

Nonverbal Idiomatic Expressions and Metaphorical Behaviour in Pixar's Animated Short Film "For the Birds"

Putri Fatimah Azzahra¹, Otong Setiawan Djuharie²
UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung^{1,2}

Corresponding Author's Email: putriazzaraa@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how Pixar's animated short film For the Birds employs metaphorical behaviour and nonverbal idioms. Despite lacking spoken speech, the movie uses human emotions, physical gestures, and symbolic sequences to convey a story full of humour and social commentary. In the film, many little birds make fun of a bigger, clumsier-looking bird, only to encounter unexpected repercussions. This story, which is both quiet and expressive, provides a rare chance to examine idiomatic meanings that are expressed nonverbally. The study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to find and analyse several scenes that metaphorically illustrate well-known sayings like "don't judge a book by its cover," "patience is a virtue," and "what goes around comes around." The results demonstrate how action, gesture, and facial expression may all serve as visual languages that represent virtues like poetic justice, humility, and tolerance. These visual idioms improve the narrative by enabling viewers to deduce intricate meanings without using spoken words. Finally, by demonstrating how idioms can transcend language through metaphorical representation in multimodal texts, this study highlights the potency of visual narrative and advances the discipline of visual pragmatics.

Keywords: nonverbal idioms, Pixar, gesture, visual metaphor, short film, pragmatics

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INTRODUCTION

Animation has become a popular medium for conveying complex social, cultural, and moral messages and a source of amusement in an increasingly visual and globalized media landscape. Through gesture, expression, and visual storytelling, animated films—especially those without dialogue—can cut over linguistic barriers and captivate a wide range of viewers. This possibility is best demonstrated by Pixar's *For the Birds* (2000), a brief animated film that contains no spoken words. The film's clever use of nonverbal communication allows it to convey a hilarious and succinct story in just over three minutes that appeals to audiences of many cultural backgrounds. The film's capacity to convey moral teachings and well-known cultural expressions only visually makes it appealing.

Language is one of the most significant aspects of human existence. It serves as an instrument of communication for people to share and express their thoughts. Since language contains interpersonal and transactional meanings, it is an essential human communication system in our daily lives. Language is how individuals convey information and express their thoughts and feelings; therefore, each language has benefited human communication.

It is impossible to separate language and culture because they are interconnected. On the one hand, language symbolises the culture of an organisation or social group. However, there is also a reciprocal relationship between language and culture; language is essential for understanding a culture, and the media helps propagate it. Learning a language also teaches us about the culture associated with that society. Beliefs, symbols, behaviour, knowledge, attitude, and values that define individuals or organisations are all part of culture.

Idiomatic expressions are typically studied within linguistic contexts, focusing on dictionary-bound phrases whose meanings cannot be deduced from their literal components. However, recent work in multimodal and visual communication suggests that idiomatic meaning can also emerge nonverbally, through gestures, posture, and symbolic actions that function similarly to language-based idioms.

In translation studies, idiomatic expressions are presented as one of the most challenging problems. An idiom is a collection of words used to convey a meaning that cannot be inferred from the meanings of the individual words, such as "over the moon" or "see the light." "Frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form, and in the case of idioms, often carry meanings which cannot be deduced from their components," is how Baker (1992) defines idiomatic phrases. Idiomatic expressions are informal language types with meanings that differ from the words' or expressions' true meanings.

People employ nonliteral idioms for various reasons in different communicative situations. One possible explanation is the desire to sway others, especially when a speaker or writer feels compelled to employ certain idioms or just because they are a part of their cultural awareness. However, the impact or importance of these idioms when used in a particular communication event counts most.

Multimodal texts such as silent films, picture books, and animations combine visual, spatial, and sequential elements that create meaning through gesture, image, and narrative flow (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020). These modes become integral when spoken language is absent, turning nonverbal cues into a form of visual syntax.

In certain situations, gesture and spatial arrangement have semantic weight comparable to words and are not only ornamental. Viewers can deduce character relationships, emotional states, and moral lessons without spoken explanation because of cues like gaze direction, body position, and tempo. This is especially clear in *For the Birds*, when exaggerated motion, proximity, and timing are used as narrative devices. Through well-planned visual signals, the movie directs the audience's interpretation, creating a

sort of "grammar" in which gestures take the place of syntax and spatial alterations serve as punctuation. As a result, the audience is actively decoding a multimodal language that stimulates empathy and cognition rather than merely seeing a story unfold.

In film animation, especially shorts without dialogue, researchers have begun to highlight how characters' gestures and interactions can carry figurative or idiomatic nuance typically associated with language (Burn & Parker, 2003). Visual semiotics here provides a grammar that conveys moral values and social commentary.

From a psychological perspective, nonverbal behaviours such as facial expression, body posture, and hand movement are critical in emotional and social signalling (Ekman & Friesen, 2003). Newer findings from neurocognitive research reinforce this: gestures activate semantic networks similarly to speech, indicating that our brains process visual-symbolic cues in deeply integrated ways (Calbi et al., 2017).

Research confirms that gestures and facial expressions augment meaning and guide interpretation in educational and social media contexts, supporting comprehension at levels comparable to or exceeding verbal instruction (Hostetter, 2011). These findings support the hypothesis that idiomatic meaning can be conveyed nonverbally effectively.

The silent animated short *For the Birds* (Pixar, 2000) presents a unique case: it communicates a complete narrative arc of mockery, exclusion, and poetic justice without dialogue. Visually, the film encodes meanings like "do not judge a book by its cover," "patience is a virtue," and "what goes around comes around."

Despite its minimal duration of 3 minutes, *For the Birds* uses carefully orchestrated gestures, mocking pecks, exaggerated postures, and facial expressions to deliver thematic messages through movement alone. The film thus becomes a visual idiomatic text.

This transformation of idiomatic meaning into physical action allows the film to function as a moral narrative without relying on dialogue or written text. Every action, from the tiny birds' coordinated eye rolls to the larger ones' serene motion, is a visual metaphor derived from commonplace expressions. Through dynamic storytelling, these corporeal expressions lead the audience through the story's emotional and moral arc, making impersonal virtues like justice, patience, and humility approachable. The film's power is increased by its brevity; every frame adds to the moral consequences that are being revealed, and there are no unnecessary scenes or wasted action. Combining gestures, rhythm, and visual symbolism, *For the Birds* effectively illustrates how short-form animation can communicate complex, culturally relevant concepts.

While most idiom research focuses on spoken and written language, investigating this short allows us to test whether visual actions can stand in for idiomatic expressions. This aligns with broader trends in multimodal discourse studies, which argue that meaning is constructed across multiple semiotic channels (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020).

This study explores how idiomatic meaning can be embodied, performed, and perceived through coordinated gesture, movement, and spatial interaction by shifting the focus from linguistic to visual modalities. The lack of conversation in *For the Birds* highlights these visual resources, allowing audiences to understand idiomatic principles like patience, judgment, and punishment through dynamic visuals instead of spoken explanation. In addition to expanding the field of idiom analysis outside conventional textual frameworks, this advances our knowledge of how meaning functions in multimodal, languageless narratives. The movie tests whether action, emotion, and consequence may successfully universalize idioms

associated with cultural-linguistic contexts. Doing this challenges the notion that idioms are only found in spoken or written language and emphasizes how visual media may serve as idiomatic discourse.

For the Birds is a perfect example of how visual media may use widely recognized nonverbal cues to convey culturally distinct idiomatic meanings because of its widespread appeal, absence of conversation, and dependence on physical comedy. Idioms are complicated concepts derived from shared knowledge, history, and metaphor in various linguistic and cultural contexts. They are typically viewed as language-bound, requiring contextual awareness and proficiency to fully comprehend. y showing how phrases like "Do not judge a book by its cover" and "What goes around comes around" can be effectively conveyed through embodied performance, visual metaphor, and sequential imagery, For the Birds challenges this presumption and makes them understandable even to viewers who are not familiar with the original language.

This raises the general question of how much idiomatic and moral content can be conveyed only by gesture and visual design. Moreover, what processes, narrative, semiotic, or cognitive allow this cross-linguistic understanding? These inquiries are at the heart of this research, which uses a multimodal framework derived from visual semiotics, gesture studies, and cognitive linguistics to investigate how idiomatic concepts are woven into the storyline of For the Birds. It seeks to demonstrate how the movie functions as a visually idiomatic system via a detailed examination of significant sequences. In this movement, timing and consequence rather than spoken words create meaning.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method to examine how nonverbal idioms are used in Pixar's animated short film For the Birds (2000). This study aims to analyse visual cues not conveyed through spoken languages, such as gestures, facial expressions, and character movements, so the qualitative technique is suitable.

The short film For the Birds, approximately three minutes long, is the study's primary data source. The movie uses nonverbal clues and symbolic behaviour to convey a comprehensive and emotive plot even without spoken conversation. The film, which is widely known for its succinct but powerful narrative, is freely accessible on internet sites.

Data were gathered by rewatching the movie and highlighting passages that might be idiomatic or metaphorical. For further examination, particular instances in which the birds' behaviour reveals deeper meanings like patience, satire, and poetic justice were chosen.

The movements and actions in each scene are interpreted by considering their literal and contextual meaning to analyse the data. The idiomatic value of these visual actions is then used to classify them. Important theoretical frameworks such as idiomaticity (Fernando, 1996), implicature (Grice, 1975), nonverbal communication (Ekman, 2003), and visual semiotics (Barthes, 1977) all lend support to the interpretation. These frameworks show how meaning can be encoded and decoded using only symbolic and visual methods.

This approach enables a targeted comprehension of how idioms typically linked to language can be effectively conveyed through animated, wordless storytelling.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part thoroughly analyses how *For the Birds* (2000) expresses idiomatic meaning using visual metaphor and nonverbal communication. This study uses close scene analysis to show how body language, character placement, and gestures convey idiomatic messages that are usually only expressed verbally. Every significant occasion is linked to results from recent studies in cognitive linguistics, visual semiotics, and gesture studies.

Through closely examining essential sequences, the analysis shows how visual metaphor functions as idiomatic substitution, in which gestures and spatial dynamics represent the abstract moral content that language typically conveys. Exaggerated eye rolls and contemptuous group conduct, for example, are prime examples of embodied ridicule; gestures can externalize internal cognitive systems. In the same way, the larger bird's calm, quiet stance symbolizes moral resistance through inaction.

This interdisciplinary paradigm makes it possible to comprehend how culturally grounded idioms can be transmitted through nonverbal media, like animation, in ways that go beyond language barriers. By doing this, the movie illustrates how viewers' cognitive processes and visual clues co-create meaning, a phenomenon known as embodied simulation, the ability of viewers to internalize meaning through bodily empathy. Therefore, this study's synthesis of gesture studies, visual semiotics, and cognitive linguistics offers a comprehensive perspective on how idiomatic meaning can be visually encoded, allowing movies like *For the Birds* to serve as morally instructive cross-cultural narratives.

In the early scenes, the small birds are clustered on a wire, immediately mocking the larger bird upon its arrival. Their gestures include rolling eyes, raised wings in imitation, synchronised pecking, and loud squawks that embody ridicule. According to McNeill (1992), such actions can be considered emblematic gestures, which are culturally recognisable and often used to express strong emotional or social positioning.

These exaggerated and repeated gestures serve as tools of communication within the flock and signals to the audience that ridicule and exclusion are occurring. The sense of uniformity and in-group behavior is visually reinforced by the birds' grouping, similar look, and cohesive body language. The group reacts defensively, employing ridicule to preserve their social cohesiveness, as soon as the larger bird differs in size, form, and behavior. Their coordinated squawking and pecking intensifies the animosity by portraying the outsider as a danger to consistency. This visual orchestration transforms the beginning scenario into a symbolic depiction of social prejudice, wherein difference is greeted with violence instead of wonder. Without using a single spoken word, the movie uses this contemptuous dance to convey the saying "Do not judge a book by its cover," depending instead on a common cultural concept of



Picture 1: Mockery in Action

This scene mirrors the idiomatic expression “don’t judge a book by its cover”. The small birds’ immediate negative judgment of the larger, awkward-looking bird is based purely on appearance. Recent studies on nonverbal mockery synchronised group behaviour often strengthen the message of exclusion and create a social hierarchy reinforced through gesture.

This instance demonstrates how snap decisions based on appearances can reveal more complex social dynamics. Because of its size, form, and behaviour, the larger bird is instantly viewed as “other” by the smaller birds, even if they look identical. Their combined eye-rolls, mimic imitations, and contemptuous squawks provide a visual shorthand indicating exclusion, i.e., through synchronised nonverbal cues rather than spoken words, the movie shows how difference may become a catalyst for social exclusion. Such gestural ridicule, which is frequently observed in both animated representation and real-life group behaviour, reinforces the inferiority of the outsider while strengthening in-group cohesion. This visual idiom’s familiarity and clarity are what make it so successful. Pixar uses artistic motion and spatial organisation to turn an English sentence into a widely readable ethical message.

The big bird, on the other hand, maintains its composure and displays open, easygoing body language, a soft smile, and slight head tilts. The character waits silently instead of taking revenge. This conduct communicates the idea that “patience is a virtue.” According to Hostetter (2011), the constraint is a metaphoric gesture in which physical stillness is an abstract idea of emotional maturity and inner fortitude.

This depiction of silence might starkly contrast with the lesser birds’ restless, impetuous actions. The large bird uses quiet and calm presence as self-possession techniques, while they relies on noise, movement, and group animosity. The silence becomes a potent narrative element that conveys deliberate control rather than passivity. It implies that wisdom can be discovered in quiet perseverance rather than requiring quick action or verbal defense. The large bird is morally superior and emotionally sympathetic due to its gentleness and calm reaction. By gently encouraging the audience to respect this poise, the message that patience is not merely self-control but also an active display of maturity and dignity in the face of adversity is reinforced.



Picture 2: Visual Patience: Minimal Movement as Moral Strength

According to Petković et al. (2024), an open, relaxed posture fosters trust and reduces tension, highlighting the communicative potential of nonverbal immediacy. The video emphasises the moral lesson that patience in the face of antagonism yields better results by the big bird's refusal to react to provocation.

The large bird's serene manner contrasts sharply with the smaller birds' frantic and aggressive conduct. The bird provides a visual image of inner power and emotional intelligence by remaining calm in the face of hostility or defensiveness. This dynamic is consistent with what Ekman and Friesen (2003) call affective neutrality, in which moral authority and psychological stability are communicated through restraint in movement and facial expression. The spectator is urged to identify with the character not because of the dialogue—there is none—but because of the nonverbal clues that imply dignity in mockery. This visual metaphor functions on both an emotional and a narrative level.

According to Buchan (2014), animation studies frequently employ this kind of stillness as embodied resistance, which turns inaction into a significant act of moral rejection. The scene's idiomatic reading is reinforced by this silent resistance: patience, which is sometimes interpreted as passive, is represented as an active, purposeful posture that eventually results in vindication. The giant bird demonstrates how a silent posture may function as a potent moral narrative with its controlled movements, leisurely motions, and gentle facial expressions. These elements work together to create an image of virtue that appeals to viewers from various cultural backgrounds.

The film's climax occurs when the small birds' collective weight on the wire, after they pull the large bird downward, causes the wire to spring upward once he is released. As a result, all of them are flung into the sky, losing all their feathers. This brilliant visual realisation of the idiom "what goes around comes around."

This turning point represents poetic justice in its most unadulterated visual manifestation. The small birds' demise is caused by the same acts they used to make fun of and alienate the larger species. Once an act of domination, their laughter and aggression are immediately undermined by an uncontrollable turn of events. The abrupt change in power dynamics is amusing and educational, demonstrating how malicious intent frequently has unintended results. The movie turns a mechanical reaction into a symbolic calculation by exaggerating the physical result (birds soaring, feathers flying). The audience is shown the price of cruelty and, more significantly, the certainty of repercussions without a single word.



Picture 3: Cause and Consequence: Embodied Poetic Justice

According to Vogt & Kauschke (2017) and Calbi et al. (2017), action-based visual metaphors captivate audiences emotionally and cognitively. Through a sequence, this type of kinetic idiom conveys consequence: cruelty and mockery are the source, while loss and humiliation are the result. The larger bird's final stillness, facial expressions, and exaggerated timing all combine as visual cues for the moral lesson.

In addition to being visually arresting, this abrupt change in action is poetry in its storytelling. The little birds, who had previously used exclusion and mockery to establish their authority, are now at the mercy of the system they controlled. The wire snapping serves as a narrative karma moment in which the physical world carries out a kind of justice that words can never express.

Through sympathetic simulation, embodied retribution in visual storytelling engages the viewer's moral cognition and enables them to "feel" the consequences. Timing is essential in this scene because the birds' actions (pecking and pulling the wire) and subsequent consequences (being thrown away) replicate cause-and-effect systems frequently found in fables and parables. This kinetic metaphor emphasizes that bad intentions can result in self-inflicted consequences by turning a straightforward mechanical reaction into a moral lesson.

Additionally, the birds' shocked and alarmed facial expressions in midair heighten multimodal irony, a situation in which physical motion, expression, and gesture combine to create an ethical joke by providing a humorous counterpoint to the seriousness of the problem. The visual idiom here is universally accessible: without any spoken words, viewers recognize that the small birds' downfall is not an accident, but a direct response to their earlier cruelty.

The smaller birds' motions are linked not only physically but also emotionally. Their duplicated movements and identical responses foster mob behaviour and imply a lack of uniqueness. Group synchronicity in nonverbal behaviour implies hostility toward outsiders and strengthens in-group identity.

This visual conformity emphasizes how groupthink can override individual morality. The smaller birds form a cohesive front that opposes difference and dissuades disagreement by mimicking each other's movements, such as synchronous looks, synchronized chuckling, and group pecking. They become single-minded organisms motivated by common contempt, metaphorically erasing individuality through their same gestures and appearance. The group's social pressure is increased by this homogeneous animosity, which makes it simpler to attack the outsider without consideration or compassion. This delicate unity is threatened by the appearance of the bigger, dissimilar bird, which leads to mockery as a protective tactic.

The movie essentially criticizes exclusionary group behavior through visual repetition and symmetry, implying that when sameness, rather than acceptance, is the foundation of belonging, it can quickly become a vehicle for cruelty.



Picture 4: Poetic Hijinks

Moreover, Smith and Neff (2017) argue that fast, sharp gestures in animated characters are perceived as aggressive or extroverted, while smoother, slower movements correlate with kindness or introversion. The film utilises these gesture dynamics precisely: the small birds flap and jerk rapidly, while the large bird moves slowly and softly.

The little birds, who had previously been united in ridicule and animosity, are left featherless and humiliated after being thrown into the sky by the exact force they conspired to generate in the last scene of *For the Birds*. This provides a moment of moral closure. The phrase "You reap what you sow," which emphasises that evil deeds eventually hurt the doer, is graphically shown by this dramatic result. The abrupt visual change physically and emotionally echoes their previous conduct, naked bodies, astonished faces, and silence.



Picture 5: Final Humiliation

This final scene is both a humorous conclusion and a graphic representation of moral justice. A representation of the human cost of malevolent intent, the lone bird, devoid of feathers and dignity, floats in midair. In contrast to the more general cause-and-effect relationship in "What goes around comes around," this scene emphasizes personal responsibility, reaffirming that deeds have immediate and frequently degrading repercussions for the one who performs them. This ironic reversal is a concluding device in visual storytelling theory, satisfying the audience through poetic justice and balance. The sharpness of the image, the bird's naked body, and frozen panic convey vulnerability and consequence with a single glance, transcending the need for verbal explanation.

Furthermore, this retribution scene's moral impact is enhanced by the humor it contains. According to narrative media, audiences are more likely to retain and absorb a moral lesson when misconduct is punished in a lighthearted but degrading manner. This makes the last frame more than just a joke; it is a didactic image that makes the visual statement that cruelty is immoral and detrimental to oneself. This supports Pixar's use of animation as a medium for subliminal moral teaching, where deeds, facial expressions, and tangible results are more powerful than words.

According to gesture theory, this is called a kinetic metaphor, in which physical acts represent moral ideas. It strongly resembles the consequence-based metaphorical gesture that Vogt and Kauschke (2017) explained, in which the result of an action is framed as a symbolic penalty. The phrase "the birds' own plotting is their undoing" is made more evident by the absence of a spoken explanation. In addition to punctuating the movie's plot, this scene turns the entire sequence into a visual tale, a storytelling technique in which the lesson is performed rather than told.

Furthermore, there is a subtle difference between this phrase and "What goes around comes around." Although they both discuss moral consequences, "You reap what you sow" emphasises human responsibility and causality, that is, the idea that one's fate is determined by one's deeds rather than just karma. This is further supported in *For the Birds* by the dramatic contrast between the aggressors' initial arrogance and eventual weakness. The visual irony demonstrates Pixar's skill at incorporating moral maxims into succinct yet impactful situations, encouraging the audience to think and laugh.

The movie effectively uses simple visual language to convey several idioms in these situations. Visual idioms depend on embodied cognition and shared cultural understanding, as opposed to verbal idioms, which rely on lexical knowledge. Even in the absence of any words, the audience understands the meanings underlying the actions intuitively.

The film's focus on well-recognized human behaviors, such as sarcastic mimicry, passive resistance, abrupt reversal, and heightened emotional reaction, gives rise to this intuitive understanding. Viewers are used to understanding these gestures in real-life social circumstances since they are culturally and physically anchored. Their simplicity makes the visual clues more evident: quick motion conveys surprise or loss of control, stillness conveys restraint, and excessive eye-rolling conveys contempt. By doing this, the movie uses the audience's embodied simulation ability, enabling them to experience and interpret meaning through observation instead of interpretation. Because of this, idiomatic meaning is expressed through timing and performance rather than words, enabling the movie to avoid using language while telling a morally complex and culturally relevant story.

This proved that complicated knowledge could be conveyed by nonverbal teaching gestures as successfully as spoken language. To put it briefly, the movie uses widely relatable visual idioms to function as a nonverbal moral story.

Pixar's animated short film *For the Birds* illustrates how visual storytelling can communicate intricate idioms without using words. The movie instills moral and cultural idioms into the behaviour of its protagonists through expressive gestures, exaggerated body language, and strategically placed narrative scenes. Each major scene can be associated with a commonly known idiom:

Table 1: Comparative theme analysis, Visual Idioms in *For the Birds*

Scene	Gesture/Action	Implied Idiom
Group Mocking	Pointing, eye-rolling	"Do not judge a book by its cover."
Passive Response	Stillness, smiling	"Patience is a virtue."
Wire Snapping	Sudden reversal, springing wire	"What goes around comes around."
Final Humiliation	Feathers flying, stunned faces	"You reap what you sow"

Each of the four major scenes from *For the Birds* is linked to a commonly used idiomatic expression in the table provided in this study. Nonverbal clues, gesture-based metaphors, and narrative sequencing are used to perform these idioms, which include "Do not judge a book by its cover," "Patience is a virtue," "What goes around comes around," and "You reap what you sow." To illustrate the alignment between cultural knowledge (in the form of idioms) and embodied action (in the form of character conduct and plot consequences), the table aims to show how each idiom is mapped onto a unique visual event inside the movie.

Each row of the table corresponds to a key moment in the film where an idiom is dramatized:

- The first row shows group mockery, with the smaller birds mocking the larger one, a behavior that corresponds to "Do not judge a book by its cover." The visual design highlights groupthink, shallow judgment, and the rejection of difference. Initially, a group of small, similar birds makes fun of a bigger bird that looks funny. Their coordinated sneers, eye rolls, and contemptuous gestures serve as a visual representation of superficial appearance-based judgment. This highlights themes of conformity, bias, and social exclusion and illustrates people's propensity to reject what is strange or unfamiliar.
- The second row describes the larger bird's passive response, which does not retaliate or respond to provocation. This visual stillness reflects the idiom "Patience is a virtue," presenting composure as an act of inner strength. Unlike the aggression he encounters, the bigger bird reacts with composure and restraint. His serene demeanor, kind smile, and passive posture exude strength without resorting to violence. In contrast to weakness, an internal control in the face of provocation, this action presents patience as a conscious and potent decision.
- The third row illustrates wire snapping, a physical reaction to the tension caused by the smaller birds' aggression. This is a kinetic metaphor for "What goes around comes around," as their plotting backfires spectacularly. The smaller birds' actions, pulling and pecking at the wire, cause an unanticipated blowback as the tension rises. In addition to upsetting their plan, the abrupt reversal caused by the cable snapping works against them. This instance illustrates how malicious intent frequently results in self-destructive consequences.

- The final row emphasizes final humiliation, where the birds, now featherless and airborne, experience the consequence of their hostility. This perfectly reflects "You reap what you sow," highlighting direct moral causality. The tiny birds, devoid of feathers and dignity, are hurled into the air at the last second. Their stunned looks and defenseless thrashing are a visual reward for their earlier brutality. The connection between their deeds and demise further supports the notion that bad behavior breeds bad outcomes.

The analysis shows how *For the Birds* uses visual storytelling to convert idiomatic language with cultural connotations into gestures and narrative moments understood by all. Despite the English origin of these expressions, the film's use of timing, body language, facial expression, and exaggerated physical humor makes it possible for audiences from various cultural backgrounds to understand its moral lessons. Symbolic behaviors that communicate ethical meaning without vocal explanation include synchronized ridicule, patient stillness, startling reversal, and poetic retribution.

By taking this approach, the movie demonstrates how animation can translate spoken language into something solely visual. Silent action creates moral clarity by enacting idioms often expressed through words, movement, and consequence. As a result, *For the Birds* becomes a cross-cultural tale that is succinct, enjoyable, and ethically meaningful. Its use of physical storytelling demonstrates that moral stories can be just as powerful, if not more so, when they speak through the universal grammar of human emotion and conduct rather than using language.

Intentional movement, timing, gesture, and visual exaggeration convey these idioms instead of spoken or written words. Eye rolls, synchronised mockery, passive immobility, and abrupt narrative reversals are all examples of actions that create meaning in *For the Birds*. These actions serve as visual metaphors reflecting idiomatic idioms ingrained in the culture. The film can transcend linguistic limitations because of its dependence on kinetic and symbolic visual clues. Viewers from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds can understand the moral lessons without the need for translation because there is no conversation. This universality supports Pixar's goal of creating emotionally impactful and semantically intuitive stories in all languages to attract a worldwide audience.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2020) claim that visual narratives use a grammar of design that functions similarly to language grammar, using composition, colour, frame, and motion to convey meaning. This makes *For the Birds* a powerful illustration of how idioms, which are typically language-bound, may be articulated using a purely visual grammar. As a result, the story is entertaining and instructive for comprehending cross-modal communication.

When considered collectively, the findings of this close scene analysis demonstrate how *For the Birds* skillfully uses cause-and-effect scenes, physical performance, and spatial design to convey idiomatic meaning through visual storytelling. The movie uses posture, movement, and expression to animate moral idioms rather than spoken dialogue or language signals. This helps viewers understand complex concepts like prejudice, patience, fairness, and self-inflicted consequences. In addition to a narrative progression, each scene serves as a visual argument in which the characters' actions and responses represent values relevant to the culture. These results support the idea that, although being frequently dismissed as light entertainment, short animation can be a sophisticated moral communication tool.

More significantly, the conversation demonstrates how idiomatic language, which is typically limited by cultural specificity, can convey universal meaning when accompanied by everyday human experiences such as time, gesture, and physical irony. From visual semiotics, gesture studies, and cognitive linguistics perspectives, the movie shows that moral lessons can be successfully conveyed to various

linguistic and cultural audiences. The film's emotional and didactic impact is further enhanced by humor and ethical consequence, consistent with current studies demonstrating how nonverbal storytelling stimulates deeper moral cognition.

In the end, *For the Birds* is a prime example of how animated, silent storytelling can function as a visually idiomatic system that may convey abstract moral ideas in relatable and captivating ways. This broadens the purpose of animation beyond aesthetics and amusement, establishing it as a medium for promoting self-reflection, teaching morals, and promoting intercultural understanding. The work adds to larger conversations in media studies, linguistics, and education on how visual texts can effectively engage with moral and cultural debate. It highlights the depth of Pixar's story design, further multidisciplinary research into nonverbal visual media's diasporic and educational possibilities made possible by these revelations.

CONCLUSION

Pixar's *For the Birds* is more than just a humorous animated short; it is a sophisticated visual text that uses time, gesture, and nonverbal expression to convey hard moral lessons. Throughout its short duration, the video functions as a wordless metaphor, using movement instead of words to portray idiomatic phrases like "Do not judge a book by its cover," "Patience is a virtue," "What goes around comes around," and "You reap what you sow." Regardless of language ability or cultural background, the film's ethical lessons are accessible worldwide thanks to its purposeful lack of dialogue. By doing this, it serves as an example of how kinetic metaphors—actions that symbolize moral or emotional ideas—can be effective visual communication tools.

Every narrative beat in the movie represents a different moral thinking level. The little birds' initial condemnation and derision serve as an example of social exclusion based on outward looks and a critique of prejudice and groupthink. The giant bird's quiet reaction illustrates the importance of patience in harsh situations and is a visual metaphor for temperance. Poetic justice is served by the sudden reversal of events when the wire snaps, signifying the results of cruelty. Last but not least, the humiliation of the tiny birds that have lost their feathers and dignity offers a moment of personal responsibility, turning the saying "You reap what you sow" into a concrete, memorable picture. These scenes work together to form what may be described as a visual fable, combining humor and morality in a compact, universally readable format.

From a theoretical perspective, this study supports the idea of visual grammar, which postulates that visual design components like movement, location, and framing produce structured meaning akin to speaking. The movie also supports embodied cognition theory, which states that people mimic ideas and feelings by observing how their bodies behave. This nonverbal method of idiom representation is entertaining and instructive in multicultural or multilingual environments, where language idioms could otherwise be lost in translation.

Additionally, the film's use of comedy improves moral resonance and recall. When used with visual irony, hilarious punishment can increase audience engagement with ethical material. Laughter and education coexist in *For the Birds*, allowing viewers to feel emotionally fulfilled and think critically about ethics. The film's brief length and multi-layered visual narrative make it an invaluable tool for teaching media literacy, moral education, and intercultural communication, among other subjects.

In conclusion, the movie *For the Birds* shows how powerful animated film can be as a universal moral language. It demonstrates that moral storytelling does not require words to be effective by converting

idioms into action and consequence. Such instances indicate how silent tales can effectively arouse empathy, critique, and ethical awareness in a world where visual media are increasingly shaping society. The movie demonstrates how form may be simple while meaning can be profound, reinforcing Pixar's dedication to emotionally intelligent storytelling that appeals to audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

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