

4.4 In Conclusion ...

In *Remediation: Understanding New Media*, Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin offer the following consideration:

In this last decade of the twentieth century, we are in an unusual position to appreciate remediation, because of the rapid development of new digital media and the nearly as rapid response by traditional media. Older electronic and print media are seeking to reaffirm their status within our culture as digital media challenge their status. Both new and old media are invoking the twin logics of immediacy⁴⁴³ and hypermediacy⁴⁴⁴ in their efforts to remake themselves and each other.⁴⁴⁵

In addition to this, Bolter and Grusin remark that nowadays no medium is an island and, consequently, they define remediation as a process in which “what is new about new media comes from the particular ways in which they refashion older media and the ways in which older media refashion themselves to answer the challenges of new media.”⁴⁴⁶

According to Kimberley Reynolds, picturebooks are particularly responsive to remediation. In *Radical Children's Literature* (2007), in fact, she states that “picturebooks are responding to new media and technologies through experiments in form and format in ways that are significantly affecting the aesthetics of visual narrative.”⁴⁴⁷ As far as this issue is concerned, in *Crossover Picturebooks* (2012) Sandra L. Beckett remarks that the exploitation and exploration of new formats, techniques and media made by picturebooks is a mutual process, because “the picturebook appropriates from other media just as it does from other literary genres”⁴⁴⁸ while at the same time new media appropriate from picturebooks. This dynamic reciprocity is also underlined by Nadia Crandall, when she says that in response to new media “contemporary writers will

⁴⁴³ “A style of visual representation whose goal is to make the viewer forget the presence of the medium (canvas, photographic film, cinema, and so on) and believe that he is in the presence of the objects of representation.” Bolter, Jay David, Grusin, Richard, *Remediation: Understanding New Media*, cit., p. 273.

⁴⁴⁴ “A style of visual representation whose goal is to remind the viewer of the medium.” *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁴⁴⁷ Reynolds, Kimberley, *Radical Children's Literature: Future Visions and Aesthetic Transformations in Juvenile Fiction*, Handmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p., 38.

⁴⁴⁸ Beckett, Sandra L., *Crossover Picturebooks: A Genre for All Ages*, cit., p. 312.

continue to deconstruct and reinvent the process of storytelling as they attempt to encompass entirely new fields of knowledge and new ways of thinking about our humanity.”⁴⁴⁹

As already pointed out, Tim Burton is not only a writer or a director, but also and especially a “visual storyteller”, who is constantly deconstructing and reinventing the past tradition of grotesque and Gothic children’s book illustration embodied in the work of the artists previously taken into consideration. As a matter of fact, through the visual and contrastive comparison of Burton’s work with the picturebooks realised by the illustrators taken into consideration, I have tried to provide full evidence of the ways in which the American artist appropriates and remediates a past tradition. Exploiting grotesque and Gothic children’s picturebooks through the use of new media, Burton explores their limitless possibilities, bringing them towards an unexplored area – in fact, from Wonderland to Burtonland.

In addition to this, Burton succeeds in keeping alive an important feature of picturebooks which has been identified with the imaginative activity. In *Phantasmagoria* Marina Warner makes reference to Aristotle’s *De Anima*. Here Aristotle says that the soul never thinks without a mental image. Aristotle’s word for soul is *psyche*, while the word for the mental image is *phantasma*. Thus, according to Marina Warner, it could be possible to state that the *psyche* does not think without phantasms. Tim Burton’s phantasms are his sketches and drawings which, in most cases, could be considered as wordless picturebooks. As a consequence, despite the fact that Burton’s imaginative universe includes his own pictures, this does not prevent the beholders from creating their own imaginative universe. In fact, if we agree with Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott when they say that “as soon as words and images provide alternative information or contradict each other in some way, we have a variety of readings and interpretations”,⁴⁵⁰ then we have to notice that this is particularly valid for wordless picturebooks, in which the beholders have to fill a lot of missing gaps. Thus, in many instances, Burton’s imaginative universe stimulates “the literacy of the imagination”,⁴⁵¹ because it is an

⁴⁴⁹ Crandall, Nadia, “Cyberfiction and the Gothic Novel”, in Jackson, Anna, Coats, Karen, McGillis Roderick, eds., *The Gothic in Children’s Literature: Haunting the Borders*, cit., pp. 39-56, p. 55.

⁴⁵⁰ Nikolajeva, Maria, Scott, Carol, *How Picturebooks Work*, cit., p. 17.

⁴⁵¹ Cfr. par. 1.3.

“example of imaginative activity, as a response to conditions of disconnection and isolation.”⁴⁵² As stated by Marina Warner, “seeing and visualizing bring personal consciousness into play and demand active engagement, interpretation, and shaping, not passive receptivity.”⁴⁵³

⁴⁵² Magliozzi, Ron, “Tim Burton: Exercise the Imagination”, in Magliozzi, Ron, He, Jenny, eds., *Tim Burton*, cit., p. 14.

⁴⁵³ Warner, Marina, *Phantasmagoria: Spirit Visions, Metaphors, and Media into the Twenty-first Century*, cit., p. 121.

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