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ČASOPIS ZA NAUKU O JEZIKU I
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Sadržaj / Table of Contents

Editor's Note

Svetlana Kalezić – Radonjić 5

The Orchestra as a Metaphor in Illustrated Children's Books

Rosy-Triantafyllia Angelaki 9

Ylvis' *The Fox* – From Music Video to Picturebook –Transformed Into Tinsel or Gold?

Eivind Karlsson 31

Living Free in Harmony: Contrasts and Levels of Invocation in the Picturebook *Piccola con Piccolo*

Diana Zalar, Tea Sesar 51

Musicality and Movement in Corinna Luyken's Picturebooks

Jennifer M. Miskec, Željka Flegar Jopp.....65

Music, Images and Movement in Children's Multimodal Knowledge Books: Tchaikovsky's Ballets in the *Story Orchestra Series*

Christos Charakopoulos, Georgia Karantona, Tasoula Tsilimeni 79

Which Came First, the Song or the Picturebook? Merging and Recreating Literature and Music Across Media

Inês Costa 89

Hawaiian *Mo'olelo* as Sites of Resistance: *Mele Oli* and Temporality in Kimo Armitage's *The Healers*

Carmen Nolte-Odhiambo 103

Rock Me, Baby: Rock and Roll in Croatian Teenage Novels

Vladimira Rezo 123

Dialogues Between Literature and Music in Contemporary Portuguese Young Adult Novels

Maria João Lopes 145

Lemony Snicket's <i>A Series of Unfortunate Events</i> (1999-2006): A Musically-Shaped Narrative Caroline Starzecki	163
Music as Representation of Ethnicity in <i>Asterix</i> Comic Books Marianna Missiou	185
Songs of the War: Ukrainian Children Processing the War Trauma Through Singing Åse Marie Ommundsen	205
Musical for Children Mira Brajčić, Tea-Tereza Vidović Schreiber, Daniela Petrušić	227
Enhancing Children's Literature: The Setting of Fairy Tales to Opera Maria Frendo	247
Translating Aurality: How French Readers Re-script <i>La chasse à l'ours</i> (<i>We're Going on a Bear Hunt</i>) for Performance Maureen Hosay	265
<i>Uputstvo autorima</i>	283
<i>Instructions for Contributors</i>	285

EDITOR'S NOTE

The papers published in this issue are the result of the *Child and the Book* conference *Magic of Sound: Children's Literature and Music*, held in Podgorica from 15 to 17 May 2023. The conference was organised jointly by three units of the University of Montenegro: the Faculty of Philology, the Music Academy and the Faculty of Fine Arts.

The initial idea for organising this conference arose from the recognition that literature and music are deeply rooted in our physical, emotional and intellectual experiences and that they frequently intertwine in myriad ways. However, the relationship between the two has not been explored to a sufficient extent. Music and sound play a crucial role in how language functions, how meaning emerges, how our bodies respond to and shape experience, and how we learn and develop. In both subtle and overt ways, music operates within poetry and prose, graphic narratives, drama, games and play, and folk culture, in addition to more explicit musical contexts, such as popular and classical music, opera, musical theatre and music education. And yet, despite music and literature being “sister arts” with shared origins, their relationship – particularly within children’s culture – has rarely received sustained critical attention. While scholars of children’s literature tend to be more comfortable engaging with perspectives from visual studies, they often shy away from, or fail to recognise, connections with the field of music.

By organising this wide-ranging conference, which brought together 127 researchers from 25 countries worldwide, we sought to address these gaps in the scholarly treatment of the relationship between the two arts. This issue presents a selection of papers originally delivered at the conference, chosen for their quality, innovativeness and strong pedagogical grounding.

In the first section, the articles explore music in picture books, focusing on metaphors, movement and multimedia connections. Rosy-Triantafyllia Angelaki (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), in *The Orchestra as a Metaphor in Illustrated Children's Books*, demonstrates that music can function as a means of fostering understanding, appreciation of diversity and social skills in multicultural societies. Eivind Karlsson (Oslo Metropolitan University) shows how the picture book *What Does the Fox Say*, illustrated by the renowned Norwegian author Svein Nyhus, is not merely a spinoff of the popular music video *The Fox* by Ylvis, but an autonomous and innovative work of art, whose rich iconotext can be fully appreciated only through close analysis and

picture book theory. Diana Zalar and Tea Sesar (Faculty of Teacher Training, University of Zagreb) analyse the innovative picture book *Piccola con piccolo*, which, through the story of a gifted young girl, contrasts formal musical instruction with improvisation and promotes the freedom of musical creation. Jennifer Miskec (Longwood University) and Željka Flegar Jopp (University of Osijek) examine the picture books of Corinna Luyken, characterised by an improvisational, musical and embodied creative approach in which rhythm, movement and “bodily poeticizing” invite readers to reflect on creativity and human relationships. Christos Charakopoulos, Georgia Karantona and Tasoula Tsilimeni (University of Thessaly) investigate sound-enhanced multimodal picture books from *The Story Orchestra* series, which combine text, illustration and music to introduce young readers to Tchaikovsky’s ballets, with sound functioning not merely as accompaniment but as a key element in understanding melody, narrative and emotional nuance. Finally, Inês Costa (University of Aveiro), in *Which Came First, the Song or the Picturebook? Merging and Recreating Literature and Music Across Media*, analyses three Portuguese children’s picture books that combine literature and music, exploring how different media (books, songs, video clips and musical inserts) shape the representation and reception of stories, increasing their visibility and appeal.

The second section of this issue brings together articles that examine musical elements in young adult novels, often in relation to cultural, ethnic, and multimedia contexts. Carmen Nolte-Odhiambo (University of Hawai’i–West O’ahu) argues that children’s and young adult literature frequently reflects a Western, linear, and segmented conception of time, whereas Indigenous Hawaiian songs, stories, and traditions – such as *mo’olelo* and *mele oli* – offer alternative temporal perspectives that affirm non-linear understandings of life. Vladimira Rezo (University of Zagreb) analyses three Croatian young adult novels in which rock music functions as a key motif in the protagonists’ coming-of-age processes; each novel employs a different narrative strategy, addresses a different age group and belongs to a distinct genre (the performance novel, the novel of music criticism and the musical diary/*Bildungsroman*). Maria João Lopes (University of Aveiro) examines musical references in three contemporary Portuguese young adult novels, demonstrating that these references are not merely decorative but actively contribute to character development, thematic depth and the expansion of the reading experience, showing how music shapes meaning and identity in youth narratives. Caroline Starzecki (University of Rouen) analyses how Lemony Snicket’s *A Series of Unfortunate Events*

employs music – particularly the accordion – as a symbolic and structural element that shapes the narrative and enables multilayered storytelling, while Lemony Snicket himself functions as a multidimensional author-narrator-character who orchestrates the story in a manner akin to a musician.

The third section includes contributions that explore music as a means of representing ethnicity, cultural identity, or emotional experience. Marianna Missiou (University of the Aegean) examines, through the lens of imagology, how music in the *Asterix* comics shapes and reinforces ethno-cultural stereotypes while simultaneously inviting their critical reassessment. Åse Marie Ommundsen (Oslo Metropolitan University) investigates the power of music in processing war-related trauma by analysing Ukrainian songs – most notably “*Oi u luzi chervona kalyna*” – which function as vehicles for emotional expression, collective consolation, protest and national identity.

The fourth section brings together studies of musical performance and dramatisation for children. In *Musicals for Children*, Mira Brajčić, Tea-Tereza Vidović Schreiber and Daniela Petrušić (University of Split) examine how musicals, through the integration of song, dance and acting, can be effectively used in educational work with preschool children, particularly in puppet performances in kindergartens, as children’s participation in the creative process fosters cognitive, social and emotional development. Marija Frendo (University of Malta) explores, across three different cultural contexts, the adaptation of fairy tales into the musical genre, demonstrating how such transformations support learning as well as children’s emotional and cognitive development, especially among those from disadvantaged and marginalised backgrounds.

The final section of this issue addresses translation and intercultural aspects of music. Maureen Hosay (University of Antwerp and Ghent University), for example, analyses the picture book *We’re Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury, focusing on its musical – or aural – dimension as a key element of read-aloud practices, as well as on translation strategies such as rhythm, rhyme and linguistic choice, which shape the sonic quality and performance of the picture book for an audience.

As the contributions discussed above demonstrate, the aim of this issue has been to explore further possibilities for the “tandem reading of musical and literary works” (Kramer 1989, 161) within the field of children’s literature, thereby offering new contributions to literary-musical studies in response to the culturalist turn in the humanities. We are confident that this issue of *Folia Linguistica et Litteraria* will inspire

further research into this highly compelling and unjustly underexplored topic.

Svetlana Kalezić-Radonjić

THE ORCHESTRA AS A METAPHOR IN ILLUSTRATED CHILDREN'S BOOKS

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Abstract: Ethnic, social, cultural and linguistic diversity is a distinguishing feature of today's societies. Consequently, it is important to help children learn how to value diversity, interact successfully with others and appreciate different perspectives, while making clear that multiple influences shape their own perspectives and behaviours. Music is considered to be a universal language that allows people from different backgrounds to communicate successfully with each other and to gain a better understanding of different cultures. It is also important for orchestral musicians to have strong social and interpersonal skills, as well as to maintain good social relationships with colleagues, in order to achieve excellence on stage. Therefore, this article examines the ideological implications of illustrated children's books that present music as a creative and communicative art and draw on the metaphor of "the orchestra as society", aiming to enable readers to appreciate cross-cultural differences.

Keywords: children's literature, picturebook, multiculturalism, music, orchestra, metaphor

1. Introduction

Music¹ (including every dimension of it, such as History, identity, gender, and customs) in contemporary societies is associated with education, culture, the healthy development of the human personality, the formation of social identity, and people's smooth adaptation to the

¹ The term music derives from the Greek word "μουσική", signifying the "art of the muses", who were goddesses and companions of Apollo in Ancient Greece. Within the realm of ancient Greek culture, music held a significant position among the seven art forms, playing a crucial role in soul cultivation. It also served an essential function in education, possessing the ability to refine the souls of listeners and performers alike (Koivunen 62).

society from a young age (Gabrielsson and Lindström 369; Stokes 123, 132). Additionally, it is considered to be an alternative way of communicating with other people, as well as an important means of expressing and disseminating the folk and cultural heritage of a nation or an ethnic group, through which cultural pluralism is highlighted and the knowledge and acceptance of the Self and Others is achieved, regardless of their origin, gender, age, religion, profession, lifestyle, etc. (Le Roux 54, 65).

The aforementioned becomes evident when observing orchestral musicians: To ensure success, each one must comprehend their individual role and responsibilities within the ensemble, as well as the collective skills of the team. It is vital that orchestral musicians have strong social and interpersonal skills and maintain good relationships with colleagues, in order to achieve excellence on stage. They also need to remain adaptable, as they may encounter a different conductor each week, and should be prepared to adjust to varying interpretations of the same symphony, tolerating these differences (Logie 31).

Orchestra is a neologism, and its interpretations as a term, a concept, and an institution within the European culture have evolved throughout history². Today, the term is used as a metonym for instrumentalists who perform under centralized control and discipline. Orchestras encompass various types of ensembles, with a symphony orchestra being the most complex kind and comprising over 100 musicians (Spitzer and Zaslaw 14-23). The factual aspects of the orchestra, such as the number of players, the instruments used, and its arrangement, can be comprehended through literal language. However, the significance of the orchestra is grasped through figurative language, encompassing the descriptive terms people employ to characterize orchestras, the analogies drawn between orchestras and other entities, and the similes and metaphors utilized to express what the orchestra signifies to individuals.

² The term also derives from the Greek word “ορχήστρα”, originally referring to a space designated for dancing (Koivunen 63). In ancient Greek theaters, the orchestra was the area in front of the stage reserved for the choir. With the emergence of opera in the 17th century, this concept was adopted and adapted accordingly by Renaissance humanists to designate the area in the theater between the stage and the audience. Later that century, when the instrumental ensemble was moved out in front of the stage, the orchestra began to refer to the place where the musicians played. By the early 18th century, the meaning of orchestra began to extend itself to the large musical ensemble, which consisted of a diverse group of musicians, proficient in various instruments.

More specifically, as orchestra and its concept became entrenched during the 18th and 19th centuries, and as people became familiar with its structure and operation, the orchestra itself emerged as a rich source of metaphorical inspiration, with governance, economy, hierarchies, and labor being central to these metaphors (Ramnarine 330; Spitzer 243). According to Lakoff and Turner's terminology (23), the target domain is the orchestra, while society is the metaphor's source domain. Lakoff and Johnson revolutionized metaphor studies when, in 1980, they introduced Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which dictates that most abstract concepts (target domains) are understood thanks to metaphors using concrete concepts (source domains), forming conceptual metaphors that dominate our everyday thinking, speaking, and acting (142); structure the way we think about something and "may be internalized by children from their mostly unmarked presence in picturebooks" (Stephens 138).

While in the early 17th century some opted for metaphors with negative implications when describing orchestras, highlighting whether the sensory and social chaos resulting from the amalgamation of numerous instrumentalists into a single ensemble or the fact that, under the direction of a single leader, the orchestras mirrored autocratic styles of governance (Ramnarine 330), others perceived the disorder of the massed instrumentalists as akin to celestial harmony (Spitzer 239). In the 18th century, people began to employ the metaphoric conceptualization "orchestra as a society" on the grounds that, just as the interests and actions of individuals are merged and regulated within society, the orchestra combines instrumentalists to create music (Ramnarine 327; Spitzer 204)³. The "orchestra as a society" metaphor falls into the category of structural metaphors that are "grounded in systematic correlations within our experience". That is, they are based on certain aspects of our cultural and physical experience (Lakoff and Johnson 14).

2. Orchestras' metaphoric conceptualizations in children's texts

Texts created for children uphold and sometimes redefine societal values, operating within ideologies assumed to be shared between the

³ During the second half of 19th century, the term orchestration was also employed metaphorically, referring to the purposeful manipulation with a particular goal in mind, drawing inspiration from the composer who skillfully arranges the instruments of the orchestra and considers the nature of the different parts, relationships and connections of the musical work, to fulfill his musical goals (Spitzer 252).

text and its audience. These texts also fulfill a cognitive function by organizing social attitudes and relationships within narrative plots (Stephens 137). One of their main goals is to raise young readers' awareness and social awakening and to introduce them to the idea of the intercultural dialogue and acceptance of Others while at the same time recognizing them as a part of the Self (Angelaki 2023a, 161). Given that:

- (i) music as a concept can provide avenues for cross-cultural comprehension and societal unity (Volk 5) and remains a preferred method of communication between diverse cultural groups;
- (ii) learning the language of music teaches someone to listen (Barenboim 65), which is essential to communication and the basis of harmonious co-existence;
- (iii) symphony orchestras are viewed by many as socio-political actors; and;
- (iv) orchestral interaction signifies social values such as harmony, organization, dedication, and control (Ramnarine 2017),

it would be, thus, interesting to examine how illustrated books for children⁴ consider the role of music in relation to cultural diversity, as well as whether music making within an orchestra, when presented in children's texts, can be regarded as a symbol that encompasses multiculturalism, diversity, harmony, and search for one's identity, whether overtly or implicitly.

3. Starting points and purpose of the study

The starting points in my entry is, on the one hand, Lakoff's and Johnson's argument that metaphors used in everyday language are conceptual devices; have a cognitive basis; and are deeply intertwined with the way we understand the world (3–4). On the other hand, Stephens claims that "all aspects of textual discourse, from story outcomes to the expressive forms of language and pictorial representation, are informed and shaped by ideology" (Stephens 317). Particularly, Stephens claims that ideologies play a crucial role in maintaining social order, as they provide the structure necessary for the functioning of society; that, in order for children to effectively integrate into society, they must understand and adhere to the various social and linguistic norms present within it. He also underlines that ideologies,

⁴ This article adopts Elizabeth Bird's and Junko Yokota's argument (281) that picturebooks should be considered as a subset within the broader category of illustrated books, based on the assertion that illustrated books "are any that have at least one illustration".

being composed of commonly held beliefs and ingrained within textual elements, can often go unnoticed, functioning at a deeper level than mere thematic interpretations typically reach. He cites scholars who studied how picturebooks reflect ideologies of multiculturalism and mentions García González's study (2015) that focuses on the depictions of migration and adoption in contemporary Spanish children's books. Her analysis relied on Lakoff's metaphor, the "nation-as-family", which implies "that citizens are like children whom the government needs to care for" (86) and suggests that politics in the U.S.A. are built upon the nurturant parent model for the liberals, and the strict father model for the conservatives.

Additionally, Stephens refers to scripts (139), mentioning that, just as conceptual metaphors are integrated into everyday cognition, they can possess ideological significance through their implicit teleological assumptions, while also representing a common pattern of actions that underpins many everyday activities. He adds that scripts encompass standard actions, situations, or familiar narrative structures, allowing readers to anticipate a sequence of events based on key components or schemas. Image schemas are used as source domains and lie at the basis of numerous metaphorical constructions. A schema, meaning the cognitive framework or concept that helps organize and interpret information (Angelaki 2023a, 163), consists of several components and is activated in illustration by visual representation of key components (Stephens 141).

In this article I chose three illustrated children's books that deploy the "orchestra as a society" metaphor and imply that music education can make a contribution to self-actualization and a positive self-image (Le Roux 84). While two of the books —specifically, Dan Brown's *Wild Symphony* (2020) and Eliseo García's *La orquesta de mis amigos* (2021)⁵ —are characterized by an equal relationship between pictures and words, in Angeliki Darlasi's *To paliopaido*⁶, which means the drifter in Greek, (2014), the illustrations become an extension of the text, yet the narrative does not rely on their presence (Bird and Yokota 281).

Considering that social relations within orchestras are found to be useful in conceptualizing the relational dynamics within society and in understanding the interplay between the individual and the collective, I

⁵ The particular book was studied by the author in Greek. Therefore, extracts of the book have been translated in English by the author herself, who has taken as a reference the Greek published translation.

⁶ The book was originally written in the Greek language and its original title is *To παλιόπαιδο*.

examine how the books consider the role of music in relation to cultural diversity and individual identity; how the metaphor of the “orchestra as society” and its positive connotations is implied both in the visual and the verbal text of the selected books, promoting a vision of a well-integrated society based on the notions of collaboration, liberalism, pluralism and mutual respect; if the works have the capacity to instill to children social values, enabling them to develop listening and communication skills, to appreciate themselves and the Others, as well as to accept cross-cultural differences.

I analyze the selected books by adopting an interdisciplinary approach informed by scholarship on illustrated books for children and ideology (Stephens *ibid*), musicianship, and the key concepts of music education in multicultural societies. I also rely on Ryan’s concept of “storyworld” (34), which is “the mental representation of a virtual world a text must evoke in order to qualify as narrative” (Narančić Kovač 416), and examine how its most prominent components (meaning the characters and their actions, the events and the setting) convey the ideological message that orchestras function as “the social world in miniature” (Ramnanine 329), and can be regarded as socio-political actors that address issues around community, identity, and multiculturalism.

4. The research material

4.1. *Wild Symphony*

This is the work of renowned author and son of music teachers, Dan Brown. Confirming Blacking’s argument that language and music are characteristic features of communication for human beings (11), Brown wrote a book for preschoolers and primary school students, “whose instrumental parts, together with the lyrics and illustrations, also tell a story”. Readers can enjoy it as a traditional read-along or can opt to enhance their experience by listening to original music composed by the author himself —one for each animal— through a free interactive smartphone application (app). This app utilizes augmented reality to play the corresponding song for each page when the phone’s camera is positioned over it.

At first glance, Brown’s book appears to lack a central plot. However, with a closer look, it becomes apparent that the book’s story world is presented in a traditional symphonic format, and the book is a celebration of community and affirmation of individuality. These are suggested by the book’s title, which is complementary to its textual meanings and offers readers the opportunity to form an opinion about the book even before reading it (Genette and Crampé 693). The term

“symphony” is used to describe grandiose orchestral works. To compose them, composers must concentrate on merging a multitude of stylistic elements, showcasing the potential of various musical instruments, and orchestrating the talents of different musicians

Brown emphasizes the dynamics between individuals and the collective by building the plot around the metaphorical conceptualization of the “orchestra as society” —or, as one could claim, on the “orchestra as a humane and animal society”—, thus motivating readers to respect not only themselves and Others, but also animals. This approach aims to foster an appreciation of social cohesion by highlighting the individuality present within orchestral musicians, ultimately suggesting the essential balance required between diversity and coherence in contemporary societies. Readers are prompted to experience the importance of the individual contribution to the social whole through safe distance, as the author attributes human-specific characteristics to the animals that constitute form the orchestra (Cunningham et al. 17). They are also encouraged to feel as artistic entities themselves, since being different, they are called upon to consciously combine heterogeneous views in order to live together in harmony (Lowe 56; Forney and Machlis 245).

The story unfolds in the jungle. In the book, there appear different kind of animals, such as birds, kangaroos, cats, boars, frogs, spiders, fish, armadillos, ponies, elephants, etc., divided into five distinct groups: mammals, fish, birds, reptiles, and amphibians, in correspondence with a symphony orchestra’s organization into five sections, based on instrument families: strings, woodwinds, brass, keyboards and percussion. This division facilitates the conductor in achieving a balanced and cohesive sound. All animals parade at the book’s colorful pages, while a third-person narrator reveals their traits through delightful verses. The pictures are symmetrical to the text (Nikolajeva and Scott 12). Similar to the orchestral musicians, each specializing in different instruments, each animal family group learns a different kind of instrument to constitute a musical ensemble, where different types of collectives and social relationships are forming. As the musicians are divided into discrete instrumental sections within which they are supposed to play different parts, although from the same score, the animals are presented into distinct doublespreads that simulate the instrumental sections where musicians perform different parts. At the penultimate spread, they contribute to a whole that surpasses what any single individual could achieve by attempting to master all the instruments of the orchestra (Image 1).

Image 1. *Wild Symphony*

Notably, the author draws a parallel between the animals' social groups and the orchestras, emphasizing the Maestro Mouse's role, who holds such diversity together and coordinates their complementary efforts. Specifically, both the visual and the verbal discourse imply the importance of the orchestras' inner workings, systems of control, and negotiations over authority between musicians and conductor, indicating his crucial role and responsibility for holding together such diversity. In orchestras, it is important that conductors evaluate the sound all the time, form aesthetic judgments about the playing and understand music, as well as communicate all the aforementioned with the musicians (Hunt, Stelluto, and Hooijberg 151-2). Conductors should also be aware of their behavior since it significantly impacts instrumentalists and shapes the outcome of their conducting endeavors, paying attention to treating them as collaborators rather than subordinates (Logie 33). Additionally, it is essential that they encourage the members of the orchestra so that the latter can endure the creative process and be completely involved in the playing (Spitzer 242).

Accordingly, the Maestro Mouse in *Wild Symphony* is always present on the setting, holding his baton, showing tempo and dynamics, and reminding the animals that, in order to communicate in a positive and cooperative environment, just like the orchestral one, they must all respect and accept one another, be completely involved in their in-between communication, endure tension and acquire interpersonal skills. The mouse's body language, as depicted in the illustrations, is encouraging to the animals; he acts as a facilitator dealing with conflicts, as an innovator who thinks creatively; as a mentor to them, just like conductors do (Lebrecht 17-9), sharing his advice for group dynamics and harmonious living in everyday life's "jungle". Maestro Mouse's recommendations are carved on wooden signboards and are written in capital letters, probably because the typography of written language

serves as a conduit of verbal narrative, as a visual element, and as a semiotic resource with its meaning potentials (Serafini and Clausen, 2012). For example, he suggests animals to “BE QUIET AND GRACEFUL” as “A LOT OF NOISE IS NOT THE BEST WAY TO GET ATTENTION” thus introducing to readers the value of discretion, perhaps recalling the composer’s argument that silence is as important as music and has its own interpretation; hence, the discernible pauses in many orchestral pieces.

Orchestral musicians need to have patience and practice often, as well as to understand and appreciate their colleagues’ skills as much as their own, to mitigate performance anxiety, feelings of dissatisfaction and lack of control, fear of losing skills, and internal conflicts of self-esteem and personal limitations so as to deliver an enjoyable performance for the audience (Logie 31, 61). Maestro Mouse advises animals –and, thus, readers– to “ADMIRE THE SKILLS OF OTHERS, BUT NOT TO FORGET THAT THEY HAVE TALENTS, TOO”, reminding them that “FALLING DOWN IS A PART OF LIFE. THE BEST THING TO DO IS TO GET BACK ON THEIR FEET”. Also, since symphony orchestras may also be competitive organizational environments, just as contemporary societies are dominated by competition, with the musician’s emotional intensity sometimes interpreted as an irritable behavior, overreactions, and even aggression among musicians, may happen just like in real life, (Koivunen, *ibid*, 68-75). For this, the cheerful Maestro Mouse advises: “WHEN YOU FEEL OVERWHELMED, IT’S GOOD TO TAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF” and “BLOCK OUT BAD THINGS”, being careful not to become isolated and “OPEN UP AND INVITE THE GOOD THINGS IN”. The ideological messages of the text are supported by the illustrations, which depict an “anxious ostrich”, that “when she’s stressed or feeling hurt, she sticks her head down in the dirt”, as well as an armadillo, “who’s got his shell when days are bad, to keep out things that make him sad”.

The relationships among orchestra members who might be from different ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural backgrounds, are crucial for achieving collective excellence. This involves active listening, adjusting individual volume,

and taking into account various musical parameters and rhythms with distinct boundaries, in order to produce melodies in harmonious sequence. Accordingly, in order to successfully navigate the globalized society, people in their daily lives should become culturally aware and try to listen and communicate effectively with others, by accepting alternative viewpoints alongside those of the prevailing majorities. The aforementioned are implied in the double spread where the “woodland

birds” are presented to the audience (Image 2). The third-person narrator informs the readers that “honking, hooting, chirping, peeping, squawking, tweeting, cooing, cheeping” is indeed “so noisy”, but if they pause for a while, they will “hear each bird’s own special song”. Therefore, children are prompted to realize that in contemporary multicultural societies, each person’s special point of view is only fair to be heard.



Image 2. The “woodland birds” in *Wild Symphony*

The illustration depicts birds with different sizes, colors, and shapes, aiming to imply that even though they belong to the same animal group, they have different physical, behavioral, and genetic characteristics that make them special. Moreover, since color meanings come about through connotation and metaphor (Kress and van Leeuwen 72), one would argue that the birds’ different colors intend to introduce a sense of diversity to children, who are encouraged to perceive the latter as an enriching element of society. Correspondingly, children become acquainted with the different sounds of music produced by “happy frogs” who “sing together in the bogs. Big ones, small ones, fat ones too, green and brown and even blue. No one’s right, and no one’s wrong. Everyone just sits along” (Image 3). This way, any form of discrimination and prejudice is eliminated, and the author’s attempt to familiarise children with the fact that orchestras and societies are culturally diverse is evident. In this particular illustration, Maestro Mouse’s sign supports the author’s attempt to infuse music in children’s minds as a way of manifesting cultural pluralism, such as the message “ALL OF US ARE DIFFERENT SIZES, SHAPES AND COLORS, IF WE WORK TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE WONDERFUL MUSIC” carved on it.



Image 3. "Frogs in a bog" in *Wild Symphony*

4.2. *La orquesta de mis amigos [My Friends' Orchestra]*

This book encourages readers to be creative, to play music and listen to it. Its pages are not numbered, yet many have acoustic symbols next to the musical instruments presented each time, all of which appear lined up with their exact names in the next-to-last full spread. In the final full spread, these icons can reproduce the sound of an orchestra and each instrument previously presented, as long as readers click on them, with the book being battery-operated. In the same full spread, children can also see a list of musical pieces for piano, violin, flute, etc., written by famous composers. However, apart from acquainting preschoolers with music, this book also promotes music as a means of communication in multicultural environments and contributes both to the understanding and acceptance of the Other, as well as to the recognition of the Self through the acceptance of cultural diversity (Cabedo-Mas & Díaz-Gómez 387; Hebert and Karlsen 6). The ideological meanings of the verbal discourse are enhanced and expanded by colorful illustrations (Nikolajeva and Scott 68).

The book's story world stages the description of the symphony orchestra as a "microcosm of society" (Gillinson and Vaughan 194), idyllically reflecting the ethnic diversity of the world and presenting music as an opportunity to elaborate on expressions of cultural diversity. According to the narrator, the plot unfolds as follows: Martha's family "owns a musical instrument shop. Her friends, who want to make up an orchestra, decide to visit her and try them out" to find those that suit them. Martha and her friends are all trying to explore a number of musical procedures, to develop their innate musical potentials, and to apply their musical skills to new musical experiences so that to make up an orchestra, which they perceive as a collective in which everybody is

different, but they all manage to maintain unity while engaging with each other's ideas (Oehrle 76); Martha's friends come from diverse cultural backgrounds and Martha herself is depicted as a girl with disabilities, seated on a wheelchair (Image 4)⁷.

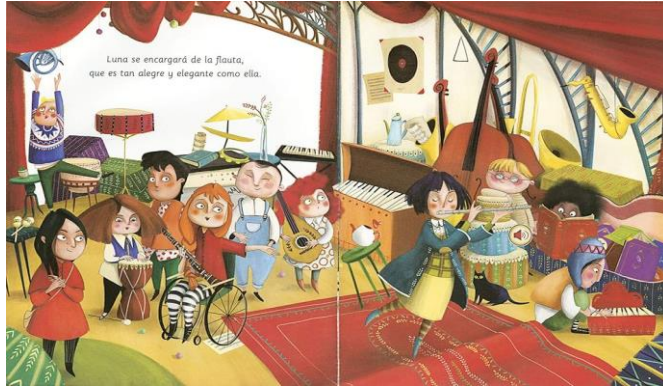


Image 4. Picture from *La orquesta de mis amigos* (original version)

Perhaps the author, in an attempt to deploy the basic principles of multicultural music education in his book and to combine music and diversity, chooses to implicitly refer to physical disability via the visual discourse, probably intending to show that physically disabled persons need not necessarily live in obscurity. However, it may be considered too pretentious that the disabled girl is projected as unique and widely accepted.

According to Le Roux, “children who hear and appreciate a wide variety of music will gain a world view that encompasses humanity as a whole and music past and present - a perspective that is both positive and critical to the future of one's country and our world” (147). While it is impossible to know what real readers will obtain while reading the book, since Martha and her friends are depicted as individuals from different origins, readers are possibly prompted to assume that the

⁷ The inclusion of images from both the Spanish, the Greek and the English editions of the same book is a conscious scholarly choice. Firstly, these were the editions that were publicly accessible and legally available online, which allowed for ethical and accurate use of visual material. Secondly, and more importantly, this selection supports the multicultural and transnational perspective of the study. By drawing from different linguistic and cultural editions, the analysis highlights the book's international reception, circulation, and adaptation across diverse cultural contexts. This approach also reinforces the argument that literary works are not only national but also transnational cultural artifacts, shaped by and contributing to multiple cultural narratives.

characters would want to make their cultural backgrounds visible and, therefore, integrate their music culture into the performance. This claim is supported by the interaction of the dual semiotic codes, for example, when Jack is depicted playing the guitar happily (Image 5). He “shouts excited at the sight of it,” announcing that he wants it because “his grandfather taught him to play it.” It is thus implied that Jack would play the music his grandfather taught him, which would enable his friends to gain a deeper understanding of him as a person and of his musical heritage. This way, the prevailing colonial perception of “West is the best” (Nethsinghe 2) is discarded, and readers can gain a heightened sensitivity towards their musical heritage, acknowledging the contributions of that heritage within the broader realm of music (Le Roux 158).

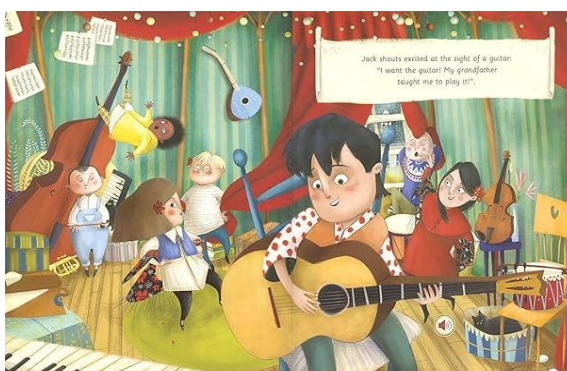


Image 5. Picture from *My friend's orchestra* (English version)

It could also be argued that the dual semiotic codes interact to present children's music education as a means of refining themselves, implying that music can afford opportunities for fostering inclusion and mutual understanding: For example, we read that Peter “most of the time he just makes noise, but now that he is joining the orchestra, he is determined to play the notes properly” (Image 6).



Image 6. Picture from *Η ορχήστρα των φίλων μου* (Greek version)

Peter's friends are depicted as rather annoyed by his play, but no one discourages him. Given that later on in the book Peter is depicted taking part in what appears to be the orchestra's final rehearsal (Image 7), it is implied that social groups, just as youth orchestras, can offer a climate free from pressure and competition, allowing individuals to believe in their competence (Le Roux 76). Also, readers are prompted to understand that disciplined engagement with music can transform noise into subtle melody, as well as that mutual respect among musicians and a commitment to improving individual and group performance are essential, that just as instrumentalists should appreciate their colleagues' dynamics and foster collaboration to deliver an enjoyable performance, correspondingly members of a social group should encourage one another, be receptive to difference and exchange cultural elements with others to achieve harmonious coexistence.

The book, apart from deploying the metaphor of "the orchestra as society", also interrogates readers' schemas or "mental structures of preconceived ideas" (Stephens 141) regarding conductors: By reading that "the conductor is petite Yvonne", children who would have already internalized a schema for conductors derived from gender norms in patriarchy may develop a new cognitive map that disputes such stereotypes. Cassandra's illustration supports the author's attempt to present music as a way of reducing prejudice and producing intercultural cohesion instead: The picture that complements the text depicts Yvonne as a small and short person who is obviously accepted as a figure of power (Image 7) by all of Martha's friends, who appear to be fully concentrated and happy with their coordinator. The fact that in the previous pictures they were all wearing clothing somewhat reminiscent of traditional attires (for example, Martha's friend, whose eyes are slightly slanted upwards, wears a blouse that resembles a Japanese kimono), but in this particular picture, they are all depicted

wearing the same costume, is indicative that the illustrator attempts to highlight diversity within coherence.



Image 7. Picture from *Η ορχήστρα των φίλων μου* (Greek version)

4.3. *To paliopaido* [The Drifter]

Darlas's illustrated book is a discourse about "the power of art and culture against poverty and social exclusion"⁸, aiming to enable children to look at youth orchestras in terms of social action and to connect them with the promotion of ideals around socio-ethical concerns, which is a way of orchestrating civil society (Ramnarine 333). The story world emphasizes music education's contribution to self-actualization and social inclusion, which stems from the fact that it helps individuals organize and express their emotions and ideas in a manner that is reconcilable with the society in which they live. Additionally, it highlights the orchestras' capacities for acquiring a positive self-image and obtaining social interaction.

The author draws inspiration from José Antonio Abreu's example of the civic functions of a youth orchestra: In the 1970's, the economist and musician envisioned helping the poor children in his country, Venezuela. Building on a group of eleven children, he created El Sistema, a music education system and social change/youth development program offering alternative societal visions. Thanks to the transformative power of music, starting in Caracas, Abreu managed to integrate into society many children and adolescents who "formed gangs" so as "to entertain their sadness and face their poverty" (Darlas

⁸ As the author declares on the book's back cover. The book was awarded in 2015 in the National Literature Awards in the category of Illustrated books for children and was mentioned the same year at the IBBY Honour List.

17). Through music education, he removed thousands of children from spiritual poverty and crime, transforming their lives by imparting values of solidarity, cooperation, harmony, and humanism. He made these children “the stars of an orchestra,” and, as a result, they gained “self-esteem and pride” (59).

The story’s main character is Felix (Image 8): a poor child who lives in the slums of Venezuela, deprived of rest, play, education, friends, warm food, and parental affection since his father “was always away looking for work”, while his mother “was very ill” and therefore helpless (9). He is the drifter that others marginalize “because once, when he was hungry, he stole a loaf of bread from the bakery, and when he was cold, he took a pair of socks from a neighbor’s clothesline. Because sometimes, being exhausted, he fell asleep on the stairs of strangers. Because many times he played with the abandoned toys of other children, and everybody thought he had stolen them (17).



Image 8. Felix, the main character of the book *To Paliopaido* [The Drifter]

According to the third-person narrator, Felix is induced by gang membership as a way to cure loneliness and gain peer respect. Following his leader’s orders, he steals from a man, threatening him with a revolver. This man happens to be the founder of El Sistema. In their second random encounter, Abreu unveils the greatness of his soul and manages to wrest the revolver from Felix, exchanging it for a violin, which proved to be “a powerful weapon against child and juvenile delinquency”⁹ alongside music. Abreu approaches Felix with warmth and acceptance and even offers to play music for him (Image 9) - something that allows the protagonist to “let the beauty of music

⁹ As it is also stated on the book’s back cover.

embrace him as a consolation or a promise” until his eyes are filled with tears.



Image 9. Abreu plays music for Felix

Abreu, who is not preoccupied with Felix, as soon as he realizes the effect of music on the young boy's soul, offers to give him violin lessons. According to the text, his approach filled Felix with such joy that he felt “as if the stars had spoken to him and the sky had embraced him” (44). Abreu proposed Felix join the group of kids to whom he provided free music education. Felix accepted his offer, and then his life changed entirely as he learned to be authentic and proud of his background, since the youth orchestra he joined proved to be a supportive and stimulating environment, a highly valued institution, as well as a social union of pluralism, where music served as a catalyst for communication, fostering appreciation and new behavioral patterns.

Felix's engagement with music and his confidence after joining the orchestra also expanded his neighbors' understanding of him. Since the narrator informs readers that Felix's neighbors “remembered his name again”, stopped calling him “a drifter”, and “felt happy and lucky to have him around” (52), readers are prompted to perceive music as a unifying force with significant social benefits that functions as a tool for dismantling barriers and biases that separate individuals, promoting a culture of tolerance and inclusivity (Oehrle 99). The aforementioned is implied in the picture where Felix is depicted playing the violin (Image 10), wearing red clothes instead of the grey garments he was depicted to wear in the previous pictures of the book. His two neighbors, a young girl and an old lady, are depicted smiling at him as they listen to his

playing, with the musical notes suggesting the positive effect of music on the girl's mood as they rise up to her window.



Image 10. Felix's neighbors "stopped calling him "a drifter", and "felt happy and lucky to have him around" (52)

Since colors prove to be an essential source of meaning in an illustration (Kress & van Leeuwen, *ibid*), Samartzi, in order to clarify that music was a source of joy that added color to Felix's colourless, grey life, uses the bright red color, which is associated with power, passion, revolution, and extroversion (Angelaki 2023b, 88). This is also evident in the picture where Abreu plays his violin (Image 9), which is rendered in fiery red, just like each musical note above his head. Arguably, readers are encouraged to conclude that, as the red musical notes lead to heaven, so does everyone's soul through music. The positive effect of music on Felix's soul is also indicated by the different colors with which the illustrator chose to shade the slum where the protagonist lived. While initially, Samartzi chose the grey color to depict the slum (Image 11), after Felix joined the orchestra and "felt happy again," she chose fiery red as the dominant color of the sketch (Image 12).



Image 11.



Image 12.

5. Conclusion

This article examined whether “typical” illustrated books about music that conceptualize the metaphor of the “orchestra as society” can cultivate intercultural respect in young readers, laying the foundations for their smooth introduction to today’s multicultural society. The analysis focused on the verbal and visual representations of prominent story elements of the selected books. It examined whether they projected orchestral interaction as a mode of civic collaboration that helps individuals expand beyond their cultural confines and attain the necessary attitudes to actively participate in public discussions with people of diverse backgrounds.

The analysis indicated that the selected books both verbally and visually conceptualize the orchestra as a broader set of harmonious social relationships; perceive diversity as a unifying force; advocate the notion that engaging in shared performances can provide children with enjoyment and boost their self-esteem; and promote music as an expressive medium and a communicative art that enables children to comprehend the significance of cultural distinctions. While Brown and Garcia present orchestras as the metaphorical equivalent of democratic, multicultural societies, Darlasi emphasizes the positive societal impacts of orchestral initiatives that provide marginalized children with a sanctuary through action-oriented forms of creative engagement (Ramnarine, 333), implying that music can foster various aspects of a child’s self-actualization. All three books invite children to decode the relationship between the visual and verbal texts to understand the ideological messages of the two tropes and to produce the final meaning, which lies in the fact that the harmony that dominates the world of music, conceived as a dynamic process of integrating diverse

elements into a whole, should pave the way for obtaining harmony in life and in the world.

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L'ORCHESTRA COME CAMPO SORGENTE PER LA METAFORA NEI LIBRI ILLUSTRATI PER BAMBINI

La diversità etnica, sociale, culturale e linguistica contraddistingue le società odierne. Di conseguenza, è importante aiutare i bambini a imparare a valorizzare la diversità, a interagire con successo con gli altri e ad apprezzare i diversi punti di vista, chiarendo al contempo che le proprie prospettive e i propri comportamenti sono modellati da molteplici influenze. La musica è considerata un linguaggio universale che permette a persone di diversa estrazione di comunicare con successo tra loro e di comprendere meglio le diverse culture. Considerando che per i musicisti d'orchestra è importante non solo avere forti capacità sociali e interpersonali, ma anche mantenere buone relazioni sociali con i colleghi per raggiungere l'eccellenza sul palcoscenico, questo articolo esamina gli albi illustrati per bambini che presentano la musica come un'arte creativa e comunicativa e attinge alla metafora dell' "orchestra come società" per consentire ai lettori di apprezzare le differenze interculturali.

Keywords: Letteratura per ragazzi, libro illustrato, multiculturalismo, musica, orchestra, metafora

YLVIS' THE FOX – FROM MUSIC VIDEO TO PICTUREBOOK –TRANSFORMED INTO TINSEL OR GOLD?

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Original scientific paper

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Abstract: The article deals with the picture book *What Does the Fox Say*, based on the music video “The Fox” by Ylvis (2013). The question is what the relationship between the two products is. When a hit video is celebrated and followed by a picture book with what appears to be more or less the same content, can one assume that the book is a mere spinoff product without much significance? This article seeks to answer this question by performing a reading of the picture book, using three different approaches. The first one uses the historical context to investigate the provenance of the products and to describe relevant parts of the cultural landscape of spinoff phenomena. The second approach uses theory about intertextuality to attempt a description of the two products and discuss a connection. The third approach uses picture book theory to ascertain whether the iconotext of the picture book is indeed interesting and not merely mirroring the video. The findings confirm that the origins of the picture book are indeed shrouded in mist. More importantly, using theory on intertextuality as a tool proves useful to unveil some relations between the products, but involves some principal issues regarding the comparison of products from different art forms. However, a close reading of the picture book using picture book theory, reveals a versatile and innovative iconotext which deserves scrutiny by readers young and old, and debunks suggestions that the picture book is in any way inferior.

Keywords: music video, picturebook, iconotext, intertextuality, spinoff

1. Introduction

This text approaches two artistic expressions that represent a joint project and much of the same content, but that exist in different media and genres: A music video, “The Fox” (Ylvis, 2013), and its picturebook counterpart *What Does the Fox Say* (2013), illustrated by Svein Nyhus. Whereas the video gained considerable attention in its time (Karlsson, 2016), the picturebook’s fate is a less obvious success story.

The authority on children's literature history in Norway, *Norsk barnelitteraturhistorie* [Norwegian child literature history] (Birkeland and Mjør, 2018), presents Nyhus at length, with analyses of his contributions to different picturebooks. *What Does the Fox Say*, however, is only mentioned as a sales success. It is remarkable that Birkeland and Mjør do not comment on the style or the content of this book, considering how it represents a project unlike any others from the hands of Nyhus, and seeing as he is one of the most revered picture book creators in Norway and beyond. But in this case only the sales figures are deemed worth mentioning, not the aesthetic effort.

The present analysis aims to use an investigation into the video and the picturebook in order to answer this question: Is it reasonable to argue that the picturebook is a mere spin-off product of the video, and is it possible to argue for the opposite? I look for arguments in three places: 1) In historical context, 2) in theory on intertextuality and 3) in picturebook theory, with emphasis on the local iconotext.

The motivation for this study is the wish to make sense of a chaotic situation. On one hand there is the product, the picturebook, which is part of a rather conventional literary institution, involving an established creator and distributed through the normal channels of the literary cycle of children's literature. On the other hand this book exists in symbiosis with a video. They are both part of the multimodal World of netizens of the *web.2*, a generation who consume and contribute, independently of the establishment. These netizens use social media, play online games and watch videos, but they use the digital surroundings to inform their practices and mental focus. And they also read books. It all starts early. It is an ambition of this text to discuss the role of a paper product in this context and to discuss the function it may have.

The assumption is that a simple and hurried spin-off product will not make a great impression on anyone, be it first line consumers or scrutinizing scholars. Likewise, an innovative quality product will have the potential to make its mark. But what if a confusion arises, placing a quality product in a low status category? To investigate this, it is necessary with a wide scope. In this text it includes the global perspective, where the origins and reception of the book play a part. It also includes the local perspective, where a close reading of the book delivers arguments. In addition, reflection is required regarding the comparison between two products in different media.

2. The historical context

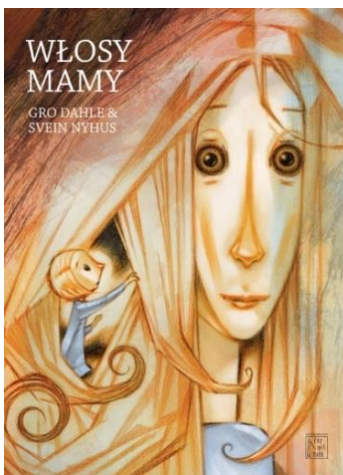
A presentation of the video “The Fox” is a good starting point as we try to understand the issue at hand. The video became a major YouTube hit as soon as it was published. It was the first music video by a Norwegian group to exceed 500 million views and is now listed with more than 1 billion. Music videos with this kind of success experience digital transformations of different kinds: Memes, mashups, cover versions, parodies and more, all part of the process called “going viral.” The success of “The Fox” may not be a total coincidence. Karlsson (2016) points out how “The Fox” is similar to another major Youtube hit, Psy’s “Gangnam style” (2012). Both videos were launched on a platform that already had some popularity, both were follow-ups of other videos, both are so-called novelty products, both contain outsider characters and show people of all generations, and both are ambivalent regarding the target audience. They both feature animals, which appeals to many viewers, and there is a catch phrase and an iconic dance in both. Furthermore, both are based on local contexts that may appear exotic to international netizens; the spruce forest of “The Fox” relates to Norway, the country of outdoor living (“friluftsliv”). The modern Asian city of “Gangnam Style” relates to South Korea, the competitive culture with social tensions. Thus there is a logic behind the choice of staging of the videos, yielding an effect on a broader international audience. The early launch and reception of the video “The Fox” comprises a diverse landscape. The video itself constitutes a crossover product, addressing people of different ages, and distinct elements represent the perspective of children, of teenagers and of young adults, as well as the old. This is a feature that is also apparent in the video “Gangnam Style” by Psy (2012), and it may be part of the explanation why some videos do go viral (Karlsson 2016).

The picturebook *What does the fox say* (2013) was published alongside the video. Both appear to profit from the internet community and internet behaviour, while at the same time conforming to traditional small children’s picture books. The present reading takes a look at the historical context, the intertextuality and the local iconotext of the picturebook and can complement some less nuanced reviews of the book, and by including a glance at its immediate digital multimodal hypotext we can discover more of the potential that we find in this playground of expressions. The launch of the video “The Fox” and the picturebook *What does the Fox Say* in 2013 appears to be a planned multiproduct launch. The video was part of the popular TV programme *Tonight With Ylvis* (TVNorge 2011-2016), in a series of videos that were also published on Youtube (“Tonight with Ylvis episode 1: ‘Song of the

day' and 'The jury'"). These videos had already gained some popularity, but presumably it was anyone's guess which one would really go viral, there was no particular campaign to promote any of them in particular.

The video was launched in September of 2013, while the book was published in December. According to Ylvis, it is not a spin-off product, because it was conceived at a moment where "The Fox" had not yet gone viral ("Hva sier reven?"). This means that Nyhus had a month or two to create the book. This is a short time, even as a full time engagement, and it could mean one of two things: Either that the book was made much earlier, or that it was made rather quickly. In the latter case, it is natural to assume that the video is the primary product and the book a by-product.

Some facts may indicate that the book and the video were a joint effort aiming at some commercial breakthrough. Both products involved top performers in each genre. The producers of the video is one example. "Stargate" is a video production company with clients like Rihanna. "Stargate's" Mikkel S. Eriksen (41) and Tor Erik Hermansen (41) owed Ylvis a favour, and that is how a video like "The Fox" was made possible on a limited budget ("What the Fox? Everything you need to know about Ylvis and then some.."). This ensured that the eccentric humour of the song got a commercial wrapping that could resound with a wider audience.



Likewise, the work with the picturebook that was published the same year was assigned to an accomplished artist with high renown in his field. Svein Nyhus is a three times winner of the children's book award of the Norwegian Department of Culture and a six times nominee for the international ALMA award. His picturebooks about children in challenging life situations, together with Gro Dahle, have been translated into many languages. They combine artistic ambition with a therapeutical function

and are part of a lifelong project of giving challenged children a voice and enabling adults to empathize ("Let's Talk Illustrators #109: Gro Dahle and Svein Nyhus"). The child's perspective is also noticeable in the books Nyhus has made alone. The involvement in a purely commercial publication like *What Does the Fox Say* seems like a hazardous venture for an artist with such a legacy.

What Does the Fox Say was an international bestseller as soon as it was published, topping the picturebook bestseller list of papers like The New York Times ("Children's Picture Books"), and reportedly selling more than 300 000 copies ("The Fox (What Does the Fox Say?)"). This success came with a price. Tim Newcomb in *Time magazine* (2013) comments on the numbers with the words "ka-ching." He calls the book a "literary extension" of the "crazily popular" music video, and he also speculates about the initial negotiations between Ylvis and Nyhus in the hiring process, concluding that Nyhus only said yes to do the picturebook job when he got wind of the millions of views of the Youtube video.

This context coincides with some features the picturebook, where Nyhus makes some relevant aesthetic choices. First and foremost he conserves the words of the video unabridged, which does not seem ambitious. On the one hand this choice is a constraint that could be an interesting challenge for an artist. However, in the book we find few traces of a conscious or ambitious connection between verbal text and pictures in the book. The text is repetitive and is dominated by the onomatopoetical utterances from the video. There are few or no intra-iconic verbal text features (Beckett, 2014) and the letters are integrated into the iconotext in a rather rudimentary way. The rigid rendering of the verbal elements appears to be a static element, isolating the video text from the iconotext of the picturebook. This is an imposed or self-imposed choice, in line with texts of song books, with illustrations surrounding it, or integrated into the text. In this case the picturebook appears to be a pendant to the video, where the adult who reads to the child is invited to simply recite the words from the video, for example singing the lines. Youtube responsive videos demonstrate how small children have no problems enjoying singing along with the video as they watch it ("My Girl Sings - What Does the Fox Say – Ylvis"). The book can scaffold a similar way of experiencing the content.

The colour palette of the book is also interesting in a historic perspective. What does it signal? Far from the saturated and bright primary colours of mainstream commercial products for children, like Lego blocks or Peppa Pig aesthetics, Nyhus chooses colours that give a dim impression, with earth tones mixed into them. It could be a way to distance the expression from certain purely commercial franchises. I interpret it as a design choice to evoke some favourable sentiments in the adult readers. The colour palette is not part of the playful process with multimodal elements. The spreads are dominated by a tainted layer with a sepia effect, also on empty spaces in the spreads. The effect is that the book seems aged and gives a retro style impression. This is

not unknown in products for children. The nostalgia surrounding childhood provides a market for old school toys and retro style products. We find this aesthetics in the products from *Blafre* (Inspirasjon forlag), which build their marketing on retro vibes. Their thermo bottle matches the colours from *What Does the Fox say*. The motive shows nature (clouds) and culture (farm) with references to local traditional landscapes, where the Massey-Ferguson tractor and the red building with the bridge and the pointed roof are typical of Norway. The clothes company *Moods of Norway* and the popular Norwegian children's TV series "Gråtass" contain the same elements. Alluding to them in a picturebook for children is a shortcut to the heart of Norwegian families, and apparently also resounds with an international audience.

These initial observations point in the direction of a spin-off product borrowing its value from the video, combined with nostalgia

signals that can boost sales.

According to dictionary.com a spinoff product is "any product that is an adaption, outgrowth, or development of another similar product", a secondary product in a "somewhat unrelated area" ("Spin-off").

However, there exist arguments for the opposite view. The strongest is perhaps the presence of an actual picturebook in the



video. In the dance scene the dancers surround an old man who reads a picturebook for a child, singing the very same phrases that we find in the Nyhus picturebook. This is a source of confusion when it comes to fictional layers (Karlsson, 2016). It also challenges the genesis of the physical book and the time of its creation. The book in the video is a different book, judging from the cover that is displayed. So the picturebook *What does the fox say* can not be found as a prop in the video. The relationship is more complex than that. The picturebook has a life in its own merit, and it also exists in a tactile version for people with reduced sight or other special needs – or others who just want a tactile experience. This is one step further in understanding the book with a an autonomous existence, independent of the video. When the products in these ways pose the question of what is the primary and

what is the secondary product, we are no longer talking about a regular spin-off phenomenon.

3. Intertextuality as a problem and possibility

If the book is a text that has its own aesthetical value and system, what then is the relationship between the video and the picturebook? Genette (1997) starts out describing the palimpsest (an old manuscript with several layers of written and erased text) as a metaphor for relationships between old texts (hypotexts) and new texts (hypertexts) that build on the old ones. In the case of *What does The Fox say* it is unclear which is which. However, it is worthwhile to look into the world of intertextuality in order to sort out some possible relationships.

Related texts are transformations of each other. We have transformations when one artistic expression is transformed into another. Genette (1997) lists a plethora of possibilities, like transstylization, when the high style text is reborn in a low style version. Another example is transmotivation, when the original hypotext reemerges in a version where the point of the story is changed, for example from moralism to pure entertainment. We can also think about the diegetic transposition, where the plot of a story is set in a different time and place, like *West Side Story* (1961), the musical version of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Could such transformations apply to our two products?

In the case of the video and the picturebook we have two different media. To compare them is problematic. Is the image of a fox in a picturebook necessarily related to a fox in a video? The video contains stylized foxes in the shape of dancers and fursuits, but also a realistic fox, and not least an anthropomorphic fox with fox hide and a human voice, standing up and singing. The many different fox shapes in the picturebook have features from all of these fox-like apparitions from the video. We interpret drawings on paper in a different way than we interpret video pictures and animations. Drawings are fixed expressions that need active interpretation and contextualization. Moving pictures in a video require a different kind of co-creative activity. With picturebooks we can talk about the reductive nature of encapsulation (Duncan, 1999): The picturebook spread freezes a moment in time and selects a limited number of elements and emphases. When the level of abstraction required for interpretations increases, the chances of finding reasonable points of comparison wane. The picturebook is a more open and diverging expression than the video in our case.

Genette describes intersemiotic relations in chapter 79 of *Palimpsests* (1997) by warning that different art forms have elements

that are not comparable. Meaning, language, repetition, mood; they all have different ontological status in works of painting, music or literature. When we compare two multimodal expressions, the job becomes exceedingly complex. Perhaps the closest we can come to a valid comparison is by resorting to Genette's concept of diegesis, in this case the fictitious world that the story unfolds in. In my view, the book and the video both retain some basic features that picturebook readers and video viewers will perceive as similar:

1. The fox and the trees. In both products there are plenty of these.
2. The party guests and the animals. In both products there are plenty.
3. The party apparel: glasses, masks, confetti, food, furniture. In both products there are plenty of these.
4. Humorous elements. In both products there are plenty of these.
5. The lyrics, identical in both products.

The diegetic world is the sum of the verbal, non-verbal, paraverbal, communicative, cognitive, and semiotic parameters of an aesthetic expression (Drößiger, p. 282). Before looking further at the details of the picturebook, it is good to come to terms with a preliminary conclusion: The intertextual relationship between the two products must represent some type of copresence of texts (Genette, 1982, p. 2). The picturebook quotes the video by rendering the text in its entirety. The similarities between the other visual elements could be a type of allusion. The third type of copresence of texts is plagiarism, according to Genette, but in this case the imitation is no secret, regardless of what we perceive as the original.

Both the video and the picturebook are based on a certain kind of hypotext: children's books about animals. In an English-speaking context, Dr. Seuss' *Fox in Socks* is a reference, and this makes sense: The tongue-twisters of Dr. Seuss highlight poetic language, as does also *What Does the Fox Say?* in its own way. Roald Dahl's *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (1970) is also well known, and both these books present the fox as an interesting animal. So do the many folk tales about the fox: It is a smart, enigmatic and elusive animal. *What Does the Fox Say?* indeed focuses on the charisma of the fox. Its self-assured posture and its frequent appearance in the limelight of a stage in the book leaves no doubt as to who the main character is. We find a similar attitude at the end of the video, but this is an element that the book cultivates to a higher degree.

Diegesis presupposes a fictitious world where there exists a plot, but there is not much of a plot in the video. It is more like a collection of tableaux that act as a background for one single question, a so called

sylliloque, where the main character talks to himself. The video revolves around this. The picturebook, on the other hand, has the fox as its main character. The narrator in the frame story is now invisible. Maybe it is fair to say that the book has a slightly more developed plot, with the constant marching from left to right, with occasional stops for a performance by the fox or another animal. A picturebook is a type of media with room for small side themes, created by secondary characters, but it also has linear characteristics and a tradition for causality. We turn the page and prepare to be surprised or to have some confirmation. A video, in particular a music video, invites to a more simultaneous reading, and new angles and scene shifts don't necessarily mean that we travel on a timeline. In conclusion, also the plot and our expectations in that regard, represent some incongruency that is unsurmountable. The art forms are just different.

The concept of transmediation is often applied to discussions about books and movie versions, and it is also applicable to discussion about a picturebook and a video. However, the question at hand is not how much content is retained in one medium and lost in another. The question concerns the status of the picturebook. Its inherent qualities are just as important as the transmediation perspective. This text uses intertextuality as the comparative tool. It is a well established field with some tradition, while transmediation is a field in rapid development. Peña and James deliver a comprehensive synopsis of the plethora of different definitions of this concept, suggesting that it might represent a theoretical detour from a quite practical research question. However, Peña and James cite Horn (2007), where the introduction advocates "attention toward the "technological-medial *a priori*" of culture; that is, toward the function and functioning of media over and against any interrogation of their "nature."" This functional focus is an invitation to a final comment on the epitextual context of the picturebook.

In a digital world, intertextuality is taken one step further. Karlsson (2016) refers to the so-called web.2 of the new digital cosmopolitans. The Web.2 is a world where the mash-ups, comments, parodies, pastiches, commentaries, paraphrases and "covers" exist as parasites on viral phenomena, but also contribute with creativity and influence. The example where a kindergarten enacts a music video about the fox, using the original sound, is interesting. Nyhus could have picked it up and referred to it in his picturebook. I have not managed to find any conclusive evidence for such influence. Nyhus seems to operate isolated from the web.2 aspect of the video. Nevertheless, his picturebook can be viewed as one in a long row of multimodal comments on the video, and probably one of the most elaborate ones. Parodies on Youtube are

often parodies in the original sense of the word, as a song sung alongside another, and not necessarily with a mocking intent. Nyhus' pictures resound alongside the pictures of the video, and they offer a lot of creativity and add new qualities. This brings us back to the question of the status of the book as a spin-off product or an independent picturebook in its own right. The last line of argumentation will address its qualities as a picturebook.

4. The complex iconotext

The question of the status of the picturebook will be addressed here also by conducting a close reading. A complex and challenging expression can be used as an argument that the picturebook is not a spin-off of the video, but an autonomous artistic product. We will look at the paratext, the motive, the verbal elements, the style and the rest of the iconotext.

The *paratext* of a picturebook includes the peritexts that are part of the physical book, like the covers, the end papers and the title page. Let's look closer at the title. The video has a short title: "The Fox." This is for internet visibility and impact, and it makes online searches more effective. The title is partly dictated by the dynamics of the medium. It is also short and enigmatic and caters to a diverse target group, really anyone with an interest for this animal.

The title of the picturebook can be interpreted as a quote from the video refrain. "What does the fox say?" is the catchphrase, and it is the closest we come to a refrain. It is common to name songs either by first line in verse or refrain. However, Bob Dylan chose the repeating phrase in the refrain in "Blowin' in the wind" as his name for the famous song. The pop group *Survivor* uses the last words in the verse in "Eye of the Tiger" (used in the *Rocky* movies). "The Fox" (the video) is similar: The catch phrase forms a bridge between the verse and the refrain. In "The Fox" the space allocated for the refrain is filled with fox sounds. Each of these "refrains" is different, with different sounds, but the same musical environment. It is a cognitive challenge to imagine what the refrain could be, if we found out what the fox says. But we can only guess, according to the text. In rhetorics it is a so-called indecorous element when the refrain is reduced to a draft every time it repeats itself. Hunt and Paliewicz describe indecorous elements as at odds with conventions, and a way to make room for suppressed voices. In this case, the playful vocalizations of the refrain certainly give children a voice and an agency in the processing of the video and book. The wording of the catchphrase is still familiar from a long tradition of children's books and songs that ask: What does the dog say and what

does the sheep say. The video and the picturebook connect to that tradition.

Videos with animal sounds are not unique. The pop group A-ha has a song called "Cry wolf" (Scoundrel Days, 1986), using animal sounds in a song for adults. A-ha is the greatest Norwegian commercial success, and a big influence on Norwegian pop musicians, also on Ylvis. When A-ha's most famous song, "Take on me" (Hunting High and Low, 1984) ends on a high note, it is iconic, especially with Morten Harket's characteristic falsetto voice. It is even the name of the last World tour of the pop group ("Aha"). "The Fox" also ends on a high note: "What do you saaay?" This is a musical allusion to A-ha. Based on this, the most interesting part of the paratext of both book and song is the title. It refers to small children's books, but it also has other references. When the book picks up these elements, it is an example of playfulness and intertextual complexity.

The paratext also includes the *epitext*, which is the mention of the book in contexts that are not part of the physical book. The video is a dominating epitext for the picturebook. Not only the original video has this function, the epitext also includes all online comments and references. These are prolific online. Bristol public library has posted a Youtube video where a librarian (presumably) sings the song while showing the picturebook spreads ("What Does the Fox Say? Book and Song"). The youtuber Lihay made a cartoon ("What does the Fox say? [cartoon version]"). There is a *Just Dance* version, where we can learn the dance ("Just Dance 2015 - What Does The Fox Say?"). The bluegrass version with Gwen Sebastian is catchy ("The Fox - Bluegrass Tribute to Ylvis by Gwen Sebastian (what does the fox say)"). Zhenjiang book club presents a loud reading without the music ("What Does the Fox Say (Musical Book Reading)"). A kindergarten presents a "parody", which is more like a reshoot of the video, with child actors ("Ylvis- (The fox Parody) Kid Version"). An ocean of videos revolving around "The Fox" show the impact of a video gone viral, and it is typical of contemporary netizens that they actively engage and create, they are not just passive consumers looking for entertainment (Karlsson, 2016). This world of meaningful activity is also the epitext of the picturebook. It functions as a recommendation—this video and this book is worth looking into—and as online resources that can increase the potential for interesting experiences with the book.

The motive is interesting. Nyhus establishes a big *carnival* in his picturebook, taking the gathering of friends in the posh forest house from the video a step further: All kinds of animals participate in a giant costume party, and they march forward, each one contributing with his own voice. This scene corresponds with Bakhtin's vision of the carnival element in medieval culture, where the whole village or society come together and the World becomes a stage, with all inhabitants as actors. The ideas are developed in *Rabelais and His World* (Bakhtin, 1984): In the times of the carnival the body shapes, with its protrusions and crevices, get increased attention, and crude songs and raw laughter, theatre and literature can resound unhindered by morale. People low and high switch places, bishop seats are seized by choir boys, children spank their parents and animals attend mass. We notice similarities in *What Does the Fox Say?* Some elements are certainly present: crowds of persons and loads of peculiar body shapes, and all the animals taking part. It is also a subversive tendency here: The animals take the place of people in the carnival in the picturebook. The Bakhtinian tendency can also be related to the online community, which acts as a market place for all sorts of crude or refined expressions in connection with "The Fox." Inadvertent or not, Nyhus has set a stage for an inclusive and diverse event, as child readers, adult readers, youtubers and viral audiences

take part in the celebration of the humour and wonder. Epitext matters.

The *verbal* text in the picturebook is identical to that of the video, and the video actually has subtitles, so the correspondence can be tracked in minute detail. It is interesting how verbal text is put in the foreground, both in video and picturebook. Most of the song consists of some type of animal language, where the song and book present all the different sounds, which are really guesswork on fox sounds. But the verses contain some



musings that are also subject to emphasis when the words are

highlighted in different ways. In the picturebook the verbal text has one intraiconic feature: The font is a typewriter font, similar to the MS word font Courier. This is a retro signal and influences the reader reception.

Finally, there is one more reference to verbal text in both video and book that should be mentioned. In one of the spreads we see a person reading a book. This turns into a meta event in the book, in a more direct manner than in the video. Karlsson (2016) interprets this video sequence as the childhood memories of the main character who poses the question in the song. In the picturebook, however, the book is in the hands of a frog in a rocking-chair, far from evoking any sentimentality. When animals read books, it can have a motivational effect on children that feel close to animals. It also conforms with the subversive motive: Humans have left this stage, and the lowest of animals sit on the reader's throne

Turning to the pictures, we notice the nostalgic colour scheme. The shapes have a distinct style. The organic shapes with non-repetitive patterns and shapes are striking. Even when there is a pattern of fox shapes, like on the back cover, each fox has an individual expression, in addition to conforming to a pattern. The geometrical plan for the shapes is evident already on the front cover: Wavy leaves and soft fur alternate with rigid half circle rocks and pointy trees with straight lines and triangle shapes. Throughout the book we notice an obsession with circles in the pictures. They appear everywhere, from bottle tops to white tail dots. There is definitely playfulness of geometry here. On spread number 1 there are at least 22 circles, even in the joints of the dog. On spread 5 there are 38 circles to be found, for the attentive reader. In spread 1 there are four spirals, hidden in shapes like tails or party stationary. In addition to the organic and geometric shapes we find a lot of two-dimensional surfaces. All of the prominent elements of the shapes come together in a style that resembles a defined style, the Art Deco. The spreads have the aesthetics of 1930s posters. The perspectives are skewed, and we see rays in the shape of trees and handheld flashlights, often parallel rays. There are also rays spreading out from one single point, like in spread 5 and 11, and there are sun-shaped spotlight shapes. This is also typical of the art deco style, along with the propensity for free profiles. Nyhus' style could be labelled as a contemporary Art Deco, and he uses it also in other books.

A picturebook analysis includes a look at the *iconotext*, describing how the elements of the book work together. As we have seen, Nyhus creates a world with nostalgia as a stylistic move, and it is populated by characters recognizable from the epitext the video, e.g. the costume party members. However, in the picturebook animals have taken the

place of people. We don't see people dressed as animals, we see animals dressed as foxes. They not only wear carnival masks, they also form a parade, like a circus parade as the circus comes to town. The spread with a spotlight on the real fox in the role of a star rhymes with this.

If we view the video and the picturebook as one product, we notice how the book selects and highlights certain elements. In spread 5 we see a character in a chair shouting out sounds, just like the old man in the video. But the book puts emphasis on the oral activity by repeating and exaggerating. The frog in the chair shouts so much that he bounces in his chair, and the tongue almost falls out. The fox on the recto opens his mouth wide, and the trees in the background are physical manifestations of the voice, like the motion line and emanata (sweat or tear drops) of comic books, the lines that act as meta signals. The picturebook displays congruency (Nikolajeva&Scott, 2006, p. 6) with the video. At the same time we see varying degrees of deviation, as pointed out above. It makes sense to view the two products as one combined product. How else can we find motivation in the book for a reading frog, or explain why animals dress up in carnival masks and ask about the sound of the fox? The book is not completely independent of the video.

However, the reader who accepts the peculiar plot of the book, will find many ways in which the book creates meaning on its own, and I will continue to use terms from Nikolajeva&Scott. There is *congruency* in spread 6, when the text says "blue eyes, pointy nose" and the picture shows the same. But the other spreads show that "pointy" can mean a lot of things, so there is *elaboration*. In spread 1 the text says that the dog says woof, which is a generic statement. But the picture shows a particular Dalmatian dog with red leash and its own personality. This is *specification*. We have *amplification* with all the open mouths in the spreads, emphasizing that animal sounds are in focus. On spread 2 the frog says quack, following the familiar pattern of the small children's book, but the frog has a crown. This could be an example of *complementation*: Animals are individuals and they have their history, just like people. A closer look at the frogs reveals that some of them have things in common with so-called head-footers, figures from paintings by Renaissance painter Hieronymus Bosch. One frog with a pointy party hat has a body resembling a Pokémon ball, the dwelling of the animal-like figures from the popular movies and games. Here different narratives compete, and this may be an example of *alternation*. It continues on spread 3, where an animal that looks like Disney's Donald Duck appears, and on spread 10, where the fox appears in the guise of an Egyptian Anubis figure. *Sylleptic* elements are everywhere, for example in spread 10, where two foxes on the recto are

having a fight, on spread 5, where two mice discuss dance moves, and on spread 12, where a frog rests on the elephant's tail after doing a decoration job.

Humour is everywhere. The spider on spread 10 has a mask that is bigger than the animal itself. The tree stub on spread 9 dances along with the foxes. The animals on spread 3 bring with them their own inflatable animals. It is not every day you see a duck with a rubber duck. The fish in the water bowl uses a straw to drink soda from a box that is already submerged on the bottom of the bowl. The bowtie on spread 9 has eyes, so that it looks like a mask. The moon on spread 4 looks like a fox tail, and the flowers on spread 6 look like fox heads, alluding to the plants with names like fox glove and fox bell. On spread 12, lying between scattered leaves and party apparel, we see a smile on the ground, in the shape of a mask, definitely setting the tone for the atmosphere.

In both cultural references and in the humour it is evident that the intended *audience* is both young and more experienced readers. Spread 12 is one example. A child can recognize the fox tail on the seal head, and perhaps the clumsy figure of the cow with fox ears and tail attached. Also the lamp cord in the shape of a duck is within reach for young eyes, perhaps more so than for adults. But adults will attach more significance to the half eaten apple and tooth brush on the ground, pointing towards more lamentable sides of party life and the day after. On top of the soda cup with a straw we also see what looks suspiciously similar to a used condom. The naïve expression of the cow's face may remind adults of the struggle to fit in, which is part of the social challenge that parties represent for people with or without anxiety for contact, gatherings, crowds and hierarchies.

The references to drinking culture is interesting. In the video we see mostly wine glasses/goblets. The picturebook, on the other hand, lets loose a plethora of drinking experiences for children: straws, the licking of cups, a milk bucket with straws, drinking straight from the water mug, a baby bottle and a vase. The book acts like a wimmelbook, with a row of epiphanies for readers who go looking for details. Adults may find a message in the way Nyhus translates the champagne culture of the video into a party environment suitable for children. The children's perspective is to find inspiration in the mundane, or seeing the exhilarating in the seemingly normal, far removed from the artificial intoxication sought after by adults. The adults, on the other hand, will connect the Anubis figure and the mystical life of the fox and notice trees that are alive and trees that are dead. Insects with wings symbolize the spirit, in death liberated from the body and flying into the hereafter.

Life is short and you only live once. Perhaps both adults and children may notice the walking stick and the key hidden in the pictures – a reference to Martin Handford's popular books about Waldo (Wally). As we read, we see this ambivalence of this remarkable book, without a clearly defined plot or a specified target group, but which most definitely contains an iconotext with inventive, surprising, complex and profound elements.

5. Conclusion

An investigation into three contexts of the picturebook *What does the fox say* confirms that these contexts are relevant and can deliver answers to the question: Is it reasonable to argue that the picturebook is a mere spin-off product of the video, and is it possible to argue for the opposite? The latter part of the question seems less and less appropriate with increasing insight into the book and its context.

1) The origin and reception of the picturebook may indicate that it conforms with purely commercial publications based on the popularity of a primary product. A look into the process behind the picturebook shows that parallel products can be part of high ambitions and a complex series of events and negotiations. Timing may be essential, but it may be unrelated to quality. It seems likely that the sudden rise and fall of the sales numbers of the picturebook is related to the viral video as a promoting factor.

2) A pure spin-off relationship between video and picturebook should yield a good number of congruency between the products. However, it turns out that the intertextual relationship is complex and a matter of discussion. This is due in part to the different media, but the present analysis shows how elements are used in different ways and to different ends in the two products. Using Genette's concept of hyper/hypotextuality as a tool, it is possible to identify many alternatives for a transformation of the texts, from transstylization to transmediation. It seems likely that the distant, yet unmistakeable connection between video and book contributes to its status. The diegetic relationship is perhaps most striking to a traditional reader. However, the digital approaches on social media create an epitextual atmosphere that cannot be removed entirely from the book.

3) Moving on to the analysis of the iconotext of the book, it becomes clear that Nyhus has not only made a simple pendant to the video, but developed the motive and the functions into an autonomous or near autonomous product. A visit into the functions of Nikolajeva & Scott (2006) makes it clear how Nyhus plays with visual elements and iconotext elements, making surprising moves with elaboration,

specification, complementation, alternation and other relationships between picturebook elements. Addressing readers with different experiences, the picturebook displays many qualities incompatible with a low quality spin-off product.

Although we can not know the exact time of conception of the two products, we can point out some ways that the two point to each other, complement each other and amplify each other. A close reading of the book demonstrates how it is a true picturebook, with all the complexity of a skilled work of art with an ambition of its own. Musicians and visual artists seem to inspire each other in this case, and the result offers many interesting experiences for readers who see past the commercial surroundings.

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Illustration:

Roger Broders exhibition poster - *Cote d'Azur - Le Soleil toute l'année - France - Travel – Tourism* – print, <https://www.etsy.com/listing/1353522684/roger-broders-exhibition-poster-cote>

YLVIS' THE FOX – FRA MUSIKKVIDEO TIL BILDEBOK: FORVANDLET TIL GLITTER ELLER GULL?

Artikkelen tar for seg bildeboken «Hva sier reven» av Svein Nyhus, som utkom i 2013, samme år som videoen «The Fox» ble et youtubefenomen. Spørsmålet er om bildeboken er en mindre interessant pendant til videoen, eller om den er et autonomt og kunstnerisk høyverdig produkt. En lesning som inkluderer et blikk på historisk kontekst, på intertekstualitet og på ikonotekst avdekker noen komplekse sammenhenger, men konkluderer med at bildeboken ikke står tilbake for Nyhus' øvrige produksjon med tanke på kvalitet, humor, oppfinnsomhet og utnyttelse av bildebokmediet.

Nøkkelord: musikkvideo, bildebok, ikonotekst, intertekstualitet, *spin-off*

LIVING FREE IN HARMONY: CONTRASTS AND LEVELS OF INVOCATION IN THE PICTUREBOOK PICCOLA CON PICCOLO

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Abstract: The paper explores the picture book written by Croatian author Bruno Mezić and illustrated by Klasja Habjan, published by Mala zvona (2021). Croatian children's literature about music (Ž. H. Vukelja, Lj. Šimara etc.) starts from different topics; the importance of hard training, overcoming fear before a performance or the characteristics of a musical instrument. This picture book raises some provocative questions about the relationship between practising and enjoying music, and provokes the reader's engagement. First, the picture book has a different and unusual theme: the freedom of creating (composing) music, which is not only possible for adults, but also for a very small girl. This idea corresponds in the picture book with the girl's sensitivity to sounds from nature and the environment. Second, this is a hypersensitive and extremely gifted child, so the picture book can also be viewed from the aspect of encouraging and affirming creativity. The picture book also functions as a small vocabulary in the field of classical music, in a humorous and appropriate way. Third, the illustrator's contrasting illustrations (scenes of formal teaching in a music school and improvisations which Piccola practices alone) are a visual challenge addressed to the reader, while the text has the role of describing different ways of understanding and performing music. The focus of the text is the method of the author's artistic presentation of the previously mentioned perspectives. The authors of the paper were also inspired by the books *The Gifted Learner. How to Help* (Fidelma Healy Eames 2022) and *With Story to Music – Story as a Starting Point in the Musical Upbringing and Education of Younger and Preschool Children* (Željka Horvat Vukelja & Petra Heisinger 2020), as well as functional pedagogy by Elly Bašić and recent research on the discovery of gifted children by Blaženka Bačlija Sušić and her colleagues.

Keywords: picturebook, creativity, improvisation, child, music, gifted learner, functional music pedagogy

By teaching them music, we have taken music away from them.

Elly Bašić

1. Introduction

The interesting topic of incorporating music into the upbringing of children in Croatia is present at various levels. In addition to music schools and academies with classical programs, there is the Elly Bašić Music School, which develops and promotes a comprehensive concept of musical education, the so-called functional music pedagogy. Its founder, Elly Bašić, emphasized:

By teaching them music, we have taken music away from them. Historically, at least from the Scholae cantorum until today, we have not educated and cultivated creative types, but reproductive ones. (...) Instead of putting techniques and knowledge at the service of music, they became an end... (2005, 28)

One of the main concerns of the music school founded by Elly Bašić is the possibility of improvisation and the attitude that without spontaneity there is no improvisation and spontaneity arises when you believe in your own abilities. Bašić explained:

Every child has creative imagination. Every child has a rhythm. Every child has the right to musical culture. Even five-year-olds can be students. Improvisation on an instrument as a free and spontaneous expression of the child, which is not limited by the conscious level of knowledge, is combined with the conscious acquisition of musical knowledge (...) The child, psychologically motivated by the magic of play, is not a reproductive object, but a creator, reproducer and his own audience in one person. (2005, 27)

The picture book discussed in this work artistically confirms the thoughts on which Elly Bašić bases her musical pedagogy. The main character, a girl, achieves international success precisely through the power of her creativity and improvisation in playing various musical instruments.

The Ana Maletić School of Contemporary Dance is another complete music education concept for the new generations in Zagreb that combines two arts – dance and music, with the emphasis on dance. When it comes to pre-school music education, stories and classical music are brought together by children's book authors Željka Horvat Vukelja and Petra Heisinger, who lead music and storytelling workshops for children, which they call Music Room Love. The aim is to improve children's music-making, supported by a story, interdisciplinary activities and the linking of different areas before, during or after listening to music. But no matter what recital or classical piece is presented, it all starts with a story that opens up an emotional and

natural pathway to understanding and learning. This approach also encourages a positive attitude towards classical music and the children's interest in it.

Through the story and art of illustration, the picture book talks about how interest in classical music in young children must be supported by an interesting story, by encouraging the expression of emotions, as well as by encouraging musical improvisations that arise from natural sensitivity to the sounds that surround us.

Željka Horvat Vukelja is the author of two picturebooks on the subject of children and music. *Pianist*, illustrated by Kaća Svedružić, is about overcoming the aversion to hard work and practice, the fear of performing and the satisfaction when hard work is rewarded. The *Flying Piano*, illustrated by Dario Kukić, is an adventurous story about a concert piano that ran away from irresponsible owners until it found a musician who longed for it and deserved it.

The picture book *Piccola con piccolo* is the first picture book published in Croatia that does not talk about the difficulties of making music, nor about the sacrifices of musicians, but about the inner world of a girl who is exceptionally gifted and who manages to offer her gift to the world through musical improvisations. A special topic is the influence of the social and natural environment on a gifted child.

At Zagreb's Exit Theater, director Rene Medvešek has staged the play *And the Tree Was Happy* based on Shel Silverstein's picturebook *The Giving Tree* with professional academic musicians. The performance makes the complex and rather sad message of the picture book brighter through the joy of making music. This brilliant theatrical example shows how the meaning of the picturebook can be enhanced and enriched by musical parts and characters of instruments, improvisation in the characterization of figures and images from the book or relationships between characters. The project has been running for more than twenty years and shows how theater art can be used to introduce children to music and instruments, especially with four types of saxophones: soprano, alto, tenor and baritone.

The picture book *Piccolo con piccolo*, from this perspective, shows how a literary work can introduce a child to terms from music theory (with the help of a small glossary at the end of the book), to the characteristic sounds of various musical instruments, to the pleasure of performing and the pleasure of creating music.

Taking all this into account, we can say that the diverse and interesting music concepts and approaches in Croatia are not followed by an equally rich and innovative corpus of children's books dedicated to this topic or topics such as children's music-making, composing or

performing. Therefore, we have determined that the picturebook *Piccola con piccolo* by Bruno Mezić and illustrator Klasja Habjan is of great importance. It attracted us precisely because of the joy of making music. It makes no mention at all of the efforts and sacrifices involved in learning music - for the simple reason that the child in this picturebook does not perceive them as such.

The concepts of the Elly Bašić Music School and the approach of Music room Love by Horvat Vukelja and Heisinger are close to this philosophy. But the artistic scope of the picturebook *Piccola con piccolo* can also be explained in the light of Fidela Healy Eames' scientific research. The little girl Piccola belongs to a special group of children to whom Eames dedicated her last book *The Gifted Learner. How to help*. It describes the characteristics of a gifted learner, different models of giftedness and how to include these learners in the educational process. It is of great importance that we understand the long-term motivation of gifted children and the ways to support their emotional and social development, in addition to providing appropriate help to parents, teachers and caregivers in guiding these children.

The picturebook *Piccola con Piccolo* is about the exceptionally gifted little girl Piccola, who grew up surrounded by adults who recognized and understood her diversity and specialness, in other words – her talent. Piccola became famous for her flute improvisations and her ease of playing and performing is astounding. It is obvious that this ease comes from her inner motivation, creativity and inspiration. The story and the illustrations speak of talent in many ways. So let us see how the picturebook *Piccola con piccolo* agrees with some of the conclusions of the authors mentioned.

2. Music as a unifying level of understanding – analyzing the picturebook *Piccola con piccolo*

The picturebook *Piccolla con piccollo* is an homage to free music-making, interwoven with nature and its sounds, which inspire the little girl Piccolla. The special feature of the picture book is that the girl hears music in all sounds, whether in the sounds of nature or in the sounds of household appliances and technology, all of which are accompanied by musical notes. The illustration as a narrative level thus suggests that the universal language for understanding the world is music, as it represents the synergy of different sounds using the same musical language and notation system. How do the authors achieve this?

At the beginning, the reader is introduced to the little girl Piccola, a name that means very small or tiny in Italian, who loves to sing, mumble, babble, chirp and screech, and we easily understand that she is fond of

the world of music and sounds. Piccola understands music and is constantly singing different melodies in her head or can immediately repeat the melodies she hears. Furthermore, Piccola never says a word in the picturebook, but speaks in musical notes, which are illustrated in each speech bubble instead of words. One illustration shows her producing a new melody to a song she hears on the radio. In this tiny moment of improvisation and composition, her parents decide to enroll her in music school and her musical journey begins. Piccola begins to play the little flute and becomes Piccola con piccolo (picture 1).



Picture 1

V. Svalina, B. Bačlija Sušić and G. Lapat speak about early detection of musically gifted children in *Primary school teachers' opinions towards musically gifted students*. They state:

One of the clues and indications that confirm that musical giftedness appears earlier than giftedness in other areas (at the age of 1 or 2 years) (Winner & Martino, 2000) is children's fascination with musical sounds. Very young children are often fascinated by musical sounds, as evidenced by their responses to music. (...) In most cases, these are children who like to express themselves musically and enjoy singing. They pick up melodies, rhythms and rhythmic phrases that need to be repeated very quickly and effortlessly. Basically, they show a special interest in music and their engagement in music lessons is exceptional. (2021, 135, 144)

The reader of the picturebook is also invited to unveil the beauty of classical music, especially through illustration and artistic language. The authors of this paper argue that there are several ways in which the synergy of sounds is (re)present(ed), as well as different levels of invocation and contrast, which are described in the following sections.

2.1. Synergy of sounds:

a) technical world

The narrator of the text informs us that Piccola used to produce all kinds of sounds that were not to be found in the music book, such as the howling of the wind, the humming of the car, the crackling of the fire or the whirring of the food processor. We can see in the illustration that household appliances such as the cafetière with boiling coffee, the water in the sink, cars on the road and birds in the sky that can be seen through the window are depicted as notes in the same color and design as the music Piccola plays with the piccolo. This is an invitation to children and adults alike: the freedom to create (compose) music, which is possible not only for adults but also for a very little girl, and the freedom of expression with the help of instruments are in line with Bašić's pedagogy, as mentioned earlier in this article (picture 2).



Picture 2

b) animal world – birds

Birds as a symbol of freedom play an important role in this picturebook. At the beginning, the illustrator places the birds on one side and the girl on the other. They see each other, but are not yet together. The girl is alone until she starts to play Piccola. As the story progresses, Piccola and the birds get closer and grow closer, mainly because the birds are attracted to Piccola's play. They come very close to her, for a moment one sits on her shoulder, and it seems as if she is talking to them by playing Piccola, because in each speech bubble the notes are in the same colors and with the same design. Different kinds of birds in all feather colors sit around her on the grass and even on her head. Slowly, the birds evolve from a symbol of freedom to the

illustrator's way of expressing different levels of invocation. Piccola begins to play *Musica degli uccellini* (Bird Music), her own composition that even the birds around the world understand. She begins to travel and gives concerts in various cities, always with her piccolo and surrounded by a flock of birds. The further the reader progresses in the story, the larger the birds become, the closer they are to the eye of the reader and the closer the little girl is.

Another unique and special detail of this picturebook are the colored words that readers should pay attention to while reading. They are in Italian, the language of classical music, and their explanation can be found in the color glossary at the end of the book. These words are in the same colors as the birds in the illustration.

c) animal world – cats and dogs

An important moment for the story and the development of Piccola's character, especially in terms of her musical talent, is when she decides to change instruments and play the trumpet. From *Piccola con piccolo*, she becomes *Tromba che romba* overnight. This serves to introduce a few new parts to the story – it adds humour by emphasising the play of language, creates suspense and surprise for the reader, and takes the plot in a new direction. In addition, *Musica degli uccellini* becomes *Musica cannegatto*, imitating dogs barking and cats meowing. From one point of view, a gifted child develops, it needs a change and new challenges, because life is beautiful and full of possibilities, especially life with music (picture 3).



Picture 3

„A child's faculties develop gradually and take shape, but a child is a complete being at every stage of its development. (...) A child is an organism, not an instrument!“ (Supek, 2005, 16).

„Improvisation is not only an important skill to learn, but also a valuable experience to have“ (Korošec, Bačlija Sušić, Habe, 2022, 353).

From another point of view, language and music are linked by their ability to improvise and form neologisms. The word *cannegatto* does not exist in Italian, yet it can be found in the glossary and is explained as dog-cat music. Our perception of the world and the language we use to describe it or our experiences is surpassed by the freedom of creation. Creation precedes language and music-making, not the other way around, and this is a starting point for creative thinking not only in music, but in general. It would be very interesting to contextualize this philosophy within the philosophy of connection between world and language by Peter Sloterdijk, but this attempt is left for future investigation as it exceeds the aim of this paper (1988).

d) animal world – african animals

At the end of the picturebook, after she has played the trumpet, we see Piccola picking up a new instrument – the pipe with a plane ticket to Africa attached to the bottom. The elephant and rhinoceros are evoked in the reader's mind by the long, deep tones produced by the pipe. At the top is Piccola's mirror image with a smiling face, heralding new adventures, new discoveries and new music. It is up to the reader to invent new words. We find it very interesting that the three instruments chosen belong to the wind instruments, a category of instruments that use air to produce sound. Just as we use air to breathe, making music is just as important to Piccola as breathing. Or: for Piccola, making music means breathing. Just as air currents and winds mean life for birds.

2.2 Levels of invocation and contrasts in illustrating

This picturebook is a lively and colourful demonstration of the evocation of abstract or concrete concepts through the interplay of words and images. However, the method most often used by the illustrator is the contrast of colours, lines and shapes to convey a meaning or add new semantic layers to the existing ones.

a) Invocation of solitude

The reader meets Piccola on a swing, surrounded by nature, trees, flowers and bees. The girl is not alone, as she enjoys the world she sees and imagines, and she is constantly singing or humming. This may refer to the fact that Piccola, who we find very melodious early on, does not

feel lonely even when she is alone, because her music and melody are her company.

b) Invocation of nature

Piccola constantly makes noises and imitates sounds from nature that she hears around her.

I. First contrast in the illustration – contrasting lines and forms in the interior and exterior

The girl's talent comes to the fore as the illustrator simultaneously contrasts scenes in nature and indoors. The first are rich in shapes, round lines, in scenes without frames. The others are angular lines, simple and minimalist, with broken frames or within strictly defined frames. This shows Piccola's urge for creative expression and his free-spirited way of thinking.

c) Invocation of music

Piccola gives the music she hears a contrapuntal melody with her voice. Her parents notice her peculiarities and decide to take her to a music school. Piccola not only learns very quickly and is extremely talented, but she also begins to make and compose her own music.

„It is critical to identify the gifted child as early as possible, before they feel too different, isolated or misunderstood.” (Eames, 2022, 8)

II. Second contrast in the illustration – contrasting colours to indicate the connection to nature

Piccola sings a new melody to a song she hears. The illustrator contrasts the colours for the music she hears and the music she creates, which together create a new melody. This expresses the positive connotation of her musical talent, but also that she is playing when she sings. Composing, singing, whistling and other ways of producing sound are like playing for Piccola, because she does it effortlessly and spontaneously.

Nurturing creativity in gifted children is vital for their development and happiness. It improves self-esteem, helps them understand and accept their talents, and provides permission and vehicle for self-expression. (2022, 17)

Piccola is on the stage of a concert, the birds are in bright colours, as is the little girl in the scene. The birds are like listeners in the dark, they have the same colours as the notes that come from Piccola and allude to the *musica degli uccellini*.

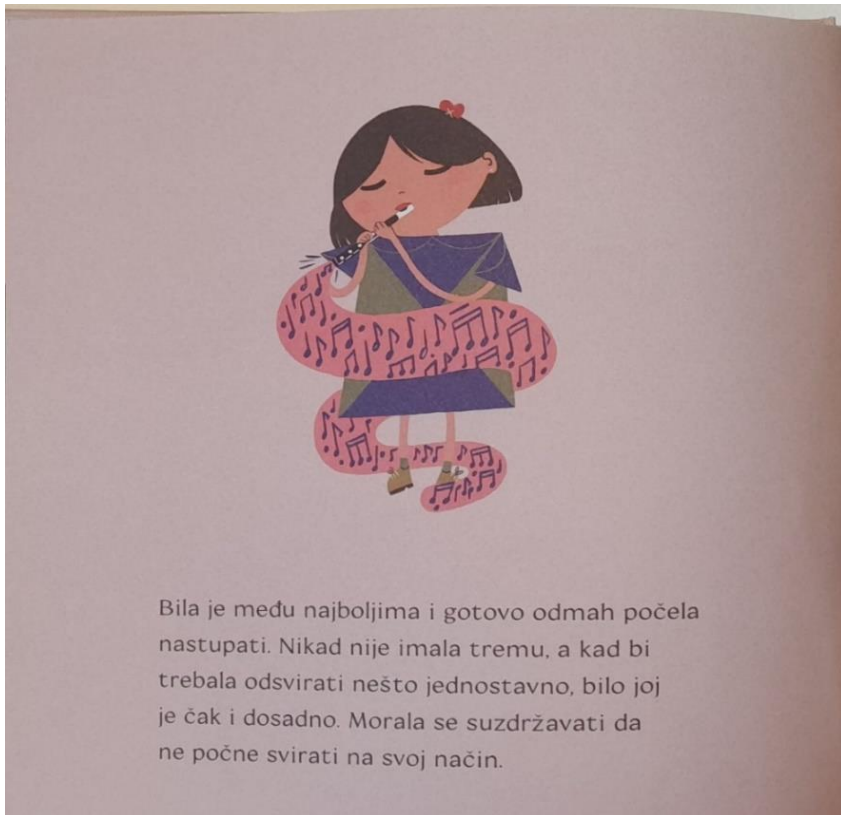
III. Third contrast in the illustration – interplay of meaning and colour

Piccola's parents are at home and the girl is exposed to the media and journalists - Piccola and the "flock" of black microphones in contrast to Piccola and the flock of white birds who are together in the forest. They are like a single being, the forest has the shape of a big baby surrounded by green.

d) Invocation of improvisation

Like a soft shawl made of notes, music becomes a "protective shell" for the little girl. But mostly she makes up her own music and is not afraid of the performance. *The bird music*, as the little girl calls it, is created without any shyness. In the illustration, we can see that she is already playing with full confidence in front of her teacher, who has the time and willingness to listen to her improvisations. Maestro (the teacher) decides to encourage her way of expressing herself in music and understands her bird music. Once again, improvisation resonates as a creative act within Elly Bašić's functional music pedagogy (pictures 4 and 5).

According to T. Buzan (2000, 2004), M. Čudina-Obradović (1991) and M. Vučemil (2010), after starting school, or by the age of ten at the latest, most children experience a "decline in creativity", which could be interpreted in various ways: due to the acceptance of imposed rules and regularities that help them understand the environment, which eliminates the need for independent research and creation, due to the reduction of the ability to freely and holistically approach a problem in favor of logical and verbal instruments of thought, due to certain pedagogical methods (emphasis on accuracy, logic, evaluation, criticizing the quality of answers, failure to develop openness to more possibilities...). If we take this into account, the picture book about Piccola is a strong warning about the danger of stifling creativity in older children.



Picture 4



Picture 5

Conclusion:

The picturebook *Piccola con piccolo* is an affirmation of language and musical creativity as well as the human connection to nature. It is also a tribute to free music making, as it promotes the importance of improvisation and the boundless spontaneous expression of children in the world of music. A quality way of teaching music also requires teachers to be competent in conducting musical activities, which includes identifying musically gifted children. The illustrator's contrasting illustrations (scenes of formal teaching in a music school and improvisations practiced by Piccola alone) are a visual challenge for the reader, while the text has the task of describing different ways of understanding and performing music. In this way, the picturebook raises some provocative questions about the relationship between practicing and enjoying music, provoking reader engagement and different ways of socializing through music. The authors have tried to show that *Piccola con piccolo* uses music as a unifying language and that music can lead to a harmonious life, both literally and figuratively. The picture book is in accordance with the concepts of teaching and performing music by Elly Bašić, Željka Horvat Vukelaj and Petra Heisinger, as well as the scientific studies of Blaženka Bačlija Sušić and Fidelma Healy Eames.

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ŽIVJETI SLOBODNO I SKLADNO: KONTRASTIRANJA I RAZINE INVOKACIJE U SLIKOVNICI *PICCOLA CON PICCOLO*

Rad istražuje slikovnicu hrvatskih autora Bruna Mezića (tekst) i Klasje Habjan (ilustracije) u izdanju zagrebačkog nakladnika Mala zvona (2021). Hrvatska književnost za djecu o glazbi (primjerice slikovnice Željke Horvat Vukelja) polazi od različite tematike. Nerijetko su u središtu pažnje imperativ napornoga vježbanja, svladavanje straha prije nastupa ili karakteristike glazbala. Međutim, ova slikovnica ima neuobičajenu temu, a ta je sloboda stvaranja (komponiranja) glazbe koja nije rezervirana samo za odrasle, već u njoj uspješno uživa posve malena djevojčica. Slikovnica je djelo koje postavlja neka provokativna pitanja o odnosu između vježbanja i uživanja u glazbi i izaziva angažman čitatelja. 1. Ova ideja korespondira u slikovnici sa senzibilnošću djevojčice prema zvukovima iz prirode i tehničke okoline. Sinergija zvukova je predstavljena u slikovnici na različitim razinama, kao i zazivi koje djevojčica osjeća. 2. Ilustracije produbljuju značenje teksta inovativnom uporabom boje i eksperimentiranjem oblicima. Autorice skreću pažnju na razine invokacije čitatelja i kontraste izražene ilustracijama : u prvome je riječ o invokacijama samoće, prirode i same glazbe; u drugome o kontrastiranju linija i oblika vanjskog svijeta i svijeta u zatvorenim prostorima, uporabi boje koja postaje komentar povezivanja djeteta s prirodom i igri značenja i boje. Slikovnica se stoga na više razina može promatrati s aspekta poticanja i afirmacije kreativnosti, a funkcionira i kao početni pojmovnik iz područja klasične glazbe, na šaljiv i primjeren način. 3. Kontrastni postupci ilustratorice (primjerice prizori formalnoga učenja sviranja u glazbenoj školi i improviziranje koje Piccola uvježbava sama) vizualni su izazov upućen recipijentu, dok tekst ima funkciju podrške različitim načinima shvaćanja i izvođenja glazbe. Autorice su posebno nadahnute dvjema knjigama: studijom *The Gifted Learner. How to help* Fidelme Healy Eames; priručnikom Željke Horvat Vukelja i Petre Heisinger *Pričom do glazbe – priča kao polazište u glazbenom odgoju i obrazovanju djece mlađe i predškolske dobi*, kao i funkcionalnom glazbenom pedagogijom Elly Bašić i radovima Blaženke Bačlije Sušić i njenih kolega o otkrivanju i poticanju glazbene nadarenosti u djece.

Ključne riječi: slikovnica, kreativnost, improvizacija, dijete, glazba, nadareni učenik, funkcionalna glazbena pedagogija

MUSICALITY AND MOVEMENT IN CORINNA LUYKEN'S PICTUREBOOKS

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Abstract: One way to understand the work of the contemporary American picture book author and illustrator Corinna Luyken is to appreciate her work's improvisational spirit, its playful, spontaneous and generative creation, style and reception. It is even more important to recognise the musicality of Luyken's improvisational ethos and the music and rhythm in the language and movement in her picture books. Luyken credits her dance background as being the catalyst for the embodied mindfulness evident in her work, especially in terms of the way it changed how she thought about movement, bodies and creativity. In our article we share concrete examples of Luyken's picture book imagery from *The Book of Mistakes* (2017), *ABC and You and Me* (2023), *Something Good* (2021) *The Tree in Me* (2021), *Adrian Simcox Does NOT Have a Horse* (2018) and *Nothing in Common* (2020). In each, scenes illustrate musicality and harmonising, both literally and metaphorically, in movement and compatibility. To borrow a phrase from performance scholars Lesa Lockford and Ronald J. Pelias, we consider Luyken's "bodily poeticizing" as a means by which the reader is invited to pause and consider the musical rhythms and patterns of the body, language and human interactions.

Keywords: movement, musicality, improvisational theater, Corinna Luyken, picturebooks

1. Introduction

Corinna Luyken's picturebooks are models for how movement and musicality, specifically as they are rooted in improvisation, can manifest in literature for children. The contemporary American author and illustrator often credits her approach to bookmaking to the art of improvising. Movement, musicality, and improvisation are familiar terms in jazz and theater spaces, but the way Luyken uses movement

and musicality to tell her written stories likewise reflects the spirit and underlying mechanisms of improvisation. While she often mentions it in the context of her creative process, Corinna Luyken's work, her words, illustrations, and the aesthetic engagement she invites from readers, are models for how improvisation and the wisdom of improv can manifest in picturebooks both in style and content.

Unlike music and theater, "improvisational" is rarely an adjective used to describe books. Jazz is famous for inviting improvisation, allowing musicians to make in-the-moment rhythmic, melodic, or harmonic alterations. And improvisational theater is live performance during which the action evolves spontaneously, often with the help of the audience. While poetry can be created and delivered extemporaneously, it seems antithetical to think about printed books as improvisational. However, a growing body of improv theory gives us language to understand how the spirit of improv—playful, spontaneous, generative—is about more than just a set of behaviors at the production level. This encompasses the classic theories of improvisational theater, such as Viola Spolin's *Theater Games in Improvisation for the Theater* (1963), Keith Johnstone's *Impro System* (Dudeck) in *Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre* (1979), modern improv theories like the theory of "bodily poeticizing" and epistemic stances of improvisation by Lesa Lockford and Ronald J. Pelias, and elements of improvisation by Nicholas J. Zaunbrecher. There are studies that focus on specific aspects of improv, such as creativity, acceptance, and well-being (Schwenke et al.) and reading and "worlding" (Tanner et al.), or more broadly, those that address applied improvisation, defined and investigated by Theresa Robbins Dudeck and Caitlin McClure in their edited collections *Applied Improvisation: Leading, Collaborating and Creating Beyond the Theatre* (2018) and *The Applied Improvisation Mindset: Tools for Transforming Organizations and Communities* (2021). Such research gives us access to many different areas in which improv is used. All these studies offer insight into improvisational techniques that are used in and outside of theatrical spaces and how they generate creative connections.

Improv is an aesthetic and a philosophy, a way of being and thinking that transcends real-time performative spaces. It's also a way of understanding "message reception and interactional coordination" (Lockford and Pelias 433); in other words, how readers are invited to respond to a text. In fact, the basic tenets of improv—tenets such as refusing to block ideas by always saying "Yes," working to build on ideas by saying "Yes, and," embracing mistakes, and a dedication to mindfulness—can both generate spontaneous moments of creativity in the arts and cultivate "deeper levels of questioning, awareness, and

human connection” (Pyles and Adam 4) that are integral to civility in human organization. Corinna Luyken’s work reflects the spirit of improv in its creation, its style, and the generosity and compassion that underpins its subject-matter. We will explore Luyken’s authored and co-authored books *The Book of Mistakes* (2017), *ABC and You and Me* (2023), *Something Good* (illustrator; 2021) *The Tree in Me* (2021), *Adrian Simcox Does NOT Have a Horse* (illustrator; 2018), and *Nothing in Common* (illustrator; 2020) for their improvisational qualities of movement and musicality.

2. Improvisational Play and the Sound and Rhythm of Language

Like a jazz musician or an improv theater player, Luyken explains her creative process in improvisational terms. Says Luyken,

When I draw and paint, as well as when I write, I rarely have a concrete idea of where I’m going. I prefer to follow the sound and rhythm of language, the sweep and flow of line, or the conversation between colors and to see where it will take me. (Interview)

This is especially apparent in Luyken’s first picturebook, *The Book of Mistakes*, and it is evident throughout her oeuvre. *The Book of Mistakes* begins with the first half of a simple sentence: “It started.” On the opposite page is a half-finished face, a round, bald head with one eye, one ear, and a nose. The second two-page spread begins with the rest of the sentence, “with one mistake,” and shows the face again, now a bit more completed with hair, two eyes, and a mouth—except that one eye is bigger than the other one, which is the “one mistake” in question. So sets off a series of images in which Luyken builds a human figure, the story’s protagonist, detail by detail. While every page shows how small details form to become movement, the journey toward the final image is filled with both good ideas and mistakes; the character we see at the end of the story is who she is because of both. Luyken admits,

All of the mistakes in *TBoM* are mistakes that I have made when I draw. Some of them are mistakes that I make frequently. And all of the “fixes” are solutions I have actually used to transform those supposed mistakes . . . Over time, I discovered that things like glasses, collars, hats, bushes and trees are great ways to transform what feels like a mistake into something that is beautiful. (Interview)

Instead of erasing or starting over, Luyken embraces improvisational techniques like “Yes!” (accepting), “Yes, and” (building) to keep moving

forward, to use mistakes rather than letting them derail her, to move from “Oh, no!” to “What can I do with this?” (“Coming Home”). Knowing how to fix a mistake, though, creative as it may be, is only a part of Luyken’s process, and it is only one aspect of what makes *The Book of Mistakes* so compelling. In her book *Improv Wisdom: Don’t Prepare, Just Show Up*, in a chapter titled “Make Mistakes, Please,” Patricia Ryan Madson asserts, “Mistakes are our friends, our partners in the game. Making mistakes is how we function. We don’t consider them as something to be avoided; they are part of our operating system” (103). For Luyken, “A large part of creative work is this—retraining yourself, changing the way you think, and in turn, the way you see” and adjusting, “First, in my head, then on paper” (“Coming Home”). Luyken’s improvisational tendencies mean that mistakes are opportunities rather than setbacks. *The Book of Mistakes* playfully employs a variety of creative strategies one can use to fix artistic mistakes, smudges, smears, and asymmetry. But the way Luyken embraces mistakes is even more intriguing. As *The Book of Mistakes* goes on, we realize that the main character is much more intricate and complex than she first appears. The final images widen our perspective, pulling back more and more so that we can better see the big picture. The intricate forested landscape—one tree dotted with activity, tents, ladders, balloons, and people frolicking in its branches—from far away becomes a silhouette on the top of the girl’s capped head. We become aware that what we are seeing close-up is only a part of the larger truth of the creative, playful, thinking girl. At the end, the reader is asked, “Do you see how with each mistake she is becoming? Do you see now who she could be?” The girl is because of and not despite the mistakes. Here we see Luyken’s celebration of the beauty and integrity in mistakes, their detours, misunderstandings, and rhythms, which are key components of improvisational play.

In her study on the musicality of language in picturebooks, Robin Heald proposes that, much like a composer, who “makes decisions about musical direction (legato, fortissimo), meter, accents, and tempos,” so too does the picturebook author who captures “rhythms and stresses within simple sentence structures, producing language that lends itself to being read aloud” (233). While there have been many studies on the musicality, prosody and timbre of *language* in picturebooks, in Luyken’s picturebooks the illustrations and images work together and play along with the text to create a cohesive whole, engaging the *whole body*. Whereas musicality in language is expressed through sound, in images it is realized through movement. The metafictional nature of *The Book of Mistakes* shows a book as a process

and an artifact that, much like the main character, is gradually “becoming” through the rhythms of utterances, the movements of the hand, the acts of placemaking and mobility, and the changes in perspective and point of view. As the images progress along with the story and an entire world is being built from scratch, Luyken demonstrates the complexities of improvisational storytelling that even “pre-dates mankind’s first music” (Bailey, qtd. in Heald 231).

3. Mindfulness

In addition to espousing the principles of improv by accepting and building on ideas and embracing mistakes, Luyken’s work reflects yet another essential tenet of improv: mindfulness. Broadly defined, mindfulness has to do with practicing a non-judgmental awareness of the present moment. Mindfulness is essential to improvisational creativity because it frees us from focusing on regrets from the past and anxieties about the future. Luyken admits to loving being surprised in the creative process, to not know exactly where she is going to end up: “It keeps me interested, and I find that it lends itself to a kind of alertness that is very similar to the practice of mindfulness” (Interview).

More to the point, mindfulness is embodied; one’s focus on the present moment depends on being aware of all of the body’s senses in the moment. The way Luyken uses bodies in *The Book of Mistakes* exemplifies her commitment to embodied mindfulness. As Luyken’s main character is built, part by part, the mistakes and fixes call attention not only to the character’s body—its proportions, and the way a body fits in space—but also to the body of Luyken herself, the wrist and shoulder of the artist moving ink around a page. When an eye is made too large or a neck too long, for example, we are reminded of the way the artist’s body controls her tools. When ink smudges are turned into leaves that look like “they’d always wanted to be lifted up,” we are reminded of the materiality of the wet ink and the physicality of the hand moving across the page. As we witness the main character being drawn, or when a tree is painted around “the girl with the very long leg” to climb, we are reminded of the order of design, foreground and background, and spatial relationships, and the process of an artist designing the book in our hands. Luyken’s metafictional approach at the level of both text and imagery invites the reader to pause and reflect on the process and materiality of the book alongside the story itself, enlisted in multiple levels of meaning making, as improv is wanting to do. Says Luyken,

Holding a pencil or paintbrush and moving it across the page is a very physical act. If the arm holding the pencil is

relaxed or tense, it translates into the drawing. And when people look at a finished piece of art I think that they can get a sense of the energy that was in the wrist and shoulder that drew it. (Interview)

For those familiar with improv theory, this evokes Viola Spolin's concept of "physicalization" which functions at the "physical, non-verbal level" and "keeps the actor in an evolving world of direct perception—an open self in relation to the surrounding world" (16).

Luyken credits her dance background as the catalyst for the embodied mindfulness evident in her work, especially how it changed the way she thought about movement, bodies, and creativity. Says Luyken,

Looking back, I can see how the improvisational dance classes that I took in college had a profound impact on the way I have approached every creative endeavor since. In part, those improvisation classes spoke to me because this was already the way I approached writing poetry and drawing with ink. But the classes refined and honed that ability—they gave me concrete tools for paying attention to the creative work that was emerging around me. Tools like saying "yes, and..." in response to anything that happens on the dance floor (or on the page). (Interview)

4. Bodily Poeticizing

One could even call Luyken's focus on the body "bodily poeticizing," to borrow a phrase from performance scholars Lesa Lockford and Ronald J. Pelias. In a rare discussion of improv and literature, the article "The Great Literary Improvisers" invokes Lockford and Pelias's discussion of bodily poeticizing to describe the "communication, playfulness, sedimentation, sensuality, and vulnerability" (Flegar 193), qualities required in improvisational performance, to discuss mid-19th and early-20th century children's classics (such as *Peter Pan*, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and the Croatian classic *Čudnovate zgode šegrta Hlapića/The Brave Adventures of a Shoemaker's Boy* by Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić) to show that children's books written during this time period—deemed the Golden Age of children's literature—can be characterized by a shift toward the body. Embodied, expressive, playful, and spontaneous, the same can be said for Luyken's work.

Luyken's bodily poetizing means inviting the reader to pause and focus on the body as a site of meaning. This technique can be seen most obviously in Luyken's picturebook *ABC and You and Me* where, in matte

pastels, Luyken explores the body and movement by showing how bodies can shape themselves into the letters of the English alphabet. The narrator starts by asking, "Can you wiggle your wrists? Can you twist from your hips? Can you lean without bending your knees? Can you point, dip, bend, roll, reach, or sway? You can? Then follow me." Readers then see a diverse array of bodies bend and stretch themselves through both upper and lower case letters. Some of the bodies are more stylized than others, but the point of the book is less so for readers to match their bodies exactly to the bodies on the page and more to mindfully engage your whole body in movement. The narrator asks,

From the tips of your toes, to your elbows and nose, your ankles, your chin, and your knees. . .from your belly, your wrists, your fingertips, to your shoulders, ears, and cheeks. . . from the smallest of hairs on the back of your neck to the arches of your feet. . . tell me, what shapes can you be?

While this book showcases the English alphabet and even includes embedded images of objects that share the first letter of their name with the letter the body is forming (upper case "C" is holding a cake; lower case "f" is holding a feather), this book is about movement, and the focus is on bodies in motion. In other words, the intellectual takeaway is thinking about your body rather than an educational concept.

Bodily poeticizing also manifests in more subtle ways in Luyken's illustrations for Marcy Campbell's picturebook *Something Good*. In the story, objectionable graffiti is found on the wall of an elementary school's bathroom. Readers are never told what the graffiti says; we are only told that it is a "bad-something." Instead, Campbell and Luyken let the characters' bodies and bodily responses convey the magnitude of the objectionable message. For example, a group of girls sneak into the bathroom to see the graffiti and proceed to have various intense responses: the main character's mouth pops open, her friend Tanisha turns and runs away, Kiyoko kicks the stall really hard, and Emma starts to cry. Rather than explicitly verbalizing the graffiti's content, the girls' visceral and physical responses to the graffiti set the tone for the action of the story. What can be interpreted as feelings of surprise, disgust, and sadness serve to explain the characters' motivation and invite the reader's emotional investment in wanting a resolution.

In particular, the two-page opening spread of *Something Good* deserves consideration. The written text states, "The day the custodian found the bad-something on the bathroom wall, all the girls from Mr. Gilbert's class were called into the principal's office." The visual text

shows twelve girls lined up against a wall waiting to meet with the school's principal. Each girl looks different from the other girls in line, with different skin tones and hair colors, lengths, and textures, a variety of physical sizes, and diverse styles of dress. But what is most striking are the ways the girls' bodies convey discomfort, guilt, and confusion. Few of the girls are making eye contact with anyone else; instead, faces are turned up to the ceiling or down to the floor. Arms are crossed or hands are stuffed into pockets. Shoulders are hunched. Toes tap. Each body tells a different emotional story, and each individual character appears to be lost in her own thoughts. While the narrator later reports, "Some of us felt worried or confused or sad or angry. No one felt nothing," the reader is left to read the non-verbal, the body language, alongside of the verbal to understand the central conflict of the story. For, it isn't the graffiti that is the central conflict of the story; rather, the "bad-something" is an abstraction, a feeling of distrust and fear, a fissure in the school's sense of community. The conflict's resolution, therefore, happens not when the graffiti is erased, but when the students find community again.

As Madson posits, "Learning how to work together moment by moment without a known formula is the essence of improvisation" (Madson 126). In *Something Good*, Campbell and Luyken explore a problem scenario for which there is no formula or script for success. What's more, what does bring the community back together is "a big project—an art project—and we could all participate." The whole community comes together to paint all over the bathroom wall. In the spirit of improv, building in particular, "Each of us had something to add. Mateo drew flowers, and Rosa drew dragons, and Kai drew both, plus rainbows and dogs and lots of smiling people." Not incidentally, while there are multiple pages dedicated to the creation of the mural, as soon as the kids start to paint, the individual artists' bodies are blurred and blackened, calling attention instead to the image as a whole, to the collaborative product of a community working together rather than of the individual kids. As Carrie Lobman notes,

When an improv troupe is working well together, what they create collectively is greater than the sum of their individual ideas. A well-crafted improvised scene uses every suggestion and every mistake and transforms them into a cohesive whole. (307)

In other words, the book depicts the harmonizing and rhythms of human interactions as a positive resolution to a crisis.

5. Building Through Community and Compassion

Though improvisational theatre's origins are 16th century Italian *commedia dell'arte*, American improv is rooted in early-twentieth century settlement houses, social group work, and democratic play. Though the improv methods of people like Viola Spolin are still used today, an equally enduring contribution of improvisational theory is the improv spirit, an open-minded, open-hearted, social, democratic, and creative sensibility. "Improv places a strong emphasis on active listening, risk taking, individual growth, and group mind . . . These are all concepts central to the heart of social group work" (Steitzer 271). Organization theorists of all kinds—education and business in particular—seek the creativity, openness, and active listening made possible by improv because, when done well, it fosters a sense of community, which most certainly breeds compassion. Compassion is at the heart of Luyken's picturebook work.

Luyken's *The Tree in Me* demonstrates her commitment to improvisation in her focus on mindful embodiment, the importance of building, and, ultimately, in the compassion that is at the core of the story. The picturebook begins, "The tree in me is part apple part orange-pear-almond-plum (part yummm) part shade and part sun." The accompanying images, brushy and matte, show a young child reaching for a bright pink apple hanging from a tree—the hue of which matches the pink in the child's cheeks—biting into the apple, preparing the apple for a pie, then sharing the pie with friends outside under a tree. The child, who presents neither explicitly female nor male, goes on to compare themselves to the tree, seed, blossom, branch, roots, trunk, leaf, as well as the bee, sun, sky, bird, wind, rain, and dirt. The visual representation of the child's abstract dimensions, their strength, sweetness, and empathy, are strong, bending, and rooted like the tree. The tree's attributes are embodied by the child. The storytelling is playfully improvisational, too, when the narrator explains, "And because there is a tree in me, there is wind, and rain, and dirt, and a river with fish, and a sky too," building with each "and, and, and," untethered from the rules of standardized English grammar to create a rhythmic communication pattern of accepting and building. But the most profoundly improvisational part of *The Tree in Me* is the compassionate conclusion. After going through all the things they are inside, the child concludes, "Because there is a tree, and a sky, and a sun in me, I can see that there is also a tree in you." In improvisational terms, the child concludes that if they are present and mindful, generous, forgiving, and aware of themselves, they can be the same for others. By embracing the

nature's ebb and flow, its continuity and change, the child in the book builds connections and grows.

The Tree in Me is touchingly compassionate and deeply poetic, but we can see an equally powerful expression of compassion in a much less abstract style in *Adrian Simcox Does NOT Have a Horse*, another collaboration with author Marcy Campbell. At its core, the story is about the generative spirit of "Yes, and," accepting and building rather than blocking. In the story, Chloe, the narrator, is sure that Adrian Simcox doesn't have a horse, even though he tells everyone at school that he does. Chloe even goes so far as to call out Adrian on the playground, in front of everyone: "He's lying! Adrian Simcox does NOT have a horse!" Although Chloe is correct, the story isn't about lying as an immoral act, nor is it about Adrian Simcox learning a lesson. Rather, the resolution of the story has to do with Chloe embracing the improv spirit, resisting the urge to "block" so that she can instead engage in the playful and spontaneous act of Adrian Simcox's horse story. In a moment of growth, Chloe lowers her status, to use Keith Johnstone's terminology, and accepts Adrian Simcox's offer of the story of the horse by asking him if the horse is at a farm. The moment is metaphorized by an act of play, "Adrian Simcox tossed a ball to me. I caught it. I tossed it back to him," and is illustrated with an image of Chloe extending a branch toward Adrian. "It was kind of cool to see Adrian Simcox smile," Chloe admits, generously choosing to accept and build, to "Yes, and" Adrian's story. Chloe even goes so far as to credit Adrian Simcox with having the best imagination of anyone at their school—and the most beautiful horse, too. The story's compassionate resolution is based on the generosity and compassion of Chloe's choice. The reader is not invited to judge Adrian Simcox's lie, just as we are invited to forgive Chloe of her initial attitude toward Adrian Simcox. Instead, we are meant to appreciate that, "Saying yes is an act of courage and optimism . . . Yes expands your world" (Madson 27). Accepting another's reality is an act of embodied mindfulness, bodily poeticizing. Building on someone else's perceptions, needs, and wants requires moving in new ways down unknown paths, and attuning oneself to the various patterns of creativity and imagination.

6. Conclusion

From the wisdom of the body, bodily poetics, to the general ethical dimensions of improv, the principle tenets of improv are at the core of Corinna Luyken's picturebooks. Expressive, playful, spontaneous, and full of movement, Luyken's picturebooks push against typical

picturebook trends and instead embrace embodied knowledge, musicality, and the collaborative spirit of improv. Luyken's picturebooks represent musicality and harmonizing in the literal and metaphorical sense, through movement and compatibility. In her work, mindfulness breeds spontaneity and, in a group, communality. Embodied mindfulness, to be more specific, offers practitioners an opportunity for holistic engagement, "presence with the whole self, whole self-inquiry, empathetic connection, and compassionate attention," say Loretta Pyles and Gwendolyn Adam (45). Although improv and children's picturebooks seem to have about as much in common as the two kids in Kate Hoefler and Corinna Luyken's picturebook *Nothing in Common*, the best picturebooks are embracing the spirit of improv, "looking on the same quiet rooftops, and under the same whale, and near the same planets." When the two come together, though, they find that they have a lot in common after all, "the same stars. And the same earth." Improvisation is a style and an attitude, a joyful, generous, creative space full of play, musicality, and movement. Through the musical rhythms and patterns of the body, language, and human interactions, the improvisational spirit of Luyken's books breeds compassion. Heald says, "In using one art form to describe another, we find what is distinctive about each art form and where they merge. Sometimes we discover something deeper" (228). The interdisciplinary approach has allowed us to look at Luyken's picturebooks from a performative angle, both in production and reception. By using improvisational theory to delve deeper into the creative processes of creating picturebooks, we placed emphasis on their interpretative and performative aspects that may affect reader responses, reading habits, the development of literacies and the explorations of languages and cultures.

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MUZIKALNOST I POKRET U SLIKOVNICAMA CORINNE LUYKEN

Stvaralaštvo suvremene američke autorice i ilustratorice slikovnica Corinne Luyken možemo promatrati kroz pojam umjetničke improvizacije te njezinu zaigranost, spontanost, kreativno stvaralaštvo, stil i recepciju. Još je važnije istaknuti muzikalnost improvizacijskog etosa Corinne Luyken—glazbu i

ritmičnost jezika i pokreta u njezinim slikovnicama. Luyken ističe svoje plesno iskustvo kao važan pokretač utjelovljene i usredotočene svjesnosti koja je sastavni dio njezina opusa te posebno način na koji je ples promijenio njezin način poimanja pokreta, tjelesnosti i kreativnosti. U ovom radu analiziramo specifične primjere iz slikovnica *The Book of Mistakes* (*Knjiga pogrešaka*; 2017), *ABC and You and Me* (*Abeceda, ti i ja*; 2023), *Something Good* (*Nešto dobro*; 2021) *The Tree in Me* (*Stablo u meni*; 2021), *Adrian Simcox Does NOT Have a Horse* (*Adrian Simcox NEMA konja*; 2018) i *Nothing in Common* (*Ništa zajedničko*; 2020). Odabrani prizori iz ovih slikovnica odišu muzikalnošću i harmoniziranjem, u doslovnom i prenesenom smislu, kroz pokret i kompatibilnost. Koristeći se terminom teoretičara izvedbenih umjetnosti Lese Lockford i Ronalda J. Peliasa, smatramo „poetiku tijela“ Corinne Luyken strategijom pomoću koje se čitatelju daje prilika zastati i promotriti glazbene ritmove i obrasce tijela, jezika i ljudskih interakcija.

Keywords: pokret, muzikalnost, improvizacijski teatar, Corinna Luyken, slikovnice

MUSIC, IMAGES AND MOVEMENT IN CHILDREN'S MULTIMODAL KNOWLEDGE BOOKS: TCHAIKOVSKY'S BALLET IN THE STORY ORCHESTRA SERIES

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Abstract: This article investigates how sound-enhanced multimodal picture books introduce children to classical music through the integrated use of text, image and embedded audio. Focusing on three titles from *The Story Orchestra* series, *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker* and *Sleeping Beauty*, it explores how these books mediate Tchaikovsky's ballets for young readers, encouraging simultaneous engagement with narrative, visual and auditory elements. Drawing on multimodality theory and research in children's non-fiction, the analysis demonstrates that sound functions not merely as an accompaniment but as a central interpretive resource, shaping children's understanding of musical structure, emotional nuance and narrative pacing. Illustrations and text work together with musical excerpts to support comprehension of plot dynamics, musical expression and movement. The study also examines the pedagogical and experiential potential of these books, illustrating how sound-enhanced knowledge picture books can foster musical literacy, imaginative engagement and cognitive development. The findings suggest that such books offer a compelling model for integrating cultural education, aesthetic experience and multimodal literacy in children's literature.

Keywords: multimodality, children's non-fiction, music education, picturebooks, Tchaikovsky, sound books, visual narrative

1.Introduction

Music has consistently been recognised as a critical element of children's cognitive, emotional, and cultural development. Research in music education and developmental psychology demonstrates that

musical engagement from early childhood can significantly enhance attention, memory, emotional regulation, and social skills (Hallam, 2010; Dobrota, 2022). Simultaneously, children's literature, particularly the picturebook, has evolved into a complex multimodal form, integrating visual, verbal, and material resources to construct meaning. Within this context, children's knowledge picturebooks focused on music occupy a distinctive position: they aim not only to inform but also to facilitate experiential encounters with an art form that is inherently temporal and auditory.

Despite longstanding scholarly interest in the interplay between music and literature (Brown, 1970; Scher, 2004), relatively little research has focused on sound-enhanced knowledge picturebooks as a specific category of children's non-fiction. Existing studies largely concentrate either on narrative picturebooks or on digital multimedia texts, leaving printed books with embedded sound under-theorised. Yet these hybrid artefacts raise important questions about the ways in which musical knowledge is designed, mediated, and experienced by young readers.

This article addresses this gap by examining three sound books from *The Story Orchestra* series, all dedicated to Tchaikovsky's ballets. Rather than providing exhaustive plot retellings, the study adopts a comparative thematic approach grounded in multimodal theory. The central research question investigates how text, image, sound, and representations of movement interact to construct meaning in children's music-related non-fiction and how these interactions support both aesthetic enjoyment and cognitive development.

2. Multimodality and Contemporary Children's Non-Fiction

Children's non-fiction has undergone a significant transformation over the past two decades. No longer defined solely by expository prose and didactic intent, contemporary information picturebooks increasingly incorporate narrative structures, visual storytelling, and aesthetic design (Papadatos, 2017; Joy & Jarman, 2018). Scholars argue that such books should be understood as multimodal ensembles, in which meaning emerges from the orchestration of multiple semiotic resources rather than from written language alone (Kress, 2010).

Within multimodal theory, modes such as writing, image, colour, layout, gesture, and sound are socially shaped resources with distinct meaning-making potentials (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021). In picturebooks, illustrations function as interpretive partners to verbal text, capable of extending, amplifying, or reconfiguring meaning (Nodelman, 1988). When sound is added to this ensemble, the semiotic

landscape expands, introducing temporality, rhythm, and affect as integral dimensions of interpretation.

Children's sound books occupy a liminal space between print and multimedia. Unlike fully digital texts, they retain the materiality and reading practices of the codex while incorporating auditory elements that invite embodied interaction. Research indicates that multimodal configurations support comprehension and recall when meaningfully integrated and aligned with the narrative or informational goals of the text (Verhallen, et al. 2006; Lewalter, 2003). Conversely, poorly integrated enhancements risk cognitive overload or distraction, undermining both aesthetic experience and learning.

In music-related knowledge books, sound assumes a particularly complex role, functioning simultaneously as an object of knowledge, an aesthetic experience, and a narrative guide. Understanding how these roles intersect requires an analytical approach that attends not only to content but also to design, sequencing, and reader engagement.

3. General Features of *The Story Orchestra* Books

Each book in the series follows a consistent design logic. Cover art functions as a paratextual threshold (Genette, 1997), inviting engagement while shaping expectations. Bold colors and detailed illustrations establish mood and hint at musical content. Within the book, narrative text is presented in soft colored frames along the margins, allowing illustrations to dominate visual attention. Central motifs of movement and dance are emphasised, with dancers, animals, and scenic elements depicted in dynamic poses that visually animate the accompanying music. Sound buttons are consistently positioned, linking images directly to musical excerpts and reinforcing the interplay of sound, text, and illustration. Musical terminology, introduced via glossaries, supports children's conceptual understanding while maintaining narrative flow.

4. Analysis of Individual Books

The Nutcracker

The Nutcracker narrates Clara's dream journey from the Christmas party to the Land of Sweets. Musical excerpts punctuate key narrative moments, from the festive opening to the climactic battle with mice and the diverse dances in the kingdom of sweets. Music functions not merely as accompaniment but as an active narrative partner: brisk tempos and bright timbres accompany excitement and movement, while lyrical passages underscore introspective moments.

Illustrations emphasise motion and expression, often showing characters mid-dance, with gestures echoing musical rhythms. The palace interior, snowy landscapes, and confectionary kingdom are depicted in rich visual detail, sustaining attention and imagination. Sound buttons, strategically placed near salient visual elements, encourage children to associate musical cues with imagery, fostering layered understanding and aesthetic appreciation. Repeated exposure to these multimodal cues supports intuitive learning of musical patterns, narrative dynamics, and expressive gestures.

Swan Lake

Swan Lake depicts Prince Siegfried's encounter with Odette and the emotional complexities of love, transformation, and conflict. Musical excerpts, particularly woodwinds and harp, highlight grace and intimacy, while brass and percussion underscore tension during confrontational scenes. Illustrations of swans in motion, reflections on water, and expressive gestures guide children's interpretation of musical textures and narrative pacing. The interplay of light and shadow mirrors shifts in musical dynamics, reinforcing emotional contrasts and narrative tension.

The book's multimodal design encourages children to perceive relationships between auditory and visual elements, enabling them to interpret narrative meaning through coordinated sensory input. The alignment of movement in illustration with musical rhythm fosters embodied understanding, allowing children to connect sound and gesture in meaningful ways.

Sleeping Beauty

In *Sleeping Beauty*, illustrations communicate grandeur, menace, and eventual celebration in close alignment with the music. Darker tones and dramatic passages accompany conflict, while lighter colors and melodic themes signify benevolence and joy. Sound excerpts, associated with visual cues such as the approach of the Lilac Fairy or the wedding feast, allow children to perceive how musical elements shape narrative tone.

The design emphasizes contrast and resolution, with illustrations capturing spatial dynamics of ballrooms, gardens, and magical forests, while musical excerpts punctuate narrative transitions. Glossaries and brief musical explanations support conceptual understanding, enabling children to relate musical motifs to narrative events and artistic gestures.

5. Corpus and Methodological Orientation

The analysed corpus includes three large-format picturebooks from *The Story Orchestra: The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, and *Sleeping Beauty*. Published by Frances Lincoln Limited and translated into Greek by Patakis Publishers, the books share a consistent format: each double-page spread combines concise narrative text, detailed illustration, and a sound button that plays the corresponding ballet excerpt.

Paratextual elements reinforce the books' status as children's knowledge resources. Brief biographical notes introduce Tchaikovsky, while glossaries explain musical terms such as orchestra, rhythm, and waltz. The final page, displaying all sound buttons together, encourages readers to revisit music independently.

Methodologically, the study adopts a comparative thematic approach across four analytical axes: multimodal design and information architecture; sound as narrative and interpretive resource; visualisation of musical movement; and the relationship between aesthetic immersion and knowledge construction. This framework foregrounds design strategies and meaning-making processes rather than plot, providing insights into how children engage with complex cultural content through multimodal resources.

6. Multimodal Design and Information Architecture

Across the three titles, multimodal coherence is achieved through carefully orchestrated design strategies that balance visual, verbal, and auditory elements. The large format and expansive double-page spreads prioritise visual immersion, allowing children to experience the illustrations almost as performative spaces where narrative and musical events unfold. Textual segments, framed along the margins or at the bottom of the page, maintain clarity while leaving the central visual field free for dynamic representations of movement and emotion. By visually subordinating text to illustration, the design encourages children to first engage perceptually and emotionally with images and music before processing verbal information.

From an informational perspective, knowledge is distributed across multiple semiotic layers. Narrative text introduces characters, plot, and context, while illustrations provide emotional, spatial, and kinetic cues. Sound excerpts function as immediate access points to musical content, bridging conceptual knowledge and sensory experience. This layered structure aligns with contemporary theories of multimodal literacy, which emphasise the integration of multiple modes to support comprehension and meaning making (Serafini, 2014). Readers are encouraged to navigate content non-linearly, attending to elements of

interest while making connections across modes, an approach that mirrors authentic processes of musical perception and interpretation.

Paratextual elements play a central mediating role in orienting young readers. Following Genette's (1997) framework, covers, glossaries, and explanatory notes function as interpretive thresholds that shape expectations and guide engagement. In *The Story Orchestra* series, these features contextualise the books as knowledge texts while maintaining an invitation to imaginative exploration, signaling that learning and aesthetic pleasure can coexist. By orchestrating design, text, image, and sound, the series constructs a coherent multimodal environment in which children can explore complex cultural content in a structured yet playful manner.

7. Sound as Narrative and Interpretive Resource

Sound is the defining feature of the series, operating as both narrative and interpretive resource. Musical excerpts are selected to mirror plot progression and emotional tone, reinforcing narrative cues while inviting affective engagement. The books avoid explicit technical explanations; instead, children infer meaning through repeated associations between auditory, visual, and textual elements. Fast rhythms, high-pitched tones, and bright instrumentation correspond to moments of action, tension, or excitement, while slower tempos, legato phrasing, and softer timbres signal intimacy, reflection, or calm. This careful alignment enables readers to develop an intuitive understanding of how music communicates affect and narrative nuance.

The integration of sound aligns with multimodal literacy theory, which emphasises the synergistic function of multiple semiotic systems (Barthes, 1977; Kress, 2010). In these books, music does not merely illustrate images; it interacts with verbal and visual cues to guide interpretation, allowing children to perceive and anticipate narrative and emotional trajectories. Over time, repeated exposure to these patterns supports the development of early musical literacy, helping children recognise motifs, structural cues, and expressive devices while simultaneously reinforcing narrative comprehension.

Additionally, the books foreground the temporal dimension of music. Children experience sound as unfolding in time, paralleling the temporal progression of the story. This synchronicity between auditory and visual-temporal cues fosters a sense of rhythm, pacing, and dramatic tension, allowing young readers to perceive both the abstract structure and expressive content of musical works.

8. Visualising Musical Movement

Movement constitutes a crucial bridge between music and image in the series. Illustrations translate auditory rhythm and flow into visual form through compositional devices such as diagonal lines, repeated figures, swirling shapes, and gesture-based postures. These visual cues convey both the speed and intensity of music, inviting children to “see” rhythm and motion and to internalise the embodied qualities of dance. Colour, line density, and spatial arrangement further signal changes in energy, mood, and dramatic tension, offering a rich palette of interpretive possibilities.

In *The Nutcracker*, circular formations, symmetrical positioning, and lively gestures visually echo playful, dance-like musical passages. *Swan Lake* uses flowing, elongated lines and reflective water surfaces to suggest lyrical elegance, while angular, tense poses align with climactic conflict. *Sleeping Beauty* employs contrast between light-filled celebratory scenes and shadowed moments of tension, aligning visual and auditory cues to reinforce narrative arcs.

By representing movement visually, these picturebooks support embodied learning and kinesthetic engagement. Children can physically mimic gestures, sway with rhythm, or imagine themselves within the scene, fostering an integrated sensory experience that bridges perception, cognition, and emotion. Such strategies align with research indicating that visualisation of motion can enhance comprehension and recall in children (Sun, Loh & Roberts, 2019), particularly in the context of musical learning.

9. Pedagogical and Experiential Applications

The Story Orchestra books offer rich opportunities for experiential learning that extend beyond passive reading. Listening to musical excerpts while observing illustrations encourages active auditory engagement, promoting attention, memory, and imaginative processing. Children may visualise scenes with their eyes closed, enact movements suggested by illustrations, or compose narratives inspired by music, creating a deeply interactive and personalised learning experience.

Educational practitioners can leverage these multimodal affordances in structured or open-ended activities. Matching games linking sound buttons to specific illustrations, discussions comparing emotional tone across music and image, and creative tasks such as dramatisation or storytelling allow children to integrate cognitive, affective, and kinaesthetic skills. Such practices illustrate how multimodal texts can foster both aesthetic sensitivity and conceptual

understanding, demonstrating that knowledge acquisition need not compromise enjoyment.

The interactive and repeatable nature of these books encourages iterative engagement, enabling children to explore, anticipate, and interpret musical and narrative patterns autonomously. Repeated exposure reinforces pattern recognition, sequencing, and memory, supporting foundational skills relevant to literacy, music education, and cognitive development. The series thus exemplifies how children's literature can function simultaneously as a site for cultural immersion, skill-building, and imaginative play.

10. Conclusions

The analysis of *The Story Orchestra* series highlights the remarkable potential of sound-enhanced multimodal picturebooks to mediate children's engagement with classical music and narrative art forms. These books demonstrate that auditory elements, far from being supplementary, operate as central interpretive tools, guiding comprehension, emotional response, and aesthetic appreciation. The integrated coordination of musical excerpts, visual imagery, and textual narrative creates a holistic sensory environment in which children can simultaneously develop cognitive, affective, and imaginative faculties.

Illustrations meticulously aligned with musical rhythm and dynamic contrast enable readers to perceive motion, narrative tension, and expressive nuance, fostering an embodied understanding of musical structure and storytelling. Paratextual features, including glossaries, composer biographies, and explanatory notes, scaffold conceptual understanding, supporting children in connecting musical motifs with narrative events and enhancing their grasp of musical literacy fundamentals. The interactive and repeatable design of these books encourages iterative engagement, reinforcing pattern recognition, memory, attention, and interpretive reasoning.

Pedagogically, these picturebooks offer opportunities for experiential learning: children can listen attentively, observe visual cues, and enact gestures or dance movements inspired by illustrations, internalising musical and narrative elements in a personalised, meaningful way. Such engagement promotes aesthetic sensitivity, cultural literacy, and early music appreciation, illustrating how multimodal resources can bridge artistic exposure and conceptual learning.

Furthermore, the series demonstrates that children are capable of sophisticated interpretive activity when provided with carefully designed multimodal resources. By orchestrating auditory, visual, and

textual modes, these books provide a model for integrating imaginative engagement, cognitive development, and cultural education. They underscore the importance of intentional multimodal design in fostering sustained interest in complex cultural content, opening avenues for further research into learning outcomes, reader interaction, and the pedagogical potential of immersive multimodal texts in early childhood education.

Ultimately, sound-enhanced knowledge picturebooks exemplify how children's literature can transcend the traditional boundaries of reading to offer multisensory, intellectually stimulating, and culturally rich experiences, cultivating both the appreciation of classical music and the capacity for critical, embodied interpretation.

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ΜΟΥΣΙΚΗ, ΕΙΚΟΝΑ ΚΑΙ ΚΙΝΗΣΗ ΣΤΑ ΜΠΑΛΕΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΤΣΑΪΚΟΦΣΚΙ: ΠΟΛΥΤΡΟΠΙΚΑ ΒΙΒΛΙΑ ΓΝΩΣΕΩΝ ΓΙΑ ΠΑΙΔΙΑ

Τα πολυτροπικά βιβλία γνώσεων με ήχο παρέχουν στα παιδιά μια εμπυθιστική μαθησιακή εμπειρία που συνδυάζει κείμενο, εικόνα και μουσική, διευκολύνοντας την κατανόηση αφηγηματικών δομών, μουσικών στοιχείων και αισθητικής. Η σειρά *The Story Orchestra* ενσωματώνει ηχητικά αποσπάσματα σε πλούσιες εικονογραφήσεις και κείμενο για να εισάγει τους μικρούς αναγνώστες στα μπαλέτα του Τσαϊκόφσκι, ενώ παράλληλα ενισχύει την ανάπτυξη της μουσικής γνώσης, της φαντασίας και της συγκινησιακής αντίληψης. Η μελέτη δείχνει ότι η ενσωμάτωση μουσικού ήχου με εικόνες και η αφήγηση υποστηρίζει την ολιστική εμπλοκή των παιδιών, συνδυάζοντας μάθηση και απόλαυση και προσφέροντας νέες προοπτικές για την εκπαίδευση και την παιδική λογοτεχνία.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: πολυτροπικότητα, παιδική λογοτεχνία μη μυθοπλαστικού χαρακτήρα, μουσική εκπαίδευση, εικονογραφημένα βιβλία, Τσαϊκόφσκι, βιβλία με ενσωματωμένο ήχο, οπτική αφήγηση

WHICH CAME FIRST, THE SONG OR THE PICTUREBOOK? **MERGING AND RECREATING LITERATURE AND MUSIC** **ACROSS MEDIA**

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Abstract: This paper analyses three Portuguese children’s “story worlds” (Ryan and Thon, 2015) that combine literature and music in distinct ways. The first story world is represented in the picture book *Tudo tão grande* [*It’s All So Big*] (2021), by Isabel Minhós Martins and Bernardo Carvalho, and in three songs created by readers who responded to a peritextual invitation to compose melodies to “sing the book”. The second story world is found in the song *O melhor presente* [*The Best Gift*] (2018), by the Portuguese singer-songwriter Luísa Sobral, and its corresponding videoclip, which focuses on the pages of a book-object—specifically conceived for this purpose—that is turned at the pace of the song. The final story world is represented in the picture book *A cruzada das crianças* [*The Children’s Crusade*] (2015), by Afonso Cruz, which followed the eponymous play and includes a musical score that later gave rise to a song incorporated into an album by the Portuguese band The Soaked Lamb.

Drawing on a media-conscious qualitative analysis grounded in literary and intermedial studies, this paper examines which characteristics – thematic, stylistic and other – of these story worlds and their representations are conducive to entanglements between literature and music. It further explores how, within this *corpus*, different media influence both the representation and reception of each story world, highlighting the specific affordances and limitations of each medium. The study suggests that awareness of multiple media representations has an impact on the perception of the story world and that this perception depends, at least in part, on the order in which audiences encounter the different media. Furthermore, the recourse to intermediality appears to be beneficial in increasing the story world’s visibility and appeal, attracting new audiences across different age groups and media preferences.

Keywords: Portuguese children’s literature; contemporary picturebooks; videoclips; multimodality; intermediality

1. Introduction

Literature and music have long gone hand in hand, continually feeding and transforming one another. However, in contemporary contexts marked by processes of hybridisation and dissolution of boundaries, it becomes particularly relevant to explore the coexistence, transposition, and entanglements between these two artistic forms. In addition to being an object of study in fields such as Comparative Literature, Interart Studies, Music Studies and Cultural Studies, musico-literary relations have more recently become a topic of interest within the broader field of intermedial studies (cf. Rippl, *Handb. Intermediality Lit. - Image - Sound - Music*), from which this paper draws its terminology and theoretical framework. In general, within this perspective (Wolf, "Intermediality"; Wolf, "Literature and Music: Theory"; Rippl, "Introduction"), the concept of medium is understood in a broad sense, encompassing not only technical or institutional channels for conveying a message, but also what social semiotic approaches have termed "modes", defined as "material resource[s] which [are] used in recognisably stable ways as [...] means of articulating discourse" (Kress and Leeuwen 25), such as verbal language, pictorial signs, moving images, music, etc.

The concepts and boundaries related to intermediality are far from consensual; therefore, given its long-standing and specific dedication to musico-literary relations, this paper follows the terminology and typology proposed by Wolf ("Musicalized Fiction and Intermediality: Theoretical Aspects of Word and Music Studies"; "Literature and Music: Theory"), which draws on Scher (1970) and Rajewsky (2002). Wolf distinguishes between extracompositional and intracompositional intermediality. While *intracompositional intermediality* concerns "the direct or indirect participation of more than one medium in the signification and/or structure of a given semiotic entity" ("Literature and Music: Theory" 460), *extracompositional intermediality* refers to "relations between media that transcend individual works or compositions" (460). Within extracompositional intermediality, Wolf identifies two variants: *transmediality*, which concerns phenomena that appear in more than one medium without being specific to any of them (461); and *intermedial transposition*, which involves the transfer of content or formal features from one medium to another, with a discernible origin in a source medium (462). Within intracompositional intermediality, Wolf further distinguishes between *plurimediality*, which occurs whenever "two or more media with their typical or conventional signifiers are overtly present in a given semiotic entity" (463), and *intermedial reference*, whereby one medium refers to "another medium

using the means of the referring medium only" (468). The latter may take the form of *explicit reference*, often associated with thematisation (for instance, portraying characters who are painters or musicians or discussing music in a novel), or *implicit reference*, involving forms of heteromedial imitation (468).

Concepts from both extracompositional and intracompositional intermediality branches—particularly intermedial transposition, plurimediality and intermedial explicit reference—will be used throughout this paper to define and characterise distinct relations between literature and music. It should be noted that the term *literature* is deliberately employed here in a broader sense, so as to include picturebooks, which are inherently plurimedial or multimodal artefacts. This usage is not fully consistent with the theoretical framework of intermedial studies underpinning this article, where literature is understood in a more restrictive sense, referring exclusively to verbal language. The decision to adopt the broader meaning of the term—both in the title and throughout the text—to discuss the connection or interrelation between literature and music reflects a background rooted in children's literature studies, in which picturebooks are conventionally discussed within the literary domain despite their multimodal constitution. In order to minimise this terminological tension, the analysis will refer explicitly to individual media, such as text or verbal language, images, music, and others, whenever greater precision is required.

Another concept borrowed for this study is that of "storyworld" from Ryan and Thon. Building on the ongoing discussion of representations of fictional worlds that span across different media, Ryan and Thon deliberately place the "narrative at the center of media convergence" (2). The authors note that this center can be "a specific storyworld", in the sense that "different media converge around this world by presenting different aspects of it" (3). Alternatively, this center of convergence may be understood in more abstract terms, as "content constitutive of 'narrativity,' a content [...] which all stories share" (3). In this latter sense, the concept of storyworld "captures the kind of mental representation that a text must evoke in order to qualify as narrative" (3).

Within this theoretical framework, this paper focuses on three Portuguese children's storyworlds that combine literature and music in distinct ways. The first storyworld was initially represented in the picturebook *Tudo tão grande [It's all so big]* (2021), by Isabel Minhós Martins and Bernardo Carvalho, and underwent an intermedial transposition when a few readers followed a peritextual invitation and

composed melodies to “sing the book”, thereby transforming the text into songs. Three of these songs were shared on the publishing house’s Facebook page (Planeta Tangerina) and are included in the analysis conducted in this study. The second storyworld is found in the song *O melhor presente* [*The best gift*] (2018), by the Portuguese singer-songwriter Luísa Sobral. In this case, the link to literature occurs as the music videoclip focuses entirely on the pages of a book-object being turned at the pace of the song (“O Melhor Presente”). The third and final storyworld in the *corpus* is represented in the picturebook *A cruzada das crianças* [*The children’s crusade*] (2015), by Afonso Cruz, which was originally a play. The picturebook includes a musical score that, six years later, was interpreted and extended, giving rise to a three-minute song incorporated into an album by the Portuguese band The Soaked Lamb.

Considering this *corpus*, this study employs a media-conscious qualitative analysis aimed at addressing the following questions: which characteristics of these storyworlds and their representations are particularly conducive to entanglements between literature and music? More specifically, considering the intrinsic plurimediality (or multimodality, in social semiotics) of picturebooks, which medium (text, illustration, materiality) most effectively promotes connections with music? Additionally, how do different media contribute to the representation and reception of the storyworlds in this *corpus*, and what affordances and limitations does each medium entail? Finally, does awareness of multiple media representations affect the perception of a storyworld, and to what extent does the order in which audiences encounter different media influence its reception and interpretation?

2. *Corpus* analysis

2.1. *Tudo tão grande*

In the picturebook *Tudo tão grande* [*It’s all so big*] (2021), the connection to music is already suggested in the subtitle, “Canção cada vez maior” [“A song that keeps growing”], but there is also an additional peritext on the back cover that poses an invitation to the reader: “Create a song to sing this book”, thereby encouraging processes of intermedial transposition. Composing a song to accompany the text of a picturebook is not unusual; it is, in fact, a common follow-up activity in reading sessions in preschools and primary schools. However, it is the explicit invitation that distinguishes this book and suggests that it possesses specific characteristics that make transposition to other media—or expansion, if one considers the possibility of a transmedial storyworld (Ryan and Thon 14–15; cf. Jenkins; Klastrup and Tosca)—a natural next step.

A close reading analysis reveals that verbal language is probably the medium that most strongly connects this picturebook with music. The text presents a structure commonly associated with lyrics, employing rhyme (cheia/inteira; avança/dança; perto/aberto) and generating a repetitive rhythm, largely through stylistic devices such as syntactic parallelism (e.g. “O dia grande / A noite cheia / A maré alta / A noite inteira” – *noun + adjective* or “O sol já nasce / A erva avança / A nuvem sobe / O vento dança” – *noun + verb*) and ellipsis (e.g. “Os pássaros, longe / As vozes, perto”). The epiphora at the end (“Eu vou também [...] Eu danço também [...] Eu cresço também”), together with the repetition of the final verse, also resembles a chorus.

It can also be argued that the theme resonates with the editorial proposal for media expansion, as the book is entirely concerned with expansion and growth. Throughout the text, adjectives such as “big”, “full”, “tall”, “whole”, “infinite”, “long” recur, alongside verbs such as “overflow”, “dilate”, “expand”, “run” or “going forward”. In the end, the final verses state that “Everything grows. I grow too. I grow too.” If everything grows, why could a picturebook not grow into a song? Despite the argument that theme and textual strategies constitute a strong gateway to audio transposition, one must also take into account the explicit invitation found in the peritexts, as previously mentioned.

Some readers took up the challenge and created melodies to accompany the lyrics provided by the textual component of the picturebook. Before analysing and comparing these musical versions, it is worth reflecting on the likely developments and outcomes suggested by the characteristics of the picturebook itself. If, on the one hand, the short verses of the poem suggest a fast pace, on the other hand the contemplative effect of the illustrations—mainly prompted by panoramic representations of natural landscapes and wide open spaces (Figure 1)—is more likely to suggest a calm and relaxing melody. Indeed, the first two musical versions created by readers and shared on the publisher’s social media¹ present slow and calming rhythms, akin to a lullaby, and were probably influenced by prior contact with the illustrations, which evoke contemplation and placidity. The third version adopts a faster tempo and establishes a more euphoric tone that is

¹ The three songs created by readers and shared on Planeta Tangerina’s Facebook page are available at the following links: 1) “Canção cada vez maior” – <https://soundcloud.com/fredmenos/cancao-cada-vez-maior>; 2) “Recebemos uma música nova, criada a partir do nosso ‘Tudo tão grande’”. Desta vez os autores (e intérpretes) são a Margarida Mestre e Manel (9 anos)” – <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=546610149836430>; 3) “Tudo tao grande” – <https://soundcloud.com/culture-cceg/tudo-tao-grande>.

absent from the former two versions. This contrast leads to reflections on the potential of audio instantiations to determine, or at least to condition, the underlying tone of the representation of the storyworld, this being one of the affordances of this medium (one can, for instance, recall the Prokofiev's "Peter and the wolf" to illustrate this claim). Melody and rhythm, as well as the vocals or instruments used, can suggest joyful, melancholic, or even mysterious tones, potentially influencing the expectations and the overall experience of the reader-listener, especially when the first contact with the storyworld occurs through a musical instantiation.

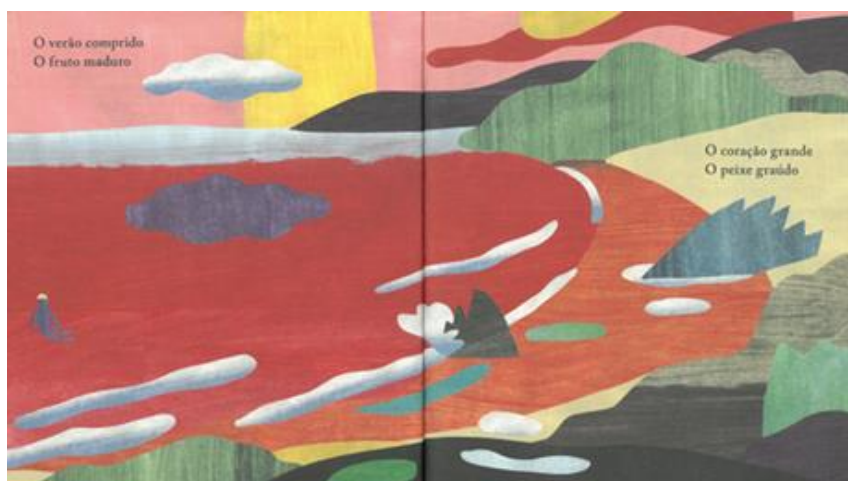


Figure 1. Doublespread of *Tudo tão grande* (2021)

Despite the fact that the publisher promotes these creations on its social media, thereby granting them not only visibility but also a form of approval or validation, the disparity among the versions makes it clear that, taken together, they lack the cohesion required to constitute a transmedial storyworld, and should instead be understood as a series of independent intermedial transpositions. With regard to media limitations, it is beyond doubt that listening exclusively to the audio entails the loss of the picturebook's visual aesthetic experience. Even when the reader combines both media, listening to the audio while turning the pages of the picturebook, the constraints remain, as the audio imposes a certain reading/listening pace. Moreover, even slower tempos are not slow enough to allow for a proper appreciation of the illustrations, which are rich in intertwined shapes, vibrant colours combinations, and varied textures.

Nonetheless, the first musical proposal deserves a more in-depth analysis. Despite not respecting the integrity of the picturebook's text, as it cuts a couple of *stanças* and adds a chorus by repeating the text of two specific doublespreads, the melody and rhythm, drawing on influences from *bossa nova*, echo the spirit of the illustrations, which evoke the bliss of the long days of summer holidays (Figure 1). Not only is the connection between the two media more profound, offering cohesion to the storyworld, but the audio also has the potential to appeal to different audiences, widening the universe of readers and reinforcing the crossover potential of the storyworld.

2.2. *O melhor presente*

In the song *O melhor presente* [*The best gift*] (2018), by Luísa Sobral, the lyrics render a mother assuring her first-born child that the sibling yet to be born will be the best gift they will ever receive. The videoclip suggests a connection between the song and children's literature even before the first chord, as a shelf filled with children's books appears in the frame, including two picturebooks by the renowned Portuguese author Catarina Sobral.

In this videoclip, the intermediality between music and literature falls within the category of *explicit reference*, in Wolf's typology, as the videoclip focuses entirely on the presentation of a book-object, whose pages are turned at the pace of the song. This example is remarkable not only because of the multiple creative strategies applied in the conception of this book-object—with push and pull tabs, expanded spreads, detachable elements, lift-the-flap features, etc.—but also because of the synchronism of the song and the manipulation of the book, which enhances both the meaning of the lyrics and specific parts of the melody.

The book represented in the videoclip resembles a photo album, capturing memories and moments of strong bonds and affection between the two siblings and their mother. In the first spread, through a lift-the-flap strategy, the book partially decodifies the first verse of the song, "You will receive the best gift": a baby (although it is not yet revealed that it is a younger sibling) [minute 0:21]. In the chorus, in the verse "a mother's lap enlarges whenever someone arrives", the word enlarges perfectly matches the moment when the spread is unfolded, expanding in the same way as the mother's lap referred in the lyrics [minute 1:12]. On the following page, while listening to the expression "the best gift", the viewer stares at the depiction of an actual gift, which contains inside representations of several moments shared between two siblings, concretising the metaphorical meaning of the word "gift"

[starting at minute 1:24]. Next, the line “you’ll demand your independence” is matched with the representation of the older sibling being detached from the book and placed outside the spread [minute 1:45]; and “it remains the same” is depicted by sliding and replacing the illustration of a baby with that of an older child, wearing a school backpack, representing its growth over time, even though certain things “remain the same” [starting at minute 1:49]. At this point, the younger sibling is no longer a toddler, and the subsequent pages display the usual everyday conflicts between siblings, but also moments of complicity between them, thus concretising the verse “there won’t be no one that knows you better”. The final spread confirms that the mother is expecting, depicting the younger sibling once again as a baby—consistently associated with round shapes and the colour yellow (while the older sibling is always represented through blue square shapes)—and featuring a movable element that places the baby inside the mother’s womb [starting at minute 2:47].

It could be argued that one of the media limitations in this case, with regard to the videoclip, is the lack of interactivity, in the sense that the audience cannot control the pace of the audiovisual representation. The viewer must listen to the song and watch the pages of the book being turned at the pace set by the videographer. Moreover, in contrast to the previous example analysed—*Tudo tão grande [It’s all so big]*—where the user can listen to the song while holding the actual picturebook, in this instance there is no physical book. There is only a single copy of this book-object, which was handcrafted specifically for the videoclip, thereby eliminating the possibility of direct audience interaction with the book and its materiality. Considering the overall experience of reading a book, especially a book-object such as this one, which requires physical manipulation, this may be seen as a significant constraint. However, as noted above, the videoclip was filmed with the aim of achieving a simultaneity that facilitates the meaning-making process and enhances the message of the song. In fact, in an informal exchange with the author of the book, Camila Beirão dos Reis, she confirmed that the book was conceived from the outset with the lyrics, sequence, and development of the song in mind². Camila also confirmed the intermedial and literary sensitivity of the songwriter, stating that the idea for the videoclip—centred on the manipulation of an interactive book-object—came from Luísa Sobral. Sobral, the creator of the song that constituted the initial representation of this storyworld, followed

² Personal correspondence exchanged on 01.05.2023.

the entire process of the book's creation and suggested some of the creative options and strategies.

Although the absence of physical interaction with the book constitutes a limitation of the audiovisual medium, it should be emphasised that the illustrations of *The best gift* are fewer and less detailed than those of *It's all so big*. Therefore, the videoclip ultimately succeeds in showcasing both the song and the content and design of the book without significant visual loss. The initial strictly audio-based medium, however, may now appear less engaging than the audiovisual option, even though the latter also entails limitations, for instance with regard to the specifics of its medium carriers (i.e. it requires a screen-based device rather than, for example, a conventional car radio). This perspective may nevertheless be biased by a literary studies standpoint; a musicologist, for example, might argue that the quality of the audio file and the exclusive engagement of the aural sense are more important for experiencing the storyworld than the visual component.

2.3. *A cruzada das crianças*

A cruzada das crianças [*The children's crusade*] (2015), by Afonso Cruz, was initially a play, staged in 2014, and was turned into a picturebook the following year (cf. Ramos). The book goes the extra mile in terms of plurimediality, in Wolf's terminology (or multimodality, following Hallet (2015), Gibbons (2012), Kress and Leeuwen (2001), among others), conveying visual and verbal components not only through conventional text and illustrations, but also through photographs, newspaper articles, and even a musical score. The musical score presents the notes and rhythm, as well as the lyrics correctly placed above the notes³. These lyrics are repeated thrice throughout the book, and the story ends with the final repetition, signalling the importance of this melodic chorus. Within the narrative, the musical segment functions as a recurring climax that encapsulates the collective protest of thousands of children who enter public places—libraries, zoos, post offices, police stations—to demand better living conditions and healthier, happier, and more egalitarian societies. The child characters claim that, if they were in charge, politicians would take better care of the country, as if they were watering plants; there would be inaugurations of bread; and poetry would be recited to the crowd. A

³ It is possible to find online readings of the book that incorporate the song. One example – "A Cruzada de Crianças", dated February 8th, 2020, can be found at the following link: <https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/raul-silva1>.

musical segment referring to poetry represents yet another instance of explicit reference, in Wolf's terminology.

As mentioned above, the picturebook followed the homonymous play, making it reasonable to assume that the musical segment was originally integrated into the play. The author made a deliberate effort to ensure that picturebook readers would be able to have access to the original melody by including the reproduction of a musical score. Nonetheless, this presupposes that young readers or their mediators are able to read a musical score. Or, at least, to seek assistance in performing this task. Even so, if the reader is unable to reconstruct the melody suggested by the author, they are nevertheless made aware that they have encountered a musical segment, either through the visual representation of the musical score or through the inscribed didascalies, indicating "music".

When considering the reasons behind the author's decision to represent this storyworld through multiple media—both in terms of social semiotic modes and technical channels of transmission—beyond his own profile as a writer, illustrator, and musician, it is reasonable to argue that the musical element clearly reinforces the theme of appeals and street protests, strengthening the protesters' slogans. In other words, the theme may have called for something as strong and effective as a chorus, whose impact is further intensified when sung or shouted. It is precisely this vigorous and urgent attitude of the protesters that is also highlighted in the illustrations, which depict people shouting with megaphones and raised fists.

In 2021, six years after the book was published, the band The Soaked Lamb, which includes the book's author Afonso Cruz, released an album entitled "Two to Two" (2021) featuring a song called "Blá, blá, blá". This three-minute song incorporates the melody and lyrics presented in *The children's crusade*, although both were extended to create a full-length musical track. The additional lyrics maintain the original structure while introducing new demands: some more pragmatic, such as abolishing homework or turning the multiplication table and the alphabet into songs—once again reinforcing the link between music and verbal language—while others align more closely with the books' activist stance, including the claim that everyone should be a boss. According to theories on transmedial storytelling, one may argue that the representation of the storyworld was somewhat expanded when it reached this new medium. In addition to the song, the band also released a music videoclip—a different medium combination, this time audiovisual.

It is possible to listen to the song “Blá blá blá” and miss the connection to the book. In fact, none of the few reviews of the album available online refer to either the picturebook or the play. Some of them, however, allude to the childlike universe of the song, noting the presence of children’s voices in the chorus and the choices made in the videoclip⁴. Indeed, the videoclip sequences and animates a series of children’s drawings and displays the lyrics using a font perceived as handwritten by a child (“The Soaked Lamb - Blá, Blá, Blá”).

One may argue that the picturebook and the music videoclip are independent of each other; however, being aware of their simultaneous existence undoubtedly enhances the overall experience. The main drawback lies in the dissimilarity between the visual components of the videoclip and the illustrations in the picturebook, which compromises the unity and coherence of the storyworld. Nonetheless, unlike in the previous examples, the reader can appreciate the picturebook at their own pace, pausing, if desired, on the illustrations, while still listening to the song at each chorus repetition. In fact, the possibility of switching from the picturebook to the videoclip during the musical segments and then back to the book transforms the act of “reading” into a dynamic hypertextual activity, as suggested by Hallet (1997).

3. Final considerations

Beyond the specific analyses presented in this paper, it is worth noting that the strong connection between music and literature evident in this *corpus* may not be fortuitous. Earlier research on “song picture books” (Lamme) in the Portuguese bookmarket (Costa) revealed that the few examples identified were either published by Planeta Tangerina, the publisher of *It’s all so big*, or integrated into a series coordinated by Afonso Cruz, the author of *The children’s crusade*, who is also a musician. Similarly, Luísa Sobral has previously collaborated with, for instance, the Portuguese illustrator and children’s book author Catarina Sobral, is recognised for sharing book recommendations on social media, and has more recently become an author herself. Overall, these authors and this publishing house have demonstrated a sustained interest in both music and literature, particularly picturebooks.

Drawing on a media-conscious analysis, it was possible to underline each medium’s affordances and limitations in portraying the

⁴ “It’s a fun journey sung in Portuguese with what seems like a children’s choir, which gives it a touch of children’s music, something emphasised by the video.” (“The Soaked Lamb – Two to Two (2021)” – <https://altamont.pt/the-soaked-lamb-two-to-two-2021/>) (own translation).

storyworlds. From the perspective of a picturebook scholar, it stands out that the appreciation of the visual component of picturebooks requires more time than what is generally provided by audio instantiations. Additionally, while it remains unclear whether it is paramount to determine which medium came first, it seems evident that, in general, the awareness of multiple media representations may indeed influence the perception of the storyworld, and that this perception ultimately depends on the order in which the audience accesses the different media.

Lastly, the intermediality examined in this study does not primarily pursue an “expansionist approach” (Mittell 264). In other words, the new media do not aim to reveal more storyworld content or to fill gaps, for instance by introducing characters, settings, or actions. Additionally, with the exception of one audio version of *It’s all so big*, none of the media instantiations disrupt the sequence of the narratives or poems, as often occurs, for example, in instantiations such as apps or other digital platforms, where users may navigate scenes in non-linear ways or pause to access more detailed descriptions of settings or characters. In this *corpus*, intermediality mainly serves to consolidate the storyworld (e.g. in *It’s all so big*, by sharing on social media the audio versions created by readers, the publisher has a means to engage with its audience and to continue promoting the book beyond its limited launching period). Furthermore, intermediality proves beneficial in increasing the storyworld’s visibility and appeal, attracting new audiences across different age groups and media preferences.

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O QUE NASCEU PRIMEIRO: A CANÇÃO OU O ÁLBUM? COMBINAR E RECRIAR LITERATURA E MÚSICA ENTRE OS *MEDIA*

Este artigo analisa três *storyworlds* (Ryan e Thon, 2015) portuguesas, destinados ao público infantil, que combinam literatura e música de maneiras distintas. O primeiro *storyworld* é representado no livro-álbum *Tudo tão grande* (2021), de Isabel Minhós Martins e Bernardo Carvalho, e em três canções criadas por leitores que responderam ao desafio lançado nos elementos peritextuais: “inventa uma música para cantares este livro”. O segundo *storyworld* cumpre-se na canção *O melhor presente* (2018), da cantautora portuguesa Luísa Sobral, e no respetivo videoclipe, centrado na visualização de um livro-objeto — especificamente concebido para o efeito — a ser manipulado ao ritmo da canção. O último *storyworld* é representado no livro-álbum *A cruzada das crianças* (2015), de Afonso Cruz, que derivou da peça homónima encenada em 2014 e que inclui uma partitura musical que mais tarde deu origem a uma canção integrada num álbum da banda The Soaked Lamb.

Através de uma análise qualitativa, ancorada nos estudos literários e intermediais, este artigo reflete sobre as características — temáticas, estilísticas e outras — destes *storyworlds* e respetivas representações que favorecerem a conexão entre literatura e música. Procura-se, ainda, compreender de que modo os diferentes *media* influenciam a representação e a receção dos *storyworlds*, bem como as vantagens e limitações específicas de cada um. Os resultados sugerem que ter conhecimento das várias representações, compreendendo múltiplos *media*, tem impacto na perceção do *storyworld* e que essa perceção depende, pelo menos em parte, da ordem pela qual a elas se acede. A intermedialidade parece também aumentar a visibilidade e impacto dos *storyworlds*, favorecendo a atração de públicos-alvo de diferentes faixas etárias e com preferências variadas em termos de *media*.

Keywords: literatura infantojuvenil portuguesa, álbuns contemporâneos, videoclipes, multimodalidade, intermedialidade

HAWAIIAN MO'OLELO AS SITES OF RESISTANCE: MELE OLI AND TEMPORALITY IN KIMO ARMITAGE'S THE HEALERS

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Abstract: In *Beyond Settler Time*, Mark Rifkin observes how dominant temporal frames of reference position Native peoples either in the past or in a settler-defined present, thereby denaturalising Indigenous timespaces. My paper contends that the genre of adolescent literature participates in this process, as it is centred on stories of individuation, growth and maturation that are in sync with age-segregated Western temporality. Focusing on Indigenous narratives for young people in Hawai'i, my paper suggests that Hawaiian *mo'olelo* (stories and histories) can serve as sites of resistance to settler time as they employ traditional modes of storytelling – such as *mele oli* (chants) – that foreground Native tempos, rhythms and genealogies. To illustrate the important function *mo'olelo* can serve in affirming distinctly Indigenous sensations of time, I read Native Hawaiian author Kimo Armitage's adolescent novel *The Healers* (2016) as a text that transcends Euro-American genre conventions. By integrating *mele oli*, Hawaiian *mo'olelo* such as *The Healers* articulate the intergenerational expanse of Native temporality, defined by stories and genealogies that are carried in but exceed individual bodies and that link the ancient past with possible futures. This temporal vastness cannot fit within the much more confined timespace of Western individuation that serves as a defining factor of the adolescent literature genre. Hence, I posit, Native Hawaiian literary works for young readers, such as Armitage's novel, can productively “unsettle” the dominant conventions of writing for adolescents and challenge us to imagine the rhythms and tonalities of becoming otherwise.

Keywords: Native Hawaiian literature, adolescent literature, young adult literature, temporality, coming of age, Pacific literature, speculative fiction

1. Introduction

What does it mean for the Native child to come of age in Hawai'i, where dominant settler narratives invalidate Indigenous timescapes and

modes of becoming? Situated in a postcolonizing space, the Native Hawaiian child straddles a multitude of cultural and temporal borders: Within the Indigenous *Kānaka Maoli* (Native Hawaiian) framework, this child figure embodies Hawaiian futurity and hope, but in settler colonial discourse, it remains confined to backwardness and pastness. Negotiating these irreconcilably different configurations of the Native child constitutes an important impulse of the islands' literatures for young people, and these texts therefore tend to cross and blur the conventional boundaries of Euroamerican models of children's and young adult literature. Contending with the ways in which Native Hawaiian childhoods have been subjected to non-native spatiotemporal dynamics that cast the Indigenous child out of Native time, my article suggests that *Kānaka Maoli mo'olelo* (stories and histories) can serve as potent sites of resistance to settler temporal formations as they draw on distinctly Native conceptions of becoming and employ traditional forms of storytelling such as *mele oli* (chants).

To contextualize my discussion of adolescent literature in Hawai'i, let me offer a very brief sketch of the islands' history since the overthrow of Hawai'i's kingdom in 1893. The islands were annexed by the United States of America in 1898, leading to a severe suppression of the Native Hawaiian language and Indigenous cultural practices in the decades that followed. Reimagined as belonging to its U.S. American colonizers and placed in the service of their recreational as well as economic and military needs, Hawai'i became a state in 1959. Several decades later, in 1993, the U.S.A. passed the so-called "apology bill," which acknowledges that "[t]he indigenous Hawaiian people never directly relinquished their claims to their inherent sovereignty as a people or over their national lands to the United States" (qtd. in Trask 45). Nonetheless, neither their sovereignty nor their land has been returned to the Native Hawaiian people. Contemporary Hawai'i hence constitutes a settler colonial society, in which dominant Euroamerican cultural narratives exist in tension with Indigenous epistemologies.

In *Beyond Settler Time*, Mark Rifkin discusses how dominant temporal frames of reference, which position Native peoples either in the past or in a settler-defined present, denaturalize Indigenous temporal modes and processes of becoming. The prevalent insistence on a supposedly singular and shared present, Rifkin argues, privileges non-Native time-conceptions because this notion of coevalness is in fact "defined by settler institutions, interests, and imperatives" (viii). I contend that the genre of adolescent literature is one such institution that perpetuates dominant narratives of individuation, growth, and maturation that are in sync with age-segregated Western temporality.

The trajectories of young adult novels typically focus on a relatively short but highly meaningful period of individual human development – the teenager’s process of growing up over a timespan of a few years or less – which stands in stark contrast to “Indigenous narrations and sensations of time” that may employ “the setting of the significance of events within a much longer timeframe (generations, centuries, or millenia)” (Rifkin 19). By following distinctly Euroamerican understandings of time, the genre of adolescent literature relegates other conceptions of temporality to the margins of the text, if not entirely outside it.

Adolescent literature thereby adheres to what I call Euroamerican “aetotemporality” (from the Latin *aetas*, meaning “age”). As I have elaborated elsewhere, my term “aetotemporality” refers to “the distinct tempos, rhythms, and tonalities associated with human childhood, adolescence, and adulthood” (Nolte-Odhiambo 415). Within the Euroamerican context, aetotemporality captures the “patterning of individual human development along a path of progression from lack to agency,” whereby “the child is constituted as a not-yet subject in an asymmetrical power relation with the adult that is decreed to be ‘natural’” (Nolte-Odhiambo 415). Diversifying the genre of adolescent fiction would mean not “adding color” by incorporating non-white characters into conventional timelines but rather “[n]oting the existence of multiple temporalities that cannot be unified into a singular timeline, [which] means acknowledging the diversity of processes of becoming and the variety of potential interrelations among those processes” (Rifkin 17). Taking up Rifkin’s point that Indigenous texts present “possibilities for envisioning and engaging with alternative temporalities” (47), I posit that Hawaiian *mo’olelo* affirm a distinctly Indigenous sense of aetotemporality, and I read Kimo Armitage’s young adult novel *The Healers* (2016) as a text that subverts Euroamerican genre conventions by affirming a Native Hawaiian sense of time.

Defying many typical cornerstones of the adolescent literature genre, Armitage’s narrative builds on the long tradition of *mo’olelo* to foreground traditional *Kānaka Maoli* tempos and modes of storytelling, such as *mele oli* (chants). These *mele oli* describe much longer timeframes than the relatively short period of individual human development during adolescence, highlighting instead the rhythms of intergenerational connections: “*Ka po’e kahiko* (the people of old) of Hawai’i were *ha’i mo’olelo* (storytellers). *Oli* (chant), *hula* (dance), and *mo’okū’auhau* (genealogy) are traditional methods of storytelling. In this way *mo’olelo* transcend time and space, linking each succeeding generation to the ones before as well as those yet unborn, an unbroken

chain of continuity of the ‘Ōiwi [Hawaiian] culture” (Halliwell vi). The incorporation of Hawaiian chants into a text for young readers hence presents a significant act of resistance to dominant epistemologies of storytelling and time. Alongside these *mele oli*, Armitage’s novel features a non-linear, multigenerational narrative with a variety of narrators and characters who are young, old, human, animal, alive, dead, ancestor, and unborn. Ultimately, *mo’olelo* like *The Healers* cannot be mapped onto the settler timeline or be made to fit the Euroamerican aetotemporal foundations of adolescent literature conventions. Instead, they pluralize time by affirming an Indigenous temporality that does not correspond to any When or Then of Western time.

2. Speculative Fiction, *Mo’olelo*, and *Mele Oli*

Much of twenty-first-century adolescent literature, particularly with its contemporary emphasis on dystopian narratives, falls under the large umbrella of speculative fiction. Marek Oziewicz notes that speculative fiction can function as “a super category for all genres that deliberately depart from imitating ‘consensus reality’ of everyday experience” and, as such, “includes fantasy, science fiction, and horror, but also their derivatives, hybrids, and cognate genres.” Moreover, speculative fiction has gained traction as a literary category in part due to “the proliferation of indigenous, minority, and postcolonial narrative forms that subvert dominant Western notions of the real” (Oziewicz). Since *The Healers* invites its readers to consider non-Western epistemologies, alternative (hi)stories, and Indigenous wonder and liberation, it seems appropriate to read the novel within the framework of speculative fiction. Indeed, the genre accommodates not only “the non-mimetic genres of Western” fiction “but also non-Western and indigenous literatures – especially stories narrated from the minority or alternative perspective” (Oziewicz). At the same time, however, the fact that speculative fiction serves as an umbrella category for all fiction that does not conform to Euroamerican understandings of the real also betrays the continuing dominance of these conceptions of what counts as real. Put differently, only literature adhering to the Euroamerican real ultimately gets to enjoy the label of realist fiction, whereas texts depicting other, minoritarian versions of the real are relegated to speculative fiction and hence to the realm of the fantastic, or the unreal.

In Hawai’i, the colonial strategy of removing Indigenous epistemologies from what constitutes the real has a long and fraught history. In *Legendary Hawai’i and the Politics of Place*, Cristina

Bacchilega explains the devaluing of Native Hawaiian *mo'olelo* via the translation of this term into English:

Naming—always already a renaming—has been a powerful tool of colonial rule and cultural appropriation. From early on, Native Hawaiian narratives, or *mo'olelo*, were for the most part identified by Western travelers, scholars, and popularizers as “legends,” or “myths” and “folktales” interchangeably, and thus seen as “folklore,” a newly formed category in European and American nineteenth-century thought. Because “folklore” was and is often viewed in the science-centered West as an outmoded or “false” way of knowing, this classification has unfortunately also provided an opening to view the *mo'olelo* as “untrue.” [...] This has resulted in erasing the meaning of “history” carried in the Hawaiian word and genre, with *mo'olelo* being translated and understood only or primarily as “story.” (9)

As Bacchilega observes, the *Kānaka Maoli* narrative genre of *mo'olelo* does not distinguish between the real and the fantastic along the same lines as Euroamerican classifications do. Literally translating to “succession of talk” and thus capturing the oral transmission of knowledge in old Hawai'i, *mo'olelo* includes all of the following Western genres: “story, tale, myth, history, tradition, literature, legend, journal, log, yarn, fable, essay, chronicle, record, article; minutes, as of a meeting” (“Mo'olelo”). *Mo'olelo* often relay cosmological frameworks that showcase humans' genealogical relationships not only with each other but with all natural entities, and they establish ties between the past, present, and future by “connecting generations to their kupuna (elders) and preserving cultural heritage” (Indriyanto and Rudy 131).

Mo'olelo are thoroughly interwoven with the Hawaiian storytelling forms of *mele* (songs and poems) and *mele oli* (chants). Because no precise English equivalencies exist, there are multiple possible translations not only for *mo'olelo* but also for *mele* and *oli*. Noting that *mele* cannot be categorized neatly in Western terms, Native Hawaiian literary scholar ku'ualoha ho'omanawanui explains that it refers to songs, chants, and poetry alike: “While songs, chants, and poems are considered separate genres in Anglo-American literary traditions, in Hawaiian literary traditions they often overlap; the primary distinctions among them come from the mode of performance: a song is sung, a chant is chanted, a poem is recited” (“He Lei” 30). *Mele oli*, or just *oli*, is a term for chants without accompaniment, and many different genres

of *mele oli* exist, including genealogy chants, place chants, love chants, and mourning chants (ho'omanawanui, "He Lei" 35).

A particularly important *mele oli* for Native Hawaiian epistemology of time and place is the creation chant *Kumulipo*, which "recounts the beginnings of the Kanaka Maoli concept of the universe, through the evolution of all living creatures, culminating in the birth of kanaka (people), and the complex mo'oku'auhau (genealogical lines) from the first woman, La'ila'i, through her distant descendant, countless generations later, the Ali'i Nui (high chief) Kalaninui'iamamao, born sometime in the 1700s" (ho'omanawanui, "He Lei" 37). Over 2,000 lines long, the *Kumulipo* was memorized and passed down orally by *Kānaka Maoli* genealogists (ho'omanawanui, "He Lei" 37). The chant highlights the interconnectedness between past, present, and future generations as well as their intimate belonging to their land, with whom they share a cyclical and reciprocal relationship (Halliwell xii).

Native Hawaiian scholar Bryan Kamaoli Kuwada articulates this intergenerational expanse of *Kānaka Maoli* temporality when he writes that "We native peoples carry our histories, memories, and stories in our skin, in our bones [...] in our children. [...] Our genealogies are a backbone stretching to the very inception of these islands. [...] The future is a realm we have inhabited for thousands of years. You cannot do otherwise when you rely on the land and sea to survive." *Mele oli* are foundational for expressing and fostering this distinctly Indigenous sense of time and place.

3. Adolescent Literature and Native Time

The embodied and relational Hawaiian ways of knowing expressed in *mele oli* such as the *Kumulipo* stand in stark contrast to the Euroamerican aetotemporalities elaborated in adolescent literature. While the former highlight intergenerational and interspecies interdependence, the latter emphasize individualism and independence instead. Moreover, adolescent literature's depiction of individual development as a trajectory from lack to empowerment resonates with conceptions of non-Western places like Hawai'i as temporally distant and childlike. When extended from the individual plane to the global geopolitical context, the narrative of growth perpetuated by the adolescent literature genre's coming-of-age formula positions only a few nations as having already attained the maturity of adulthood while characterizing the rest as the "developing world," an idea that "rests on an inherently hierarchical version of the real [...] bound up with figurations of the child" (Castañeda 44). As anthropologist Johannes Fabian puts it, "*geopolitics* has its ideological foundations in

chronopolitics” because of the colonial temporal ordering that results from “placing the Now of the [so-called] primitive in the Then of the Western adult” (144; 63). As children’s literature scholar Kenneth Kidd comments, “adults can be minors too, culturally if not also legally” (15). This is the case, I would suggest, for Indigenous adults in Hawai‘i, who occupy a minoritarian position even on their Native land. Fabian has called the temporal alignment of non-Western peoples with children “a classical example for ‘methodological’ abuses of Time” and noted that it renders Native children “even more infantile,” or doubly distanced from fully-fledged adulthood (61).

The predicaments resulting from the infantilization of Indigenous adults alongside the double infantilization of their children continue to cause significant harm to Native peoples, as Julie Kaomea observes within the context of Hawai‘i: “Dominant discourses that construct indigenous children as needy, helpless victims, while simultaneously stigmatizing their parents and families as deficient caretakers, suggest that to save indigenous children, the parents’ influence must be minimized – a 21st-century version of killing the Indian to save the man” (92). Positing Indigenous adults as childlike, immature, and incompetent, Western institutions such as social and educational services participate in neocolonial projects in settler societies like Hawai‘i, where they “are virtually ‘kidnapping’ contemporary Native Hawaiian children by devaluing and supplanting indigenous Hawaiian child-rearing knowledge” because these Indigenous child-rearing practices do not align with Euroamerican aetotemporal trajectories of maturation (Kaomea 79).

Drawing on the specious similarities between the child and the Indigenous, children’s literature scholar Perry Nodelman has claimed that childhood constitutes a colonized space not only in settler societies but globally, with adult/child dynamics mimicking colonizer/colonized relations (166-67). This argument has been rightfully critiqued for its faulty analogy, which neglects the manifold ways in which the sociopolitical status of children and colonized peoples differ. In addition, Nodelman’s analogy disregards the temporal dimensions of childhood under the dominant aetotemporal order, which grooms at least some children to grow out of their disenfranchised position and become adults themselves, with adulthood here constituting a symbolic achievement of full majoritarian personhood and citizenship. Responding to Nodelman, Victor R. Ramraj asserts that “the actual colony, unlike the colony of childhood, has literal oppressive military forces, literal political prisoners; and the actual colony does not literally grow out of its colonial state as does the child who, on reaching the age

of majority, is no longer a colonized figure but now takes his or her turn at being an adult-imperialist" (qtd. in Lassén-Seger 12). Importantly, however, for Indigenous peoples in settler societies, childhood does indeed continue to delineate a postcolonizing timespace as Euroamerican aetotemporality is imposed on Indigenous youth, whose own epistemologies of time are thereby forcefully denaturalized and marginalized.

Considering the history of youth literatures as well as of the dominant modern constructions of childhood and adolescence, the perpetuation of Euroamerican temporalities in the pages of children's and adolescent fiction comes as no surprise. Neil Postman has argued that the understanding of children as fundamentally different from and deficient vis-à-vis adults was fostered by the spread of literacy in Europe. Drawing on Rousseau, who called reading "the scourge of childhood, for books teach us to talk about things we know nothing about," Postman writes that "reading is the scourge of childhood because, in a sense, it creates adulthood" (13). He maintains that the concept of childhood was absent from the medieval imaginations due to the lack of literacy and formal education but that the onset of printing gave rise to a new sense of what it meant to be an adult, and hence also of what it meant to be a child: "The printing press created a new definition of adulthood based on reading competence, and, correspondingly, a new conception of childhood based on reading incompetence [...]. That is why there was no such thing as children's literature [before]" (17-18). Indeed, literature and stories geared specifically towards children started to appear in Europe only in the mid-eighteenth century. According to Postman, then, it is due to printing that children had to start earning adulthood by learning how to read and write, and formal education became compulsory precisely for the purpose of teaching children these skills that were now required for achieving full adulthood, here meaning full cultural literacy and competency.

Due to the importance placed on literacy, children started to enter a process, beginning at birth, of becoming adults, with adulthood now not merely a biological life-stage but rather a symbolic accomplishment. While print ultimately resulted in written knowledge becoming more accessible to adults, it created a different kind of knowledge monopoly as children became increasingly separated and closed off from the everyday adult life they had been involved in previously (Postman 49; 76). With the increasing importance placed on literacy, children were subjected more and more to the supervision of teachers and parents and to what these authorities deemed suitable reading material for them.

But of course, this creation of a child/adult binary based on literacy was absent in oral cultures such as old Hawai'i and, as a consequence, the line between the child and the adult remained much more fluid in places where the transmission of knowledge occurred not through reading and writing but through observation, participation, and oral storytelling genres such as *mo'olelo* and *mele oli*. Formal education imposes this child/adult binary developed in Europe onto Native peoples elsewhere, and thus schools in places like Hawai'i work to interpellate the Native child into settler time. Euroamerican literature participates in this process, not least because Native Hawaiian and other Indigenous "knowledge systems traditionally circulate through oral narratives that operate outside Western literary frameworks" (Indriyanto and Rudy 129). Hence education in literacy that seeks to devalue oral traditions, including musical traditions such as chanting, can be considered a biopolitical tool that severs connections to Indigenous epistemologies and aetotemporalities.

A concept even younger than modern childhood, adolescence too has its origins in the Global North: "This 'third-age' accelerated in the post-war years in the United States, England, continental Europe, and Japan, before spreading to the whole world" (Garcia 397). Specifically, adolescence developed out of the need to find a bridge that would allow the maturing individual to overcome the ever-widening chasm created between the realms of childhood and adulthood. Tristan Garcia notes that modern adolescence constitutes "the between-the-two par excellence" and has grown "from being a *threshold* to being an *enclosure*. The time between childhood and adulthood became long, too long to merely be an event, an isolated ritual, because what separates childhood from adulthood became too important" (396-97). Just as the modern conception of childhood has been imposed on Indigenous peoples by the Global North, so has this idea of adolescence as a space of enclosure to which Native teenagers would henceforth find themselves confined.

This invisibilization of Indigenous timespaces occurs, in part, via the collaboration between the dominant aetotemporal apparatus and the conventions of adolescent literature. In her study of the genre, Roberta Seelinger Trites observes that adolescent literature relies on "the *Bildungsroman* formula [which] mandates a plot determined by the concept of growth as linear," so that it follows "a narrative of transcendence: the individual grows into an adulthood of autonomy and self-determination" (118; 18). The *Bildungsroman*, which has its roots in the romantic era and expresses that era's belief in growth and individuation, depicts, in Hans-Heinrich Borchardt's words, a movement

“from error to truth, from confusion to clarity, from uncertainty to certainty, from [...] nature to spirit” – in other words, a movement from childhood to adulthood (qtd. in Trites 11). As such, the *Bildungsroman* embodies Euroamerican aetotemporal values, and hence adolescent literature, by employing the romantic models of growth and development on which the *Bildungsroman* rests, functions as an important cog of the dominant aetotemporal machine. The genre thus reinforces binary, hierarchical conceptions of childhood and adulthood even as it is ostensibly designed as a guide for those caught in between these two opposing spheres.

Given the ways in which dominant definitions of adolescent literature foreground the teleological paths of the *Bildungsroman*, the genre relies on understandings of childhood and adolescence that effectively exclude Native Hawaiian youth. Unlike Euroamerican aetotemporal constructions, *Kānaka Maoli* conceptions do not figure the child as lacking, in a state of “not-yet-ness,” and hence in need of traversing specific paths via adolescence toward adulthood and thus full humanity. But, as Rifkin reminds us, “if story has the ability to realize modes of perceiving and living time, then that potentiality can be enacted through Native forms of writing and cultural production” (46). In refusing to conform to the adolescent literature formulae and instead affirming Indigenous temporality, Native Hawaiian *mo’olelo* for young readers can hence assert what Rifkin calls “temporal sovereignty” and provide an important source of validation for *Kānaka Maoli* youth (16).

4. Aetotemporality in Kimo Armitage’s *The Healers*

Showcasing trajectories that differ profoundly from the conventional aetotemporal dynamics of individual maturation, Armitage’s novel refrains from inscribing its Indigenous characters into settler time and thus engages a strategy of refusal. It does not seek recognition and legibility within settler-determined frames but instead emphasizes *Kānaka Maoli* endurance and difference. While the multicultural model prescribes integration – a process whose temporal framework is not neutral but grounded in Western time and normativity – *The Healers* instead unsettles the dominant conventions of writing for adolescent readers and their aetotemporal foundations. As ho’omanawanui emphasizes, “the very act of creating *Kānaka Maoli mo’olelo*, as opposed to mimicking Western writing, is political, and thus empowering” (Hā 90). It is precisely by refusing mimicry and by not seeking “to become temporally intelligible to non-natives” that *The Healers* succeeds in bringing to the fore *Kānaka Maoli* modes of being and becoming (Rifkin 5).

Rather than providing an in-depth exploration of the *Kānaka Maoli* epistemologies articulated in Armitage's text, my intent in this section is to interrogate settler literary institutions and specifically the often unexamined Euroamerican premises of the adolescent literature genre. Hence my discussion here aims not to provide a comprehensive reading of *The Healer's* cultural nuances but rather to expose the ethnocentric biases and limitations of adolescent literature conventions. In order to illustrate how the genre fails to capture narratives that have grown out of other cultural contexts, I seek to highlight the complex ways in which Armitage's novel differs from the Euroamerican storytelling conventions for young readers. The multifarious differences are prominent both in the novel's form, which heavily evokes *Kānaka Maoli* modes of storytelling such as *mele oli*, and in its content, particularly as pertains to depictions of family life and of death.

The Healers features several Hawaiian chants and underscores the important function these *mele oli* serve in affirming Indigenous sensations of time and place. In her reading of *The Healers* as a text that "begins to fill the void in Hawaiian narratives for adolescent readers," Caryn Kunz Lesuma discusses a sequence of chants performed by adolescent protagonist Keola as he seeks to be accepted as a student by an eminent healer and *kumu* (teacher) (93). Composing and performing three consecutive chants, Keola pauses after each chant to assess his performance and discuss the meaning of the chant. Lesuma comments that "Armitage is careful to explain some of the *kaona* (hidden meaning) of the *oli* after they are uttered, a feature usually missing from oral narratives" (93). The novel thereby highlights "the depth and layering of meaning that is present in Hawaiian oral forms" while making these oral forms accessible to adolescent readers, particularly those who may lack the cultural competency to fully interpret the chants themselves (Lesuma 93). Moreover, and with the notable exception of place names, the chants are rendered largely in English rather than Hawaiian as Armitage seeks "to make these forms accessible through explication and translation" to his young adult audience (Lesuma 93).

In-depth familiarity with the Hawaiian knowledge systems conveyed by *mele oli* is a crucial prerequisite for *Kānaka Maoli* healers. It is therefore not surprising that the *kumu* whose guidance Keola seeks will only accept the teenager as a student if he proves himself worthy through chanting. In their analysis of the novel, Kristiawan Indriyanto and Dian Syahfitri observe that healers "must know the chants to pull the universe's healing energy into the sick patient" (16). Armitage's book thus underscores the intimate connections between *mele oli*, healing,

and “Hawaiian culture, where nature, humanity, and the spirit world coexist harmoniously” (Indriyanto and Syahfitri 15).

Furthermore, the *mele oli* that punctuate the text help to articulate the expanse of Native Hawaiian temporality, defined by stories and genealogies that are carried in but exceed individual bodies and that link the ancient past with the distant future through the land they share. Armitage makes this connection explicit in the following passage:

When Hawaiians die, their bodies were interred in the land. After a time, their bodies became the earth. The earth became a womb for the plants. Men consumed these plants. When a man died, he was returned to the earth. It was a spectacular cycle. This is how Hawaiians are connected to the earth. If a family had lived in an area for generations, their ancestors made the land where they lived and grew their food. (166)

The *mele oli* in *The Healers* highlight this familial intimacy between the land and genealogy, which includes humans, flora, and fauna alike, in ways that deterritorialize settler colonial discourse around becoming and belonging. As such, they make palpable the extent to which *Kānaka Maoli* epistemologies “unsettle” dominant ways of knowing and being.

This “unsettling” is apparent also in the ways in which *The Healers* challenges Western modes of linearity and historical chronology. The novel is set on the island of O’ahu, which has seen such a steady, overwhelming influx of foreign settlers that those who identify as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander make up only about a quarter of its population today (“Hawaii Population”). But the text, presenting an alternative timeline, features only main characters from Oceania and depicts their lives as shaped by *Kānaka Maoli* rather than settler ways of being and knowing. Instead of narrating the plot through a single focal character in chronological order, Armitage includes multiple narrators who relay interconnected tales spanning numerous generations in a narrative web that speaks to Native understandings of temporality and to intergenerational connections that far exceed the nuclear family.

In conventional narratives for young adult readers, parents play a genre-defining role: Typically serving as catalysts for conflict and as repressive forces, parental characters are obstacles that the adolescent characters must overcome, given the Western understanding of separation from parents as a prerequisite for growth into adulthood (Trites 56). That separation finds expression, for instance, in the incorporation of a school setting where adolescent characters pursue a formal education, in classical *Bildungsroman* fashion, outside the home

and away from parental restrictions. In *The Healers*, on the other hand, child and adolescent characters learn not in age-segregated schools but from exposure to the way of life and practices of the adults around them, who here serve as affirming rather than repressive forces. Hawaiian scholar Mary Kawena Pukui notes that children used to be involved “in nearly every aspect of family life. Little effort was made to shield children from the ‘realities of life’ as [in] Western society. [...] In old Hawaii, children learned skills by watching their elders,” just as the child characters do in Armitage’s text (qtd. in ho’omanawanui, “Moamahi” 92). Not only do the methods of learning differ, but the knowledge the young characters acquire by observing and participating in the world of adults around them diverges from the knowledge acquired in the Western education system as well: As the novel’s protagonists, cousins Pua and Keola, study the ways of traditional Hawaiian medicine and healing, they learn not by memorizing formulae from textbooks but rather by actively working with plants from the land and sea and by learning healing chants.

The Healers generally places much less emphasis on the traditional role of parents than readers of Euroamerican young adult fiction may be accustomed to. Following the common Native Hawaiian practice of *hānai* (adoption), Pua and Keola are raised by their grandmother, and even though they know their mothers, these women play only a minor role in the text. When the adolescent, unmarried Pua becomes pregnant, *The Healers* illustrates Pukui’s observation that “Hawaiians loved children and were adopters, taking the children of others to rear as their own” (qtd. in ho’omanawanui, “Moamahi” 92). Far from being shunned, Pua’s pregnancy is welcomed and celebrated: Her grandmother feels nothing but “joy and love” when she finds out, exclaiming that “We need more Hawaiian children in this world” (112; 144). The family’s neighbors even express their desire to raise the child if Pua does not want to raise it herself (147). *The Healers* here differs starkly from conventional young adult fiction, which typically depicts unplanned teen pregnancy as the undesirable outcome of adolescents’ lack of conformity to an aetotemporal order dictating that sexual activity, and especially sex that can lead to pregnancy, belongs in the realm of adulthood. Indeed, sexuality continues to present a topic of great ambivalence for a genre that is often concerned less with a realistic portrayal of sexuality than with teaching its young readers about the potential dangers of sex (such as unplanned pregnancy) as it takes great pains to guide its readers on the path to adulthood while simultaneously preserving at least some of their supposed youthful innocence.

Much like depictions of sexuality, representations of death in Western narratives for adolescents tend to oscillate between empowering young readers with knowledge and delimiting their de facto agency. Trites calls death the “sine qua non,” or defining factor, of the genre’s narratives, which tend to culminate in the adolescent characters’ acceptance of their own mortality (xii; 118). When it comes to the portrayal of death, adolescent literature as a genre sets itself apart from both texts for (younger) children and those for adults in significant ways. As Trites points out, children’s literature may incorporate death but typically only shows death occurring off the page and to characters older than the child protagonists; hence, death is here not an issue that main characters need to address in relation to their own sense of self. In adult literature, on the other hand, there is no specific convention regarding the portrayal of death, which can take myriad different forms. What characterizes adolescent literature is that “death is often depicted in terms of maturation when the protagonist accepts the permanence of mortality, when s/he accepts herself as Being-towards-death” (119). Differently put, young adult novels that incorporate the theme of death tend to do so in ways that show the adolescent protagonists confronting and, ultimately, coming to terms with not just the mortality of others but their own as well. Death represents the endpoint of the linear development that undergirds the *Bildungsroman* plot pattern, and the Euroamerican aetotemporal order maintains that awareness of Being-towards-death – a Heideggerian prerequisite for authentic *Dasein* – be acquired during adolescence.

In contrast, the opening pages of Armitage’s novel depict consciousness of Being-towards-death in two newborn *Kānaka Maoli* infants mourning their cousin, who died inside the womb: “Pua and Keola were sad because of the loss of their cousin. They cried for six months without stopping” (1). Clearly, this depiction of very young Hawaiian characters in *The Healers* – another of which remembers the time spent together with her twin “in her mother’s womb” (28) – signals an understanding of childhood starkly opposed to the Lockean figuration of the child as *tabula rasa* that continues to inform Euroamerican childhood constructions. Indeed, the life cycle presented in the novel functions as a cycle of being and agency that does not begin at birth nor end at death, and hence it does not adhere to Euroamerican aetotemporal divisions and modes of becoming. Far from demarcating the end of development, death is delineated by Armitage as a space of transition and potentiality that does not foreclose consciousness. One of the novel’s vignettes is in fact narrated in the first person by a character who has died: “Even though I was dead,” the character tells

us, "I believe I could still smell the clusters of ylang-ylang growing from the trees" (8). When a different character, Kealo, delivers a stillborn daughter in the ocean, the child takes "the body of a shark," who henceforth plays an active and decisive role as animal kin in the lives of Kealo's human-bodied descendants (7).

By blurring the conventional lines between life and death, child and adult, and human and nonhuman animal, *The Healers* brings into sharp relief the performative dimensions of aetotemporality as it elucidates how the timescapes of age and becoming can be otherwise. Native Hawaiian adolescent literature, such as Armitage's novel *The Healers*, hence occupies a precarious position as it does not conform to many of the conventions characterizing the adolescent literature genre. It thereby draws attention to the ways in which the Native Hawaiian child has been (and continues to be) removed from the conventional stories we tell about childhood, while at the same time affirming a place for Native aetotemporal epistemologies and storytelling traditions.

5. Conclusion

Authors of Indigenous fictions negotiate often irreconcilable differences between Native narrative traditions and dominant limitations of genre and form. Adhering to the latter, for instance by integrating Indigenous stories into the settler timescapes of adolescent literature conventions, can be a potent strategy for ensuring that these tales are published, disseminated, and read. But at the same time, Rifkin points out, it can "limit possibilities for envisioning other Indigenous experiences of time and expressions of temporal sovereignty" (5-6). Furthermore, Audra Simpson reminds us that "[t]here is a political alternative to 'recognition,' the much sought-after and presumed 'good' of multicultural politics. This alternative is 'refusal'" (qtd. in Rifkin 14). Since Native Hawaiian aetotemporalities do not fit within the confines of adolescent literature, such refusal of integration and recognition can open up the space for alternative modes of storytelling, as is the case for *The Healers*.

As it complicates the conventional boundaries not only of childhood and adolescence but also of the young adult literature genre, Armitage's novel draws on tropes and techniques of speculative fiction even as it ultimately remains firmly rooted in a distinctly Hawaiian tradition of storytelling. Rather than striving to make *The Healers* fit the genre of speculative fiction and thereby risking to devalue the Hawaiian ways of knowing it presents as mere fantasy, it might be more appropriate to consider the novel as an example of *mo'olelo* in the term's true sense. Understood as a contemporary iteration of the long

tradition of *mo'olelo* and *mele*, *The Healers* does not conform to the Western binary categorization of the real and the fantastic; rather it is a form of story and history all at once that blends poetry, prose, and chanting. It thereby participates in a long tradition of Hawaiian music and literature, which have “been carried from the ancient past to the postmodern present by chanters, singers, dancers, and musicians. In each successive period, different genres of *mele* have adapted new influences, from the Victorian waltzes of the nineteenth century to rap and hip-hop” (ho'omanawanui, “He Lei” 52). It makes sense, then, to consider Armitage's novel a contemporary *mo'olelo* that adapts the influences of the adolescent literature genre for a Hawaiian setting and worldview.

For young *Kānaka Maoli*, *The Healers* therefore “validates their cultural knowledge and offers a holistic representation of 'Ōiwi adolescence that balances cultural, spiritual, intellectual, and physical identity” (Lesuma 91). As such, a text like *The Healers* fulfills an important cultural function because it helps to convey an Indigenous sense of (hi)story alongside a distinctly Native Hawaiian temporality that emphasizes genealogy and the interdependence of past, present, and future. In the words of ho'omanawanui, “Kānaka Maoli today are sustained, fed, and empowered by our 'olelo, by the *mo'olelo* of our ancestors, by the literary ropes of resistance we weave for future generations who will, in turn, continue to travel the path of our ancestors *i ka wa pono*, when the time is right” (“Hā” 91).

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HAVAJSKE MO'OLELO KAO MJESTA OTPORA: MELE OLI I TEMPORALNOST U ROMANU *THE HEALERS* KIMA ARMITIDŽA

U *Beyond Settler Time*, Mark Rifkin primjećuje kako dominantni temporalni okviri pozicioniraju autohtone narode ili u prošlost ili u sadašnjost koju definišu kolonizatori, čime se potiskuju i osporavaju njihova sopstvena, autohtona vremena i prostori. U svom radu tvrdim da književnost za mlade učestvuje u ovom procesu tako što se usredsređuje na priče o individualnom oblikovanju, odrastanju i sazrijevanju, koje su usklađene s uzrasno podijeljenim zapadnim poimanjem vremena. Fokusirajući se na autohtone narative za mlade na Havajima, moj rad sugerije da havajske *mo'olelo* (tradicionalne priče i predanja) mogu služiti kao mjesta otpora kolonizatorskom vremenu, jer koriste tradicionalne načine pripovijedanja — poput *mele oli* (pjesme/ritualne napjeve) — koji ističu autohtone ritmove, tempove i genealogije. Da bih ilustrovala važnu funkciju koju *mo'olelo* može imati u afirmisanju izrazito autohtonog osjećaja vremena, tumačim adolescentski roman autohtonog havajskog autora Kima Armitidža, *The Healers* (2016), kao tekst koji nadilazi evroameričke žanrovske konvencije. Uključivanjem *mele oli* i havajskih *mo'olelo* (poput *The Healers*) ovi tekstovi izražavaju međugeneracijsku širinu domorodačkog poimanja vremena, oblikovanog pričama i genealogijama koje se prenose kroz pojedinačna tijela, ali ih i nadilaze, povezujući drevnu prošlost sa mogućim budućnostima havajskog naroda. Takva vremenska prostranost ne može stati u znatno skućeniji vremensko-prostorni okvir zapadne individualizacije, koji je jedno od ključnih obilježja književnosti za mlade. Zato tvrdim da književna djela domorodačkih Havajaca namijenjena mladim čitaocima, poput Armitidžovog romana, mogu plodno „uzdrmati“ dominantne konvencije pisanja za adolescente i podstaći nas da zamislimo drugačije ritmove i tonalitete postajanja.

Ključne riječi: autohtona havajska književnost, adolescentska književnost, književnost za mlade, temporalnost, sazrijevanje, pacifička književnost, spekulativna fikcija

ROCK ME, BABY: ROCK AND ROLL IN CROATIAN TEENAGE NOVELS

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Abstract: The paper lists and classifies musical phenomena, and then analyses the musical atmosphere in three recent novels of Croatian YA literature: *The Band* (Bend, 1999) by Silvano Simčić, *Yellow Minute: A Rock 'n' Roll Fable* (*Žuta minuta: rock'n'roll bajka*, 2005) by Darko Macan and *The Ice Creams* (*The Sladoleds*, 2019) by Miljenko Muršić. All three novels have a rock-and-roll theme, they all follow the life and growth of boys for whom rock music is extremely important in their formative years. The age difference between the three boys is approximately two years: Muršić's hero Miran is 14 years old, Macan's protagonist Yellow (*Žuti*) is 16 years old, and Simčić's main character celebrates his eighteenth birthday near the end of the novel. Given that the heroes are of different ages, the author's approach is different in all of them, and they are intended for different audiences. The chronotope of the novel is also different: In the novel *The Ice Creams* the characters are gathered around the band of the same name live in an unnamed city; in Macan's novel, the band The Deaf Swallows (*Gluhe laste*) plays in a club named The Shed (*Shoop*) in Novi Zagreb (New Zagreb); and the main character of Silvano Simčić's teenage story is a young rocker, Vudi, who dreams of forming a band and briefly started Happy Dead People (*Sretni mrtvaci*) in Rijeka in the early 1980s, which at the time was a real rock capital. The referentiality of the three novels is based on the names of well-known rock bands, solo musicians and songs, Croatian and foreign, then iconic world locations associated with rock, among others. The numerous interferences of literature and music have been pointed out by intermedial studies, primarily a very detailed model by Werner Wolf. Due to the variety of musical references in the novels, we are talking about three different novelistic genres: a novel of performance (*The Ice Creams*); a novel of music criticism (*Yellow Minute*); and a musical diary (*The Band*), which is also a kind of musical memoir prose and a *Bildungsroman*.

Keywords: YA literature, rock and roll, *The Band*, *Yellow Minute*, *The Ice Creams*

1. Introduction

In the focus of our research are three recent novels of Croatian young adult (YA) literature: *The Band* (*Bend*, 1999) by Silvano Simčić, *Yellow Minute: A Rock 'n' Roll Fable* (*Žuta minuta: rock'n'roll bajka*, 2005) by Darko Macan and *The Ice Creams* (*The Sladoleds*, 2019) by Miljenko Muršić. The central theme of all three novels is rock and roll, and they all follow the life and growth of boys for whom rock music is extremely important in their formative years. The age difference between the three boys is approximately two years: Muršić's hero Miran is 14 years old; Macan's protagonist Yellow (*Žuti*) is 16 years old; and Simčić's main character Nikola, a.k.a. Vudi, celebrates his eighteenth birthday near the end of the novel. Considering the different age of the heroes, they all show a different approach by the author and are intended for different audiences. The paper analyses all the occurrences of rock music in the three novels, their similarities and differences. These occurrences are grouped and systematised and an attempt is made to describe the entire musical atmosphere in the novels, the musical background to the events.

Music is defined as tonal art and sound-shaped rhythm, while literature is defined as the art of spoken and written words. Both forms of art can be recorded, fixed either in writing, graphics as a text or linguistic record, or with notes as a sheet music or score. What graphemes (letters) are in a verbal, literary text, notes are in tonal notation. A record implies a sequence, and reading words and notes means following a series of graphic verbal or tonal records; therefore music and literature are temporal arts, inseparable from the passage of time. They belong to the medium of performance: they are perceived auditorily and visually by reading. Literary science and musicology share terminology, e.g. a musical/literary work, motif, theme, composition, event, description, emotion, melody and rhythm.

Therefore, for the study of music in the three novels, the theory of intermediality was imposed, which determines the types and forms of the presence of one medium in another, in our case, music in literary works. Intermediality is the process by which the structures, materials, forms and techniques characteristic of one medium are transferred to another. Intermediality implies the use of more than one medium in artistic expression, and it denotes the relationship between systems, not between individual phenomena (Wolf 1999, 36). In intermediate operations and procedures, new meanings are added to what a work expresses through its traditional means.

Steven Paul Scher's typology (2004, 173-201) distinguishes three models of the relationship between literature and music: "literature in music"; "music and literature"; and "music in literature". Music in

literature consist of three subtypes: “word music” (words imitate the acoustic quality of music); “musical structures” (adaptation of larger musical structures and patterns and application of musical techniques and devices, e.g. theme and variations, the contrast and the leitmotif, the sonata, the fugue, etc.); and “verbal music” (a piece of music is the theme of the text, the score is approximated, the performance of the music is evoked, as is one’s reaction to the performance) (180-188).

On the solid basis of Scher’s distribution, Werner Wolf created a fairly detailed model. In researching rock and roll in the three novels, we focus on what Wolf calls intermedial reference, which can be either explicit or implicit. Explicit reference, or intermedial thematisation, are terms that can be used interchangeably, particularly for verbal media. “In verbal media”, Wolf claims, “explicit reference is easiest to identify. In principle, it is present whenever another medium (or a heteromedial work) is mentioned or discussed (‘thematised’)” (2015, 464). Implicit reference or intermediate imitation has three subtypes. The first – evocation – concerns the effect of music in general or of a certain work, evocation of a musical composition in a literary work. “As opposed to explicit reference, which points to another medium in a non-imaginative, denotative and cognitive way, it appeals to the recipient’s imagination. Evocation is highly relevant for the relation between literature and music. (...) novels can evoke a specific musical composition in the reader’s mind by describing its effects on certain characters” (466). Another subtype is partial reproduction, and an example of this is, as Wolf says, “as far as the relationship between literature and music is concerned, a novel that contains a quote of the text of a well-known song, thereby presenting the entire song (including the music) to the (informed) reader’s mind” (465). The third subtype of implicit reference is formal imitation. Its characteristic feature is that it attempts to shape the structure of one medium so that it assumes a formal resemblance to the typical features or structures of another medium, at least to some extent. An example in our case would be the musicalisation of a literary work, imitating music with words or imitating a musical structure in a literary work.

2. Rock and roll references in the three novels

2.1. *The Ice Creams*

The heroes of the novel *The Ice Creams* live in an unnamed city. Although half of the novel is actually a light story about the romances of two pairs of elementary school students, Ana and Mislav and Iva and Miran, the remaining half deals with the first performance of an emerging band, The Ice Creams. The initial line-up, which consisted of

the guitarist Miran, the drummer Filip and the keyboard player Martin, would be supplemented by the 30-year-old bassist Ivan and the singer Iva, who is still in elementary school. Parallel to the formation of the band, the love between the two teenage couples grows, accompanied by dramatic arguments and petty jealousies, along with conversations about current events at school and their desired future occupations (architect, musician, psychologist, kindergarten teacher). Ultimately, everything culminates in an extremely successful school concert and the resolution of love-related vicissitudes.

2.1.1. Explicit references or intermedial thematisation in *The Ice Creams*

Miran's guitar practising is frequently described in passages, as well as his judgments on his own performance, and about the song *Mona Lisa*, for which he wrote both the lyrics and the music. When Ivan joins the band, we read a description of the performance of several songs, his evaluation of the main qualities and shortcomings and a self-assessment of all the band members regarding the quality of the performance.

The keyboard player is very good. You can see that he knows how to play, you can see that he is educated. He doesn't make mistakes in the notes or in the melody, and he has a feeling for the melody. That's great. The drummer is also phenomenal. Sometimes he loses his composure and drums too much. He has some of his drumming ornaments with which he wants to show off his virtuosity. It's actually not bad because it's effective and gives the performance a distinctiveness, and the listeners like it too. Only that should remain within certain limits. If it's within limits, then it's excellent, if it goes too far, then it's annoying. That goes for everyone. It's a little trick – let them predict that each of them will have one part in which they will come to the fore and show their skills – the keyboardist, the drummer, and the guitarist. And Miran is good. The guitar is the soul of rock 'n' roll. The guitar has to stand out (Muršić, 2019, 65).

Finally, several pages of the text are dedicated to the band's performance at the school event, where we read about the effects of The Ice Creams' music on the audience. The musical part of the novel is focused on performances and value judgments during rehearsals, and then on the final performance. The reader is a witness to the entire process, the selection of the repertoire, and its rehearsal until the final

form that the band presents at the school performance. A large part of the novel is devoted to the creative process: practising and reproducing:

– It is fine! – Miran praised himself. This is his first, only and best own composition. It is far from perfect. It will be! The boy keeps hitting the guitar. When he makes a mistake, he repeats, corrects himself and looks for a good tone (5).

The explicit reference also includes the narrator's comments and conversations about the composition of the rock band: "In rock bands, the drum is the foundation. Guitar, keyboards, singing – it's all a superstructure, and the drum is the foundation. (...) The guitar is the soul of rock" (59). A few endearing stereotypes have "crept" into conversations about the rock milieu: "(...) all rockers are kind of relatives" (18), "A dude is someone who can play rock 'n' roll, not someone who can solve maths problems" (33), "One day, when I am playing in a rock band, thousands of the most beautiful girls will scream and admire me, including Iva" (22), and "(...) rock musicians have the right to the most beautiful girls" (44).

Assessments of particular songs are also a kind of explicit reference, e.g. *Satisfaction*: "A powerful song, impressive rhythm, very attractive" (62), or *Bohemian Rhapsody*: "Of course they couldn't choose that because it's too complicated and they would need the whole philharmonic" (63). Musical terms form a part of explicit reference, too. For example: "band", "backing tracks", "demo recording", "sound effects", some even from the past, such as the Soviet "VIA – vocal-instrumental ensemble", etc.

In addition to the aforementioned interweaving of music and literature, in the novel we also encounter the subtype of explicit references, intermedial quotations, in the form of the names of bands, solo musicians and songs. They appear in the context of composing a repertoire for a school performance and are significantly fewer than in the novel *Yellow Minute*, and especially in the novel *The Band*.

THE ICE CREAM – INTERNATIONAL AND CROATIAN EXPLICIT REFERENCE (intermedial quotations)	
International	Croatian
Bands	
The Beatles The Rolling Stones Pink Floyd	Azra

Queen	
Band Members / Solo Musicians	
Freddie Mercury (Queen) Tina Turner	Branimir Johnny Štulić Drago Mlinarec
Songs	
<i>Yesterday</i> (The Beatles) <i>Michelle</i> (The Beatles) <i>Satisfaction</i> (The Rolling Stones) <i>Another Brick in the Wall</i> (Pink Floyd) <i>Bohemian Rhapsody</i> (Queen)	<i>What Should I Do</i> (A šta da radim) / Azra <i>Smile</i> (Osmijeh) / Group 220 (Grupa 220)

Table 1. Subtype of explicit reference, intermedial quotations, in the novel *The Ice Creams*

2.1.2. Implicit references or intermedial imitation in *The Ice Creams*

When we talk about implicit references, one example of its first subtype – evocation – shows the moment when Iva completely immerses herself in the performance at the first rehearsal with the band, and that motivates the other members as well. The way in which Iva and the band immerse themselves in the music undoubtedly evokes the fierce rhythm of rock music to the reader, and not, for example, opera, *fado*, soul or trap.

She got into the song, varied her voice, inserted her improvisation into the singing, and even improved it a little melodically. In the last chorus, she broke free until the end, as she has seen with some bands. Her teasing encouraged Martin to introduce his improvisation on the keyboard, and then Miran also stepped up and excelled on the guitar. When it seemed that it was over, the drummer broke free, as if he couldn't wait to release the accumulated energy. Then they sang the chorus from their hearts together once more, which now sounded great (85).

Unlike intermedial citations of the names of bands, solo musicians and albums that belong to explicit references, those of individual verses

or entire songs are counted as the second subtype of implicit reference, referred to as partial reproduction. The examples are the literal lyrics of the first stanzas of two rock songs. The first one is *What Should I Do* (*A šta da radim*), by the group Azra, published as their first single (1979). The second song, *Smile* (*Osmijeh*), is the title track of the album by the Zagreb rock band Group 220, which was released in 1967. Partial reproduction is supported in both cases by explicit references to band names and song titles.

THE ICE CREAMS – IMPLICIT REFERENCE = PARTIAL REPRODUCTION	
Verses	
<u>What Should I Do</u>	<u>Smile</u>
<i>What should I do When my friends leave When the girl On whom I cast my eyes Leaves.</i> <i>(A šta da radim kad odu prijatelji moji kada ode djevojka na koju bacam oči.)</i>	<i>Like the sun that shines through the day Like the yellow moon that shines in the sky My dear, know that is how you look to me While you look at the world with a smile.</i> <i>(Ko sunce što sja kroz dan Ko mjesec žut što na nebu sja Tako mi draga znaj izgledaš ti Dok sa smiješkom promatraš svijet.)</i>

Table 2. Subtype of implicit reference, partial reproduction, in the novel *The Ice Creams*

In addition to verifiable songs by two Croatian bands, we find in the novel an endearing song *Mona Lisa* by the band The Ice Creams, which talks about inviting Mona Lisa to eat ice cream, the text of which is fully present in the novel.

MONA LISA

<i>If you want happiness, listen to the old wisdom: all you need to know is - play the guitar!</i>	<i>(Ako želiš sreću, slušaj mudrost staru: samo trebaš znati – svirati gitaru!</i>
<i>Mona Lisa, Lisa ice cream! Mona Lisa, Lisa smile!</i>	<i>Mona Lisa, Lisa sladoled! Mona Lisa, Lisa nasmiješi se!</i>
<i>Mona Lisa, Lisa ice cream! Mona Lisa, Lisa I love you!</i>	<i>Mona Lisa, Lisa sladoled! Mona Lisa, Lisa volim te!</i>
<i>If you want a girl go crazy with love, buy her an ice cream – don't waste your time (5–6).</i>	<i>Ako želiš curu ljubavljju zaludit, kupi joj sladoled – nemoj vrijeme gubit.)</i>

The onomatopoeic imitation of the sound of the guitar, representing the third subtype, formal imitation, is present in several places in the novel: “Pin pin piuuu – simulates Miran playing the guitar” (18); “Pin pin piu, Miran plays” (33); “Piruriiii, he plays” (33); “Piruuu – like he’s playing the guitar” (38). We find this subtype of implicit reference only in the novel *The Ice Creams*.

2.2. Yellow Minute

In Darko Macan’s novel the main character is Yellow, a student at Andrija Maurović Secondary School Centre. Yellow is a rocker at heart, he passionately collects records and gives his last money for them. But he doesn’t play. He is best friends with Gogo, the frontman of the band

The Deaf Swallows (Gluhe laste). Yellow is a big rock enthusiast, he is hard-working and a good person, so he helped Asterix, the manager of a club named The Shed (Shoopa) in Novi Zagreb, to clean and set up the club. Yellow does not like asking for favours, so he only reluctantly does this to ensure the Swallows' first appearance in The Shed. By chance, the smug Uroš Uzelac, editor of rock magazine *The Rebel*, appeared at the concert of The Deaf Swallows. Yellow amazes him with a coherent assessment of the subgenres played by The Deaf Swallows. Because of this, Uroš asks Yellow to write ten lines about the Swallows' performance. That is how Yellow becomes a rock critic, and the fate of Gogo's band is in his hands. Yellow shot to fame with what would turn out to be his only article in the magazine, because it soon stopped being published. He fell unhappily in love with Ljiljana, so he then fell out of love, then he changed the balance of power in his friendship with Gogo. In the last sequence of the novel, he is on the way to falling in love again, this time with Ksenija, a friend from school.

2.2.1. Explicit reference or intermedial thematisation in *Yellow Minute*

The assessment of the repertoire played by The Deaf Swallows, which Yellow presented to Uroš Uzelac "in a flash", is part of explicit reference or intermedial thematisation: "post punk-rock grunge, I would say, with a great influence of 'Black Sabbath'. In terms of music, not of biting off chickens' heads" (Macan 2005 34), and when he misinterprets the editor's speechlessness, Yellow adds a comparison to a more recent band, Alice in Chains.

Actually, Yellow had already displayed a lucid and very objective assessment of The Deaf Swallows' concert when he asked Asterix to allow the Swallows to perform in the club, and the article written in *The Rebel* attests to his knowledge of the technical characteristics of the band's performance, as well as to his ingenious use of language. Writing about the relationship between music and literature, Viktor Žmegač emphasises that music in its essence remains true to its nature (2003 173). If a literary text wants to represent music, it must either hide it or unduly burden the accessibility of the literary (mainly prose) expression. When expressing a personal impression (if too professional a description is to be avoided), the author must use metaphors and look for a literary expression appropriate to the musical experience. The trouble then, Žmegač emphasises, is that each reader can read the text in his own way. At the other extreme, there may potentially be a musicological description of some musical text, that would drastically limit the number of future readers who can understand it (174).

Of course, Yellow is not able to write a musicological description of the performance of a rock band, and the readers of *The Rebel* do not want to read such a text either. The magazine's habitus and Yellow's age are much better suited to this discourse of music criticism:

Rock is true (...). Rock is more than music and words (...). Rock is a voice (...). Rock is the voice of dissatisfaction, the voice of the betrayed, the voice of hope. Rock is not just music – rock is a call to change the world for the better. (...) So when rock is played in the name of dissatisfaction, in the name of hope and change, then it doesn't matter if the guitarist has problems with more complex chords or if the drummer constantly rushes half a beat. 'The Deaf Swallows' played in the name of the truth in 'The Shed' that evening and the audience responded in the name of the truth with roaring and dancing... (Macan 2005 44-45).

Nikša Gligo divides up verbal texts in terms of their relationship towards music into: "literature about music", "verbal text as an instruction for interpretation" and "verbal interpretation of the findings of technical analysis" (1999, 165). Regarding the latter category, Gligo (referring to H. H. Eggebrecht's theory of musical analysis) explains the "division of degrees of analysis" (165), according to which the analytical procedure is based on "technical analysis", and then on "its verbal interpretation". From the previous quotes from the article published by Yellow in *The Rebel*, it is evident that Yellow emphasises interpretation in his judgments.

Yellow is, therefore, a good musical diagnostician, but he is somehow out of his time, he is an anachronism. In the flood of pop culture and folk, he knows and loves rock. He understands the mechanism of music creation and its performance, but the market mechanism is completely foreign to him. For example: it is hard for him to understand that *The Rebel* is dwindling because rock does not bring in money, only folk songs sell well.

The novel *Yellow Minute* also has its stereotypes and unwritten rules, such as: "A friend will always side with a friend, but a rocker can't lie about rock" (Macan 2005, 17), or:

That's not how it works in rock! You play and then you get good and then you get noticed and they invite you to small clubs and then to bigger ones and then you record a CD and go to stadiums and then you get hooked on drugs or become a mystic and ... But, you don't arrange a performance in a club

through friends! Ties and laces – that’s the way adults think!
There is no place for that in rock ‘n’ roll! (15-16).

In addition to the critical oral judgments that Yellow pronounces, one written criticism and stereotypes, explicit reference of the text is achieved through intermediate quotation: in the novel we find a slightly larger number of band names, musicians and song titles than in the novel *The Ice Creams*.

YELLOW MINUTE – INTERNATIONAL AND CROATIAN EXPLICIT REFERENCE <i>(intermedial quotations)</i>	
<u>International</u>	
Bands	Band Members / Solo Musicians
Black Sabbath Alice in Chains Motörhead AC/DC Calexico The Rolling Stones The Beatles Led Zeppelin The Monkees Foo Fighters The Hives Queens of the Stone Age	Paul McCartney Beck Jimi Hendrix
	Songs
	<i>Ace of Spades</i> (Motörhead) <i>Rebel Yell</i> [Billy Idol] <i>Bohemian Rhapsody</i> [Queen]
<u>Croatian</u>	
Bands	Band Members
Dirty Theatre (Prljavo kazalište) White Button (Bijelo dugme) Indexes (Indexi)	[Jasenکو] Houra / (Prljavo kazalište) [Husein Hasanefendić] Hus / (Prljavo kazalište)

Table 3. Subtype of explicit reference, intermedial quotations, in the novel *Yellow Minute*

Musical terminology is abundantly represented, for example: “frontman”, “audience”, “stage”, “backstage”, “fan”, “set”, “cover version”, “chord”, “unplugged concert”, “post punk-rock grunge”, “rockabilly”, including the terminology of the microworld where rock music and journalism converge: “demo band”, “demo tape”, “albums for review” or “press card”.

2.2.2. Implicit references or intermedial imitation in *Yellow Minute*

The only kind of implicit reference in the novel, evocation, belongs to the descriptions of dancing. The effects of music on Yellow are clearly shown in two passages in which he expresses his love for rock music performatively. Although his movements are quite clumsy, his dancing evokes associations with rock and similar fierce rhythms and cannot be mistaken for a waltz, samba or cha-cha-cha. It should be emphasised that the novel is “framed” – it begins and ends with Yellow’s dancing; the first and last sentences of the novel are identical.

Yellow dances.

Yellow does not dance particularly beautifully or particularly interestingly: he throws his elbows to every blast from the speakers, drops his head, and raises his right knee (always only the right) almost to his chin. While girls and boys dance around him to be seen or to be like each other, Yellow resembles more than anything an Indian witch doctor for whom there is no world while he is summoning a storm in a trance (7).

With each step, Yellow shakes off one worry and one bad memory. With each of Ksenija’s smiles, Yellow feels the old joy and knows that everything is good, that everything will always be good.

Yellow throws his arms strongly, and powerfully up, and lets out a roar of invincible youth and unbearable happiness from the top of his lungs.

Yellow dances (141).

2.3. *The Band*

The novel *The Band* takes place in the 1980s in Rijeka, which was then a rock capital. The main character of Silvano Simčić’s teenage story is a young rocker who dreams of starting a band. He has an inner voice,

that of a fierce rocker, Janis Joplin. Nikola is called Vudi because he is obsessed with Woodstock. He has finished marine engineering high school, he is unhappily in love with Morena, who has a boyfriend, and he also likes Tanja. Vudi spends his time in rock clubs in Rijeka with Morena and also with Anica, who becomes part of his short-lived band Happy Dead People (*Sretni mrtvaci*). The desire for a guitar (and an amplifier) motivated Vudi to look for a summer job, and when he spends part of the earned money on a summer vacation, he accepts the gift of a guitar from his friend and neighbour Elvis even though he knows it was stolen. When the band is finally established, Vudi has a hard time coming to terms with the band's punk profile imposed by Maja, an experienced punk singer from Ljubljana. Because of the guitar, he goes to the police to be interviewed and he has to return it, and the band breaks up. What follows is a relationship with Tanja, a phase of promiscuity, graduation and finally a voyage on a ship to the other side of the world, which signifies Vudi's growing up.

2.3.1. Explicit reference or intermedial thematisation in *The Band*

When describing a visit to a café, a disco, or even a visit to someone's house, Vudi always mentions the music that was playing on that occasion. He does so in great detail: he lists both the artist and the song, sometimes accompanied by a short review. Time is divided up by musical numbers. Songs are anchor points in the flow of time – gripping points, dividers. The novel is somewhat reminiscent of a musical version of a diary. Vudi recorded a lot of factual information from the world of rock music, comments and observations, and the number of passages in which he describes the states into which certain songs take him is truly impressive – which are all characteristics of a diary.

Thematisation or explicit reference in the novel is achieved in several ways. The first are Vudi's observations about the rock scene in Rijeka in the 1980s:

In the middle of 1982, the rock scene in Rijeka was mostly played by new wave-oriented bands. There are also some pop and heavy metal and sympho groups that follow the former. A few years earlier, Termites and Paraphs started the whole rock 'n' roll craze. Now both bands are dying, but they are being succeeded by younger and more agile ones" (Simčić 1999: 14).

Furthermore, the thematisation paragraphs are Vudi's expert comments about the way certain instruments are played in different bands full of technical details: "It is played fiercely; the rhythm guitar,

under distortion, is in the foreground, the solos are short and effective, and the lyrics are engaged, and related to the topic of everyday life” (14). Vudi also comments on the rehearsals of the band Happy Dead People: “Whenever I would like to refine the sound and offer a few softer chords and more melodious phrases, I encounter her strong resistance” (71).

Explicit references are also the numerous musical terms incorporated into the novel, for example “chords”, “distortion”, “riffs” and the names of musical genres: “soul”, “funk” or “sympho” and some musical jargon: “đitra”, meaning a guitar, “dilajla”, meaning out of one’s mind, drugged or drunk, calling back to the hit song *Delilah* by Tom Jones.

Two tables containing many names of bands, musicians, songs and albums, world-famous and those from Croatia, testify to the representation of intermedial quotations. (And we are only talking about references from the domain of rock music.)

THE BAND – INTERNATIONAL EXPLICIT REFERENCE (<i>intermedial quotations</i>)		
Bands	Band Members	Songs
The Beatles	Grace Slick	<i>Something</i> (The Beatles)
The Rolling	/Jefferson Airplane	<i>Let it be</i> (The Beatles)
Stones	John Lennon, Paul	<i>Angie</i> (The Rolling Stones)
U2	McCartney	<i>Beast of Burden</i> (The Rolling
Jefferson	/ The Beatles	Stones)
Airplane	Debbie Harry	<i>Start Me Up</i> (The Rolling
Deep Purple	/Blondie	Stones)
Pink Floyd	Mick Jagger /	<i>You Can’t Always Get What</i>
Uriah Heep	The Rolling	<i>You Want</i> (The Rolling Stones)
Led Zeppelin	Stones	<i>Wild Angels</i> (The Rolling
The Stooges	Ian Curtis / Joy	Stones)
The Doors	Division	<i>Stairway to Heaven</i> (Led
Who	Jonathan	Zeppelin)
Pere Ubu	Richman /	<i>Lust for Life</i> (Iggy Pop)
New Order	Modern Lovers	<i>Heroes</i> (David Bowie)
Television	Johnny Rotten /	<i>Scary Monsters</i> (David
Jonathan	Sex Pistols	Bowie / Robert Fripp)
Richman &		<i>Denis</i> (Blondie)
Modern Lovers	Solo Musicians	<i>Hotel California</i> (The Eagles)

Specials Talking Heads Spandau Ballet Simple Minds Yes King Crimson Genesis The Cure The Velvet [Underground] Jethro Tull Black Sabbath Lynyrd Skynyrd <u>Punk bands</u> Sex Pistols The Clash Joy Division The Ramones Partisans Discharge Dead Kennedy Gang of Four The Vibrators	Janis Joplin Eric Clapton David Bowie Bob Dylan Joe Cocker Santana Elvis Costello Patti Smith Joe Jackson Jeff Beck Neil Young Mike Oldfield Jim Morrison [Bruce] Springsteen Lou Reed Elton John Iggy Pop Alvin Lee Arlo Guthrie	<i>Let's Stick Together</i> (Bryan Ferry) <i>Whiter Shade of Pale</i> (Procol Harum) <i>Wish You Were Here</i> (Pink Floyd) <i>Dark Side of the Moon</i> (Pink Floyd) <i>Blue Jeans Blues</i> (ZZ-Top) <i>Me and Bobby McGee</i> (Kris Kristofferson / Janice Joplin) <i>Goodbye Stranger</i> (Supertramp) <i>Cocaine</i> (J. J. Cale / [Eric Clapton]) <i>Hey, Joe</i> (Jimi Hendrix) <i>Avalon</i> (Roxy Music) <i>Sultans of Swing</i> (Dire Straits) <i>Samba Pa Ti</i> [Santana]
	Albums	
	<i>Some Girls</i> (Rolling Stones) <i>Avalon</i> (Roxy Music) <i>War</i> (U2)	

Table 4. Subtype of explicit reference, intermedial quotations, in the novel *The Band* (international)

THE BAND – REGIONAL (CROATIAN, INTER ALIA) EXPLICIT REFERENCE (intermedial quotations)	
Bands	
<u>Rijeka</u>	<u>Croatia</u>
The Termites (Termiti) The Paraphs (Parafi) Eastern Exit (Istočni izlaz) Chaos (Kaos) Empty Plates (Prazni pijati) Protest (Protest) Ideological Riots (Idejni nemiri) Let 2 The Mirrors (Ogledala) Lonely Boys (Usamljeni dječaci) Frozen Rats (Smrznuti štakori) Alpha [= Beta] Centauri	Azra Dirty Theatre (Priljavo kazalište) White Button (Bijelo dugme) The Passage (Haustor)
	<u>Slovenia</u>
	Children of Socialism (Otroci socijalizma) The Bastards (Pankrti) Laibach O!Cult (O!Kult) Niet
	<u>Serbia</u>
	Catherine II (Katarina II) Electric Orgasm (Električni orgazam)
Songs	Band members
Azra <i>Horror is My Style (Užas je moja furka)</i> The Termites (Termiti) <i>Folk Song (Narodna pjesma)</i> Movie (Film) <i>You Radiate Rays Through the Air (Ti zračiš zrake kroz zrak)</i> <i>Smiles (Osmijesi)</i> <i>Misfit (Neprilagođen)</i> <i>Modern Girl (Moderna djevojka)</i> <i>When You Are Young (Kad si mlad)</i> <i>Together (Zajedno)</i>	Jura Stublić / Movie (Film) Johnny Štulić / Azra Kralj / The Termites (Termiti)
	Albums
	Movie (Film) <i>Signals in the Night (Signali u noći)</i>

Table 5. Subtype of explicit reference, intermedial quotations, in the novel *The Band* (regional, mostly Croatian)

A particularly interesting part of the intermedial quotations are two comparisons with rock singers and bands as the main components: “His car shines like Mick Jagger’s concert microphone” (62). “Everything seems to have an end. After all, neither Janis Joplin, nor The Doors, nor the Sex Pistols lasted forever” (124).

2.3.2. Implicit references in *The Band*

A subtype of implicit references in the novel – evocation, i.e. quotes of the effects of listening to music – is focused on Vudi. Of the 13 references found, we single out two, one short: “(...) until I put *Some Girls* by The Rolling Stones on the record player for my pleasure, finding on the album the beautiful ballad *Beast of Burden* that takes me somewhere high up in the middle of the sky” (13), and one really long:

(...) I recognise the opening bars of *A Whiter Shade of Pale* by the group Procol Harum. That melody fills my soul like a holy river that soaks the fertile land. A sense of mystical awe towards life grows in me, which must be just one big secret that only the best rock music can express in a subtler way. The thing captivated me and at the same time alienated me from people, locking me in my own shell. At that moment I am unable to start a conversation with anyone. I’m just peeking at the couples in the living room dancing, in love, while their faces reflect the glare of the blue, yellow and reddish lights of the *light show* (33).

The second subtype of implicit reference, partial reproduction, is reduced to the three verses identical to the names of the Croatian songs.

THE BAND – IMPLICIT REFERENCE = PARTIAL REPRODUCTION
Verses
<i>Smiles, Smiles (Osmijesi, osmijesi)</i> / Movie (Film) <i>You Radiate Rays Through the Air (Ti zračiš zrake kroz zrak)</i> / Movie (Film) <i>I’m a Really Happy Kid (Ja sam stvarno sretno dijete)</i> / Dirty Theatre (Prljavo kazalište)

Table 6. Subtype of implicit reference, partial reproduction, in the novel *The Band*

In addition to the small number of mentioned verses of real songs, numerous songs by Happy Dead People are mentioned in *The Band*:

Praise to Hard Punk (Pohvala tvrdom punku), *Phallus of the Moon* (Mjesečev falus), *Yugoslavia* (Jugoslavija), *To the Workers in the Shipyard* (Radnicima u brodogradilištu), *Lenin's Will* (Lenjinova oporuka), *Communism in High-Heeled Boots* (Komunizam u čizmama sa visokim petama), *Hlapić the Apprentice in the Central Committee* (Šegrt Hlapić u Centralnom komitetu), *Easy* (Radodajka), and the first three were performed in their entirety. Here is an example of one of them, as well as one of the two lines of unfinished songs that Vudi wrote after his walk of shame home from police interrogation.

<i>PRAISE TO HARD PUNK</i>	<i>(POHVALA TVRDOM PUNKU</i>
<i>if you can't live normally</i>	<i>ako ne možeš normalno</i>
<i>because you don't have a job</i>	<i>živjeti</i>
<i>or enough money</i>	<i>jer nemaš posao ili dovoljno</i>
<i>blast out hard punk</i>	<i>novaca</i>
<i>punk is a big supermarket</i>	<i>šibaj tvrdi punk</i>
<i>with weapons</i>	<i>punk je velika samoposluga s</i>
<i>you just pick it and shoot</i>	<i>oružjem</i>
<i>someone... (68)</i>	<i>ti ga samo odaberi i nekoga</i>
	<i>upucaj...)</i>
<i>Cry, mother, cry,</i>	<i>(Plači, majko, plači,</i>
<i>that theft oppresses us both,</i>	<i>ta krađa oboje nas tlači,</i>
<i>cry, mother, cry,</i>	<i>plači, majko, plači,</i>
<i>it makes us stronger (83)</i>	<i>to nas čini jačim)</i>

In the novel *The Band*, we find a lot of Vudi's mistakes when writing down the names of authors, bands, songs or albums. For example: Johny [Johnny] Rotten, Peru [Pere] Ubu, Lynard Skynard [Lynyrd Skynyrd]. Some titles are garbled, such as *Goodbay* [Goodbye Stranger] by Supertramp, *You can get always what you want* [You Can't Always Get What You Want] by The Rolling Stones, *We are always together* [Together] (Mi smo uvijek zajedno [Zajedno]) by Movie (Film) – but one line reads *Because we are always together* (Jer smo uvijek zajedno). Also, Vudi attributed one album to the wrong artists: "While driving we listen to Joy Division's *White Album*" (63). The *White Album* was recorded by The Beatles, at the time when the novel *The Band* takes place, whereas Joy Division recorded the studio albums *Unknown Pleasures* and *Closer* and the compilations *Still* and *Substance*. The mistakes in the novel do not interfere with the reader's experience. Wrong entries are entirely in

the spirit of the subjectivity of a diary entry, and thus also of a music diary.

3. Referentiality

In addition to musical intermedial references, references from reality or their absence are also interesting in the construction of rock milieu and stories in novels. Thus, in all three novels, the bands around which the main action takes place are fictional. In the novel *The Ice Creams*, referentiality is largely absent, so we do not find out in which city the four elementary school pupils live, so a fictitious band is expected.

In *Yellow Minute*, the characters move through Zagreb's neighbourhoods (Trnsko, Trešnjevka, Knežija) and squares (Kvatrić, Cvjetni), individual buildings (Jadran Bridge [Jadranski most], House of Sports [Dom sportova], Atrij Cafe, Đuro Rock Club) and a supermarket chain (Konzum) are also mentioned. Part of the literary reality is fictional: places (The Shed, Portorico club, Andrija Maurović Secondary School Centre), a cult rock magazine (*The Rebel*), singers (Neva Djever, Šokre Bundek, Slavoljub Munižaba), and many rock bands – The Deaf Swallows, Martin and the Pirates (Martin i gusari), The Hussars (Husari), Ganders (Gusani), Second Support Group (Druga predgrupa), Formulas 2 (Formule 2), The Mandrakes (Mandraci), Jarun, and Penkala.

The novel *Yellow Minute* emphasises the spatial component. The passage underlining the iconic status of Wembley Stadium, where numerous world musicians have held memorable concerts, and somewhat caricaturing the music critic's worldwide fame is impressive and funny at the same time. Uroš, who is affectedly self-important, longs for Wembley, feels topophilia for it (Tuan 2003). He fantasises about being late for the concert of the world's biggest rock attraction, dressed in black, when everyone falls silent, all the lights are focused on him, and he "bows slightly, gently touches his chest with his long white fingers, even smiles with the corner of his lips" (Macan 2005, 23). Then Wembley erupts, half a million people clap, and the drummer stomps his feet. "The concert is finally complete because he, Uroš Uzelac, *the* critic, has arrived" (24). Gogo also fantasises about performing at the cult stadium, and he makes many promises to Yellow because he helped The Deaf Swallows get their first concert at The Shed: "You are on our list from now until the end of time! When we play at Wembley, you'll have a backstage ticket!" (19). Finally, the singer Šokre Bundek says that he wants to reach Wembley when he suggests that Uroš become his manager: "Then Šokre laughed: – And you know the conditions: either

you bring me to Wembley in a year or two or I'll dump you! 'Wembley', thought that hungry part of Uroš's mind, 'I can do it!'" (96).

The referentiality in *The Band* is contributed to by the absence of any fictional band names besides Happy Dead People (Alpha Centauri is written wrongly, when it should be Beta Centauri), and of any fictional places: all the iconic rock places are real – Kont Club, Palach Club, Modra Disco Club in Rijeka, the Forty-Eight Disco Club (Četrdesetosmica) in Opatija, Mimi Disco Club in Lovran – as well as those where snappy dressers gather – Kont and Milde in Rijeka, Imperial Disco Club in Medulin. The stratification of Rijeka's youth is based (mostly) on musical criteria, even on individual catering facilities: the first floor of the Kontinental Hotel (a pastry shop) is occupied by snappy dressers, and the bottom (café) by rockers, punks and others. But one place is even more important to rockers than Kont, they belong entirely to the Palach Club: "And that youth club for every rocker from Rijeka was Parliament, Banares, Mecca, the Vatican, Paris, London, Texas, New York, CBGB, Studio 54, Graveyard on Kozala, the United Nations and Kantrida Stadium together" (Simčić 1999 19). When we talk about internationally famous places, what Wembley is in *Yellow Minute*, Woodstock is in the novel *The Band* – an iconic world-renowned location associated with rock.

The iconography of Vudi's and Yellow's rooms contributes to the rock atmosphere of *Yellow Minute* and *The Band*; the rooms are similar, with plenty rock posters on the walls, and hundreds of CD and vinyl records on the shelves and on the floor. Also, the numerous fictional songs of Happy Dead People in *The Band* and the song Mona Lisa in *The Ice Creams* contribute to the musical atmosphere of these novels, but they only feign the status of intermedial quotation.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, formal imitation, which introduces structural analogies and formal similarities between two mediums is present only in the novel, *The Ice Creams*, and that is in its simplest form – onomatopoeic imitation. In our three novels, according to Diana Grgurić, "(...) deeper interactions between music and literary-artistic works were not realised. They stopped at the level of describing the music and its atmosphere" (2010 23). When implicit reference is concerned, we find evocation in all three novels, as well as partial reproduction in two of them. It is obvious, then, that intermediality in all three novels is mostly explicit. It consists of various statements, comments, evaluations,

musical terminology and intermedial quotations. Nevertheless, its diversity created three very interesting and different novels: a novel of performance (*The Ice Creams*), a novel of musical criticism (*Yellow Minute*) and a musical diary (*The Band*). Referentiality contributes to the musical atmosphere in all three novels as much through actual toponyms and iconic musical places as through the bands, singers and songs, both real and imagined – which we also include in intermedial quotations.

This musical atmosphere has the strongest effect on the reader in the novel *The Band*. Apart from the real background on which the novel is entirely based (to a greater extent than *Yellow Minute*, and especially more than *The Ice Creams*) and the multitude of musical references, the novel *The Band* is a true and authentic testimony of the music scene in Rijeka during a certain time period, a kind of prose musical memoir. On the other hand, as Vudi's life is permeated to the core with music, parts of his upbringing are accompanied by musical sequences that partially change over time – in accordance with the announcement of musical novelties on the market, the Rijeka music scene, especially the music that is heard in cafés and clubs, but also in accordance with Vudi's current musical preferences. As Vudi grows up, so does the musical expression, so the novel is also a kind of musical *Bildungsroman*. In any case, of the three analysed novels, *The Band* is the one most strongly "soaked" in music.

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LJULJAJ ME, DUŠO: ROCK AND ROLL U HRVATSKIM ROMANIMA ZA MLADE

U radu se navode i razvrstavaju glazbene pojave, a potom se analizira glazbeno ozračje u trima novijim romanima hrvatske književnosti za mlade: *Bend* (1999.) Silvana Simčića, *Žuta minuta: rock'n'roll bajka* (2005.) Darka Macana i *The Sladoleds* (2019.) Miljenka Muršića. Sva tri romana imaju rock and roll tematiku, svi prate život i odrastanje dječaka kojima je rock glazba iznimno važna u formativnim godinama. Razlika u godinama između trojice dječaka je otprilike 2 godine: Muršićev junak Miran ima 14 godina, Macanov protagonist Žuti 16 godina, a Simčićev glavni lik pred kraj romana slavi 18. rođendan. S obzirom na to da su junaci različite dobi, kod svih je različit i autorski pristup te su namijenjene različitoj publici. Drukčiji je i kronotop romanâ: u romanu *The Sladoleds* likovi okupljeni oko istoimenoga benda žive u neimenovanome gradu, u Macanovu romanu *bend* Gluhe laste svira u klubu Shoopu u Novome Zagrebu, a glavni lik tinejdžerske priče Silvana Simčića mladi je roker Vudi koji sanja o osnivanju benda te je nakratko osnovao bend Sretni mrtvaci u Rijeci početkom osamdesetih, koja je u to vrijeme bila prava rock prijestolnica. Referencijalnost triju romana temelji se na imenima poznatih rock bendova, glazbenika i pjesama, hrvatskih i inozemnih, zatim kultnih svjetskih lokacija povezanih s rockom itd. Na brojne interferencije književnosti i glazbe upozoravaju intermedijalne studije, ponajprije vrlo detaljan model Wenera Wolfa. Zbog raznolikosti glazbenih referenci u njima, riječ je o trima različitim romanesknim žanrovima: romanu izvedbe (stvaralačkoga postupka) (*The Sladoleds*), romanu glazbene kritike (*Žuta minuta*) i glazbenome dnevniku (*Bend*) koji je ujedno i neka vrsta glazbeno-memoarske proze i *Bildungsroman*.

Ključne riječi: književnost za mlade, rock and roll, *Bend*, *Žuta Minuta*, *The Sladoleds*

DIALOGUES BETWEEN LITERATURE AND MUSIC IN CONTEMPORARY PORTUGUESE YOUNG ADULT NOVELS

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Abstract: This article provides an analysis of how certain musical references in three contemporary Portuguese young adult novels operate in narrative worlds. The works under analysis, published by Planeta Tangerina, are *O Caderno Vermelho da Rapariga Karateca* (2012), *Irmão Lobo* (2013), and *Pardalita* (2021) – translated respectively as *The Karate Girl's Red Notebook*, *Brother Wolf* and *Pardalita*. In this sense, in this study the aim is to determine whether references to João Gilberto, Johnny Cash and António Variações serve a merely decorative function or whether they play a role in the construction of the narratives by engaging with the characters and themes. In this context, the following research question is posed: how do these musical references, their lyrics and the artistic and biographic identities of the musicians contribute to the selected young adult narratives in terms of meaning making, thematic depth and identity development? To address this question, a qualitative methodology based on close reading is adopted. After identifying the most relevant musical references, the musicians' biographical and artistic contexts are presented in order to relate these elements to the narratives and to specific theoretical frameworks concerning the role of music in adolescence. One of the central contributions of this article is to problematise the status of musical references by examining whether they go beyond a merely decorative function to actively participate in the construction of meaning and in the expansion of the reading experience. The findings demonstrate that, in these three contemporary Portuguese young adult novels, musical references can be elements that intensify characterisation, reinforce thematic complexity and expand the reader's interpretative experience.

Keywords: young adult literature, adolescence, music, songs

1. Introduction: the potential of music in young adults' universes¹

The relationship an adolescent develops with the music they discover, choose, and listen to can be intense. Sounds and lyrics manifest themselves in an adolescent's inner and social life in multiple ways. Music may contribute to a young person's construction of an identity – or even of multiple identities – may foster a sense of belonging to a group, may guide a young person along an aesthetic path, and may even help them to understand feelings more fully, to process and express emotions, and to engage in a dialogue with the inner turmoil which is characteristic of this stage of development. It may also support adolescents in their efforts to make sense of the world. The significance of this relationship between music and adolescence has inspired substantial theoretical reflection on the subject (North, Hargreaves, and O'Neill, 2000; Coats, 2012; Miranda, 2013) and will likewise be considered in this analysis, including the ways in which it is represented in the selected young adult novels. In this sense, "music is of central importance in the lives of most young people, fulfilling social and emotional as well as cognitive needs" (North, Hargreaves, and O'Neill, 2000, 269). Given this significance, young adult (YA) literature that incorporates musical references constitutes a productive field for examining how such references interact with narrative elements – such as character construction – and contribute to meaning-making processes. This study therefore addresses the following research question: How do musical references, their lyrics and the artistic and biographic identities of the musicians contribute to YA narratives in terms of meaning construction, thematic depth, character development, and identity formation?

For this research into possible relationships between music and YA literature, three YA novels were selected: *O Caderno Vermelho da Rapariga Karateca* (2012), written by Ana Pessoa and illustrated by Bernardo Carvalho; *Irmão Lobo* (2013), written by Carla Maia de Almeida and illustrated by António Jorge Gonçalves; and *Pardalita* (2021), written and illustrated by Joana Estrela. As previously noted, these titles may be translated as *The Karate Girl's Red Notebook*, *Brother Wolf*, and *Pardalita*.² With the exception of *Irmão Lobo*, which has since

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² All translations of titles and excerpts from texts into English are the responsibility of the author.

moved to a different publishing house, these works belong to the *Dois Passos e um Salto* collection, the YA series published by Planeta Tangerina, a major Portuguese publishing house, particularly renowned for its work in picturebooks. The novels were selected because they represent three significant new voices in the contemporary Portuguese landscape of children's and YA literature. Although the three works are part of a collection intended for a YA readership, they address a wide age range. In fact, *Irmão Lobo* and *Pardalita* may be considered particularly as crossover narratives that address "a diverse, cross-generational audience" (Beckett, 2009, 3). The collection as a whole is characterized by hybridity and multimodality, as all the books incorporate illustration and other graphic elements into the narrative, thereby challenging artistic boundaries and exploring diverse literary procedures and artistic languages. These books are conceived as integrated artworks, in which even the most discreet element, when carefully examined, may reveal semantic significance. Although Portuguese in origin, they are aligned with some contemporary multimodal narrative strategies commonly employed in the YA segment.

To orient this exploration, this study draws on certain theoretical perspectives and reflections on the connection between music and adolescence (North, Hargreaves, and O'Neill, 2000; Coats, 2012; Miranda, 2013; Frith, 2016). This aids understanding not only of the power of intermedial references (Rajewsky, 2005), but, above all, how the choice or preference for a particular piece of music – and its subsequent inclusion in the narrative, including its lyrics, cultural context, and even the artistic and biographical dimensions of the musicians – can help the reader gain a deeper understanding of the characters and the work's themes, thereby enabling a more profound immersion in the narrative and its meanings. The three novels include excerpts from song lyrics, which may also have an intertextual dimension (Kristeva, 1969).

Using a qualitative methodology that combines theoretical discussion with close reading, this article explores the relationships between musical references and narrative construction, particularly with regard to characterization and other elements. To carry out this research, each musical reference is contextualized within the narratives' thematic structures and processes of character construction, with the aim of identifying meaning-making patterns in the selected YA novels.

To ensure a coherent structure across the three analyses, each section begins with a brief overview of the respective novel, including its plot, principal characters, and the musical references it contains. The

discussion then addresses the potential dialogue between the narrative and the musical references by first outlining key features of the music or musician in question, followed by close readings of how these elements interact with themes, characters, and other relevant narrative components of the YA novel under analysis. By examining musical references in three significant contemporary Portuguese YA novels, this article seeks to highlight the role of music within the literary context of YA literature. As Coats observes,

Young Adult literature of the twenty-first century reflects this new form of self-fashioning in various ways, but positioning music as the centre of the project of a character's identity formation occurs less often in the literature than in real life. (Coats, 2012, 116)

While Coats' observation appears valid, it is the aim of this study to determine whether musical references actively contribute to characterization and identity formation in these three contemporary YA novels, alongside other narrative elements. Taking as a given that "[t]he emphasis on identity construction is perhaps enough of a reason to focus on the place of music in Young Adult literature" (Coats, 2012, 120), this research leads to the conclusion that, in the selected novels, musical references engage not only with the characters but also with themes of construction and exploration of youth identity, while interacting creatively with formal, hybrid, and multimodal narrative strategies.

2. Music references as part of narrative universe

2.1. Transforming the form to become a new form and different beings

The first novel discussed in this study is *O Caderno Vermelho da Rapariga Karateca* (*The Karate Girl's Red Notebook*, 2012), written by Ana Pessoa and illustrated by Bernardo Carvalho. The hybrid narrative, which draws on different literary devices, follows N, a teenage protagonist who practices karate and acquires a notebook in which to record her reflections on daily life, her love for Raul, her friendships, her school experiences, and her family relationships. N challenges conventional gender norms (declaring that she is not a baby girl) and refuses to consider her notebook a traditional diary, thereby questioning form, gender, and social conventions. The notebook thus becomes a transformative place for both its writer and itself, shifting

across forms and genres – a model to which N aspires. According to the English synopsis provided on the Planeta Tangerina website:

This is not a diary. It has no lock, it contains no secrets.

(It does have secrets really.) It also has a will of its own, moving pages, (...) and characters like the wicked witch who wants to learn to be good and the fly that doesn't know what it is.

This is the karate girl's red notebook. N's favorite thing, a pet, a character, a real person. (Planeta Tangerina)³

In this narrative, the protagonist challenges conventions of gender and literary form in multiple ways. She asserts that she is neither a girl nor a "baby girl," but a practitioner of karate (Pessoa, 2012, 9). Similarly, she rejects the classification of her notebook as a diary (Pessoa, 2012, 31) and even claims that the notebook itself transforms into different beings (Pessoa, 2012, 31), reflecting the ways in which she simultaneously reshapes literary form through her writing. This character, who does not aspire to "pretty feet," prefers to fight (Pessoa, 2012, 62–63) and resists gender stereotypes, and also refuses to confine her notebook to a specific genre or form, in this case, the diary. Consequently, as she writes, the notebook undergoes metamorphoses, assuming the forms of animals or fictional characters, among others. In this context, the protagonist expresses a desire to transform herself in parallel with her notebook, writing: "Sometimes, I would like to be like you: several beings in one, several possibilities, several forms of expression, several contents. A cat, a rabbit, a fly, a character, a person, a red notebook" (Pessoa, 2012, 122).

It is through writing and the exploration of literary form that transformations and metamorphoses take place. How does the protagonist deform and reshape literary form? Through experimentation, hybridity, and the blending of genres. The narrative employs a variety of literary strategies, including the exploration of the diary and diary-novel forms, the parodic reworking of traditional tales, and entries constructed as scientific homework, in which the scientific method is applied to describe the world – albeit in a distinctly literary manner. This is a narrative that resists confinement to a single literary form or genre, written in a notebook that morphs into animals, characters, and people, by a non-stereotypical girl who likewise seeks to transform herself into new forms or beings, mirroring the notebook she

³ <https://www.planetatangerina.com/en/loja/the-karate-girls-red-notebook/>

writes. Traditional forms, such as diaries, tales, homework assignments, and gendered expectations serve as foundations from which the narrative creates alternative modes of storytelling, expression, and being. This exemplifies the transformative power of literary writing and, more broadly, the transformative potential of art itself.

In fact, the protagonist and her notebook share a deeply intertwined relationship, engaging with multiple artistic modalities, as reflected in the titles of several entries: “My notebook listening to music” (Pessoa, 2012, 65), “My notebook reading” (Pessoa, 2012, 108), and “My (your) drawings” (Pessoa, 2012, 123). These headings highlight the centrality of music, literature, and visual arts within the narrative. Indeed, illustrations and peritextual elements constitute a significant aspect of the book. While the work is richly illustrated, two visual features are particularly noteworthy: the barcode formatted to resemble a notebook, and a sequence of sixteen double-page illustrations, complemented by two additional illustrated pages, which together create a wordless narrative moment. Focusing specifically on the entry “My notebook listening to music,” attention is drawn to the reference to João Gilberto and the song “Lobo Bobo” (freely translated as “Foolish Wolf”). In the narrative, the protagonist recounts a day spent at home with her notebook:

We [she and her notebook] stayed all day at home (...). We lay down in bed listening to João Gilberto (...) It was Uncle Delfim Eduardo who gave me this CD (...) he told me that I should write my stories to the sound of João Gilberto, because of his voice, between jazz and samba. (...) I’ve never written to the sound of João Gilberto. But one of these days I am going to try. (...) I would like to write songs like the ones João Gilberto sings. *Once upon a time there was a bad wolf who decided to have someone for dinner...* Father says that it wasn’t João Gilberto who wrote Lobo Bobo. Who wrote it then?⁴ Tomorrow are you going to be the Foolish Wolf? [she asks the notebook]. (Pessoa, 2012, 65)

This passage illustrates the intimate and interactive relationship between the protagonist and her notebook, as well as the role of music – here represented by João Gilberto – as both inspiration and a model

⁴ Carlos Lyra and Ronaldo Bôscoli wrote this song recorded on João Gilberto’s first album, *Chega de Saudade*, a seminal record in bossa nova.

for creative writing. Thus, the reference to João Gilberto (1931–2019), one of the founders of bossa nova, renowned for radically transforming musical form through his innovative approach to rhythm, represents a reference worthy of attention.

João Gilberto's body of work, distinguished by nuanced integrations of samba and jazz, is commonly seen as a defining moment in Brazilian popular music. Critics have described him as "the providential genius who showed the world something yet to be invented" (Pacheco, 2019, n.p.). Scholars have suggested that bossa nova can be divided into Gilberto's distinctive style and all other variants, both before and after him, which merely share certain elements with his approach (Pianta, 2010, 14). His work represents a unique synthesis, differentiating itself from the earlier and later hybrid forms of samba-jazz or choro-jazz (Pianta, 2010, 15). In this respect, Gilberto's style not only transformed Brazilian popular music but also integrated broader practices from international popular music, particularly from North America (Pianta, 2010, 16). Moreover, his style is described as so characteristic and concentrated that it "practically closes in on itself: either his procedure is copied point by point, or he ends up going back to elements of previous styles" (Pianta, 2010, 15). João Gilberto is also recognized as "an inventor and master of both voice and guitar, and his style is a combination of both" (Pianta, 2010, 98).

In this narrative, the protagonist listens to "Lobo Bobo" and expresses a desire "to write songs like the ones João Gilberto sings" (Pessoa, 2012, 65). Will the notebook then transform into the Foolish Wolf, as she asks? And will the teenager herself undergo a transformation? In parallel with this ontological experimentation, Ana Pessoa engages in literary experimentation, exploring traditional forms and genres in parodic and humorous ways to destabilize convention and investigate alternative modes of storytelling. For instance, "Lobo Bobo" parodies the "bad wolf" of "Little Red Riding Hood," recounting the tale of a wolf who wishes to eat someone but lacks the means to do so. Similar procedures occur throughout this novel. The tale *A bruxa má, conto infantil dedicado aos intrusos* (freely translated as *The Bad Witch, a Children's Tale Dedicated to Intruders*), which tells the story of a witch who occasionally aspires to goodness (Pessoa, 2012, 13), exemplifies this approach. Additional humorous narratives appear in the text, such as the story of a fly uncertain of its identity and considering the possibility of being a bee (Pessoa, 2012, 33–34), as well as tales of a character who wishes to become a person and a person who wishes to become a character (Pessoa, 2012, 110–115).

More importantly, the narrative foregrounds the protagonist's experimental engagement with multiple literary forms, reflecting her search for new modes of expression. There is a sustained effort to transform form – both literary and ontological – through hybridity, mixing, and creative experimentation, aiming to discover a transformative mode for her writing, her notebook, and herself. Through this process, the protagonist searches for her own literary voice, a pursuit that exerts a profound transformative effect on her life, worldview, and sense of self. Her exploration parallels João Gilberto's innovation in music, as he has been called “the brilliant creator of the beat that gave birth to bossa nova,” a “beat like no one has ever heard,” and is therefore “considered to be the legitimate founder of bossa nova” (Pacheco, 2019, n.p.).

In this context, it can be argued – also in a fusional manner, reflecting the relational dynamic between the writing object and the protagonist in Ana Pessoa's narrative – that João Gilberto “fully represents the style, because he *is* the style” (Pianta, 2010, 94). Similarly, the protagonist of Pessoa's novel aspires to become like the notebook in which she writes, a notebook that transforms into various beings as she composes. This notion of transformation is inherently fusional: as the notebook metamorphoses, it is not solely the object that changes – the protagonist herself also undergoes transformation. For example, immediately following an entry about Easter rabbits, the narrative includes an illustration depicting the girl with a rabbit's head, visually exploring the potential for ontological transformation through literary writing.

When considering how this musical reference interacts with the narrative, it becomes evident that, in a story defined by an intense search for alternative forms and a challenge to normative structures, the reference to João Gilberto is particularly significant. In a context where a teenager asserts that she is not a baby girl and her notebook is not a diary, and where metamorphoses regularly occur, Gilberto's reputation for inventive musical innovation resonates meaningfully, reflecting the transformative power of art. The reference to Gilberto, who reshaped musical form to create a new sound, becomes productive and symbolically rich.

Thus, within this narrative context, the inventive, original, and transformative way in which João Gilberto reinvented music – or, indeed, created a new musical form – echoes, or interacts narratively with, the adolescent protagonist's ambition to subvert and reject all pre-

established forms in order to find a new one. Indeed, perhaps not just one, but many, since she wishes to be multiple, like the notebook in which she writes: “various beings in one, various possibilities, various forms of expression, various contents” (Pessoa, 2012, 122). For this reason, she experiments with diverse literary resources and possibilities, and her notebook does not settle on a single procedure or even a single form, transforming itself, quite surprisingly, into different animals. The girl and her notebook thus resist form and convention, and indeed seek to challenge normative structures, which resonates with João Gilberto’s inventive drive. In this case, music is linked to the adolescent’s explorations of artistic, literary, and ontological form, even if her aspiration, after all, is to embrace multiplicity. This emerges not only in her artistic and literary voice but also at an ontological level, which, in turn, resonates with the idea that “[m]usic is a resource from which adolescents decide to explore possible selves” (Miranda, 2013, 12).

2.2. Lyrics and characters moved by contradictory forces

Carla Maia de Almeida’s *Irmão Lobo* (*Brother Wolf*, 2013), illustrated by António Jorge Gonçalves, narrates the story of a family grappling with the familial, professional, social, and emotional difficulties triggered by an economic crisis. The mother is compelled to take multiple jobs while the father remains unemployed. The youngest child – who has one sister and one brother – accompanies her father on a road trip to locate an old family house, which is ultimately discovered to be in ruins. During this journey, several pivotal events occur, the most significant and traumatic being the father’s death while attempting to rescue another family from a fire.

The narrative is “based on two different time periods,” structured “alternately from the memories of the teenage narrator (aged 15) about her (...) childhood experience (aged 8), which occurred in the summer of her father’s death” (Ramos and Navas, 2016, 120–121). Illustrations also play a crucial role in the text. As Ramos and Navas (2016, 121–122) observe, graphic design functions as a narrative strategy, visually differentiating the two narrative voices through color schemes and numbering conventions. The alternation of blue and beige backgrounds, alongside the use of Roman and Arabic numerals, signals shifts in perspective, while the black background in chapter 26 symbolizes the father’s disappearance and death (Ramos and Navas, 2016, 121–122).

In *Irmão Lobo*, alongside other musical references present in both verbal and visual elements – such as Nirvana, Shakira, Britney Spears, and Linkin Park – one significant element is the mention of songs by

Johnny Cash (1932–2003), an indispensable figure in the American musical landscape. He is renowned not only for the wide range of musical styles he embraced – spanning, among other genres, country, folk, and rockabilly – but also for his striking personality, at once defiant and indomitable, yet above all deeply immersed in numerous contradictions. Notably, Cash also produced “records within a wide variety of musical genres, ranging from country and rockabilly to blues and gospel” (Askerøi, 2017, 65). Moreover, “Cash and the Tennessee Two gradually developed a distinct sound: the boom-chicka-boom sound. (...) there was something new and different about the sound of this trio” (Askerøi, 2017, 65).

References to Cash in the work appear from the very epigraph, which quotes the lyrics of “Ring of Fire,” and also, for example, when the father sings “Country Trash,” songs that oscillate between themes of love and social commentary. In the epigraph, an excerpt from “Ring of Fire” reads: “The taste of love is sweet / When hearts like ours meet / I fell for you like a child / Oh, but the fire went wild.” By the end of the novel, readers are encouraged to draw intertextual (Kristeva, 1969) connections between the lyrics of this song and the narrative, as the father dies in a fire during a road trip with his child while attempting to rescue another family, in circumstances that remain unclear.

Another significant reference to Cash appears during the family’s road trip to the old family house, when the father sings “his music,” “Country Trash”: “Let the thunder roll and the lightning flash, I’m doing alright for a [sic] country trash...” (Almeida, 2013, 33). This musical reference resonates thematically with the family’s struggles and fragmentation amid economic and social hardship. The father unsuccessfully attempts several ways of providing for the family, including managing a greenhouse (Almeida, 2013, 70) and offering his labor on a family farm (Almeida, 2013, 17). He expresses frustration with “this country that doesn’t move on” (Almeida, 2013, 17) and seeks to resolve the family’s financial difficulties by relocating to an old house in the countryside to live off the land (Almeida, 2013, 95).

Another important aspect of the narrative is the complexity of the father’s character, who is far from a linear figure. If the family members are imagined as islands, the child describes her father as the “most unstable” one: on this island, “in one day, it can be all the seasons”; some areas are “difficult to access but they can be magical landscapes”; “unfortunately, the presence of active volcanoes threatens this patrimony” (Almeida, 2012, 111); and “due to the high explosive index

it is possible that this island will end up sinking into the sea” (Almeida, 2012, 111–112). He is also depicted as deeply emotional: at the conclusion of the road trip with his child, he weeps upon discovering that the family home is in ruins (Almeida, 2013, 99), thereby revealing himself as both a dreamer and a vulnerable individual. Although he may lack the capacity to secure his own well-being or that of his family, the narrative explores his contradictions and ambiguities, culminating in his death in a fire while, apparently, courageously attempting to rescue another family (Almeida, 2013, 220–221).

Within this narrative, the character of the father engages in a subtle dialogue with traits associated with Johnny Cash, with discreet allusions evident when a friend calls him Johnny (his given name being João Miguel) (Almeida, 2013, 40, 47–48). Both the father and Cash are defined by the tension arising from contradictory forces – courage and vulnerability, light and shadow, rebellion and convention. The father oscillates between selfishness and bravery, between a luminous and a darker side, defying stereotypical expectations in a manner reminiscent of Cash, who has been described as a “saint and sinner, family man and rambler” (Edwards, 2009, 13). Edwards (2009, 13) emphasizes that Cash’s identity is shaped not by the reconciliation of contradictions, but by the continued coexistence of opposing traits, which are actively developed and held in tension, giving rise to a complex artistic identity. This description of Cash similarly applies to the father, who, in the eyes of his young child, can embody both Black Elk and Ice Man – the first representing a “protector father, loyal and warm,” and the second “the cold, distant and aggressive one” (Ramos and Navas, 2016, 124). The narrative further subverts traditional masculine and paternal ideals: familial strength is concentrated in the female sphere, while vulnerability is associated with the male. The mother, described as “a force of nature” (Almeida, 2013, 51), sustains the family through multiple jobs. The father acknowledges her centrality, attributing to her “the miracle of the multiplication of bread” (Almeida, 2013, 51).

In *Irmão Lobo*, music functions not only as a thematic element but also as a tool for character construction. The artistic identity associated with the personality traits of the musician known as Cash allows for the establishment of points of contact, functioning almost as a mirror in which the character of the father in this story – equally complex, dual, and full of contradictions – is reflected. References to Johnny Cash – including his artistic profile, musical sonorities, and lyrics – create a distinctive soundscape within the narrative, which dialogues with thematic concerns while simultaneously shaping the psychological

depth of the father's character. The father listens to "his music" (Almeida, 2013, 33), suggesting that Cash's work forms part of his own identity. Although he is an adult, Frith's observation remains pertinent: "the most significant pop songs for all generations (not just for rock generations) are those they heard as adolescents" (Frith, 2016, 267). Consequently, this musical reference contributes both to the development of narrative themes and to the psychological complexity of the father.

2.3. How to be multiple in literature and music

Joana Estrela's *Pardalita* is a hybrid, multimodal and graphic novel that combines prose, poetic passages, diary entries, and visual storytelling. The work employs a variety of illustrative techniques, from full-page drawings to cartoon panels, creating a richly layered narrative that integrates dramatic, poetic, and narrative modes. The story follows a teenage girl dealing with friendship and family life, as she falls in love with a female friend, Pardalita.

Although *Pardalita* contains other intermedial references (Rajewsky, 2005), the musical reference to António Variações (1944–1984) is of particular significance. Several considerations could be made regarding António Variações, an indispensable figure in the Portuguese artistic and musical landscape who is remarkable from various perspectives: from the standpoint of the hybridity that characterizes his music, combining different sonorities and bridging past and future; and from the perspective of his artistic performance, which challenges gender norms and conventions, while affirming sexual and identity liberation and emancipation. Variações' work is characterized by extensive hybridization, combining tradition and innovation, the familiar and the experimental, while foregrounding sexual emancipation and self-affirmation. Indeed,

Variações emerges as one of the most important figures in the history of Portuguese music because of the discourse on identity and social condition present in his work and life, always navigating between past and future, tradition and modernity, local and global, echoing Pessoa's expression: "Be plural like the universe" (Guerra, 2017, n.p.).

Beyond his "new musicality," Variações was also a "promoter of a queer identity in Portugal" (Guerra, 2017, s/p). Drawing on the work of Featherstone and Turner (1995), Guerra (2007) emphasizes that:

This disruptive sense of the song is reinforced through the equally disruptive aesthetics and bodily performances of (...) Variações, who, with his homoerotic charge (...) subverts the notion of gender, considering it far from being stable and natural, through performative acts (...) took to the point of calling into question, through their subversive performances, the division between man/woman. (Guerra, 2017, n.p.)

Variações' artistic persona and performative practices therefore challenge normative conceptions of gender, emphasizing fluidity and demonstrating art's capacity to destabilize entrenched social conventions. António Variações was, in fact, the author of disruptive crossovers between tradition and innovation, reshaping established conventions. As Guerra (2017, n.p.) observes, and as Variações himself explained, even the choice of his artistic name – Variações, which can be freely translated into English as Variations – reflects his pursuit of mixing, hybridization, and liminal spaces. In the artist's own words:

Variações [Variations, as noted above, in a free translation] is an extremely elastic word, Portuguese, and that doesn't leave me limited to a musical area. It's the right name to escape routine, it's a name that doesn't enslave me and doesn't leave me committed to labels, which for me is excellent. (Abreu, 2009, 66)

This notion resonates with the teenage protagonist of *Pardalita*, who, at a certain moment while dressing, observes that nothing fits her – or, as she adds, that she herself does not fit (Estrela, 2021, s/p). Variações' artistic output recreates “composite representations of aesthetic, cultural, artistic, social and spatial hybridisms (and antagonisms)” (Guerra, 2017, n.p.). Within this context, it is important to emphasize “the eclecticism and stylistic transience of [Variações'] music, along with the imagery as a representation of his identity – queer, somewhere between kitsch and camp,” which “constitute fundamental elements of that demarcation and dialogue between tradition and modernity” (Guerra, 2017, n.p.). This logic of hybridity finds an echo in the graphic novel's own visual and narrative construction, for example in the rehearsal space described as follows: “It's clear that the furniture is second-hand and comes from completely different places. It's a strange but pleasant combination” (Estrela, 2021, n.p.).

By the end of the book, the characters perform Variações' “Erva Daninha a Alastrar” (freely translated as “Weed Run Wild.”) This song –

the narrative includes excerpts of the lyrics – is about something that grows uncontrollably, something untamed and untreated, and which finds resonance in the transformation experienced by the protagonist, in her discovery of being in love with a female friend, as well as of her own identity. Considering that “it is the highly individual nature of the relationship between a teenager and their music that marks it as an important part of the identity formation process” and that “the particular type of music preferred by a young person is related to their history and their future, their self-perception, and their internal emotional state” (McFerran, 2012, 105), a clear dialogue emerges between the reference to *Variações* and the protagonist(s) of this YA novel. Indeed, “[t]eenagers use music (...) to regulate and alter their moods, establish and consolidate both core and tribal identities, (...) generate courage for new endeavours, affirm their values and beliefs” (Coats, 2012, 111). The broad themes explored in the narrative, including emancipation, freedom, and fluid identities, resonate closely with both the music and biography of *Variações*.

The dialogue between music and narrative extends beyond thematic concerns to formal considerations: both *Variações*’ work and *Pardalita* are structured through multiplicity, experimentation, and the convergence of diverse artistic procedures. Indeed, just as *Variações*’ artistic universe is hybrid and draws on diverse sources, the narrative of *Pardalita* is constructed in a hybrid and multimodal manner, combining different literary modes, techniques, and artistic languages. In this context, music reinforces the narrative’s engagement with multiplicity, artistic hybridism and identity formation.

3. Conclusion

In these contemporary Portuguese YA novels, musical references are not simply decorative soundtracks; rather, they actively participate in the construction of meaning and interpretation, engaging in dialogue with characters, themes, and narrative form. Thus, attentive engagement with all the elements integrated into the book and its narrative can enhance the depth and quality of the reading experience, and musical references such as those discussed here should not be an exception, as they can indeed enable readers to explore the narrative more profoundly, immersing themselves in its thematic concerns, characters, and overall universe.

If “music can influence key aspects of adolescent development – for instance, aesthetics; identity; socialization; emotion regulation and

coping; personality and motivation; gender roles; and positive youth development” (Miranda, 2013, 18), then it warrants careful consideration when analyzing themes, characters, and motivations in YA narratives. This article aims to stress the importance of paying attention to musical references in YA narratives, because they can serve as significant vehicles of meaning.

All three narratives incorporate musical references to artists who challenged conventions and experimented with form to create innovative sonorities, and these ideas resonate with the protagonists’ own ontological explorations. In *O Caderno Vermelho da Rapariga Karateca*, for instance, the teenager resists gender norms and literary form, asserting that she is not a baby girl and that her notebook is not a diary, while seeking to transform both herself and the notebook into other forms or beings. In this context, the reference to João Gilberto – an artist who transformed musical form – becomes significant. Here, music is associated with processes of formal, artistic, and ontological transformation, reinforcing the protagonist’s exploration of alternative modes of being and expression.

Regarding *Pardalita*, it should be emphasized that this graphic novel is strongly characterized by multimodality and hybridity, pushing artistic boundaries through the blending of diverse artistic languages and literary procedures. Thus, in a narrative about a young girl’s love for her female friend, the reference to António Variações – an artist associated with sexual emancipation and musical hybridity – becomes especially meaningful. Here, music relates to free self-discovery, expression, affirmation, and hybridity, aligning with the idea that, within the juvenile universe, “music becomes an important code for social and individual identity formation” (Coats, 2012, 112) and can play a role “in creating and sustaining an identity” (Coats, 2012, 119).

In this sense, musical references contribute to the psychological construction of characters. This is particularly evident in *Irmão Lobo*, where, although the father is not a teenager, he listens to “his music” (Almeida, 2013, 33), indicating that these are not ephemeral songs of the moment but music that has become part of his identity. As Frith observes,

people’s heaviest personal investment in popular music is when they are teenagers and young adults – music then ties into a particular kind of emotional turbulence, when issues of individual identity and social place (...) are at a premium. (Frith, 2016, 266–267)

Moreover, despite being an adult, this father does not conform to conventional age-based or parental roles, once again subverting normative models and stereotypes.

To conclude, by evoking João Gilberto, the creator of a singular bossa nova style; Johnny Cash, propelled by the rhythm of the boom-chicka-boom sound; and António Variações, whose work embodies disruptive crossovers between tradition and innovation, these narratives establish productive intersections between literature and music, enriching the reading experience and underscoring the active role of music – including lyrics – in meaning-making. Beyond engaging with the works' multimodal and hybrid structures, these musical references create distinctive soundscapes that resonate with the novels' themes, formal strategies, and the characters' explorations of identity.

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DIALOGOS ENTRE LITERATURA E MUSICA EM ROMANCES JUVENIS PORTUGUESES CONTEMPORANEOS

Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar o papel que certas referências musicais têm nos universos narrativos de três romances juvenis, contemporâneos e portugueses. As obras em análise, publicadas pela editora Planeta Tangerina, são *O Caderno Vermelho da Rapariga Karateca* (2012), *Irmão Lobo* (2013) e *Pardalita* (2021). Neste sentido, este estudo procura determinar se as referências a João Gilberto, Johnny Cash e António Variações têm uma função meramente decorativa ou se, pelo contrário, desempenham um papel nas narrativas, dialogando com personagens e temas. Para tal, colocou-se a seguinte questão: como é que as referências musicais, incluindo as letras e a identidade artística e até biográfica dos músicos em causa, contribuem para as narrativas juvenis selecionadas, em termos de construção de significado, profundidade temática e desenvolvimento e caracterização das personagens? Adotando uma metodologia qualitativa baseada na leitura das obras, procedeu-se à identificação das referências musicais mais relevantes, verificando-se, também, os contextos biográficos e artísticos dos músicos, procurando relacionar esses elementos com as narrativas e com algumas reflexões teóricas sobre o papel da música na adolescência. Uma das principais contribuições deste artigo é a de procurar problematizar o estatuto das referências musicais, percebendo de que forma podem participar ativamente na construção de significado e na expansão da experiência leitora, em vez de

exercer uma função apenas decorativa. A análise mostrou que, nestes três romances juvenis, as referências musicais podem ser elementos que intensificam a caracterização e a procura ontológica das personagens, reforçando, ainda, a complexidade temática e expandindo a experiência interpretativa do leitor.

Keywords: Literatura juvenil, adolescência, música, canções

LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS (1999-2006): A MUSICALLY-SHAPED NARRATIVE

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Abstract: Lemony Snicket's 13-book series *A Series of Unfortunate Events* (1999-2006) is a prime example of music and literature feeding upon each other. The books can be considered a fragmented accordion-like text which unfolds its themes to its readership. The opening song of the Netflix adaptation (2017–2019) of the books rely on the accordion, which is itself mentioned throughout the narrative. The author's notorious love for this peculiar instrument (Handler 2012) has inevitably shaped the whole narrative of the novels. This focus on musicality allows us to explore different aspects of the novels. Apart from the various mentions of classical instruments, the text itself makes creative use of alliteration, assonance and both internal and structural repetition. Moreover, the accordion in itself is a telling instrument; just as in Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief* (2005), the "poor man's piano" can be a symbol for both life and death or joy and nostalgia. The dichotomy between the accordion being both a folkloric and classical instrument transpires through the narrator's ambiguous position. This in turn showcases the duality between high and low culture, exemplified mostly by intertextuality. Most importantly, we can analyse this in the light of the versatility of the accordion which is reflected through the figure of Lemony Snicket. Just as Daniel Handler is an accordionist – a one-man band, capable of producing rhythm, harmony and melody simultaneously – Lemony Snicket is a multidimensional persona, as he is author, narrator and character at once, orchestrating his narrative at will. This paper thus focuses on the links between the novels and the image of the accordion in order to show the wealth of multifaceted writing. Mentions of the movie adaptation (2004), audiobook album song (2000–2006) and Netflix adaptation (2017–2019) further support this study.

Keywords: Lemony Snicket, *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, accordion, duality, folk, classic

1. Introduction

To begin our investigation, the first fifteen seconds of the Netflix series *A Series of Unfortunate Events*¹ (2017–2019) set the tone, with an energetic accordion, rock background, and the chorus “Look away,” composed by Nick Urata with lyrics by Daniel Handler. Sung by Count Olaf (Neil Patrick Harris), the playful, self-reflexive opening engages viewers and reflects both the series and the original books.

This popular TV show (Welch, 2017 ; Saunders, 2018 ; Nelson, 2018) is an adaptation of a thirteen-book series of the same title, written by American author Daniel Handler under the pseudonym Lemony Snicket. It came out more than a decade before the creation of the series (1999–2006). The books follow the Baudelaire orphans – Violet, Klaus, and Sunny – who, after losing their parents and home, must constantly escape the schemes of an antagonist seeking their inheritance. The series features diverse characters, locations, and themes, narrated by Snicket, whose role as author, narrator, and character remains deliberately ambiguous.

This study focuses on *A Series* for two reasons. First, its author, Daniel Handler, is a musician, allowing exploration of the intersection between verbal and sonic elements in children’s literature. Second, despite selling over sixty million copies in forty-one languages, the series has received little scholarly attention, though adaptations have renewed interest (Austin, 2013; Kaczyńska, 2018). More close readings are needed to understand how postmodern children’s novels have gained prominence in the 2010s and 2020s.

This study focuses on the connection between word and sound. The novels are infused with musicality, and the popularity of the recent adaptation owes much to its opening song and lively accordion, an instrument with a historically ambivalent status. Handler’s own musical interests, particularly in the accordion, have influenced his writing. Metaphorically, the accordion – folding, unfolding, hiding, and revealing words and sounds – illustrates how literature and music intertwine in the series.

This study argues that in *A Series*, words are shaped by music and that the novels explore the high/low culture divide, including the folkloric versus classical associations of the accordion. We first link Daniel Handler, the author, to the accordion to show its influence on the text. Next, we examine the narrator’s ambiguous role, paralleling

¹ For simplicity, *A Series of Unfortunate Events* shall be referenced to as *A Series*.

Handler as a “one-man band” with Snicket as a “one-man *persona*,” and explore the text’s musicality and symbolism. Finally, we show how high and low culture are bridged through intertextuality and intermediality.

2. Daniel Handler the accordionist

We shall first focus on the real author,² Daniel Handler, and the importance of both the accordion and music in general.

2.1. A quick history of the accordion

First, it is necessary to clarify why the accordion matters both to this study and to the author’s life. As an instrument that straddles high and low culture, moving between folkloric and classical traditions, its ambivalent status lends it a metaphorical significance that this article will later explore. Created in 1829 in Vienna by Cyrill Demian, the accordion functions with the principle of the free reed, or what Pierre Monichon (1971: 9) calls “l’âme de l’accordéon”, the accordion’s “soul,” and is in-between the piano (referred to in French as the “piano à bretelles,” or “piano with galluses” [Brut, 2022]) and the harmonica. We can broadly distinguish three types of accordions, but two interest us the most here: the diatonic accordion, used mainly to reproduce famous quadrilles and operas, and the chromatic accordion for folkloric music and dances, among which is the famous concertina, used mainly for clown shows.

Throughout the 19th century, the accordion circulated across both working-class and bourgeois milieus: it was linked to gypsy bands as much as to domestic entertainment. Its history in the United States is equally ambivalent. Played by slaves, Creole musicians, and immigrants as well as by wealthier families – especially women (Ward & Burns, 2002) – the accordion spread rapidly thanks to European migrants, notably Italians. Renowned performers such as the Diero brothers and Frosini helped popularise the “piano accordion,” whose American “Golden Age” (1930s–1950s) was fuelled by its affordability, portability, and vigorous marketing (Jacobson, 2012). After World War II, it became a vehicle for nostalgia, while also gaining recognition as a serious

² This terminology shall be extensively explained later in our study; this notion stems from Wayne Booth’s distinction between real and implied author, in which the real author is the person who has physically written the books. See: Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1961).

instrument, entering orchestras and flourishing in Gospel, Blues, and jazz.

Its popularity nevertheless waned in the late 20th century as rock music and the electric guitar overshadowed it. Still, the accordion continued to assert its place among traditional instruments (Monichon 1971: 10), even as it remained identified with popular culture – a strength for its communities, though one that partly explains its decline. Recent decades, however, have seen renewed interest: more rock musicians now incorporate it, and sales – particularly on the US West Coast – have risen (Gerber, 2014).

The very history of the accordion is hectic, being both an influence of and on many musical genres and shaping collective imagination: hearing the accordion can summon paradoxical feelings of nostalgia and joy, and it is this tension that we shall make use of in this study.

2.2. Daniel Handler's love for music

The author of the corpus under scrutiny, Daniel Handler, is both a writer and a musician. Daniel Handler has had a classical musical upbringing, as he explains in this interview (Smith, 2009):

I was lucky, because I grew up in a household full of classical music. I didn't really know there was any other kind of music besides classical music until I was about 13. I took a lot of piano lessons, and my parents regularly took me to the opera, so I had a sort of privileged upbringing when it came to classical music.

But I'm also a product of the San Francisco public schools, so from a young age I watched all the classical music programs, even in San Francisco, slowly be invaded by budgetary types.

Although he later discovered pop and rock, his tastes remained anchored in classical music. This affinity is particularly evident in *The Composer Is Dead* (2009), a picturebook combining text (Snicket), illustration (Carson Ellis), and music (Nathaniel Stookey). In this playful murder mystery, an Inspector interrogates each orchestral section, offering humorous yet accurate insights into their musical roles. For instance, the neglected Violas lament playing “the notes in the chords nobody cares about,” highlighting Snicket's appreciation for the often-overlooked “inner voices” essential to orchestral texture.

Handler's interest in other genres – and in the accordion – developed alongside his classical background. He jokingly admits to

having taken up the accordion in college “to pick up women,” wanting to join a band (Tulloch, 2014). The choice reflects the instrument’s hybrid status, and his piano training eased the transition. He went on to play in groups such as the Edith Head Trio and Tzamboni, but his most significant collaborations were with Stephin Merritt of The Magnetic Fields, The 6ths, and The Gothic Archies, the latter contributing songs to the *A Series* audiobooks. Handler also frequently performs accordion pieces during readings and signings. A playlist he shared with the *New York Times* confirms his broad but classically inclined musical tastes (Garner, n.d.).

Although we may not go to the extent of saying that Handler has a musical career, music definitely models his writing career. Music is incorporated more sporadically in *A Series* but it cannot be overlooked. We shall now concentrate more precisely on our corpus in order to draw links between literature and music through the image of the accordion.

2.3. Classic music shaping *A Series*

Classical music has inevitably shaped the way *A Series* is structured and composed. The author was largely inspired by two tracks when writing the book – the string quartets by Shostakovich and “Preparation for the Final Mystery” by Scriabin, two classical music tracks which gave him the “ability to engage and also disengage the mind.” (‘Lemony Snicket’, 2016) Moreover, Handler argues that the opera and the melodrama have had a deep influence on him (Smith, *ibid.*).

Opera emerged in early 17th-century Florence with sung dramas such as Peri’s *Dafne* (1598) and *Euridice* (1600). It can be broadly divided into *opera seria* – serious mythological or historical dramas with renowned singers – and *opera buffa*, comic works depicting everyday life. The genre evolved through forms like the French *ballet de cour*, the English masque, and Italian *intermedi* (Abbate and Parker, 2012), with its survival largely owed to the shifting balance between music and poetry (Russano Hanning and Weinstock, 2023).

Melodrama originated within opera, initially synonymous with *dramma per musica* due to the shared use of the human voice. By the late 18th century, Rousseau’s *Le Pygmalion* (1770) redefined it: theatrical monologues were paired with musical refrains, making music an accompaniment that intensified emotion rather than the work’s core. The term “melodramatic” came to signify sensationalized emotional appeal, focusing on private, character-driven plots. Many operas are inherently melodramatic, with character-centered stories emphasizing

emotional resolution despite often flat, stereotypical characters (Waeber, 2013).

The fact that Handler was hugely inspired by the opera and melodrama to write *A Series* is an indicator of the books' themes and structures but also of the author's musical interests. Indeed, the novels are structured like theatrical acts. For example, up until *The Vile Village* (book 7), the pattern of the books roughly follows the five-act structure of a theatre play or opera performance. Moreover, internally, there is indeed "always something sinister going on," as Handler puts it, as there are multiple mentions of murder, arson, kidnapping, paedophilia and so on: death lurks around the whole book series, and it recalls the melodramatic tone.

Furthermore, in both the novels and the Netflix adaptation, the opera is linked to the past (the Baudelaires' parents) and to the root of the antagonist's evil quest. A mention of *La Forza del Destino* (1862), a famous melodrama by Giuseppe Verdi, is made in relation to the parents (Snicket, 2005: 8):

"Our parents took a taxi to the opera one evening when their car wouldn't start." [Klaus said.]

"I remember that evening well," Kit [Snicket] replied with a faint smile. "It was a performance of *La Forza del Destino*. Your mother was wearing a red shawl, with long feathers along the edges. During intermission I followed them to the snack bar and slipped them a box of poison darts before Esmé Squalor could catch me. [...]"

Throughout the story, it becomes clear that Beatrice Baudelaire, the protagonists' mother, stole a sugar bowl from Esmé Squalor at the opera and is implied to have caused the death of one of Olaf's parents, leaving him orphaned (*ibid.*: 308). In the TV adaptation, this is made explicit when viewers see Beatrice shoot Olaf's father, explaining the grudge Esmé and Olaf hold against the Baudelaires. Snicket, present at the event, describes *La Forza del Destino* as a melodrama full of duels, secret marriages, and accidental deaths—exaggerating for effect, though the gun motif remains, recalled through a poster of the opera (*The Penultimate Peril*, 2005: 15-16):

"The poster," Klaus said, "Mother said she purchased it during intermission... She said it was the most interesting time she'd ever had at the opera."

Violet remembered, "The poster had a picture of a gun, with a trail of smoke forming the words of the title."

Sunny nodded, "*La Forza del Destino*."

Through the opera and the melodrama, there is a clear connection between literature and music throughout *A Series*. We can observe how music shapes the way *A Series* is written and how this stems from the author's biographical interest in both fields. Building on this analysis, we shall now turn our attention to the versatility of the role of the author-narrator-character encompassed in the *persona* of Lemony Snicket in order to understand more thoroughly how music is at the very core of the work, especially from a metaphorical point of view.

3. A three-dimensional role: Lemony Snicket as a versatile tool

Handler is both writer and musician, or more precisely accordionist, a "one-man band," who can produce rhythm, harmony and melody simultaneously. We shall now see that he holds an even more flexible role as the different diegetic planes are constantly crossed.

3.1. A convoluted author-narrator relationship

The mystery of *A Series* lies not only in the protagonists' outcome, but also in the fictional life of its narrator, Lemony Snicket. Following the investigation Ela Wydrzyńska (2021) conducted on Pseudonymous Bosch, the narrator of *The Secret Series* (2007-2011), we can observe similar conclusions. Indeed, the two *personae* are very much like, and one can contend that Pseudonymous Bosch, or rather Raphael Simon, was greatly inspired by Lemony Snicket/Daniel Handler to create his own *persona*. Why is the latter so ambiguous? We must introduce a few concepts in order to understand clearly how he is author, narrator and character of *A Series*.

Snicket claims authenticity in his novels, arguing that everything the reader learns in the novels has really happened; unable to change the story, the narrator's duty is, according to him, simply to report the facts (Snicket, *The Reptile Room*, 1999: 85): "And as fervently as the Baudelaire orphans wished their circumstances were different, I wish that I could somehow change the circumstances of this story for you."

By constantly addressing readers, Snicket highlights the text's artificiality, which is both metaleptic and metafictional. To distinguish between authorial layers, we can consider real *versus* implied authors. The real author and readers exist outside the text, while Wayne Booth's implied author – the mental image readers construct from the work

(Booth, 1961; Toolan, 2001: 65) – helps differentiate Handler from Snicket. Even if debated, texts with self-aware authors always convey an “authorial persona” (Wall, 1991: 5), as Snicket does. Gregory Currie’s (2010) distinction between internal and external authors further clarifies the difference between implied authors and character-authors, as seen in narrators like Watson in *Sherlock Holmes*, who is both a character and, within the story, the author of his own narrative. In the same fashion, Snicket acts as the internal author of *A Series* as he appears to be in the process of writing it; he also seems to exist as the external author, because it is his name that the reader sees on the cover of the book series.

Real author: Daniel Handler, writing under the pseudonym ‘Lemony Snicket’

Implied author: Lemony Snicket (the reader’s mental image of who Snicket is based on what can be known from the text about him, and the identity believed to be the external author)

Narrator: a character-author version of Lemony Snicket (internal author) who narrates the story as he is investigating it in first-person and in the present tense

Characters: Violet, Klaus and Sunny Baudelaire in third-person, past tense

Narratee: “You”, direct address accessible only by the narrator

Implied reader: the reader the text is meant to address. We can assume this role aligns with the narratee as Snicket is both the implied author and the narrator.

Real reader: the reader in the real world, who aligns him/herself with the implied reader to navigate the story-world the way it is intended by the implied author

Fig.2: Booth’s teller and receptor roles as portrayed in *A Series*; model adapted from Ela Wydrzyńska’s paper (2021: 235) with her permission

No references are ever made to Daniel Handler in the books, and the latter even goes as far as pretending to be Snicket’s agent during signing event, rarely ever presenting himself as the author of the books (Benfer, 2000).

The image thus created in the mind of the real reader is inspired almost completely by Snicket, and not by Handler. We may assume that Lemony Snicket holds the roles of external author, implied author, internal author and narrator at once (fig.2). This gives him an all-

encompassing eye and authority over the text, and the image of the accordion is fitting here: the plethora of roles allows Snicket to give a chosen tempo to the novels, and it ultimately points toward a complete manipulation of the text.

3.2. Making the narrative levels more complex: Snicket the character

Most interestingly, however, Snicket is not only author and narrator: he is also a character in his own story. His subjectivity and authority were already assessed through the conflation of the two discussed roles, but the inclusion of a diegetical position further complicates his relationship with his own text. Although it is not made clear from the beginning of the book series, a few hints are given to the reader. The epigraphs present at the beginning of each novel are addressed to "Beatrice," and express a form of longing, as we understand that the woman has died (Snicket, 1999):

For Beatrice—

I would much prefer it if you were alive and well.

The woman is decidedly part of the diegesis, as she is put on the same level as other characters of the story: "The Baudelaire orphans have asked it, of course. Mr. Poe has asked it. I have asked it. My beloved Beatrice, before her untimely death, asked it, although she asked it too late. The question is: *Where is Count Olaf?*" (Snicket, 2000: 109) The reader gradually identifies the woman with the protagonists' mother, Beatrice Baudelaire: Snicket was meant to marry Beatrice, but she decided to marry someone else (*ergo*, Bertrand Baudelaire). This is made explicit in the last volume, as Snicket clearly implies he knew Beatrice Baudelaire (Snicket, *The End*, 2006: 38): "I can see her now, [...] telling me not to worry about the party that was beginning downstairs."

Beatrice Baudelaire serves as the primary lens through which the narrator is characterized. Lemony Snicket is also part of the Snicket family, whose members appear in the story: Jacques Snicket is killed by Olaf in book 7, and Kit Snicket aids the children from book 11 onward. From book 8, Olaf references the "Snicket files," which the children eventually discover. A photograph shows their parents, Jacques Snicket, and an "unknown man" with the caption suggesting a possible survivor of a fire (Snicket, 2001: 109). While the Baudelaires hope it might be a parent, the reader realizes it is Snicket, depicted with his face hidden, clutching a notebook and pen – hinting at his role as the story's concealed writer.

Furthermore, he crosses their path for a brief moment in book 12, and it is one of the few moments when Snicket distances himself from his narration (Snicket, 2005: 245-246):

[...] but before her siblings could answer, the children felt a shadow over them, and looked up to see a tall, skinny figure standing over them. In the darkness the children could not see any of his features, only the glowing tip of a skinny cigarette in his mouth.

“Do you three need a taxi?” he asked [...].

The siblings looked at one another, and then squinted up at the man. The children thought perhaps his voice was familiar, but it might just have been his unfathomable tone [...].

The words in bold are those used to define the mysterious man; it is perhaps the only instance in the text where a character is so undefined (“shadow,” “figure,” “the man”), as his face and tone are indistinguishable and difficult to qualify – which is a characteristic trait of Snicket. Even if this passage does not clearly indicate Snicket’s presence at a diegetical level, his withdrawal from a narratological point of view – which happens every time the ‘unknown (Snicket) man’ is mentioned – tends towards our argument.

All in all, Lemony Snicket appears to be a multidimensional *persona*, who manipulates his narration at will through his versatile status of (external, internal and implied) author, narrator and character. This all-encompassing role is not dissimilar to the image of the accordion: Vincent Lhermet argues it is the “Swiss Army knife of musical instruments,” (2016) able to produce multiple tasks at once and tune in with all the other instruments, whether they are popular or classical.

3.3. Readership and co-creation

Throughout the book series, Snicket holds a form of power and authority over both his text and his readership. This would leave the latter in a passive position; but it is here that the versatility of Snicket’s role (and of the image of the accordion) comes most into play. Snicket does exert his authority but constantly subverts it and even submits it to his young readers, motivating their free thought and interpretation through postmodern techniques and playfulness. Metalepsis, metafiction and constant narrative interruptions are admittedly meant to engage the reader.

One of the key features of the narrator of *A Series* is his propensity to define words and concepts, and one should be wary of these definitions, which are, most of the time, correct only in a contextual sense, as exemplified hereafter: ““I will thank you not to be impertinent,” Aunt Josephine said, using a word which here means “pointing out that I’m wrong, which annoys me.”” (Snicket, 2000: 56) This is something to be found throughout the whole text, and serves the playfulness of language (“The World Is Relative Here”, 2019: 32):

This conceit is carried out throughout all of the series’ texts: Snicket uses the definition trope to characterize, editorialize, and comically subvert the meaning of words within their context. This returns us to the metafictional concept of Derridean play, where the multiplicity of meaning inherent in language is emphasized.

Playfulness is closely linked to the accordion, traditionally associated with popular gatherings like fairs, circuses, and the French *bal musette*. The TV adaptation’s opening song captures this playfulness, balancing bright and somber tones. In the text, the accordion’s bellows – shaping the tone and “feeling” of notes – mirror Snicket’s narrative, which hides and reveals elements through playful postmodern techniques, shifting the mood and inviting readers to fill in the gaps.

Because the narrator is unreliable and manipulative, meaning is co-created by the reader. Following Jauss (1978) and Iser (1985), a text exists only in interaction with its audience, who bring expectations and interpretations unique to their experience. *A Series* intentionally engages readers in this process, using the narrator’s unreliability and playful techniques – a dynamic reflected in the image of the accordion. Having traced this image through author, narrator, and character, we now turn to a broader perspective: what links children’s literature and the accordion as forms that inhabit the space between high and low culture.

4. Reconciling high and low cultures through literature and music

A Series is a book series mainly targeted at a young audience, as it is a middle-grade novel (8 to 12-year-old children). As works of children’s literature, the novels are often placed within what is commonly perceived as a “lower” cultural category, especially when contrasted with the “high” culture of general literature—a divide reflected, for instance, in the disproportionate number of literary awards granted to each field. Yet several features of the series broaden

its intended readership, suggesting that *A Series* ultimately speaks to a much wider audience. The concept of dual audience (Wall, 1991)³ or crossover novels (Falconer, 2009; Harju, 2012; Burnes, 2016) can be applied to our corpus here, and we shall see in what ways through the concepts of intertextuality and intermediality.

If the novels appeal to a wider audience, we may challenge the notions of high and low culture in the context of *A Series* through the lens of literature and music. The image of the accordion, conversely, is an image of the in-between, as it is caught between folkloric and classical music, as Monichon argues (*ibid.*: 6)⁴:

[...] Can we fault an instrument for expressing popular thought or for evoking the folkloric nature of a region? For enabling the performance of a Bach fugue or a Franck chorale? Can one blame it for moving, for being able to cover a whole range of feelings and passions by translating what each human being experiences deep within themselves?

4.1. The symbolic use of music: hope and nostalgia

Music holds a particular meaning for the real/implied author, and this transpires through the image of the accordion. The accordion symbolically came to represent feelings of longing and of nostalgia during WWII, especially for immigrant populations who thought of their native European lands. Jazz music amplified this phenomenon by combining the accordion with the saxophone: when used in soft, low tones, the instruments provide both feelings of comfort and remembrance. There is a profusion of mentions of music and instruments throughout the novels. The characters, like the author, have a good classical music upbringing, as they are able to identify concepts and instruments (Snicket, 2001: 140):

³ A dual audience is to be found in books that are written to address both children and adults simultaneously; double address is more common, for children's books attract adult audiences, but are not originally meant for them. We argue that *A Series* was intended for both audiences. See: Wall (*ibid.*).

⁴ Original quote : "[...] Peut-on reprocher à un instrument d'exprimer la pensée populaire ou d'évoquer le caractère folklorique d'une région ? De permettre l'exécution d'une fugue de Bach ou d'un choral de Franck ? Peut-on lui reprocher d'émouvoir, d'être capable de parcourir toute la gamme des sentiments et des passions en traduisant ce que chaque être humain ressent au plus profond de lui-même ?", my translation.

“The subliminal emotional tenor of a mob’s unruliness lies in solitary opinions, expressed emphatically at various points in the stereo field.”

“Tenor? Stereo?” Violet asked. “It sounds like you’re talking about opera.”

Violet’s misapplication of her brother’s words to the opera suggests her familiarity with the genre. Classical instruments appear frequently throughout *A Series*, reflecting the musical background of the author, narrator, and characters, with over 35 mentions across the series. While not pervasive, music punctuates each book, sometimes for characterization – such as the violin, associated with Nero (*The Austere Academy*, 2001) – and sometimes symbolically, as when the Baudelaires recall their parents bonding over music: “Occasionally, [Bertrand Baudelaire] would play one of [the Baudelaires’] mother’s favorite pieces of music on the phonograph, and she would rise from the sofa and dance awkwardly [...].” (Snicket, 2005: 12) Key instruments like the piano and accordion also carry significance: the piano evokes memories of the parents, seen when the children encounter its burnt remains (*The Bad Beginning*).

Music often carries strong symbolic weight in children’s literature, as in Mark Zusak’s *The Book Thief* (2005), where the accordion represents both reassurance and death. For Hans, Liesel’s adoptive father, it recalls debt, survival, and sustaining his family during war, while also foreshadowing his death. The instrument thus embodies the union of literature and music as a source of comfort. In *A Series*, the accordion’s symbolism is subtler, evoking nostalgia and longing. The father of the real author is a WWII Jewish immigrant from Germany who came to the USA in 1939; Handler argues that this intergenerational trauma has shaped his life and his writing (Dery, 2015).

Fear, fatality, and powerlessness shape the author’s psyche, and Lemony Snicket shares these traits. In *A Series*, instruments like the piano evoke nostalgia, while the accordion—mentioned five times—is primarily tied to Snicket and the past. Described as “dusty” in book 1 and linked to an opera memory in book 12 (*The Penultimate Peril*, 126), it recalls both personal history and a brief musical career. Here, the accordion is associated with classical music rather than popular culture, bridging its image in collective imagination with its actual use. The first example is particularly interesting to prove how the accordion is symbolically used in *A Series* because in this extract, Snicket is making a list of things that are important to him and that come to characterise

him in the eyes of the real and implied readers. The accordion becomes a symbol for the past (Snicket, 1999: 124):

I am certain that over the course of your own life, you have noticed that people's rooms reflect their personalities. In my room, for instance, I have gathered a collection of objects that are important to me, including a dusty accordion on which I can play a few sad songs, a large bundle of notes on the activities of the Baudelaire orphans, and a blurry photograph, taken a very long time ago, of a woman whose name is Beatrice. These are items that are very precious and dear to me.

By describing the objects "precious and dear" to him, Snicket grants the reader a controlled glimpse into his intimate space. His life revolves around three elements – music (the accordion), literature (the Baudelaires), and love (Beatrice) – with the accordion listed first, though described as "dusty" and playable only for "a few sad songs." This connection between the instrument and Snicket's melancholy is reinforced in book 8 (*The Hostile Hospital*, 259), linking his musicality to time, nostalgia, and unfulfilled potential. Introduced early in the series, the accordion anchors the persona to the past. Overall, we may say that music is used at multiple levels in *A Series*, as it influenced the way the text is structured, how the sentences are formed, how the characters interact between one another and how the reader interacts with the text, especially through symbolic musical language. Music, particularly through the piano and the accordion, is associated with literature, the past, nostalgia, but also with hope, as it encapsulates the impulse of life and of movement within it.

4.2. Intertextuality and intermediality

The text uses literature and music symbolically, especially through musical language and the accordion's imagery. Both the accordion and children's literature occupy a space between "high" and "low" cultures – classical and folkloric music, popular and general literature. *A Series* bridges these gaps through playfulness, language, and the interplay of different art forms. Intertextuality and intermediality expand the fictional universe, allowing Handler to showcase his love of music and its versatility. We will briefly define these concepts and their connection to musicality and the bridging of cultural categories.

Intertextuality is a concept developed by Mikhail Bakhtin but which was popularised in Western academia by Julia Kristeva in her work *Bakhtin, Word, Dialogue, Novel*. (1967) The text is a dialogue between different types of writing – a reader, writer and writing that collide through a particular cultural context.

The term “dialogue” is essential here, as past and present contexts interact to create new content. Roland Barthes, (1967) a poststructuralist who also formed a more precise theoretical frame around the concept, argues that the text does not exist on its own, and that it consists of many other texts which form an intricate dialogue (and, conversely, do not belong solely to the author any longer). According to him, any text is intertextual by nature because meaning is created between texts and not within them. The goal of intertextuality is manifold, as it allows the author to parody, pastiche or pay tribute to another piece of work.

A text will thus explicitly or implicitly reference another, which will create a large artistic web and engage the reader. Intertextuality is omnipresent at a literary level, as *Snicket* constantly alludes to or even parodies known literary authors and works, from Herman Melville (“Queequeg” in book 11, a reference to a character in *Moby Dick*) to George Orwell (a character named Georgina Orwell appears in book 4, recalling the author’s novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*) through Lewis Carroll (“Briny Beach” is a reference to the poem “The Walrus and the Carpenter” in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*). Although it is a long-established phenomenon, intertextuality, pastiche and self-referentiality are all features of postmodernism in both literature and music, (Manuel, 1995: 227) and are, unsurprisingly, quite common in *A Series*.

In music, intertextuality is a hallmark of the postmodern, encompassing the adoption of earlier styles or the incorporation of literary references, such as Led Zeppelin’s “Ramble On,” which mentions Mordor from Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*. Kostka and de Castro (2021) note that musical intertextuality serves similar purposes as in literature, including parody, collage, and dialogue with the past. In *A Series*, composers and musicians are frequently mentioned, with one of the most modern references being Justin Timberlake’s “Cry Me a River” (*The Penultimate Peril*, 190).

The presence of music is even more striking in the TV adaptation of the novels. In episode 1 (Hudis and Sonnenfeld, S01E01, 6:45-7:00), for instance, there is a direct reference to James Brown’s song “Super Bad” (1971):

VIOLET: And what's that thing James Brown said?

KLAUS: I got somethin' that makes me want to shout

LEMONY: I got somethin' that tells me what it's all about.

The reference to the singer (1933–2006) creates a temporal clash, as the modern allusion contrasts with the TV show's aesthetics. While younger viewers may miss it, older audiences enjoy the recognition, and the comic effect is enhanced by Snicket's tone conflicting with the upbeat music. The 2004 movie adaptation, scored by Thomas Newman, relies more on classical music than the TV series, suiting the Gothic aesthetics.⁵ Newman's compositions feature intertextual references to other composers; for example, the theme "Hurricane Herman" combines violins, cello, clarinet, flute, horns, and percussion, with dissonant high notes creating tension. The music rises in intensity but stops abruptly, echoing Hans Zimmer's style and embedding Newman's work in a broader musical network. Although Newman draws on many influences, he uses the orchestra innovatively, treating it like a "tone tank" that combines instruments to create varied sound textures rather than a harmonious whole. Intertextuality links the text, TV, and movie adaptations, engaging audiences through familiar references.

Intermediality, in contrast, describes the dialogue between different media rather than texts, allowing analysis of *A Series of Unfortunate Events* alongside its 2004 movie and 2017–2019 TV adaptation. As Müller (2000) explains, audiovisual works integrate structures and concepts from other media, creating aesthetic layers that enrich the viewer's experience.

Intermediality is, overall, the necessary dialogue between different media, and nowadays, this is oftentimes between text and digital platforms such as the theatre, cinema, television and so on, especially in the context of adaptations. They rely heavily on intermediality, and find

⁵ Many critics have argued that the movie looks like a 'Tim Burton movie,' Burton being renowned for propagating the Gothic aesthetics under discussion. By Gothic aesthetics, we mean that the props, locations/CGI renderings, clothes and lighting used in the movie recall what Gothic has come to represent in collective imagination following the literary genre's evolution throughout the centuries. See: Starzecki, Caroline. "Repenser le stéréotype gothique avec les orphelins Baudelaire de Lemony Snicket (1999-2006; 2017-2019)" *Imaginaires*, 25, 11-32: <https://doi.org/10.34929/imaginaires.vi25.50>

themselves at a crossroads with Henry Jenkins' notion of convergence (2006: 20):

By convergence, I mean the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want. [...]

In the world of media convergence, every important story gets told, every brand gets sold, and every consumer gets courted across multiple media platforms.

The "courting" of media, as Jenkins notes, applies to *A Series* as well. While the movie and TV adaptations blur the line between intertextuality and intermediality, we will focus here on a musical extension: the 2006 audiobook album *Tragic Treasury: Songs from A Series of Unfortunate Events* by The Gothic Archies, primarily Stephin Merritt (voice) and Daniel Handler (accordion). Handler's direct involvement makes this album central to the corpus, linking each of the thirteen tracks (plus two extras) to a specific novel – track 1, "Scream and Run Away," corresponds to the first book:

The Count has an eye on his ankle
And lives in a horrible place
He wants all your money
He's never at all funny [...]

The first verse introduces Count Olaf, highlighting his traits, his house, and his ambitions, all drawn from the first novel. The music is deliberately whimsical, favoring dissonance over harmony: the accordion dominates, yet sounds slightly off, the flute similarly falters, and the cymbals have a deliberately rough quality. Merritt's voice is coarse and occasionally out of tune, prioritizing spontaneity over precision. The result is an intentionally artificial aesthetic, creating a distinctive, experimental tone that pervades the entire album.

The songs accompany the narrative, shaping the listener's imagination and linking music and literature through intermediality. Found in the audiobook, album, and Netflix adaptation, they combine words and sound to engage the audience. Their purpose is consistent: blending influences and celebrating language while highlighting the popular. The accordion, associated with both classical and folkloric music, appears whimsical and playful, reinforcing this hybridity. The TV adaptation features the most songs (about six), while the movie has

none. By combining text and music, the narrative's meaning is expanded, and audience engagement is heightened.

Intertextuality and intermediality allow the narrative to thrive, especially through music, which – across adaptations and the album – shares hybridity, playfulness, and theatricality. The mix of classical and popular instruments in this postmodern children's series blurs cultural boundaries and shows how text and sound complement and shape each other. Just as the novels influenced the musical adaptations, the music also shaped the TV series' atmosphere. Composer Jim Dooley, who scored the second Netflix season, watched the movie beforehand and drew inspiration from its aesthetic (Staff, 2018). With Handler involved in the scripts and still performing accordion pieces from *Tragic Treasury*, the music is fully integrated into the *A Series* universe.

The accordion and music in the Snicketverse challenge the division of literature and music into “high” and “low” categories. *A Series* embraces hybridity, blending genres, media, and words with sound. Through intertextuality and intermediality, art feeds on art, revealing the series' complexity in both Snicket/Handler's multidimensional *persona* and the text's layered structure.

5. Conclusion

This study explored *A Series of Unfortunate Events* from both musical and literary perspectives. Music and text intersect at diegetic, metaphorical, and structural levels. The blending of real/implied author and narrator/character gives Snicket authority, while the accordion symbolizes duality and versatility: like the instrument, the narrator can reveal or conceal the story. Yet the unsaid words empower the reader, highlighting Snicket's multidimensional *persona*.

By leaving space for absence and imagination, co-creation becomes possible. The accordion mirrors *A Series of Unfortunate Events*: both exist between high and low, folkloric and classical cultures, bridging the gap through intermediality and adaptation. Music shapes the text at structural, diegetic, extradiegetic, and metaphorical levels. The novels' postmodern playfulness, intertextuality, and self-reflexivity amplify this connection, engaging the audience's imagination and knowledge.

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LES DESASTREUSES AVENTURES DES ORPHELINS BAUDELAIRE (1999-2006) DE LEMONY SNICKET: UN TEXTE CONSTRUIT PAR LA MUSIQUE/CALITE

Cet article examine la relation entre texte et musicalité dans le cadre de l'ensemble romanesque *A Series of Unfortunate Events* (1999-2006) ou *Les Désastreuses aventures des orphelins Baudelaire* en français, écrites par l'auteur américain Daniel Handler sous le pseudonyme Lemony Snicket. L'oeuvre est un excellent exemple d'arts complémentaires qui se nourrissent l'un l'autre. Les livres peuvent être considérés comme un texte fragmenté à l'image d'un accordéon qui se déploie. La musique d'ouverture de l'adaptation Netflix (2017-2019) des livres s'appuie sur le son si particulier de l'accordéon, qui est lui-même mentionné sporadiquement tout au long du récit. L'amour notoire de l'auteur pour cet instrument particulier a inévitablement façonné sa plume et le caractère de son auteur-narrateur. Cette focalisation sur la musicalité nous permet d'explorer différents aspects des romans.

Outre les diverses mentions d'instruments classiques, le texte lui-même fait un usage créatif de l'allitération, de l'assonance et de la répétition interne et structurelle. L'accordéon est en soi un instrument révélateur. Comme dans *The Book Thief* (2005) de Markus Zusak, le "piano du pauvre" peut symboliser à la fois la vie et la mort, ou la joie et la nostalgie. La dichotomie entre l'accordéon, instrument à la fois folklorique et classique, transparaît à travers le statut ambigü et ambivalent de l'auteur-narrateur. La polyvalence de l'accordéon se reflète dans le personnage de Lemony Snicket. Tout comme Daniel Handler est un accordéoniste - un "homme-orchestre" capable de produire simultanément du rythme, de l'harmonie et de la mélodie -, Lemony Snicket est une entité multidimensionnelle qui orchestre le récit à sa guise. Notre étude met en lien les romans et l'image de l'accordéon afin de mettre en lumière la richesse de l'écriture de l'auteur : nos observations seront étayées par l'adaptation Netflix (2017-2019) et la bande musicale accompagnant les audiobooks (2006).

Keywords: Lemony Snicket, accordéon, musicalité, hybridité

MUSIC AS REPRESENTATION OF ETHNICITY IN ASTERIX COMIC BOOKS

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Abstract: This article investigates the role of music in shaping ethnotypes in the comic medium, drawing on imagology, a subject of comparative literature. Music and comics are culturally and socially significant, whereas comics, as a visual art form, are a strong tool for the emergence of stereotypes. Both are relevant in imagological terms. Drawing on Daniel-Henri Pageaux's imagological method, the image of the Other is analysed at three levels: the word; the hierarchised relationship; and the scenario. The analysis focuses on *Asterix* albums, depicting Greeks, Spaniards and Swiss, as they incorporate various aspects of foreign cultures in a humorous and satirical tone. How does the authors' French gaze produce and sustain the image of the foreigner through the representation of music genres, melodies, musicians and musical instruments, both verbally and visually? The article discusses the widening scope of imagology from verbal to graphic texts, as well as the importance of music and comics as cultural manifestations that challenge stereotypes of the Other.

Keywords: imagology, comics, music, ethnotypes, the Other

1. Introduction

This article focuses on imagology, a field of comparative literature, dealing with the "discursive and literary articulation of cultural difference and of national identity" (Leerssen, *The Rhetoric of National Character* 268-9). It broadens the application of imagology from the verbal to the graphic text, aiming to explore the role of music in shaping the otherness within comics medium. At the same time, it expands imagological analysis to a corpus that forms part of children's reading. Comics constitute an important part of children's literature, yet children's literature has, as O'Sullivan shows, long flown under the radar of imagology even though it is a key site for the construction and circulation of images of Self and Other (2005; 2011; 2023).

The analysis is conducted within the framework of Daniel-Henri Pageaux's imagological approach, which outlines a three-level method for studying the image of the Other: "le mot, la relation hiérarchisée, le scénario" (the word, the hierarchised relationship, and the scenario) (64). The article shows the evolving scope of imagology, the significance of music as cultural manifestation and the role of comics as a visual medium perpetuating representations of the Other, the foreigner.

Imagology studies the mental images or representations of the Other/the foreigner (Beller 7, Chevrel 28, Moura 35, Pageaux 59). According to Pageaux, "[...] toute image procède d'une prise de conscience, si minime soit-elle, d'un Je par rapport à un Autre, d'un Ici par rapport à un Ailleurs" [every image arises from an awareness, however minimal it may be, of a Self in relation to an Other, of a Here in relation to a There] (60). Similarly, in their foreword, Beller and Leerssen state: "The nationality represented (the spected) is silhouetted in the perspectival context of the representing text or discourse (the spectant)". It becomes clear that the Other can only be studied in relation to Self. Literature is significant in shaping cultural, national, and ethnic identity. Leerssen asserts that among all art forms, it stands out as the most explicit in reflecting and influencing the awareness of entire societies (*The Rhetoric of National Character* 268). Thus, imagology offers the possibility of tracing authors' ideas, as well as those of the societies they live in, concerning groups, societies, or nations through the images created in their writing. As contemporary narrative fields expand to include diverse media like film and comics (including their subcategory of graphic novels), the traditional concept of imagology extends. Traditionally focused on studying the cultural construction and literary representation of national characters through literary texts, imagology now embraces a broader scope beyond literature (Edtstadler, Folie, and Zocco; Beller and Leerssen, Pageaux 59).

Music has been used as a form of expression for centuries. It is through music that local, national, ethnic, social and cultural identities are constructed and expressed (Stokes; Wade; Young). It reflects the values, beliefs, and traditions of different communities and serves as a means of cultural transmission (Bryant). Many dominant cultures have utilized music to articulate their cultural heritage and identities. For instance, European classical music has been employed to convey the ideals of European culture, such as notions of rationality, objectivity, and refinement (Bourdieu). Music and its influence on the construction of national identities has been further explored in the context of imagology

(Edtstadler, Folie and Zocco 35). According to Leerssen, contrary to the common perception that music is abstract and lacks specific cultural or social significance, it holds relevance in imagological terms, thus, recognizing music as important “for the expression and dissemination of nationalist ideals” (*Romanticism, Music, Nationalism* 606).

Concerning comics, as a visual art form, they inherently produce images, making them a potent medium for perpetuating national, ethnic, and cultural stereotypes. For Achim Hölter, the comic genre derives much of its vigor from the foreign and the exotic, while “do not autonomously generate a specific ethnotypical register, but passively repeat or invoke generally current common-place ideas” (307). The stereotype combines minimal information with maximum meaning, says Stanzel (cit. Beller 8-9). Pageaux also highlights the stereotype’s tendency to be reduced to the essential by expressing maximum possible communication within minimal information (63). Comics, like other literary genres, rely on action, but their distinctiveness lies in brevity, constituting their primary rule. To be effective, they must convey the maximum perceptible information with the utmost clarity in minimal time (Masson 97), thus aligning with the nature of stereotypes. Indeed, comics demand brief, dynamic panels that present roles, characters, and situations with clarity for immediate recognition; otherwise, the message becomes blurred. Furthermore, in comics, physical appearance, clothing styles, the objects used, as well as the depiction of the environment and climate, contribute to the immediate identification of a specific nationality (Missiou, 222). The artist bears the exclusive responsibility for describing these elements, and the transition from language is unnecessary, as visual descriptions tend to be more explicit than verbal ones (Nodelman 201, Nikolajeva & Scott 83). However, the decision of which elements to incorporate into the depiction of a subject or overlook is left to the artist’s discretion, carried out more or less consciously. These choices play an important role in shaping the image of the foreigner, as Pageaux asserts that every act of referencing or non-referencing marks otherness (68). When such choices appear in works targeted at young readers, their impact extends further. As O’Sullivan has shown, children’s texts construct a fixed repertoire of notions about foreign countries that young readers internalize, thus contributing to processes of “othering” and “same-ing” (2023). The focus of this article is centered on exploring how music contributes to the construction of ethnotypes within the verbal and visual text of comic books. Ethnotypes refer to stereotypical characterizations attributed to ethnicities or nationalities (Leersen

Imagology 16). In the context of imagology, the term “image” has traditionally been associated with mental images and ideas. However, the definition of “image” expands to not only include mental representations but also graphic, optical, perceptual, and verbal expressions (Mitchell 505). Writing about picturebooks, O’Sullivan argues that they offer “a double perspective of images of nations, cultures and ethnic groups – the notional representations formed by the imagination (the subject of imagology) and the material images of the picturebook in which these are expressed.” (2023 p. 105). Comics as multimodal medium likewise mediate ethnotypes through the interplay between notional representations and their graphic realisation on the page. Thus, image will be hereby considered in its graphic, verbal, and mental dimension.

The specific focus of the article is on investigating how music reflects national and ethnic stereotypes in three *Asterix* comic books, written by René Goscinny and illustrated by Albert Uderzo: *Asterix at the Olympic Games*, *Asterix in Spain*, and *Asterix in Switzerland*. The *Asterix* series take place in ancient Gaul, following the adventures of the titular character, a Gaulish warrior, and his friend Obelix. Their village resists Roman occupation due to a magic potion granting superhuman strength. In the series, the protagonists visit many different regions and countries. A plethora of visual codes facilitates the easy recognition of various national and ethnic characteristics. The authors use various elements of foreign cultures, such as artistic masterpieces, historical facts, fixed phrases, folk traditions and gastronomy, to present the identities of various people in a humorous and satirical manner (Rouvière, 2008). Certainly, it is difficult to overlook the extent to which the series relies on stereotypes. As Anthea Bell notes, *Asterix* is arguably one of the few mainstream comics “that can still make harmless use of politically incorrect, xenophobic attitudes.” *Asterix* belongs to the tradition of humorous adventure comics, and its verbal or visual humor is what make its national and ethnic stereotypes highly visible, memorable and apparently harmless. However, Goscinny and Uderzo deliberately use existing mid-20th-century stereotypes, and represent other nations as “uncivilized people with ridiculous customs” (Lefèvre). They use stereotyping and even caricature of cultural features to make readers laugh at themselves and at others: “Notre seule ambition, c’est de faire rigoler... Les autres interprétations sont démesurées” (“Our only ambition is to make people laugh... Anything beyond that is wildly over-interpreted”; qtd. in Lesage). The humor in *Asterix* operates both

through a stereotyped French gaze on foreign peoples and through mockery of French and Gallic traits themselves (Mutta). The mockery of foreigners is actually a way of satirizing the Gauls' ethnocentrism (Rouvière 286). The series stages a "parody of identities" rather than a straightforward xenophobic discourse: all groups, including the Gauls, are stereotyped and ridiculed, within a broadly democratic and universalist framework (Rouvière). This second-degree treatment of clichés helps to account for Asterix's lasting popularity, even though the albums abound in national and ethnic stereotypes. The humorous effect emerges through stereotyping, which emphasizes recognisable traits and behaviors, allowing readers to detect what unites and what distinguishes the various peoples, alterity and proximity.

In imagology the aim is not to determine the accuracy of the image of the Other, but rather to understand how he/she is perceived and represented (Leerssen, *The Rhetoric of National Character* 280). In *Asterix*, where both authors are French, there is the adoption of a French gaze when portraying various cultures, symbolized by the Gauls as the observed culture. Since their first publication in *Pilote*, the Asterix albums have achieved international bestseller status and have been translated into numerous languages. This worldwide dissemination means that the French gaze constructed in the original versions circulates far beyond its initial national context and reaches diverse child and adult readerships. The musical ethnotypes analyzed here thus contribute to a transnational circulation of imagological "auto"- and "hetero-images" (Leerssen 275) of people, allowing readers to recognize themselves either as Others or as the imagined Self.

While *Asterix* comics prominently feature different kinds of music, musical instruments, musicians and singers, the focus narrows down to the Greeks, the Spaniards, and the Swiss. These depictions were selected because in these comics, music is clearly associated with a specific culture, and used to depict ethnic identity, whereas in other albums it tends to appear more diffusely as one cultural element among many. Furthermore, dancing scenes will also be examined, as they acknowledge the intricate relationship between rhythm, melody, and movement expression.

2. Music, musicians and musical instruments in Asterix

A brief presentation of the selected comic books follows to provide context for the reader. *Astérix et les Jeux Olympiques* (Asterix at the Olympic Games) was first published in French comic magazine *Pilote* no. 434/ 15.02.1968, with its first album edition released in 1968; the first

English translation by Anthea Bell and Derek Hockridge appeared in 1972. The narrative unfolds in the context of the Olympic Games in Athens. Asterix and Obelix want their village to participate in the Olympic Games to stand up against the Roman occupiers in their region. *Astérix en Hispanie* (Asterix in Spain) made its debut in Pilote no. 498/22.05.1969, followed by its first album edition in 1969 and its first English translation in 1971. This story transports readers to a small Spanish village, still resisting Rome. Julius Caesar gets tired of the unconquerable villagers and force his centurion to kidnap Pepe, the son of the Iberian chief. Pepe finds himself in Gaul, at the Roman Babaorum camp, where he encounters Asterix and Obelix, who free him and decide to bring him back home to Spain. Finally, *Astérix chez les Helvètes* (Asterix in Switzerland) was first introduced in Pilote no. 557/09.07.1970, with the initial album edition released in 1970 and the first English translation in 1973. The story unfolds in Switzerland, where Asterix and Obelix embark on a quest for the Edelweiss to cure a Roman auditor, poisoned by a corrupt governor embezzling taxes, demonstrating their readiness to aid even an enemy. Throughout this article, the English translations of these comics by Anthea Bell and Derek Hockridge (Hodder Dargaud editions) are used.

Among the plethora of cultural elements in *Asterix* series, music is a recurring theme, with references to melodies, musicians, musical instruments, songs and singers. Goscinny and Uderzo draw inspiration primarily from French songs, with some borrowing from Belgian and other international sources. The series features a wide range of musical genres, including religious chants, regional and national anthems, military songs, drinking songs, nursery rhymes, operettas, films, and popular songs (Rivière). Daniel Russell praised the series for its attention to detail in depicting the music of ancient civilizations. He has compiled a full list of musical instruments featured in *Asterix*, including Roman military musical instruments, ancient Celtic brass instruments, natural wind instruments, fingered wind instruments, ancient stringed instruments, early drums and percussion instruments. Music is often used as a way to set the mood and add to the overall atmosphere of the stories. Notably, Cacofonix, the village bard and one of the principal characters of the comics, is known for his terrible singing, contrasting with his belief in his talent. His singing often serves as a humorous weapon against the Romans and others opponents. Additionally, the use of intertextuality is evident in some instances, such as in *Asterix in Britain*, where The Beatles are caricatured during an autograph session,

in front of frenzied fans, mainly young girls (19). Similarly, in *Asterix in Spain*, the French composer Gérard Calvi is depicted directing music during circus games (44). However, what is of interest within the scope of this article is the ability of music to function as a demarcation line, distinguishing the Gauls from other cultures and thus constructing the image of the Other.

3. The lexical level

One way in which language is used to represent a country or culture is through the selection of lexical registers. A lexical register refers to the specific set of words and phrases used in a particular context or situation. Thus, for the initial step of Pageaux's imagology, it is necessary to categorize words under two main lexical registers: those originating from the observing country and those borrowed from the language of the observed country. According to Pageaux, the words from the observing country are used to define the observed country, while words taken from the language of the observed country are transferred without translation in the texts of the observing country (64).

In this context, exclamations and vocalizations used while singing, which are integral to the native language of the observed culture, provide linguistic authenticity in the representation. For instance, the Spanish exclamation *Olé* expresses approval, encouragement, or triumph (*Chambers concise dictionary* 829). This word is closely associated with dancing and bullfighting, two stereotypical characteristics of Spanish culture (Landborn 78). In *Asterix in Spain*, untranslatable *Olé*, used during singing and dancing, creates a more authentic representation of Spanish culture and a sense of exoticism and otherness for the non-Spaniard reader (35-36). Moreover, the use of vocalizations in music can equally serve as cultural markers. For example, the cantaor's "Ayayayaaaaa" is associated with the haunting laments of flamenco and embodies the essence of this art form (Sautter 122). Similarly, the yodel vocalization "Yodleiiiiiiiiii" (*Asterix in Switzerland* 38) is a recognizable element of Swiss musical heritage linked with the Alpine surroundings of the yodeler. The region is reflected in the vocal performance: low notes echo the valley and high notes mirror a mountain peak (Plantenga 24). In the context of the popular Syrtaki dance (*Asterix at the Olympic Games* 27), the rhythmic syllables "Lala lala lala" embody the vibrant nature of Greek culture. All the aforementioned vocalizations are frequently written in bold letters in the respective *Asterix* comic books. The choice of this lettering implies

loudness and conveys a sense of intensity, energy, and excitement of the moment, which is transmitted by the music.

The second lexical register comprises vocabulary employed by the observing culture (I, the Self) to describe the observed culture (the Other). When lyrics of songs use the cultural context of the observed culture, they become a significant cultural mark connected to that specific heritage. For example, the themes of flamenco lyrics often include sorrow, poverty and oppression, as well as personal suffering, hope and despair, love and pain of love, devotion to the mother (Chuse 39). These characteristics are found in *Asterix in Spain*. The two protagonists are invited by a group of Spanish Romani to participate in their nocturnal dance and have fun (35). However, during the performance, the cantaor sings a melancholic chorus that lacks cheerfulness: “Ayayayayyyyy, whoooooe is meeeeee! Ayayayayyyyy, why did sheeeeeee leeeeeeeve meeeeeeeeee? Ayayayayayayyyyyyyyyyyyy!”.

The importance of translation needs to be noted here. The French original lyrics: “Ayayayayyyyy, quel malheur d’être nééééééé ! Ayyyyyy, ma mère, pourquoi m’as-tu fait çaaaaaa ? Ayayayayayyyyyyyyy !” would be literally rendered in English as: “Ayayayayyyyy, what a misfortune to be boooooorn! Ayyyyyy, my mother, why did you do this to meeeeeee? Ayayayayyyyy!” In Greek, the lyrics become: Ayay, ayay, ayyyyyy, yy. Ah, what pain, what sorrow! Ayayyyyy! Mother, why was I born poor? ay ay ay ay ay ay, yyyyyyyyyyy.

Although the translations are not literal, they succeed in conveying the general spirit of the flamenco lament. What they lose, however, is the degree of parody and exaggeration that characterizes the French original and its playful use of melodrama, where the lament becomes a heavy complaint, almost a theatrical cry, and at the same time a childlike whine. Nevertheless, the antithesis between the invitation to laugh and the lamentations of the flamenco lyrics creates an incongruity, a reversal of the reader's expectations, which is a fundamental characteristic of humorous discourse (Morreall 11). Moreover, as the lyrics are made up by the observing culture, they offer a parodic perspective on the culture being observed.

Furthermore, in Pageaux's imagology approach, repetition can be employed to reinforce, subvert, or unify images and stereotypes within a text (65). In this context, when a Roman soldier, disguised as a Spanish villager, bursts into song, performing a flamenco piece to convince the two Gauls protagonists of his supposed Spanish identity, the repetition of the flamenco style reinforces the stereotype of Spanish culture

(*Asterix in Spain* 37). Young Pepe further comments on the soldier's unimpressive singing and his knee-tapping rhythm alluding to the flamenco dance style. The image of the Other is further strengthened in the final panel of the comic book. During the customary dinner that concludes the story, Obelix performs a flamenco dance and song for his compatriots. The depiction of this act suggests the acceptance and recognition of the foreign culture.

Finally, the narrator's discourse and the dialogues of the characters are also subject to lexical analysis. For example, the protagonists go out at night in Athens and the following dialogue takes place between them: "Obelix: They seem to be having a good time in there! - Asterix: They're fond of dancing...I hear Greek dances are very interesting...." (*Asterix at the Olympic games* 27). In the caption, the narrator comments: "As the night goes on, our friends are introduced to the art of Greek dancing..." Asterix notes that the sun is about to rise and upon their return to the inn, the Gauls exclaim: "Up with the Greeks!". These exchanges express the Gauls appreciation for Greek customs and the way they entertain themselves. Greece is thus portrayed as a place where partying continues until dawn.

The lexical choices discussed in this section are therefore markers of how the French observing culture constructs Greek, Spanish, and Swiss musical Others; they also form the material that translators must negotiate when adapting *Asterix* for international audiences. The analysis so far has been based on the English translations. However, the representations of these ethnic groups circulate across numerous languages. In the French, English, and Greek editions examined, the artwork is reproduced unchanged, so the visual musical markers (instruments, dance poses, the staging of musical performance in tourist-like landscapes), as well as the onomatopoeic sound effects that are part of the drawn image, remain stable across these language versions. Elements that belong to the observed culture, such as borrowed exclamations (Olé) and musical vocalisations (Ayayay, yodeling, rhythmic lala), also tend to remain unchanged. What changes, rather, is the verbal framing of music in the speech and thought balloons and in the captions; in other words, the vocabulary through which the French observing culture comments on the musical practices of the Others. This underlines how important translation is for the international construction of ethnotypes as articulated through music in *Asterix*.

4. The narrative level

The second step in Pageaux's method, largely inspired by structural analyses conducted by Claude Lévi-Strauss on myths, involves analyzing how different parts of the text are organized. It consists of identifying the hierarchised relationships, that is, to detect the major oppositions that structure the imago-typical text. Pageaux notes that these oppositions are: 'I' - narrator - culture of origin vs 'the Other' - character - represented culture (67). To analyze these relationships, it is necessary to break down the elements that structure the image of the Other: the system of characters, the spatiotemporal framework, and the thematic units. The text is read as an anthropological document, with the goal of identifying the values of the Other and expressions of their culture (Pageaux 68). This can include examining "artistic practices, religion, music, clothing, cuisine etc." (Pageaux 68), that contribute to alterity and create distinct boundaries between Self and the Other.

4.1. The system of character and visual stereotypes

Pageaux emphasizes the significance of external appearance in the enunciation and production of stereotypes, thereby justifying the actions and behaviors attributed to the Other (63). In comics, the portrayal of external appearance is achieved through visual means, enabling the easy recognition of various national elements. In *Asterix*, the characters are often depicted as embodying typical traits of certain nationalities, with their external appearance reflecting these characteristics. Thus, the Swiss characters are depicted with blond or red hair and mustaches, while Mediterranean people like Greeks and Spaniards are characterized by dark hair. Beyond physical attributes, clothing choices and the presence of specific objects contribute to shaping the image of the Other, distinguishing them from the Self. Everyday objects from other cultures might appear strange to outsiders, serving as markers of otherness. This is evident in the depiction of musicians who adhere to traditional dress code of their respective cultures. For instance, the Swiss are portrayed singing in traditional Alpine lederhosen while wielding traditional alpine horns (*Asterix in Switzerland* 38). Spanish Romani characters wear a mix of colorful and patterned garments, accessorized with scarves or headbands. The dancers hold castanets and use their hands to accompany the sounds of Flamenco; they are also depicted barefoot, symbolizing their poverty as another aspect of their otherness (*Asterix in Spain* 35-36). Greek musicians, on the other hand, don cloaks adorned with characteristic

meanders and wield musical instruments from ancient times, such as the pan flute, ancient lyre, and triple pipe (*Asterix at the Olympic Games* 27). These elements evoke the culture of Greek Antiquity, contributing to the portrayal of Greek culture as sophisticated and refined.

In addition, national and ethnic stereotypes in music can be reflected in the portrayal of the singer's facial expressions and gestures. As comics obey the principle of the immediate and rapid transmission of the message, the facial features and kinesics of a character are often stereotyped, formed according to cultural elements. In *Asterix in Spain*, for instance, the cantao's face expression and kinesics are represented as passionate and emotional (35), aligning with the idea that Flamenco artists are individuals "who live their art more fully than they perform it" (Washabaugh 8). Furthermore, the unique vocal texture of flamenco is depicted by prolonging the vowels inside the speech balloons, which host the lyrics, helping to convey the emotions of the song. Meanwhile, Swiss singers' faces are portrayed as vigorous, exhibiting the "esophageal gymnastics" (Plantenga 9) they engage in while yodeling. The comics humorously illustrate what Plantenga describes as "the yodel's characteristic glottal leap, giving it its uniquely vigorous character" (4).

4.2. Characters' reaction to foreign songs

In addition to the aforementioned morphological characterization, which involved the examination of physical, gestural, and expressive traits, the construction of otherness occurs through oppositional pairs (Pageaux 68). Music can serve as a demarcation line between the Self and the Other, where the foreigner's music is perceived as inferior to the supposed superiority of the observed culture. A characteristic instance is the characters' reactions to Swiss yodeling, evoking mixed responses. While the Swiss find it amusing and enjoyable, the Gauls and Romans perceive it as irritating and even painful, with Obelix going to great lengths, such as jumping into the sea, to escape the annoying sound (36-38). Additionally, a subtle irony emerges in the dialogue between a Swiss character and Asterix, where the Swiss expresses pride in his national song and invites Asterix to hear it performed by their Glee Club (37). Asterix answers: "We have a bard at home who sings a bit like that" (37). His response carries a humorous undertone that playfully challenges the notion of yodel music being universally pleasant. However, from one side, this response mirrors the self-awareness and self-mockery of the yodelers, inherent in yodeling culture. It reflects the "cultural prejudice that has been jocularly accepted by one and all",

where “[a]ll yodelers, it seems, learn to laugh at themselves-before someone else does [...]” (Plantenga 4). There is thus a reproduction of an image for which the yodelers themselves satirize. From the other, the reference to the poor singing voice of the Gaulish bard balance any negative image of the Swiss, as the Gauls, through Asterix words, also make fun of a prominent member of their own society. Similarly, when Cacophonix offered to sing lullabies to help Pepe, the young Spaniard, fall asleep, his off-key notes pierced the air, causing the villagers to wince in agony and attempt to make him stop (*Asterix in Spain* 20). However, Pepe responded with enthusiasm: “*Olé!* It reminds me of home, especially the goats!” Thus, through Pepe's words, the Gauls once again engage in self-mockery.

4.3 The space

Pageaux underscores the significance of the spatiotemporal framework in literary texts, suggesting that the cultural representation of a country or society is often constructed based on a specific time and place, affecting how the observing culture perceives the observed culture. He sees a connection between geographical space and psychological space in literary texts, at least on a metaphorical level, as the foreigner's space acquires symbolic value and plays a special role in expressing otherness (67).

The landscapes depicted in *Asterix* comics, resembling scenes from tourist guides or postcards, function as representative backdrops for places where singers are situated and perform, contributing to a portrayal of stereotypical appearances. For instance, Switzerland is depicted with snow-capped mountains, fir trees, and inns reminiscent of Swiss chalets (24, 38, 45). Yodel, specifically the Alpine *naturjodel*, is closely associated with the herder's need and occasional longing to communicate with other herders and the herd over long distances (Plantenga 22). In the comics, this musical tradition, depicted as a form of entertainment for the Swiss, effectively reinforces the stereotype of Switzerland as a country of mountainous landscapes, rural traditions, and a mountain culture. Moving to Greek culture, *bouzoukia* clubs, favored by both locals and tourists, emerge as stereotypical representations in *Asterix at the Olympic Games* (27). As these popular nightlife spots in Greece feature live music and dancing, their presence in the comics perpetuate the idea of Greek people as joyful and fun-loving. Finally, in *Asterix in Spain*, the performance of flamenco dance and singing unfolds amidst the warm glow of the fire and under the

starry night, set against the backdrop of Spanish Romani colorful caravans (35). The portrayal of this space strongly emphasizes the nomadic lifestyle and bohemian exoticism of the Romani people, together with its cultural reputation and image abroad, determined by the “ongoing imagery of festive traditions” (Lopez de Abiada 247).

5. The scenario

The final stage of Pageaux's imagological approach is called the *scenario*. The term refers to the hermeunetic function of the literary text and its overall organization. It highlights the importance of examining a text's lexical and structural analysis in relation to the historical context in which it was written. By doing so, one can identify the underlying ideological, cultural, literary, and aesthetic traditions that the text represents and the imagination that it exploits and addresses (69). In the context of *Asterix* comics, it applies to the representation of cultural myths around various nationalities. It is interesting in reviewing the clichés about Spain, Greece and Switzerland seen by the French, which are very basic: Flamenco singing and dancing, Greek *bouzoukia* and *syrtaki* music and dance, Swiss Alps and yodeling, and, above all, tourism. The comics were written in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and they reflect the French people's perceptions of the countries they visited while traveling abroad. Music has an intrinsic bond with the imaginary culture of the other. Yodel, syrtaki, and flamenco are all distinct forms of music with their own unique cultural and historical contexts, and each has its own set of symbols and meanings which contribute to the overall representation of a culture.

Greek music has a rich history that dates to ancient times. As stated by West in his introduction, Ancient Greek culture “was permeated with music”, and he emphasizes that “the world owes the word [music] to the Greeks” (1). In 1964, the film *Zorba the Greek* contributed to the promotion of Greek popular music and tourism, by celebrating Greek spontaneity, music, and dance (Paschalidis 169). Particularly, the syrtaki gained wide international recognition after being featured in this film and has since become a popular dance performed at Greek-themed events around the world. The slow pace at the beginning of the syrtaki dance lends something contemplative but the delirium that follows with the acceleration leads to an escape from the world and the cares of life. The dance is typically performed by individuals or groups in a linear or circular formation and includes a variety of intense movements. In *Asterix at the Olympic Games*, when the Gauls dance under the syrtaki rhythm and melody, it implies the cultural myth of the Greeks as

hospitable people who enjoy life (27). The dance's movements and formations can be interpreted as a symbol of togetherness, while the faster-paced movements can be seen as a reflection of the Greek spirit of celebration, warmth, and passion.

In the case of flamenco, as Heffner states, during the 20th century it became "one of the most visible symbols of Spanish national identity in the international community, largely due to the attraction of the tourist-oriented spectacles in Spain and abroad" (1). The authors of *Asterix* recognized the profound connection of flamenco in Spanish folklore, a music that links the joy of living to the tragic feeling of life (Rosset). Specifically, they drew inspiration from Andalusian folklore, flamenco, and its *cante jondo* (Rosset), which is "the most serious and deeply moving kind of *cante* [singing]" (Faiella 84). Furthermore, Washabaugh underlines that "[f]lamenco music marks and defines the Andalusian cultural identity, and at the same time the identity itself also marks and defines the music (14)." The portrayal of flamenco as a form of exotic entertainment reinforces the stereotype of Spain as a tourist destination and the Spanish Romani as a passionate and poignant ethnicity.

In a similar way, at the scenario level, Swiss yodeling in *Asterix in Switzerland*, often combined with other folkloric markers such as alphorns and Alpine scenery, organizes the narrative's representation of otherness by providing the *couleur locale* through which the cultural myth of the Swiss is constructed. Beyond its mountain-pastoral origin as a herder's long-distance call, yodeling has been stylized in European popular culture as the musical emblem of an idealized Alpine homeland, from Johanna Spyri's *Heidi* and its numerous adaptations to contemporary Swiss folklore shows for tourists. Furthermore, there is a long European tradition of exoticizing the mountain folk. From the Renaissance through the Enlightenment and Romantic periods, the Alps were repeatedly reimagined by travel writers, naturalists, and artists as a wild, picturesque place of shepherds, and unspoiled nature (Étienne et al.). Moreover, early modern and Enlightenment scholars and travelers constructed the Alps as an exotic internal alterity within Europe, using travel narratives, images and descriptions of Alpine inhabitants, their bodies, customs and environment, contributing to a positive exoticization of the Alps (Boscani Leoni). In the context of the *Asterix in Switzerland*, programmed, repeatable scene of Swissness, yodeling, its sound, its performers and the Alpine scenery in which it is staged, can be understood as part of the same exoticizing gaze,

contributing to a folkloric tableau of Switzerland for foreign observers, and marking the Swiss as a clearly demarcated national Other.

6. Conclusion

The strategic use of cultural elements related to music contributes to the representation of the Greeks, Swiss, and Spaniards in the *Asterix* comics. On a lexical level, vocalizations, exclamations, and lyrics, as well as the choice of specific words in the speech balloons and the captions, relating to musical practices of the foreigners, underscore how language contributes to the construction of the Other. Furthermore, the organization of elements within the comics, including visual morphological characterization of the singers, together with their particular musical instruments, and the setting in which they perform, depicts ethnical representations. The characters' reaction to the music of the Other is also discussed, as it marks major oppositions that structure the imagotypical text. Finally, music is portrayed as cultural myth in *Asterix* comics, crystallizing basic clichés about foreigners, particularly those rooted in tourism.

In the *Asterix* comics, music constructs a certain image of otherness that may or may not reflect reality but contributes to the overall sense of ethnic and national representations. Each ethnicity expresses the supposed national superiority of its own culture through music and ethnic stereotypes are gently ridiculed, with music serving as a vehicle for achieving this effect.

Humor plays a key role in this process. The musical stereotypes in *Asterix* use exaggeration, a common technique of humor. These musical images are not meant to be accurate descriptions of real cultures, but rather playful caricatures. Humor in this context reduces the seriousness of the issues around stereotyping, but it also shows how easily ethnic identities can be simplified into just a few familiar sounds.

At the same time, the comics' musical scenes carry a critical and pedagogical potential. Incorporating various musical styles, songs, singers, and instruments from different cultures involves acknowledging and recognizing the Other alongside the Self and can be used to open conversations about ethnic, national, and cultural differences. By translating these differences into instantly recognizable musical markers, the comics allow young readers to learn who sounds like what, and thus who is like whom, a process at the heart of imagological "othering" and "same-ing." In this sense, the representation of music in *Asterix* offers an opportunity to foster a more self-reflexive and critical imagination of cultural difference in the child readership. From an

imagological perspective, music works as another way of shaping images of foreign peoples, influencing how they are imagined, heard, and laughed at.

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LA MUSIQUE COMME REPRÉSENTATION DE L'ETHNICITÉ DANS LES BANDES DESSINÉES D'ASTÉRIX

Cet article examine le rôle de la musique dans la formation des ethnotypes dans la série de bandes dessinées *Astérix*, en appliquant l'imagologie, un domaine de la littérature comparée. La musique et la bande dessinée ont une signification culturelle et sociale, tandis que la bande dessinée, en tant que forme d'art visuel, est un puissant outil pour l'émergence de stéréotypes. En s'appuyant sur la méthode imagologique de Daniel-Henri Pageaux, l'image de l'Autre est analysée à trois niveaux : le mot, la relation hiérarchisée et le scénario. L'analyse se concentre sur la représentation des Grecs, des Espagnols et des Suisses, car ils intègrent divers aspects des cultures étrangères de manière humoristique et satirique. Comment le regard français des auteurs produit-il et maintient-il l'image de l'étranger à travers la représentation des genres musicaux, des mélodies, des musiciens et des instruments de musique, à la fois verbalement et visuellement ? L'article examine l'élargissement du champ de l'imagologie, des textes verbaux aux textes graphiques, ainsi que l'importance de la musique et de la bande dessinée en tant que manifestations culturelles qui mettent en question l'Autre.

Keywords: imagologie, bande dessinée, musique, ethnotypes, l' Autre

SONGS OF THE WAR: UKRAINIAN CHILDREN PROCESSING THE WAR TRAUMA THROUGH SINGING

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Abstract: On 24 February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. The Ukrainian population has suffered from Russian attacks on civilians, hospitals and schools. In the media, we have seen the Ukrainians as a singing nation. Songs are sung in bomb shelters and by soldiers, in the streets to celebrate victories and in memorials for the dead victims. This article discusses how certain songs can find a special place in the nation's collective memory as comfort, protest and a catalyst for emotions. A search for war songs that are sung by children and adolescents and posted on social media shows that there are a number of popular war songs, from the national anthem and traditional folk songs to more recent pop and rock songs. "Oi u luzi chervona kalyna" seems to be the most popular and important war song in Ukraine and has been posted on social media in several versions. The article analyses this Ukrainian war song as a multimodal expression, in which the artist's appearance, clothing, colours, gestures, body language expression and singing voice, timbre, pitch, melody, rhythm, instruments, arrangement, movement and dance – all of these expressions are carriers of meaning, and together they contribute to the totality (Machin 2010, 2). Furthermore, using examples from social media of Ukrainian children and young people singing "Oi u luzi chervona kalyna", the article discusses how the younger generation can build national identity and process the trauma of war in the nation's collective memory by singing this song and sharing their performances on social media. The analysis is rooted in Martin Clayton's (2009) theory of the functions of music, recent studies on neuroscience and music (Levitin 2008; Brean & Skeie 2019), and the concept of collective memory (Assmann 2006).

Keywords: song lyrics, the function of music, national trauma, Ukrainian war songs, children singing, "Oi u luzi chervona Kalyna", songs as multimodal expressions, vyshyvanka, national identity, collective memory

Introduction

On 24 February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. The Ukrainian population has suffered from Russian attacks on civilians, hospitals and schools. In the media, we have seen the Ukrainians as a singing nation. Songs are sung in bomb shelters and by soldiers, in the streets celebrating victories and in memorials for the dead victims. In this article, I will discuss how certain songs may find a special place in the nation's collective memory as consolation, as protest and as a catalyst for emotions. Through examples from social media of Ukrainian children protesting and processing the war trauma through singing, I will discuss how songs may build national identity and create unity, hope, comfort and resistance.

Seven-year-old Amelia Anisovych was filmed singing "Let It Go" in a bunker in Kyiv on 4 March 2022. The film went viral through social media around the world, and shows adults being moved to tears when listening to the young Ukrainian girl singing. "From the first word, there was complete silence [in the bomb shelter] [...] everyone put their business aside and listened to a song by this girl who was just beaming light [...] even men couldn't hold back the tears", wrote the photographer Marta Smekhova. A few days later, Amelia was fleeing from Ukraine with her grandmother and siblings to Poland. Her mother Lilia and father Roman stayed in Kyiv. On 20 March, Amelia reappeared on YouTube and other social media singing her a cappella version of the national anthem of Ukraine¹, "Shche ne vmerla Ukraina i slava, i volia" (Ukraine's glory and freedom has not yet perished), at the start of the "Together for Ukraine" charity concert that was held at the Atlas Arena in Poland. She performed to an ocean of thousands of people in a huge stadium, wearing a traditional *vyshyvanka* Ukrainian embroidered shirt.

As a scholar of children's literature, I am especially interested in the songs' impact on children and young adults. Thus, I have searched for war songs that were sung by the younger generation and that have received a special place in the collective memory.

¹ The Ukrainian national anthem was first performed in Lviv in 1864, the same year as the Norwegian national anthem was first performed at Eidsvoll.



Amelia in the bunker. Photo: Marta Smekhova. Amelia performing in the arena. Photo: Marian Zubrzycki/AP

“Music [...] is about cultural definitions as people come to create meaningful worlds in which to live” (Machin, 2010, 2). In my search for songs (also) sung by the youngest generation in Ukraine “to create meaningful worlds in which to live”, I found many popular war songs, including the national anthem, traditional folk songs, popular pop and rock. For the multimodal analysis in this article, I selected a song that has been performed in numerous versions and posted on social media by children, adolescents and adults alike – namely, “Oi u luzi chervona kalyna”. “Oi u luzi chervona kalyna” seems to be the most popular and important war song in Ukraine.² I will analyse the song as a multimodal expression in which the various artists’ appearance, clothes, colours, gestures, expressions and singing voice, as well as the timbre, pitch, melody and rhythm, and the instruments, the arrangement, movement and dance – all of these expressions are carriers of meaning, and together they contribute to the totality of the multimodal experience (Machin, 2010, 2). The analysis will be based on three theoretical frameworks: Martin Clayton’s (2009) theory about the functions of music, recent studies on neuroscience and music (Levitin 2008, Brean & Skeie 2019), and the concept of collective memory developed by Jan and Aleida Assman.

Furthermore, using examples from social media of Ukrainian children and young people singing “Oi u luzi chervona kalyna,” the article discusses how children and young people can build national identity and process the trauma of war in the nation’s collective memory by singing this song and sharing their performance on social media.

² I wish to thank Aliona Yarova and Olena Diachenko for their useful comments and references pertaining to the most important Ukrainian war songs.

The research questions are: How is the war in Ukraine processed as a national trauma in “Oi u luzi chervona kalyna”? How do Ukrainian children and young adults process the national war trauma through singing the song?

The functions of music and earlier studies on national traumas

We cannot all talk at the same time, but we can all sing together. Music can evoke and alter feelings and moods, and this gives it a great potential for the processing of grief (Ommundsen 2014). Music has the potential to vitalise, to heal and to create experiences of “being one with one another” (Knudsen, Skånland, and Trondalen, 2014, 5). War songs sung in unison can strengthen the sense of fellowship as a nation and boost the fighting spirit. This happened in Norway during World War II when Norwegians “sang for life” (Vollestad 2022). A Norwegian teacher who was imprisoned during the war (one of the survivors from the resistance movement) claimed that “Our songs became our weapon”. Per Vollestad’s research on how songs were used in the resistance during World War II notes that the songs created a sense of unity, hope, comfort and resistance across all strata of the population. The position of the song and the sing-along has perhaps never been stronger in Norway than in the years just before the end of the Second World War (Vollestad 2022, 236). Precisely the ability to quickly align our emotional state with that of others, in a shared experience, is among music’s greatest wonders. It is not accidental that almost all communal ritual actions – from football matches to weddings and funerals – start with music. Music’s ability to quickly and wordlessly unite us emotionally is completely unique (Brean and Skeie 2019, 84).

In Ukraine, throughout several wars, music, songs and singing have played an important role in the life of the soldiers, and have even been used during soldiers’ training:

It [singing] was a significant tool used during soldiers’ training and in battle by the military authorities to bolster the soldiers’ morale, improve their fighting efficiency, appease their fears, enhance emotional awakenings of their patriotism and dedication to an ideal. Wartime songs for the populace was a form of propaganda, which helped to promote specific attitudes, support, and a better understanding of the national involvement in war conflicts. (Wolnynetz 2018, p 13)

According to Martin Clayton (2009), music's functions fall into four categories: the regulation of the emotional, cognitive or physiological state of the individual; negotiations and communication between the self and the environment; symbolic representation; and the coordination of action (Clayton, 2009, 40-42). The singing of songs together after Russia's invasion in Ukraine can be understood in the light of all these four categories. The songs may bring consolation and a feeling of "being one" with a larger, collective totality, where everyone is moved by the same feelings. Songs may 'bring people together' and help to coordinate action. In an early phase soon after the war started, the songs may have helped put words to the unutterable, as a tool for "interaction in instances where normal speech communication is found to be inadequate. [...] musical sound and action can specify aspects both of affect and movement more precisely than words" (Clayton, 2009, 41). David Machin (2010) emphasises that music can help people to create meaning: "Music [...] is about cultural definitions as people come to create meaningful worlds in which to live" (Machin, 2010, 2). He refers to Daniel J. Levitin (2008) when he writes that music is "part of the way in which through culture we come to give meanings to what after all are just noises" (Machin, 2010, 2). Songs can be used to process national traumas and to unite a nation. The singing of songs together can strengthen the community and may help to process grief and mobilise inner resources. Certain songs receive a place in the collective memory of the nation as consolation, as protest and as a catalyst for emotions. This happened in Norway during World War II, when Norwegians "sang for life" (Vollestad 2022) and in the aftermath of the terror attacks of 22 July 2011³, where music played a significant role in processing the collective grief (Ommundsen 2013, 2014a, 2014b, 2015).

Earlier studies on national traumas show how the singing of songs together strengthens the community and may help process grief and mobilise inner resources. The word 'trauma' comes from the ancient Greek, meaning wound, damage or "a deeply distressing or disturbing experience" (Oxford English Dictionary). Trauma includes an element of shock, in that an ongoing activity is suddenly disturbed by an unexpected and shocking experience, so that it occurs as a radical change (Neal 1998, p. 3): "In telling and retelling the stories of our past, the events in question become stereotyped and selectively distorted as they become embedded in collective memories" (Neal, 1998, p. 201).

³ On 22 July 2011, two terror attacks killed seventy-seven people in Norway, most of them children and young people.

The memory will then acquire an ideological character, being reduced to a few elements and symbols. Jan Assmann describes this process:

Alongside the individual bonding memory, there is also a collective memory in an authentic and emphatic sense. The task of this memory, above all, is to transmit a collective identity. Society inscribes itself in this memory with all its norms and values and creates in the individual the authority that Freud called the superego and that has traditionally been called “conscience”. [...] Collective memory is particularly susceptible to politicized forms of remembering. [...] These are the irreconcilable, mutually opposed memories of the winners and losers, the victims and perpetrators. Memorials, remembrance days with corresponding ceremonies and rituals [...], flags, songs and slogans are the typical media of this form of commemoration. [...] It is a projection on the part of the collective that wishes to remember, and of the individual who remembers in order to belong. (2006, pp. 6-7)

Using the concepts developed by Jan and Aleida Assmann, we can observe how Ukrainian songs of war are shifting the trauma of the Russian invasion out of the communicative memory and into the collective memory. The numerous recorded performances of “Oi u luzi chervona kalyna” are good examples of this transmission of a collective identity.

“Oi u luzi chervona kalyna”

“Oi u luzi chervona kalyna” (Oh, in the meadow a red guelder rose) is a Ukrainian folk song. It was first performed in 1875 by Volodymyr Antonovych and Mykhailo Drahomanov as a Ukrainian patriotic march, originating from a 17th-century Cossack song. Soldiers of the Ukrainian armies, especially the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen (Sichovi Striltsi), created many new songs by composing original melodies and writing lyrics (Wolynetz 2018). In 1914, “Oi u luzi chervona kalyna” was modernised by the composer Stepan Charnetsky, and it was a beloved anthem for Ukrainian Sich Riflemen during the First World War (Sribniak 2022). It was later adopted by the Ukrainian People’s Army during the Ukrainian War of Independence 1917–1921. There are many versions of the song, and they are all associated with the Ukrainian people’s aspiration for independence. Singing of the song was banned during the period when Ukraine was part of the Soviet Republic 1919–1991. Nevertheless, it was

sung by Ukrainian patriots with defiance. Anyone caught singing it was jailed, beaten or even exiled (Wolynetz 2018). The song was revived after the Russian annexation of the Ukrainian Crimean Peninsula in 2014. In the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Crimea, the singing of "nationalist anthems" like Chervona Kalyna is punished by fines and imprisonment.

The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has made the song even more popular, both in Ukraine and among the Ukrainian diasporas. Only a few days after Russia invaded Ukraine, the song became a viral hit and gained international attention through an Instagram video of an a cappella rendition. Andriy Khlyvnyuk, the lead singer of the Ukrainian band Boombox, was actually touring abroad at the time of the invasion, but returned to Ukraine to fight for his country. Dressed in his soldier's uniform, he was singing the first verse of the song, with a changed melody. His song was later remixed in a number of versions by different artists around the world – one of many examples being Pink Floyd's single "Hey Hey Rise Up", featuring Andriy Khlyvnyuk of Boombox. All profits of Pink Floyd's remix were donated to The Ukrainian Humanitarian Relief Fund.

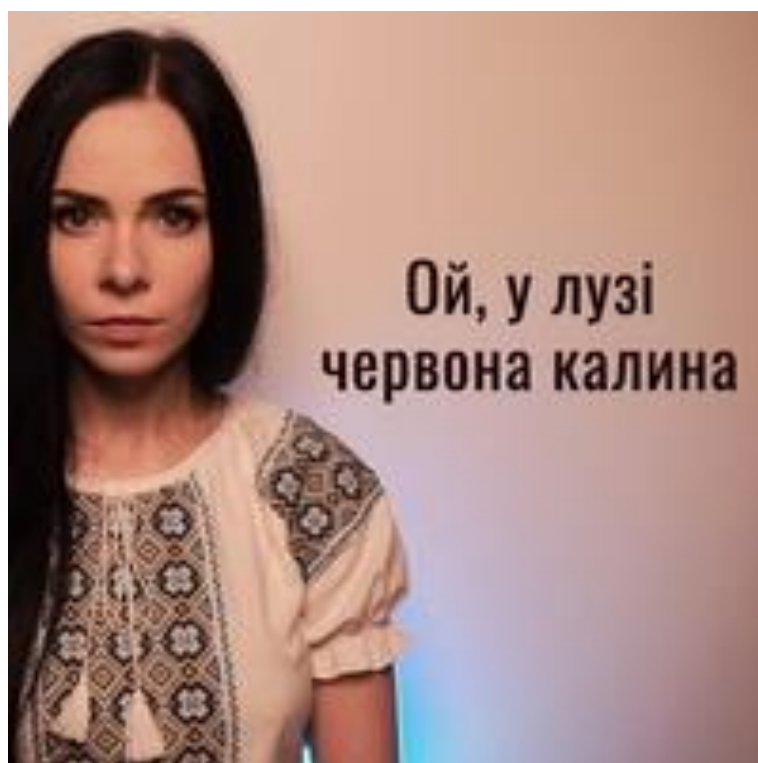
Multimodal analysis

When analysing this Ukrainian war song in terms of multimodal expressions, the various artists' appearance, clothes, colours, gestures, expressions, and singing voice, the timbre, pitch, melody, rhythm, the instruments, the arrangement, movement, and dance – all these expressions are bearers of meaning, and together they contribute to the totality (cf. Machin, 2010, 2). In the following, I will analyse the rendition performed by Eileen – a popular Ukrainian artist and translator, with a high number of followers on social media (her real name is Helena Androsova). Her version of the song has been seen more than 11.1 million times on YouTube and is also popular on other social media channels, like TikTok and Twitter. She has her own YouTube channel @SplendentEileen. Eileen's a cappella version is stripped down to a minimum of modal expressions, elements and symbols (cf. Assmann 2006).

Eileen is dressed in a traditional Ukrainian embroidered shirt, called a vyshyvanka, which in the video functions as a symbol of resilience and unity. The vyshyvanka is the central feature of Ukraine's traditional clothing that experienced a resurgence in popularity after the Russian annexation of Crimea and full-scale invasion of Ukraine (Cherednychenko 2022). Traditionally, it is made of linen, with colourful

embroidery representing features of Ukraine's landscape or cultural values. The patterns often include three main motifs: plants, animals and geometric shapes. Plant patterns represent the "tree of life", prosperity and harvest (Cherednychenco 2022). The design of the vyshyvanka varies depending on the region, and villages may have their own specific vyshyvanka patterns that vary from village to village. The traditional colours of Ukrainian embroidery are white, black, red, blue, yellow and green. Red and black are the most commonly used colours, representing luck, joy and love (red), and wisdom, prosperity and Ukraine's fertile soil (black). Eileen has chosen to wear a white vyshyvanka with blue and yellow embroidery. The white represents purity, innocence and holiness. Vyshyvankas with blue embroidery were traditionally worn by men, especially those going to war, "as the color blue is considered a kind of amulet that protects against diseases and brings peace of mind" (Cherednychenco 2022). By choosing a vyshyvanka with blue embroidery, Eileen may be seen as a soldier herself, fighting for the freedom of her country. Yellow represents the sun and wheatfields, symbolising abundance, joy and well-being. Together, blue and yellow constitute the colours of the Ukrainian flag. Ukrainians wear vyshyvankas for special occasions, such as Easter, Vyshyvanka Day (16 May) and Independence Day (24 August). Since the Russian invasion, it has served as a symbol of national identity, cultural belonging and resilience against the Russian aggression (Saint Javelin 2024).

The symbolic effect of Eileen's vyshyvanka is strengthened due to the video's absence of other details, symbols or colours. Her performance is almost without any bodily movement. By fixing her determined gaze directly into the viewer's eyes, she challenges us to action. With this stripped-down performance, the steady rhythm and intense lyrics are in focus. The only instrument is her voice. She sings both the melody and a harmony line that is a third below the melody, along with some pedal tones. This creates an especially strong emotional effect (cf. Brean and Skeie 2019).



Eileen's "Oi u luzi chervona kalyna". Photo: YouTube.

Eileen's YouTube video ends with these words: "I thank the Armed Forces of Ukraine for defending Ukraine from the Russian occupants! Ukraine will win!" This is just one of many examples from social media of how the song has been used to keep up the fighting spirit and to support the Ukrainian armed forces in their fight against Russian occupants.

"Oi u luzi chervona kalyna" is known for its powerful melody and lyrics, which have inspired many Ukrainians in times of struggle and hardship. The rhythm is a continuous, driving, march-like rhythm with four beats to the bar. This makes it easy to sing, as does the fact that the song has been passed down through generations.

The main symbolism in the lyrics is the chervona kalyna, or the "red viburnum" – a leafy shrub peppered with clusters of blood-red berries that may grow to be four or five metres tall. The kalyna is referenced throughout Ukrainian folklore and is depicted along the edges of the flag of the President of Ukraine. The kalyna has been a symbol of Ukrainian culture since ancient times. In the song, it serves as a metaphor for the

Ukrainian nation and its struggles (Jones 2023). It has been sung by generations of Ukrainians and is regarded as an important part of their heritage. Together with the other symbols in the song, the kalyna builds the ideological character of the collective memory (cf. Assmann 2006). According to Maria Sonevystky, Ukrainian folkloric songs often open with a naturalistic image like a tree, bird or kalyna, and from that kind of opening image, you unspool a kind of metaphor, or a story about politics or the complexity of life. “Oi u luzi chervona kalyna” is no different, using the ‘red viburnum’ from which the song takes its name as a grounding metaphor for liberation (Ofman 2022). The red colour of the kalyna berries may be read as the blood shed by Ukrainian soldiers in their fight for freedom, while the white flowers symbolise hope for a brighter future. The use of the kalyna tree as a symbol of Ukraine adds to the emotional and cultural resonance of the song, making it a powerful representation of Ukrainian identity. Eileen’s wearing of a traditional Ukrainian vyshyvanka in the video adds to the cultural authenticity of the song. Together, the multimodal interplay of all the different modalities not only tells the story of the Ukrainian people defeating their Russian invaders but also builds a sense of national identity, cultural resistance and hope for a prosperous future for Ukraine.

The lyrics

The song has many variations. What they all have in common is that the lyrics present several symbols in metaphorical ways. The first stanza presents the problem: “/ Oh, in the meadow a red kalyna has bent down low, / For some reason our glorious Ukraine is in sorrow. /” The chorus presents the solution to the problem: “/ And we’ll take that red kalyna and we will raise it up, / And, hey-hey, we shall cheer up our glorious Ukraine! /”

In the meadow, a red kalyna

Versions: [#1](#) [#2](#)

In the meadow, there a red kalyna, has bent down low ,
For some reason, our glorious Ukraine, has been worried so.
And we'll take that red kalyna and we will raise it up,
And we, our glorious Ukraine, shall, hey - hey, cheer up - and rejoice!
And we'll take that red kalyna and we will raise it up,
And we, our glorious Ukraine, shall, hey - hey, cheer up - and rejoice!

Do not bend low, Oh red kalyna, You have a white flower.
Do not worry, glorious Ukraine, You have a free people.
And we'll take that red kalyna and will raise it up,
And we, our glorious Ukraine, shall, hey - hey, cheer up - and rejoice!
And we'll take that red kalyna and will raise it up,
And we, our glorious Ukraine, shall, hey - hey, cheer up - and rejoice!

Marching forward, our fellow volunteers, into a bloody fray,
For to free, our brother - Ukrainians, from hostile chains.
And we, our brother - Ukrainians, we will then liberate,
And we, our glorious Ukraine, shall, hey - hey, cheer up - and rejoice!
And we, our brother - Ukrainians, we will then liberate,
And we, our glorious Ukraine, shall, hey - hey, cheer up - and rejoice!

In the field, of early spring wheat, there's a golden furrow,
Then began, the Ukrainian riflemen to, engage the enemy,
And we'll take, that precious, early wheat and will gather it,
And we, our glorious Ukraine, shall, hey - hey, cheer up - and rejoice!
And we'll take, that precious, early wheat and will gather it,
And we, our glorious Ukraine, shall, hey - hey, cheer up - and rejoice!

When the stormy winds blow forth from the wide steppes,
They will glorify, through out Ukraine, the Sich riflemen.
And we'll take the glory of the riflemen preserving it,
And we, our glorious Ukraine, shall, hey - hey, cheer up - and rejoice!
And we'll take the glory of the riflemen preserving it,
And we, our glorious Ukraine, shall, hey - hey, cheer up - and rejoice!

The lyrics in English, posted on Twitter/X by Sofia, 13 November 2022.

As mentioned, the red kalyna is a strong symbol of Ukraine. Bent down, it may be understood as a metaphor of the Ukrainian nation's struggle for independence and freedom. But by using the inclusive "we", it is implied that we, the people, will raise it up and cheer it up again. The lyrics call for action, for the listeners to be active agents. In this way, the song functions as a coordination of action, which is one of the functions of music (Clayton 2009). "Oi u luzi chervona kalyna" can be understood in the light of Martin Clayton's four categories: the regulation of the emotional, cognitive or physiological state of the individual; negotiations and communication between the self and the environment; symbolic representation; and the coordination of action (Clayton, 2009, 40-42). The chorus expresses hope by reassuring the listener that the problem can be fixed, and Ukraine will be liberated. The second stanza personifies Ukraine as a "you", assuring Ukraine that "You have a free people". By communicating between the self, the "we", the "you", Ukraine and the environment, the song functions as a symbolic representation of Ukraine's struggle for freedom and also coordinates action and builds fighting spirit. All the stanzas include words with strong symbolic and political meaning: the kalyna, free people, raise up, Moscow shackles, early spring wheat, the sich riflemen, Ukraine.

The third stanza expresses in a direct manner the history in which Ukrainians fought to free their country from Russian invasion: "/Marching forward, our fellow volunteers, into a bloody fray, / For to free our brother Ukrainians from the Moscow shackles./" The fourth stanza refers to the Sich riflemen, who were one of the first regular military units of the Ukrainian People's Army during the 1917–1919 Ukrainian War of Independence. It also refers to the harvest of the early spring wheat, which is a powerful symbol of prosperity and hope for the future. Wheat is one of Ukraine's most important export commodities, and Russia is dependent on the Ukrainian supply of grain. Together, the symbols in the song strengthen the fighting spirit and build national identity, where one agrees on a certain value, such as freedom from Russia. The song's special place in the collective memory – as part of a shared national heritage – makes it possible for it to be sung together, as all Ukrainians across the generations know the song by heart. They also know the movements and the spirit in which to sing it. For example, when singing the song, the "Hey hey" chorus is often accompanied with bodily movements in which the singers raise their hands, as if in victory.

Ukrainian children processing the national war trauma through singing

When the city of Kherson in southern Ukraine was liberated from Russian occupation in November 2022, the song “Oi u luzi chervona kalyna” was heard throughout the city as a song of freedom and resistance (Norwegian Broadcasting News (NRK) Nov 15.2022 19.34). Residents gathered in the streets in celebration, waving Ukrainian flags, honking horns, and singing the national anthem “Shche ne vmerla Ukraina i slava, i volia” and “Oi u luzi chervona kalyna”. “Chervona Kalyna has become the symbol of freedom and resilience” was the message that was shared by news outlets all around the world (Ofman 2022). Still, although the song has achieved viral success, it remains banned in Russian-occupied territories, and people are fined and arrested for singing it. This may be part of the reason why residents in newly liberated Kherson immediately turned to this song. The fact that the song is prohibited by the Russian authorities proves how powerful it is in maintaining Ukrainian fighting spirit. Sergey Aksynov, the Russian head of the Crimean Peninsula, warned that the authorities would punish people severely for “singing nationalist songs”: “People who do this are acting like traitors”, and a special FSB security service group has been established to deal with this matter (The Moscow Times 2022b). In September 2022, six people singing “Oi u luzi chervona kalyna” at a wedding party in Crimea were fined and imprisoned for 5–10 days (The Moscow Times 2022b). The winner of the 2022 Miss Crimea beauty pageant, Olga Valeyeva, was fined 40,000 rubles, and her friend was sentenced to 10 days in prison for “promoting extremist symbols” when they shared their singing of “Oi u luzi chervona kalyna” on Instagram (The Moscow Times 2022).

Thus, it is not without risk that Ukrainian children and young adults process the national war trauma through singing the song, yet they continue to sing, in the streets, bomb shelters and refuges. When Ukraine was invaded, the children turned to songs, prayers and social media (Skalietska 2022). You can hear them sing war songs on social media and sometimes see how their singing moves both the singers and the listeners. The singers and listeners are not necessarily physically present in the same place but they experience the music together through social media. Their common musical heritage – songs that they know by heart – creates an imagined community (cf. Anderson 2006). Across borders, through songs, Ukrainians are still part of the same socially constructed community. “Oi u luzi chervona kalyna” brings people together, coordinates action, provides consolation and instills a

feeling of being one with a larger collective, no matter which country they are residing in at that moment (cf. Clayton 2009). The song functions as a tool for interaction accross borders (Clayton 2009, 41) as well as reinforcing a cultural definition (Machin 2010, 2). Many experience feeling emotionally overwhelmed by the music, but young Ukrainians still continue to sing their war songs, even when living abroad as refugees.

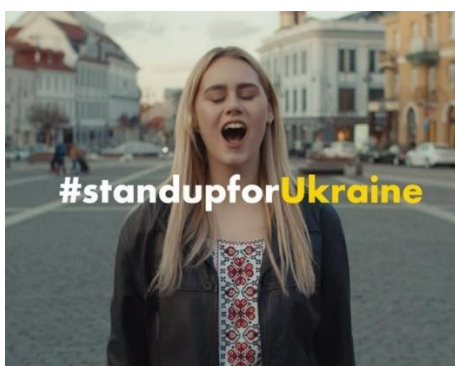
Ten-year-old Marharyta Pohosova fled to France together with her mother and sister, while her father stayed in Ukraine. Living in France, she remained an online student at the Odessa Musical School N16, and she performed her rendition of “Oi u luzi chervona kalyna” on YouTube from her new home.



Photo from YouTube: Ukrainian refugee Marharyta Pohosova singing in France for Odessa Musical school N16.⁴

⁴ I wish to thank Marharyta Pohosova and Alexandra Kosyuga, Marharyta's mother, for sharing the video and the information about the context with me.

Like other Ukrainian children, Marharyta already knew the song lyrics by heart and asked her piano teacher to teach her how to play the song on the piano because she really wanted to know how to play it. Her mother recorded a video of Marharyta playing and singing the song and posted it on YouTube for the Ukrainian musical school. She is dressed in a traditional Ukrainian embroidered vyshyvanka, and her hair is decorated with the national colours yellow and blue, a sunflower and red kalyna berries. In the background we can see the Ukrainian flag. Her face expresses a solemn mood. When I met Marharyta Pohosova in France, she spontaneously sang the song for me in a happy, smiling manner. She told me her friends in Ukraine only want to sing the traditional war songs at their birthday parties, instead of birthday songs.



Ukrainian refugee singing with Lithuanians. YouTube.



Ukrainian Sofia singing on the underground. X.

You can literally see how the young singer Elizaveta Izmalkova, who is living as a refugee in Lithuania, processes the national trauma through singing. In her performance of “Oi u luzi chervona kalyna” on YouTube, the young Ukrainian sings with 300 Lithuanians who answered her call to gather in Vilnius and sing this Ukrainian folk song to draw attention to the ongoing war and the struggles of the Ukrainian people. According to the information posted on YouTube, Elizaveta is a young singer who had to flee her country as a child when Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014. When Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, Eliza’s family home was

I met Kosyuga and her daughters in France on 5 May 2024. When I told them about my project on Ukrainian war songs, Marharyta spontaneously started to sing “Oi u luzi chervona kalyna” for me. Both daughters showed me videos of themselves playing and singing the song. Kosyuga provided me with additional information in e-mails 08.05.2024 and 12.5.2024.

destroyed for the second time by the Russians. Her rendition of “Oi u luzi chervona kalyna” is performed in support of Ukraine, under the slogan “#Stand up for Ukraine”. Her emotional singing coordinates action (cf. Clayton 2009) and creates unity, hope, comfort and resistance (cf. Vollestad 2022), and the feeling of fellowship across the borders (cf. Clayton 2009). The YouTube video has been seen more than 6.6 million times and has almost 9,000 comments from all over the world.

Like Amellia, Eileen and Marharyta, Elizaveta is dressed in the traditional embroidered vyshyvanka. She starts clapping the rhythm and sings the first verse a cappella, when suddenly she is surrounded by a mighty choir of Lithuanian singers, who are dressed in the Ukrainian colours yellow and blue and draped in Ukrainian flags. The video includes film clips from numerous mass demonstrations held in support of Ukraine against the Russian aggression. Sung by a refugee living in another country, the song builds cultural identity, resilience and a feeling of belonging. The song not only brings Ukrainians together but also people of different national backgrounds in support of Ukraine. The singing of “Oi u luzi chervona kalyna” coordinates action and fighting spirit in the various settings in which it is performed (cf. Clayton 2009).

Another young singer, who calls herself Sofia Ukraini, has shared Elizaveta’s rendition of “Oi u luzi chervona kalyna” on Facebook. Sofia has also shared videos of herself singing “Oi u luzi chervona kalyna” at the underground station, posted on X (formerly known as Twitter). She writes in her post: “Ukrainians have been fined, beaten, exiled and jailed just for singing ‘Oi u luzi chervona kalyna’. We still sing it aloud in our bathrooms, the hallways, parks, wherever we can to defy the oppressive regime that continues to try and destroy us. We will not be broken” (Sofia 2022). These examples from social media of young Ukrainian girls processing the war trauma through singing illustrate how the singing of “Oi u luzi chervona kalyna” builds national identity and creates a sense of unity, hope, comfort and resistance. The war in Ukraine is processed as a national trauma in “Oi u luzi chervona kalyna”, and children and young adults seem to process this trauma by singing it. Furthermore, as Sofia writes in her post, singing “Oi u luzi chervona kalyna” may also be the young singers’ way of using their agency to protest, to fight and to resist the oppressive regime.

The three examples indicate that “Oi u luzi chervona kalyna” has found a special place in young Ukrainians’ collective memory as a form of consolation and protest and as a catalyst for emotions. The song puts words to the unutterable, as serves a tool for “interaction in instances

where normal speech communication is found to be inadequate. [...] Musical sound and action can specify aspects both of affect and movement more precisely than words" (Clayton 2009, 41). It is the kind of song that "[...] document [Ukraine's] historic past, glorify heroic deeds, and grieve over ruin and devastation; [...] give comfort in moments of sadness; laugh at one's foibles; reproach the weak, the traitors; support and strengthen one's faith; uplift one's spirit to lofty ideals" (Wolynetz 2018, p. 13). The song is a common frame of reference for all Ukrainians – children and adults alike – and is an important part of Ukraine's cultural heritage and collective memory.

Conclusion

"Oi u luzi chervona kalyna" seems to be the most popular and important war song in Ukraine and has been performed in numerous versions. The war in Ukraine is treated as a national trauma in "Oi u luzi chervona kalyna", and children and young adults can process this trauma by singing and sharing their own versions of the song. This is a deeply patriotic song about the Ukrainian people defeating invaders, which builds on the kalyna plant as a significant cultural symbol of Ukraine's history, struggles and hopes for the future. The song's popularity demonstrates music's unique ability to quickly unite us emotionally and connect people from all around the world. We have seen how children and young adults may utilise this song to process their trauma through singing and sharing their own adaptations of the song, and how music can evoke and alter feelings and moods. This gives music its great potential for the processing of grief. But singing "Oi u luzi chervona kalyna" may also be the young singers' way of using their agency to protest, to fight and to resist. Through war songs, people may find their own cultural resilience and connect with fellow Ukrainians in different countries, as well as with people around the world who support Ukraine against the Russian aggression. War songs can be used to process the trauma in the nation's collective memory, to build national identity, and as a liberating project of nation-building, where people agree on values such as freedom, solidarity and democracy.

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SANGER FRA KRIGEN: UKRAINSKE BARN BEARBEIDER DET NASJONALE KRIGSTRAUMET GJENNOM SANG

24. februar 2022 invaderte Russland Ukraina. Den ukrainske befolkningen har lidd under russiske angrep på sivile, sykehus og skoler. Gjennom media har vi sett ukrainerne som et syngende folk. Sanger synges i bomberom og av soldater, i gatene for å feire seire og i minnesmerker for de døde ofrene. Denne artikkelen diskuterer hvordan visse sanger kan finne en spesiell plass i nasjonens kollektive minne som trøst, protest og som en katalysator for følelser. Analysen er forankret i Martin Claytons (2009) teori om musikkens funksjoner, nyere studier om nevrovitenskap og musikk (Levitin 2008, Brean & Skeie 2019) og begrepet kollektivt minne (Assmann 2006).

Ved å bruke begrepene utviklet av Jan og Aleida Assmann, kan vi observere hvordan ukrainske krigssanger flytter traumet fra den russiske invasjonen fra det kommunikative minnet til det kollektive minnet. Søket etter krigssanger som (også) synges av barn og ungdom og postes på sosiale medier, viser at det finnes en rekke populære krigssanger, fra nasjonalsangen og tradisjonelle folkesanger til nyere pop og rock. "Oi u luzi chervona kalyna" synes å være den mest populære og viktigste krigssangen i Ukraina, og er postet på sosiale medier i atskillige versjoner. I artikkelen analyseres denne ukrainske krigssangen som et multimodalt uttrykk, der artistens utseende, klær, farger, gester, kroppsspråk, uttrykk og sangstemme, klangfarge, tonehøyde, melodi, rytme, instrumenter, arrangement, bevegelse og dans – alle disse uttrykkene er bærere av mening, og sammen bidrar de til den multimodale helheten (Machin, 2010, 2).

Videre, gjennom eksempler fra sosiale medier av ukrainske barn og unge som synger "Oi u luzi chervona kalyna", drøfter artikkelen hvordan barn og unge gjennom sang kan bearbeide krigstraumet, bygge nasjonal identitet og skape enhet, håp, trøst og motstand. Krigen i Ukraina behandles som et nasjonalt traume i "Oi u luzi chervona kalyna", og barn og unge kan bearbeide traumet ved å synge sangen. Dette er en dypt patriotisk sang om det ukrainske folket som beseirer inntrengere, og som bygger på kalynaen som et viktig kulturelt symbol på Ukrainas historie, kamper og håp for fremtiden. Sangens popularitet viser musikkens unike evne til raskt å forene oss følelsesmessig og knytte mennesker over hele verden sammen. Barn og ungdom kan bearbeide traumet gjennom å synge og dele sine egne versjoner av sangen. Musikk kan vekke og endre følelser og stemninger, og har et stort potensial for å bearbeide sorg. Men de unge sangerne kan også bruke sang for å protestere, kjempe og vise motstand. Gjennom krigssanger kan folk finne sin egen kulturelle

motstandskraft og knytte bånd med ukrainere over hele verden, samt med alle som støtter Ukraina mot den russiske aggresjonen. Krigssanger kan brukes til å bearbeide traumet i nasjonens kollektive minne, til å bygge nasjonal identitet og som et frigjørende prosjekt for nasjonsbygging, hvor man blir enige om verdier som frihet, solidaritet og demokrati.

Keywords: Sanglyrikk, musikkens funksjon, nasjonalt traume, ukrainske krigssanger, barn synger, "Oi u luzi chervona kalyna", sanger som multimodale uttrykk, vyshyvanka, nasjonal identitet, kollektivt minne

MUSICAL FOR CHILDREN

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Abstract: Musicals refer to musical and theatrical works which are amusing in nature and special in their integration of dance, singing and acting into a unique whole. Musicals are similar in their characteristics to operas, operettas and burlesques. They are performed all over the world and have been performed in the most famous places such as Broadway and the West End. Most often, amateur school groups present musicals in churches, schools and other performance spaces. Starting from this fact, the goal of this paper is to explore the possibility of using musicals in working with children of early and preschool age. The methodological instrumentation (analysis and description) will show how children prepare musicals in their educational institutions (including making costumes, set design, writing the text, choosing music and practising dance movements). The research will particularly focus on the stage realisation of puppet musicals in kindergartens, because puppets are most suitable for performing simple short stories, for example fables with animals as the protagonists and fairy tales in which heroes defeat evil. Children's attention is held by the dramatic content stimulated by the fantastic events. Moreover, it will be shown that such texts are easier to adapt. It is important to point out that the beauty and amusing character of the performance relate primarily to the songs of a musical. The songs connect the acting and dancing parts of the musical and complete and deepen the plot. It can be concluded that the participation of children in the creative process, in this context in the performance of musicals in preschool institutions, is possible and according to new educational paradigms, it is necessary because of the multiple benefits for children's development.

Keywords: acting, dance, singing, integration, musical and theatrical form

1. Introduction

A musical is a musical-theatrical type of entertainment with spoken parts and dramatic, musical, and dance acts. It appeared at the turn of the 20th century in America, although it has its roots in antiquity. It first began to develop in Broadway theaters, from where it spread further to Europe, and is considered an American descendant of the European operetta.

Children's participation in musical performances helps children develop their identity, teaches them responsibility, fosters cultural awareness, and helps them socialize with their peers. Improvisation and interpretive dance in a musical can often help children overcome certain obstacles, like shyness. Acting helps such children to be creative in their environment, more relaxed, and open-minded, giving them a sense of security and strengthening their self-confidence.

The aim of this paper is to present the musical as a genre and to introduce the possibility of applying musicals in working with children of school and preschool age in educational institutions (from making costumes and scenography, writing the text, and choosing music for practicing dance moves and singing). The puppet as a medium is best suited for depicting simple shorter stories: fables, due to animals that are the protagonists, and fairy tales, in which the main protagonists are heroes. Children's attention is certainly maintained by the dramatic content, which is emphasized by miraculous events. Methodological instruments (analysis and description) of the paper will present the genre fertility of musicals for children and their (continuous) performance in Croatia.

2. Features and Development of Musical

A musical is a stage genre that combines acting, music, song, and dance (Karlin, 2005), and it is precisely the harmonious connection of these elements that makes it special. It is based on three key components: libretto, music, and songs.

The libretto contributes to the quality of the work itself, and therefore attention should be paid to the choice of theme and its dramaturgical elaboration (Mihaljinec, 1996). It includes dialogues and dramaturgical structure, and must be clearly designed in order to be able to build on the music. Due to the importance of the text, authors often hire special songwriters to write songs or adapt existing literary templates. A good libretto not only carries the plot, but also determines the tone, dynamics, and emotional flow of the entire work (Catalano, 2019). The music in the musical has the role of an emotional and communicative link with the audience. It is written in the form of

musical numbers and can be solo or choir. These musical numbers can also be performed as independent melodies outside of musicals, so some melodies have become compositions with evergreen motifs (Mihaljinec, 1996). The most common vocal techniques are legit, which derives from the classical singing tradition, and belt, a louder and more spoken style that is characteristic of more modern musicals (Bourne et al., 2010). Songs should be naturally incorporated into the plot (sometimes they are decorative in nature), since they arise from the situational and emotional needs of the characters. Poor integration can create the impression of artifice or can interrupt the plot, which is why great attention is paid to the dramaturgical logic of the transition from speech to song. The lyrics in the songs are actually the text that a character would say in a play, but in a musical he/she sings it. We could say that solo songs are actually the same as monologues in a dramatic text, and duets and group songs are the same as dialogues ("Mjuzikl"). In a musical, dance is located between choreography and text because its main task is to expand the expression of verbal language, so a successful collaboration between the choreographer, some of whom have also become directors (George-Graves, 2015), and the writer of the performance is important. There are seven main roles of dance in the musical: the unspoken aspects of the libretto, the exploration of the characters in the psychological sense, the narrative device, the metaphor, the transitional means, the basis for character development, and the dance part within the story (Everett and Laird, 2008). The complete integration of dance and action was first achieved in the musical *West Side Story* (1957), in which the director-choreographer Jerome Robbins combined acting, song, and dance into an inseparable whole. The role of the dancers was crucial, because their movement and dynamics expressed conflicts, belonging to a group, and emotional states. Furthermore, Hollywood musicals had to fascinate with dance, singing and acting, because these were the points that the musical could not and did not want to give up (Paulus, 2005:119).

2.1 The historical development of the musical

The musical developed in the United States under the strong influence of the European operetta. *The Black Crook* (1866) stands out as a precursor, the first major stage spectacle that combined music, dance, and drama. A turning point in the historical development of the musical is *The Show Boat* (1927), as it was the first musical in which musical and stage numbers were not just entertaining inserts, but an integrated part of the plot (Jagušić, 2014). With this, the musical begins to take on a contemporary form. Furthermore, The Golden Age of

Musicals (1940–1960) brings the genre's pinnacles to Broadway. During this period, many cult works were created, such as: *Oklahoma!* – the first modern book musical with a fully integrated story and music, *West Side Story* – a powerful choreographic and musical work about the clash of teenage gangs and numerous classic titles that shaped the standard of musicals (Catalano, 2019).

In Europe, the peak of popularity came in the 1970s and 1980s, when new stage technologies, more ambitious productions, and more serious topics were introduced. The authors experiment with a combination of operetta, rock, and drama theater (Lovričević et al., 2020).

3. Types of Musicals

There are several types of musicals: book musical, jukebox musical, backstage musical, concept musical, rock musical, mega-musical, and film musical. A story-based or *book musical* is a type of musical whose plot is based on a particular story that takes place backstage. It emerged in the 20th century and is one of the most frequently performed types of musicals on Broadway and the West End. This type of musical aims to tell a coherent story through the interaction of song and spoken dialog. It consists of the typical book parts: the introduction, the plot development, and the conclusion, thus enabling foregrounding of the characters (McMillin, 2006). Some of the most famous musicals based on stories are: *West Side Story* (1957), *Show Boat* (1927), and *My Fair Lady* (1956). *Jukebox musical*, a type of musical whose trend of performing is based on old pop melodies, emerged in the 1960s, and consists of three types. The first tells stories about dead rock stars, a band or a singer. The best-known examples are *Elvis* (1977) and *Jersey Boys* (2005). The second type of jukebox musical includes works that have a fictional story within an existing story. The third type shows a new plot and connects it with the songs of an artist or band. The most famous example of such a musical is *Mamma Mia!* (1999), which was performed for years mostly on Broadway and the West End, while in 2008 it was also shown as a film (Everett and Laird, 2008). *Backstage musical* emerged in Paris in the 1930s. It is a form of a musical consisting of several entertainment sections that include various sketches in addition to dance and music. It is special because it gives the audience a subtle insight into what is happening between the actors, the scene, and the stage, i.e., how their performance was created. The most famous backstage musicals are *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986) and *Cabaret* (1966). *Concept musical* is based on a central or key event and allows the audience to focus on several characters or connected plots at the

same time. The main goal of the concept musical is to illustrate different concepts of the main idea (Kenrick, 2017), and some of the examples include *Hair* (1968) and *Cats* (1981). *Rock musical* is considered to be any type of musical that has turned to popular music, whether it be rock music or not. The mentioned musical *Hair* (1968) is also a rock musical because it uses popular music that is very appealing to the audience, and its performance reformed the system of traditional American musicals. It should be mentioned that the rock musical raised awareness of presenting social problems on the stage, and therefore its performance was considered controversial. In addition to *Hair* (1968), there is a famous rock musical *Aida* (1998). *Mega-musical* developed in the 1980s as a type of musical almost entirely sung, with very few spoken parts. Great importance is attached to the song and emotions. The musical *Phantom of the Opera* (1986) is a backstage musical, and is also one of the best examples of a mega-musical that was performed on Broadway and the West End over a period of twenty years (Kenrick, 2017).

Immediately after the emergence of the film, a film musical was developed in which one of the main elements was music, aiming to revive images of silent films and accompany various situations (Paulus, 2005). Moreover, with the advent of sound and music in movies, people began to go to cinema much more often. The first cinema film had as many as six different songs and was quite similar to the musical in terms of performance, so it was also a milestone for the musical as a genre to move to the screen and thus become a unique form that we now call a film musical. In the beginning, the film musical was shot as a copy of a theater musical, and there were smaller problems with dance and plot that were not fully adapted because the film cannot literally convey the elements of the theatrical performance. Spectators were most interested in dancing, singing, and acting, so actors in film musicals had to represent all three elements to make the performance as good as possible. Some of the most popular film musicals are *Singing in the Rain* (1952), *Chicago* (2002), and *Mamma Mia!* (2008).

4. Development of Musical in the Republic of Croatia

In the 17th century, musical theatre began to develop in Croatia, very soon after the appearance of opera in Italy. Namely, the Dubrovnik authors took over and translated their librettos. Thus, the first Croatian opera *Ljubav i zloba* by Vatroslav Lisinski was written in 1843. This was a precursor to the development of musicals in Croatia. Another composer who was also responsible for the development of the opera was Ivan Zajc, who composed about 50 operas and operettas from 1870

to 1889 (Muzička enciklopedija, 1974). In the 20th century, operetta began to be performed on the scene, taking on a dominant role within musical theatre. Among the most famous composers of operettas was Ivo Tijardović with his works *Mala Floramye* (1926) and *Spli'ski akvarel* (1928). After the operetta, the 1960s saw the flourishing of musicals as an independent genre in Croatia. This can be linked to the development of the Zagreb City Theatre "Komedijski", whose director and actor Vlado Štefančić encouraged the creation of musicals composed by excellent musicians such as Đelo Jusić, Alfi Kabiljo, Karlo Metikoš, Stipica Kalogjera, Pero Gotovac, and Arsen Dedić as well as writers such as Pajo Kanižaj, Luko Paljetak, Nino Škrabe, Vladimir Krstulović, and others. Vlado Štefančić directed some of the most famous Croatian musicals *Jalta, Jalta* (1971), *Dundo Maroje* (1972), *Car Franjo Josip u Zagrebu* (1989), and *Kralj je gol* (1994) (Jagušić, 2014). Of special importance are Alfi Kabiljo and Milan Grgić, who are the authors of several musicals, but by far their most famous work is *Jalta, Jalta*, premiered in Zagreb in 1971. This is considered to be the first major Croatian musical. This work is one of the most performed and is still shown today. It can be justifiably said that Vlado Štefančić is one of the most important persons in the development of musicals in Croatia.

4.1. Musical *Jalta, Jalta*

As already mentioned, the musical *Jalta, Jalta* is the first major and high-quality Croatian musical whose libretto was written by Milan Grgić, it was directed by Vlado Štefančić, and composed by Alfi Kabiljo. It is considered one of the most performed works and has been shown for 46 years. The premiere of this musical took place in 1971 and the piece was performed throughout the former Yugoslavia and beyond. The plot is set in the year 1945 on the island of Crimea, where a conference was held to share and create a new map of the world. Three major statesmen met at the conference: Joseph Stalin, Winston Churchill, and Franklin Roosevelt accompanied by their valets: the Russian Grisha, the Englishman Stanley, and the American Larry. Since there was mistrust between the three, there were constant conflicts in the Villa Aramovski run by Nina Filipinova. There were arguments about a meadow, called a green meadow, located in Antarctica. Only the valets knew about this meadow while their bosses were in ignorance. Nina Filipinova advocated dividing the green meadow into three equal parts, but her idea had no success. In the meantime, the valets fell in love with Nina, there were physical conflicts, and the meadow remained undivided. Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill learned of the green meadow and agreed to keep it common property.

Yalta is always a current topic because this unwritten conflict between great powers reflecting on small nations and states will always exist. But no matter what, we should always rejoice, hope, and believe in world peace and good. It was this aspiration of Milan Grgić and me that reflected on the song 'Neka cijeli ovaj svijet', which has become an unofficial anthem and which is performed today at various events. I wish *Jalta* to continue to sail so splendidly in the restless seas of the world (Kabiljo, 2018).

4.2. Musical *Dundo Maroje*

The musical *Dundo Maroje* directed by the same person, Vlade Štefančić, was based on a literary piece of the same name by the Croatian author Marin Držić. It premiered in 1972. Although the year before saw the first performance of *Jalta, Jalta* that achieved incredible success, it seemed that the musical *Dundo Maroje* would not be so popular. However, the exact opposite happened, as it had over 500 performances just like *Jalta, Jalta*. The libretto for the musical *Dundo Maroje* was written by Marko Fotez, the lyrics by Stijepo Stražičić, and the music by Đelo Jusić, and this adaptation largely follows the original. The plot is based on a conflict between father and son. The father is stingy, and the son is a spoiled spender, while the main protagonist is their servant named Pomet. He solves problems, making fun of the nobility and the aristocracy, and helps three couples in the drama to eventually be together (Maro and Pera, Laura and Ugo, and Pomet and Petrunjela).

The musical *Dundo Maroje* is a welcome renewal of domestic production. It is a musical that is easy to watch, like a real comedy that, despite some stage lapses, is sweet to get immersed into (Paulus, 2008).

5. Musical for Children

5.1. *Mačak Džingiskan i Miki Trasi*

Mačak Džingiskan i Miki Trasi is a famous literary work written in 1968 by Vesna Parun, earning the author the *Grigor Vitez* award. In 1971, the work was dramatized by Zvezdana Ladika, the music was composed by Ladislav Tulač, and the musical was performed by the theater "PIK" ("Pionirsko kazalište"), while today it is performed by "Zagrebačko kazalište mladih". The musical was also performed at the opening of the 52nd International Children's Festival in Šibenik. It tells the story of two cats and their adventures on the island of Zlarin. The old farmer tried to get rid of the cats by throwing them into the sea, but they were rescued by fishermen and taken to Grandpa Roko and Grandma Pim Bako. *Mačak Džingiskan* and *Miki Trasi* were not the only

animals in Grandpa Roko's house as there were also a donkey Žan, a goat Kasi, and a lizard Rikiplan. Through depicting the animal world, Vesna Parun actually described the life of the inhabitants of Zlarin, where she lived. The musical begins with the song *Brodolomci* [The Castaways], showing that Parun placed her characters in her hometown:

*U Zlarinu na rtu Bučini
Rodila se jednog ljeta
Na pragu okrenutom pučini
Dva mačića, dva probisvijeta.*
(Parun, 1968: 7)

[In Zlarin at Cape Bučina
One summer
On the threshold facing the sea
Two kittens, two miscreants were born.]
(Parun, 1968: 7)

Another song *U novom domu* [In the new home] shows how Mačak Džingiskan and Miki Trasi look like:

*Mijau! - prodra se mače crno
-Moj nježni braco, dobar dan! (...)
A šareno mače se protegne , zijevne:
-Hej, Džingis-kane, tko si da si!
Ne hajem za ratnike drevne,
Zovem se naprosto Miki Trasi!*
(Parun, 1968: 9).

[Meow! - screams the black kitten
-My tender brother, good day! (...)
And the colorful kitten stretches, yawning:
-Hey, Genghis Khan, whoever you are!
I do not care about ancient warriors,
My name is simply Mickey Tracy!]
(Parun, 1968: 9).

Songs have a cheerful melody, the lyrics contain humorous names and rhyme, which makes the performance entertaining for children. Each character is presented with their own song accompanied by an orchestra and a children's choir. In the musical, along with professional actors, children act and sing songs. Moreover, before presenting their characters, the actors use a hand puppet, matching their costumes. The adventures of Mačak Džingiskan are accompanied by a motif of love. In

a village not far from Zlarin, there were three cats: Smiljka, Vala, and Saka. Mačak Džingiskan fell in love with Smiljka, and she fell in love with him. But even though their love was strong, Mačak Džingiskan still decided to go on a journey with a steamer to a distant world.

*U Smiljku se zaljubio
Džingiskan, crni mačak.
Ljubim te, bit ćeš moja! (...)
U bašti čekala Smiljka,
Džingiskan slavno utječe
(prevrnu lonac bosiljka)
Očarao ga, zanio
Onaj parobrod „Čačak“!
(Parun, 1968: 26)*

[He fell in love with Smiljka,
our Genghis Khan, the black cat.
I love you, you will be mine! (...)
Smiljka was waiting in the garden,
Genghis Khan escaped
(overturned the basil pot)
Captivated, enchanted by
That steamer "Čačak"!]
(Parun, 1968: 26)

Before the journey, he wanted his cat friend Miki Trasi to go with him, however, unable to make up his mind, Miki Trasi hid and Džingiskan had to go alone. Miki Trasi was sad because he did not have his friend with him, although Džingiskan often sent him letters saying where he was and what he was doing, as shown in one of the songs *Treće Džngiskanovo pismo* [Genghis Khan's Third Letter]:

*Zdravo Miki! Osjećam se odlično.
U pristaništu tovarim sanduke
Dok dizalica buči jednolično.
(Parun, 1968: 47)*

[Hey Mickey! I feel awesome.
Loading crates at the pier
While the crane is making a uniform noise.
(Parun, 1968: 47)]

Due to great sadness and longing for his home and beloved Smiljka, who faithfully waited for him for ten years, Džingiskan decided to return

to Zlarin to the great joy of his grandfather Roko, grandmother Pim Bako, cat Smiljka, and his friend Miki Trasi. Thrilled by his friend's adventures, Miki Trasi also boarded a steamer and sailed away to a distant world.

*Kada se skupio cio rod!
Pred Džingiskanov crni brod,
Na kormilo pope se – tko si, da si!
I reče: - Zovem se Miki Trasi!
Pa okrene brod na sjever, na jug.
I vikne: - Zbogom! Život je dug.
(Parun, 1968: 75)*

[When the whole group gathered!
In front of Genghis Khan there's a black ship,
He gets on the helm – whomever you are!
And says: - My name is Mickey Tracy!
So he turns the boat north, south.
And he yells: - Goodbye! Life is long.]
(Parun, 1968: 75)

5.2 *Mi o vuku*¹

The recent musical for children directed by Robert Bošković and produced by *B GLAD PRODUCTION*, approaches well-known fairy tales in a completely new, educational and creative way. It puts them in a modern framework in which both children and adults are exposed to all kinds of information from advertisements and social networks. The trends of modern technologies point to one important thing that is often ignored by both adults and children, and that is – critical thinking. In this way, children learn about the value of friendship and trust and the importance of personal contact and communication in relation to communication on social networks (“*Mi o vuku – mjuzikl za djecu*”).

This musical with two playful actors (Manuela Svorcan & Bojan Jambrošić) brings a handful of memorable moments, a comedy that sheds new light on well-known stories and, therefore, encourages creativity in children, but also tolerance and a sense of justice (“*MI O VUKU, mjuzikl za djecu*”).

6. Puppet musical

Puppetry is a synthesis of art that combines artistic, musical, dramatic, dance, and literary expression, and

¹ The English equivalent of the phrase “speak of the devil”.

therefore offers countless possibilities of creative expression for both children and adults (Županić Benić, 2009: 8).

Puppetry as a performing art uses the puppet as the main means of expression. The puppet mediates the process of teaching and learning, improves interpersonal relationships, and brings a good mood. A stage puppet is a valuable and powerful tool and aids in working with children, as it is based on a strong emotional connection. The puppet triggers the imagination and the child's mental and emotional world, and enables the child to express their rich and complex experience of the world in words (Pokrivka, 1985). Representing certain emotional states of the puppet's character contributes to understanding the character's emotions and enhances the development of their own higher emotions (Ivon, 2010). A puppet can also be a constructive mediator in resolving conflict situations, which allows children to find a solution suitable for everyone, thus also promoting their prosocial behavior. A puppet can be an intermediary in communication among children or between a child and an adult. Majaron (2004) believes that discovering how to communicate is one of the most important steps in a child's progress. Communication skills and the quality of social interactions can be improved by using toys as characters in improvised songs-stories (Birnbaum, 2013).

The puppet musical has a very positive impact on children, because the puppet itself affects the spontaneous development of the child and the creation of a positive self-image (Pokrivka, 1985). Moreover, the puppet enhances social skills, develops emotions, creativity, and perception of different life situations that children experience in an amusing way, thanks precisely to the puppet. In addition to puppets, which represent characters, a very important segment that also has an impact on children is music that is functionally included in the plot. When puppets sing and dance, they actually express themselves through music. Songs in a puppet musical can be sung by puppeteers behind the props or can be reproduced using an audio device. Songs that are mainly used in puppet musicals are simple in text, they are easy to remember and do not last too long, so they attract children's attention, often resulting in singalongs with performers. Furthermore, music in puppet musicals lifts the mood of children, and dancing with puppets accompanied by music stimulates children to movement and physical activity (Starc et al., 2004). When the scene is not static, children become more relaxed.

The puppet allows children to experience different life functions before living them. With a puppet, children can

enter new situations with a sense of preparedness because they tried them with the help of the puppet before they have actually happened (Ivon, 2005: 8).

Examples of puppet musicals

6.1 Puppet Musical – *Složna obitelj* [Harmonious Family]

The leading theatre in Croatia in terms of the number of performances of puppet musicals is “Produkcija Z”. This is supported by the fact that Croatia Records has released soundtracks of Produkcija Z’s musicals *Prometna priča*, *Lijepo putovanje Lijepom našom*, *Dobro se dobrim vraća*, *Pravi prijatelj* and others. Composer Ivo Lesić is the most frequent author of music, story and production in musicals. He was also in the play *Složna obitelj*, while Luči Vidanović was in charge of the set design and puppets. The musical was filmed in Split and was shown in kindergartens and schools. In this musical, children are presented with family as the origin of love, care, kindness, and togetherness (“SLOŽNA OBITELJ”). Also, the play talks about basic eating and hygiene habits (“Dječji vrtić Ploče”). However, with the appearance of the wizard Zlik, the harmonious family falls into temptations, but in the end, harmony overcomes all adversity. The story of mom, dad, Kresa and Tihana is presented through 15 songs characterized by tenderness and charm, including the final one, *Obitelj meni je sve*² which is the main point of the story (“SLOŽNA OBITELJ”).

6.2. Puppet musical *Koje je godišnje doba najljepše* [Which Season Is the Most Beautiful]

This is a very educational musical. Duško Mucalo is the author of the story, the lyrics of the songs, and the music, while the *Suncokret* studio is responsible for the production. The protagonists are representatives of the seasons: Snowman, Bunny, Dolphin and Autumn Tree, who argue with each other trying to prove that their season is the most beautiful and emphasizing the best characteristics of that season. The musical consists of a series of songs related to a certain season, and the music also plays an illustrative role. Songs are written in a simple style, verses rhyme, and can be easily remembered by children. Each character is accompanied by a different voice, so children follow the change of seasons. Winter, spring, and summer are presented with hand puppets, while the character of the Autumn Tree is played by an actor with autumn decorations (yellow leaves). This musical combines the use of hand puppets with the performance of actors without puppets. The

² Family is everything to me.

puppets dance to the sound. The change of seasons is among the most common topics implemented in kindergarten through various activities. The final song of the musical covers all seasons with their characteristics and answers the question from the title, saying that each season is beautiful and interesting in its own way.



Figure 1. Performing the musical *Which season is the most beautiful?* in Medo Brundo Kindergarten

6.2. Puppet musical *Dobro se dobrim vraća* [One Good Turn Deserves Another]

This is an interactive musical for children that talks about good deeds that children should adopt from an early age. It is actually a puppet musical by "Produkcija Z", whose director, composer, and executive music producer is Ivo Lesić. The story for this musical was written by Duško Mucalo. The musical consists of eighteen songs featuring an interesting and cheerful story about good deeds. Songs are lively, use pure rhyme, and last approximately two minutes, which is great for children's attention. Each character in this story has their own song that presents them and their characteristics and needs. The plot takes place at the Adriatic Sea, which is home to a multitude of marine animal species that represent the characters of this story: Špar – Ar, Girica – Irica, Hobotnica – Obotnica, Ribice, Bakalar – Lar and Morski pas – As. The story begins when Hobotnica – Obotnica finds herself in trouble; she gets entangled in a net, and the fish, which Hobotnica – Obotnica normally eats, decide to help her. As a token of her gratitude, she promises to return the favor any time they need her help. So one day, Bakalar – Lar from the other sea comes, and Ribice are dissatisfied with his arrival, but they decide to be good and accept him anyway. His

gratitude is shown when Ribice are afraid and hiding from Morski pas – As, who is very hungry. He helps them by inviting Hobotnica – Obotnica, who promised to help them at any time, to drive out Morski pas – As. He eventually escapes, and that is how the story ends. Through this musical, children learn in an amusing way, i.e., through singing, acting, and dancing, that one good turn deserves another.

*...I u dobru i u zlu, ribe bile su k'o braća,
Zato pamti mudrost tu,
Da se dobro dobrim vraća...*

[...For better or for worse, the fish were like brothers,
So remember this wisdom,
one good turn deserves another.]

(Duško Mucalo, lyrics of the final song of the musical *One Good Turn Deserves Another*)



Figure 2. Performing the puppet musical *One Good Turn Deserves Another* – Vela Luka Elementary School

7. School Musical

Children participate in producing the school musical through various activities and regular classes. Children come up with lyrics and music, make costumes and everything else they need to create a musical. Their activities and active participation are combined in several school subjects, from the Croatian language to Informatics. The libretto can be designed in Croatian Language classes, songs in Music classes, and choreography in Physical Education classes. Making costumes and set design can be done during Art classes (Vidulin-Orbanić, 2013). Throughout the entire process of creating the school musical, teachers always help, participate, and guide children. For example, teachers of

various art subjects can assist their students in finding a space to practice and perform a musical, as well as finding an expert in technique and stage lighting. This whole event requires an approval by the school principal who then works with the media for this project. When children watch performances, they share their experiences with actors, and actors do the same. Children imagine and pretend to be someone else, thus encouraging the development of their creativity (Schonmann, 2006). We can say that the active participation of children in producing a musical is the best way to understand this form of performance. In addition, children's participation in a musical helps them learn to be responsible, boosts self-confidence, and develops emotional and cognitive abilities.

Croatian schools often perform various musicals, from original works to adaptations, often with an educational, humanitarian or environmental message. Such projects are complex endeavors that integrate various artistic fields and engage a large number of students and teachers in collaborative work.

A Croatian school musical *Na putu s Antuntunkom* [On the Road with Antuntunka] is an exceptional example of how art at school can have a wider, humanitarian effect. The performance of The Grigor Vitez Elementary School was not only a play, but also a humanitarian endeavour which collected donations for the Red Noses association, combining the creativity of students with a noble cause. The musical *U modroj uvali* [In the Blue Bay] by the small choir *Lovranske črešnjice* conveyed a strong ecological message to the audience. Through the story of the protection of the sea and the coast, the children learned about the importance of nature conservation in an interesting and interactive way. *Glazba srca mog* [Music of My Heart] is the work of Ivan Josip Skender, which was successfully staged by the students of the Varaždin Music School at the *Theater Komedija*. *Jedan školski dan* [One School Day]: A completely original musical by the Ljubo Babić Elementary School, with original songs on topics close to every student because they show the experiences of school life. *Na putu do zvijezda* [On the Way to the Stars] is a musical by the Medvedgrad Elementary School, inspired by the popular film *Pitch Perfect*, and shows how contemporary cultural influences can be creatively transferred to the school stage. *Škola snova* [The School of Dreams] was created in cooperation with various organisations and promotes healthy lifestyle habits, sports and play, with an artistic component. The beginning of a new tradition in The Vukomerec Elementary School, showing that the most important thing for staging the musical *Vukomerečka čarolija*

[Vukomerec Magic] is the enthusiasm of teachers and students who are ready to put in the effort.

Furthermore, The Juraj Baraković Elementary School from Ražanci performed a school musical called *Ražanačka ljubav* [Rožanac Love], as part of the celebration of the school founding day. This is the culmination of a project dedicated to nurturing the cultural heritage of the native region ("Premijera školskog mjuzikla...")

In the context of all of the above-mentioned, a picture is attached that shows the plan of a series of activities related to the project *Školski mjuzikl* [School Musical] in the curriculum of the Ljubo Babić Elementary School, Jastrebarsko ("Projekti").

Oblik aktivnosti	Projekt
Kurikulumsko područje	Umjetničko područje
Naziv aktivnosti	Školski mjuzikl
Obrazloženje cilja aktivnost	Iskustvenim doživljajem stvaranja kompleksne glazbeno-scenske vrste usaditi učenicima ljubav prema glazbenom i glazbeno-scenskom stvaralaštvu. Razviti kod učenika svijest o vrijednim glazbenim i glazbeno-scenskim djelima. Potaknuti učenike na buduće aktivno bavljenje glazbom.
Namjena aktivnosti	OŠ GK A.7.1. Učenik poznaje određeni broj skladbi. OŠ GK A.7.3. Učenik na temelju slušanja prepoznaje različite glazbene vrste. OŠ GK B.7.1. Učenik sudjeluje u zajedničkoj izvedbi glazbe. OŠ GK B.7.2. Učenik pjevanjem izvodi autorske i tradicijske pjesme iz Hrvatske i svijeta. OŠ GK B.7.3. Učenik sviranjem i/ili pokretom izvodi umjetničku, tradicijsku, popularnu ili vlastitu glazbu. Sudjeluje u aktivnostima glazbenog stvaralaštva. OŠ GK A.8.3. Učenik slušno i vizualno, prepoznaje, razlikuje, opisuje i uspoređuje, glazbeno-scenske i vokalno-instrumentalne vrste. OŠ TZK A.6.3. Povezuje i odabire ritmičke i plesne pokrete. OŠ TZK C.6.2. Izvodi raznovrsne vježbe za razvoj motoričkih postignuća. OŠ TZK D.6.1. Izvodi vježbe za pravilno tjelesno držanje s razumijevanjem njihova utjecaja. OŠ TZK A.8.2. Povezuje dijelove strukture gibanja u cjelinu i primjenjuje osnovno nazivlje. OŠ HJ A.7.1. Učenik govori prema planu i razgovara primjenjujući vještine razgovora u skupini. OŠ HJ A.7.2. Učenik sluša tekst, izvodi zaključke i tumači značenje teksta. OŠ HJ A.7.3. Učenik čita tekst, izvodi zaključke i tumači značenje teksta. OŠ HJ B.7.4. Učenik se stvaralački izražava prema vlastitom interesu potaknut različitim iskustvima i doživljajima književnoga teksta. goo C.3.1. Aktivno sudjeluje u projektima lokalne zajednice. goo C.3.3. Promiče kvalitetu života u lokalnoj zajednici. osr A.3.1. Razvija sliku o sebi. osr A.3.2. Upravlja emocijama i ponašanjem. osr A.3.3. Razvija osobne potencijale. osr B.3.1. Obrazlaže i uvažava potrebe i osjećaje drugih. osr B.3.2. Razvija komunikacijske kompetencije i uvažavajuće odnose s drugima. osr B.3.3. Razvija strategije rješavanja sukoba. osr B.3.4. Suradnički uči i radi u timu. osr C.3.3. Aktivno sudjeluje i pridonosi školi i lokalnoj zajednici. pod A.3.1. Primjenjuje inovativna i kreativna rješenja. B.3.1.B Razlikuje i vrednuje različite načine komunikacije i ponašanja. uku A.3.4. Učenik kritički promišlja i vrednuje ideje uz podršku učitelja. uku C.3.1. Učenik može objasniti vrijednost učenja za svoj život. uku C.3.2. Učenik iskazuje pozitivna i visoka očekivanja i vjeruje u svoj uspjeh u učenju. uku D.3.2. Učenik ostvaruje dobru komunikaciju s drugima, uspješno surađuje u različitim situacijama i spreman je zatražiti i ponuditi pomoć.
Nositelji aktivnost	Učenicima predmetne nastave. Ivana Strmečki-Vučina, učiteljica likovne kulture Ines Bohaček, učiteljica tjelesne i zdravstvene kulture Ivan Sirovica, učitelj fizike i tehničke kulture Maja Kraljev, učiteljica glazbene kulture

Figure 3. The plan of a series of activities related to the *Školski mjuzikl* project of Ljubo Babić Elementary School's curriculum

8. Conclusion

Children's musicals as an interdisciplinary art form play an important role in the context of children's upbringing. The analysis of various examples of musicals in this paper, from classic literary adaptations to contemporary pedagogically oriented projects, indicates that musicals stimulate the development of numerous cognitive, emotional, and social skills in children.

Classical works, such as *Mačak Džingiskan i Miki Trasi* by Vesna Parun, effectively use animalistic motifs and the local context of Zlarin to introduce the universal themes of home (which is also present in the contemporary musical *Složna obitelj*), love, friendship and adventure. Furthermore, contemporary musicals, such as *Mi o vuku*, question current social circumstances, especially the influence of social media, encourage critical thinking in children, and emphasize the value of direct communication and strengthening trust.

Given that the puppet has a strong influence on a child's overall development, this paper will also focus on the puppet musical. Performances by Split's "Produkcija Z", such as *Složna obitelj*, *Koje je godišnje doba najljepše* and *Dobro se dobrim vraća*, show how music, interaction and a clear visual structure can be successfully used to convey concrete moral and everyday messages, from family relationships and hygiene habits to ecology and the importance of doing good deeds.

The process of creating a school musical further expands these effects because it goes beyond the performance itself and grows into an integrated pedagogical project. The involvement of students in devising the libretto, music, costumes, and scenography, along with the connection of different school subjects, encourages collaborative learning, develops a sense of responsibility, and strengthens self-confidence. Examples from Croatian school practice, often marked by humanitarian or environmental messages, confirm that a musical can have a wider social significance.

Ultimately, a children's musical, whether a professional theater production or a school project, develops a love for musical theatre creativity, entertains, and encourages emotional and social development through song, story, and playing. To be more specific, it is an irreplaceable tool for the holistic development of the child, which confirms the hypothesis of this paper.

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MJUZIKL ZA DJECU

Rad razmatra mjuzikl kao složen glazbeno-scenski oblik i analizira njegovu funkciju te potencijal u radu s djecom predškolske i školske dobi. Polazeći od kratkog povijesnog i teorijskog pregleda razvoja mjuzikla, od njegovih američkih početaka do suvremenih europskih i hrvatskih djela, posebna pažnja posvećuje se razvoju mjuzikla za djecu u hrvatskoj kulturi i njegovoj stalnoj prisutnosti u kazališnoj praksi.

Analizom odabranih primjera, kao što su, sadržajno različitih lutkarskih ističu se njihovi narativni, simbolički i pedagoški potencijali. lutka kao medij omogućava djeci sigurnu recepciju i tumačenje emocionalno i društveno značajnih sadržaja pa forma lutkarskog mjuzikla djeci rane školske i predškolske dobi iznimno zanimljiva i prihvatljiva. Među najpoznatijim su mjuziklima za djecu prikazivanim u predškolskim ustanovama Republike Hrvatske izvedbe produkcija “Suncokret” i “Produkcije Z”.

Aktivno sudjelovanje djece u stvaranju školskog mjuzikla u sklopu projekta pridonosi razvoju komunikacijskih vještina, kreativnosti i identitetske izgradnje što je izrazito važno u suvremenom odgojno-obrazovnom procesu.

Cilj je rada pokazati plodnost žanra mjuzikla i ispitati mogućnosti njegove primjene u institucionalnom odgojno-obrazovnom kontekstu. Metodološki okvir rada temelji se na kvalitativnoj analizi relevantne znanstvene i stručne literature, deskriptivnoj metodi te analizi reprezentativnih primjera iz kazališne i pedagoške prakse. Polazna hipoteza rada jest da mjuzikl za djecu, kao umjetnička forma koja integrira različite umjetnosti, ima višestruko pozitivan učinak na cjelokupan razvoj djeteta.

Ključne riječi: gluma, ples, pjevanje, integracija, glazbeno-kazališni oblik

ENHANCING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE: THE SETTING OF FAIRY TALES TO OPERA

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Abstrat: Since the eighteenth century, composers have been inspired by fairy tales, leading them to write operas based on these stories. From German Märchenoper to Russian folklore, from Bo-Peep to Rusalka, from witches to water sprites, these timeless stories have inspired composers write in the operatic genre, one that is normally reserved for themes relating to existential concerns, dynastic power and tragic prerogatives. Indeed, a few of the more well-known examples have found their way into the canon. Humperdinck's *Hansel und Gretel* (1892), Dvořák's *Rusalka* (1900) and Joseph Vella's *Bo-Peep: A Little, Little Opera for Children* (1968) are all configurations of well-known fairy tales/nursery rhymes written by the Brothers Grimm, Erben/Němcová and 'Mother Goose' respectively. This paper will look at the world of these tales and the intrinsic musical quality inherent in them, and the differences between the German, Slavic and English style as indicated in the three chosen stories. It will then investigate the ways the three examples have been set to music as fully-fledged operas. The highly intriguing case with Joseph Vella's opera is that it was devised as a pilot test in a government school in one of the most deprived areas in Malta. The objective of this test was to see whether children coming from difficult backgrounds could learn through opera performance. More generally, the probing question of this paper deals with the nature of translating these tales into music, and how opera, generally regarded as an art form enjoyed by the older generations, enhances the genre of children's literature as well as being instrumental in the emotional and cognitive development of children, even of disadvantaged children.

Keywords: opera, fairy tales, education, literature, hope, Humperdinck, Dvořák, Joseph Vella

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to foreground the unqualified importance that music has on a child's development, both cognitive and emotional. Critical debate has made it an unequivocal fact that children need books

with compelling stories that fire their imagination in order for them to develop into stable, mature adults capable of having a mind of their own. Case studies have also shown that a lifelong love of literature becomes one of a handful of points of reference when perhaps all else fails. Suffice it to say that only in February 2024, the *International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement* (IAEEA) carried out a test across North America, with results showing that primary schools that produced the highest academic achievement are spending 20% to 30% of the school-day on the arts, with special emphasis on music.

Despite statistics and countless books affirming the validity of stories for children, the debate has not really extended to an appreciation of opera for and performed by children. Most recently, Bernadette Lamb's seminal book, *Read the Beat: Music in Children's Literature* (2023), while making use of visual aids together with music, does not bring opera into the equation. The emphasis largely stays on cultivating a visual culture, which, of course, is very appealing to a child's fledgling imagination. Exposing children from a very early age to beautiful songs, accompanied by pictures, opens up a completely new world for them, one through which children learn to cultivate an intellectual as well as an emotional relationship with. Studies in the field, most particularly but not exclusively those conducted by Kulikovskaya & Andrienko (2016) as well as Fleer & Hammer (2013) and Sayer et al., (2018) show that when children are taught that the subjects and themes which fairy tales deal with are actually ones of universal concern, these stories contribute towards the growth of the child's cognitive development, enabling them to reflect on these matters and to speak about them. Reflecting on these aspects of the tales also helps with enabling the children to nurture their discernment with regard to social aspects that would serve them in good stead not only as children but also when they develop into adults. These points are made very clearly especially by Fleer & Hammer (2013), referred to above, while Koutsompou Violetta-Eirini (2016), states that 'these classic stories, especially when set to music, may be said to encode patterns that enable the restoration of vibrant functioning' (213).

In this regard, opera, while heavily weighted on the visual, also combines the aural in equal measure. In order to have a more thought-provoking debate, this paper will focus exclusively on opera, a genre largely regarded as an elite art form aimed at a cultured audience of a certain breeding and pedigree. While reference to Humperdinck's *Hansel und Gretel* and Dvořák's *Rusalka* will be made, the main force of the argument will be brought on the Maltese composer Joseph Vella's

Bo-Peep: A Little, Little Opera for Children. This particular work was devised as a pilot study (Vella & Mallia Milanes, 1968), carried out in one of Malta's most uninspiring environments, namely, the small town of Żabbar in the south of the island. The majority of the children at the primary school there came from extremely difficult backgrounds. They were written off as hopeless cases, illiterate and unruly. Joseph Vella wrote this lovely work for them to test whether the genre of opera, that rarefied and sophisticated art form, can be made relevant and accessible to such children. He believed that music, specifically opera, is important in helping children find their voice, expressing thoughts and feelings they perhaps are not aware of even having. Vella also believed that the academic curriculum could not be implemented with any measure of success without access to music and the arts in general. Conceived and carried out in 1968, this pilot test is visionary, anticipating what the IAEAA is currently doing. Vella's test was not only successful, but it radicalised the education system in Malta with regard to the appreciation of the arts as a prerequisite in a child's emotional and cognitive development. It brought to bear not only on the fact that opera is important for children, but that children can make opera happen.

For a small island such as Malta, innovation comes with a dose of suspicion and trepidation, not least in environments which are firmly established and consolidated by decades of tradition. The pilot study carried out by Vella and Mallia Milanes involved all the children, from the ages of six to ten, at the Żabbar Primary School. In all, around a 120 children took part, with a robust roster established which enabled all children at this school to participate in this project. The Director of Education at the time, Ms Margaret Mortimer, fully supported the initiative and following the unprecedented success of the project, she made it mandatory that every child in government primary schools would have at least one music lesson a week. Music became integrated in the school curriculum, as an inherent core subject, contrary to it being sidelined as an extra curricular activity.

1.1 Aims and Theoretical Frameworks

While research on the musical development of the child has been consistently plentiful and robust, the subject of opera as a key component of a child's education and development remains a largely untapped source. Even the latest publication, *The Oxford Handbook of Early Childhood Learning in Music* (2024) does not make reference to opera.

The research question that inspired this paper stems from the points made here, namely, that opera is not only a sophisticated art form aimed for responses from a discerning public. While it can be seen in this way, it can also be an artistic tool that could be used to mould a child's education in a more holistic and comprehensive manner. Specifically, reference is here being made to operas whose subject matter stems from fairy tales, stories whose protagonists are generally children themselves, thereby making them relatable and accessible to the intellectual and emotional intelligence of the child. Fairy tales stimulate the children's interest in social phenomena and challenge them to recognise what these fictional stories reflect in real life. Through fairy tales, children's social aspects develop as they become aware of various social and global problems and participate in the effort of collective problem solving and responsibility. As expressed by Koutsompou Violetta-Eirini (2016), the stories of fairy tales expressed through language by transfer and symbolic representations, facilitate the development of symbolic thought, the representative abilities and the mental processing of life events at a fantasy-level, which form the basis for the development of creative thought and emotional intelligence. This point, among others, is also clearly articulated by Sayer et al., (2018), as well as by K. Gallas (1994). At the same time, by experiencing the lives of the heroes through identification and imitation, children experience the universal values of friendship, solidarity, mutual respect, gender equality, and other values that are intrinsic to the well-being of both the child and the adult (Kulikovskaya & Andrienko, 2016).

When fairy tales are introduced via the medium of opera, the benefits are various and varied. Children are automatically introduced to a rich mix of multiple art forms. With music, the child learns to appreciate the power of melody to move and interact; rhythms and harmonies enrich these melodies not least because they also express different emotional states. With drama, the child develops the skills of storytelling as well as emotional expression (Bettelheim 1991). All this is expressed through the use of language which in turn is linked to history and culture.

Unlike other music genres, opera brings together voice training, acting, and stage presence. When a child learns opera, they gain confidence, improve focus, and build discipline. And when parents participate alongside them, learning turns into a shared adventure.

The three operas chosen for discussion and analysis in this paper all have their roots in a fairy tale or nursery rhyme: Humperdinck's *Hansel und Gretel* by the Grimm Brothers and published in 1812; Dvořák's *Rusalka*, based on a Slavic folk tale was first produced in 1900, and

Joseph Vella's *Bo-Peep*, a nursery rhyme popular with children, which was set to an opera for children and first produced in 1968.

Finally, what this paper aims to establish is that exposing children from an early age to opera is fundamental to their holistic education. It presents a holistic and experiential approach to music education, emphasising the integration of speech, movement, and instrument playing to foster a comprehensive understanding of music.

Given that the topic addressed in this paper has been to a large extent under-researched, music education researchers also need to derive original theories rather than simply importing or appropriating existing theories. This is a point made by Jorgensen (2009). In fact, no researchers have systematically investigated which theoretical/methodological frameworks have been so far employed in opera appreciation for children in particular.

2. The Magic of Fairy Tales

Einstein tells us that '[I]f you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales'. While Einstein is not renowned for being an expert on child education, he does have a point, one that is scientifically corroborated by, among others, Azamovich (2021), Pulimeno et al., (2020), Maricic & Stakic (2017), and Yong-Sook et al., (2015). These studies, although carried out in different social and cultural environments, all show that fairy tales are fundamental in the child's cognitive nurturing and development, not least because through relating with these stories, the cognitive and intellectual processes are facilitated and triggered to the child's benefits.

Together with the unqualified benefits of books for the well-being of a child, it is believed that music has an enduring quality that takes the book to limits one would not think possible. Music speaks a language beyond the power of words; it means when language fails, and its universality brings people of diverse cultures, race, and creeds together (Schmidt et al., 2018). Music appeals to the aural reception of words in sound, translating words to tunes that stick in the memory and are not likely to be forgotten once we have engaged with and responded to them. Active engagement with music helps not only in short-term moments of pleasure but also in long-term emotional, cognitive and intellectual development as the child matures into a young adult. As adults, we carry those memories with us.

Children are inherently musical: Natalie Sarrazin (2016) states that children show 'natural responses to music from even when they are still in the womb' (16), while Wangid (2018) claims that music serves a

mnemonic function in that children are more able to remember words through singing them. He goes on to argue that this mnemonic retrieving and processing of information leads to more concentration and focus which in turn nurtures the child's perceptual ability, reasoning and critical thinking. Music, thus, as Kulikovskaya & Andrienko (2016) confirm, helps in the development of the child's imagination and its creative powers, leading to stimuli related to positive feelings.

In an age increasingly governed by consumerism, stopping for a moment to linger on the view of a world lost to speed and materialism will help us appreciate a Blakeian utopia that is possibly recoverable through our engagement with music. When one reads fairy tales, one realises that peace and happiness can only exist on some condition. This idea, which is the core of ethics, is also the core of fairy tales.

In her otherwise remarkable book, *Children's Literature Comes Of Age* (1996), Maria Nikolajeva seems to underestimate the power of fairy tales to trigger the imagination not only of the child, but also of the adult composer who uses these tales to compose what have become absolute standards in the musical canon. She writes:

Reading a collection of folktales is also different from reading a children's book. Instead of a writer – the sender of information in a simple communication model – we have in the case of folktales a mediator (the person who tells the story orally), a collector (the person who makes a transcript of the oral text), and an editor or publisher (the person who is responsible for the published version of the text). (14-15)

While Nikolajeva is making quite sound observations, she stops at commenting on how folktales set to music is also a performative publication whose impact on a child's imagination can be long-lasting. Such 'publications' also attempt to portray the cultural and stylistic differences of their original sources. Tales from Germany, Czechoslovakia, and England (as this paper will seek to investigate) are different not because they present three-pronged antithetical moral premises, but because they represent three original perspectives, or readings, of the same world, necessarily embracing unique, stylistic features. It is difficult to understand why Nikolajeva labels such stories as 'essentially not children's literature' (15). In my country, Malta, which is a tiny island in the heart of the Mediterranean, such tales are regarded, indeed accepted, as children's literature, as they are elsewhere. These are stories that children are told and read; children create relationships with the characters, they identify with their situations and they are brought up to believe that doing good is

ultimately good for you and for the world. This is perhaps the result of a tightly-knit community on a small island in the Mediterranean. Folk tales, legends, myth: these form part of the story-telling that children are brought up on in Malta. From an early age, the Maltese child finds himself/herself coming into contact with these tales even in the school curriculum, with re-enactments of traditional folk tales forming an integral part of the child's cultural education. To this effect, a good number of publications containing these stories are available, a few of which have been translated into English, Italian and French (Pisani, 2020, 1999; Fenech, 2017).¹

On the other hand, Charles Dickens, noted for his observation of children and childhood in his novels and in his writing in general, among other aspects of life he focuses on, responds to George Cruikshank in this way, when Cruikshank rewrote 'Cinderella' as a tract promoting equilibrium and temperance. Dickens replied with an essay entitled 'Frauds on the Fairies':

Fairy stories [were] nurseries of fancy [from which children could learn] forbearance, courtesy, consideration for the poor and aged, kind treatment of animals, the love of nature, abhorrence of tyranny and brute force.... A nation without fancy, without some romance, never did, never can, never will, hold a great place under the sun.(111)

2.1 Opera as the saving grace

Within this context, one that advocates a take on the child's threatened life and world as being potentially redeemable, this paper will dwell on three adaptations to opera from fairy or folk tales or nursery rhymes from different countries.

Opera is not an easy genre to negotiate. Given the fact that opera brings together so many different art forms and skills (music, literature, set design, costume design, props, lighting, etc), putting all these in one coherent and cogent art form can present problems with regard to ideas, conformity with the artistic director's plans for the production as well as the musical director's prerogative for artistic unity. While on the one hand it is a rarefied art form, traditionally appealing not only to adults but to adults of a certain breeding, on the other hand it is also a

¹ See, Ġorġ Pisani. *Triqat il-Holm*. Malta: Progress Press, 2020. See also Ġorġ Pisani. *Għawdex johlom fil-leġġendi*. Malta: Midsea Books, 1999. Additionally, see Victor Fenech. *Old Legends of Malta and Gozo*. Malta: Miranda Publishers, 2017.

genre that has a universal appeal, and many tunes that we hum are likely to come from very well-known operatic sources rather than from symphonies or sonatas. So, how does one juggle a family night at the opera? The question here is not only whether operas are adaptable or good for children, but also what a child can do for opera. While quite a lot has been said about the former point, as already attested to by the test cases quoted earlier in this paper, most relevantly Kulikovskaya & Andrienko (2016) and Sayer et al., (2018), it is the latter one that is more intriguing and which this paper will attempt to address.

The theatre experience can be unforgettable for opposing reasons: either an exhilarating one that will nourish children and have them begging for more; or else a boring one that could see children being disenchanted with the experience the theatre offered them. Given that opera about children is a genre that children are likely to engage with, not least through their acquaintance with the story, it is also important for the adult/teacher to explain that opera is a mixture of diverse art forms. There is acting, singing, performing, a group of people playing different instruments together. Sometimes there is dancing, then there are stage designers, costume designers, stage props, lighting, and so much more. Operas can consist of funny stories, romantic love stories, or sad stories, just like the fairy/folk tales and nursery rhymes the child will be acquainted with. An opera is also sung poetry/poetic prose. Above all, the protagonists of such operas will be children and that, more than any other feature, will create a bond between the child on the stage and the child in the auditorium. Finally, the stage can look like almost any kind of place: it can be Cinderella's bedroom, or the tower in Rapunzel, or the forest in Hansel and Gretel. The child will know these places: she/he will have interacted with them, lived in them in their imagination. Adults should never underestimate the power of the child to relate. Opera, therefore, is an all-comprehensive experience and given its variety and multi-hued aspects it is more likely than any other musical genre to appeal to a child's imagination. As the famous conductor and educator Leonard Bernstein who, among many other things is famous for his 'Young People's Concerts' with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra between 1958 and 1972, states: 'I propose that the reading and understanding of music be taught to our children from the very beginning of their school life; that they learn to participate with enthusiasm in the study of music from kindergarten through high school. No child is tone deaf; every child has the natural ability and desire to assimilate musical ideas and comprehend their combinations into musical forms. Every child can be taught to read music as he or she is taught to read words; and there is no reason why both kinds of reading

cannot be taught simultaneously. Above all, introducing a child to opera from a young age opens up a wealth of imaginative riches like no other a child can experience at that age.'

2.2 Humperdinck's *Hansel und Gretel*²

Based on the brothers' Grimm fairy tale 'Hansel and Gretel', Humperdinck's opera was first produced in Weimar on 23 December 1894, conducted by Richard Strauss. Since then, the setting of this dark tale, not least the 'gingerbread house', has been associated with Christmas, further extending the appeal that the story has to children. While this is a tale of horror inhabiting very dark spaces, like the majority of stories in this genre it ends with redemption.

In the hands of Humperdinck (1854 – 1921), the tale retains its emphasis on the perennial dialectic between good and evil. Of his three operas based on stories for children, it is his version of the Grimm fairy tale that has made Humperdinck immortal. It is one of the high points of 19th-century opera, a re-modelling of the language of Wagnerian music drama into a work that has the lightest of musical and dramatic touches, and never seems a moment too long. Exposing the child to such music drama needs careful preparation, and children have an infinite capacity for learning and absorbing. What is extremely interesting in this setting is that Humperdinck incorporates Germanic folk tunes into his opera, ones that had been transmitted orally down generations and which had become an integral part of the culture of his people. This is immediately noted right from the start with the beautiful melody 'Suse, liebe Suse', a German folk tune dating back to the 15th century. Weaving new tapestries with old thread, there is an uncanny affiliation here with Modernist poetics, namely, the influences of the past on the present.

Humperdinck sets the story in the time of fairy tales in the land of fairy tales. What could be more wonderful for a child's imagination? (Tatar, 1992). In fact, Märchenoper means an opera set in a fantasy

² The opera of Hansel and Gretel by the German composer, Engelbert Humperdinck (1854-1921) is traditionally performed at Christmas. The celebration of sweets and food makes a seasonal delight. Or course, for those who know the story, you will realise that the section with the witch is spooky enough to listen to at Halloween too. The production I had worked on with the Manoel Theatre in Valletta (Malta) in 2002, was an adaptation of Humperdinck's opera which brought to the children and the audience the most charming and catchy tunes, with spoken narration and acting in between. While the story was adapted for children between 5 and 10 years of age, the singing was pure opera, with nothing from Humperdinck's score changed.

landscape. Retaining the name of the fairy tale as the title of the opera would inevitably create the necessary link in the child's mind and he/she would know the story prior to watching the opera. Adelheid Wette's libretto perfectly reflects that of the fairy tale, but she goes one step further to mitigate the impact that the horror of the tale undoubtedly has on a child's imagination. In her libretto, the mother is the children's real mother not a stepmother. She is not at all as evil as in the story but rather a lovely woman trying her best to deal with naughty children and the hardship that comes with being a broom-maker's wife. So, basically, this is a polished opera without the attendant disturbing elements one comes across in the fairy tale. Additionally, it would be likely that children attending the opera would know the story and while the horror of the fairy-tale is still present they will know that all will be well in the end. So, when the witch is shoved into the oven and all the previously baked children spring back into their own form there is the kind of redemption the child will be expecting and be happy about (Roseblatt, 1994). This is further consolidated by the final chorus of children and adults singing in harmony together, expressing not the tribulations they have endured but the inevitable step towards reward that that suffering leads to. This final chorus also attests to the harmony that is possible between adults and children.

The tale consists of universal truths and reflects the values of the time periods and societies from which they are derived (Koutsompou Violetta-Eirini, 2016). Many of these have still have a significant value, even nowadays. The characters, their actions and their reward lead to the development of moral issues. The good defeats the evil, justice triumphs, the non-arrogant is lucky in love, intelligence overcomes physical strength, while kindness, diligence and hard work leads to reward.

2.3 Dvořák's *Rusalka*

'Rusalka' is a tale whose endearing qualities inspired the great Czech composer, Antonin Dvořák (1841 – 1904), to compose what is arguably one of his most beautiful and haunting works. In Slavic mythology, a rusalka is something analogous to Celtic mermaids or Greek sirens. The concept of rusalki (the plural form of 'rusalka') originated from a Slavic pagan tradition where young women were symbols of fertility. These nymphs did not interfere too much with human life and mainly served to provide life-giving moisture to the fields and forests every spring when they came ashore to dance in the spring moonlight. The water spirits were believed to help crops grow plentifully and so were generally treated with respect. (This aspect of the tale has

affinities with the myth of Demeter in Greek mythology. In Roman mythology she is known as Ceres.) In the modern era, a large mythos mostly unrelated to fertility has sprung up around the beguiling young women of the water. By the 19th century, the main objective of a rusalka had transformed herself into harassing the human population.

The libretto for *Rusalka*, a tale that perhaps best addresses slightly older children than the story of *Hansel and Gretel* does, is based on the fairy tales of Karel Jaromir Erben and Božena Němcová. The opera was first performed in Prague on 31 March 1901. Jaroslav Kvapil wrote the libretto before he had had any contact with Dvořák, and the plot holds elements which are also relevant to *The Little Mermaid* by Hans Christian Andersen and to *Undine* by Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué.

Because Kvapil's and Dvořák's appropriation of the multi-faceted Rusalka tales dwells more on a kiss that leads to death rather than to life (unlike in 'Sleeping Beauty'), this fairy tale is known as a reversed type (Nikolajeva, 2002). The interplay and struggle between goodness and evil, the spirit world and that of the human, is beautifully balanced. Dvořák, unlike Humperdinck, does not deviate from the story to make it a happy one. Rather, true to character, he emphasises the Slavic spirit's 'cursed capacity for suffering', as Pasternak writes in *Doctor Zhivago*. The style is that of opera as we understand it. Leitmotifs abound, largely used for Rusalka herself, her damnation, the water spirit, and the forest. These leitmotifs occur frequently, and with each iteration there is a cumulative effect, one that augments and strengthens the emotional intensity in the listener.

The opera makes use of traditionally established theatrical devices, most notably, dancing, comedy (as in the interaction between the Gamekeeper and Turnspit), as well as pictorial musical depiction of nature, bringing the technique of word-painting to dizzying heights. There is an abundant wealth of melodies, dramatic in themselves with shimmering orchestration, as one expects from Dvořák. All said, this is a beautiful if profoundly disturbing drama which steers away from the expected 'and they lived happily ever after' ending so typical of traditional Western fairy tales. In this regard, this type of opera is more realist than idealist (Propp, 1991). Rather, the libretto, powered by wonderful singing, stages brave women who shun the constraints and boundaries heaped upon them by either family or society. Their attitude towards emancipation and, partially, towards gender equality, is tremendous. Yet, in this reversed fairy tale, the rebellion of these women is fatally determined to fail, 'for so the story runs', we are told in the libretto. It presents a more realistic take on life, one that moves away from the utopia that conventional stories generally harness. While

this is disturbing it is also firmly anchored in real life where, regrettably, the 'happily ever after' ending is not as common as one would desire. Yet, it cannot fail to captivate a child's imagination in our contemporary times. While the ending is a sad one, the child will be able to understand that even if one loses, one will not go down without a fight.

2.4 Joseph Vella's *Bo-Peep: A Little, Little Opera For Children*

Moving much further south, a contemporary composer, Joseph Vella (1942 – 2018) was a Gozitan-born composer, conductor, researcher, university professor, and, above all, a humanist. There is an honesty and an integrity about Vella's work that endow it with a permanent validity. Certainly not as well-known as the two composers discussed in this paper so far, yet this does not make the man or the composer less valid in his contribution to a child's experience of literature through music and vice versa.

Some background to the composing of Vella's opera for children is relevant here. In his multi-faceted life, Vella was an Education Officer of Music for a number of years, and this made him responsible for overseeing music education in primary and secondary schools all over Malta and Gozo. Under his guidance, the islands witnessed dramatic changes in this regard. For a long time, experience of music only entailed the organisation of concerts at Christmas and Prize Days. Vella revolutionised this limited experience, and music became integral to a child's regular education, with a minimum of one music lesson a week in all government schools.

In a survey on literacy (Malta Literacy Survey and Statistics, 1968) carried out in the late 60s in Malta and Gozo, it was established that the town of Żabbar in Malta had the lowest literacy rate on the islands, with some 78% of the population there unable to read and write. Joseph Vella set his sights on this town and embarked on a project (Vella & Mallia Milanes, 1968) which would prove that the teaching and the experience of music education go above and beyond the regular engagement with canonical subjects such as Maths, languages, science, and so on. He also set out to prove that in such difficult situations, it is Art in its various formats that would be the catalyst for the learning of academic subjects. In short, Vella wanted to bring music to the same level as standard academic subjects; he wanted to affirm that music is not an extra-curricular subject but one which is integral to a child's holistic educational process (Sayer, I., Kristiewan, M., & Agustina, M. (2018). In order to test this idea, he took the story of Bo-Peep, a well-known nursery rhyme which around 90% of students at primary level in Żabbar did not even know about, and developed the tale into an opera for children.

Vella first advised the music teacher visiting the Żabbar Primary School every week to create activities for the children which would see them not only learn the words of the nursery rhyme, which in itself is a kind of miniature fairy tale, but to also help the children identify with the parts and take turns in acting them in ways that the children could relate to. Then, in collaboration with Prof. Victor Mallia Milanes, Vella fashioned a libretto in English which became the text that Vella then set to music. The final result was *Bo-Peep: A Little, Little Opera for Children*, scored for 2 young soloists (not older than 10 years of age), a children's choir (largely in unison but occasionally in two-part ensemble), together with a small ensemble consisting of strings and piano. This work of approximately 35 minutes' duration is in one act.

The opera was finished on 6 June 1968 and the teachers, to include those responsible for drama and dance, got busy rehearsing with children from the Żabbar Primary School. Soloists were chosen from the upper classes of the primary level, while the choir, some 60-strong ensemble acting the part of the flock of sheep, included all the children from the remaining classes. In one way or another, all children from the Żabbar Primary School took part. Costumes were made by the needlework teacher, props were in the hands of the drama teacher, and so on. Everything was home-made, as it were, and the children were encouraged to help even in these other areas of opera production. It was a Żabbar Primary School production, a school which for decades had been dismissed as the pits, one that was branded a 'hopeless case'.

The premiere performance took place on 2 July 1968, with the composer conducting the performance, some two months after the completion of the work, during a prize-giving ceremony. It is good to also note that prize-giving ceremonies had been abolished for many years at this school largely because there was no motivation for them. The reinstated ceremony was attended not only by parents and relatives of children but also by dignitaries including the Director General of Education, the Minister for Education, and so on. To say that the performance was a resounding success is an understatement not least because most of those attending were understandably sceptical that anything good could come out of Żabbar Primary School. Not only did something good emerge but the 'little, little opera for children' was produced to a very high level, polished and stylish in execution and, most importantly, the children loved it, proving that there is an aspect to education that goes beyond the strictly academic (Nodelman, 1992). This project confirmed that music, opera is relatable to all levels, that children written off as unteachable could actually show others how it's done.

As Chesterton reminds us: 'Fairy tales do not tell children that dragons exist. Children already know that dragons exist.' The Żabbar Primary School children were facing dragons in the shape of a hostile environment and a wretched reputation, they were written off as hopeless cases. To appropriate Chesterton, opera told the Żabbar Primary School children, and the authorities, that dragons can be killed. This is a truth that, in different ways, the three children's operas discussed in this paper confirm, that music is a preeminent subject in a child's education, that music cuts across boundaries and overcomes obstacles in a way that perhaps other subjects cannot accomplish (Nodelman, 1992; Yong-Sook et al., 2015).

Conclusion

What this paper has attempted to demonstrate is how music education, specifically exposure to opera from an early age, vastly enriches the child's holistic education and is in itself conducive to a healthier interaction with other people and life in general. There are many situations in schools worldwide where music appreciation and performance are relegated to a side issue on the curriculum, if at all. Introducing a child to opera is an even rarer occurrence, but in the long term, it is one that comes with both benefit and privilege with regard to the child's emotional and intellectual development.

The narration or reading of legends, myths, and fairy tales through the medium of opera is a way of nurturing the child's soul and humanism (Beckett, 1997). The understanding of the world grows as children understand the early cultural traditions, learn about the culture and read a variety of myths, learn to appreciate the culture and art of other people, according to Donna E. Norton (1991). Without the spiritual knowledge that music gives, children-readers may not realise the dissemination of the culture. The similarities found in texts of traditional children's literature shows that all people have the same needs and the same problems. In fact, some tales are almost the same. At the same time, traditional myths encourage children to imagine that people from all over the world care about the good, the courage, the benefaction and the industry.

Above all, one should never underestimate the power of music to move, to enhance and to enrich a child's life in a way that is neither measureable or quantified in strictly scientific ways. There is a measure that transcends calculation, one that speaks to the spirit in profound ways that result in the cultivation of the well-being of the child. Having imagination means enjoying inner wealth, a relentless and spontaneous flow of images that enables the child to view the world in its entirety

(Winnicott, 1996). In the dreamy world of the fairy tale, where everything unfolds in an intermediate space between fantasy and reality, the child's magic thought finds an appropriate mode of expressing itself. The structure of fairy tales as shaped by the operas discussed in this paper (and there are more) allow children to move into a dreamy world without restrictions and cancellations. At the same time, through the mechanisms of identification and projection, the child has the ability to identify, express his/her negative feelings, to give importance to personal traumatic experiences and, ultimately, to look for and find a meaning in his/her life (Von Franz, 1996). Additionally, in a comprehensible and clear manner, the fairy tales set to opera answer the fundamental questions of children as they transfer important knowledge and information about life.

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INSEBBHU L-LETTERATURA TAT-TFAL: L-ISSETTJAR TAL-ĦREJJEF F'OPRA

Din il-preżentazzjoni tipprova tikkonferma l-istat importanti li l-mużika għandha fl-edukazzjoni tat-tfal. L-opra mhix biss forma ta' arti għal nies sofistikati u eruditi, imma tista' tkun aċċessibbli anki għal tfal li ġejjin minn ambjenti diffiċli. Dan l-esej jipprova juri li t-tfal jirrelataw ma' sitwazzjonijiet anki koroh u japprezzaw li minkejja d-diffikultajiet, fl-aħħar mill-aħħar, it-tajjeb jiegħleb lil hażin. B'eżempji minn tlett ħrejjef magħrufa, jiġifieri ta' Hansel u Gretel, Rusalka, u Bo-Peep, li ġew magħmulin f-opra mill-kompożitur Ġermaniż Engelbert Humperdinck, il-kompożitur Ċekoslovakk Antonin Dvořák, u l-kompożitur Malti Joseph Vella, din il-preżentazzjoni tikkonferma li l-opra mhix ġeneru t'arti li jappella biss għal tip ta' nies biss, imma anki għal tfal. Każ partikolari li din il-paper tagħmel huwa dak ta' Joseph Vella, bl-opra tiegħu *Bo-Peep: A Little, Little Opera for Children*. Dan kien studju pilota li Vella għamel f'sitwazzjoni partikolari immens. L-iskola primarja ta' Haż-Żabbar, fin-naħa t'isfel ta' Malta, kienet magħrufa għad-diffikultajiet tremendi soċjali li kienet tiffaċċja. Tfal kellhom reputazzjoni hażina, kienu magħrufa bħala illitterati, bla kontroll, li ma riedux jafu b'taġħlim. Joseph Vella ried jipprova/jikkonferma li l-opra tgħin lil dawn it-tfal isibu l-vuċi tagħhom, ittihom kunfidenza u tama mhux biss għat-tagħlim imma għal ħajjithom.

Keywords: opra, ħrejjef, edukazzjoni, litteratura, tama, Humperdinck, Dvořák, Joseph Vella

TRANSLATING AURALITY: HOW FRENCH READERS RE-SCRIPT LA CHASSE À L'OURS (WE'RE GOING ON A BEAR HUNT) FOR PERFORMANCE

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Abstract: Picture books are highly multimodal products, combining textual, visual, aural – and sometimes even tactile and olfactory – modes. In spite of the richness of such combinations, most scholarly attention has been devoted to interplays between visual and textual modes as their most salient meaning-making resources (see Sipe 1998; 2012; Nikolajeva & Scott 2000; Painter 2013; Nodelman 1990; Hamer et al. 2017). However, picture books are connected to sounds in a variety of ways (e.g. song adaptations, rhythmic structure, sound books). In this article, I explore their read-aloud quality which, though “latent” (Boria et al. 2020), is an essential part of their production and reception. Indeed, Catalina Millán-Scheiding identifies musicality as one of the four core dimensions of children’s rhymes (2021). More specifically, I focus on picture books’ read-aloud quality in translation, and its consequences on performances for an audience. The picture book that I examine – Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury’s *We’re Going on a Bear Hunt* (1989) – is based on a folk song and has retained its musical qualities. Through an investigation of YouTube read-aloud videos in French, I analyse how the translation strategies employed at the textual level (e.g. rhythms, rhymes, linguistic choices, register) affect the aural quality of the picture book and its subsequent performances. From the outset, French performances demonstrate greater diversity than English ones, which have been shaped by Rosen’s performance. I will interpret those findings using a model for analysis of translated picture book texts based on Millán-Scheiding’s (2021) and Cay Dollerup’s (1999; 2003) models.

Key words: children’s literature, aurality, translation, performances

1. Introduction

When perusing the children’s book section of a bookstore, it does not take long to notice the connection between children’s literature and sound: numerous picturebooks enhance the audience’s reading experience through sound buttons or CDs, audiobooks and eBooks

generally feature sounds and music, and textured baby books aim to create sounds through touch. The picturebook discussed in this article, Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury's *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* (1989), is tied to sound and music through its origin as a scout camp song that emerged in the US in the 1970s (Tims 2012).

As a picturebook, *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* (*Bear Hunt* hereafter) is the story of four children, a baby, and their dog going on an adventure across the countryside in search for a bear. On their way, they face a series of natural obstacles (e.g. long grass, a cold river, a snowstorm). Oxenbury's double spread illustrations alternate between black and white charcoal drawings – when the children face an obstacle – and watercolour paintings – when they go through it. While the former contain the bulk of the text, the latter only display onomatopoeias, a core feature of the picturebook's read-aloud quality.

Before he was advised by his editor to turn it into a picturebook, Rosen integrated the song into his school performances. The initial medium (song) of the *Bear Hunt* and its genre (folk) as well as its performative context (scout camps) prompt a certain kind of performance, one that is lively and upbeat, sung by a group – adults and children alike – during outdoors activities. Those qualities have been maintained by Rosen in his shows and YouTube performances, as well as in the numerous recorded versions of the song by different artists (e.g. Linda Goss 1976; Alison McMorland 1977; Mike and Michelle Jackson 1992; Greg and Steve 2000). There is, therefore, a relatively established way of performing the English *Bear Hunt* song and picturebook.

The picturebook's success led to translation in many languages, including French. The translation process of picturebooks not only involves paying attention to the relationship between the text and the illustrations, but also being aware of their read-aloud quality (Oittinen 2018, 463). Though it is latent, i.e. "potentially available whenever we encounter a sequence of written words" (Tomalin 2020, 137), it is one of its core components, one that is, as Seán Golden argues, as important as meaning (Golden qtd. in Oittinen et al. 2017, 71). As Riitta Oittinen puts it: "An illustrated text, like a picture book, is not just a combination of words and illustrations; it has both sound and rhythm, which can also be heard, as picture books are often read aloud to children" (Oittinen 2000, 109). This complexifies the task of the picturebook translator, who has to juggle several dimensions during the translation process in order to provide a product that reads aloud well. To do so, Oittinen et al. stress that "[t]ranslators of picturebooks should be aware of the different potentials of expression, such as tone, intonation, tempo, and pauses,

and contribute in every way possible to the aloud-reader's enjoyment of the story" (Oittinen et al. 2017, 69).

In this article, I approach the translation of picturebook text as a multidimensional process. I first analyse the strategies employed by the French translator of *La chasse à l'ours* by close reading a portion of the text, then compare with the English version to identify which dimension(s) of the text come through in translation and what kind of performance it scripts for the audience (Bernstein 2011). Then, I turn to YouTube read-aloud videos of *La chasse à l'ours* to gain insights into how French audience members perform the translated text, and the ways in which they "rescript" it to be suited for a performance by choosing to prioritize different dimensions of the text.

2. Picturebook text as a multidimensional script for performance

While empirical research is necessary to uncover how a given work is actually read-aloud and performed by an audience, the work itself already provides information – what Annalisa Sezzi aptly calls "stage directions" (Sezzi 2020, 215). In this article, picturebooks are regarded as "scriptive things," i.e. "item[s] of material culture that prompt[] meaningful bodily behaviors" (Bernstein 2011, 71) and that "reveal a script for a performance" (71-72). Crucially, Robin Bernstein highlights that those scripts are *proposed* to the audience, not imposed to them (72).

Drawing on the works of Cay Dollerup (1999; 2003) Catalina Millán-Scheiding (2021); Marcus Tomalin (2020), and Sezzi (2020), I distinguish five dimensions of picturebook text:

1. linguistic (vocabulary, word order, sentence structures);
2. poetic (verse forms, rhythm, rhymes);
3. narrative (elements of the plot and order of those elements);
4. performative (elements of play, performance);
5. visual (design, typography).

Those five dimensions are interconnected and a change to one has consequences for the others, hence the relevance of this model to study the translation of picturebook texts. For instance, capitalised words (visual) suggests a louder voice (performative); a word choice (linguistic) can affect the story (narrative); the sentence length (linguistic) may change the meter (poetic); the choice of an onomatopoeia in translation (linguistic) affects its pronunciation (performative).

Within the scope of this article, "to perform" is understood as "to entertain people by dancing, singing, acting, or playing music"

(Cambridge Dictionary). There is no one way to “read” a picturebook aloud, and it often involves more than reading (aloud) altogether (e.g. rhythmic reading, singing, making gestures and facial expressions, acting out scenes, voicing characters). I will, therefore, use the terms “performance” and “performing” as umbrella terms to refer to any combinations of the abovementioned activities that occur during the reading-aloud of the picturebook. As will be shown, the readers from the sample used in this analysis can all be said to “perform” the picturebook, albeit in a variety of ways.

3. *La chasse à l’ours*

In this section, I apply the model detailed in part 2 to identify which dimensions of the French text have been prioritized in translation and which have not, and to what effect. Table 1 offers a side-by-side comparison of the first scene from the picturebook in English and French (the grass). For ease of reference, the numbers on the left will be used in further discussions of specific lines. Additionally, lines 1-4 and 7-10 will respectively be referred to as the first part of the chorus and the second part of the chorus, as they are repeated without change throughout the entire story. I call “verse” lines 5-6, which change with each obstacle.

	English	French ¹	Back translation
1	We’re going on a bear hunt.	Nous allons à la chasse à l’ours.	We are going on the bear hunt.
2	We’re going to catch a big one.	Nous allons en prendre un très gros.	We are going to take a very big one.
3	What a beautiful day!	La vie est belle !	Life is beautiful!
4	We’re not scared.	Nous n’avons peur de rien.	We are not scared of anything.
5	Oh-oh! Grass!	Oh, une prairie !	Oh, a meadow!

¹ The French picturebook has two translations (Lauriot-Prévost 1989 and Duval 1997). Unless mentioned otherwise, I refer to the first one, as it is the one used by all performers but one. In fact, the second translation did not remain in print for long. Following requests from readers, the publishing house responsible for it bought the rights to the first translation and has only been publishing that one ever since.

6	Long wavy grass.	On dirait la mer.	It looks like the sea.
7	We can't go over it.	On ne peut pas passer dessus.	We cannot go over it.
8	We can't go under it.	On ne peut pas passer dessous.	We cannot go under it.
9	Oh, no!	Allons-y !	Let's go!
10	We've got to go through it!	Il n'y a plus qu'à la traverser !	All that is left to do is go through it!

Table 1: The first double spread of the Bear Hunt in English (left), French (middle) and back translated English (right)

When comparing the English and French texts, it appears that the French translation contains more words and more syllables, and proportionally more two-syllable and three-syllable words (e.g. “allons,” “passer,” “dessus,” “allons-y,” “traverser”). Table 2 provides an overview of the number of words, syllables, and the distribution of words based on syllable numbers in the selected passage:

	Words	Syllables	1 syllable	2 syllables	3 syllables
English	41	47	35 (86%)	5 (12%)	1 (2%)
French	49	54	38 (78%)	9 (18%)	2 (4%)

Table 2: Word and syllable count, and syllable distribution in the first double spread of the Bear Hunt in English and French

Though the English version does not have a rhyming pattern per se, most lines end on the same or similar sounds: hunt – one; day – scared; grass – grass; it – it – it. This is not the case of the French version. However, it should be noted that certain word choices in the French version do contribute to a rhythmic reading: “peut pas passer” [“cannot go”] and “dessus ... dessous” [“over ... under”] (l. 7-8) present alliterations and convey the repetitiveness present in the English text, though in a different way.

Generally, however, word choices are likely to make it harder to sing the text: the repetition of the “l” creates a tongue twister in “Nous allons à la...” (l. 1). The sentences “nous n’avons peur de rien” (l. 4) and “Il n’y a plus qu’à la traverser” (l. 10) are quite wordy. The [ɛ] sound in “belle” [“beautiful”] (l. 3) is long, therefore inviting a slower reading rhythm and undermining the potential for an upbeat and fast-paced performance on that line and the one that follows. Though something similar happens in the English version, the effect is different. In English,

the line “We’re not scared” (l. 4) is the last one before the introduction of the verse (l. 5-6). In contrast to the other three (l. 1-3), which contain between six and seven syllables, that one only has three. In his performances, Rosen drags on the words, putting some emphasis on the “not.” While this disrupts the fast pace of the first part of the chorus, it does so at the very end. Narratively, this draws attention to the idea of fearlessness, while also leaving some space and time for the opposite to be implied through intonation (are they as brave as they claim?). In the French version, the pace slowing down on one line before last, dealing with how beautiful life is (l. 3), puts the emphasis on the more contemplative dimension of the chorus, and may consequently slow down the last line before the verse (l. 4).

The obstacle in this first verse is “une prairie” [“a meadow”] (l. 5). Here, the French version substitutes the more concrete “long wavy grass” and its movement with a simile: we are told that the meadow “looks like the sea.” Although there is a semantic link between “wavy” and “sea,” the French version focuses on conveying an evocative and poetic mental image. This gives the text a more abstract and contemplative dimension, potentially undermining the performative potential of the movements of grass in the wind.

As a result of the translator’s choices, especially at the linguistic (word length, word choices) and poetic levels (stylistic devices, sounds), the French version offers a more complex and contemplative script to its performers. The lines tend to roll off the tongue less and do not lend themselves to an oral performance as much as the English version. The performers discussed in the next section, however, adopt different strategies to include some degree of singing in their performances.

4. Youtube performances of *La chasse à l’ours*

In this section, I examine the first chorus-verse (the grass) in seventeen YouTube performances of *La chasse à l’ours*. Those videos have been selected among all the videos of *La chasse à l’ours* available on Youtube, based on the following criteria: (1) native French speaking performer; (2) adult performer; (3) one performer; (4) no audience included in the video; (5) performance involves more than reading (singing and/or rhythmic reading). The performances have been divided into three groups based on the dimension of the text that they prioritize in their performance. Group 1 prioritizes an upbeat performance akin to (or directly inspired by) Rosen’s, resulting in some degree of adaptation to either the text or the performance; group 2 prioritizes the closeness to the French text, resulting in a significantly different melody from Rosen and the performers in group 1; group (3) prioritizes the rhythm

and performativity of the text, resulting in significant adaptations and simplifications of the text and the narrative. The performers will be referred to throughout this paper using a shortened version of their YouTube usernames. Group 1 consists of five performers: Eric Mandret (Eric), Michael Grzegorzewski (Michael), Les histoires de Monsieur Jean-Marc (Jean-Marc), Lycée Lb-français Abdel Kader (Lycée) and Alix Enfolie (Alix). Group 2 consists of eight performers, Mapad'Am (Mapad), Les Histoires de Dame HIBOUX (Dame), Nini et les ouistitis (Nini), Nicolas GARNIER (Nicolas), Juste une histoire (Histoire), Pascal Bicrel (Pascal), Claire et ses histoires (Claire) and ProvindedeLiègeTV (Province). Finally, group 3 consists of four performers: Alma Nadège (Alma), La minute des petits écrans (Minute), La maternelle magique de Sandrine (Sandrine), Martine Michèle (Martine).

4.1. Priority to the melody

All four performers in group 1 (Eric, Jean-Marc, Alix, and Lycée) sing parts of the text in an upbeat and lively manner, to a melody similar to Rosen's. While Eric adapts the text of the picturebook, Jean-Marc, Alix and Lycée remain closer to it. They nonetheless make other adaptations, namely at the linguistic and/or performative levels to be able to maintain an upbeat melody. Table 3 gives an overview of the lines sung (grey) and spoken (white) by Rosen and the five French performers.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Rosen										
Eric										
Michael										
Jean-Marc										
Alix										
Lycée										

Table 3: Distribution of singing and reading across five performances of *La chasse à l'ours* compared to Rosen's.

Rosen sings most of the text, though he drops the singing on "Oh-oh grass, long wavy grass" and "Oh, no!/We've got to go through it" to the benefit of expressiveness. For the first line, it allows him to mark a contemplative pause. This also translates the black and white double spread illustrations, in which Oxenbury portrays the children contemplating the obstacle before deciding to cross it. For the second line, it makes it possible for him to emphasize the contrast between the

children's reluctance ("Oh, no!") and their resolve ("We've got to go through it!") through intonation.

Eric sings the most lines. His consistency is likely due to his retranslation of the French text to make it closer to the English text, as well as easier to sing (linguistic, poetic and performative dimensions). Table 4, shows a comparison between the picturebook text and Eric's retranslation. The lines in bold indicate the retranslated lines².

	Picturebook (French)	Eric	Back translation
1	Nous allons à la chasse à l'ours.	Nous allons à la chasse à l'ours.	We are going on the bear hunt.
2	Nous allons en prendre un très gros.	Nous allons en prendre un très gros.	We are going to take a very big one.
3	La vie est belle !	Quelle très belle journée !	What a very beautiful day!
4	Nous n'avons peur de rien.	On n'a pas peur.	We are not afraid.
5	Oh, une prairie !	Oh-oh, de grandes herbes !	Oh-oh, tall grass!
6	On dirait la mer.	Hautes et grasses.	Tall and lush.
7	On ne peut pas passer dessus	On ne peut pas passer dessus.	We cannot go over it.
8	On ne peut pas passer dessous.	On ne peut pas passer dessous.	We cannot go under it.
9	Allons-y !	Oh non !	Oh no!
10	Il n'y a plus qu'à la traverser !	Il faut les traverser !	We have to cross them!

Table 4: Side-by-side comparison of the French picturebook text, Eric's retranslation and back translation

For instance, he retranslates "We've got to go through it" with "Il faut les traverser" (l. 10) and "We're not scared" by "On n'a pas peur" (l. 4) instead of the wordier "Il n'y a plus qu'à la traverser !" (l. 4) and "Nous n'avons peur de rien" (l. 10).

In his version, "What a beautiful day" becomes "Quelle très belle journée" instead of "La vie est belle" (l. 3) bringing back the more concrete and current dimension of the line. He also retranslates "Grass, long wavy grass" by "De grandes herbes/Hautes et grasses" instead of

² The punctuation of the performance transcriptions was made based on the French picturebook punctuation.

“Une prairie/On dirait la mer” (l. 5-6). Once again, this brings back the focus onto the more concrete obstacle and removes the metaphorical dimension. The use of the adjective “grasses” [“lush”] in French is interesting, as it makes his translation of this line end on the same *sound* as the English version: “De grande herbes/Hautes et **grasses**” ⇔ “Grass/Long, wavy **grass**” (l. 5-6) thus using homophones across languages and marking the connection between his version and Rosen’s not only through rhythm and word choices, but also through sounds.

Michael sings only three lines out of the ten (performative dimensions), to the benefit of expressiveness. He also keeps the sea-meadow simile but takes his time to perform that passage as if he were actually seeing something in the distance (performative dimension). The main difference, however, is that he merges the first and second – lesser known – French translation of *La chasse à l’ours* (Duval 1997) (linguistic and narrative dimensions). Though Michael sings very little, it is striking that he sings the passages taken from the second translation and speaks the ones from the first. Indeed, some passages from the second translation, such as “Quelle belle journée/Rien ne nous effraie” (l. 3-4), almost rhyme, which is not the case of its equivalent in the first translation: “La vie est belle/On n’a pas peur” (poetic dimension). Table 5 shows the two French translations and Michael’s version side by side. The lines in bold indicate from which version(s) his come.

	Picturebook (1989)	Picturebook (1997)	Michael
1	Nous allons à la chasse à l’ours.	Nous allons à la chasse à l’ours.	Nous allons à la chasse à l’ours.
2	Nous allons en prendre un très gros.	Nous allons en attraper un très gros.	Nous allons en attraper un très gros.
3	La vie est belle !	Quelle belle journée !	Quelle belle journée !
4	Nous n’avons peur de rien.	Rien ne nous effraie !	Rien ne nous effraie.
5	Oh, une prairie !	Euh ! de l’herbe !	Oh ! Regardez là-bas, tout au loin qu’est-ce qu’on voit ? Une prairie !
6	On dirait la mer.	De hautes herbes ondulantes.	Aaaah, on dirait la mer.

7	On ne peut pas passer dessus	Passer par-dessus ?	On ne peut pas passer dessus.
8	On ne peut pas passer dessous.	Passer par-dessous ?	On ne peut pas passer dessous.
9	Allons-y !	Impossible !	Allons-y !
10	Il n'y a plus qu'à la traverser !	Nous devons les traverser !	Il n'y a plus qu'à la traverser !

Table 5: Side-by-side comparison of Michael's performance and the two French translations of the picturebook

Jean-Marc, Alix, and Lycée also use an upbeat melody similar to that of Eric and Michael but stay closer to the French picturebook text. Unlike Eric and Michael, therefore, all three needed to make other types of adjustments (linguistic for Jean-Marc, performative for Alix and Lycée) to be able to sing it. Jean-Marc merges the “en” in “Nous allons en prendre un très gros” (l. 2) with the end of “allons,” resulting in “all-en prendre...” and contracts “On ne peut pas...” [“we cannot”] into “On n’peut pas” [“we can’t”] (l. 7-8). He also adds a long “Ooooooh” before “La vie est belle” (l. 3) to start this line with a faster pace, which he sustains throughout that line and the next (l. 4). Alix only sings the first four lines, dropping the singing after slowing down his pace on “La vie est belle/Nous n’avons peur de rien” (l. 3) and not picking it back up, suggesting that both the meditative tone and longer vowel sound lend themselves better to a slower pace. Lycée drops the singing after the first two lines but picks it back up on “On ne peut pas passer dessus/On ne peut pas passer dessous” (l. 7-8). All performers except Alix sing those lines, suggesting that the alliteration and repetition prompt singing.

Overall, adopting a similar melody, rhythm and pace to Rosen’s version requires performers to make some adaptations. In the five performances discussed above, those adaptations involved retranslating the text (linguistic and narrative dimensions), merging the two translations (linguistic, narrative and poetic dimensions) adjusting the text to fit the rhythm (linguistic and poetic dimensions), or dropping the singing more (performative dimension). The results are upbeat performances that combine singing and a fast-paced rhythmic reading, focused on the cheerful and lively energy of the song. While three out of the four performers show the book on the screen, they do so via a slideshow. This allows them to have their hands free to either play the guitar (Eric, Michaël, and Alix) or make gestures (Jean-Marc). In doing so, they acknowledge the connection with the picturebook while prioritizing the musical dimension of the story.

4.2. Priority to the text

Unlike some performers in group 1, none of the performers in group 2 change the text of the picturebook. All but one of them show the physical book on camera during their reading, thus further emphasising the connection between their performances and the picturebook text and framing the video as a reading-aloud session. One of my hypotheses in part 3 was that the French translation made an upbeat performance more difficult due to it being generally wordier, harder to pronounce, and more abstract. Since group 2 prioritises the text, adaptations occur at the level of the melody. The performers from group 2 do not adopt the same upbeat and lively rhythm that characterises Rosen's performances. Instead, they opt for melodies that share similarities in terms of pacing (slow), pitch (high), and rhythm. Three different melodies are used across the eight performances: two original ones (Mapad, Dame, Nini, Nicolas, Histoires, Pascal; Province) and one borrowed from the popular French nursery rhyme "Il était un petit navire" ["There once was a small ship"] (Claire). The three melodies are all slower than those in group 1. While the four performers in group 1 perform the first verse-chorus in 15 to 21 seconds, the performers in group 2 do it between 22 and 40 seconds. Combined with a generally higher pitch, their performances are calm and nursery-rhyme-like instead of lively and upbeat. Table 6 indicates which passages performers sing (dark grey), which passages they read rhythmically (light grey), and which passages they read (white).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mapad										
Dame										
Nini										
Nicolas										
Histoire										
Pascal										
Claire										
Province										

Table 6: Distribution of singing, rhythmic reading, and reading across eight performances of *La chasse à l'ours*

In group 2, all the performers sing at least the first part of the chorus (l. 1-4) and all but one do not pick it back up at the start of the second part (l. 7). However, some performers incorporate other markers of a song in their performances. For instance, Mapad'Am repeats the

lines “La vie est belle/Nous n’avons peur de rien” (l. 3-4) twice. Claire does something similar, doubling the line “La vie est belle” and repeating “La vie est belle/la vie est belle/Nous n’avons peur de rien” (l. 3-4) twice. Other performers, such as Mapad and Nini do not sing “On ne peut pas passer dessus/On ne peut pas passer dessous” (l. 7-8) but nonetheless perform it rhythmically, once again indicating that the alliteration and repetitiveness of the line lends itself to (at least) a rhythmic reading.

The performers from this group remain faithful to the linguistic dimension of the *Bear Hunt*, which interestingly means that the connection with the adventurous aspect of the narrative is undermined. By musically reinterpreting it as a nursery-rhyme like song, they foreground its contemplative and pastoral dimensions instead.

4.3. Priority to the rhythm

The performers in group 3 (Alma, Minute, Sandrine, and Martine) focus primarily on the rhythmic potential and embodied performance of the text in a pedagogical context³. They do not feature the book in their performance, using their hands (and bodies) to make gestures instead. The connection with the picturebook text and illustration is also lessened by the performers in group 3 through their extensive adaptation of the text to be easy to remember and perform, even for a young audience. Their versions are simpler (vocabulary and syntax), more informal, and more repetitive. They also feature fewer obstacles (tree, river, mud and cave for Alma; river, mountain and cave for Minute; cliff, river, hole and cave for Sandrine; lake, tree, and cave for Martine). It is interesting to note that there are also more discrepancies between the obstacles from version to version, thus showing greater freedom from the source material. Since none of them feature grass or a variation thereof, I will compare the river/lake chorus-verse, which they all share. Table 7 presents the picturebook text and the transcript of the four performances side by side.

	Picturebook (French)	Alma	La minute	Sandrine	Martine
1	Nous allons à la chasse à l’ours.	On va à la chasse à l’ours. x3	On part à la chasse à l’ours. x3	Je pars à la chasse à l’ours. x3	Je pars à la chasse à l’ours. x3

³ This is either mentioned explicitly by the performer or is part of the information provided by their Youtube channel.

2	Nous allons en prendre un très gros.				
3	La vie est belle !				
4	Nous n'avons peur de rien !				
5	Oh, une rivière !	Oh, mais y a un lac !	On arrive devant une grande rivière !	J'arrive devant une rivière !	J'arrive devant un lac !
6	Large et glacée.	Un très grand lac.	Elle est tellement grande qu'...		
7	On ne peut pas passer dessus.	On peut pas passer su'l'côté.	On n'peut pas passer par ici.	J'peux pas passer d'un côté.	J'peux pas passer par là.
8	On ne peut pas passer dessous.	On pas passer d'laut'côté.	On n'peut pas passer par là.	J'peux pas passer d'l'autre côté.	J'peux pas passer par là.
9	Allons-y !	Alors qu'est-ce qu'on fait ?			
10	Il n'y a plus qu'à la traverser !	Il faut... nager !	Alors il faut nager !	Alors ? Alors ? Je nage !	Alors ? Je nage !

Table 7: Side-by-side comparison of the French picturebook text and four simplified performances

Instead of the first part of the chorus, the four performers repeat the first line three times. That line is also simplified, from “Nous allons à la chasse à l’ours” [“We go on the bear hunt”] to “on va” [“we go”], “on part” [“we go”] or “je pars” [“I go”] (l. 1), either using the first person singular pronoun or the pronoun “on,” the informal equivalent of “nous”

("we"). In both cases, the verb is singular, thus also shortening the line. The adjectives used for the river and the lake are simple or lacking: "grand," "très grande," "tellement grande" ["big," "very big," "so big"]. The last line is also simplified, from "Il n'y a plus qu'à y plonger" to a shorter, more direct and easier to pronounce instruction: "Il faut nager" ["We must swim"] and "Je nage" ["I swim"] (l. 10). Contractions are also used, making the text shorter and more informal: "su'l côté" instead of "sur le côté" ["on the side"] (l. 7); "d'laut'coté" instead of "de l'autre côté" ["on the other side"] (l. 8); "on n'peux pas" instead of "on ne peut pas" ["we cannot"] (l. 7-8); "J'peux pas" instead of "je ne peux pas" [I cannot] (l. 7-8), "mais y a un lac" instead of "mais il y a un lac" ["but there is a lake"] (l. 5).

Notably, the group 3 performances extend to the performers' bodies. Some in group 1 (Eric, Michael, Alix) emphasised the musical dimension of the text by playing an instrument during their performances and the performers in group 2 foregrounded the connection between their performances and the picturebook by showing it on camera. In group 3, the performers use their hands to tap rhythmically on their lap and make expansive gestures that match the story. This includes extending their arms to show the size of an obstacle, leaning left and right to consider other options, wagging a finger to indicate that no other way is possible, and gesturing (swimming, walking, climbing) as they go through it. In the case of Alma and Sandrine, the pedagogical and interactive nature of their performances is reinforced by them calling on the audience for solutions. Alma asks "Alors qu'est-ce qu'on fait?" ["What do we do then?"] and Sandrine gestures with her palm up and shoulders raised, asking "Alors? Alors?" ["And so? And so?"].

In group 3, each text was adapted by its performer to be repetitive (poetic dimension), with shorter sentences and simpler vocabulary (linguistic dimension), more familiar and informal in register (linguistic dimension) and to be paired with gestures (performative dimension). Combined with rhythmic tapping and an energetic and sustained delivery rhythm, these versions emphasize the embodied performative potential of the *Bear Hunt* in a pedagogical context. In addition, they also encourage their young audience to participate (simple text, ample gestures, questions) and perform alongside them, putting them in a more active position than the performers in group 1 and 2.

5. Conclusion

Translating picturebooks is a complex task. It requires taking their textual but also visual and aural dimensions into consideration, as well

as their interplays. Even when only focusing on the text, translators are faced not with a monolith, but with five interconnected layers. A greater awareness of the multidimensional nature of picturebook text shows that different translation strategies will prioritize different dimensions, and that this will inevitably have an impact on the performative potential of the text. However, performers are not passive recipients of a script: they can, in turn, rescript it, performing the picturebook text in ways that foreground another of its dimensions. In the present case, the French translation of *La chasse à l'ours* puts less overall emphasis on the performability of the text than its English counterpart. This does not mean, however, that the text cannot be performed. The small yet revealing sample of videos analysed in this article reveals that the individual audience members resort to different strategies that will, themselves, prioritize this or that dimension of the picturebook text. The performers from group 2 mark an explicit connection between their source material and their performances by showing the picturebook to the camera, in the style of a read-aloud session. They all perform the picturebook text as is and, as a result, the *Bear Hunt* takes on a nursery rhyme-like quality, creating a generic shift from a folk song to a lullaby. The users in group 1, on the other hand, seem to have (some) knowledge of Rosen's performance and attempt to replicate it by retranslating the text or merging the two existing translations to ensure easier "singability," contracting the text, singing less and speaking more, and foregrounding the theatrical dimension of the text through expressiveness. While some still feature the book in the video, it appears as a slideshow, as the performers themselves either play an instrument or make gestures as part of their performance, thus putting more emphasising on its musical dimension than on the narrative and visual connection with the book. The performers in the third group go back to the song's roots – halfway between a story and a game. Through simplifications, they make it easier to remember and perform for a young audience. They also foreground its dynamic rhythm, replicated by the body through gestures that reflect the meaning of key moments in the story. By not featuring the book and marking a narrative departure from its text and illustrations, they prioritize the children's immersion as characters through an embodied experience of the story. Through translation, the *Bear Hunt* went from an American folk song, to a British picturebook, to a French picturebook, reinterpreted by its audience as an upbeat song, a nursery-rhyme like song, and rhythmic play-song. In framing textual translation and reading performances as equally interpretative processes, this article aimed to highlighting the dynamic

nature of children's texts, the potential for stories to shift in a multitude of directions, and the central role the audience can play in that process.

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TRADUIRE L'ORALITÉ: LA CHASSE À L'OURS (WE'RE GOING ON A BEAR HUNT) RÉINTERPRÉTÉE PAR LES LECTEURS FRANÇAIS

Les livres pour enfants sont des objets multimodaux, dans la mesure où leur signification est le résultat de la combinaison de ressources visuelles, textuelles et sonores. Même au niveau du texte, ils présentent une variété de dimensions connectées entre elles. Le modèle proposé dans cet article en dégage cinq : linguistique, narrative, poétique, performative et visuelle. Étant donné que la lecture à voix haute est un aspect essentiel de leur production et de leur réception, les traducteurs de livres pour enfants doivent jongler avec ces dimensions et faire des choix qui donneront inévitablement la priorité à certaines d'entre elles plutôt qu'à d'autres. Abordant les livres pour enfants en tant que « choses scriptées » (Bernstein 2011), cet article examine comment le script proposé par le livre pour enfant *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* (Rosen et Oxenbury 1989) est altéré par le processus de traduction vers le français. Ensuite, à travers l'analyse de dix-sept performances YouTube de *La chasse à l'ours* en français, j'analyse la façon dont les lecteurs français performant ce script, et identifie trois stratégies de performance, donnant chacune la priorité à une dimension différente du texte. Le premier groupe privilégie le rythme entraînant de la chanson, le deuxième groupe privilégie la fidélité au texte du livre, et le troisième groupe met l'accent sur la dimension rythmique du texte accompagnée de gestes. En fin de compte, cet article vise à démontrer que la traduction de textes pour enfants n'est pas seulement une pratique textuelle, mais également visuelles, orales et performatives.

Mots-clés: littérature pour enfants, auralité, traduction, performances

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