

“We’ll See Who Knits the Fastest”: Female Emotionality and Embodied Knowledge in Annemarie van Haeringen’s Dutch Picturebook *Sneeuwwitje breit een monster* and Its American Translation¹

Abstract:

The belief that women are more emotional than men and less able to control the influence of their emotions on their thoughts and behaviours is one of the strongest gender stereotypes in Western cultures. While gender representation in children’s books has been studied since the 1970s and has led to numerous books that challenge gender stereotypes, the notion of women as emotionally irrational persists – even in picturebooks that rewrite or circumvent other gender-stereotypical elements. Drawing on feminist (fairy-tale) studies, translation studies, cognitive theory, and picturebook studies, the author of this article seeks to examine how verbal and visual choices in the Dutch picturebook *Sneeuwwitje breit een monster* [Snow White Knits a Monster] by Annemarie van Haeringen (2014) and its American translation, *How to Knit a Monster* (2018), can reinforce or challenge the Western stereotype of women as emotionally unstable and lacking control. The author’s comparative multimodal analysis reveals that visual split depictions and dramatic

* Rosalyn Borst – MA, prepares a doctoral dissertation at Tilburg University (the Netherlands) on gendered constructions of anger in contemporary picturebooks. Her research interests include feminist theory, cognitive approaches to children’s literature, multimodal analysis, picturebooks, and fairy-tale adaptations. Contact: r.e.borst@tilburguniversity.edu.

¹ This publication is part of the project “From Silent Containment to Empowering Rage: Gendered Constructions of Anger Expression and Diversion in Contemporary Picturebooks” (project number PGW.20.003), conducted within the research programme PhDs in the Humanities, funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO). I would like to thank the students and my colleagues at Tilburg University, as well as the audience of the 2024 The Child and the Book Conference in Rouen (France), for their valuable comments on the papers that contributed to writing this article. I am also grateful to the anonymous reviewers of *Dzieciństwo. Literatura i Kultura* for their useful remarks.

irony in the selected case studies uphold the harmful association of women with emotional irrationality and ignorance. In contrast, word-image interactions that allow for ambiguity and that suggest the main character's use of embodied knowledge offer a potential challenge to these connotations.

Key words:

Annemarie van Haeringen, gender, emotions, feminist theory, multimodal analysis, picturebooks, translation

„Zobaczymy, kto najszybciej robi na drutach”. Kobięca emocjonalność i ucieleśniona wiedza w holenderskim picturebooku *Sneeuwwitje breit een monster* autorstwa Annemarie van Haeringen i jego amerykańskim przekładzie

Abstrakt:

Pogląd, że kobiety są bardziej emocjonalne niż mężczyźni i mniej zdolne do kontrolowania wpływu emocji na swoje myśli i zachowania, należy do najsilniejszych stereotypów genderowych w kulturach zachodnich. Choć badania reprezentacji genderowej w literaturze dziecięcej były prowadzone już od lat 70. XX wieku i wiele książek zaczęło kwestionować płciowe stereotypy, to przekonanie, że kobiety są emocjonalnie irracjonalne, jest utrwalone i pojawia się nawet w książkach obrazkowych, które przekształcają lub podważają inne stereotypy genderowe. Opierając się na feministycznych badaniach nad baśnią, badaniach nad przekładem, teorii kognitywnej i badaniach nad książką obrazkową, autorka niniejszego artykułu bada, w jaki sposób wybory werbalne i wizualne w holenderskim picturebooku *Sneeuwwitje breit een monster* [Śnieżka robi potwora na drutach] autorstwa Annemarie van Haeringen (2014) oraz jego amerykańskim tłumaczeniu *How to Knit a Monster* [Jak zrobić potwora na drutach] (2018) utrwalają lub kwestionują zachodni stereotyp kobiet jako emocjonalnie niestabilnych i pozbawionych kontroli. Multimodalna analiza porównawcza przeprowadzona przez autorkę tekstu pokazuje, że wizualne przedstawienia podzielone [*visual split depictions*] oraz ironia dramatyczna w wybranych studiach przypadków podtrzymują szkodliwe skojarzenia kobiet z emocjonalną nieracjonalnością i ignorancją. Z kolei interakcje między słowem a obrazem, które pozostawiają miejsce na niejednoznaczność i sugerują wykorzystanie ucieleśnionej wiedzy przez główną bohaterkę, mogą podważać te konotacje.

Słowa kluczowe:

Annemarie van Haeringen, gender, emocje, teoria feministyczna, analiza multimodalna, książki obrazkowe, przekład

Introduction

To be considered “emotional,” feminist philosopher Sara Ahmed (2014) points out, is marked as a characteristic “of some bodies and not others” (p. 4). Oftentimes, these bodies are female. Psychology of emotion scholar Stephanie Shields (2002) identifies the belief that women are more emotional than men as one of the strongest gender stereotypes in Western cultures. In these societies, men are seen as capable of controlling their emotions rationally, while women are viewed as inherently emotional and unable to control how emotions affect their thoughts and behaviour (Brescoll, 2016; Shields, 2002). Feminist scholars highlight that this association of women with emotional irrationality reflects a broader Western tendency to think in hierarchical binary pairs that correlate with one another – this leads to the perception that the mind, reason, knowledge, and rationality are connected with men and the masculine, while the body, emotion, ignorance, and irrationality are associated with women and the feminine (Boler, 1999; Grosz, 1993). The ensuing stereotype of female emotional irrationality is harmful, as it is used to dismiss women’s emotional expressions outright, without giving due attention to the potentially legitimate causes behind those expressions (Cherry, 2018).

A number of studies demonstrate that gender-emotion stereotypes are acquired early in life (Birnbaum, 1983; Birnbaum & Chemelski, 1984; Parmley & Cunningham, 2008; Widen & Russell, 2002) and can be transmitted not only through caregivers but also through media, which provide frames and scripts for expressing and evaluating emotions (Coats, 2018; Mar & Oatley, 2008; Nikolajeva, 2018). While the representation of gender in children’s books has been a research topic since the 1970s and has led to numerous books that challenge gender stereotypes (Coats, 2018), the depiction of women as emotionally irrational remains persistent, even appearing in picturebooks that rewrite or circumvent other gender-stereotypical elements (Borst, 2022; Coats, 2019).

In this article, I explore how verbal and visual choices in picturebooks can either reproduce or challenge the stereotype of women as emotionally unstable and lacking emotional control through a comparative multimodal analysis of two versions of the same picturebook. The selected works are the award-winning and widely translated Dutch picturebook *Sneeuwwitje breit een monster* (hereafter referred to as *Snow White Knits a Monster*) by the acclaimed Dutch picturebook artist Annemarie van Haeringen (2014) and its American

translation titled *How to Knit a Monster* (Haeringen, 2014/2018).² In these fairy tale-inspired picturebooks, the main character – a goat who loves to knit (called Snow White in the Dutch source text and Greta in the American translation), gets angry at her neighbour, Mrs. Sheep, who derides her knitting skills. When Mrs. Sheep remarks that she herself knits much faster and more beautifully, Snow White / Greta angrily thinks: “We’ll see who knits the fastest” (Haeringen, 2014; p. [12]; 2014/2018, p. [15]), and starts knitting very fast. This effort produces a wolf on her knitting needles, who, once Snow White / Greta releases it, swallows Mrs. Sheep whole. Faced with the threat of being eaten herself, Snow White / Greta needs to figure out how to get rid of it. First, she decides to knit a tiger, which devours the wolf, but this only worsens her predicament as the tiger then turns on her. She then decides to knit a monster, keeping the last stitches unfinished on her needle. After the monster gobbles up the tiger, Snow White / Greta unravels her knitting, releasing Mrs. Sheep, who remorsefully apologises to the protagonist.

As the brief description of both books already reveals, the American edition introduces changes to the title and the main character’s name. Additionally, the translation incorporates other notable adjustments to the verbal text and the layout of the images. In the following sections, I compare the verbal and visual choices in *Snow White Knits a Monster* and *How to Knit a Monster*, examining how each challenges and/or reinforces Western gender stereotypes in general and the stereotype of women as emotionally irrational in particular. I will do so through a comparative multimodal analysis, drawing on feminist (fairy-tale) studies (Joosen, 2011; Paul, 2004), translation studies (Alvstad, 2018; O’Sullivan, 2005), cognitive theory (Lakoff, 1987; Tanaka, 2011), and picture-book studies (Gressnich, 2012; Moya Guijarro, 2014; Painter, Martin, & Unsworth, 2013). I start by analysing how the two books verbally and visually engage with fairy tales and feminist fairy-tale criticism, discussing how this engagement revises the stereotypical associations of femininity with being passive, social, sharing, and submissive. Next, I focus on two key narrative moments (one in the complication-climax phase and another at the very end of the

² Following its publication in 2014, *Snow White Knits a Monster* received the 2015 Zilveren Penseel [Silver Paintbrush] and the 2015 Biennial of Illustration Bratislava Plaque. Prior to the release of the American translation in 2018, translated editions were published in Danish in 2014, German, Chinese, and Japanese in 2016, and French and Korean in 2017. All unofficial translations from the Dutch edition to English presented in this article, including the English title, are my own renderings. The name of the translator of *How to Knit a Monster* is not indicated in the book. I reached out to the publishing house to inquire about it but had not received a response at the time of the article’s publication.

book), where the American edition introduces verbal and layout adjustments. I examine how the female main characters are represented both visually and verbally, and how the readers are invited to engage with the narrative at these two pivotal moments. My analysis reveals that while the Dutch source text challenges gender stereotypes by portraying the female protagonist as a skilled and adventurous creator who relies on her embodied knowledge, the American edition reinforces harmful associations of femininity with ignorance and emotional instability.

Revising Female Passivity

As children’s literature scholar Vanessa Joosen (2011, 2018) observes, many contemporary fairy-tale picturebooks engage in a dialogue with both traditional fairy tales and fairy-tale scholarship. *Snow White Knits a Monster* and *How to Knit a Monster* are no exception. The Dutch source text explicitly alludes to fairy tales, notably by referencing *Snow White* in its title and the main character’s name. Another prominent fairy-tale reference in both versions is the wolf devouring another character, a trope found in tales like *Little Red Riding Hood*, *The Wolf and the Seven Little Goats*, and *The Three Little Pigs*. Additionally, both versions include more subtle visual references to two of these tales. On the first opening, the main character is portrayed walking from her house with a basket, a scene reminiscent of *Little Red Riding Hood*. Furthermore, she is depicted knitting seven little goats and hiding from the wolf in a closet beneath a clock, both referencing *The Wolf and the Seven Little Goats*.

The most prominent feminist critique of popular Western fairy tales concerns their gender dynamics, particularly in terms of agency: while male characters often play active roles, female characters remain passive (Joosen, 2011). *Snow White Knits a Monster* and its American translation revise this trope by granting the female protagonist agency. Unlike Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother in the Grimms’ version of the tale, who need to be saved from the wolf’s belly by a male hunter, Snow White / Greta confronts her antagonists herself: she stands up to Mrs. Sheep and ultimately ensures the safety of both herself and Mrs. Sheep. As the two editions revise the male saviour trope, they do not fall into the pitfall of presenting a simplistic role reversal where female characters take on traditionally masculine gender roles. Instead, the protagonist wields agency through knitting, an activity predominantly seen as women’s domestic work (Jones, 2024; Riley, Corkhill, & Morris, 2013), though also practised by men (McBrinn, 2021).

The verbal and visual portrayal of the main character's knitting blurs stereotypical gendered binaries. These oppositions include 'individual' versus 'social,' 'competitive' versus 'sharing,' 'aggressive' versus 'submissive,' and 'hard' versus 'soft.' As Hilary Janks (2010, p. 48) and Maria Nikolajeva (2005, pp. 149–150) note, such contrasts are traditionally used to define maleness and femaleness, yet in this portrayal, these distinctions are obscured. In the first two spreads of the editions, the protagonist is introduced verbally as engaging with knitting both as a social practice (she knits socks for everyone) and as an individual creative outlet: she wants to try something new and starts knitting goats, which, as shown in the illustrations, come to life. Additionally, while the main character demonstrates the female-coded trait of sharing (p. 150), she also exhibits the male-typed trait of competitiveness in her effort to prove Mrs. Sheep wrong by knitting very fast. What is more, through knitting a wolf that devours Mrs. Sheep, the protagonist's knitting also blurs the binaries of 'aggressive' versus 'submissive' and 'hard' versus 'soft' – she uses soft fabrics to retaliate after being insulted. Thus, the female-typed domestic activity of knitting, often associated with cuteness, cosiness, and perceived as harmless and nonthreatening (Jones, 2022; Steed, 2016), is “reclaimed” (Paul, 2004) as an active and powerful form of expression.

Moreover, the transformative quality of knitting introduces a more playful and cyclical aspect to how anger processing is often represented in Western cultures. As cognitive linguist Georg Lakoff (1987) points out, when talking about emotions such as anger, we frequently use figurative expressions like: “I'm *struggling* with my anger” and “[They] *unleashed* [their] anger [emphasis in original]” (pp. 391–392), which are grounded in conceptual metaphors that map an abstract idea or experience onto a more concrete referent to convey meaning. The two conceptual metaphors underlying these examples are ANGER IS AN OPPONENT (IN A STRUGGLE)³ and ANGER IS A DANGEROUS ANIMAL, both of which portray anger as an undesirable physiological reaction that one needs to keep under control, as losing control could be dangerous to the angry person or to others (pp. 391–393). In *Snow White Knits a Monster* and *How to Knit a Monster*, several aspects of these two conceptual metaphors are explored: the depiction of a dangerous animal emerging from anger, its growth (from wolf to tiger to monster), its uncontrolled presence, the owner's responsibility to restrain it, and the energy – or in this case, wit – required to manage it. However, by choosing to let the protagonist create a dangerous animal out of yarn, the story

³ In cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphors are typically written in small capitals.

adds a playful and cyclical twist. Since knitted creations can be unravelled, every piece of knitting has the infinite potential to be transformed into new creations (Jones, 2022, p. 7). Both *Snow White Knits a Monster* and *How to Knit a Monster* employ the female-typed cyclical nature of knitting (Janks, 2010, p. 48) to show that releasing anger can be powerful and threatening, but it does not necessarily lead to long-term destructive consequences. Similar to the traditionally female-coded domestic activity of knitting, the expression of anger in these narratives is depicted as non-harmful; neither Mrs. Sheep, the protagonist, nor the yarn are harmed during this creative process. What emerges from the moment of knitting and anger expression can be unravelled, undone, and transformed into something new.

While *Snow White Knits a Monster* and *How to Knit a Monster* both portray the protagonist’s knitting as active, creative, and powerful, the following sections focus on two specific moments in the narrative where significant verbal and layout adjustments result in a different characterisation of the main character’s emotional processing.

Female Embodied Knowledge or Emotionality?

As numerous translation scholars observe, adjustments in words and images are common in translations of children’s literature (Alvstad, 2018; O’Sullivan, 2005). Such changes are often made for various reasons, including aligning the text more closely with the literary conventions or social norms of the target culture (Alvstad, 2018). Especially themes considered sensitive by mediators of children’s literature are particularly susceptible to alteration in translation, with several scholars citing examples of adjustments related to nudity, bodily functions, sexuality, and violence in children’s literature translated for the American market (Alvstad, 2018; O’Sullivan, 2005). These revisions are often regarded as censorship. Yet, as translation scholar Cecilia Alvstad (2018) reminds us: “Before judging all changes in translation too harshly, it should be kept in mind that publishers often suggest or impose changes in original works as well” (p. 166). With this in mind, my comparative multimodal analysis of the two instances where significant textual and layout adjustments appear in the American edition will not speculate on the motivations behind these changes but will instead focus on how these adjustments affect the narratives’ potential to reproduce or challenge gender stereotypes.

The openings on which a wolf emerges on the protagonist’s knitting needles, only to be released by her, exhibit some striking differences in how the

Dutch and American editions describe this process in the verbal text. The Dutch version relates how Mrs. Sheep's insulting remarks first cognitively distract Snow White from her knitting, but how she then regains focus and begins knitting at great speed. The verbal text reads:

Snow White has lost the thread. She's not paying attention. //⁴
One knit, one purl, one stitch after another.
We'll see who can knit the fastest, Snow White thinks angrily.
Ticketyticketyticketytick, the needles tick against each other, faster and faster.
While Mrs. Sheep rattles on, Snow White keeps knitting at a furious pace, without looking up. One knit, one purl, one stitch after another!
Finished! The thread has already been ended off before she realises it... //
A wolf jumps off the needle! (Haeringen, 2014, pp. [9–13])⁵

Due to her focus on speed, these lines suggest, Snow White is not paying cognitive attention to what she is knitting: she does not look up to see what she is producing, and the decision to end off her knitting is not a cognitive choice (it happens before she realises it). While Snow White is not fully engaged cognitively, her body continues to perform the skill of knitting. The verbal text highlights the method and repetitive nature of the process (“One knit, one purl, one stitch after another” is mentioned twice) and underscores how Snow White is able to speed up the process (“faster and faster” and “at a furious pace”).

In depicting Snow White knitting a wolf without cognitively realising it, the Dutch source text describes a process familiar to many knitters: the experience of, as knitter and sociologist Betsy Greer (2008) puts it, “the hands taking over from the brain” (p. 37). “Suddenly,” Greer recounts, “I wasn't thinking about what I was doing, my fingers seemed to be under someone else's control” (pp. 37–38). The force at work in Greer's anecdote is what cognitive theorists term “embodied knowledge” – according to Shogo Tanaka (2011), a theorist of embodied cognition, this is a type of knowledge “where the *body* knows how to act [...]. There is no need to verbalize or represent in the mind all the procedures required. The knowledge seems to be imprinted in one's body [emphasis

⁴ The double slash indicates a page turn.

⁵ Dutch source text: “Sneeuw witje is de draad kwijt. Ze let niet goed op. // Eén recht, één averecht, de ene steek na de andere. We zullen wel eens zien wie hier het snelst kan breien, denkt Sneeuw witje boos. Tikketiketiketik, steeds sneller tikken de pennen tegen elkaar. Terwijl mevrouw Schaap doorratelt, breit Sneeuw witje in razend tempo verder, zonder op of om te kijken. Eén recht, één averecht, de ene steek na de andere! Klaar! De draad is al afgehecht voor ze er erg in heeft... // Een wolf springt van de pen!”

in original]” (p. 149). The description of Snow White knitting a wolf in the Dutch source text can be read as an example of this concept. Cognitively, Snow White may not have planned to knit a wolf, but her hooves still crafted and completed it. Her skilled body *knew* what to do.

By contrast, the significantly shorter verbal text of the American translation invites a different reading of how the wolf is created. It reads:

Greta is upset. She isn’t watching her knitting. //
We’ll see who knits the fastest, Greta thinks angrily.
Clickclickclicketyclick go her needles.
Mrs. Sheep keeps talking. Greta still isn’t watching her knitting.
She decides it’s finished and ends it off... //
... and a wolf jumps off the needle! [emphasis in original] (Haeringen, 2014/2018, pp. [13–17])

Instead of depicting the protagonist as cognitively distracted, the translation characterises her as emotional (she is described as “upset”) and establishes a direct link between her emotional state and her behaviour (not watching her knitting). Additionally, all elements that portray Snow White as skilled are absent in the translation. The lines highlighting the method and repetitive nature of knitting (“One knit, one purl, one stitch after another”) and those describing the protagonist’s ability to accelerate the process (“faster and faster” and “at a furious pace”) are omitted. Instead, the translation notes twice that Greta is not watching her knitting, while the second mention also contains the adverb “still.” This adverb underscores that Greta’s inattention to her knitting is continuous, implying that she *should* be watching her work and thereby making her appear more ignorant than her Dutch counterpart. Lastly, the moment Greta ends off her knitting is presented as a cognitive decision (“She decides it’s finished”). Framing this as a conscious cognitive choice, after highlighting that Greta has not been watching her work due to her emotions, makes her appear more emotionally irrational than in the Dutch source text.

In addition to these adjustments in the verbal text, the translation also introduces a change in layout. In the Dutch source text, Snow White knitting ferociously and the wolf jumping off her needle are depicted on the fourth opening (see Figure 1). However, the American edition employs what picture-book scholar Eva Gressnich (2012) has labelled a “split depiction,” where “the borders of the page are crossed visually by depicting only a small part of an object on the edge of the page [...] and the missing part [...] on the next spread” (p. 176). In the American edition, the readers are shown only a small part of the



Eén recht, één averecht, de ene steek na de andere.
We zullen wel eens zien wie hier het snelst kan breien,
denkt Sneeuwvitje boos.
Tikketikketikketik, steeds sneller tikken de pennen tegen
elkaar.
Terwijl mevrouw Schaap doorratelt, breit Sneeuwvitje in
razend tempo verder, zonder op of om te kijken. Eén recht,
één averecht, de ene steek na de andere!
Klaar! De draad is al afgehecht voor ze er erg in heeft...

FIGURE 1. 4th opening from *Sneeuwvitje breit een monster*, © Annemarie van Haeringen, Uitgeverij Leopold, 2014.

protagonist's knitting on the fourth opening, and this part lacks an identifiable shape. To find out that she is knitting a wolf, the readers must turn the page.

As Gressnich (2012) points out, split depictions are a type of pageturner that entices the readers to flip the page to piece together fragmented elements. This visual split depiction is not the only pageturner on this opening. The verbal texts of both the Dutch and American editions also contain a verbal page-turner. A line ending with a triple-dot glyph and continuing on the next opening in both versions exemplifies a "split sentence" – a sentence that extends "over more than one spread, so that a reader has to go overleaf to finish reading the sentence" (p. 170). In the translation, the line ending with a triple-dot glyph also continues with a triple-dot glyph on the next page and starts with the word "and," making it a more fully realised example of a "split sentence." The adjustments in the verbal text and visual layout of the American edition create a closer symmetry between words and images, as both modalities incorporate a page-turning technique.

The choice to reveal the creation of a wolf after the page turn may enhance engagement, as it builds suspense and more strongly invites the readers to turn the page. Significantly, however, the visual representation of this process also risks affirming the stereotype of female ignorance much more than the source text does. In the American edition, the front part of Greta's knitting, shaped

like a wolf, is obscured by the page turn, thereby suggesting that Greta lacks full awareness of what she is knitting. Here, the verbal and visual text strongly imply that Greta does not know what she is doing and that this results from not looking at her knitting (which she ought to have done). By contrast, in the Dutch source text, the wolf is visually displayed in full on the fourth opening, which adds a layer of ambiguity: since the wolf is completely realised, there remains the possibility that Snow White is somehow aware of its presence. This reading resonates with the aforementioned interpretation of the verbal text: Snow White may not have cognitively intended to knit a wolf, but her body did.

Ultimately, the Dutch edition emphasises Snow White’s knitting skills more than the American translation: it highlights how she knits (one knit, one purl), how this knitting is repetitive (by repeating the phrase twice), and foregrounds her focus on speed. The latter aspect is also the reason that she is not looking up. By contrast, the American version lacks the emphasis on the method of knitting and the main character’s attention to speed. Instead, it establishes a direct connection between the protagonist being “upset” and her inability to see what she is doing. Hereby, it echoes the stereotype that women are unable to control how their emotions influence their behaviour. Furthermore, the American version frames Greta’s failure to watch her knitting as something she should be doing, portraying her response to Mrs. Sheep’s insulting remarks as both ignorant and irrational compared to the source text. This characterisation is therefore more likely to reinforce the gendered stereotype of women as emotionally unstable, whereas the Dutch version offers an alternative perspective.

Female Creativity or Ignorance?

The endings of the two versions, with an additional, similar adjustment in the layout appearing in the American edition, also warrant closer examination regarding gender stereotypes. After the protagonist has unravelled her knitting, revealing an apologetic Mrs. Sheep, the verbal text of the Dutch edition concludes as follows:

Satisfied, Snow White puts new stitches on her needle.
If only she could knit tender grass...
She looks forward to that after this adventure. (Haeringen, 2014, p. [28])⁶.

⁶ Dutch source text: “Tevreden zet Sneeuwvitje nieuwe steken op haar pen. Als ze toch eens mals gras kon breien... Daar heeft ze wel zin in na dit avontuur.”

This excerpt does not characterise Snow White in a stereotypically feminine way. She is portrayed as thinking about a new knitting project that will bring her joy (and not necessarily others), with her past experiences depicted as an “adventure,” a word traditionally associated more with male than female characters (Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus, & Young, 2006; Weitzman, Eifler, Hokada, & Ross, 1972). Additionally, the accompanying illustration shows that her new knitting project will probably lead to further adventures. While the verbal text mentions only that Snow White is thinking of grass, the image shows her knitting a crocodile (see Figure 2). The counterpointing interaction between the words and the image (Nikolajeva, 2005, p. 226) creates ambiguity as to whether Snow White knows (cognitively or bodily) that she is knitting a crocodile. Yet, one element in this image suggests that she does. A diagonal line can be drawn between the eyes of Snow White and the crocodile, suggesting they are gazing at each other and hinting at a sense of companionship between the two characters (Moya Guijarro, 2014, p. 78). Perhaps Snow White initially thought of grass, but she has recognised that her practice of knitting, guided by embodied knowledge, is steering her in a new direction? Additionally, the green thread extending to the edge of the page invites a symbolic reading (Painter, Martin, & Unsworth, 2013, p. 57), implying that more adventures lie ahead. The analysis of the interplay between the verbal and visual



FIGURE 2. 12th opening from *Sneeuwvitje breit een monster*, © Annemarie van Haeringen, Uitgeverij Leopold, 2014.

texts resonates with another knitting experience described by Greer (2008): “With my hands at work, my mind and creativity are free to roam and explore” (p. 38). The Dutch edition seems to embody this experience: while knitting, Snow White’s mind wanders off, opening space for creativity driven by her embodied knowledge, which leads her in unexpected directions.

By contrast, adjustments in the verbal text and visual layout of the American edition result in a characterisation of the main character that aligns more closely with gender stereotypes. The verbal text at the end of the American version reads:

After Mrs. Sheep goes home, Greta puts new stitches on her needles.

What next?

I know, thinks Greta. *I can knit some fresh green grass for the little goats!*

She happily daydreams about the little goats playing on the grass, and guess what?

She doesn’t watch her knitting... [emphases in original] (Haeringen, 2014/2018, [p. 33]).

Several significant narrative choices are made in this text. First, unlike in the Dutch source text, the American version presents Greta’s new knitting project as a social undertaking – it is something she does for the little goats rather than for herself. Second, the verbal text engages the readers in a distinct way: the omniscient narrator explicitly conveys information beyond the protagonist’s grasp. By posing the rhetorical question: “[...] guess what?,” and answering it with: “She doesn’t watch her knitting,” the narrator enables the readers to infer that Greta is repeating her previous behaviour. The illustration further adds layers of meaning by including details unavailable to the main character. Due to an adjustment in the image layout in the American edition, the front part of Greta’s knitting, shaped like a crocodile, is once again obscured by the page turn. However, this time the line, “She doesn’t watch her knitting,” points to a specific part of the green knitting where a foot can be discerned. While the text highlights this detail for the readers, Greta appears unaware of it. Additionally, the layout change directs her gaze toward a ball of wool on her left, rather than toward the emerging crocodile. On the final opening, the discrepancy between Greta’s knowledge and the readers’ is amplified, as the missing part of the image – revealing that Greta is knitting a crocodile – is shown only to the readers. The protagonist, left behind on the previous page, remains unaware of this revelation.

The situation of dramatic irony created in the American edition, where the readers are granted more elaborate knowledge of events than the protagonist, can have several effects. The experience of knowing more than

a character may evoke delight and satisfaction in the readers since, as children's literature scholar Julie Cross (2011) points out, children are believed to "naturally enjoy the opportunity to 'know better' than younger and/or more naïve characters" (p. 64). However, it may also inculcate societal beliefs about the "funny" incapacities of a certain group (p. 140). Both effects are likely to be evoked by the American edition. The dramatic irony at the ending likely offers readers enjoyment and satisfaction through clues that allow them to anticipate the conclusion, but this comes at the cost of a female character. Greta is ultimately depicted as someone incapable of mastering her emotions, reinforcing the stereotype that women are unable to control their feelings. As in the source text, the green thread extending to the page edge could symbolise a continuation of events. However, in the American edition, the focus shifts from future adventures to the unchanging cycle of ignorant Greta failing to watch her knitting.

Conclusion

Both the Dutch picturebook *Snow White Knits a Monster* and the American translation *How to Knit a Monster* challenge stereotypical associations of femininity with passivity and submissiveness, representing Snow White / Greta as active, competitive, and capable of retaliating powerfully when insulted. However, through distinct verbal and visual choices in two significant moments in the text, the two editions engage with the stereotypes that women are emotionally irrational and ignorant in different ways. The American edition employs verbal and visual techniques such as visual split depictions and dramatic irony, which aim to increase reader engagement. While these techniques can create suspense and enjoyment, they do so at the protagonist's expense. The split depictions of the main character and her knitted creations suggest that she is unaware of what she is knitting and unable to control how her emotions affect her behaviour. Furthermore, the ending relies on dramatic irony, positioning the readers as 'knowing better' than the protagonist, which reinforces the harmful stereotype of women being ignorant. In contrast, the source text lacks both split depictions and dramatic irony. Instead, the interaction between words and images allows for ambiguity and more open interpretations. By portraying Snow White alongside her knitted creations, the Dutch version leaves room for the possibility that she may be aware of their emergence. Snow White may not have cognitively planned to knit a wolf, but her body, guided by embodied knowledge, leads her in unplanned

and creative directions. By depicting a female character whose skilled body, rather than her emotions, takes over from her mind, the Dutch source text creatively challenges the stereotype of women as emotionally irrational and lacking emotional control.

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