER SELF is hidden and resides inside, and therefore, it is invisible to the public. The INNER SELF is socially unacceptable, as in (13a) and (13b), and the SUBJECT has to keep the INNER SELF invisible to others, though the SUBJECT's attempt to keep it inside is not always successful, as in (13c).

- (13) a. She's sweet on the outside and mean on the inside.
- b. The iron hand in the velvet glove.
- c. Her petty self came out. (Lakoff 1996, 109)

In most cases, the SUBJECT sets the standards for its SELF to follow. However, sometimes it is the SELF who sets the standards of conduct for the SUBJECT. If the SUBJECT fails to follow the standards by its own choice, then the SUBJECT betrays its SELF, as in (14a). If the failure happens not by the choice of the SUBJECT, then the SUBJECT lets the SELF down, as in (14b) and the SUBJECT disappoints the SELF, as in (14c).

- (14) a. Don't betray yourself.
- c. I let myself down.
- d. I disappointed myself. (Lakoff 1996, 110)

When one's true self is realized, we say it as finding one's true self. The examples in (15) show the TRUE-SELF metaphor.

- (15) a. He found himself in writing.
- b. I'm trying to get in touch with myself.
- c. He found his true self in writing.
- d. He went to India to look for his true self, but all he came back with was a pair of sandals.
(Lakoff 1996, 107)

How the SELF metaphors are manifested linguistically has been discussed, based on Lakoff (1996) and Lakoff and Johnson (1999). Now we are going to turn our attention to how the SELF metaphors are manifested in the picturebook *Hey, Al*, throughout the whole story of the book.

3. Analysis of SELF Metaphors in *Hey, Al*

3.1 Introduction of *Hey, Al*

Hey, Al is a picturebook written by Arthur Yorinks and illustrated by Richard Egielski. It was published in 1986. In 1987, the book received the Caldecott award which is given to the best picturebook every year. The summary of the book is as follows:

Al is a janitor who lives in a one-room apartment with his dog Eddie. They do everything together but struggle to live in such a small room. Eddie complains about being confined in a small place where he cannot run around. Eddie emphasizes their miserable lives, saying that "Pigeons live better than us!" And then one morning a bird

peeps in through the bathroom window and invites Al and Eddie to a paradise where there are "no worries" and "no cares." After a serious discussion with Eddie about moving to the suggested fantasy place, Al decides to take the risk.

They arrive at a utopian island where birds bring them food and drinks. Al wants to stay forever. But after a while, Al and Eddie realize they are slowly turning to birds. Beaks protrude from their lips and nose and their limbs change to wings. They want to return home. However, their cries to take them back are all ignored by the birds, so they flap, rise, and fly back home on their own. On the way, Eddie gets exhausted and falls into the ocean, so Al arrives back home alone. However, Eddie is a good swimmer and finds a way home. With great joy, they make small renovations of their home and seem satisfied with the little change of painting their wall.

3.2 The DIVIDED PERSON metaphor and The OBJECTIVE-SUBJECT metaphor

Throughout the whole story, we can observe the DIVIDED PERSON metaphor and the OBJECTIVE-SUBJECT metaphor. Through the two different characters, a janitor, representing his SUBJECT, and his dog, representing his SELF, one person is divided into two different entities and the objective observation of each other is made possible.

Al's job is to sweep and mop floors, but a part of him has ambitions that are much higher. Though he appears satisfied, he is in a state of inner conflict. This inner conflict manifests itself through Eddie. Eddie is the reflection of Al's suppressed desire to rise above his current position and live in a paradise. The conflict is shown in the following dialogue between Al and Eddie:

"Look at this dump!" Eddie growled. "We can't have a house? A little back yard to run around in for a change?"

"Oh, sure," Al snapped. "Today it's a house you want. Tomorrow, who knows? Maybe the moon!"

"The moon? The moon?" Eddie howled. "Pigeons live better than us!" (Yorinks and Egielski 1986, the 2nd spread)

Through what Eddie says, Al understands his inner desire in an objective way. He subconsciously wants to live a better life. Al is outside of his SELF and is able to watch himself objectively, as is observed in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Yorinks and Egielski 1986, the 2nd spread

3.3 The INNER SELF metaphor

We can observe the INNER SELF metaphor on the title page where Al, with his mop and pail, walks in front of Eddie. Eddie is following Al, but his eyes are straying on the opposite direction, where three little birds are following them. Eddie turns his head to see the birds, indicating Al's inner SELF follows what the birds suggest. However, Al, himself, has his leg raised – he's taking big strides, with his eyes closed. It could be that he is intentionally ignoring the chirping of the birds (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Yorinks and Egelski 1986, title page

The color and size of the birds signify the degree of temptation they bring. On the title page, the chirping birds are very small and blue in color. They are enough to make Eddie's head turn, meaning that Al's inner SELF is tempted, but Al's consciousness (SUBJECT) is firmly in control here, moving away from the source of temptation with his mop and pail in hand. However, the bird that visits Al to invite him to paradise is big and colorful (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Yorinks and Egelski 1986, the 3rd spread

This bird can only fit its head through the bathroom window, and we can see that its head is much bigger than Al's. The bird's beak is a combination of black, yellow, blue, and red, and its head is a combination of black, blue, and white. The bird is big and vivid, and as we've seen, Al succumbs to this greater temptation, complying with the desire of his inner SELF.

3.4 The SPLIT SELF metaphor

When the bird invites Al to paradise, Al drops his shaving razor in shock. But we also see Eddie on the other side, pressing his ear against the door and listening very intently (Figure 6). Through this image, Al's dual psychology is observed – on one hand, he is shocked, and on the other hand, he is very interested in the suggestion the bird is making. His well-trained and sensible SUBJECT wants to keep his job and stick to reality. But his SELF, as shown by Eddie's actions, has been longing for something better, so much so that when a fantasy paradise is offered, the first response of the latter SELF is intrigue rather than surprise, fear, or doubt. In the end, it's this side that wins out:

"What? Just quit my job?" Al said.

"There's more to life than mops and pails!" Eddie insisted.

"But—"

"That's it, we're going. I don't want to hear another word."



Figure 7. Yorinks and Egielski 1986, the 4th spread

As seen in Figure 7, Eddie looks outside at the very window where the bird peeped in, with his paws on the window frame. Al, on the other hand, sits on his suitcase in the bathroom in deep thought. He looks at a feather that the bird left behind, contemplative and hesitant. Though his controlled and reasonable SELF has temporarily given in, it hasn't altogether disappeared. This scene shows how Al moves back and forth between what his consciousness tells him to do and what he subconsciously wants to do. This scene is parallel to the linguistic manifestations of the SPLIT SELF metaphor in (9).

3.5 The ABSENT-SUBJECT metaphor

In the next scene, when "Al and Eddie are ferried thousands of feet upward to an island in the sky," Al drops his suitcase. This implies that Al is not permitted to take any of his old life with him into the fantasy land. The cost of paradise is a total separation from his identity as a janitor. His past identity as a janitor was practical and grounded. According to Lakoff, being on the ground means that the SUBJECT controls his SELF with his normal consciousness, and being above the earth means the SUBJECT does not control his SELF, as shown in the linguistic manifestations of the ABSENT-SUBJECT metaphor in (6).

Al's upward movement to an island is closely related to the ABSENT-SUBJECT metaphor. Al's SUBJECT is

absent now since he is not grounded and he no longer controls his SELF with normal consciousness. Al reaches new heights of ecstasy now, as shown in Figure 8.



Figure 8. Yorinks and Egielski 1986, the 5th spread

When the suitcase is dropped, Al watches it go with a pitiful look. Eddie and the bird do not so much as notice. They stare straight ahead into the future. When the bird drops off Al and Eddie on the island above the clouds, Eddie looks joyous and excited at the wonderful sights. But Al looks puzzled, and keeps one hand on top of his cap. Al does not want to lose this cap – the last item that symbolically represents his identity as a janitor, suggesting that he is trying to have somewhat normal consciousness even though he has his head in the clouds.

3.6 The TRUE-TO-YOURSELF metaphor

In *Hey, Al*, the TRUE-TO-YOURSELF metaphor is observed when Eddie definitely decides to move to a paradise and does not allow further discussion, saying: "That's it, we are going. I don't want to hear another word." Al tries to follow Eddie, as he does not want to disappoint his SELF. However, as we can see in Figure 9, when he waits for a bird to pick him up, when he is carried by the bird, and when he first arrives at the so-called paradise, Al always seems to be hesitant about leaving his real life, unlike Eddie who is full of excitement and expectation for the future. In his hesitation, we can see that Al is trying very hard not to disappoint his SELF.

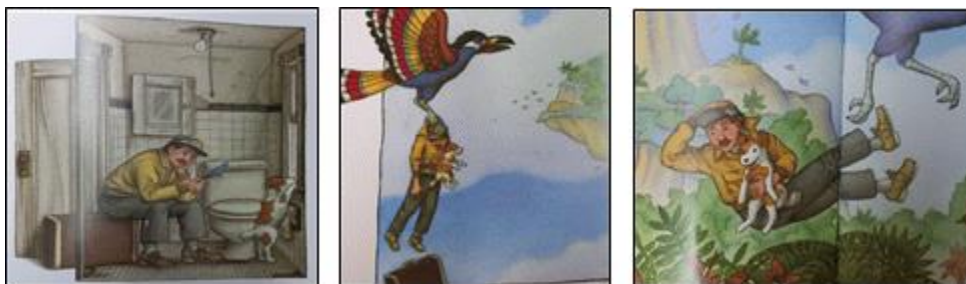


Figure 9. Yorinks and Egielski 1986, the 4th, the 5th and the 6th spreads

3.7 The SELF-AS-COMPANION metaphor

Throughout the whole story, Al, and his dog, Eddie, live together. They eat, work, and watch TV together. They

decide on important things together. They are described as very close friends. Their horizontal relationship as friends is verified when they quarrel over what they want to do in the future. Eddie, though he is a dog, forces Al to follow his idea and says “That’s it, we’re going. I don’t want to hear another word!” Al listens to Eddie and finally decides to go to the paradise, even with hesitations. If we think of Eddie as Al’s SELF, Al talks things over with himself before he decides something important and follows what his SELF wants, ignoring what his consciousness (SUBJECT) tells him to do.

On the flight home, Eddie cannot follow Al very well and falls into the ocean. When Al comes back home, he is all alone. His despair over losing his friend is presented visually, as shown in Figure 10.

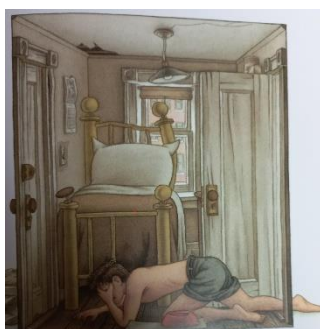


Figure 10. Yorinks and Egielski 1986, the 12th spread

The despair of being alone without his friend is verbally delivered as well, as shown in the following text, showing the close relationship between Al and Eddie.

Al barely made it home in one piece. Alone, without his friend, he was heartbroken.

(Yorinks and Egielski 1986, the 12th spread)

3.8 The LOSS-of-SELF metaphor

Eddie could not come home with Al, which means Al’s SELF is lost. However, the loss is not as negative as it initially appears. As Eddie is the manifestation of Al’s outlandish desires, it would hardly be fitting if Eddie simply returned home unchanged with Al. The impression that Eddie drowned, however momentary, is important because through a symbolic drowning, Eddie is cleansed and transformed, as in symbolic religious ceremonies such as baptism. The Eddie who represents longing for grandeur returns home simply as Eddie the best friend and dog.

In Al’s moment at home alone, readers are led to believe that Eddie has drowned. But on the next page, Eddie, a good swimmer, makes his way home and he and Al are reunited. After cleaning Eddie’s desire, they hold each other very tightly, as if they are one unit (Figure 11).



Figure 11. Yorinks and Egielski 1986, the 13th spread

3.9 The TRUE-SELF metaphor

After the journey to the fantasy land and the journey back home, Al and Eddie are in harmony, signifying that Al's SELF has become compatible with his SUBJECT. The realization of one's compatible SELF is metaphorically connected to finding one's true self.

As Al and Eddie make their escape from the island – ironically using the wings that they do not want – Al loses his janitor cap. This cap was on his head all the time that he was on the island, even as he turned into a bird. He loses his other clothing too, becoming almost naked except for his pants which are rolled up high to become shorts. When his cap flies away, his Hawaiian wreath, which he had obtained in the fantasy world, also flies away, symbolizing that his past identity and his dream about a utopian life are leaving him simultaneously. Despite the fact that his past identity as a janitor was practical and grounded, he also had a closeted, unconscious desire for something better. When his cap and his wreath disappear, his past is gone and he can start anew. He has matured, and he can return to his life on earth without any lingering, furtive desires.

As seen in Figure 12, the last scene describes how happy Al and Eddie are as they fix up their home with by painting the wall a vivid yellow color. They find their heaven together after their identities are threatened by an alluring but ultimately sinister paradise. Their tight living conditions don't bother them anymore, and they find immense satisfaction with the painting, as can be seen in the verbal text and the visual image.

Paradise lost is sometimes Heaven found (Yorinks and Egielski 1986, the last page).



Figure 12. Yorinks and Egielski 1986, the last page

7. Conclusion

The picturebook *Hey, Al* has been analyzed based on Lakoff's ideas regarding how the concept of the SELF is metaphorically understood. In its story and theme, *Hey, Al* involves diverse SELF metaphors, which are specifically observed through verbal texts and visual images. In the two main characters, Al and his dog, Eddie, who are not compatible with each other, we see a clear demonstration of the DIVIDED PERSON metaphor where a person is conceptualized as two different entities, the SUBJECT and the SELF. Since Al can see and hear Eddie, Al can observe his SELF very objectively, revealing the OBJECTIVE SUBJECT metaphor.

Through what Eddie says and his behavior, we can observe what Al wants subconsciously, verbally and visually: Al's INNER SELF is not satisfied with his life as a janitor and wants to live a better life. When a bird invites him to paradise, Al decides to go there, following the advice of Eddie who insists that Al quit his job and live a better life in the paradise, demonstrating the TRUE-TO-YOURSELF metaphor: Al is trying not to disappoint his SELF. Even after the decision and while flying to the paradise, Al seems to be hesitant, showing the SPLIT SELF metaphor: Al moves back and forth between his consciousness asking him to stay and his inner self asking him to leave.

The happy life in the paradise leads Al and Eddie to change their identities in a troubling way. To avoid the identity change, they fly back home. Unlike Al, who successfully arrives home, Eddie gets tired and plunges into the water, so Al could not come home with Eddie. From this separation of Eddie from Al, the LOSS-of-SELF metaphor is observed: Al loses his SELF while he comes back home. Eddie, Al's inner self, goes through a process of cleansing and transformation when he falls into the ocean. In that sense, the LOSS-of-SELF is not negative. Rather, Al and Eddie become one unit in harmony. Finally, Al finds his TRUE SELF. The analysis of the picturebook *Hey, Al* based on the conceptual metaphors relevant to SELF opens the floodgates for case studies of various conceptual metaphors in verbal and visual modes of picturebooks.

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Picturebook analyzed

Yorinks, A. and R. Egielski. 1986. *Hey, Al*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Examples in: English

Applicable Languages: English

Applicable level: Tertiary