

# Research on Illustration Creation of Children's Picture Books

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**Abstract:** *The Children's picture books are an important tool for children's education. Illustrations of children's picture books play an important role in improving children's cognitive ability, discrimination awareness and Intellectual thinking. Based on this, this paper analyzes the creation of illustrations of children's picture books. This paper puts forward the importance of role creation, color application, scene design and application of traditional Chinese culture in children's picture book illustration to children's physical and mental development, in order to improve the quality of children's picture book illustration, to meet the needs of children's growth.*

**Keywords:** *children's picture books; illustration research*

## 1. Introduction

The art of illustration is a unique form of visual communication, which is the comprehensive embodiment of the illustrator's unique thoughts and feelings and artistic accomplishment. Lu Xun once said: "Book illustrations, originally intended to decorate books, increase the interest of readers, but that power can assist text greatly, so it is also a kind of propaganda picture." That is to say, illustration has many special functions. An excellent illustrator, on the basis of a deep understanding of the connotation of words, can use the language of illustration to reasonably express, depict and enrich the content and characters of literary works and enhance the reading value of books by giving full play to his rich imagination and association.

## 2. Study the significance of illustration in children's picture books

With its simple and intuitive artistic charm, illustration is widely used in all kinds of books, such as children's picture books. The readers of children's picture books are children with rapid physical and mental development and certain acceptance ability. In the process of reading, they will regard the illustrations in picture books as an effective way to perceive the unknown world. They will recognize and distinguish the object modeling, color tendency and emotional factors in the illustrations by virtue of their curiosity and imagination for all things. To improve your ability to see and understand the world. Children's picture book illustrations, as an important medium for information dissemination, carry the important mission of helping children to recognize new things, receive new knowledge, meet emotional needs and form a correct outlook on life and values<sup>[1]</sup>. Therefore, it is of great significance to study the illustration design of children's picture books.

## 3. An analysis of the creation of children's picture book illustrations

As a visual communication medium for reading and understanding, illustration has undoubtedly become an important standard for parents to choose books for children. An excellent children's picture book cannot be separated from wonderful illustrations that can produce emotional communication and spiritual interaction with children.

### 3.1 Character creation for children's illustrations

#### 3.1.1 The role creation of children's illustration has obvious age stage

Children's cognition, understanding and learning level of the world have a strong stage. The famous cognitive psychologist Piaget divided children's cognitive behavior into four stages: perceptive motor

stage, preoperational stage, concrete operational stage and formal operational stage. Children at each stage of language development, cognitive expression and understanding ability is different. This requires illustration designers to always uphold a childlike innocence, observe the world from the perspective of children, in the selection of children's books content and illustration design style should be based on the development characteristics of children of different ages to think, improve the applicability of illustration and educational value. At present, the most typical character creation of children's illustrations is rich and changeable shapes. In a story plot, there may be dancing red flowers, singing birds, talking trees, smiling sun and flying clouds. The communication between illustration works and children's mind can only be realized by starting from the cognitive and developmental characteristics of children.

Imaginative role modeling techniques in children's illustrations inherit the aesthetic expression and emotional experience of children's emotions, which directly affects the direction of children's psychological cognition and emotional formation. For example, *Three Little Pigs* this children's picture book is for children under the age of 3 -- 6 years old, the characters in the book both smart and cute dual characteristics: the mother pig, honest and clever pig baby, ferocious face of the Wolf and so on. Children in this age group have preliminarily developed their abstract and summary thinking and improved their ability to distinguish specific images of things. While effectively conveying the information of the story, these distinctive animal shapes in the book enable children to understand the faces of good and evil, resulting in the contrast between good and bad, and arousing the emotional resonance in their hearts.

The core readers of this children's picture book *It doesn't Matter if you Lose*, are children around 6 years old. At this stage, children's cognitive ability and awareness of discrimination are strengthened, and their intellectual thinking is gradually formed. When children read this book, they first pay attention to the colorful, cute and exaggerated little hero Bois. Bois in the book is endowed with rich and profound thoughts by the illustrator. His expression changes with the changes of the plot from the initial happy to the middle lonely and finally resolute. In the process of interesting reading, children can not only feel the ups and downs of the story, but also gain knowledge and understand the truth of continuing efforts after failure, and guide children to form a correct value orientation through reading pictures. As Bois says in this book, "It doesn't matter if you lose, start again!". It can be seen that the positive illustration content will guide the children at this stage to gradually transition from image thinking to intellectual thinking, and even the deeper level of text information.

### **3.1.2 The role creation of children's illustration has exaggerated personification**

The amiable and exaggerated personified character images in children's illustrations can arouse children's interest. This kind of interesting design is not only conducive to the development of children's thinking and cognitive ability, but also enables children to get emotional satisfaction. In the process of creation, we can use exaggerated expression techniques to exaggerate and strengthen the image, expression, clothing and other features of the object of creation, so as to make the illustration more visual impact, leave a strong and distinct role impression on children, and meet their emotional needs full of fantasy in the process of recognizing the world. At the same time, we can anthropomorphize various things according to needs, and follow the development law of children's psychological cognition on the basis of giving vivid vitality to the picture, so as to make the perfect combination of language and image, while realizing the effective transmission of information, inspire children's beautiful imagination and infinite association of things in the world, and gradually feel and understand the world. For example, in the children's picture book *Little Gecko Borrows a Tail*, the protagonist of Little Gecko: The round head is inlaid with a pair of bright and intelligent big eyes, the glossy curved eyelashes slightly upturned, the exaggerated big mouth with the upturned mouth, and then embellish the cheeks slightly shy blush, like a charming and graceful girl, shy and shy, yellow short-sleeved T-shirt with black and white striped vest, immediately highlights the small gecko lovely external shape, Add the cute amiable affinity and positive and brave attraction of the little gecko, so that every story is lifelike.

### **3.1.3 The role creation of children's illustration needs rich imagination**

Imagination is a special form of thinking, which is based on reality but beyond reality. It can promote people to carry out various practical activities creatively. As a guiding function of children's picture book illustration, it is particularly important to reflect and cultivate its rich imagination<sup>[2]</sup>. Illustrators should make full use of illustration as a tool to convey information to expand the beautiful imagination of the world, use solid painting foundation and unrestrained imagination to enrich the content of children's picture books and make the emotional atmosphere of the pictures more vivid and

full, analyze the inner activities of the characters through association and imagination, and find the internal correlation between the story content and the actual life, so can stimulate children's curiosity. This can not only enlighten children's thoughts, guide children to build their own spiritual world, but also cultivate children's aesthetic and reading ability, to provide indispensable spiritual food for the development of children's psychological cognition. For example, in the children's picture book *Winnie the Pooh*, there is such a story plot: Kangaroo Bean and his mother invite their friends to their home, but the kangaroo mother's cookies to entertain the guests fail to be made with improper materials, and the kangaroo mother is particularly upset. But instead of criticizing Mother Kangaroo, the friends shared their own food with mother Kangaroo and mother Kangaroo. The plot probably should have ended there, but with the clever help of the illustrator, the plot takes a new twist: The cute animals found that the failed cookies were not edible, but each had a unique shape and bright color, which made them suitable for decoration. Looking at the Christmas tree decorated by the cookies, the frustration of the kangaroo mother disappeared. This story hopes that children can feel the emotional development of mother kangaroo in the story, understand the clever and witty side of small animals, and perceive how to regulate and manage their emotions in life. Let the children find their own similarities from the story, imagine if one day they also suffered setbacks, cannot blindly immersed in failure, to analyze and solve the problem from another Angle, understand the blessing in disguise, realize the effectiveness of children's reading and thinking ability training.

### **3.2 The use of color in children's illustrations**

Children's perception of color mainly comes from intuition. Their cognition and feeling of things often come from the colors of the things they contact and observe. Bright and sprightly colors have strong appeal and are easier for children to accept, which is an important factor that cannot be ignored in children's cognitive development<sup>[3]</sup>. The matching of hue, brightness, warmth and purity of colors in children's illustrations can produce different artistic conception and atmosphere, and give children different psychological feelings and visual effects. In the illustration design of children's picture books, the three primary colors of red, yellow and blue are mostly used as the keynote to fully meet the emotional needs of children at this stage of safety and warmth from the aspects of purity, brightness and contrast. The children's version of picture book *The Magic Brush Ma Liang* uses warm, positive colors as the keynote throughout the scene. The fiery red sun, orange-red sky, orange-yellow earth, the magic brush with golden light, the dark red hair accessories and purple clothes worn by Ma Liang can form a bright contrast with the blue of corrupt officials sinking into the sea, which arouses children's emotional resonance. It has been proved that children around the age of 5 have the need for color expansion, and natural colors such as orange, pink and green appear brightly in illustrations. After the age of 6, children begin to pursue the authenticity and details of the picture, and the aesthetic color is more and more consistent with the natural world, such as the red sun, blue sky and green grass, which are easier for them to accept. For example, the picture book of *Gollum Gollum* is aimed at children around 6 years old. The color processing in the story of *Moving Cake Together* is closer to the natural reality. The illustrator uses a variety of expression techniques to depict various natural scenes in the plot: a group of red colored ants in brown clothes work together to carry a cream cake with red strawberries on a path with green grass and flowers in full bloom; A few delicate and lovely yellow chicks with pale red combs on their heads dance merrily on the green grass; A clean and clever dog goes to a store to buy things. There are yellow butter bread, green beer, red ham sausage and yellow orange on the shelves. The color processing of each picture is close to reality, harmonious and warm, and the color atmosphere created is also in line with the cognitive and aesthetic needs of children in this age group for the objective world.

### **3.3 Scene design of children's illustration**

Children's picture books are the enlightening books for children's aesthetic and cognitive development. All content in children's picture book illustration except character design belongs to scene design. Scene design is an important visual element to show the content and plot of illustration, as well as the emotional expression of illustrator. In the process of illustration creation, designers can shape various scenes in line with aesthetic laws according to their understanding and imagination of the story. Scene design should not only explain the background content such as the time and place of the story, but also construct the deep character emotion and environment atmosphere in the visual space, to show the life breath and specific emotions conveyed by the illustration characters in the process of story development. Designers can not only create lively and cheerful scenes through bright and sprightly color matching, but also rationally arrange visual elements through novel and unique creative

composition, accentuate the emotions of the characters and shape the characters' personalities, realize the interdependent relationship between the role shaping of illustrations and scene design, and convey the profound meaning and truth that designers want to express, so as to develop children's ability to recognize and understand the unknown world. For example, in the children's picture book *The Four Seasons of the Earth*, there is such a vivid scene: on a golden land, there are many lush potato seedlings growing. The dark green and robust seedlings and light green leaves bring us a vibrant scene. A few hard-working little bees carrying baskets, are flying around the field. They are so busy. Along the line of sight we look down, the end of the seedling are different forms of vigorous roots buried deep in the ground. They are thick, thin, long and short. They try to stretch around in order to absorb nutrition. If you look carefully, you will find that there are a lot of potatoes on the root. They are large, small, long and round.....Look! And a cute little mouse is making a hole next to a potato... Through the screen, we can analyze: The golden color creates the joy of harvest, while the rich green color symbolizes the continuation of life. The bees carrying baskets and mice making holes show the busy life scene and increase the interest of the picture. The busy, cheerful, childlike and lively atmosphere and the novel composition make the theme of the picture clear, which not only conveys the plot development of the story. It also arouses children's perception and thinking about the real world: for example, the stem and leaves of a potato grow on the surface of the earth, while the underground is the home of the potato. Hard-working bees bear the important mission of pollinating potato flowers; Clever mice will also put their home in the field, there are plants to shelter, to provide a guarantee for their safety. It can be seen that colorful and interesting scene design in children's illustrations can create an infinite fantasy space for children and stimulate the improvement of children's imagination and creativity.

### ***3.4 The application of children's illustrations to traditional culture***

Children are the hope of the motherland, children's picture books are the soil to cultivate the future of the nation. The market prospect of children's picture books with profound tradition and distinct national characteristics is getting wider and wider. China has a long history and culture, and the folk traditional arts are rich and colorful, such as calligraphy, shadow play, Peking Opera facial makeup, paper cutting, traditional Chinese painting, etc., whose unique shape, gorgeous color combination, and incomparable expression techniques are all materials that children's illustrations can learn from and use. From the form of expression, Chinese folk paper-cut art, with its regional cultural characteristics, is suitable for children's illustration. The style of paper-cut works is rough and simple, the shapes are free and clear, the patterns are romantic and vivid, and the colors are fresh and thick. They transcend the original aesthetic laws of natural scenery and emphasize the visual effects of modeling. Both animals and plants are integrated into new emotions and vitality by the artist. With the help of the designer's unrestrained imagination and anthropomorphic expression techniques, the artistic theme of joy and well-being is expressed vividly, naturally and interestingly through superb tailoring techniques, which opens up a road of national characteristics for the development of children's picture books. From the expression content to consider, the Spring Festival theme of children's illustrations can reasonably use firecrackers, Spring Festival couplets, lanterns, New Year pictures and other materials to combine, from which to select the visual elements most easily understood and accepted by children to depict the picture, such as children chasing firecrackers; Children follow their parents stick couplets; The children use all kinds of colored paper to make lanterns and light candles; Friends gather together to paint New Year pictures, which not only enrich the content of the picture but also convey the characteristics of happy reunion of the Spring Festival, so that children can feel the difference of traditional national festivals in the lively atmosphere. From the perspective of expression techniques, we can adopt the leading Chinese painting, such as meticulous brushwork techniques, freehand brushwork techniques, white painting techniques, etc. Chinese painting is not subject to the constraints of light source, perspective and projection, and has the beauty of "Use appearance to show spirit, the little trumps the big, keep the white against the black". Reasonable use of children's illustrations can reflect the strong national culture and unique national art style. It is helpful to shape the children's artistic image in the meaning and thought-provoking, and build a spiritual paradise with happiness and strong national flavor for children. For example, the image of Sun Wukong, the hero of the children's picture book *Uproar in Heaven*, is created by using the art form of Chinese Peking Opera facial makeup with unique national characteristics. The designer uses exaggerated and deformed art to inlaid Sun Wukong's golden eyeshadow and bright green eyebrows on his red cheeks like fairy peaches, highlighting the character characteristics of Sun Wukong's "blazing eyes" and "heroic loyalty". A top-down with dramatic clothing: green scarf, yellow small shirt, tiger skin pattern skirt, bright red pants, appropriate black ankle boots, etc are through bright colors and fantastic imagination to vividly shape the image of Sun Wukong's righteousness, to create the beauty of the image of opera characters. On the one hand,

this kind of creation technique with national emotion arouses children's interest in reading and thirst for knowledge of traditional culture. On the other hand, it adds distinct national characteristics and vigorous vitality to children's picture books, providing a broader space for the development of national culture.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The illustration design of children's picture books should not only meet the aesthetic psychological characteristics of children but also meet the cognitive development requirements of children. Not only to arouse children's strong interest in reading, but also to improve children's rich imagination and creativity. Illustration designers should think about children's aesthetic taste, observation and attention from multiple perspectives, so that children's picture books can shoulder the multi-layer responsibility of knowledge dissemination, emotional education and aesthetic satisfaction, and use exquisite picture book illustrations to lead children to feel and understand the world faster and better.

#### **References**

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