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New Challenges in Children's Illustration in Portugal: Intertextuality and Multimodality¹

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The aim of this paper is to reflect on some of the current trends in Portuguese illustration for children, focusing on an intertextual reading of the picturebooks written and illustrated by Manuela Bacelar, as a precursor in the creation of this kind of book in Portugal. Based on the discursive interdependence of text and illustrations, stylistic and technical-narrative procedures are observed, in necessary articulation with the visual/graphic and material/peritextual aspects. The potential of these aspects is highlighted in the composition of the work and in the construction of its multiple semiosis. The interdependence of text and illustrations poses specific requirements in the process of reading and has an impact on the formation of competent and autonomous readers. Relying on modern literary currents to be found in a postmodernist aesthetic, this paper examines the corpus, from both a technical and compositional point of view, seeking to investigate some of the traits and formal rhetorical, stylistic and thematic resources that distinguish the work of this awarded artist.

Keywords: illustration, intertextuality, multimodality, peritext, picturebook, postmodernism, Manuela Bacelar

Recent trends in Portuguese children's illustration: notes on characterisation

In recent years, especially in the last decade, Portuguese children's book illustration has received unrivalled attention and development. This has been due to stimulation

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from the ways in which graphic arts and printing and reproduction processes have developed, along with the work of a new generation of illustrators and a number of specialised publishers. The Portuguese picturebook has received important international recognition which is reflected in the creation/attribution of different types of awards and distinctions and its prominence place in various events and gatherings. The concomitant interest in illustration for children in the Portuguese language has progressively raised its impact on the very push towards publishing children's literature and has stimulated translations in several countries and languages. It has also had an impact on the sale and acquisition of publishing rights abroad (Ramos 2016).

The "multiplicity of colours" and the diversity of aesthetic languages that characterised the Portuguese picturebook in the last two decades of the twentieth century (Bronze 2000) was followed by a proliferation of increasingly experimental and demanding graphic/artistic techniques and publishing formats or objects, a trend that Sara Van Meerbergen (2012) as well as authors gathered in the collection edited by Lawrence Sipe and Sylvia Pantaleo (2008) or in the most recent monograph edited by Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer (2018), among many others, inscribe in the post-modernist aesthetic. These picturebooks require active participation from the reader and suggest new avenues of interpretation, considerably widening the target audience – in both numbers and scope. The first decade of the new millennium signalled the beginning of a boom for picturebooks in Portugal,² as a premium publishing genre and "one of the most innovative in the literature for potential children's readership" (Ramos 2016: 38).³ This creative modality, open to the most varied of artistic influences and in which the illustrative component has – literally – gained greater space and investment, is characterised by clear discursive hybridity or a symbiotic combination of text, images and materials, with a view to creating a "coherent whole" or system (Van der Linden 2007: 9, 2013: 35). As Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer and Jörg Meibauer (2019) analyse, this type of publication constitutes a locus par excellence for considering the book as a whole object⁴ and involves formal aspects in its architecture linked to its graphic design and materials, as well as a set of peritextual elements (e.g. the cover and back cover, and the ensemble between them, the dust covers, and the cover page or credits). These ensure the aesthetic and semantic unity of the work and enable different levels of reading (Pantaleo, 2018: 47). Indeed, the valorisation of the component of imagery in children's publications, a matter which has seen similar growth among critics and mediators, has also come about via the increased impact of design on the creation of the book as object, which has been converted into a "plurisignificant and multiform" artefact (Ramos 2018: n.p.).

² Especially since 2006, the year in which for the first time a picturebook of entirely Portuguese authorship – *Come a sopa, Marta!* [Eat the Soup, Marta!] by Marta Torrão – was part of the prestigious *White Ravens* international selection.

³ The translations into English are by the author of this paper, unless stated otherwise.

⁴ In this regard, see also the studies of Van Meerbergen 2012, Van der Linden 2013 or Pantaleo 2018, among others.

Broadly speaking, the characteristics of the picturebook at the turn of the twenty-first century are the following: the degree of initiative and the primacy granted to the artist in the conception and execution of the work; the centrality of image and the secondary status of verbal text (abbreviated or rewritten, or simply removed); the appropriation of the privileges of writing (e.g. its narrative function or rhetoric-stylistic effects such as comparison, metaphor, metonymy, among others) by the image; the visual exploration of typography and material specificities of the medium (e.g. format, double-page spread and page break), the placing of images (frequently on a large-scale and meaningful) in new spaces in the book;⁵ as well as the increasingly elaborate and complex relationships established with the verbal text, complementing and contradicting it or even replacing it (Van der Linden 2007: 120–121, Rodrigues 2013: 90–92). Thus, it can also be deduced that the most successful examples supporting this typology are usually those created as a result of the individual authorship of an illustrator (who is also responsible for the creation of the text and frequently even for the graphic design of the publication) or a complicit – or even hybrid – partnership between a writer and an illustrator, including the constantly expanding role of the graphic designer (Mallan 2018).

Contemporary picturebooks are widening their complexity and aesthetic erudition and owe a debt to postmodernist tendencies (Hutcheon 1985, Sipe & Pantaleo 2008). They share with postmodernism the implosion of genres, dialogism and polyphony, the subversion of canonical literary conventions and narrative discontinuity, intertextuality and self-reflexivity (often based on parody, pastiche, and irony), metafiction and metatextuality, among many other features. These proposals, as a *semiotic playground* (Van Meerbergen 2012: n.p.) and a place of multiple challenges, are particular in their celebration of the playfulness of reading while also stretching its limits. Their openness and resulting valorisation of/adaptation to new formats commonly associated with the object-book (e.g. pop-up books, books with flaps or pull-the-tab books, strip books or mix-and-match books, perforated books, puppet books, carousel books, or accordion books) are symptomatic of their chameleonic and experimental nature. They lend themselves to increasingly more heterogeneous audiences, and question the very concept of children's books (Beckett 2012, Rodrigues 2013, Ramos 2018).

Fortunately, the potential of the picturebook has not gone unnoticed by Portuguese creators, in particular a significant group of new and young illustrators. They have an increasingly specialised education in the fields of design and/or visual arts and are responsible for the expansion of diverse, demanding, innovative and high-quality products. Certainly, until the turn of the twentieth century, republishing and translation of classic works were the main basis of the unassuming development of this segment in Portugal. However, as a result of the hard work of a group of specialist publishers,

⁵ In this regard, see also, among other studies on modernist picturebooks (such as Druker 2010 and Christensen 2010, 2013), works in *Children's Literature and the Avant-Garde*, edited by Elina Druker and Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer (2015), where several authors investigate the intricate influence of the avant-garde movements on children's literature in different countries from the beginning of the 20th century until the present.

with personal projects and concepts (e.g. Kalandraka, OQO Planeta Tangerina, Orfeu Negro, Bruaá, Pato Lógico, Gatafunho, Bichinho de conto, Bags of Books or Gato na Lua) associated with the recognition of the pictorial component and the aesthetic-pedagogical nature of picturebooks, it has become a breeding ground for highly original and bold experiments.

The development of the modern form of the picturebook was in full swing in the early 1960s in a number of European countries (such as England, France or Spain) and the United States, as a result of the evolution of graphic arts and the influence of other arts such as painting and cinema (or other forms of expression, such as advertising, for example). The classic names of Bruno Munari, Leo Lionni, Tomi Ungerer, Maurice Sendak, Eric Carle can be highlighted, among others, along with the contemporary picturebooks of Anthony Browne, David Wiesner, Jutta Bauer, Emily Gravett or Oliver Jeffers, for example. Yet, this only gained expression in Portugal with the pioneering works of Leonor Praça (*Tucha e Bicó* [Tucha and Bicó], 1969), Maria Keil (*As três maçãs* [The Three Apples], 1988; *Os presentes* [The Gifts], 1979) and, on the highest rung, Manuela Bacelar. This visual artist, on whom we will focus attention, holds most responsibility for the actual introduction and consolidation of the format in Portugal. She is a single author of a significant number of works, has received many awards, and her work has many facets.

In addition to the key figures of Portuguese illustration, and the already established names such as Alain Corbel, André Letria, Cristina Valadas, Danuta Wojciechowska, Gemini Luís, Inês Oliveira, Marta Torrão or Teresa Lima, to name just a few exemplary cases, there is another significant group of young creators who have asserted themselves internationally; in fact, as most recently shown by Ana Margarida Ramos (2018: n.p.), two generations can be discerned:

[...] the 'new' illustrators born in the 1970s, among which [...] are included the names of Afonso Cruz (1971), Bernardo Carvalho (1973), Marta Monteiro (1973), Madalena Matoso (1974), Marta Madureira (1977) or João Fazenda (1979), for example, are now joined by a 'brand new' generation, born in the 1980s (and into the '90s), including creators such as Teresa Cortez (1981), Catarina Sobral (1985), Madalena Moniz (1985), Jaime Ferraz (1986) or Joana Estrela (1990).

These new illustrators, with their autonomous creation of picturebooks (with and/or without verbal text), emphasising sole authorship as the highest form of this type of publication, also share a common feature: "a tendency to seek and create a personal, original and easily identifiable style (a kind of visual signature), sometimes with clear implications for future work" (Ramos, 2016: 47).

They explore diverse artistic techniques and styles and play games with volumes, shapes, colours and textures, establishing visual (and frequently semantic) links between images and/or peritext, and furthermore carry out frequently distinctive work at the level of typography and lettering; this is for many their brand image, which enables them to make ever more perfect verbal-iconic products. Other registers can be recognised via the common introduction of games for the reader and the frequent presence of

intertextual references (in some cases, even quite scholarly and sophisticated ones). These stimulate dialogue with other texts and/or arts, such as painting and the cinema, for example, forging connections and revealing their main inspirations.

Intertextuality in children's literature: on the picturebook as a place for *discursive exchange* and its dual audience

Defined as the semiotic interaction of a text with other text(s) (Aguar e Silva 1999), the phenomenon of intertext can be found in children's literature with multiple facets. As in literature in general, this takes place "in innovation and code switching", with frequent use of parody, requiring the reader to activate a demanding framework of artistic and cultural references (Silva 2011: 100). The referencing of other works/voices of canonical, artistic and literary repertoires, or even the (re)interpretation of works or visual fragments of their own authorship (in terms of intratextuality as self-referentiality), are some of the aspects that intertextual practices bring to the fore,⁶ enhancing varied dialogue between texts that gain "autonomation and a renewed reappearance" (Silva 2011: 104).

However, the dialogue with tradition carried on by a work or established by an author with other preceding figures, as suggested above, is not always intentional. It may therefore – instead of rewriting, honouring, quoting, imitating or deviating from previous literature – follow the path or routines of a genre, or may even incur involuntary plagiarism (Díaz Armas 2005, Díaz Armas & Rodrigues 2013). In any event, the recognition of hypotexts – i.e. "an earlier text, which serves as a source of a subsequent text ('hypertext')" (Hoster Cabo, Lobato Suero and Ruiz Campos 2018: 92) – depends significantly on the reader's receptive experiences, their encyclopaedic and/or literary knowledge, in short, "the reader's intertext" as conceptualised by Antonio Mendoza Fillola (2001).

If we remember that the whole text consists of "a *discursive exchange*, a polyphonic fabric in which other texts, other voices and other consciences converge, intersect, metamorphose, corroborate or compete", as Vítor de Aguiar e Silva states (1999: 625), the picturebook, as a mixed mode (verbal and visual) arising from the most daring postmodern experiments, thus proves to be a greater challenge. In fact, this type of publication which is based on the text-image-design triad and converted into a communicative system which can potentially capture the tone of the story and bring the child closer to various visual art forms or works (Díaz-Plaja 2002) encompasses discursive lacunas and plays with intertext of varying levels of explicitness, both verbally and visually (Hoster Cabo, Lobato Suero & Ruiz Campos 2018: 99).

For this reason, also, these books, which are intended for a reader of limited life experience and little knowledge of the world, have implicit references to cultural data from the adult repertoire, to which they give a knowing wink and fulfil their role as

⁶ On intertextual practices in picturebooks, see, among others, the studies of Beckett (2010) and Van Meerbergen (2012).

mediator (Mendoza Fillola & Cerrillo Torremocha 2003; Díaz Armas 2003, 2005; Cerrillo Torremocha 2006). Indeed, Teresa Colomer also states (1996: 30):

The genre that seemed destined to be the simplest and gentlest in children's literature has produced the greatest social and aesthetic tensions because it has made use of the resources of two simultaneous codes and has involved two different audiences.

Another aspect which is reinforced by the experimental paradigm that underlies the picturebook and which has obvious repercussions on reading it, is precisely the question of its intended reader or, in other words, its dual audience (Beckett 2011, 2012, 2014). Indeed, if this type of publication is initially conceived for pre-readers (or non-readers) and another of its specificities lies within the reach of its audience through a mediator, recent developments have fostered "a multitude of forms as a result of a creative 'effervescence'"⁷ (Ramos 2011: 27), thus considerably broadening the spectrum of its readers.

The apparent orientation of certain creative procedures by means of the presumed expectations of the mediator (e.g. embedded narrative structures and metafictional exercise, intertextual references or allusions, deconstruction processes or self-questioning) thus places these books in an intersection between child and adult reader. This is also why American critics forged the concept of *dual addressee* for this kind of *transgenerational* work. Sandra Lee Beckett (2011) places this in so-called (child-to-adult) *crossover fiction*, which is understood as "a unique visual and literary art form that engages young readers and older readers on many levels of learning and pleasure" (Wolfenbarger & Sipe 2007: 273). The complexity of the discursive techniques, the thematic motifs which it intersects (some of which are seen as fracturing or "antipoetic"), as well as the practice of artistic exercises that erudite literature does not countenance, are some of the greatest aesthetic ruptures that the picturebook has advanced so that the reader is thus no longer confined to a particular age group.

The above has provided a brief mapping of what can be considered the latest trends in Portuguese illustration for childhood, though it is not possible to extend this study to other voices and works, given the context and the limits placed upon it. Let us now focus on the picturebooks of Manuela Bacelar (b. 1943), where these same trends – not so brand new after all, as we will show in the next section – also hold a prominent place and inspire new generations.

Echoes of the Western cultural tradition in Manuela Bacelar's work

The unjustified critical silence that fell upon Bacelar's work⁸ for years does not disqualify this artist from the top spot in the group of veteran Portuguese children's illustrators. This is especially true if we remember that it was in the very early 1970s that she was the first Portuguese illustrator with an academic background in the area or the first to dedicate herself exclusively to illustration work. Bacelar's work is marked by a solid course on an artistic/illustrative balance sheet of over fifty texts of esteemed voices

⁷ This term refers to the exacerbated dynamism and activity that the format has been targeting.

⁸ On the work for children of this author, see Rodrigues (2013).

in Portuguese children's literature (and more)⁹ and numerous individual and collective exhibitions, awarded with various national and international distinctions.¹⁰ Her foray into picturebooks in the late 1980s made her, as mentioned earlier, a forerunner and the person most responsible for the diffusion of this type of publication in Portugal. She influenced a wide range of new creators for years to come, especially in her double vocation of writer and illustrator.

Indeed, the “[u]nmistakable artist who has never ceased to pursue novelty and change” (Gomes 2009: 54) offers the current editorial landscape a polymorphous and unarguably remarkable body of work. Her picturebook creations, with their emphasis on the narrative genre, can be divided into autonomous volumes – e.g. *O Dinossauro* [The Dinosaur] (1990), *O Meu Avô* [My Grandfather] (1990), *Bernardino* (2005) and *O Livro do Pedro (Maria dos 7 aos 8)* [The Book of Pedro (Maria from 7 to 8)] (2008), with the stamp of the publisher Edições Afrontamento – and those included in publishing series, like *Tobias* (publisher Porto Editora)¹¹ and *Bublina* (publisher Desbrochar), both published in the 1990s (the former recently relaunched by Edições Afrontamento). They also include two picturebooks with no text, or almost exclusively composed of images, namely *Tobias, os 7 anões e etc.* [Tobias, the 7 Dwarfs and So On.] (1990) and *Sebastião* [Sebastian] (2004). Conceived as model narratives, cohesive and perfectly articulated in their combination of text, illustration and graphic design, her books serve as singular examples of creativity, experimentalism, and quality.

While Bacelar's works play with different types of *mise en page*, the double-page spread is the fundamental space of expression in which her illustrations are most often laid out. Presented in a wide or bleeding format, by virtue of the economy of text (where it is present), her pictorial compositions have a complementary relationship with the verbal narrative. The posture and expressiveness of the characters, the setting and other

⁹ See, among many others, the cases of *Silka* (1984) and *Um artista chamado duque* [An Artist Named Duke] (1990) by Ilse Losa, *História Com Grilo Dentro* [Story With Cricket Inside] (1979) and *O Pajem Não Se Cala* [The Bearer Does Not Shut Up] (1992) by António Torrado, *O menino chamado menino* [The Boy Called Boy] (1983) and *O reino perdido* [The Lost Kingdom] (1986) by Álvaro Magalhães, *Os piratas* [The Pirates] (1986) by Manuel António Pina, *Fita, pente e espelho* [Ribbon, Comb and Mirror] (1991) by Alice Vieira, *António e o príncipezinho* [Anthony and the Little Prince] (1993) by José Jorge Letria, *A nau mentireta* [The Lying Ship] (1991) and *Os ovos misteriosos* [The Mysterious Eggs] (1994) by Luísa Ducla Soares, or *As fadas verdes* [The Green Fairies] (1994) by Matilde Rosa Araújo.

¹⁰ To mention just two examples, the “Golden Apple” from the Bratislava International Biennial and the Gulbenkian Prize for Illustration, which she received in 1989 and 1990, respectively, for her illustrations in *Silka*, by Ilse Losa (1989).

¹¹ The “Tobias” publishing series, on the one hand, has titles intended for pre-readers, namely, *Este é Tobias* [This Is Tobias] (1989), *Tobias Fantasma* [Phantom Tobias] (1989) and *Tobias, os sete anões e etc.* [Tobias, the 7 Dwarfs and So On.] (1990), *Tobias e o Leão* [Tobias and the Lion] (1990), *Tobias às fatias* [Tobias in Slices] (1990) and *Tobias do lado de lá do arco-íris* [Tobias on the Other Side of the Rainbow] (1992), to which we can add others for the 6-8 age group, such as *Tobias encontra Leonardo* [Tobias Meets Leonardo] (1991), *Tobias e as máquinas de Leonardo* [Tobias and Leonardo's Machines] (1991) and *Tobias “o que eu passei para chegar aqui!”* [Tobias “What I Went Through to Get Here!”] (1992).

details of the image in the way they play with colour and shape, and the perspective and contrasts of light and shadow carry strong meanings in the direction of the narrative and the impression of movement and dynamism, arousing questioning, and challenging the reader to keep turning the pages (Fig. 1).¹²



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Fig. 1. Double-page spread from *Tobias, os 7 anões e etc.* (Bacelar 1990)

Sl. 1. Dvostranica iz *Tobias, os 7 anões e etc.* (Bacelar 1990)

The unfolding action of her stories is set, in its entirety, in environments that oscillate between everyday reality and the wondrous universe; sometimes it is in the physical space in which the characters move, and in which the family universe is highlighted, where interpersonal relationships and childhood experiences act as euphoric places of communion and sharing; sometimes in its inner space, a place of dreams and for rambling, suitable for initiation rites, with the underwater kingdom occupying a prominent place. The emerging themes of *topoi*, such as multiculturalism, homosexuality, or family and parental diversity, champion difference. Here, essential elements of human identity intersect, such as childhood and the split (or double) self, dreams, freedom and journeys, especially understood in a symbolic sense, and implicitly associated with the search for a lost paradise, with the eternal return and the golden age.

It is within metafictional practice and the dichotomous structures between reality and fiction – between creation and action – that Manuela Bacelar constructs

¹² On the issue of the page turning in picturebooks, see the studies of Sipe & Brightman (2009), Gressnich (2012), and, more recently, Jacobs (2016).

her universe of characters: we see, on the one hand, the fictionalisation of figures close to the child reader, be they human, humanised or otherwise, wonderful and fantastic animals; the breaking of hallmarks is the basis for the representation or transmigration of other key characters which are uncommon in literature for these potential readers. To exemplify this, the author's metaleptic undertaking stands out in the books in the Tobias publishing series, which, resting as it does on a homodiegetic (and self-referential) narration, configures a kind of illustrator's *poiesis*, as the process of creating, surrendering to (self-)creation for the affirmation and legitimization of her artistic work.

The framework of reference and the dialogical universe in which this creator's work is built are equally noteworthy, especially in the thematic context that occupies us today. It therefore leverages the reading and the questioning of intertextuality – or *transtextuality*,¹³ following Genette's concept (1992) – from its most diverse viewpoints.

Indeed, on its path through different schools and aesthetic tendencies, Bacelar's artistic-literary work comprises a deep analogy (both parodistic and subversive) with its symbolic-religious and profane imagery, offering an allegorical view of a wide range of symbols, images, or myths.

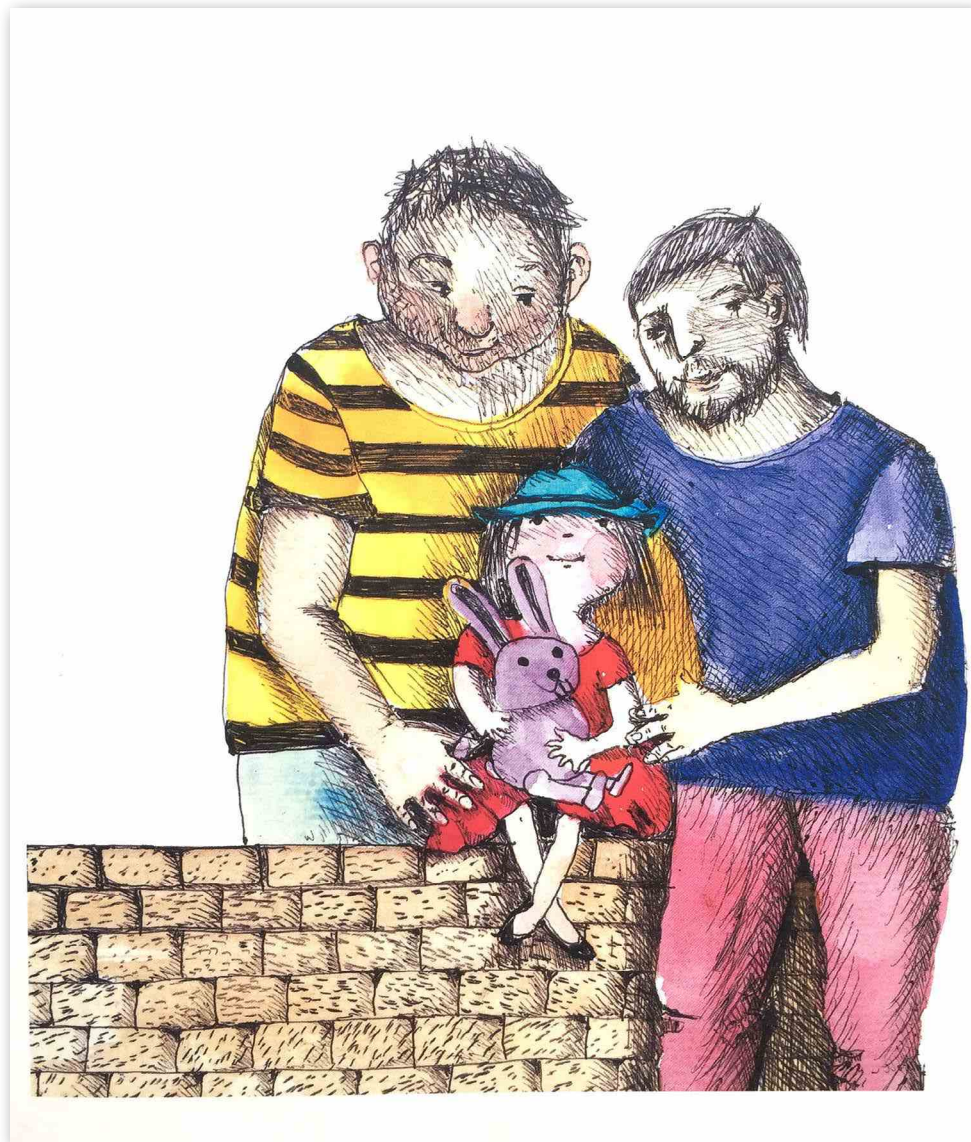
From classical mythology to modern mythology, through references to Greco-Latin art, Gothic painting and carnivalesque representations, or in various homages to Renaissance painting among others, Bacelar's work is a rich source of artistic inquiry. It brings the reader, openly and playfully, into a varied circle of fundamental names and works of the Western cultural tradition and a history of universal art. Her multimodal works include other pagan symbols, at the thematic level, together with iconographic recreation, and sometimes the very naming of the characters they fictionalise are extended by humour and parody – even, at moments, touching on nonsense. They also contain a vast number of biblical intertexts, which not only implies a set of moral/ideological concerns with a disguised tone of irony, but also reflects a Protestant reading of religion. While in some cases this kind of allusion may not prove so obvious or conclusive, in others it is practically systematic, arising in an almost clearly stated manner by the reiteration of various archetypal elements of the sacred figures alluded to, as well as by the inclusion of other subtle details that act as discreet signals to the reader (by which I mean not just and not even primarily children).

It does not seem fortuitous that in *O livro do Pedro* [Peter's Book], for example, when the protagonist, Maria (Mary)¹⁴ tells the story of her childhood to her adoptive parents, Manuela Bacelar chooses to name them after Pedro (Peter) and Paulo (Paul),

¹³ According to Gérard Genette, transtextuality is the “textual transcendence of the text”, a more inclusive term than intertextuality that describes “all that sets the text in relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts” and it “covers all aspects of a particular text” (Genette 1992: 83–84).

¹⁴ Nor does the anthroponym attributed to this character appear to be born of accidental circumstance, since, as is well known, Mary, as the progenitor of Jesus, occupies the leading biblical place, symbolising essentiality; this would justify its prominence in the volume under discussion, as well as its visual prominence in relation to other characters. Also in this regard, note the epilogue of the work, particular the fact that Maria is preparing to “give birth” on Christmas Eve.

the two greatest heroes in the history of Christianity, as founders of the Church (Réau 1998). Here, they are two homosexual characters who fictionalise and who in this story symbolically embody the portrait of the founders of the family (Fig. 2).



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Figs. 2. Illustration from *O livro do Pedro* (Bacelar 2008)

Sl. 2. Ilustracija iz *O livro do Pedro* (Bacelar 2008)

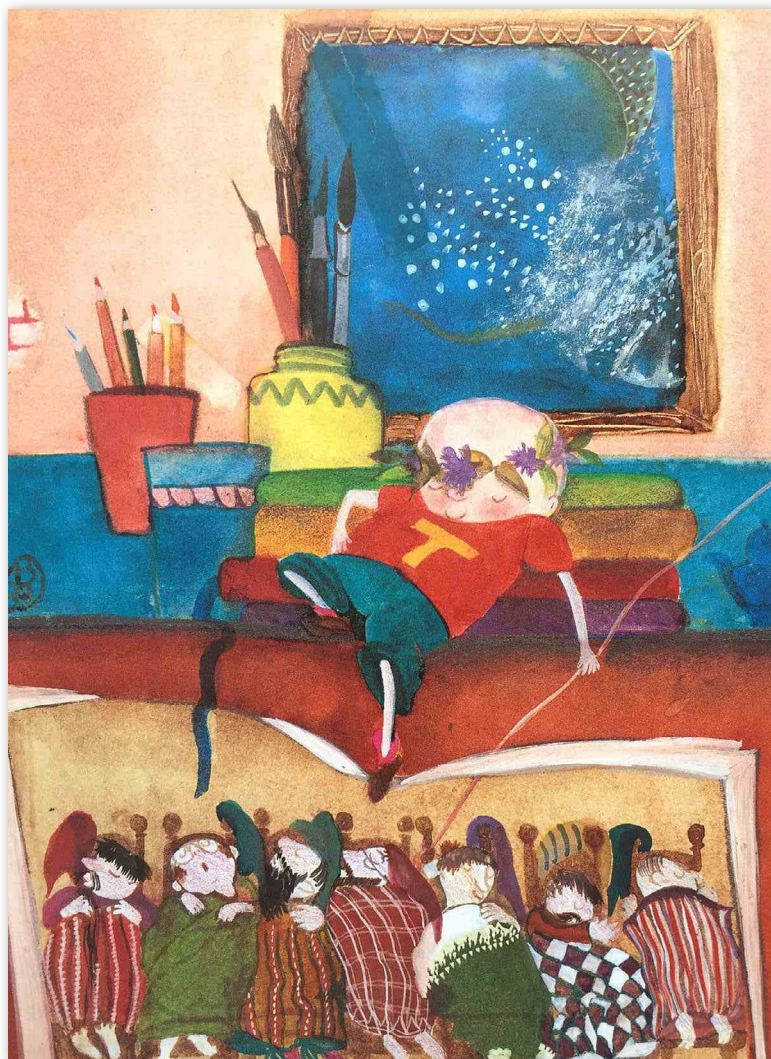
The depiction of three characters around a wall is enlightening in itself. Not by chance does Pedro (the builder of Rome) appear behind the wall, while Paulo is in front of him and below – in a kind of representation, perhaps, related to the Escape from Damascus and the subsequent descent of the biblical hero from the walls in a basket (Acts 9: 25). As noted by Gaston Bachelard (1989), the metaphor of the wall not only rests on the duality of protection/limitation, but it also has an affinity with the symbolism of the cave and the “feminine and passive element of the matrix” (Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1994: 464). In addition to an inevitable likeness to the image of the Holy Family, the very centrality of the girl who is the leading figure, sitting on the wall and between the male characters, may symbolise unity and a sense of security and stability.

Indeed, by embracing sceptical humour and by using paradox, irony, and satire, *O livro do Pedro* seems to reveal a certain motivation for parodying¹⁵ religion, as well as somehow criticising contemporary society. It does this both with the representation of the characters and the type of family it mirrors – subverting the canonically associated paradigmatic image of the two crucial figures of the early Christian Church.

With their great affinity to each other, the iconography of profane art in its reinterpretation of religious art also has a strong presence in Bacelar’s work. As well as numerous allegorical references (equally charged with parodic humour) to Renaissance art and Greco-Latin mythology, it manifests in a tribute to a varied circle of notable artistic figures from different centuries and countries: from its semblances to rock art to recalling modern artworks (such as those of Gustav Klimt, Salvador Dali, Vincent Van Gogh, etc.), to references to classical art and Greco-Latin mythology (with allusions to Bacchus and bacchanals) (Fig. 3), painting and medieval architecture (with references to Gothic art or Carnival representation), or even in various homages to Renaissance painting (by Leonardo Da Vinci or Sandro Botticelli, for example), mannerism and the Baroque, particularly Diego Velázquez.

One of the greatest influences on Bacelar’s artistic creation was surely the work of the Franco-Russian surrealist painter Marc Chagall (1887–1985), which we can see reflected at different levels in *O dinossauro*. As in Chagall’s painting, the artist’s illustrations show a strong poeticism, pervaded by mythology and mysticism (Baal-Teshuva 2008: 10). In celebration of the subconscious and dreams, frequently rooted in childhood memories, Bacelar’s illustrations are populated with fantastic creatures recreated in environments and stances distanced from reality, lending importance to the bizarre, the incongruous, and the irrational. These images are often linked to journeys and dreams, and indeed can be seen as close to the world of the circus, as in *Bernardino* or in other publications of the Tobias series.

¹⁵ It is worth remembering that parody, associated with intertextuality as conceived by Linda Hutcheon (1989: 13), constitutes “one of the most important forms of modern self-reflexivity”. In her view, this modern “form of interartistic discourse” (ibid.), is not only repetition, “it is imitation with critical distance, where irony can benefit and harm at the same time. Ironic versions of ‘transcontextualization’ and inversion are its main formal operators, and the scope of pragmatic ethos ranges from scornful ridicule to reverential homage” (54).



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Fig. 3. Illustration from *Tobias, os 7 anões e etc.* (Bacelar 1990)

Sl. 3. Ilustracija iz *Tobias, os 7 anões e etc.* (Bacelar 1990)

By championing the unconscious and dreams, often rooted in childhood memories, the figurative lyrical and magical scenarios ultimately demonstrate the way in which the artist makes use of the brush to “shape a pictorial form of her fantasies from her life, her memories and her dreams” (Baal-Teshuva 2008: 9).

These intertextual references are obvious to the adult reader, yet perhaps more veiled for the child, who will need a background of reading and receptive experiences to enable interaction with the text and recognise its echoes and rewritings. They not only support character development, but also permit the creation of possible, alternative

worlds with the unexpected (if not unusual) and humorous association of figures, eras, and genres.

Final comments

The intertextual itinerary of Bacelar's work which we have mapped out above, albeit summarised and making no claims to completeness,¹⁶ not only allows us to shed light on the innovative and experimental character of Bacelar's pioneering work – which, in itself, is worth noting, but it also enables us to testify to the potential of this manifestation of the communicative and dialogical condition of picturebooks, presenting evidence of the recent tendencies of Portuguese children's illustration and the main challenges which they face. The reading carried out in exemplifying them elucidates the plurality of interpretations that these hybrid objects are capable of suggesting and which, as they require active participation on the part of the reader, will not be addressed either first or exclusively to a younger audience.

The diverse and manifold profile that is typical of contemporary publishing for children also increases the educational advantages of early and frequent contact with this type of publication; it develops emerging habits of verbal and visual literacy and fosters literary education. Indeed, as Ana Margarida Ramos rightly points out (2018: n.p.):

Practice in reading illustrations, carried out in combination with text, in accordance with elements of visual grammar/rhetoric [...], seeking to confirm what the text says, but also discovering what images add to it, is an activity that develops deep reading skills, but it is also a game.

The development of aesthetic sensibilities, the discovery of literary reading protocols, contact with complex narrative structures and the abandonment of canonical narrative forms, and the use of metafiction and intertextuality have, as we have seen, captured a place in works for child readers, “making reading an interactive and profoundly rich experience” (Ramos 2018: n.p.). Increasingly challenging and consistent, these offers are underpinned by principles of creative experimentalism, innovation and meaningful construction of meaning and they contribute to a paradigm shift in literature – and illustration – for young Portuguese readers; they are progressively generating recognition of their value as quality aesthetic objects.

Finally, the hope is that this paper can contribute to an understanding of what constitutes new challenges for Portuguese children's illustration – and the picturebook in particular – and that this moment of reflection will also become, in a timely manner, a place of just and deserved tribute to its most important creator in Portugal, who recently completed the 30th year of her artistic career in writing and illustrating picturebooks.

¹⁶ Although the limits of the article do not allow us to extend our analysis, its comparative study with others similar ones (as they are known in Sweden, Norway, England, France or Spain, etc.) would be of interest, with a view to distinguishing the Portuguese panorama in a postmodernist trend in the picturebook scene that can be found in several countries around the same period.

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Novi izazovi portugalske ilustracije za djecu: intertekstualnost i višemodalnost

Cilj je ovoga rada osvrnuti se na neke od aktualnih trendova u portugalskoj ilustraciji za djecu, s naglaskom na intertekstualno čitanje slikovnica Manuele Bacelar, preteče tvorca takvih knjiga u Portugalu. Na temelju diskurzivne međuovisnosti teksta i slika, promatraju

se stilski i pripovjedni postupci u nužnoj artikulaciji s vizualno/grafičkim i materijalno/peritekstualnim aspektima. Ističe se njihov potencijal u kompoziciji djela i izgradnji njegove višestruke semioze te se donose zaključci o zahtjevima u pogledu čitanja, kao i utjecaju na stvaranje kompetentnih i autonomnih čitatelja. U osloncu na moderna književna strujanja u postmodernističkoj estetici, ovaj rad razmatra slikovnice kako s tehničke tako i s kompozicijske točke gledišta te prikazuje neke od formalnih retoričkih, stilskih i tematskih značajki opusa spomenute nagrađivane umjetnice.

Ključne riječi: ilustracija, intertekstualnost, višemodalnost, peritekst, slikovnica, postmodernizam, Manuela Bacelar