

TRANSLATING ART AND ARTWORKS IN PICTUREBOOKS: INTERPICTORIALITY AND EXPERIENTIAL MEANING MAKING FOR YOUNG READERS

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ABSTRACT: As a popular platform for young readers, picturebooks have been used to invoke various artistic forms, enabling the development of artistic knowledge and visual literacy in children. This study examines the properties of three inter pictorial picturebooks and discusses how they mediate art for children with differing levels of aesthetic awareness, framed by a discussion of inter pictoriality more generally.

KEYWORDS: Inter pictoriality, Picturebooks, Visual Translation, Aesthetics, Art and Artwork

1. Introduction

For Kiefer (1995), a picturebook is an artistic communication platform that provides children with an aesthetic reading experience. Picturebooks that quote or re-create artworks in their pages offer especially acute examples of this. Indeed, many scholars (e.g. Beckett, 2010; Serafini, 2015; Hoster Cabo et al., 2018) believe that such inter pictoriality helps children develop visual literacy and inducts them into epistemic and aesthetic communities, such as the world of art and culture.

This paper approaches inter pictoriality as a form of translation, not only on the part of the artist that reproduces the work in the pages of the picturebook, but also receptively, as the (child) reader learns how to experience and process this particular semiotic code. With reference to three works in particular, it examines how children's picturebooks repurpose original artworks in the interests of a new aesthetic agenda, and how these contribute to the development of children's visual processing. It also provides several complementary threads concerning the meanings that inter pictoriality might have for the children who encounter it in picturebooks.

2. Inter pictoriality in picturebooks

Some scholars have extended the scope of "intertextuality" to include multiple media forms, such as visual subjects, rather than just literature (Meinhof and Smith, 2000; Rayner et al., 2004; Allen, 2011). Art critic Margaret Rose (2011) suggests that the term "inter pictoriality" be used by art historians to distinguish the concept from intertextuality. Hoster Cabo et al. (2018) have extended Rose's idea of the concept by defining it as a process of pictorial referencing, in other words, an image referring to another image. The concept can cover a broad range of cultural artefacts, including paintings, illustrations, or even film scenes. This suggests that inter pictorial images are works not only of translation but also of re-creation, since illustrators use works of art as references and produce derivatives of them in different forms.

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The term is also usually used about a picturebook image that is inspired by a preceding image, especially an artistic one. However, the pictorial inspiration is not restricted to the field of fine art. The inspiration might come in the form of a derivative image or from other images that have some aesthetic dimension while not generally considered to be “art”.

When reviewing existing theories on interpictureoriality, it becomes apparent that the most prominent scholars in the field (e.g. Beckett, 2012; Serafini, 2015; Hoster Cabo et al., 2018) tend to limit their focus to illustrations. However, my PhD research on interpictureoriality (Wang, 2021)¹ has found that although illustrations are the most common places in which interpictureoriality emerges, it can also appear in other parts of a picturebook, such as the endpaper and cover page, as well as in the overall visual aesthetic of the book. There are various reasons why illustrators adopt interpictureoriality in their works. Over the course of my study, the following were identified as possible purposes:

- To illustrate the geographic and temporal context of the picturebook’s narrative;
- To introduce artworks, artists, and artistic concepts to young readers;
- To interact aesthetically with other components in the picturebook;
- To create points of recognition for mature readers who have advanced artistic knowledge background;
- To create a “playful atmosphere” by parodying works of art;
- To develop the illustrator’s own aesthetic preferences;
- To express the illustrator’s own interpretation of an interpictureorial image;

The study found, in keeping with other scholars (e.g. Beckett, 2012, Serafini, 2015, Hoster Cabo et al., 2018), that the most common reason for adopting interpictureoriality in a picturebook is to illustrate aspects of the context of its narrative. However, whether the interpictureorial image appears as a reproduction or in a modified form, new meanings will be infused into it by virtue of the recontextualization and reframing that inevitably takes place. In this respect, the process is very similar to that involved in translating a verbal text into a new linguistic and cultural context.

Diverse modes of interpictureorial reference have been identified in picturebook studies. Most scholars categorise patterns of interpictureoriality based on the aesthetic or narrative meanings they hold. For instance, Beckett (2012) identifies several different ways of referencing of artworks in picturebooks: *scavenging of styles*,² *art fantasy*,³ *direct allusions*

¹ Research carried out within the scope of my PhD thesis entitled *An Exploration of Interpictureoriality: The Relationship between Original Artworks, Children’s Picturebooks, and Meaning-Making* (2021) carried out at the University of Glasgow.

² This involves allusions to the style of an artist or artistic movement, without direct reference to a specific work of art.

³ Picturebooks in which the characters enter into illustrations, or in which paintings come to life.

to specific works of art,⁴ parodic play,⁵ references to artists' studios and museums, and multi-level parodies.⁶

Meanwhile, Hoster Cabo et al. (2018) have analysed Liliana Louvel's (2011) theory of pictorial references and selected several genres as particularly relevant to picturebooks. They suggest that Louvel's *interpictoriality* indicates a relationship between two images that is either explicit or alluded to. *Parapictoriality*, as Louvel interprets it, is "the image around the text" (p. 68), with the verbal or pictorial texts labelled "paratexts" (these can take various forms, such as a dust cover, a picture frame, or a chapter heading, associating parapictorial relationships with texts). *Metapictoriality* refers to one system commenting upon another system, such as an image commenting on a text (it is worth noting that Louvel believes this relationship to be invertible, i.e. a text can also comment on an image). Finally, *mnemopictoriality* refers to the memory or imagining of pictorial impressions, i.e. the image evoked in an audience's mind when encountering a text.

However, a picture's contributions can be very diverse, including decorative, representational, organisational, interpretational, or transformational functions, which are not necessarily included in the above taxonomy. Moreover, some picturebook images might carry more than one aesthetic or narrative meaning. Hence, classifying interpictorial images by their aesthetic/narrative meaning is likely to result in a multiplicity of modes of pictorial representation in picturebook illustrations with overlaps between them.

Serafini (2015), for his part, identifies three forms of artistic appropriation (*reproduction*, *transfiguration*, and *stylisation*). As these are the most useful for this research, they will be described in more detail here. *Reproduction* refers to interpictorial images that attempt to faithfully translate original works of art as references, and includes the illustrating techniques of realistic sketching, photography, and digital rendering. Nevertheless, Serafini (2015) recognises that even though illustrators may try to faithfully reproduce works of art, there are limitations to this process, due to the different dimensions, materials, and means of exhibiting. As for *transfiguration*, this implies that a fundamental change has been made to the artwork in question. Serafini (2015, p. 446) further divides transfiguration into two types: 1) 'coming to life', which suggests that the figures in the artwork come alive and begin to move; and 2) 'parodic transformation', which refers to the practice of referencing figures from works of art and modifying their appearance to fit the characters in picturebook stories. The process is not limited to human figures. The allusions contained in landscape paintings, still lifes, and abstract patterns can also be transfigured when appropriated by illustrators. Serafini does not mention sheared or collaged images of artwork in his analysis but each of these techniques inevitably introduces alterations in relation to the source work. On the other hand, the book designer

⁴ These involve the reproduction or adaptation of a well-known motif or figure from an artwork within the picturebook.

⁵ Usually involving framed paintings displayed on the wall, the aim is to engage humorously with the artistic allusions contained therein.

⁶ These references parody more than one work of art, artist, or artistic movement, often combining different styles and genres in a single picturebook.

does not intentionally alter any detail in these partial presentations of works of art. Hence, we might ask whether shearing and collaging belongs to the category of reproduction or to transfiguration. As for *stylisation*, this is viewed as a form of pictorial reference that forms connections with a broader collection of artworks, such as an artistic movement, a school of art, a particular artist's style, or even the visual characteristics of a particular artwork. Serafini (2015) identifies four different forms of stylisation that can be found in picturebooks: 1) picturebooks that clearly state in their texts or in the peritextual information that their inspirations derive from a specific artistic style or movement; 2) picturebooks in which the illustrations relate to fictional narratives about an artist, an artistic movement, or a particular artistic style; 3) picturebooks that depict the history or painting skills of an artist or a collection of art; 4) picturebooks that incorporate more than one artistic movement in their designs.

Although Serafini's analysis is certainly useful, my own research suggests that it is possible to go beyond his four stylisation types, since an illustration can merge multiple artistic movements, schools of art, and artists' works within it. Additionally, the contents of such picturebooks that feature stylisation can go beyond stories about the artistic subject. Illustrators sometimes select one or more element from a work of art and represent them repeatedly in the picturebook. The study has found two reasons why this might happen: either the element might be used metonymically to convey significant meanings about the contexts of the book; or it might carry certain meanings for the illustrator him/herself. To illustrate these two cases, we might consider, as an example, the image of the black bowler hat in René Magritte's paintings which appears in several of Anthony Browne's picturebooks, such as *A Walk in the Park* (1988) and *Voices in the Park* (1997). In Browne's picturebooks, Magritte's bowler hat serves as a visual indicator of a character's interior state (Hateley, 2009), to suggest the character's social status, personality, or feelings at a precise moment in the narrative. The illustrator intends to convey the message, as Magritte suggested in his own work, that the person wearing the bowler hat possesses the personal characteristic of ordinariness, while at the same time giving rein to Browne's own aesthetic preferences (he once said in an interview that his favourite artistic style refers to Surrealism [TeachingBooks, 2004]).

In some picturebooks, illustrators depict not only works of art but also images of the artist who created the art. These picturebooks usually aim to introduce readers to the artists or their works. Many illustrators also seem to enjoy depicting images of themselves in their picturebooks, either to raise their own profiles (Kiefer, 2013) or to create a metatextual game that breaches the communicative boundaries between the illustrator and readers. Examples of the latter can be found in Anthony Browne's *One Gorilla: A Counting Book* (2013) and Maurice Sendak's *Nutcracker* (2002), in which the illustrators have broken through the dimensional limitations of the form to interact as participants or observers in the narratives.

The practice of illustrating artists or referencing illustrators themselves in picturebooks brings the topic back to the discussion of a broader conception of art within

inter pictorial referencing. The illustrating strategy of depicting images of artists or of including illustrators' images in their own picturebooks resists classification as the "referencing of works of fine arts". It relates to the search for inspiration in other places, such as the image of a picturebook-related person, images relating to a well-known event, or even impressions from daily life. The inter pictoriality derived from these meaningful images can provide both literary and connotative information that stimulates readers' curiosity to look for symbolic and cultural meanings in the images. Although these images might not yet be considered "real art", they nevertheless merit the artist's attention. Hence, it would appear that the "art-not-art" identification of an inter pictorial image is fluid and uncertain.

Finally, some picturebooks also feature metadiscourse⁷ on the arts. As Beckett (2012) points out, this is particularly common in picturebooks about children visiting museums and galleries, and frequently appears at points when characters "walk into" a world depicted by a work of art, or when characters in the artwork "come out" of the depicted art world. However, it can appear in other kinds of picturebooks as well, such as biographical picturebooks about an artist or a group of artists' lives and works of arts. For example, in Robert Andrew Parker's *Action Jackson* (2007) and Gee Fan Eng's *Frida Kahlo* (2017), the illustrators extract salient artistic traits from the works of the featured artists and infuse them into their own illustrations to enable readers to share the artistic experiences of these artists.

3. Translating art in three selected picturebooks

To gain a better understanding of what inter pictorial images look like and how they function in picturebook illustrations, the next section will focus on three books, *Katie and the British Artists* (2008) by James Mayhew, *The Goddess of Luo River* (2019) by Luying Ye, and *Art & Max* (2010) by David Wiesner.

Katie and the British Artists (Figure 1) was selected because the book deals directly with the topic of introducing the arts and works of art to children. The picturebook

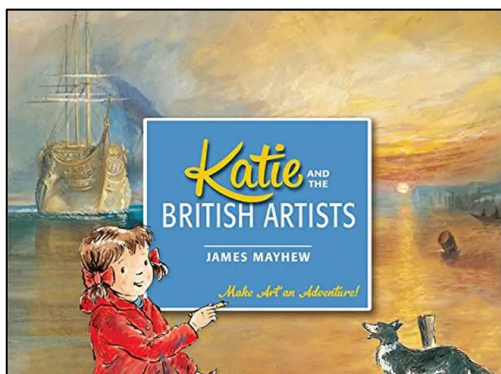


Figure 1. Book Cover of *Katie and the British Artists* by James Mayhew (2008)

⁷ Metadiscourse refers to a discussion about a discussion, a commentary made by a writer or speaker about certain oral or written text or texts (Hyland, 2017). In this paper, it suggests those arts which can be used to implicate the referred arts or artworks.

combines various forms of interpictureoriality in its narration. Each form offers different visual meanings with which to interpret the selected paintings and how Katie engages with those paintings. *Katie and the British Artists* is the only one of the selected picturebooks that involves a child visiting art galleries and museums. By analysing the interpictureoriality emerging in *Katie and the British Artists*, this research intends to explore the connections between the works exhibited in art galleries and museums and the interpictureorial images in picturebook illustrations.

Ye's *The Goddess of Luo River* was selected because it involves combinations of Oriental and Western arts in its illustrations (Figure 2). The illustrator visualises a classic Chinese ode



Figure 2. Book cover of *The Goddess of Luo River* by Luying Ye (2019)

along with other verbal and visual descriptions of ancient mythical creatures in her illustrations. Additionally, the book appears to present interpictureorial components beyond its illustrations, in terms of its bookbinding and page layout.

Art & Max (Figure 3) was selected because the interpictureorial images in the book do more than merely present the arts in the illustrations. The illustrator cleverly blends his exploration of artistic media with experiments that involve breaking down dimensional walls using different artistic styles. The illustrator's mixed use of interpictureoriality highlights the playful air throughout the picturebook. Instead of directly pointing to the referenced

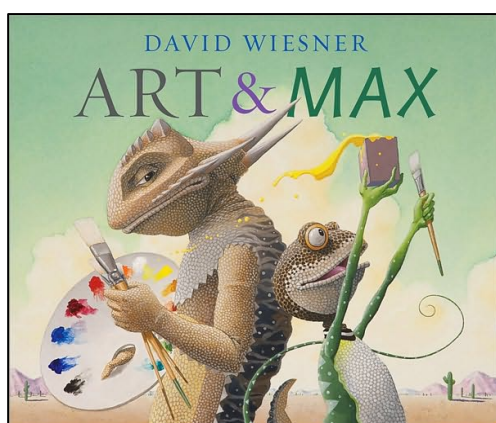


Figure 3. Book cover of *Art & Max* by David Wiesner (2010).

works of art, Wiesner disturbs the air of reality in the storytelling by fusing diverse artistic styles in the picturebook's visual narratives.

4. Picturebook One: *Katie and the British Artists* by James Mayhew

Katie and the British Artist tells the story of the day Katie and her grandmother go to The National Gallery. When her grandmother is snoozing, she magically walks into John Constable's oil painting *The Cornfield* (1862) and starts to talk with the character Ben in the picture. In what follows, Katie, Ben, and Ben's dog enter several paintings, including Joseph Turner's *Rain, Steam and Speed* (1844) and *The Fighting Temeraire* (1839); George Stubbs' *Whistlejacket* (1762); and Thomas Gainsborough's *The Painter's Daughters Chasing a Butterfly* (1756). Inside the worlds depicted in these artworks, Katie and Ben engage with the characters, animals, or objects in each painting. At the end of the story, Katie bids farewell to Ben and the dog and comes back to the real world. *Katie and the British Artists* is an example of what Beckett (2012) calls "art fantasy", showing how this little girl interacts with five British paintings.

Most of the interictorialities in *Katie and the British Artists* involve images of original paintings actually visible in the National Gallery of London. Compared with the other two picturebooks analysed in this article, this book incorporates various forms of interictoriality as the illustrator presents different meanings at different stages of the narrative. When the painting is first presented, it is usually rendered in realistic mode (reproduction). However, as Katie enters the painting, the interictorial technique becomes transfiguration. For example, in the first such scene, Constable's *Cornfield* (1826) is a recognisable reproduction of the painting, but as she enters it, the illustration zooms in and focuses on only a part of the painting (Figure 4).

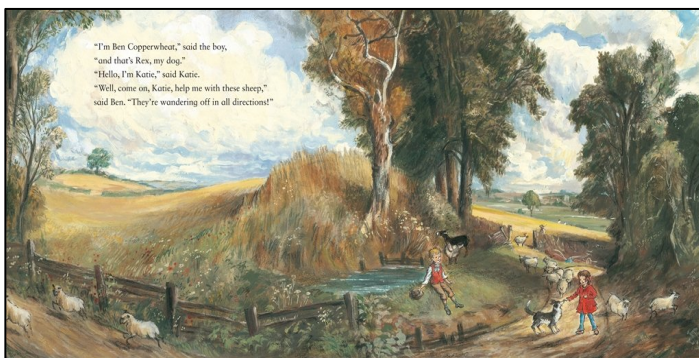


Figure 4. Illustration in *Katie and the British Artists* by James Mayhew (2008)

If the faithfully reproduced images of the paintings suggest the "noumenon" of the referenced artworks, then the transformed images of the paintings can be considered "phaenomena", that is to say, Katie's perceptions of the artwork. The visual elements selected from the paintings are different in each case. Their appearance can be considered a signal that draws the reader's attention and threads the plot episodes together from the beginning to the end. With their varying appearances, the different interictorial forms function diversely to develop the narrative of the picturebook.

As the story progresses, Katie walks into other paintings. To form connections between the different scenes, Mayhew selected a specific element, the images of sheep from *The Cornfield*, and inserts them in many different places throughout the picturebook's pages.

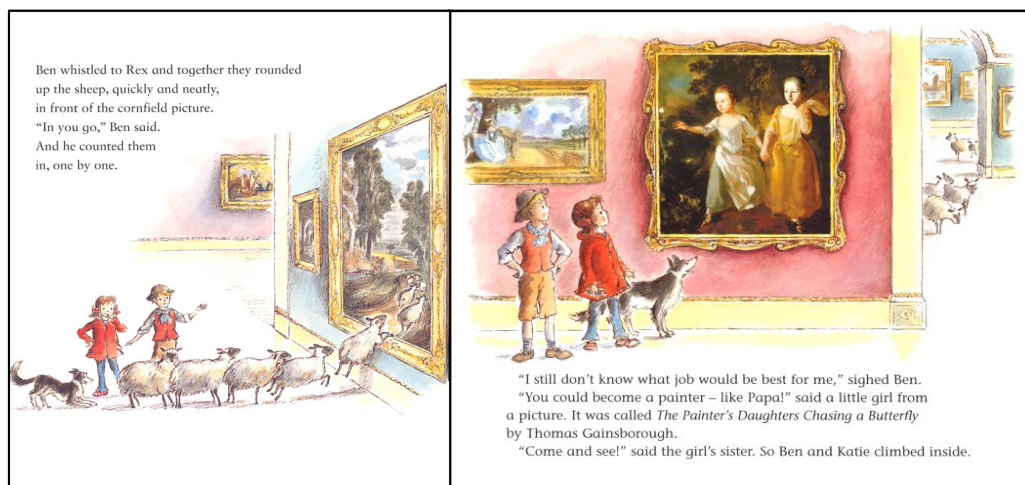


Figure 5. Illustrations in *Katie and the British Artists* by James Mayhew (2008)

The images of sheep constitute a kind of thread that ties together the story and their periodic appearance weaves the scenes together and connects the story episodes (Figure 5).

Katie and the British Artists also includes an amount of artistic metadiscourse in its illustrations which narrate the origins of the artworks depicted in the picturebook. For example, the thumbnail illustration page at the end of the picturebook provides basic information about the selected paintings and the artists who created them (Figure 6). The page seems to have a purpose, namely, not simply to use the arts to enrich the visual effects of the illustrations but also to send readers messages about the book's contexts. Like the closing credits roll of a film, these thumbnail images present the "cast" of the picturebook in the "epilogue" to supplement the story. In fact, the whole book could be considered an extended metadiscourse on the arts, as Katie and Ben engage with the characters, animals, or objects in the depicted paintings.

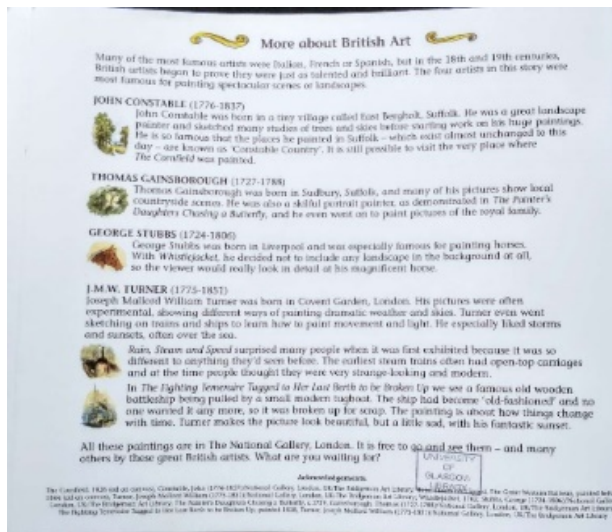


Figure 6. The thumbnail image page in *Katie and the British Artists* by James Mayhew (2009)

As it can be hard for young readers to recognise the origins of a work of art in a picturebook illustration, Beckett (2012) argues that this kind of interpictureoriality is more appropriate for older children with some prior knowledge of the artwork; the images tend to be hidden within the illustrations and can be hard to notice. However, while this might apply to picturebooks that do not provide enough foreshadowing of or introduction to the referenced artwork,⁸ in *Katie and the British Artists*, Mayhew provides sufficient basic information about the referenced paintings in both the illustrations and the texts to enable comprehension.⁹ Moreover, he seems to have little intention of challenging his readers' background knowledge about the referenced works of art. Even though it still requires effort on the part of young readers to identify the paintings in the illustrations, this should not present insurmountable problems as they have enough time to realise that the worlds Katie enters are scenes from the paintings.

5. Picturebook Two: *The Goddess of Luo River* by Luying Ye

The Goddess of Luo River by Luying Ye (2019) is a picturebook based on an ancient Chinese ode by Cao Zhi, who lived in the third century CE. The book was published by Zhong Xin Press in 2019 and is part of a series called *Chinese Culture Classics for Children*, which introduces traditional Chinese culture and literature to young readers. The book tells the story of Cao Zhi's encounter with the beautiful goddess of Luo River. The book has 32 pages and combines historical facts, literary imagination, and artistic expression to present this romantic and tragic legend.

⁸ For example, Browne's *Willy's Pictures* (2000) or *The Voices in the Park* (1997), or Wiesner's *Art & Max* (2010) provide little basic information about the referenced arts and artworks and involve artistic styles in the visual context of the story.

⁹ The thumbnail images at the end of the book provides basic information about the selected paintings and the artists who created them.

Although *The Goddess of Luo River* is inspired by an ancient Chinese story, its illustrations contain a mix of both Eastern and Western art. The book references numerous works of art, including illustrations featuring transfigured Chinese paintings, sculptures, and ancient frescoes. When representing the female character's grace, the illustrator was inspired by the Apsaras from the Dunhuang frescoes (Figure 7).¹⁰ She also draws inspiration from traditional Japanese art as well. In her illustrations of seascapes, for example, *ukiyo-es*¹¹ can be recognised, especially those by Hokusai (Figure 8).



Figure 7. (Left) Illustration in *The Goddess of the Luo River* by Luying Ye (2019)
(Right) The image of Apsaras from the Dunhuang frescoes



Figure 8. (Left Top & Left Bottom) Illustrations from *The Goddess of the Luo River* by Luying Ye (2019)
(Right Top & Right Bottom) Japanese Ukiyo-es by Katsushika Hokusai. [Colour Woodblock].
Location: Numerous.

Ye also integrates Western art into her illustrations. In a personal conversation with the author (2019), Ye confirmed that she was paying homage to Gustav Klimt's works and referencing his decorative golden colours in her illustrations to convey the story's dreamy atmosphere (Figure 9). With her broad range of references to works of art, Ye creates a visual form of multicultural presentation.

¹⁰ Apsaras are celestial beings in Hindu and Buddhist mythology who are associated with music, dance, and beauty. They are often depicted as female dancers or musicians who fly in the sky or accompany gods and goddesses.

¹¹ Ukiyo-e are a genre of Japanese art that flourished from the 17th to the 19th centuries. They are woodblock prints and paintings that depict various aspects of the "floating world" during the Tokugawa period.

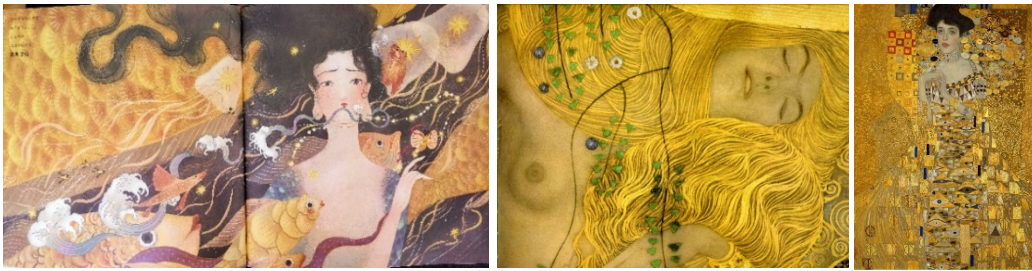


Figure 9. (Left) Illustration in *The Goddess of the Luo River* by Luying Ye (2019)
(Middle) Partial image of *Water Serpents* by Gustav Klimt (1904-1907).
[Tempera and watercolour on parchment]. Private collection.
(Right) *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer* by Gustav Klimt (1907).
[Oil, silver and gold on canvas]. New York: Neue Galerie New York.

One unique feature that Ye incorporates in her picturebook is a page in concertina form between the flyleaf and the frontispiece (Figure 10). Included on this page are essential details about the narrative setting, such as the story's background, location, and leading characters. Thus, this page is like a prelude to the overall story, setting the tone for the narrative mode of the picturebook. It can be considered a substitute for or extension of an endpaper because it works in a similar way, offering readers basic information regarding both the verbal and visual discourses before they enter the main body of the story. This not only increases the diversity of the picturebook's components but also serves as a kind of invitation, by foreshadowing the story and welcoming readers to Ye's fictional world. Since this prelude page is the first interior matter to be seen when readers open Ye's picturebook, it acts as an intermediary agent and mediates readers' transition from the real world in which they live to the fictional world contained in the story. Sipe and McGuire (2006, p. 293) note that endpapers can serve as an 'orienting experience' for readers. In the case of *The Goddess of Luo River*, Ye's special arrangement of the prelude page provides this orienting experience, offering information to guide the reader. In the same way that stage curtains sometimes do, this endpaper provides a taster for the audience before the story begins.



Figure 10. Illustration page in *The Goddess of Luo River* by Luying Ye (2019)

The prelude page as well as several other pages in the book are longer than most and are folded back and forth alternately to give a concertina-like appearance. In accordance with the context of the story, the illustrator seems to be attempting to evoke Chinese orihons, which are ancient forms of oriental bookbinding (Korbel and Katz, 2005).

Besides adding to the depth of meaning in the picturebook story, Ye's mixed use of artistic references also provides her young readers with a greater understanding of the arts. In her illustrations, Ye's mixed use of Western and Eastern arts constructs a network of cross-cultural communication between the narrative and its visual expression, which expands the metaphorical space between the picturebook's inter pictorial images and its narratives. Thus, this Chinese story is no longer limited to interpretation exclusively in terms of Chinese arts for, as we have seen, artwork from other cultures, such as Japan (the *ukiyo-es*) and Austria (Klimt's works), are also adopted to present the picturebook's narratives in a visual form. This mixed use of cross-cultural art references in the story challenges readers that are capable of identifying the origins of the artwork to think further and connect the illustrator's adoption of these works, especially from Western art, within a new context. Hence, a more critical analysis emerges in the reading experience.

Sipe suggests that the experience of picturebook reading can help readers to capture 'the power of seeing and feeling' intensely, and further enhance their capacity to enjoy their wanderings through the worlds created by picturebooks (2001, p. 39). The inter pictorial images in picturebook illustrations engage the reader's critical thinking faculties as they make sense of the visual narrative and its contextual connections with works of art. Ye's crossover adoption of both Western and Eastern arts blends multiple cultures. It is an open and exploratory process for both the reader and the illustrator. Although Ye does not explicitly mention any of the cross-cultural appropriations in her texts, *The Goddess of Luo River* is a good example of the artistic and educational potential of the multicultural picturebook.

6. Picturebook Three: *Art & Max* by David Wiesner

Art & Max is a picture book by David Wiesner, published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt in 2010. It is about two lizard friends who have different levels of skill and experience at painting. When Max "accidentally" paints on Arthur's body by misunderstanding his words "Well...you could paint me", the two friends are launched on a trip through different artistic media. The book has 40 pages and explores various artistic media, such as acrylic, watercolor, and line sketching, and shows how they can create different effects and challenges.

In this picturebook, Pointillism and Expressionism are used to provide contrasts with the realistic or representational art¹² used in the first half of the story, when Max has not yet started to paint on Arthur's body. In the latter half of the book, other art styles, such as

¹² Cianciolo (1997) defines realistic or representational art as an artist's realistic interpretation of visual characteristics. In other words, these forms of artistic expression are used to represent how objects "should" appear in reality.

Abstraction, Expressionism, and Pointillism, start to emerge to add a greater sense of illusion to the visual narratives. For example, the lizard's skin is covered with scales, which look like brushstrokes when depicted on paper. When the scales are filled in with numerous bright colours, the lizard's skin resembles a Pointillist painting (Figure 11). When Arthur gets angry at Max for painting colours on his body and starts to shout, the colours on his body crack (Figure 12).



Figure 11. Partial illustration page in *Art & Max* by David Wiesner (2010)



Figure 12. Illustration page in *Art & Max* by David Wiesner (2010)

Over the next few pages, Arthur's skin turns into a surface covered with pastels or chalks, which can even be blown off by an electric fan (Figure 13). Then, the illustrator changes his painting materials to watercolours and now, instead of being blown off, the colours on Arthur's body become desaturated when Arthur drinks a glass of water (Figure 14).



Figure 13. Illustration page in *Art & Max* by David Wiesner (2010)



Figure 14. Illustration page in *Art & Max* by David Wiesner (2010)

This contrast between Abstract and Representational art forms in the same picturebook can inspire readers to jump between illusion and reality in the narrative. This process, in turn, can also challenge readers to reconsider the certainty of what is happening in *Art & Max*. The strategy may therefore provide great pleasure for readers as they engage in interpreting the meanings of the scenarios containing different artistic styles.

When reading a picturebook, readers tend to embrace the tacit belief that what is narrated in the story is “true”. For example, in *Art & Max*, it is considered self-evident that Arthur and Max can communicate their understandings of the arts and draw pictures. This sort of “truth” forms the metanarrative of the story and builds up an internal environmental system. This “internal reality” guarantees the certainty and resolution of the story and drives the narratives forward. However, on top of this “internal reality”, Wiesner “teases” the metanarrative on several occasions to disturb the inherent stability of the narrative dimension. Blurring the boundary between the story’s “internal reality” and its “fictional events” by playfully invading the “internal reality”, Wiesner challenges readers’ understandings of reading conventions, inspiring suspension of disbelief.¹³

Wiesner’s violation of the boundaries between artistic styles confirms that the “suspension of disbelief” in picturebooks can be temporary. This uncertainty challenges the narrative frame of the picturebook story. In this sense, the metanarrative, whether it be textual or visual, never directly represents reality. Therefore, it constitutes a kind of unreliable narrator. In *Art & Max*, Wiesner represents this uncertainty by engaging in several different artistic styles in the same picturebook for visual comparisons. In this way, the illustrator builds up a multi-dimensional world. By juxtaposing several artistic styles in *Art & Max*, Wiesner enriches the visual aesthetics of his illustrations while also challenging readers to rethink their conventional beliefs about whether their reading materials can reflect the real world.

¹³ Term first introduced by Coleridge in his *Biographia Literaria* (1817)

7. Interpictoriality as experiential translation: developing interpretational competence

When illustrators create interpictoriality with a mature readership in mind, it can be challenging for youngsters, who do not yet have the necessary knowledge base and visual literacy, to process. This interpretative ability in itself is a kind of experiential translation, since it involves transporting prior knowledge of artworks into the new subjective context. There are several factors that might influence the development of children's aesthetic understanding and competence at art translating. One crucial influence is age. This is a critical determinant of their capacity to respond to art, since children acquire a more comprehensive understanding of what an interpictorial image represents as they get older. Aesthetic understandings are also fused with their cultural awareness. Children might find it difficult to recognise, let alone interpret, certain cultural symbols if they are from a different cultural group, and indeed, the public's judgement of beauty is also tied up with their living environment, culture, and the era in which they live (Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1987).

There is currently a digital revolution taking place among illustrators (Zeegen, 2009), since many illustrators are now choosing to use digital painting tools to produce picturebooks, preferring digital pens and tablets to ink, brush, and paper. Consequently, some picturebooks also integrate multiple forms of media in story-telling, such as sound, music, moving images, and even haptic experiences. Although the adoption of digital media in picturebook representation is still in a developmental stage, it is already changing readers' understanding of visual and written texts and their reading experiences (Meyers et al., 2014). This suggests that children's aesthetic experience could be affected by society's communicative orientations.

Art education also affects children's aesthetic perceptions and ability to translate art. By assimilating ideas relating to certain artistic criteria into their aesthetic understandings, children may overcome cultural and geographic limitations to make more comprehensive sense of art and artwork. Therefore, education, especially artistic education, should also be viewed as a factor that impacts children's aesthetic judgment.

To sum up, it appears that children's understanding of interpictoriality emerges as part of the development process. It develops from an initial stage of making simple and concrete observations to a critical and comprehensive response to picturebooks. Despite differences in children's aesthetic responses, offering children art education and the opportunity to develop visual literacy is clearly important for their development, and picturebooks with interpictoriality can play a significant role in this process.

8. Conclusions and Implications

This research aims to contribute to the research on children's experiences of visual translation of interpictoriality in picturebooks by analysing three picturebooks with high levels of interpictoriality.

The findings suggest that a greater level of interaction and communication among creators, readers, and scholars of picturebooks would be valuable for research and practice

related to the subject of intertextuality in picturebooks. Sharing perspectives among the different professionals in this field could help to produce better works so that young readers may obtain a better understanding of how picturebooks tell stories visually.

The findings from this study could also be of benefit to teachers who use picturebooks with their children in the classroom. Teachers play a crucial role in supporting children's development of visual literacy and art interpreting and can do so by providing diverse ways of seeing, comprehending, and creating (Noble, 2016). A better understanding of the concept of intertextuality could help teachers create lessons that involve both the narrative and the aesthetic dimensions of picturebooks, along with the artistic knowledge necessary to interpret intertextuality in greater depth and thus encourage children's aesthetic development and growing knowledge of art. The vast variety and volume of picturebooks that present intertextuality provide unique opportunities to achieve these goals.

Ultimately, as the readers of picturebooks, it is children who encounter the aesthetic objects and the artwork within them. In the process of looking, talking, learning, and translating the artwork involved, children's awareness of the aesthetics of artwork and sense-making skills may be trained and enriched, perhaps leading them to create their own artwork.

Intertextuality in children's picturebooks is a topic that offers many potential levels for research and for contributing to our understanding of images, arts, picturebooks, creators, and readers. As the great English illustrator, James Mayhew, put it in personal communication with the author (2019): 'We all need [intertextuality] to help us make sense of the cultural history of the world!'

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