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VISUAL METAPHOR IN PARATRANSLATION OF LITERARY IMAGE

Дослідження розширює вивчення паратрансляції ілюстрованої літератури, висвітлюючи способи, у яких візуальна оповідь перетинається з текстовим перекладом, створюючи багаторівневі та динамічні мережі смислів. У роботі здійснено мультимодальний і діахронічний аналіз байок Жана де Лафонтена та їх перитекстів із особливим акцентом на різноманітних візуальних інтерпретаціях, запропонованих ілюстраторами в різних історичних і культурних контекстах. Метафора постає ключовим інструментом зв'язку в цьому процесі, функціонуючи на лінгвістичному та візуальному рівнях для посередництва смислу й утворення нових шарів інтерпретації.

Стаття має на меті визначення складної взаємодії між текстовими та візуальними елементами в ілюстрованій літературі, зосереджуючи увагу на ролі паратрансляції та метафори у формуванні значення в різних мовних, культурних та історичних контекстах. Зокрема, прагнемо дослідити, як ілюстрації, перитекстуальні елементи та мультимодальні стратегії у байках Жана де Лафонтена сприяють створенню, трансформації та інтерпретації нарративного змісту, а також як ці процеси полегшують міжкультурну інтерпретацію, залучення читачів і динамічну еволюцію оповідань протягом часу. Для цього залучені герменевтичний та семіотичний підходи та *методи* мультимодального і перекладацького, аналізу.

Дослідження пропонує типологію перитекстуальних стратегій і розглядає, як у них працює метафора, формуючи взаємини між образом, текстом і читачем. Простежуючи еволюцію візуальних інтерпретацій поряд із перекладеними версіями байок, аналіз показує, що ілюстрація виступає не вторинним супроводом, а активним агентом переконфігурації нарративного смислу. У цьому сенсі перитекст і метафора є не периферійними, а конститутивними елементами літературної комунікації, які трансформують спосіб, у який історії передаються, сприймаються та переосмислюються в часі й культурах.

У центрі цього дослідження – теоретична рамка паратрансляції, осмислена у діалозі з аналізом паратекстів і перитекстів Жерара Женетта. Такий підхід виходить за межі традиційних уявлень про лінгвістичну еквівалентність, охоплюючи матеріальні, графічні та просторові виміри смислотворення. У цій перспективі розглядається, як ілюстрації, паратекстуальні елементи та вибір композиції формують семантичне й культурне посередництво тексту, впливаючи на інтерпретацію читачем нарративного простору, динаміки персонажів та емоційного тону крізь мовні й візуальні межі.

Наш аналіз доводить, що простір у байці є не пасивним тлом, а динамічним, соціально й культурно сконструйованим елементом, зумовленим інтерпретативною рамкою та тілесним досвідом глядача. Такі візуальні стратегії, як часткове зображення або повне пропущення образу верблюда, змінюють емоційний і символічний реєстр нарративу. Замість того, щоб означати лише відсутність, ці пропуски функціонують як паратрансляційні інтервенції, які акцентують абстракцію та запрошують до відкритої інтерпретації, переосмислюючи афективний ландшафт байки.

Порівнюючи більш репрезентативні візуальні стратегії з інтерпретативними, дослідження виявляє розмаїття підходів до смислотворення у візуальних перитекстах та їхню здатність посередничати й трансформувати нарративну значущість. Порівняльне прочитання оригінальних і перекладених текстів додатково показує, як мовні нюанси взаємодіють із візуальними метафорами, переконфігуруючи нарративний простір і тематичні акценти. У такий спосіб ілюстрації постають як втілені метафори, що перекладають абстрактні концепти й емоційні стани у культурно зумовлені візуальні форми.



У підсумку результати підкреслюють центральну роль паратрансляції та метафоризації в осмисленні того, як історії не лише передаються, а й постійно переосмислюються крізь мови, медіа та культури.

Ключові слова: паратрансляція, візуальна метафора, мультимодальна динаміка ілюстрованої літератури, образ, ілюстрація.

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Introduction

Jean de La Fontaine's fables have transcended their 17th century origins to become enduring literary works that continue to captivate readers across cultures and languages. These seemingly simple tales, populated by anthropomorphic animals and moral lessons, operate on multiple layers of meaning that extend far beyond their textual boundaries. The enduring appeal and interpretive richness of La Fontaine's fables stem not merely from their narrative content, but from the complex interplay between text, image, and cultural transmission that occurs through translation and visual representation.

The relationship between literary texts and their visual accompaniments has long been recognized as a crucial factor in shaping reader interpretation and meaning, making processes. When these texts cross linguistic and cultural boundaries through translation, this relationship becomes even more complex, as translators and illustrators must navigate not only linguistic differences but also varying cultural contexts and visual traditions. Understanding how visual elements function alongside translated texts offers valuable insights into the mechanisms of cross-cultural literary transmission and the ways in which meaning is constructed, preserved, or transformed in the translation process.

Building on Genette's notion of the peritext (as textual element) and paratext (as integral term) [Genette, 1997, 1987], the present analysis applies the framework of visual metaphorisation and paratranslation to a selected corpus of La Fontaine's fables, namely *Le Loup et l'Agneau*, *La Grenouille qui veut se faire aussi grosse que le Bœuf*, *Le Renard et la Cigogne*, *Le Loup devenu Berger*, and *Le Chameau et les Bâtons flottants*. These literary works illustrate how peritextual illustrations reconfigure narrative meaning, both in the original French editions and in their translations. In *Le Loup et l'Agneau*, visual peritexts often dramatize the asymmetry of power through spatial composition. The wolf is typically depicted as dominating the frame, looming over the lamb, while the lamb is visually minimized, reinforcing the metaphor of unjust authority. These visual cues, sometimes more forceful than the verbal narration, orient the reader toward a political or moral interpretation of tyranny. In translated editions, however, shifts in wording or emphasis may either harmonize with or diverge from these visual strategies, highlighting how translation interacts not only with language but with the interpretive frame created by illustrations. Similarly, in *La Grenouille qui veut se faire aussi grosse que le Bœuf*, illustrations foreground the grotesque metaphor of overreaching ambition. Visual exaggeration of the frog's inflation, often bordering on caricature, serves as a metaphorical intensification of the verbal text. Depending on cultural and editorial contexts, illustrations might emphasize ridicule, tragedy, or satire, thus reshaping the moral orientation of the fable. When translated, the interplay between verbal economy and visual amplification can alter the balance between humour and critique, showing how peritextual elements actively participate in meaning-making.

Le Renard et la Cigogne and *Le Loup devenu Berger* highlight another dimension of peritextual metaphorisation: the modulation of character identity. In many illustrations, visual cues such as costume, posture, or setting imbue animals with social or ideological roles, framing the narratives as allegories of deceit, disguise, or moral hypocrisy. Translation of the verbal text into different languages may nuance these themes differently, but the peritextual images remain a constant point of negotiation, guiding readers toward specific metaphorical readings.

Finally, *Le Chameau et les Bâtons flottants* reveals the extent to which visual peritext can redefine the perception of the Other. While the verbal text constructs the camel as unfamiliar

and initially threatening, illustrations vary widely: some monumentalize its figure as exotic and imposing, while others domesticate it into harmless ordinariness. This visual metaphorisation repositions the narrative's central tension between fear and recognition. In translation, the images may not always align seamlessly with the linguistic rendering, underscoring the paratranslational challenge of harmonizing verbal and visual layers.

Across this corpus, peritextual illustrations emerge as interpretive mediations that profoundly influence the reception of La Fontaine's fables. They function as metaphorical thresholds that reshape the text's meaning, modulating themes of power, ambition, deception, and otherness. When these fables are translated, the interplay between verbal and visual levels becomes particularly significant: visual metaphorisation can reinforce, complicate, or even contradict the translated verbal narrative. The paratranslational approach thus reveals how meaning is negotiated not only across languages but also across semiotic modes, highlighting the necessity of treating illustrations as integral components of literary translation and reception.

The corpus selected for this study consists of a series of La Fontaine's fables that, beyond their canonical status in French literature, offer rich opportunities for analysing the relationship between text, image, and translation. The selection is based on two criteria: first, the presence of strong metaphorical structures that lend themselves to visual reinterpretation; and second, the diversity of visual traditions across different historical periods and editions. Together, these features allow an **in-depth exploration of how peritextual illustrations act as interpretive thresholds** in multimodal storytelling.

The fables included are *Le Loup et l'Agneau*, *La Grenouille qui veut se faire aussi grosse que le Bœuf*, *Le Renard et la Cigogne*, *Le Loup devenu Berger*, and *Le Chameau et les Bâtons flottants*. These texts were chosen not only for their thematic resonance such as power, ambition, deceit, disguise, and alterity, but also for the extent to which their illustrations vary across time and editions, providing a rich comparative ground.

Le Loup et l'Agneau has been one of the most frequently illustrated fables, with images ranging from classical engravings to modern graphic simplifications. The illustrations emphasize the hierarchy between predator and prey, often staging the encounter in asymmetric spatial configurations that highlight domination, injustice, and inevitability.

La Grenouille qui veut se faire aussi grosse que le Bœuf introduces a different dynamic, where the central visual motif, the swelling of the frog, invites caricatural exaggeration. Artists have treated this metaphor with irony, grotesque humour, or tragic inevitability, depending on editorial and cultural orientations. The wide spectrum of visual renderings reveals how a single verbal motif may be expanded into contrasting visual narratives.

In *Le Renard et la Cigogne*, the focus shifts to hospitality, reciprocity, and deception. Illustrations often underline the contrast between the two animals through their bodily forms and the vessels they use, turning the dinner scene into a symbolic *tableau* of exclusion and cunning. The peritext thus amplifies the moral through compositional strategies that verbal text alone does not fully articulate.

Le Loup devenu Berger exemplifies the theme of disguise and betrayal. Visual traditions often depict the wolf partially concealed within shepherd's attire, oscillating between recognizability and camouflage. These images highlight the instability of identity and the moral implications of hypocrisy, adding layers of meaning that complicate a purely verbal interpretation.

Finally, *Le Chameau et les Bâtons flottants* stands out for its treatment of alterity and perception of the unfamiliar. The camel, seldom encountered in European contexts, is rendered visually in multiple and often contradictory ways: monumental and menacing in some illustrations, almost comic or benign in others. The variability of these depictions foregrounds how illustration acts as a mediator of cultural perception, translating "foreignness" into visual metaphors that reflect editorial or societal perspectives.

Together, these fables form a corpus that demonstrates the central role of visual peritext in shaping interpretation. Their illustrations not only support the verbal text but also create metaphorical extensions that affect the reception and translation of the narratives. By analysing these works across editions and languages, this study highlights the interdependence of text and image within the paratranslational framework.

Aim and Methodology

The present article expands the investigation conducted previously [Khodorenko, 2025] by employing a broader corpus and deepening the analysis, moving beyond the mere observation of image paratranslation. It adopts a broad, diachronic, and cross-cultural perspective, seeking paratranslational evidence and incorporating peritextual elements to construct a paratranslational architecture in the process of language meaning-making. Within this framework, **visual metaphor assumes a central role**, functioning as a cognitive and semiotic tool that bridges textual and visual modalities, facilitates cultural translation, and generates new interpretive possibilities. This approach enables the study to examine how non-verbal peritextual elements and metaphoric strategies influence the verbal level of meaning-making in translation, contributing to the co-creation of layered, multimodal interpretations.

This study *aims* to determine the complex interplay between textual and visual elements in illustrated literature, focusing on the role of paratranslation and metaphor in shaping meaning across linguistic, cultural, and historical contexts. Specifically, it seeks to examine how illustrations, peritextual elements, and multimodal strategies in Jean de La Fontaine's fables contribute to the creation, transformation, and negotiation of narrative meaning, and how these processes facilitate cross-cultural interpretation, reader engagement, and the dynamic evolution of stories over time.

This article employs a qualitative research design, grounded in hermeneutic and descriptive *methodologies* [Flick, 2014; Creswell, Poth, 2018], aimed at exploring the intricate relationship between visual and verbal elements in multimodal narratives. The hermeneutic lens prioritizes a comprehensive contextual understanding, situating the examined works within their cultural, narrative, and historical frameworks. This allows for an interpretation that extends beyond surface, level formal features to include symbolic, emotional, and ideological dimensions embedded in the texts and images. The descriptive component complements this by providing a detailed account of how these multimodal elements interact to construct narrative meaning, highlighting the nuanced communicative mechanisms at play [Jewitt, 2009; Kress, van Leeuwen, 2006].

An integrative, interdisciplinary approach guides the analysis, drawing on advances in translation studies [Ferreiro Vázquez, 2015, 2022; Yuste Frías, 2011; Tymoczko, 2014], visual semiotics [Barthes, 1977; Mitchell, 1994], literary narrative theory [Groensteen, 2013; Genette, 1997], and visual multimodal literature research [McCloud, 1993]. This multifaceted perspective enables an investigation of paratranslation that foregrounds the transformation of spatial representation in multimodal storytelling. The study considers multimodal narrative as a complex site of interaction among visual codes, textual content, and cultural conventions, where meaning is co-produced and reshaped [Bateman, 2008; Forceville, 2005, 2017]. Special attention is given to how visual techniques, such as composition, framing, colour use, and spatial arrangement, serve as carriers of affective, ideological, and cultural meanings, influencing the narrative construction of space [Forceville, Urios Aparisi, 2009].

The corpus was selected purposefully [Patton, 2015] to include, as it was mentioned before, a range of La Fontaine's fables, such as *Le Loup et l'Agneau*, *La Grenouille qui se veut faire aussi grosse que le Bœuf*, *Le Renard et la Cigogne*, and *Le Loup devenu Berger*. These works were chosen because of their rich multimodal complexity and diverse strategies for representing spatial and temporal dimensions, as well as emotional and psychological states. By incorporating varied artistic styles and cultural contexts, the corpus supports a broad exploration of paratranslational processes of mechanisms within multimodal narratives [Bakhtin, 1981; Norris, 2004].

Data triangulation [Denzin, 2017] is employed as a key methodological tool to rigorously examine the complex interplay between different semiotic modes, in particular: visual, verbal, spatial, and symbolic within the selected corpus. By integrating multiple data sources, perspectives, and analytical techniques, this approach allows for a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of how environmental depictions and narrative dynamics function across modes. The aim is to validate and strengthen the findings by cross-verifying evidence, thereby reducing bias and increasing the reliability of interpretations [Flick, 2018].

Through triangulation, the study seeks to demonstrate that multimodal narratives are not isolated textual or visual objects but are dynamic, evolving spaces of meaning-making. These

narratives are shaped by the continuous interaction and transformation of verbal and visual elements through paratranslation, which adapts and reconfigures these elements to resonate within different cultural and linguistic contexts. Specifically, the analysis aims to demonstrate that spatial representations, including both the physical arrangement of elements within images and the emotional or affective spaces they evoke, serve as embedding vessels for conveying various categories of meaning. Special focus is given to psychological and emotional morphs. These meanings actively shape the lived experiential reality of the characters portrayed as well as the interpretive experience of readers or viewers.

Ultimately, data triangulation supports the argument that paratranslation operates as a process of meaning negotiation and transformation across semiotic boundaries, where the interaction between image and text creates a multi-layered narrative space. This narrative space not only transmits information but also mediates emotional and cultural resonances, highlighting the centrality of space as a metaphorical and semiotic medium in multimodal storytelling.

Visual Mediation and Paratranslational Thresholds

G rard Genette, in his seminal work *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* [1997], laid the conceptual foundations for the theorization of the paratext as the “threshold” through which a literary work is received, interpreted, and circulated. Genette emphasized that titles, prefaces, illustrations, and even editorial decisions function as interpretive mediations that orient, guide, and reshape the reader’s engagement with the text. In this perspective, the paratext is not peripheral but central to the interpretive economy of the work, as it determines how a text is framed, legitimized, and experienced by its audience.

Building on Genette’s framework, the field of paratranslation, as developed by Yuste Fr as [2012], underscores the role of translators and editors in mediating cultural transfer through paratextual elements. Translation, from this perspective, extends beyond the strictly verbal level and includes visual, material, and editorial dimensions of textual circulation. Covers, illustrations, typographic decisions, or even promotional discourse all participate in what Yuste Fr as [2011] has described as “the semiotic architecture of the translated text,” shaping both its meaning and reception.

This theoretical framework is particularly relevant when analysing the visual dimension of literature, where illustrations, graphic layouts, and adaptations function not simply as decorative elements but as interpretive layers that reposition the meaning of the work. The visual interpretations that accompany a single literary text, whether in its original editions or in translation, can be understood as forms of visual metaphor or modulations of verbal content. Rather than merely illustrating, such representations reinterpret, reformulate, and symbolically shift meaning, offering new perspectives on a work’s concepts, themes, and atmospheres.

In this regard, illustration may be understood as a form of intersemiotic translation in the sense articulated by Jakobson [1959], where verbal signs are transposed into visual signs. As intersemiotic practices, illustrations mediate between text and reader, adapting significance across cultural, editorial, and ideological contexts. By reframing verbal content into images, illustrations act as interpretive commentaries that participate in the dynamic process of meaning, making and reception.

The study of illustrations and other visual paratexts thus reveals the extent to which literary works are multimodally constructed and culturally reframed. Through their visual strategies, these paratextual elements expand the interpretive horizons of the text, creating new thresholds for engagement and situating the work within broader cultural, pedagogical, and ideological frameworks. As Forceville [2005] notes, **multimodal narratives employ spatial and temporal arrangements within images to evoke movement and emotion, producing a rhythm that sustains narrative flow.** In illustrated fables, the visual layout shapes the intensity of action and affect: visual pauses, accelerations, and symbolic variations modulate how events are experienced, not merely represented.

Thus, in works such as *Le Loup et l’Agneau*, *La Grenouille qui veut se faire aussi grosse que le B euf*, *Le Renard et la Cigogne*, and *Le Loup devenu Berger*, illustrations perform a dual function of narration and interpretation. They construct visual metaphors that deepen thematic resonance and guide the reader’s reception. In doing so, they exemplify how paratextual mediation

operates across media, situating illustration at the core of multimodal storytelling and reinforcing Genette's insight into the power of thresholds to shape meaning.

Genette's typology further specifies that the paratext can be divided into peritext and epitext. The peritext refers to all elements materially and spatially contiguous to the text itself, such as titles, subtitles, prefaces, dedications, epigraphs, footnotes, illustrations, typographic design, and covers. These components, although external to the literary text in the strict sense, remain inseparably linked to it and actively guide interpretation [Genette, 1997]. This conceptualization underscores the importance of analysing illustrations as peritextual mediations that structure the reading experience and, in the context of translation, influence both verbal and visual dimensions of cultural transfer. For Genette, peritexts represent the most immediate form of paratextual mediation, since they surround and frame the text in its published form. They act as interpretive signposts, shaping the reader's expectations even before engaging with the main narrative. A title, for example, not only identifies the work but also situates it within a genre or tradition, while a preface might anticipate interpretive strategies, highlight certain themes, or legitimize the author's authority. Similarly, illustrations and other visual components are not mere embellishments but part of what Genette described as a semiotic threshold that establishes how a work is accessed and read [Ibid].

This framework becomes particularly significant when applied to illustrated texts, since the peritext includes the visual dimension as an integral interpretive element. Far from being ornamental, images in peritextual positions (such as frontispieces, vignettes, or plates embedded in the narrative) reconfigure the meaning of the text by offering visual analogies, symbolic associations, or metaphorical reinterpretations. In this way, the study of peritexts opens a space for analysing how visibility contributes to the production and circulation of meaning, and how editorial decisions embed cultural, ideological, and interpretive cues within the material form of the work.

Peritextual Mediation in Multimodal Narratives: How Illustrations Reveal Characters' Inner Worlds

In multimodal narratives, storytelling unfolds on two levels. Alongside the external actions of characters, readers are also invited to follow an internal movement, the emotional and psychological shifts that shape how characters experience events. This inner dimension enriches the narrative by showing not only what happens but also how it is felt and understood. When paired with peritextual elements such as illustrations, layouts, or design choices, this internal movement becomes more visible, guiding readers toward a deeper engagement with the story's affective and cognitive layers. In the fables analysed within this corpus, including *Le Loup et l'Agneau*, *La Grenouille*, *Le Renard et la Cigogne*, and *Le Loup devenu Berger*, internal movement is expressed through a variety of visual and paratextual strategies. Illustrations employ facial expressions, posture, colour schemes, symbolic motifs, and spatial arrangement to convey the evolving emotional states of characters. For example, subtle changes in the wolf's gaze or stance in *Le Loup et l'Agneau* suggest aggression, doubt, or relentlessness, guiding the reader through the narrative's psychological tension. Similarly, in *La Grenouille*, the frog's facial expressions and gestures encode fear, determination, and surprise, visually narrativizing the progression of the story's affective dynamics.

Paratranslation mediates how internal movement is conveyed across linguistic and cultural contexts. As narratives travel between languages or audiences, visual and textual elements undergo adaptation, affecting the representation and interpretation of emotional states. Adjustments in image composition, colour, framing, or the inclusion or omission of specific visual details can accentuate or soften particular affective tones. For instance, translations of *Le Renard et la Cigogne* may emphasize desperation through darker shadows or altered gestures, reshaping readers' engagement with the characters' inner states.

A typology of peritexts can clarify the ways in which internal movement is constructed and mediated. Following Genette [1997], peritexts can be classified into four main categories:

1. Illustrative peritexts: images that depict characters' actions, expressions, and interactions, functioning as a form of visual commentary on the verbal narrative.

2. Layout and design peritexts: the spatial and temporal organization of text and image, including sequencing, panel structure, and pacing, which shape the reader's perception of movement and rhythm.

3. Colour and symbolic peritexts: the use of colour, shading, and symbolic motifs to modulate affective resonance and signal emotional or thematic shifts.

4. Editorial peritexts: elements such as titles, captions, and framing devices that guide interpretation and foreground particular aspects of the narrative or character psychology.

Table 1

Peritextual Typology and Their Functions in Multimodal Fables

Peritext Type	Description	Examples from Corpus	Function / Contribution
Illustrative peritexts	Images depicting characters' actions, expressions, and interactions; visual commentary on verbal narrative	<i>Le Loup et l'Agneau</i> : wolf's gaze and posture; <i>La Grenouille</i> : frog's changing expressions; <i>Le Renard et la Cigogne</i> : gestures of desperation	Convey internal movement, emotional states, psychological tension; guide readers' affective interpretation
Layout and design peritexts	Spatial and temporal organization of text and image, including sequencing, panel structure, pacing	<i>Le Loup devenu Berger</i> : shift from threatening to calm imagery; sequencing of actions in <i>Le Loup et l'Agneau</i>	Shape perception of movement and rhythm; highlight transitions in mood or narrative tempo
Colour and symbolic peritexts	Use of colour, shading, and symbolic motifs to modulate affective resonance and signal emotional or thematic shifts	<i>Le Renard et la Cigogne</i> : darker shadows to emphasize desperation; <i>La Grenouille</i> : colour contrasts reflecting fear or determination	Reinforce emotional tone; provide visual cues for symbolic or thematic interpretation
Editorial peritexts	Titles, captions, framing elements that guide interpretation and foreground narrative or character psychology	Titles and subtitles; captions in <i>Le Chameau et les Bâtons Flottants</i> ; epigraphs or introductory notes	Contextualize the narrative; direct attention to specific aspects of internal movement or thematic focus; mediate cross-cultural understanding

Through this typology, it becomes evident that internal movement is not limited to character portrayal but emerges as a multimodal effect, constructed by the interplay of textual and visual peritexts. In *Le Loup devenu Berger*, shifts in spatial composition and symbolic imagery visually reflect the transformation of the wolf's character, mapping psychological development alongside narrative action. The internal movement operates as a hermeneutic vector, inviting interpretation and emotional engagement beyond linguistic boundaries.

Internal movement is further shaped by paratranslation, which can emphasize or attenuate affective nuances by modifying image composition, gestures, or spatial arrangement. For example, fables such as *Le Chameau et les Bâtons Flottants* and *La Grenouille* display adaptations where the omission or transformation of visual elements creates interpretive gaps. The deliberate absence of certain figures, gestures, or motifs generates reflective space, prompting readers to consider both presence and absence as meaningful components of narrative and affect.

The theoretical lens of Foucault and Derrida [Foucault, 1970; Derrida, 1997] enriches this reading, highlighting the relationship between knowledge, power, and representation. Foucault [1970] argues that meaning is constructed within discursive and power relations rather than being a neutral reflection of reality. In *Le Chameau et les Bâtons Flottants*, the absence of the camel, a traditional narrative central figure, disrupts established hierarchies, creating space for new interpretive possibilities and prompting readers to attend to the emotional and conceptual implications of absence.

Thus, internal movement in multimodal narratives, as mediated through peritexts and paratranslation, expands the communicative power of fables, allowing readers to navigate characters' emotional and psychological landscapes. Visual peritexts transform simple narrative sequences into multimodal spaces of affective and cognitive engagement, demonstrating how images, layout, and editorial framing collaboratively shape reception across cultures and interpretive contexts.

Derrida's original deconstructive theory [Derrida, 1967] further deepens this perspective by challenging fixed relationships between signs and meanings. He argues that meanings are never stable or fully present; they fluctuate and gain significance in relation to what is absent. In this vein, the absent camel in some paratranslational images embodies Derrida's notion of absence as a productive site of meaning. The visual void forces viewers to engage with the tension between what is shown, such as characters gazing into empty space, and what is withheld, such as the camel's figure. This interplay of presence and absence generates an interpretative dynamic where meaning emerges not only from the explicit elements but also from the silent, unseen components of the image. Similarly, in fables like *Le Loup et l'Agneau* and *La Grenouille*, the notion of absence manifests in how emotional or psychological states are visually suggested rather than overtly depicted. For example, in *Le Loup et l'Agneau*, the wolf's aggressive presence might be visually diminished or partially obscured in some versions, foregrounding instead the lamb's vulnerability and thus shifting the interpretive focus. This selective visibility invites reflection on power relations and emotional dynamics beyond the literal narrative.

In Félix Lorioux's illustration for *Le Loup et l'Agneau*, the wolf is depicted only partially, with just a fragment of its head and ears visible. This deliberate fragmentation diminishes the wolf's visual presence, leaving much of its form and expression to the viewer's imagination. Such a representation shifts the interpretive weight onto the accompanying text, emphasizing the crucial role of the verbal narrative in completing the character's portrayal and intentions. Rather than presenting the wolf in an overtly aggressive or dominant manner, the partial image evokes a subtler, more suggestive menace. This invites the reader to engage in an internal movement, mentally reconstructing the absent parts of the wolf and projecting their emotional responses onto this incomplete figure. The resulting tension and ambiguity enrich the narrative by blending what is visually presented with what is left unsaid, reinforcing the interplay between image and text. From a paratranslational perspective, this visual strategy mediates the narrative differently across cultural contexts, altering how the emotional dynamics of the fable are communicated iconographically. The strategic deployment of absence emerges as a powerful paratranslational device in both Chagall's and Lorioux's illustrations, engaging viewers in a more nuanced and critical interpretation of La Fontaine's fables. In Chagall's depiction of *Le Chameau et les Bâtons Flottants*, the camel is completely absent from the visual field, a deliberate omission that creates a void inviting reflection on what is unrepresented. This absence destabilizes the traditional narrative hierarchy, shifting interpretive attention towards the symbolic and emotional resonances generated by what is missing rather than what is explicitly shown. In contrast, Lorioux's illustration of *Le Loup et l'Agneau* features a partial depiction of the wolf, with only fragments of its head and ears visible. This fragmentation similarly evokes ambiguity and latent threat, prompting viewers to mentally reconstruct the figure and engage more deeply with the narrative's emotional tensions. For some audiences, this partial visibility heightens focus on the lamb, or the moral conflict expressed in the text, illustrating how minimal visual cues can profoundly shape narrative reception.

Both Chagall's and Lorioux's examples illustrate the intricate interplay between verbal and visual modes in constructing narrative meaning and emotional depth within multimodal adaptations. In these works, absence (total in Chagall's case and partial in Lorioux's) functions not merely as a lack but as an active space for interpretive engagement. Visually, these illustrations guide perception along a continuum of presence and absence: empty spaces, fragmented imagery, and carefully directed gazes create a visual rhythm that complements and complicates the verbal narrative. The viewer's attention is drawn along a path defined by what is depicted, what is implied, and what is deliberately omitted, producing a dynamic visual line that structures the reading experience.

From a theoretical perspective, the insights of Foucault [1970] and Derrida [1997] illuminate this process. Meaning is constructed not only through what is present in the visual or verbal text but equally through what is withheld or deferred. In Lorioux's depiction, for example, the absent camel alongside figures oriented toward the horizon generates tension and expectation, inviting viewers to navigate a layered interplay between presence and absence. This visual strategy reshapes spatial and emotional perception, echoing Foucault's notion of knowledge [1970] as mediated by power relations and discursive frameworks, and Derrida's concept of *différance* [1967], wherein meaning emerges through the relational tension of what is said and unsaid.

Paratranslation, as the adaptation of a work across linguistic, cultural, and semiotic contexts, underscores the significance of these visual, perceptual strategies. In translating multimodal narratives, both text and image are subject to processes of decontextualization and recontextualization, whereby visual and verbal elements are interpreted, adjusted, or reconfigured to resonate within new cultural or temporal frameworks. Visual peritexts, such as layout, colour, framing, and symbolic motifs, guide attention, modulate affective response, and ultimately shape how translators and readers interpret the narrative. For instance, the manipulation of empty space, gesture, or gaze in translated editions can intensify or soften emotional resonance, subtly altering narrative perception without changing the verbal text.

The fluidity of meaning emphasized by Derrida reinforces this interpretive openness. Signs, whether verbal or visual, remain in perpetual motion, their significance negotiated in each act of reading or translation [Derrida, 1998]. **Paratranslation, in this context, functions as a methodological lens** to observe how multimodal elements transform, mediate, and continue generating meaning. The ongoing negotiation between presence and absence, between visual line and textual narration, ensures that the narrative remains dynamic, culturally situated, and perceptually rich.

Ultimately, multimodal narrative operates as a paratranslational practice in itself. By integrating verbal and visual codes, it constructs a continuous line of perception that traces characters' movements, emotional states, and spatial interactions. Graphic and linguistic conventions together map the environments inhabited by characters, the trajectories they follow, and the psychological or affective transformations they undergo. In this sense, multimodal narratives not only depict action but actively translate spatial, emotional, and narrative experience across semiotic systems, revealing the central role of visual perception and peritext in shaping meaning across contexts.

The diagram entitled "Line of Visual Perception and Peritext in Paratranslation" represents the sequential stages through which visual elements influence meaning, making in translational processes. At the first level, visual perception refers to the initial act of perceiving visual stimuli, such as illustrations, typography, or layout. This perception is then organized into a visual line, which constitutes a structured pathway of attention and recognition. From this stage, two parallel processes emerge: on the one hand, the visual line directs the reader toward the peritext, that is, the set of textual and paratextual elements [such as titles, images, captions, and design features] that frame and contextualize the main discourse [Genette, 1997]; on the other hand, it enables visual, perceptual interpretation, the cognitive act through which readers attribute meaning to what they see, integrating it into their broader interpretive framework. Finally, these stages converge in paratranslation, the process by which visual and peritextual cues mediate and reshape the reception of the verbal text, particularly in translated or adapted contexts [Yuste Frías, 2011]. The diagram thus illustrates the interdependence between perception, interpretation, and paratextual mediation, emphasizing that translation is not exclusively verbal but multimodal.

LINE OF VISUAL PERCEPTION AND PERITEXT IN PARATRANSLATION

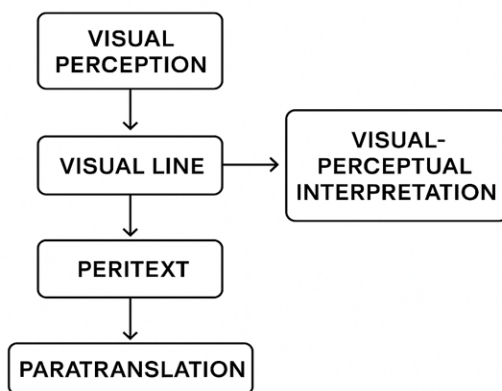


Figure 1. Diagram of visual perception and peritext operating

Within Genette's [1997] framework, illustrations constitute a central component of the peritext, functioning as visual thresholds that guide interpretation and frame the reception of the verbal text. Unlike static typographical elements, illustrations are particularly dynamic in translational and post, translational processes, as their adaptation or substitution can significantly reshape meaning. When an illustration is altered in a translated edition, whether through the modification of imagery, symbolism, or visual emphasis, the verbal component of the text undergoes a parallel shift in interpretation. This occurs because readers construct meaning holistically, integrating verbal and nonverbal cues into a multimodal act of reading [Kress, 2010]. For instance, a satirical cartoon accompanying a journalistic text may reinforce irony in the source culture but, if replaced with a more neutral visual in the translated edition, the verbal discourse loses part of its critical or humorous tone. In this sense, post, translational processes reveal the interdependence between verbal and visual semiosis: the "same" verbal text may not be received as equivalent when the peritextual illustrations are reconfigured. Thus, the visual peritext is not a mere accessory but an active participant in meaning, making, conditioning the reception and ideological positioning of the verbal discourse across cultural and linguistic boundaries.

Within multimodal narrative frameworks, paratranslation transcends the mere depiction of physical space to encompass its layered social, cultural, and symbolic constructions. As in linguistic translation, where meaning is negotiated rather than transferred, multimodal narratives rely on visual and verbal interplay to construct interpretive spaces charged with emotional and ideological meaning. Here, space functions not as a static backdrop but as a dynamic semiotic field, where absence, fragmentation, and positioning operate as visual and verbal metaphors that embody psychological states, emotional dissonance, and symbolic tension. Two illustrative examples of this are Auguste Vimar's 1897 illustration for *Le Chameau et les Bâtons Flottants* and Félix Lorioux's interpretation of *Le Loup et l'Agneau*. In Vimar's rendering, the camel is placed in the foreground with anatomical clarity and expressive posture, while the "mighty fleet" of floating sticks, central to the camel's misjudgement is entirely omitted. This absence transforms a narrative detail into a cognitive void, visually encoding the camel's internal confusion and flawed reasoning. The viewer is invited to participate in this emotional disorientation, encountering the unseen obstacle as a symbolic presence through its very omission. Similarly, Lorioux's depiction of the wolf is characterized by a striking partiality: only the animal's ears and part of its head are shown, looming from the edge of the frame. This incomplete visual presence suspends the viewer in a space of latent threat and psychological tension. The wolf's partial visibility, its fragmented body and absence of gaze, prevents narrative closure and instead emphasizes an emotional field dominated by fear, anticipation, and moral ambiguity. Just as the camel confronts an invisible danger shaped by cognitive error, the lamb is visually isolated, positioned in a void of interpretive vulnerability where the wolf's intentions must be inferred from the textual narrative. Both images exemplify how paratranslational strategies rely on visual omission and displacement to externalize internal movement, constructing rich affective geographies in which absence becomes a vector for meaning. In this sense, the illustrations do not merely accompany the fables, they actively translate and extend their moral and psychological dimensions through semiotic layering, spatial design, and emotional suggestion. By employing absence as a paratranslational strategy, Vimar's illustration invites viewers to actively participate in the creation of meaning. The empty space where the sticks should appear acts as an evocative void, a visual metaphor of uncertainty and doubt that destabilizes straightforward interpretation and opens a space for reflection on the limits of literal logic and the power of symbolic thinking. In doing so, the illustration becomes an autonomous narrative element that dialogues with the text, shaping the reader's emotional and cognitive engagement with the fable's moral and thematic dimensions.

This visual strategy aligns with broader theoretical perspectives that understand meaning as emerging not only from what is present but also from what is absent or partially represented. It highlights how multimodal paratranslation involves a complex negotiation of visible and invisible narrative components, constructing spaces of affective ambiguity and intellectual challenge that deepen the interpretive experience. Thus, the absence and partial absence in Vimar's illustration function as visual manifestations of psychological and emotional states that enrich the fable's moral discourse and invite ongoing reinterpretation across cultural and temporal contexts.

The river, a central motif in the narrative, functions as a symbolic threshold between ignorance and knowledge, presenting a critical challenge for the protagonist. More than a mere physical barrier, the water embodies a test of perception and understanding, urging the viewer to look beyond surface appearances. The deliberate absence of the floating sticks in the illustration visually reflects the transformation in perception described in the text: “Le troisième aperçut la chose de plus près, / Et reconnut des bâtons flottants sur l’onde”. These floating sticks serve as a metaphor for the camel’s fundamental cognitive error, his failure to recognize the differing properties of objects, which ultimately leads to his downfall. The composition of the image reinforces this symbolism by positioning the camel at the river’s edge, confronting the consequences of his mistake, while the observing figure is placed in a higher or more secure position, symbolizing a clearer and more accurate perspective.

In both the traditional and variant interpretations of the fable, the moral remains consistent: it warns against the perils of accepting appearances at face value without critical scrutiny. In both the traditional and variant interpretations of these fables, the central moral consistently warns against the dangers of accepting appearances at face value without critical scrutiny. This cautionary theme is visually reinforced through the strategic use of depiction and absence in their paratranslational adaptations, where animals are endowed with humanlike emotional qualities to communicate complex psychological states.

The illustration foregrounds the creature as an objet nouveau, embodying the initial fear that is gradually transformed into familiarity through cognitive engagement. The camel’s detailed and close, up depiction invites viewers to confront and reconsider their emotional responses to the unknown, symbolizing the psychological process of overcoming irrational fear through understanding.

In a parallel yet contrasting approach, Felix Lorioux partial depiction of the wolf in *Le Loup et l’Agneau* offers a fragmented visual presence with only the wolf’s head and ears visible. This deliberate omission amplifies the psychological tension within the scene, evoking an ambiguous but palpable sense of threat and emotional unease. The wolf’s incomplete image requires the viewer to mentally fill the gaps, engaging them actively in the narrative and emphasizing the wolf’s predatory dominance and internal emotional state, rather than a full physical portrayal.

Similarly, in many paratranslations of *Le Loup et l’Agneau*, the lamb is either absent or minimized, shifting narrative emphasis toward the wolf’s psychological motivations: its aggression, justification, and internal conflict. This selective visual focus on the predator’s emotional and psychological dimensions exemplifies how paratranslation transcends simple illustration, instead mediating meaning by foregrounding affective states through absence and partial presence.

Together, these multimodal adaptations highlight recurring themes across the fables: fear, misrecognition, and the tension between appearance and reality. The varying degrees of depiction, displacement, or omission function as paratranslational strategies that reframe the narrative, encouraging viewers to negotiate meaning through what is both shown and withheld. In this way, the absence or fragmentation of key figures is not a decorative choice but a deliberate narrative device. It shifts emphasis from literal action to symbolic resonance, privileging emotional and cognitive ‘movement’ over physical gesture and foregrounding the interpretive role of the audience in reconstructing the fable’s moral and affective dimensions. By modulating what is shown and what remains unseen, paratranslation enriches the fables’ moral lessons, challenging audiences to critically evaluate appearances, assumptions, and the underlying emotional truths that drive the narratives.

In order to connect the stages of visual perception, visual line, peritext, visual, perceptual interpretation, and paratranslation to higher levels of abstract cognition, the most appropriate mediating tool is metaphor. Metaphors function simultaneously at the visual and verbal levels: on the one hand, through their visual representation, which shapes how readers perceive and frame abstract concepts; and on the other hand, through their verbalized manifestation, which crystallizes metaphorical thought into textual expression [Lakoff & Johnson, 1980]. Within this framework, illustrations or changing visual cues act as embodied metaphors that guide the visual, perceptual interpretation, while their textual counterparts reinforce or reconfigure these meanings within the verbal discourse. Thus, metaphor becomes the central semiotic bridge that unifies nonverbal and verbal channels, making it possible for abstract perception to emerge through concrete representational forms.

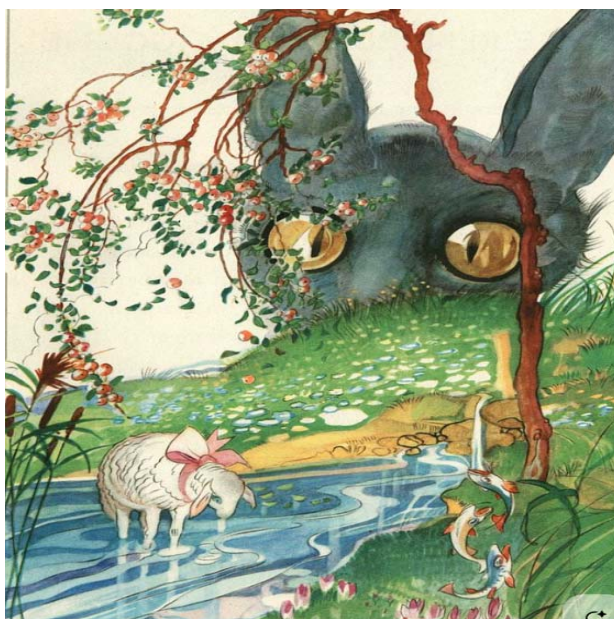


Figure 2. Illustration by Felix Lorioux, *The Wolf and the Lamb*, I
Illustration for Jean de La Fontaine’s Fable

The present study situates literal analysis of these metaphors, both in their visual and verbal instantiations, as the core methodological axis of the article. By focusing on how metaphorical structures operate across modes, we aim to demonstrate that translation, and particularly paratranslation, cannot be reduced to the verbal domain alone but must be understood as a multimodal process in which metaphor orchestrates the interplay between perception, interpretation, and discourse.

Table 2

Metaphor Types and Their Relation to Peritextual Functions in Paratranslation,
adapted from [Genette, 1997]

Metaphor Type	Description	Peritextual Function [Genette]	Example [Visual/Verbal]
Conceptual Metaphor	Abstract domains understood through concrete domains [Lakoff & Johnson, 1980].	<i>Informative / Orientational</i> – frames interpretation of the main text.	Visual: a broken chain on a book cover [metaphor of liberation]. Verbal: “Breaking barriers.”
Visual Metaphor	Metaphorical meaning conveyed through images or design.	<i>Illustrative / Attracting</i> – captures attention, directs reading expectations.	Poster of a chessboard to represent power struggles in a novel.
Verbal Metaphor	Figurative language embedded in paratextual commentary.	<i>Authorial / Interpretative</i> – signals intended readings.	Preface statement: “This work is a mirror held to society.”
Mixed/ Multimodal Metaphor	Combination of verbal and visual elements reinforcing metaphorical meaning.	<i>Relaying / Amplifying</i> – strengthens coherence between modes.	Book jacket: image of a cage [visual] + tagline “Freedom is within reach” [verbal].
Metaphor of Mediation	Metaphors referring to the act of translation itself as bridge, filter, or lens.	<i>Functional / Pragmatic</i> positions the text within a broader cultural or linguistic horizon.	Translator’s note: “This version opens a window into...” [verbal metaphor of window].

Changes in space reflect not only the physical movements of the characters, but also shifts in their emotional, social, or political states. Different illustration styles can even suggest the symbolic nature of the places inhabited by the characters. In *Le Chameau et les Bâtons Flottants* by La Fontaine, illustrated by Vimar [La Fontaine, 1897], for example, the graphic representation of space reinforces contrasts between the physical and the symbolic. The river and the natural surroundings where the fable unfolds serve not only as a physical obstacle but also as a metaphor for the limitations and errors of the main character, the camel, whose journey through space reflects his confusion and lack of judgment. In this work, space functions as both a physical and emotional setting, intensifying the moral message of the story.

Movement in multimodal narrative is dynamically represented through the arrangement of panels, the sequencing of images, and changes in the graphic expression of space. These movements can be physical, such as characters moving from one place to another, or more abstract, such as the emotional or psychological shifts experienced by the characters. In the illustration of *Le Chameau et les Bâtons Flottants*, movement is reflected in the actions of the camel as he confronts the river, which symbolizes his error in judgment, as well as in the posture of the observer, who maintains a more stable and secure relationship with the environment. Space thus becomes not only a reflection of the external world but also of the characters' internal states.

The concept of displacement is essential to understanding how characters interact with their environment. These displacements may be geographical, involving movement from one place to another, or internal, reflecting emotional or psychological journeys. Much like in La Fontaine's fable, where fear arises from a misunderstanding of the unfamiliar, characters often encounter apprehension when facing change. In the traditional interpretation of the fable, the camel, depicted by Vimar with precise and naturalistic detail, dominates the foreground and embodies the "objet nouveau" that initially provokes fear: "Le premier qui vit un chameau / S'enfuit à cet objet nouveau." The decision to portray the animal with anatomical accuracy and in close proximity to the viewer suggests a confrontation with the unknown that has now become familiar, tamed through both visual and cognitive closeness. Yet, as with the floating sticks mistaken for danger, this fear often fades once the unknown becomes understood. Transitions between images and the use of white space contribute to this sense of movement, enabling readers to experience both the physical journey and the symbolic process of recognition and growth. Through this interplay, the narrative mirrors the transformation that comes when fear gives way to understanding.

Multimodal narrative explores how physical and symbolic boundaries are negotiated, which are not only geographical but also cultural, social, and psychological. The graphic representation of space allows us to interpret these limits and transitions, whether between different worlds, cultures, or even emotional states. In *Le Chameau et les Bâtons Flottants*, illustrated by Vimar [La Fontaine, 1897], the boundary between the camel and the river symbolizes both a physical and emotional barrier. When the camel attempts to cross the water, he encounters a limit that challenges his understanding of reality. This space does not merely separate two worlds, it also symbolizes the tension between knowledge and error.

In multimodal narrative, the construction of space is achieved not only through images but also through language, which plays a key role in meaning-making. In *Le Chameau et les Bâtons Flottants*, the spatial terminology used in the text and its relationship with the illustrations reinforce the interpretation of space in both its physical and symbolic dimensions. Words such as "river," "water," and "obstacle" describe the camel's physical environment, and together with the images, they create a complete representation of the fable's setting. These terms not only indicate the camel's location but also carry connotations of conflict and difficulty, for example, "obstacle" refers to a barrier that impedes his progress.

The image of the river, where the camel attempts to cross and fails, underscores the symbolic dimension of water. In Vimar's illustrations, water becomes a symbol of "confusion," as the camel does not understand the nature of the situation. The word "error," used to describe the camel's poor judgment, refers both to the literal outcome of his actions and the emotional state he experiences in facing an obstacle he cannot overcome. This confusion is also reflected in terms such as "uncertainty" and "doubt," implicitly conveyed through failing to recognize the difference between floating sticks and his own nature, makes a fatal error.

Table 3

Metaphors, Functions, and Paratranslational Effects

Metaphor	Element [Text/Image]	Function in Narrative	Effect on Perception	Peritextual/Paratranslational Role
River as obstacle	Natural setting [image + word “river”]	Represents confusion, limitation, and misinterpretation.	Encourages readers to project cognitive difficulty onto a spatial element.	Functions as a cultural metaphor of error; mediates text, image interplay.
Camel as “objet nouveau”	Camel in foreground [image + “chameau” in text]	Symbolizes the unknown, provoking disproportionate fear.	Visual presence brings the unfamiliar into focus; exaggerates psychological reaction.	Anchors narrative around perception of novelty; directs moral reading.
Floating sticks as fleet	Distant silhouettes [image] + phrase “bâtons flottants”	Embody misrecognition; mistake transforms harmless objects into imagined threat.	Visual, verbal metaphor of illusion; highlights fragility of human judgment.	Illustrates core fable moral through absence/misreading.
Water as confusion	Flowing element [image + “eau” references]	Symbolizes instability, inability to adapt, disorientation.	Reader perceives water as metaphor for internal states [uncertainty, doubt, error].	Reinforces metaphorical reading of setting as psychological landscape.
Crossing as failure	Camel’s attempt to cross [image + verbs in text]	Stages the act of judgment gone wrong; literal failure reflects moral misstep.	Invites reflection on limits of perception and error in reasoning.	Bridges narrative movement with symbolic consequence.

The relationship between words and images in this narrative allows readers to understand space not only in physical terms but also as a reflection of the characters’ emotions and mistakes. For instance, phrases like “he will not make it” or “his mistake is clear” reinforce the interpretation that the camel is struggling not just with a physical obstacle [the water] but also with his own mistaken understanding of the laws governing that space. In this sense, space is not merely a setting for actions to unfold, it becomes a mirror of the characters’ emotional and psychological states.

Moreover, expressions such as “the water pulls him along” or “the camel cannot move forward” generate a sense of movement that is not only physical but also emotional and symbolic. Water, as a natural element, becomes a symbol of the difficulty in adapting to or understanding one’s environment, while “doubt” and “confusion” are reflected in both the language and the camel’s posture and expression in the illustrations. Thus, images and text work together to create a narrative that goes beyond physical elements and invites reflection on human error, limitations, and the misinterpretation of the surrounding space.

This interaction between language and images contributes to a deeper meaning, in which space becomes not only the physical setting of the story but also a dynamic element that reflects the characters’ internal struggles and errors. By combining text and image, *Le Chameau et les Bâtons Flottants* invites the reader to reflect on the movements—both external and internal, that define the story and the transitions the characters undergo, offering a rich narrative experience that goes beyond a mere description of physical space.

In the fable *Le Chameau et les Bâtons Flottants* by La Fontaine, the words used, such as *ridicule*, *original*, *erreur*, and *orgueil* are key to understanding the camel’s internal conflict and how his mistaken perception of the world contributes to his failure. The camel, viewing himself through a distorted lens, misinterprets the space around him, especially when confronting the river and the floating sticks. His blind trust in his own logic, which leads him to believe that if the sticks float, he too might float, is a clear example of *erreur* and *orgueil*. This belief drives his downfall, as he is confronted not only with a physical obstacle [the water] but also with a cognitive and emotional challenge he fails to recognize.

The term *ridicule* highlights how the camel is inappropriately perceived, both by himself and others, which emphasizes his disconnect from reality. By seeing himself as *original*, he distances himself even further from a true understanding of his own nature and the physical laws that govern his world. This misunderstanding reflects the fable's core message, the importance of critical reflection and humility. The space, represented by the river and the situation the camel faces, serves not only as the setting for the events but as a symbol of the camel's internal limitations. In this way, physical space becomes a mirror of the characters' emotional and cognitive states, reflecting the disconnect and internal conflict that shape their destiny. The fable teaches that a mistaken understanding of one's environment, born of pride and a lack of self-awareness, can lead to failure.

From the perspective of paratranslation, multimodal narrative offers a unique opportunity to explore how spaces and movements are translated visually, beyond simple linguistic transfer. Translators of multimodal narratives must take into account both text and images when adapting a work to another language or culture. Graphic conventions and ways of representing space and movement can vary significantly across cultures, which presents an additional challenge for translators regarding how to preserve the integrity of both image and text simultaneously. Analysing multimodal narrative from this perspective opens new avenues for research into the representation of space, movement, and culture.

Rather than viewing multimodal narrative solely as a visual or textual medium, this approach allows us to understand how both elements collaborate to construct a multimodal narrative that not only reflects physical space but also the social, cultural, and psychological dynamics that unfold within it.

In conclusion, multimodal narrative not only represents space graphically and textually, but also serves as a medium for translating the characters' experiences through their movements and displacements. This paratranslational approach allows readers to understand not only the physical space, but also the complex cultural and emotional interactions that take place within it. By combining images and words, multimodal narrative offers a unique perspective on how characters inhabit, traverse, and transform the spaces they occupy.

This multimodal and paratranslational approach to the representation of space and movement opens new lines of inquiry in translation studies, literary theory, and cultural studies, enabling a deeper understanding of how multimodal narratives contribute to the construction of both real and imaginary worlds.

Visual Interpretation and Moral Clarity in J.B. Oudry's Engraving of *Le Chameau et les Bâtons flottants*

The 18th-century engraving by Jean-Baptiste Oudry offers a didactic and visually coherent interpretation of Jean de La Fontaine's fable *Le Chameau et les Bâtons flottants*. Executed in the classical style typical of Oudry's illustrative corpus, the engraving is closely aligned with the textual narrative and serves to underscore the moral function of the fable, particularly as articulated in its concluding lines: "A qui ceci conviendrait bien: / De loin, c'est quelque chose, et de près, ce n'est rien."

Oudry's juxtaposition of illusion and recognition, between the imagined ship and the harmless sticks, mirrors the narrative's movement from fearful misapprehension to empirical understanding.

The engraving thus functions as a form of visual pedagogy, guiding the viewer through the same cognitive shift experienced by the characters in the fable. The central lesson, "from afar, it is something; up close, it is nothing," is not merely illustrated but structurally embedded in the spatial dynamics of the image. The disproportion between expectation and reality is made manifest, reinforcing the fable's critique of premature judgment and fear born of ignorance.

In this context, Oudry's work exemplifies how visual representation can parallel and deepen the textual moral. His engraving does not merely accompany the fable, but enacts its epistemological trajectory, making the viewer complicit in the transition from illusion to knowledge. By aligning image and narrative structure, Oudry captures the essence of La Fontaine's closing reflection: that the fear of the unknown often dissolves upon closer inspection, revealing the triviality of that which once appeared formidable.



Figure 4. Engraving by J.B. Oudry (18th century)

The engraving by Jean Baptiste Oudry notably omits the image of the camel, despite it being central in the opening lines of La Fontaine's *Le Chameau et les Bâtons flottants*. This absence can be interpreted in light of the fable's concluding moral: "À qui ceci conviendrait bien: / De loin, c'est quelque chose, et de près, ce n'est rien" [La Fontaine, 1874]. By focusing visually on the floating sticks and the human figures reacting to them, the composition foregrounds the central epistemological shift of the narrative, the transformation of perception as one moves from fearful misjudgment to empirical clarity. The camel, as the initial object of irrational fear ("Le premier qui vit un chameau / S'enfuit à cet objet nouveau" [Ibid]), is rendered unnecessary in the visual representation, because the engraving concentrates on the second (the principle one) narrative thread: the illusion of the distant ship that reveals itself to be mere "bâtons flottants sur l'onde". In doing so, Oudry emphasizes that the true moral lies not in the exotic or monstrous, but in how the mind fabricates significance from afar, only to dissolve it upon closer inspection. The omission thus becomes meaningful: what matters is not the fearsome unknown, but the cognitive distortion that fear produces.

Omission as Metaphor: Reframing Presence and Absence in Multimodal Paratranslation

In the realm of multimodal adaptations of La Fontaine's fables, absence and partial presence emerge as deliberate visual metaphors that carry significant paratranslational weight. One striking example is Félix Lorioux's illustration of *Le Loup et l'Agneau*, where only the wolf's ears and part of his head are visible, looming behind a tree. This act of partial concealment functions not merely as an aesthetic choice, but as a metaphorical displacement of violence: the predator becomes more threatening precisely through its incompleteness. By omitting the full figure of the wolf, Lorioux allows fear and menace to be projected into the unseen, turning absence into a semiotic force. Here, concealment does not diminish meaning; it amplifies it. The wolf's absence paradoxically makes it more present, intensifying the lamb's vulnerability and reconfiguring the power asymmetry inscribed in the text. In this sense, Lorioux's image operates as a visual metaphor of latent aggression, where what is withheld becomes more potent than what is depicted.

A different strategy of absence is visible in Marc Chagall's interpretation of *Le Chameau et les Bâtons Flottants* [La Fontaine, 1952], where the camel is entirely omitted. Instead of representing the central animal, Chagall inserts shadowed human figures and distant silhouettes of what appears to be a fleet. Here, absence becomes metaphorical displacement: the camel is no longer an agent within the scene, but its role is transposed into an atmosphere of illusion and fear. The illustration paratranslates the fable's moral by foregrounding human perception of danger rather than the creature itself. Through this omission, Chagall creates a metaphor of misrecognition, where shadows and distance embody the tension between perception and reality.

The composition is structured through contrasts of shadow and light, visually dividing the scene into two interpretive registers. On one side, darkened figures embody the projection of fear onto an indeterminate threat; on the other, the lighter expanse of the horizon suggests clarity and the absence of actual danger. This visual metaphor enacts the fable's moral lesson: the fear of the unknown is more powerful than the reality of what is ultimately revealed to be mere floating sticks. The absence of the camel is thus not a lack but a paratranslational strategy that repositions the fable's centre of gravity from animal to atmosphere, from narrative agent to cognitive metaphor. Unlike Doré or Vimar, who centred their illustrations on the camel's visible presence, Chagall situates meaning in the interplay between what is shown and what is withheld. His image underscores the semiotic power of absence: meaning arises not only from the presence of figures but from the metaphors produced by their concealment. In this way, multimodal paratranslation reveals itself as a process where visual metaphor, especially metaphor of absence, reshapes both narrative and affective reception. Interestingly, this emphasis on spatial uncertainty diverges from both the French original and its Russian translation. In neither version is the sea a dominant image; it is only indirectly referenced through terms such as 'frigate' or 'floating object.' Chagall's illustration reorients the narrative away from the camel or the sticks and toward the relational dynamic between human subject and environment. His is a narrative not of objects, but of perception, a visual rewriting of La Fontaine's fable that foregrounds metaphorisation of space and emotion as central mechanisms of interpretation. Viewed alongside the illustrations of Vimar and Oudry, Chagall's work completes a triadic visual transformation of the fable's central object. Vimar omits the fleet entirely, rendering it a conceptual absence. Chagall introduces a faint outline of a ship on the horizon, caught in a liminal space between illusion and recognition, and Oudry depicts the floating sticks clearly, dissolving all ambiguity. These stages mirror the gradual cognitive clarification articulated in La Fontaine's text, from 'mighty fleet' to 'brander,' from 'brander' to 'small boat,' then to 'bundle of goods,' and finally to 'floating sticks.' Chagall situates his interpretation at the height of uncertainty, illustrating the moment in which fear emerges as a metaphorical projection, an image where meaning is shaped less by the object itself than by the emotional and symbolic resonance attributed to it. Chagall's work is characterized by a unique visual language that departs from conventional realism. In this sense, his interpretation of the fable may have employed visual metaphors and stylistic distortions to convey its essence. Often, his work reflects a dreamlike atmosphere in which figures appear to float or merge unexpectedly with the surrounding space. Within this context, the camel could be represented abstractly, preserving La Fontaine's narrative intent but reimagined through a subjective and symbolic visual perspective. For a more detailed analysis of his approach to *The Fables of La Fontaine*, it would be useful to examine the full series of engravings he produced, as his treatment of each story varies depending on the message he seeks to emphasize. As for the fable itself, *Le Chameau et les Bâtons Flottants* presents a brief story in which animals serve as metaphors to convey a moral lesson. The narrative centres on a camel who observes sticks floating on the water and, upon comparing himself to them, experiences a mix of disdain and desire for change. Convinced that his legs are too short and clumsy compared to the slender sticks he sees in the river, the camel expresses frustration, failing to understand that his structure suits his nature. The moral of the fable suggests that every being possesses its own characteristics suited to its purpose, and that blindness to this reality, driven by pride or envy, can lead to dissatisfaction and error.

La Fontaine's text employs terms such as *ridicule*, *original*, *erreur*, and *orgueil*, which reinforce the critique of the camel's arrogance and inability to accept his own nature. These words reflect the character's inner conflict and his distorted perception of the world around him.

The water and the floating sticks take on symbolic meaning within the story, representing not just elements of the environment but also mirrors of the camel's confusion and self, deception. The structure of the tale emphasizes the irony of the character who, despite his strength and size, is misled by appearances and fails to recognize the value of his own traits.

On a deeper level, the fable can be interpreted as a critique of human vanity and dissatisfaction. The camel, in his eagerness to compare himself to the sticks, disregards his own usefulness and succumbs to an unrealistic ideal. This behaviour reflects a common tendency in society, where individuals often underestimate what they have and long for what they do not, without considering the true worth of their own attributes. In this sense, the story transcends the anecdote of the camel to offer a reflection on self, acceptance and the distorted perception of reality.

Illustrations of this fable often reflect the dichotomy between the camel and the floating sticks, showing how the imposing figure of the animal contrasts with the apparent fragility of the sticks in the water. However, the lesson of the story emphasizes that physical grandeur does not always imply superiority, and that the small and seemingly insignificant can have an equally valuable purpose. In Chagall's work, this idea may have been represented through dynamic compositions, in which forms and colours help convey the essence of the moral message without resorting to explicit realism.

In conclusion, *Le Chameau et les Bâtons Flottants* is a fable that highlights the importance of accepting one's own traits and not being misled by superficial comparisons. Its moral emphasizes that arrogance and lack of perspective can lead to error, and that true wisdom lies in recognizing the value of what one has. The artistic representation of this fable, especially in Chagall's work, makes it possible to explore these ideas from a visual perspective, where the interaction between forms, colours, and figures reinforces the central teaching of the story.

The idea that translation is not a mere mechanical process is, in itself, not particularly interesting; what is truly challenging is the role of diverse perceptions. The illustrator, the reader, the author, the translator, and the editor each contribute their own interpretative perspective, reshaping the work in distinct ways. These multiple layers of perception ultimately converge to shape the complexity of the final product, whether it manifests as a discourse, a literary, artistic text, or its translated version. Within this interweaving of perspectives, meaning acquires shifting shades: shadows alter contours, and new forms emerge. Translation, therefore, is less about transferring fixed content than about negotiating the dynamic interplay of perceptions that continually generate new and unexpected meanings.

Changes in the image affect not only the visual dimension of the work but also its chronotope, which, following Bakhtin [1981], can be understood as the configuration of narrative time and space. In multimodal narratives, this articulation of time and space arises through a continuous negotiation between verbal and visual codes. When an image is altered in the process of paratranslation, its visual composition does not merely shift aesthetically; it also reshapes the temporal and spatial perception of the narrative. For instance, if a revised illustration highlights characters' facial expressions and emotional states rather than the symbolic object present in the original composition, the chronotopic balance is transformed. The greater focus on emotion may slow the reader's perception of narrative time, intensifying the immediacy of the characters' subjective experience. At the same time, the diminished emphasis on the symbolic element alters the interpretation of surrounding space, embedding it within a different cultural and historical frame.

The chronotope is therefore a key aspect of peritextual mediation. Because illustrations, layouts, and other visual components participate in shaping how readers perceive time and space, they do not merely accompany the verbal text but actively construct the narrative world. This makes the chronotope central to the analysis of peritexts: it reveals how visual modifications influence the rhythm, atmosphere, and cultural orientation of the story, and shows that peritextual changes are not marginal embellishments but fundamental reconfigurations of narrative meaning.

This demonstrates how paratranslational transformations do not only operate at the level of style but intervene in the very structuring of narrative temporality and spatiality. As Kress and van Leeuwen [2006] argue, visual structures are themselves forms of discourse, carrying meaning

that extends beyond representation into the organization of cultural knowledge. In this sense, an altered illustration functions not merely as a replacement image but as a peritext in Genette's [1997] terms: a paratextual element that mediates the reader's entry into the text and reframes the act of interpretation. By shifting the visual emphasis, the peritext indirectly reshapes the chronotope, guiding how the narrative is experienced in time and space. Translation, therefore, is not only about verbal equivalence but about negotiating the multimodal interdependence of chronotope and peritext, where even subtle visual modifications create new pathways of meaning that exceed the literal textual frame.

The absence of the camel in Marc Chagall's illustration can be interpreted through this paratranslational lens, which considers not only linguistic transfer but also the cultural, spatial, and symbolic transformations involved in adapting a text across different media and contexts. In the original text and its Russian translation, the camel is a central symbol, representing the encounter with the unknown and the process of familiarization that transforms fear into acceptance. However, in Chagall's etching, the camel is omitted, giving way to a more symbolic and dreamlike image that forgoes literal representation in favour of conveying the fable's emotional and atmospheric dimensions.

This iconographic displacement can be seen as a form of rereading and resignification of narrative space, characteristic of the paratranslational process, in which the illustration not only translates the textual content but also reinterprets it through its own visual language. The disappearance of the camel allows Chagall to explore more abstract or universal aspects of the fable, such as uncertainty, transformation, and the subjective perception of space. In this way, the image invites the viewer to mentally reconstruct the absent symbol, encouraging an aesthetic and cognitive experience that enriches the dialogue between text, translation, and visual representation.

Therefore, the camel's omission should not be understood as a simple absence, but rather as a strategic displacement within the framework of paratranslation. This reflects how each version and medium reconfigures the original meaning, adapting it to a new cultural and perceptual context. Ultimately, this phenomenon demonstrates that translation and visual adaptation are active processes of mediation that do not merely reproduce a message, but reinvent it in accordance with new contexts, languages, and audiences.

Literary Analysis of the Original

The fable *Le Chameau et les Bâtons flottants*, attributed to Jean de La Fontaine, serves as a paradigmatic example of the fable genre's moralizing tradition, where symbolic characters and situations convey ethical lessons. From the outset, the text presents the camel as a strange and unsettling figure, evoking a natural fear of the unknown. This reaction is encapsulated in the opening line: "*Le premier qui vit un chameau s'enfuit à cet objet nouveau*" [La Fontaine, 1874], emphasizing how novelty can provoke instinctive rejection.

As the narrative unfolds, it describes a gradual process of familiarization, mediated by repeated exposure and experience. Initial fear transforms into acceptance and control. The line "*Le troisième osa faire un licou pour le dromadaire*" symbolizes this transformation, domestication as a metaphor for mastering fear. The pivotal moral emerges in the closing phrase: "*L'accoutumance ainsi nous rend tout familier*," which synthesizes the idea that through contact and habituation, what once seemed frightening becomes familiar and manageable.

The visual metaphor that concludes the fable further reinforces this moral. An object seen from a distance in the water is misidentified as a "*puissant navire*," only to be revealed as "*bâtons flottants*." La Fontaine writes: "*De loin certain objet ne purent s'empêcher de dire que c'était un puissant navire Enfin ce fut des bâtons flottants*" [La Fontaine, 1874]. This imagery illustrates how ignorance and distance distort perception, and how understanding only comes through closer engagement.

This theme of perceptual transformation is echoed in visual interpretations of the fable. The camel symbolizes the "*objet nouveau*" that initially provokes fear, but which becomes integrated into human space through the process of familiarization. The interplay between text and image reinforces the moral insight: that human beings overcome their fear of the unknown through experience and by reinterpreting the unfamiliar within their perceptual and cultural frameworks.

From a **spatial paratranslation** perspective, the fable does more than narrate a process of moral learning; it enacts a transformation of meaning that extends beyond language into space and culture. The “space” of the unknown, represented by the camel or the misidentified object, is gradually re-signified as the subject adapts and integrates it into a familiar environment.

For instance, the verse *"Le premier qui vit un chameau s'enfuit à cet objet nouveau"* marks the first confrontation with unfamiliar space, where fear emerges from lack of recognition. Later, *"Le troisième osa faire un licou pour le dromadaire"* signals a decisive act of domestication and reinterpretation, transforming a strange environment into something knowable and controllable. This “spatial translation” involves more than physical adaptation; it redefines the perceived place of the unknown within one’s cognitive and cultural worldview.

Likewise, the metaphor of the distant object (*"un puissant navire"*) later revealed as *"bâtons flottants sur l'onde"* reinforces the impact of distance and ignorance on spatial interpretation, and how this perception shifts with proximity and familiarity. The camel, in visual illustrations, becomes more than an animal: it represents the ongoing dynamic of encountering, interpreting, and ultimately assimilating unfamiliar space.

Thus, La Fontaine’s fable underscores the human capacity to adapt and reframe the unknown, transforming what initially provokes fear into something understood and controllable, a core process for cultural integration and perceptual learning.

*Le premier qui vit un chameau
S'enfuit à cet objet nouveau.
Le second approcha; le troisième osa faire
Un licou pour le dromadaire.*

*L'accoutumance ainsi nous rend tout familier:
Ce qui nous paraissait terrible et singulier
S'apprivoise avec notre vue
Quand ce vient à la continue.*

*Et puisque nous voici tombés sur ce sujet,
On avait mis des gens au guet,
Qui voyant sur les eaux de loin certain objet,
Ne purent s'empêcher de dire
Que c'était un puissant navire.*

*Quelques moments après, l'objet devint brûlot,
Et puis nacelle, et puis ballot,
Enfin bâtons flottants sur l'onde.*

*J'en sais beaucoup de par le monde
À qui ceci conviendrait bien:
De loin, c'est quelque chose; et de près, ce n'est rien.*

Figure 5. Jean de La Fontaine. Le Chameau et les Bâtons flottants. Fragment from the original text

From the perspective of spatial paratranslation, the process described in the fable involves a transformation that goes beyond mere linguistic translation, extending to the cultural and spatial reconfiguration of meaning. The “space” of the unknown—initially symbolized by the camel and the ambiguous object glimpsed from afar in the water—is gradually redefined as the subject interprets, adapts, and integrates this unfamiliar environment into their own cultural and perceptual frameworks.

The verse *"Le premier qui vit un chameau s'enfuit à cet objet nouveau"* exemplifies the initial encounter with unfamiliarity, where the instinctive reaction is fear and avoidance. As the narrative progresses, however, *"Le troisième osa faire un licou pour le dromadaire"* marks a turning point: the moment of domestication, when the once, threatening presence becomes understandable and controllable. This act of “spatial translation” repositions the strange within a familiar mental and emotional landscape, reshaping the relationship between subject and object.

Similarly, the metaphor of the distant object on the water, initially mistaken for “un puissant navire” but ultimately revealed to be “bâtons flottants sur l’onde,” illustrates how misperception arises from distance and unfamiliarity. Only through closer observation can the true nature of things be discerned, reinforcing the theme of perceptual transformation. In this context, the camel functions not merely as a literal figure but as a metaphor for the dynamic process of appropriating and domesticating unfamiliar space.

Ultimately, the fable conveys that human beings possess an inherent capacity to adapt to the unknown, translating and reframing it into comprehensible terms. This transformation, from initial fear to familiarity, is both a cognitive shift and a fundamental mechanism for cultural integration and coexistence.

The metaphor of the “Unknown” as a source of fear is a timeless theme in literature, reflecting a universal human experience. In English literature, this fear often symbolizes the anxiety provoked by unfamiliarity and the limits of understanding. For example, Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* presents a mysterious island that initially causes fear and confusion but ultimately becomes a place of discovery and growth. Such narratives illustrate how fear of the unknown can evolve into enlightenment and adaptation, echoing the moral of the fable.

The Russian Translation: Fidelity and Recontextualization of Perceptual Space

The Russian translation of the fable, titled “*Верблюд и плывущие Поленья*” (“The Camel and the Floating Sticks”) [La Fontaine, 1961], preserves the essence of the original text by reflecting the process of familiarization and the transformation of perception towards the unknown. In the text, the image of the camel, initially a cause of fear and uncertainty “*Кто первый увидал Верблюда, тот прочь бежал при виде чуда*” symbolizes a cultural and perceptual space that gradually changes through habituation and continuous contact: “*Становимся мы близки ко всему, что нам казалось пугающим и странным.*” This transformation also extends to the metaphor of the “*плывущие поленья*” (floating sticks), which are first mistaken for a powerful ship but later revealed in their true nature, reinforcing the idea that distance and lack of understanding distort our perception of space and objects.

On the other hand, Marc Chagall’s illustration [La Fontaine, 1952], though it does not depict the camel, participates in this dynamic of transformation by visually reinterpreting the text’s elements through his characteristic dreamlike and symbolic style. The absence of the camel can be understood as a form of visual translation that shifts the focus from the literal symbol to a more abstract or emotional representation of the process of adaptation and familiarization. Chagall plays with space and symbols to create a visual experience that invites the viewer to reconfigure their perception, much like the text reshapes the understanding of the strange object through familiarization.

This duality between text and image exemplifies the paratranslation of space: not only is verbal language translated, but also the cultural and symbolic spaces in which ideas are situated, adapting them to new forms and contexts. Thus, both the Russian fable and Chagall’s visual work reveal how perceptual and cultural transformation is a continual act of reinterpretation, where the space of the strange is resignified and integrated into new narratives and visualities.

Paratranslation, in this sense, is a dynamic process that enables both text and image to undergo multiple transformations to engage diverse audiences and cultural contexts, enriching the experience of both the known and the unknown.

Paratranslational theory is particularly relevant for analysing this fable in its French and Russian versions, as well as in Marc Chagall’s visual representation, because it expands the traditional notion of translation beyond mere linguistic transfer. It encompasses the cultural, spatial, and media transformations that accompany the circulation of a text or artwork. Unlike intersemiotic translation, which specifically focuses on converting one system of signs into another, such as from verbal text to image, paratranslation involves a broader range of processes, including mediation, reception, editing, promotion, and reinterpretation. All of these shape the construction of meaning and influence how a text is perceived and resignified in new contexts.

Верблюд и пловущие Поленья

(Le Chameau et les Batons flottants).
Кто первый увидал Верблюда,
Тот прочь бежал при виде чуда;
Второй осмеллся приблизиться к нему,
А третий-и узду надел на дромадера.
Так, силою привычки и примера,
Становимся мы близки ко всему,
Что нам казалось пугающим и странным
С ним находясь в общенье постоянном.
В пример тому я приведу рассказ.
Стоявшие на страже как-то раз
Увидели предмет, пловущий в отдаленье,
Немедленно решили все вокруг:
- Большой фрегат или брандер! - Чрез мгновенье
Все в нем увидели простой с товаром тюк,
Челнок и, наконец - пловущие Поленья.
Знаком я в свете кое с кем,
Кого касается мое повествованье:
Верблюд и пловущие поленья
За нечто их сочтешь на расстоянье,
Вблизи ж они окажутся ничем.

О. Чюмина.
Займствована у Эзопа.

Figure 6. Jean de La Fontaine. The Camel and the Floating Sticks.
Original title in French and Russian translation [La Fontaine, 1961].

In the case of the fable, the Russian translation preserves the core message and essence of the original French text while also performing a cultural and linguistic recontextualization that alters the perception and reception of the content. This process goes beyond the literal transfer of words, adapting the story to the cultural space and linguistic conventions of the target audience.

Similarly, Chagall's illustration, which omits the literal image of the camel but offers a symbolic and dreamlike interpretation, functions as a form of visual paratranslation. This reinterpretation translates the story into a different visual code while also resignifying the narrative and emotional space of the text, inviting diverse readings and experiences. Thus, the artwork is not merely an intersemiotic translation but a paratranslational act that intervenes in the construction of meaning beyond the simple conversion of signs.

Together, both the linguistic versions and the image demonstrate how translation and adaptation involve ongoing rereading of cultural and perceptual space. In this process, the strange becomes familiar, and the relationship between text, image, and audience is enriched through multiple layers of mediation and reinterpretation.



Figure 7. Marc Chagall, Le Chameau et les Bâtons flottants,
etching, circa 1952-1955, 39 × 30 cm [La Fontaine, 1952; Chagall, 1955]

The analysed illustration is an etching titled *Le Chameau et les Bâtons flottants*, attributed to the renowned artist Marc Chagall. It belongs to a series of engravings Chagall created approximately between 1927 and 1930, with prints made before 1952. This series, inspired by La Fontaine's *Fables*, offers a visual reinterpretation of the classic tales through Chagall's distinctive sensibility. The piece's authenticity and significance are confirmed by its presence in prominent collections, such as the Musée des beaux-arts du Canada.

The etching is executed on Japanese paper, a medium known for its delicacy and ability to capture fine detail, typical of a limited edition estimated at around 100 copies. The use of traditional materials and the restricted print run highlight both the artistic value and exclusivity of the work, allowing Chagall to re-signify the fable's narrative space through his symbolic and dreamlike visual language. Thus, the etching occupies a position not only within the tradition of literary illustration but also within the artistic experimentation characteristic of Chagall's graphic work during this period.

Figure 7 specifically corresponds to an etching created around 1952 as part of the illustration cycle for *Les Fables de La Fontaine*, published in Paris by Tériade. This luxurious two-volume folio edition is distinguished by engraved covers and the high artistic quality of its content. The original etchings, signed by Chagall and hand-coloured, emphasize the exclusivity of the print run, which consisted of approximately 200 copies, including around 85 in colour. The entire series comprises about 100 engravings, which visually marry literary tradition with modern artistic expression. The etching under discussion serves as the cover for the first volume and measures approximately 39 by 30 centimetres. This work is part of the Tériade edition of *Les Fables de La Fontaine*, published in Paris in 1952, and represents an original etching by Marc Chagall.

Conclusions and Perspectives

Absence or partial depiction of characters in illustrated fables, such as the hidden wolf in Lorioux's *Le Loup et l'Agneau* or the omitted camel in Chagall's *Le Chameau et les Bâtons Flottants*, functions not as a lack but as a metaphorical strategy. By withholding the full figure, illustrators activate spaces of interpretation where fear, uncertainty, or vulnerability are conveyed through indirect representation. The unseen or partially seen becomes a metaphor for the unknown, inviting the reader-viewer to project meaning into what remains invisible.

These visual strategies operate as forms of paratranslation, where the illustrator reinterprets the fable's moral through symbolic cues rather than literal depiction. The wolf's absence amplifies menace; the camel's omission shifts attention to human misrecognition; the river or floating sticks transform into metaphors for error and confusion. In each case, image and text interact to reshape the moral lesson, ensuring its resonance in new cultural and perceptual contexts.

Through this lens, *Le Chameau et les Bâtons Flottants* illustrates how illustration mediates between textual narrative and visual metaphor, demonstrating that meaning is never fixed but negotiated across media. The paratextual choices of illustrators, what is emphasized, omitted, or symbolically displaced, become central to the reader's reception. Translation, therefore, is not a mechanical transfer of content but a dynamic interplay of perception, where absence, metaphor, and peritext converge to generate new narrative forms and renewed moral force.

Comparing various visual representations highlights that graphic adaptations do more than merely accompany the narrative, they actively reshape the interplay between text and image and reconfigure the chronotope, that is, the narrative construction of time and space. The diverse illustrations of the fable serve as concrete examples of this transformative process.

On one hand, conventional illustrations tend to reinforce the fable's moralizing message through clear, detailed depictions of the camel and the floating sticks. These images emphasize the disproportion and thus the protagonist's arrogance, anchoring the story in a recognizable and literal environment that supports straightforward moral reading. On the other hand, stylized or symbolic illustrations, such as those by Marc Chagall, employ a distinct visual language that redefines the relationship between narrative elements. Chagall's use of colour, form distortion, and figure juxtaposition results in a more abstract and evocative interpretation, where the camel may be absent or symbolically transformed, inviting a more subjective and multifaceted engagement with the fable.

Both Marc Chagall's 1920s illustration for *Le Chameau et les Bâtons Flottants* and Félix Lorioux's visual interpretation of another La Fontaine fable, likely *Le Loup devenu Berger*, offer compelling examples of paratranslational strategies that foreground experiential perception over representational fidelity. These images bypass literal depiction to engage the viewer at a symbolic level, where absence, shadow, and deformation function as semiotic agents. Each composition evokes an emotional or cognitive condition not by reproducing the fable's action directly, but by constructing a metaphorical space that requires the reader-viewer's interpretive participation.

In Chagall's rendering of *Le Chameau*, the expected central figure, the camel, is omitted altogether. This absence redirects the narrative away from its literal trajectory toward an exploration of fear, illusion, and misrecognition. Rather than depicting the camel and the misinterpreted floating sticks, the composition introduces two human figures, one more dominant and grounded, the other nearly dissolved into the surrounding arboreal shadow. These figures face a textured, undefined maritime horizon, visually divided by tonal contrast. This spatial configuration establishes a threshold between interior apprehension and external ambiguity. The sea, empty and quiet, contradicts the imagined threat, turning the absent camel into a symbolic absence that the viewer must actively reconstruct.

Lorioux similarly manipulates visibility and absence in his rendering of the wolf. Instead of presenting the predator in full, the wolf is partially obscured or blended into the background, its form dissolving into lines and textures that merge with the landscape. This visual treatment delays recognition and encourages the reader to experience the wolf as a spectral, ambiguous figure. Such partial disappearance operates as a visual metaphor for moral transformation and deception, shifting the burden of interpretation from the figure itself to the reader's perceptual engagement. The wolf, neither fully present nor entirely hidden, becomes a construct of expectation and suspicion.

Both illustrations thereby subvert the illustrative conventions of their respective periods. Their purpose is not to render narrative content literally but to translate the fable's affective and cognitive conditions into visual form. Through absence and displacement, these works paratranslate not just meaning but mood, transforming textual events into perceptual and emotional experiences. In doing so, they extend the function of illustration into the realm of experiential hermeneutics, where the reader does not simply receive the moral lesson but encounters its ambiguity. The image does not tell but enacts; it renders interpretation contingent on presence perceived and absence imagined.

Such visual strategies, when examined comparatively, reveal a shared poetics across otherwise distinct visual languages. Chagall's surrealist fragmentation and Lorioux's decorative whimsy both converge in their commitment to constructing visual narratives that destabilize perception and foreground the threshold between seeing and understanding. In both cases, the subject is not simply what is drawn but what remains latent, the unresolved space between the known and the misread, between the seen and the imagined.

From the perspective of paratranslation, such variations in illustration are not simply aesthetic choices but represent fundamental reconfigurations of the fable's original meaning within new cultural and visual frameworks. Traditional versions maintain a direct and transparent link between text and image, reinforcing the narrative's clarity and moral intent. In contrast, Chagall's interpretation introduces ambiguity and complexity, requiring readers to actively participate in meaning-making. This visual reinterpretation thus functions as a form of cultural translation, where symbolic codes must be negotiated and adapted to sustain communicative efficacy within an altered aesthetic context.

Moreover, these shifts in representation directly affect the story's chronotope. Figurative illustrations anchor the narrative in a concrete, identifiable spatial and temporal setting, offering a stable frame for the unfolding moral lesson. Conversely, abstract interpretations like Chagall's evoke a dreamlike or indeterminate space, destabilizing temporal continuity and enabling the fable to transcend its immediate narrative context. This open, ended quality allows the story to resonate as a broader meditation on human perception, fear, and adaptation.

In this way, paratranslation provides a powerful tool for understanding not only how image changes influence the reception of a text but also how the visual translation of a single narrative

can shift its symbolic meaning, its dialogic relationship with the viewer, and its placement within diverse cultural milieus. The contrast between traditional and Chagall, inspired illustrations exemplifies that adaptation is far from a mere media transfer; it is a profound transformation encompassing semiotic, narrative, and aesthetic dimensions.

Looking ahead, this study opens up promising avenues for further research into the mechanisms and implications of paratranslation across a broad spectrum of artistic media and cultural settings. While this analysis focused on a specific fable and its visual adaptations, extending the inquiry to other literary genres, such as poetry, drama, or prose narratives, and their diverse visual or multimedia representations could yield rich insights into how meaning is negotiated and transformed. For instance, examining how myths, legends, or folk tales are visually reinterpreted across cultures and time periods would deepen our understanding of the continuous dialogue between text, image, and audience.

Moreover, extending the concept of paratranslation beyond the visual arts to encompass theatre, film, digital media, and performance offers valuable insight into the ways different storytelling modalities engage with processes of cultural translation, adaptation, and reception. Each medium operates within distinct semiotic frameworks and limitations, shaping how narratives are reinterpreted and how audiences construct meaning. Investigating these dynamics through an interdisciplinary lens may enrich theoretical understandings of cultural transmission by emphasizing the porous boundaries between original works and their various adaptations.

Importantly, this line of inquiry underscores the enduring and transformative power of narrative. Stories should not be regarded as static artifacts, but rather as evolving entities that adapt as they encounter new cultural contexts, artistic interpretations, and audience perspectives. Through the processes of paratranslation, narratives engage in a continuous negotiation between preservation and innovation, navigating the space between what is familiar and what is unfamiliar. This process of transformation not only reflects the changing contours of human experience but also plays an active role in shaping our fears, hopes, values, and identities.

A nuanced understanding of paratranslation allows scholars, artists, and audiences to appreciate the inherently multilayered and dialogic character of storytelling. Adaptation, in this view, is not a process of loss or dilution but one of creative renewal. It represents a vital mechanism through which culture remains dynamic, meaningful, and capable of sustaining connections across time and place.

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VISUAL METAPHOR IN PARATRANSLATION OF LITERARY IMAGE

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This study significantly broadens and deepens the investigation of paratranslation in illustrated literature, foregrounding the complex and multifaceted ways in which visual storytelling intersects, converges, and sometimes diverges from textual translation to generate intricate, layered, and dynamically evolving networks of meaning.

This study *aims* to determine the complex interplay between textual and visual elements in illustrated literature, focusing on the role of paratranslation and metaphor in shaping meaning across linguistic, cultural, and historical contexts. Specifically, it seeks to examine how illustrations, peritextual elements, and multimodal strategies in Jean de La Fontaine's fables contribute to the creation, transformation, and negotiation of narrative meaning, and how these processes facilitate cross-cultural interpretation, reader engagement, and the dynamic evolution of stories over time.

Moving beyond traditional translation studies that primarily focus on linguistic equivalence and textual fidelity, this research positions itself at the intersection of translation theory, visual culture studies, and multimodal discourse analysis to examine how meaning-making processes unfold across multiple semiotic registers simultaneously. As a central and paradigmatic case study, this research undertakes a comprehensive multimodal and diachronic analysis of Jean de La Fontaine's fables and their extensive peritextual ecosystems, focusing particularly on the remarkably diverse visual interpretations, adaptations, and reimaginings provided by illustrators across different historical periods, cultural contexts, and artistic traditions. The study traces how these visual interpretations have evolved, transformed, and responded to changing cultural sensibilities, aesthetic movements, and readership expectations, revealing illustration not as a static or subordinate accompaniment to text but as a dynamic and generative force in the ongoing reconfiguration of narrative meaning. Metaphor emerges as a multifaceted connecting tool in this complex process, operating simultaneously across linguistic and visual registers to mediate meaning, facilitate cultural translation, and generate new interpretive possibilities and layers of understanding. The study demonstrates how metaphorical thinking functions not merely as a rhetorical device but as a fundamental cognitive mechanism that enables the translation of abstract concepts, emotional states, and cultural values across different semiotic modes and cultural contexts. The methodological approach adopted here draws extensively upon cutting-edge interdisciplinary frameworks that recognize and theorize the inherently multimodal nature of contemporary literary experience and cultural transmission. This perspective necessitates moving decisively beyond conventional translation studies paradigms to embrace a more expansive, nuanced, and theoretically sophisticated understanding of how meaning travels, transforms, and adapts across cultural, linguistic, and visual boundaries. The research methodology integrates insights from semiotics, visual rhetoric, cultural translation theory, and reader-response criticism to develop a comprehensive analytical framework capable of addressing the complexity of multimodal textual production and reception. At the theoretical core of this inquiry lies the innovative framework of paratranslation, understood in productive dialogue with Gérard Genette's foundational analysis of paratexts and peritexts, while simultaneously extending and challenging these concepts to accommodate visual and multimodal dimensions. This approach transcends traditional notions of linguistic equivalence to encompass the material, graphic, spatial, and embodied dimensions of meaning-making processes. Through this sophisticated theoretical lens, the study explores how illustrations, paratextual elements, layout choices, typography, colour schemes, and spatial arrangements collectively shape the semantic and cultural mediation of the text, profoundly influencing how readers interpret narrative space, character dynamics, emotional tone, and thematic significance across linguistic and visual boundaries. The analysis demonstrates with particular clarity that space within the fable functions not as a passive, neutral backdrop but as a dynamic, socially and culturally constructed element that is actively informed by the viewer's interpretive framework, cultural background, and embodied experience. Visual strategies such as the deliberate partial depiction, strategic cropping, or complete omission of key narrative elements like the camel in certain fables represent sophisticated paratranslational interventions that shift the narrative's emotional register, symbolic resonance, and interpretive possibilities. Rather than signifying mere absence or artistic limitation, these calculated omissions function as deliberate paratranslational interventions that foreground abstraction, encourage active reader participation, and invite open-ended, culturally situated interpretation, thereby fundamentally reshaping the affective landscape and emotional geography of the fable. These visual choices create interpretive spaces that readers must actively fill, transforming the reading experience from passive consumption

to active meaning construction. By systematically comparing more representational visual strategies with highly interpretive, abstract, or stylized approaches, the study reveals the remarkable diversity of meaning-making approaches available within visual peritexts and demonstrates their considerable power to mediate, transform, and sometimes completely reconceptualize narrative significance.

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