



Journal of
Literary Education

no.6 2022

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Journal of Literary Education

Issue 6 - 2022

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Journal of Literary Education

Editorial

Creative Writing in Literary Education

Catalina Millán-Scheidig. Berklee College of Music, Valencia Campus

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Years of misconceptions have led to the assumption that creativity is a skill possessed by only a few. For many people, the word “creative” brings to mind images of novelists, poets, composers, and visual artists and there is a general tendency towards creativity being more associated with the arts than the sciences.

This assumption couldn't be further from the actual truth: we are all creative. As Glăveanu and Kaufman (2019) share, the ability to be creative is one of the most important traits human beings possess. Long ago, our ancestors used their creativity and saw a grinding tool in a stone, or a mechanism for moving things in a round wheel-shaped object. They started passing information on to future generations by telling or engraving oral tales, and ultimately, they discovered new ways to record these tales via writing. They identified principles of geometry and the physics of force and its mechanisms and proceeded to build pyramids and temples. They painted on the inside of caves by using natural colors such as charcoal, and discovering much later fresco, oil, and acrylic. A long chain of creativity extends from them into the past right up to us in the present and the future. Some of our important current creative people discover biological principles, develop computers, design techniques for further space research, imagine new worlds, or pass on the experience of beauty via

novels, and other written forms. We may have different creative styles, but creativity is evident in all areas of life; one way or another.

The idea of art itself aligned with nature, diverse communities and the notion of inclusion as well as free self-expression is the very heart of storytelling and, hence, at creative writing. The use of storytelling and engaging with the story to develop new perspectives and create self-awareness, has been on the rise in several fields, especially those linked with caregiving nursing, teaching and social work regularly incorporate storytelling and creative writing activities in their practices (Fairbairn, 2002). Digital storytelling, and the agency offered through new modes of story creating, is discussed as a way to connect our common humanity in an increasingly digital world (Maney, 2008).

Even though our backgrounds, personalities and readings can be very different from one another, the artistic process behind the philosophy of storytelling and creative writing offers countless and equal possibilities to be generated and shared, creating a safe space for collectives and learners (Burwitz-Melzer, 2001, p. 42). Creative Writing reflects a whole principle of life and art: starting from a rather lonely place of embracing what is within your creative soul and producing it leads towards a mutual feeling of deeper connection via the concept of readership. Creative writing offers a reactive space between the individual and the communal, between the subjective and the social (Millán-Scheiding, 2023). Heinemeyer (2020) considers how artistic practices, including storytelling, are considered to suspend the regular norms, “unite a disparate group around an intense experience, and bring individuals’ and groups’ perceptions to the attention of a culture, which succeed in generating moments of creative confluence between different perspectives”(p.213).

Storytelling as a whole, and specifically Creative Writing, can be viewed as a tool used towards a fairer and kinder society which builds empathy, and which includes human imagination and experience at its core. As writers and teachers fight for a better present and future, their creations and teachings respectively will enrich and inform each and every generation. Storytelling and the use of creative writing have been proven to promote intercultural awareness and competences, from cultural and world view self-awareness to the understanding of the complexity of other collectives’ and individual’s cultures and their link to beliefs, structures of power, values, economy and history (Deardorff, 2020).

In the current issue of *Journal of Literary Education*, we have tried to present the multifaceted, diverse and inclusive nature of Creative Writing with a view to immerse ourselves in a fruitful dialogue that aims to shed light on not only creativity in both the scientific and artistic fields, but also on the importance of storytelling and our creative response to it as fundamental elements of past, present and future generations.

In this issue, Esa Christine Hartmann talks about Multilingual, Multimodal, and Multivocal Creative Songwriting based on Tomi Ungerer's Picturebooks. With the cooperation of a group of hip-hop artists she deals with the challenge of writing songs from picturebooks in a multilingual context.

Francisco Antonio Martínez-Carratalá and José Rovira-Collado present research on silent picturebooks and its didactic potentiality in Wordless picturebooks and creativity: didactic proposal in teacher education. Maria Kalouptsi approaches the creative writing in the unique context of a correctional institution in Creative writing in the Correctional Institution: the Greek case. She presents work as a response to a particular topic: the truth.

Karo Kunde, Christian Arenas-Delgado and Mariona Masgrau-Juanola open the miscellaneous section with an article about the paratexts in picturebooks. The authors use the theoretical term in order to investigate its hermeneutic functions. On the other hand, Stefania Carioli speaks about the digital influences in picturebooks. Considering two representative books, Carioli explores the relationship between the digital language and the picturebooks language.

Rosy Triantafyllia Angelaki deals with some forgotten characters in historical novels taking as a starting point Penelope Maximou's historical novels about Byzantine period in Redefining the margins: intertextual and secondary characters in children's historical novels.

Literary learning: A proposal for using literature for the acquisition of emotional competencies and their linguistic expression, an article by Isabella Leibrandt, talks about ways to increase empathy through literary reading. Jason DeHart focuses on the reading aloud activities during the COVID-19. Using a narrative inquiry, DeHart describes the decision-making process of a 6th grade teacher to design her literature classes.

Grammeni-Eleni Pourni in The Depiction of the Loser Teenager in the Film and Television Adaptations of Young Adult Novels by John Green, analyses two adaptations: Paper Towns (2015) and Looking for Alaska (2019) and the strategies used by the creators of the audiovisual products. Finally, Milan Mašát, in Analysis of Simon Stranger's novel Lexicon of Light and Darkness, deals with the model reader of this novel. With a qualitative methodology, the author tries to determine the limits in defining the implicit reader with the theme of the Shoah in relation to their goals.

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How to cite this paper:

Millán-Scheiding, C., Kalogirou, T., & Mínguez-López, X., (2022). Editorial: Creative Writing in Literary Education. *Journal of Literary Education*, (6), 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.7203/JLE.6.25844>

Multilingual, Multimodal, and Multivocal Creative Songwriting based on Tomi Ungerer's Picturebooks

Esriptura creativa multilingüe, multimodal i multivocal de cançons basades en els àlbums de Tomi Ungerer

Escritura creativa multilingüe, multimodal y multivocal de canciones basadas en los álbumes de Tomi Ungerer

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Abstract

As creative writing research has shown, literary education in the context of teacher education at university greatly benefits from the collaborative practice of creative forms of literary expression for the development of creative literacies and imaginative agency. Accordingly, this study analyses the creative processes and outcomes of a bilingual songwriting workshop that was carried out in 2022 at the University of Strasbourg with 18 bilingual student teachers, in collaboration with the Franco-German world hip-hop artists Zweierpasch. This research was guided by the following research questions: What are the pedagogical affordances of translanguaging creative writing for the acquisition of multiliteracies in bilingual education? What are the impacts of this creative writing workshop on the bilingual student teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards creative pedagogical approaches in bilingual education? What are the effects of this workshop on the development of their linguistic, cultural, and professional identities?

This study presents a literary analysis of the poetic outcome of this creative action research, as well as an evaluation of the workshop in the form of a qualitative content analysis of the student teachers' reflections and perspectives. Overall, the student teachers considered creative writing as a valuable pedagogical approach for multimodal literacy teaching and learning in bilingual education. Their discourses reveal the transformation process of their attitudes and beliefs towards creative pedagogical approaches, and the enrichment of their linguistic and cultural identity through multilingual creative writing.

Keywords: Creative writing, literacy, songwriting workshop, creative action research

Resumen

Como muestra la investigación en escritura creativa, la educación literaria en el contexto educativo en la universidad se beneficia considerablemente de la práctica colaborativa de formas creativas de expresión literaria para el desarrollo de literacidades creativas y de agencia imaginativa. Por lo tanto, este estudio

analiza los procesos creativos y los resultados del taller de composición de canciones bilingües que se llevó a cabo en la Universidad de Estrasburgo con 18 estudiantes de Magisterio bilingües, en colaboración con los artistas franco-alemanes de hip-hop *Zweierpasch*. Este estudio fue guiado por las siguientes preguntas de investigación: ¿Cuáles son las potencialidades pedagógicas de la escritura creativa translingüística para la adquisición de multiliteracidades en educación bilingüe? ¿Qué impacto tiene este taller de escritura creativa en las actitudes y las creencias del estudiantado de magisterio bilingüe respecto al enfoque pedagógico creativo en educación bilingüe? ¿Cuáles son los efectos de este taller en el desarrollo de sus identidades lingüísticas, culturales y profesionales?

Este estudio presenta un análisis literario de los resultados poéticos de la investigación y también una evaluación del taller en forma de análisis cualitativo del contenido de las reflexiones y perspectivas del estudiantado de magisterio. Sobre todo, el alumnado consideraba la escritura creativa como un acercamiento pedagógico valioso para la enseñanza-aprendizaje de la literacidad multimodal en educación bilingüe. Sus discursos revelan el proceso de transformación de sus actitudes y creencias acerca de los enfoques pedagógicos creativos, y el enriquecimiento de sus identidades lingüísticas y culturales a través de la escritura bilingüe.

Palabras clave: Escritura creativa, literacidad, taller de composición, investigación de acción creativa

Resum

Com mostra la recerca en escriptura creativa, l'educació literària en el context educatiu a la universitat beneficia considerablement, des de la pràctica col·laborativa de formes creatives d'expressió literària, el desenvolupament de literacitats creatives i d'agència imaginativa. Per tant, aquest estudi analitza els processos creatius i els resultats del taller de composició de cançons bilingües que es va dur a terme a la Universitat d'Estrasburg amb 18 estudiants de Magisteri bilingües, en col·laboració amb els artistes francoalemanys de hip-hop *Zweierpasch*. L'estudi va ser guiat per les següents preguntes de recerca: Quines són les potencialitats pedagògiques de l'escriptura creativa translingüística per a l'adquisició de multiliteracitats en educació bilingüe? Quin és l'impacte d'aquest taller d'escriptura creativa en les actituds i les creences de l'alumnat de magisteri bilingües cap a l'enfocament pedagògic creatiu en educació bilingüe? Quins són els efectes d'aquest taller en el desenvolupament de les seues identitats lingüístiques, culturals i professionals?

Aquest estudi presenta una anàlisi literària dels resultats poètics de la recerca, i també una avaluació del taller en forma d'anàlisi qualitatiu del contingut de les reflexions i perspectives de l'estudiantat de magisteri. Per damunt de tot, l'alumnat considerava l'escriptura creativa com a un acostament pedagògic valuós per a l'ensenyament-aprenentatge de la literacitat multimodal en educació bilingüe. Els seus discursos revelen el procés de transformació de les seues actituds i creences cap als enfocaments pedagògics creatius i l'enriquiment de les seues identitats lingüístiques i culturals a través de l'escriptura creativa bilingüe.

Paraules clau: Escripura creativa, literacitat, taller de composició, investigació en acció creativa

1. Introduction

As creative writing research has shown, literary education in the context of teacher education at university greatly benefits from the collaborative practice of creative forms of literary expression for the development of creative literacies (Healey, 2013, 2015; Woods, 2001) and imaginative agency (Anae, 2014; Harper & Kroll, 2007; Munden, 2013). Engaging student teachers in creative writing not only means encouraging playful artistic experiences with the materiality of language (Vandermeulen, 2011), but also contributes to the development of their linguistic, cultural, and professional identity through creative modes of self-expression that can be read as autoethnographies (Alexander 2014; Bochner, 2016; Spry 2011). The creative writing artefact as artistic outcome of this experience can serve as a pedagogical resource for stimulating young learners' multiliteracies (Bull & Anstey, 2019; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, 2009), allowing student teachers to gain autonomy, creativity, and critical thinking in the production of stimulating learning material. More so, the discovery of the pedagogical affordances of multilingual creative writing at university may engage student teachers in developing new pedagogical approaches to literary education and literacy teaching in multilingual classrooms through the use of children's literature.

In the case study presented here, creative songwriting based on Tomi Ungerer's picturebook stories (Hartmann & Hélot, 2021) was used to enable bilingual student teachers to collaboratively conceive, develop, and produce a challenging pedagogical tool for multilingual and multimodal literacy acquisition in bilingual classrooms (Brown & Hao, 2022). Investigating the pedagogical affordances of creative writing as an arts-based approach (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008; Leavy, 2009) in bilingual teacher education, the aim of this creative action research was to change bilingual student teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards creative pedagogical approaches fostering the acquisition of multiliteracies in multilingual education, and towards their own creative agency.

Accordingly, this study analyses the creative processes and outcomes of a bilingual songwriting workshop that was carried out in 2022 at the University of Strasbourg with 18 bilingual student teachers, in collaboration with the Franco-German world hip-hop artists Zweierpasch. This creative action research was guided by the following research questions:

- What are the pedagogical affordances of translingual creative writing for the acquisition of multiliteracies in bilingual education?
- What are the impacts of this creative writing workshop on the bilingual student teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards creative pedagogical approaches in bilingual education?
- What are the effects of this workshop on the development of their linguistic, cultural, and professional identities?

This article is divided into five parts. The next section provides the theoretical framework as background to this study, exploring the affordances of multilingual and multimodal creative writing based on picturebooks in bilingual teacher education. Then I present the research context and design, followed by a description of the data collection and analysis procedures. The fourth section is dedicated to the research results and presents a genetic and literary analysis of the artistic processes and outcomes of the creative writing workshop. The final section proposes an evaluation of this creative action research in the form of a qualitative content analysis of the student teachers' reflections and perspectives.

2. Theoretical framework of the creative action research

The creative writing workshop presented in this study illustrates an innovative experiment in bilingual teacher education. It is part of the European project "Sprache Macht Europa: Sprachliche Vielfalt als Ressource in Schule und LehrerInnenbildung (SMiLe)" [Language Power(s) Europe: Linguistic Diversity as Resource at School and in Teacher Education], funded by the European Commission.

2.1 Creative writing in teacher education: Creative literacies, multimodality and multiliteracies

Creative writing is linked to critical thinking, empowerment, and teacher autonomy, with a special focus on critical literacies (Pandya et al., 2022) and creative literacies (Harper, 2013; Healey, 2013, 2015; Kiosses, 2019), since creative writing "spotlights the importance of students' access to creative modes of self-expression particularly, not just in school classrooms, but also within teacher-education programs" (Anae, 2014). Indeed, creative writing practices in teacher education include reflexive narrativity in the form of journal writing (Lee, 2008), and storytelling in teacher identity studies (Loughran, 2002). These literary productions are often interpreted as autoethnographies (Adams et al., 2021; Bochner, 2016), which explore the writing self as a form of data attesting the expression and evolution of identity. In this perspective, multimodal narratives enact the translation of experience, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and visions through the integration of various semiotic elements.

According to the visual and performative turns in literacy education (Brown & Hao, 2022; Kalaja & Pitkänen-Huhta, 2018, Mentz & Fleiner, 2018), creative writing no longer just refers to reading and writing texts, but includes the coding and decoding of various semiotic modes. Consequently, visual, audio, gestural, digital, and spatial signs contribute to the emergence of multimodal texts and multiliteracies (Bull & Anstey, 2019; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, 2009; Kress 2010).

Creative literacies thus represent a key element of multiliteracies, since they embody “not only the ability to make literary works, but more generally: the ability to use language (along with visual images and many other media) to produce complex emotional and psychological states in an audience; the ability to think and communicate in associative, metaphorical, non-linear, non-hierarchical ways; the ability to create evocative stories with fully realized characters, personas, voices; the ability to manipulate or destabilize received meanings and to produce new meanings”. (Healey, 2009, p.29).

[...]cross-border workshops offering multilingual creative writing activities contribute to the participants' experience of linguistic, cultural, and social diversity, as well as to their linguistic, cultural, and spatial mobility within a multilingual and multicultural learning environment.

Through creative writing, the original text and its meaning-making processes are critically received and multimodally transformed into a new text, according to a transmedial transformation: “The concept of creative literacy, therefore, is not only integrated in the theoretical framework of the pedagogy of multiliteracies [...], but it is asserting a dominant place in it. [...] Thus, at the heart of this new approach to multiliteracies lies the concept of creative *transformation*” (Kiosses, 2019, p.20). Meaning making in creative multiliteracies is thus an active, transformative process (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009).

Creative writing workshops represent a powerful learning environment for thinking and acting in contexts of complex linguistic landscapes, multiculturalism, and multilingualism (Lee, 2017; Chavez, 2021). In this sense, cross-border workshops offering multilingual creative writing activities contribute to the participants' experience of linguistic, cultural, and social diversity, as well as to their linguistic, cultural, and spatial mobility within a multilingual and multicultural learning environment. As “any creative writing involves imagination, practice and critical engagement, working together, questioning and supporting each other” (Kroll & Harper, 2019, p.3), the collaborative aspect of international workshops represents one of the key aspects of today's creative writing – in its artistic, but also cultural and political features that can be defined as collaborative imagination and narration.

2.2. Picturebooks as a medium for multimodal creative writing

Stimulating picturebooks, which constitute a rich research domain for literary education, offer a significant resource for creative writing in teacher education. As powerful visual narratives, they enable playful language and literacy acquisition by young children (Kümmerling-Meibauer et al., 2022), and especially by emergent bilingual learners (Bland, 2020; Hélot et al., 2014, Mourão, 2015). Picturebook stories therefore represent a rich pedagogical approach in bilingual teacher education (Hartmann & Hélot, 2021), as well as a valuable stimulus for creative writing.

Visual and textual interplays in picturebooks enable multimodal literacy acquisition (Hasset & Curwood, 2009; Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2013), engaging readers in active imagination and meaning-making, and transforming the reading practice into a holistic aesthetic experience. This beneficial multimedial feature of picturebooks can be enhanced by multimodal storytelling performances, which foster visual and verbal literacy acquisition through additional semiotic elements, such as sounds, music, gestures, mimic, movements, costumes, decorum, accessories, and soft toys. On the learner's side, these elements participating in the staging and performing process of picturebook stories facilitate the comprehension of the narrative through intersemiotic mediation. Illustrating the performative turn in literary education (Mentz & Fleiner, 2018), the transformation of picturebook stories into multimodal storytelling performances through creative writing and staging thus represents a thrilling pedagogical experience for bilingual student teachers. This transmedial transformation process reveals a postmodern conception of the literary oeuvre as work in progress, as an open work (Eco, 1989) with innumerable intertextual development possibilities.

Practicing various literary genres in creative writing means multiplying the artistic span of this intertextual transformation process. In fact, multimedial storytelling performances can adopt and combine various forms of artistic expression: installations, musicals, plays, storytelling carpets, kamishibai theatres, animation films, digital picturebook apps... or, like in this case, a multilingual music performance within a video clip. Accordingly, creative writing constitutes an important intermedial step in this transmedial transformation process, leading from the reception of a picturebook story to the production and performance of a multimodal music performance, which combines visual, musical,

Accordingly, creative writing constitutes an important intermedial step in this transmedial transformation process, leading from the reception of a picturebook story to the production and performance of a multimodal music performance, which combines visual, musical, textual, gestural, and corporeal elements.

textual, gestural, and corporeal elements. In fact, as creative writing invests other artistic spaces and forms, such as drama, music, visual performance, dance, filmmaking, and design, it becomes an interdisciplinary activity. This interrelationship between textual creation and other art forms mirrors the complex interrelationship of creative writing studies in general, as "Creative Writing Research is [...] concerned with actions as well as outcomes, with the individual as well as culture and, furthermore, with concepts and theories that illuminate

these complex interrelationships." (Kroll & Harper, 2019, p.2).

3. Research context

Creative writing workshops are still underdeveloped in university curricula in France and Germany, even in bilingual teacher education. Therefore, this study investigates creative writing as an innovative art-based approach to language, literacy and literature teaching within a multilingual educational context.

3.1 Creative writing in bilingual teacher education

The creative action research presented in this study was carried out with 18 bilingual student teachers at the Graduate School of Education of the University of Strasbourg. The bilingual student teachers were enrolled in the first year of the Master Program in French-German Teacher Education for bilingual preschools and primary schools in the border region of Alsace, France. The bilingual pedagogy seminar that hosted the creative writing project was dedicated to creative approaches fostering multimodal biliteracy acquisition. The working languages of the workshop were German and French; the creative writing task integrated the two languages German and French in the translingual writing process (Weissmann, 2018, Hartmann, 2018), and the produced literary artefact showed French-German translanguaging (Hartmann, 2020; Otheguy et al., 2015).

3.2 Academic and linguistic profile of the participants

At the time of the creative writing project, the participating student teachers were in the middle of the first year of the Bilingual Master program for bilingual preschool and primary teacher candidates, which follows a three-year Undergraduate Program (Bachelor's Degree) in different subject areas. The student teachers had accomplished two training practices of two weeks in bilingual preschool and primary classes in France, where they were in charge of the German part of the curriculum, as well as one week of training practice in primary classes in Germany.

At university, the student teachers had already taken several course units in bilingual education pedagogy and acquired theoretical and pedagogical experience in multimodal literacy acquisition. During the previous semester (October-December 2021), they had created five multimodal storytelling performances in German and successfully performed them in front of eleven bilingual preschool and primary classes. These multimodal storytelling performances were based on Tomi Ungerer's picturebooks *Die drei Räuber* [*The Three Robbers*] (1961), *CriCTOR, die gute Schlange* [*CriCTOR, the good snake*] (1958), *Adelaide, das fliegende Känguru* [*Adelaide, the flying kangaroo*] (1959), and *Rufus, die bunte Fledermaus* (*Rufus, the bat who loved colours*) (1961).

Based on the fruitful experiences of these multimodal storytelling performances, the participating student teachers selected Tomi Ungerer's stories of three fabulous mythological creatures – *Rufus*,

Crictor, and *Adelaide* – to create a musical performance entitled “Fabelhaft – Fabuleux” [Fabulous], based on translingual and transmedial creative writing.

As far as the linguistic profiles of the participants are concerned, all of the student teachers showed a bilingual French-German profile, although their bilingual repertoire turned out to be highly diverse (see Hartmann & Hélot 2021, p.183). Hence, the collaborative design of the bilingual creative writing workshop enabled all students to contribute to the textual invention and production process according to their individual repertoires and language proficiency in German and French.

3.3 Tomi Ungerer’s picturebooks as medium for creative writing

The bilingual education context in Alsace particularly invites the pedagogic exploration of multilingual picturebooks written by multilingual Alsatian authors, since they reflect the pluralistic cultural identity of bilingual learners (Hartmann & Hélot, 2021). The participating student teachers thus favoured the works of Tomi Ungerer (1931, Strasbourg, France - 2019, Cork, Ireland), a multilingual Alsatian painter, illustrator and author, whose famous picturebooks fascinate both children and adults.

The fabulous mythological creatures *Rufus*, *Crictor* and *Adelaide*, whose stories embody the narrative foundation of the creative songwriting workshop, illustrate diversity as joyous otherness and marvellous joie de vivre, and thematise difference, tolerance, and acceptance.

Rufus the bat sees life in black and white until he discovers the marvellous world of colours. Inspired, Rufus paints his wings and explores the universe of daylight, until his unusual appearance earns him hostility and rejection. Thanks to his scientist friend Dr. Arturo, Rufus finally recovers from his wounds, accepts his difference and happily returns to his nocturnal life.

Born with wings, Adelaide caused quite a stir. But thanks to her singularity, an adventurous life awaits her: she follows an airplane in the sky, visits Paris and admires the sights, becomes the star of a music hall, saves the life of two children, and falls in love with another kangaroo.

One morning the postman brings Madame Bodot a package with a boa constrictor in it. The both become best friends and Crictor turns out to be a good snake: he teaches children to read, plays with them, saves Madame Bodot from a dangerous thief, and is hailed as a hero of the town.

3.4 Zweierpasch’s *Rapconte* as model for translingual creative writing

The French-German artists Zweierpasch who collaborated to this creative songwriting workshop live in Strasbourg (France) and Freiburg (Germany) and were awarded the prestigious Adenauer-De Gaulle-Price in 2018, for their numerous educational actions in bilingual schools located on both sides of the Rhine River, as well as for their outstanding engagement for French-German friendship and

cooperation. Their bilingual world hip-hop creations integrate poetical French-German code-switching (creative translanguaging) and proved to be valuable pedagogical resources for bilingual education in Alsace, and for foreign language learning in France and Germany (Klett, 2015).

The creative action research presented in this study was inspired by Zweierpasch's bilingual creation *Rapconte. Deutsch-französischer Märchenrap* [Raptale. German-French Fairy-Tale Rap] (2016), presenting bilingual music performances as transmedia creations of four famous fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm: *Der gestiefelte Kater / Le chat botté* [Puss in Boots], *Das tapfere Schneiderlein / Le Vaillant Petit Tailleur* [The valiant little tailor], *Hänsel und Gretel / Hansel et Gretel* [Hansel and Gretel], and *Rapunzel / Raiponce* [Rapunzel]. These creations are accompanied by pedagogical activities based on the French-German lyrics, and represent a popular pedagogical resource in bilingual primary classrooms in Alsace.

4. Research design

From monolingual picturebook readings to a translingual music performance - in this project, creative writing is conceived as a transmedial transformation process. In this sense, creative songwriting illustrates a multimodal writing process, which needs to be structured in different creative stages.

4.1 Zweierpasch's *Rapconte* as springboard for the writing of *Fabelhaft – Fabuleux*

Unfolding their poetic power through virtuous translingual rhymes and the rappers' individual flows, Zweierpasch's bilingual narratives of the famous fairy-tales served as a model and springboard for the creative writing workshop based on Tomi Ungerer's picturebooks. First, the student teachers analysed the rhetorical elements of the *Rapconte* lyrics: they identified the song structure as a musical composition made of codified elements: introduction (intro), verse, chorus, and bridge. In addition, the student teachers analysed translingual writing strategies such as regular code-switching from line to line, monolingual and translingual rhymes, alliterations and assonances creating phonetic and semantic analogies throughout the verses, as well as metaphors constructing visual networks. These rhetorical elements served as a poetic palette for the creation of the translingual lyrics of "Fabelhaft – Fabuleux".

Second, listening to the music performances of Zweierpasch's *Rapconte* creations sensitized the student teachers' perceptions of the multimodal dimension of songwriting as multidimensional poetic writing. They analysed the meter (number of syllables) in the lines corresponding to the musical beat, the rhythm of the verses that determine the syntactic structure of the sentences, the melody of the

chorus conditioning the length of the lines, the individual hip-hop flows of the two rappers accentuating, stretching, accelerating or counterbalancing the rhythm within the lines.

4.2 The different steps of the multimodal writing project

The creative writing workshop was organised during ten class sessions of two hours (January-April 2022) with the collaboration of Zweierpasch, who intervened as “masters of ceremony” in three class sessions of two hours. These participative sessions were dedicated to the creative writing of the lyrics, the training of the singing performance, and the choreography for the dancing performance. Additionally, Zweierpasch coached and supervised an audio-recording session of three hours in their recording studio in Freiburg (Germany), as well as a filming session of four hours in front of a street art wall in Colmar (France) for the production of the clip.

The scenario of the clip was developed by the students and was conceived as a multimodal transmedia creation. It integrated the filmed dancing performance, three key illustrations of Rufus, Adelaide, and Crictor, as well as the calligraphies of the translingual lyrics. The filming and montage of the clip was conducted by cameraman S. Lucht of Freiburg, in collaboration with the students. Zweierpasch also collaborated textually and musically to the clip, by creating and performing a bilingual hip-hop featuring.¹

To create an aesthetic-narrative interaction of different semiotic elements, the creative writing workshop was completed by the creation of three visual artefacts illustrating the picturebook stories: an aquarelle painting for *Rufus*, a collage for *Crictor*, and an acrylic painting for *Adelaide*. These visual artworks were accompanied by four different calligraphies of the lyrics (3 verses + chorus). During the dancing performance, the visual artworks and the calligraphies were projected on a street art wall serving as decorum for the filming of the video clip. This procedure created an interesting visual, semiotic and semantic interplay between the illustrations of Tomi Ungerer’s three picturebook stories, the street art fresco, and the calligraphy of the lyrics.

4.3 Research Method: data collection and analysis procedures

First, the participating student teachers chose a project manager who was asked to write a creative protocol defining the various project steps as well as the distribution of the collaborative work. This creative log served to organise the creative process of the transmedia creation and to trace it retrospectively. The participating students formed four groups: group one was in charge of Tomi Ungerer’s picturebook story *Crictor*, group two dedicated their creative writing to *Rufus*, group three

¹ The artistic outcome of this creative writing workshop can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKKULhsZits>

rewrote *Adelaide's* adventures, and group four chose to work on the chorus. Each group kept their creative writing drafts and entered their textual productions on a shared Google document. This working document was edited by myself at an early stage of the collaborative writing process, as well as by Zweierpasch during the first joint workshop. Additionally, three student teachers volunteered to create the illustrations, costumes, make-up, and accessories, and were also asked to conserve their notes and drafts. All drafts and notes documenting the creative process were collected and analysed according to a genetic approach that traces the genesis (coming into being) of a nascent text (Hartmann 2018, among others). In addition, the different collaborative writing stages were registered, shared and pictured by screen shots, in order to trace the overall evolution of the lyrics.

After completing the project, the student teachers participated in a written survey that addressed their attitudes and beliefs towards creative approaches in bilingual education, as well as the evolution of their linguistic, cultural, and professional identities through this creative action research. The collected discourses of the participating student teachers were examined using qualitative content analysis (Dörnyei, 2007; Mayring, 2004) and provided an overall evaluation of the creative writing workshop.

5. Findings

In the context of literary education, creative writing is understood as textual expression leading to literary artefacts made of words. Accordingly, the produced text is analysed from a literary perspective, including an observation of the different collaborative writing processes.

5.1 Description of the creative writing process

The pedagogical aim of this creative writing project was to transform three famous picturebook stories by Tomi Ungerer into a new literary genre – a translingual music performance. For this purpose, the student teachers formed four groups for collaborative creative writing; they had previously read, analysed and performed the picturebook stories and were thus familiar with their narrative content.

First, the student teachers chose the beat sample *Anita Latina*, a Caribbean reggaeton soundtrack made of a balancing, sensual Latino rhythm with a regular 4/4 beat. Then, the students designed the overall composition of the song and cut the soundtrack accordingly, using a digital music edition program. The overall composition of the song included three verses (A1, A2, A3) and a recurring chorus (B), as well as a bridge (C) for the featuring by Zweierpasch, and could be schematized like this: A1 B A2 B A3 B C B, preceded by a short instrumental introduction. The chorus (B) united a rapped part by Zweierpasch and a song part by the student teachers.

According to this threefold song structure and the rhythmic pattern of the beat, each picturebook story had to fit into one verse of 16 lines, each verse being composed of four stanzas of four lines. Since the thematic unity of *Fabelhaft-Fabuleux* celebrates diversity, the students adopted the following thematic structure: verse A1 tells Crictor's heroic actions, verse A2 evokes Rufus' colours, verse A3 ends with Adelaide's adventures. To illustrate the theme of diversity musically, each verse, although following the same beat, adopted a different melody, mixing singing and rapping parts.

During their first session, Zweierpasch discussed the song structure with the students, as well as the length of each song part (number of lines). The musicological terms concerning song composition (beat, lyrics, melody, harmony) and song structure (intro, verse, chorus, bridge, interlude) were listed in French, German and English on the blackboard, and analysed according to contrastive lexicology. Then, Zweierpasch coached the student teachers with rhetoric and rhythmic songwriting tips and edited their translingual texts.

The professional songwriters explained that the creative use of rhetorical figures such as metaphors and similes enhances the poetic quality and captivating character of the song, since strong metaphors evoke visual images stimulating the listeners' emotive imagination. Furthermore, Zweierpasch recommended that code-switching should occur between lines or every two lines, facilitating the understanding of the bilingual lyrics and increasing the combination possibilities of rhyming words. Concerning the meter, every line should be composed of 6 to 14 syllables, allowing variances of the singing and rapping flow. Like in poetry, the verses should have regular rhyme schemes, such as couplets (AA BB CC DD), enclosed rhymes (ABBA CDDC) or alternate rhymes (ABAB CDCD). Internal rhymes, alliteration and assonance should reinforce the poetic character of the lyrics, as well as its catchy tune potential. Finally, the student teachers and Zweierpasch brainstormed together and adopted the title *Fabelhaft – Fabuleux* [Fabulous] for their creation.

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The student teachers took notes of Zweierpasch's recommendations and structured them as a poetics of songwriting. The four groups then started their collaborative writing. They produced the lyrics while listening frequently to the music, trying to find a rhythm for their lines, but also a melody for their verses. This parallel and integrated process of musical and textual composition reveals the multimodal character of creative song writing, and leads to an increased sensitivity for the poeticity and musicality

of language and its phonic and rhythmic characteristics. Creative songwriting is therefore an excellent medium for the development of literary awareness.

When the composition of a stanza was completed, the students sang it together, trying to fit it into the beat, while composing a melody that would correspond to the harmony of the soundtrack. Sometimes, the text of a line wouldn't fit into the rhythm of the beat or into the melody that was sung by the students and had to be modified accordingly. For example, the students of the third group had first invented the following variant, speaking of Adelaide: "Wahre Liebe suchst du weltweit" [You seek true love worldwide], but this version contained eight syllables, whereas the musical unit for this line had only seven beats. Consequently, the text was modified into "Wahre Liebe gibt's weltweit" [True love is everywhere]. This version is reduced to seven syllables and profits sonically from an assonance of [i]: Liebe / g**i**bt's.

Thanks to mutual inspiration and alternate verbal suggestions, the collaborative writing process can be described as highly productive. Every group member contributed with her individual gifts: one member benefited from many years of musical training and turned out to be particularly efficient for musical composition. Other students were particularly strong in composing in German lines, others showed great verbal virtuosity in French, others had a keen sense for the metric count of syllables, others a natural feeling for rhythm when it came to adjusting the length of the lines to the beat and to singing the lines rhythmically.

5.2 Analysis of the poetic outcome: *Fabelhaft-Fabuleux* as translingual poetry

The collaborative translingual genesis of the lyrics was quite interesting to observe. The members of each group did not use translation or self-translation, but directly produced lines in the two languages, so that we can speak of a simultaneous translingual genesis (Anokhina, 2017; Hartmann, 2018, 2019). The phonic constraints of the rhymes dominated the narrative development of the lines: in poetic invention, the signifier directs the signified (Hartmann, 2018).

To study the constants of language allocation and its translingual poetics, the song text is presented below. German passages are marked in blue, while French passages are written in black, followed by an English translation in green. We also indicated the rhyme schemes in capital letters at the end of each line, and we distinguished the rapping parts (in italics) from the singing parts. The number of syllables in each line are indicated in brackets after the indication of the rhyme scheme. The three verses are respectively dedicated to the three fabulous mythological creatures Crictor, Rufus and Adelaide.

Fabelhaft – Fabuleux [Fabulous]First verse: Crictor

Guten Tag, ich stell' mich vor,	A [7]
Hello, I introduce myself	
Je m'appelle Crictor.	A [5]
My name is Crictor	
Ich bin 'ne Boa Constrictor,	A [8]
I am a boa constrictor	
Je viens de loin, du Brésil.	B [7]
I come from far away, from Brasil.	
Mann, kein Stress, ich hab' mein' eigenen Stil !	B [10]
No stress, bro, I have got my own style!	
Accepter la différence,	C [7]
Accepting difference	
C'est une forme de tolérance.	C [7]
Is a form of tolerance.	
Peu importe ce que tu es,	D [7]
It doesn't matter who you are	
Que tu sois enfant ou serpent.	E [8]
If you are a child or a snake.	
Keine Angst, wir sind da,	F [6]
Don't be afraid, we are here,	
Il faut savoir être bienveillant.	E [8]
You have to know how to be kind.	
Hey Kinder, kommt in uns're Mannschaft!	G [9]
Hey kids, join our team!	
Changeons nos comportements,	E [7]
Let's change our behavior,	
Unterschied ist uns're Kraft!	G [7]
Diversity is our strength!	

Second verse: Rufus

La chauve-souris, die Fledermaus,	H [8]
The bat [French], the bat [German]	
Unser Held, er will heraus!	H [7]
Our hero, he wants out!	
Kunterbunt durch die Welt,	I [6]
Colourful through the world	
Leben, wie es uns gefällt!	I [7]
Live as you like!	
Rufus ist 'ne Fledermaus,	J [7]
Rufus is a bat	
Die sieht ziemlich seltsam aus.	J [7]
It looks pretty strange	
Vert, rouge, rose et bleu,	K [5]
Green, red, pink and blue	
Il est plutôt fabuleux!	K [7]
He is rather fabulous !	

Tarturo macht ihm klar: L [6]
Tarturo makes it clear to him
Anderssein ist wunderbar! L [7]
Being different is wonderful
Avec sa peinture, M [5]
With his painting
Il s'est créé son armure. M [7]
He created his armour

Rufus rayonne en couleurs, N [7]
Rufus shines in colours
L'amitié, c'est son bonheur! N [7]
Friendship makes his happiness
Rufus wurde langsam klar, L [7]
Rufus began to realize
Dass seine Welt die Nacht war. L [7]
That his world was the night.

Third verse: Adelaide

Adelaide, ja, das bin ich. O [8]
Adelaide, yes, that's me
Ich bin so einzigartig! O [7]
I am so unique !
Devinez quoi, moi je suis née P [8]
Guess what, I was born
Avec des ailes pour voyager ! P [8]
With wings to travel
Ich fliege hoch, fühle mich frei! Q [8]
I fly high, feeling free
Zeit für Unabhängigkeit ! Q [7]
Time for independence !
Mais partout, on s'étonne R [6]
But everywhere, people are surprised
De mes ailes, oui, ça détonne ! R [7]
By my wings, yes, they are unique!
Tout Paris ne parl(e) que d'toi. S [7]
All Paris speaks only of you
Malgré tout, tu n'te sens pas d' joie. S [7]
But you are not happy.
Dein Herz schlägt gegen die Zeit. T [7]
Your heart beats against time
Wahre Liebe gibt's weltweit! T [7]
True love is everywhere!
Eines Tages im Zoo triffst du U [8]
One day at the zoo, you meet
Ein Känguru, genau wie du ! U [8]
A kangaroo, just like you !
Oui, l'amour donne des frissons ! V [7]
Yes, love gives us chills !
Plus besoin de diapason! V [7]

*No more need for tuning !*Chorus

Nos trois héros vraiment géniaux	W [8]
<i>Our three awesome heroes</i>	
Adélaïde, Crictor, Rufus,	X [8]
<i>Adelaide, Crictor, Rufus</i>	
Trois animaux complètement fous!	X [8]
<i>Three crazy animals!</i>	
<i>Diese Bande ist immer froh!</i>	W [8]
<i>This gang is always happy !</i>	
Nos trois héros vraiment géniaux	W [8]
<i>Our three awesome heroes</i>	
Adélaïde, Crictor, Rufus,	X [8]
<i>Adelaide, Crictor, Rufus</i>	
Trois animaux complètement fous!	X [8]
<i>Three crazy animals!</i>	
<i>Diese Bande ist fabulous!</i>	X [8]
<i>This gang is fabulous!</i>	

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The chromatic distinction of the two languages in the lyrics shows that language allocation is quite equilibrated and code-switching rather regular. The translingual narration coming to life in the verses evolves through rhymes that follow the classical poetic schemes of couplets (AA BB CC) ou triplets (AAA), alternate rhyme (ABAB), and enclosed rhyme (ABBA).

Language alternation occurs very regularly in the third verse dedicated to Adelaide, where code-switching takes place after each couplet: AA // BB // CC... This principle also appears in stanzas 2-4 of the second verse. On the other hand, in the first verse and the chorus, code-switching occurs between each line.

When language alternation takes place between the couplets (AA // BB), most rhymes are monolingual, as for example in the third verse: “frei / Unabhängigkeit // s'étonne / détonne” (AA BB). Yet, some interesting constellations show translingual couplets and triplets, such as “vor / Crictor / Constrictor” (AAA) and “Brésil / Stil” (BB) in the first verse.

Translingual alternate rhymes appear in the chorus: “géniaux / Rufus / fous / froh” (ABAB), “Rufus / fous” being a visual rhyme since the final –s of the French adjective “fous” [crazy] is not pronounced. The last line of the chorus integrates the only English word “fabulous” echoing the title of the song, thus creating a fascinating translingual triplet: “Rufus / fous / fabulous” (AAA).

Furthermore, alliteration and assonance enrich the phonic analogy of the rhyme scheme. Monolingual alliteration underlines the originality and otherness of the fabulous mythological creatures, such as an alliteration of [st] – “Stress / Stil” – and an assonance of [ã]: “enfant / serpent” (verse 1). On the other hand, translingual alliteration phonetically emphasizes the power of diversity and friendship, such as the alliteration of [k]: “Kinder / comportements / Kraft” (verse 1). Translingual assonance phonetically underscores the acceptance of Rufus' otherness, such as the assonance of [a]: “Tarturo / macht / klar / Anderssein / wunderbar / Avec / armure” (verse 2).

Some lines combine alliteration and assonance, creating tonic and semantic emphasis. For instance, verse 2 combines an alliteration of [w] and an assonance of [a]: “Rufus wurde langsam klar, dass seine Welt die Nacht war”. Verse 3 shows an even richer combination of alliteration and assonance: “Dein / Zeit / weltweit”; „Wahre / weltweit“, „Tages/ du / Känguru / genau / du !“. Sound repetition induced by (translingual) alliteration and assonance contributes to the tonal expressiveness and semantic significance of the lyrics.

In addition, sound recurrence and phonic repetition are often associated with rhythmic variation. The rapped parts alternate between metric repetition, rhythmic acceleration, and vocal accentuation. The number of syllables show an average constant of 7 or 8 syllables per line. If the number of syllables per line exceeds 8 syllables, this corresponds to a rhythmic acceleration influencing the rapper's flow. If the number of syllables per line is less than 7 syllables, we are witnessing a rhythmic deceleration that corresponds to a vocal and semantic accentuation. In the song parts, however, the increase in the number of syllables corresponds to a melodic arc.

Consequently, the multimodal interplay of phonic, rhythmic, and vocal elements plays an important part in the invention of the translingual lyrics. Creative writing with two languages opens up the possibilities of lexical and phonic combinations, as exemplified by translingual rhymes, alliteration, and assonance. The translingual poetics of *Fabelhaft-Fabuleux* is rich in rhetoric and stylistic elements that create a semantic network and underscore the thematic universe of Tomi Ungerer's picturebooks.

6. Evaluation of the creative writing workshop

This final section proposes an evaluation of the creative action research in the form of a qualitative content analysis of the student teachers' reflections and perspectives, which I translated from German into English.

6.1 Evolution of the student teachers' linguistic, cultural, and professional identities

According to the student teachers, this creative writing workshop raised awareness about linguistic competences in two languages and the creative functionality of the students' complete linguistic repertoire: "Writing in two languages made me become aware of my creative abilities in my two working languages" (student 1).

The participants experienced the poetic possibilities of translingual writing, which they considered stimulating for the development of their creative multiliteracies: "Actually, I can use both languages well, and using these two languages for producing a poetic text shows that translanguaging can have an interesting poetic effect, such as making rhymes with two languages" (student 2).

Moreover, the students highlighted the contribution of this workshop to the development of a cultural identity: "Culturally, Tomi Ungerer's picturebooks represent the foundation of Alsatian children's literature. Creating something new with these stories is very interesting. It shows that creative writing has always a cultural dimension. In fact, writing means becoming aware of our own cultural heritage, since we always write within a literary tradition" (student 3).

Indeed, creativity was linked to multilingualism, as an identity-forming competence: "This creative project revealed my own creative bilingualism. Tomi Ungerer created with all his four languages: being multilingual means being creative. This creativity is now part of my bilingual identity" (student 4).

Last, the collaborative aspect of creative writing contributed to the social cohesion of the group, but also to the students' identification with the literary heritage of the Alsation region, embodied by Tomi Ungerer's works. "I think that this project strengthened our social and professional identity as bilingual teachers in Alsace working with our two languages, but also, in a more literary dimension, our linguistic and cultural identity. The final product, our clip, can be seen as a linguistic-cultural statement and identity text" (student 5).

6.2 Evolution of the student teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards creative approaches in bilingual education

According to the participants, translingual writing represents a valuable pedagogical approach for multimodal and multilingual literacy acquisition: "This workshop illustrated a multimodal approach to children's literature, and to multilingual literacy acquisition. Creative approaches such as creative writing help develop the entire linguistic repertoire of the bilingual learners and activate creative potential in both languages. In the creative writing process, these languages can be combined poetically. Creative writing shows the transformative power of bilingual invention" (student 6).

Thanks to this workshop, the student teachers were able to develop their own creative literacies and envision their pedagogic agency, in order to implement creative approaches in their bilingual classrooms: "This project revealed our own creativity, so that we learned how to activate the creativity of our bilingual pupils. The positive feed-back and support by our professor showed us that we must believe in the creative potential of our pupils, so that they can experience their autonomy and find their own creative energy to attain pedagogical objectives" (student 7).

Finally, the student teachers became aware that creative approaches in literacy teaching and learning represents a holistic experience: "I think this experience showed that literary education is a holistic experience, made of words, of voices, of sounds, and of images" (student 8). In fact, creative approaches highly contribute to the overall development of the learner's personality: "Creative approaches mean stimulating experiences. Creative writing is an embodied experience, because we don't only write with our brain, but with our whole body. It is also a holistic experience, because we write with all our senses. If a pupil experiences the joyful unfolding of their creative power, he or she will increase their confidence in their linguistic and literary proficiency and in their creative potential." (student 9).

However, conducting a creative writing project is not a child's play, but a matter of risk management. Creative tasks are difficult to plan, and teachers may need courage and confidence to carry them out: "Creative writing means dealing with risk. It is like walking in an unknown land, exploring a new poetic language. Creative projects are full of risk, but they empower both pupils and teachers, giving them a sense of creative autonomy" (student 10).

As the participants' statements have shown, the creative writing workshop enriched their personal and professional development of the student teachers. It offered a novel experience in bilingual teacher education in Alsace, and encouraged student teachers to conceive new creative approaches for language and literacy learning in multilingual classrooms.

6.3 Student teachers' perspectives on the pedagogical affordances of creative writing for the acquisition of multiliteracies in bilingual education

According to the student teachers, creative writing corresponds to a transmedial transformation process developing bilingual learners' multiliteracies: "Translingual songwriting based on picturebook stories represents a novel form of multimodal storytelling. It can be a powerful pedagogical tool for multiliteracy acquisition, since through translingual writing tasks bilingual learners are enabled to make use of their full linguistic repertoire. They practice written translanguaging as a holistic artistic experience" (student 11).

Another student teacher adds: “Translingual writing enhances the bilingual learner’s awareness of the rhetoric possibilities of each language, but also of the poetic combination of the two languages. This

The literary outcome of this project based on Tomi Ungerer’s picturebooks eloquently illustrates how creative writing can foster creative literacies as well as the literary and cultural skills multilingual learners develop through their knowledge of several languages. Indeed, multilingualism is primarily linked to creativity

awareness leads to writing competence in the two languages, but also to reading competence, since writing also means rewriting other texts. These two competences, reading and writing in two languages, correspond to ‘multiliteracies’ – a key competence in bilingual education” (student 12).

translingual songwriting, emergent bilinguals learn how to receive literary texts and transform them into a new genre or art form” (student 13).

In fact, the creative writing task also develops bilingual learner’s literary literacy: “By

Literary literacy is conceived as a transdisciplinary competence: “Songwriting is similar to the writing of poetry: there is an attention to sounds, rhythms, metaphors. All these elements develop the bilingual learners’ literacy competences. Yet, bilingual learners also develop their competences in Music and Math, as they have to listen to the beat, count the syllables of every line, and pose their lines on a melody” (student 14).

The research results show the student teachers’ reflections about the pedagogical affordances of creative writing in bilingual education. Overall, the student teachers considered creative writing as a valuable pedagogical approach for multimodal literacy teaching and learning in bilingual education.

Additionally, the qualitative analysis of the student teachers’ discourses reveals the transformation process of their attitudes and beliefs towards creative pedagogical approaches, and the enrichment of their linguistic and cultural identity through multilingual creative writing.

7. Conclusion

This creative action research argues for the use of multilingual creative writing for the development of multilingual and multimodal literacy in bilingual education, and more importantly, within teacher education at university. The literary outcome of this project based on Tomi Ungerer’s picturebooks eloquently illustrates how creative writing can foster creative literacies as well as the literary and cultural skills multilingual learners develop through their knowledge of several languages. Indeed, multilingualism is primarily linked to creativity (Kharkhurin, 2012). Therefore, the inclusion of two or

more languages in the creative writing process can be a productive approach for bilingual learners to develop their bilingual repertoire as well as their bilingual identity.

Today, multiliteracy teaching means teaching to read and write in several languages and in different semiotic modes: transmedial and translingual creative writing is thus a perfect medium for multimodal and multilingual literacy acquisition. The implementation of creative writing workshops in teacher education at university allows student teachers to experience their creative agency and develop innovative pedagogical approaches for literacy instruction in multilingual classrooms.

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How to cite this paper:

Hartmann, E.C. (2022). Multilingual, Multimodal, and Multivocal Creative Songwriting based on Tomi Ungerer's Picturebooks. *Journal of Literary Education*, (6), 5-27. <https://doi.org/10.7203/JLE.6.24506>

Álbumes sin palabras y creatividad: propuesta didáctica para los grados de Educación Infantil y Primaria

Wordless picturebooks and creativity: didactic proposal for Pre-School and Primary Education Teaching Degrees

Àlbums sense mots i creativitat: proposta didàctica per als Graus d'Educació Infantil i Primària

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Abstract

The expressive possibilities of wordless picturebooks offer us a tool to work on multiple subjects at any educational stage. Scientific attention shows both a clinical interest in using these books to promote narrative skills and many studies and didactic proposals that recognise these visual narratives, which are not restricted by the understanding of the written text. In this research, a didactic sequence is proposed for teacher education, carried out in the Early Childhood and Primary Teacher Education Degrees to reinforce the knowledge of visual narratives through wordless picturebooks. It is based on the use of eight picturebooks, focusing on three different categories: (1) recognition of the different elements of the narrative discourse based on the importance of the central fold; (2) the narration of the passage of time based on the sequence centred on an unaltered space, (3) the identification of a visual narrative with accumulative narrations. Based on their analysis and explanation, seven wordless picturebooks are proposed and are distributed in the same categories to carry out different creative writing activities to confirm the learning of students in teacher training. The selected wordless picturebooks also present different topics and meanings in their illustrations, thus demonstrating their narrative possibilities. The selection of these books and the reasons for their inclusion in this didactic sequence are presented, showing that wordless picturebooks are a suitable tool for literary education.

Key words: Picturebooks, Wordless, Multimodality, Creativity, Teaching Education.

Resumen

Las posibilidades expresivas del álbum sin palabras nos ofrecen una herramienta para trabajar múltiples temas en cualquier etapa educativa. La atención científica nos demuestra tanto un interés clínico por usar estas obras para favorecer la comunicación como una gran cantidad de estudios y propuestas didácticas que reconocen estas lecturas visuales, que no están limitadas por la comprensión del texto escrito. En esta investigación se propone una secuencia didáctica para la formación docente, realizada en los Grados de

Maestro/a en Educación Infantil y de Educación Primaria para reforzar el conocimiento de las narrativas visuales a través de álbumes sin palabras. Se parte de la lectura de ocho álbumes, centrados en tres categorías distintas: (1) reconocimiento de los diferentes elementos del discurso narrativo a partir de la importancia del pliegue central; (2) La narración del paso del tiempo a partir de la secuencia centrada en un espacio inalterado, (3) la identificación de una narrativa visual con las narraciones acumulativas. A partir de su análisis y explicación, se proponen siete álbumes sin palabras, distribuidos en las mismas categorías, para realizar distintos ejercicios de creatividad que confirmen los aprendizajes del profesorado en formación. Los álbumes sin palabras seleccionados presentan, además, distintas temáticas y significados en sus ilustraciones, por lo que demuestran las posibilidades narrativas de los mismos. Se presenta la selección de textos y los motivos para su inclusión en esta secuencia didáctica que confirma que el álbum sin palabras es una herramienta adecuada para la educación literaria.

Palabras clave: Libro-álbum, Sin palabras, Multimodalidad, Creatividad, Formación docente.

Resum

Les possibilitats expressives de l'àlbum sense mots ens ofereixen una eina per a treballar múltiples temes en qualsevol etapa educativa. L'atenció científica ens demostra tant un interès clínic per usar aquestes obres per a afavorir la comunicació com una gran quantitat d'estudis i propostes didàctiques que reconeixen aquestes lectures visuals, que no estan limitades per la comprensió del text escrit. En aquesta investigació es proposa una seqüència didàctica per a la formació docent, realitzada en els Graus de Mestre/a en Educació Infantil i d'Educació Primària per a reforçar el coneixement de les narratives visuals a través d'àlbums sense paraules. Es parteix de la lectura de huit àlbums, centrats en tres categories diferents: (1) reconeixement dels diferents elements del discurs narratiu a partir de la importància del plec central; (2) La narració del pas del temps a partir de la seqüència centrada en un espai inalterat, (3) la identificació d'una narrativa visual amb les narracions acumulatives. A partir de la seua anàlisi i explicació se suggereixen posteriorment set àlbums sense mots, distribuïts en les mateixes categories, per a dur a terme diferents exercicis de creativitat que confirmen els aprenentatges del professorat en formació. Els àlbums sense paraules seleccionats presenten, a més, diferents temàtiques i significats en les seues il·lustracions, per la qual cosa demostren les possibilitats narratives d'aquests. Es presenta la selecció de textos i els motius per a la seua inclusió en aquesta seqüència didàctica que confirma que l'àlbum sense mots és una eina adequada per a l'educació literària.

Paraules clau: Llibre-àlbum, Sense mots, Multimodalitat, Creativitat, Formació docent.

Extended abstract

In children's literature, picturebooks are one of the most complex and creative formats, where illustration and text are combined, with multiple ways of interaction between both elements (Nodelman, 1988), to offer stories for all ages. In this format, we also find the category of wordless picturebooks (Bosch, 2012), where images tell a story without the written text. This type of silent storytelling offers multiple expressive opportunities and provides us with multiple stories to work on different subjects at any educational stage. The academic criticism of the last forty years (Martínez-Carratalá, 2022) shows both an enormous interest from the clinical field in using these picturebooks to improve the development of linguistic development and many estudios from the literary field and various educational proposals (Serafini, 2014) that recognise the usefulness of these visual narratives, which are not limited by the comprehension of the written text. This research proposes a didactic sequence for teacher students, carried out in the Teacher Education Degrees of the University of Alicante, whose main objective is to reinforce the knowledge of visual narratives through wordless picturebooks. It is based on the reading of eight picturebooks, focusing on three different categories of interest in teacher education. The first will focus on the recognition of the different elements that influence the construction of narrative discourse, such as the importance of materiality based on the importance of the central fold, identified as (1). Secondly, the particularity of the narration of the passage of time through the sequence of images while maintaining the space unaltered (time-lapse) or playing with the materiality of the book object (2). Thirdly, we propose the identification of a visual narrative related to one of the most common types of texts in the early stages, namely accumulative

narrations (3). Based on their analysis and explanation, seven wordless picturebooks are subsequently proposed, distributed in the same categories, to carry out different creative exercises that confirm the learning of the teaching students. They are as follows: *Le mauvais pli* (J. Binet, 2017); *Yo* (A. Ladrillo, 2017); *La ola* (S. Lee, 2011); *Las estaciones* (I. Mari, 2007); *Popville* (A. Boisrobert and L. Rigaud, 2009); *Desde 1880* (P. Gottuso, 2020); *Een touw in de lucht* (M. de Leeuw, 2021). These wordless picturebooks have been selected from a larger corpus, as they present different topics and meanings in their illustrations, showing the narrative possibilities of the illustrations. Through them, new concepts of multimodality and visual narrative such as inter pictoriality are explored (Hoster-Cabo et al., 2018). After introducing the selection of texts in the three categories, the reasons for their inclusion in this didactic sequence are listed. Different dynamics of interpretation and extension are proposed that go beyond the mere inclusion of texts in these narratives. The construction of the picturebook as an object-book full of meanings and with multiple readings and interpretations, as many as there are possible readers, is explored in depth. Specifically, we work on creative writing proposals for the recognition of the elements of the picturebook, the importance of images and the meaning-making process; proposals to reflect the passing of time through the succession of illustrations or the modification of a fixed image; and finally, the possibilities of the wordless picturebook as an accumulative text, completely related to the patterns of the oral tradition, basic in the development of reading education. The results of this experience promote the creativity of university students, future teachers who will use these and other narratives for the development of their students' literary education. The selection of readings collected, and the variety of activities offered confirms that wordless picturebooks are a useful resource for literary education from early readers to university students.

1. Introducción

El libro-álbum se ha consolidado como un soporte destacado en el ámbito académico y educativo. Este medio ha continuado con la exploración de sus elementos para la construcción de su discurso narrativo, alcanzando (Arizpe, 2021), una madurez en su evolución y perspectivas investigadoras. En el recorrido que hace la investigadora en la etapa en el periodo 2010-2020 destaca diferentes áreas de creciente interés como el análisis de respuestas lectoras, temáticas sensibles como la migración, el reflejo de la diversidad, la preservación medioambiental y los álbumes sin palabras.

La experimentación en el álbum se expresa mediante un soporte en el que texto, imagen, materialidad y secuencia se relacionan para conformar un diseño total (Bader, 1976) que evoluciona junto a los cambios tecnológicos, socioculturales y audiencia más allá del lector infantil (Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2015). En este sentido, el término “crossover picturebooks” empleado por Beckett (2012) sintetiza la constante ruptura de fronteras artísticas en el soporte del álbum. En su monografía incluye un capítulo centrado en la proliferación en el ecosistema editorial de los álbumes sin palabras y con el repaso de diferentes títulos en los que se constata la dificultad que pueden entrañar este tipo de libros para los lectores en la actualidad. Entre los diferentes ejemplos, se difuminan las fronteras entre narrativas gráficas como en *The Arrival* (2006) de Shaun Tan o la complejidad de *L'orage* (1998) de Anne

Brouillard. Al respecto del álbum de Brouillard, se han destacado la capacidad para articular su narrativa visual con una precisión cinematográfica (Van der Linden, 2015, pp.72-73), o la exigencia para el lector para construir su significado (Nières-Chevrel, 2010).

De este modo, los álbumes sin palabras (Serafini, 2014, p.24) reciben una denominación que destaca aquel elemento ausente en su narrativa (las palabras) frente a su contenido como “visually rendered narratives”. En el ámbito académico se ha empleado habitualmente en estudios clínicos donde encontramos un creciente interés en los últimos años para evaluar las dificultades del lenguaje en participantes con diferentes dificultades de comprensión (Martínez-Carratalá, 2022). Estos estudios se centran, en gran medida, en el análisis de diferentes componentes del lenguaje empleado a partir de las narrativas creadas a partir de este tipo de álbumes sin palabras (Heilmann et al., 2010; Tompkins et al., 2013; Grolig et al., 2020). Frente a este tipo de investigaciones, cabe destacar que la ausencia de texto no implica que este tipo de narrativas visuales impliquen una lectura menos exigente como señala Coderre (2019).

Desde las investigaciones en el ámbito educativo y literario, se ha señalado su potencialidad para la alfabetización visual (Read y Smith, 1982; Bosch y Duran, 2009) destacando la necesidad de un lector activo que identifique, infiera, relacione, globalice y argumente a partir de sus imágenes. La secuencialidad como modo semiótico en el álbum (Santiago-Ruiz, 2021) adquiere una especial importancia. Un potencial para el desarrollo de la creatividad como destacaba Knudsen-Lindauer: “Perhaps one of the most important roles of wordless books lies in promoting and refining expressive language skills through creative expression” (1988, p. 137).

La capacidad comunicativa de la imagen ha tenido diferentes enfoques como la sintaxis de la imagen (Dondis, 1976), la capacidad de significación narrativa en la ilustración (Bang, 2000) o el enfoque multimodal desde la gramática visual de Kress y van Leeuwen (2006). En síntesis, estos enfoques revelan el potencial educativo en la comunicación visual y trasladado al álbum sin palabras se hace aún más evidente. En el análisis de Bosch (2015), además de las tipologías que analiza en función de la voz del personaje, pone de manifiesto la diversidad de recursos expresivos y comunicativos que se trasladan en la ilustración para comunicarse efectivamente con el lector.

En el soporte del álbum sin palabras se han desarrollado diferentes propuestas que invitan al desarrollo de la creatividad (Conrad et al., 2021). Un ejemplo se encuentra en las seis experiencias lectoras desarrolladas por Bosch (2020) en las que pone énfasis en una propuesta basada en un enfoque dialógico, la participación del lector y con un tiempo que permita la indagación detallada de las obras

seleccionadas. Un enfoque que en el soporte del álbum permite el desarrollo del pensamiento crítico del alumnado (Ruiz-Guerrero et al., 2021) en la valoración estética del álbum y que precisa de una pedagogía específica para el análisis de sus diferentes componentes como el diseño o la composición (Pantaleo, 2020).

En esa exploración de narrativas sin palabras cabe destacar la propuesta de Arizpe et al. (2014) y el trabajo realizado a partir del modelo de análisis de las respuestas lectoras a partir de una temática tan sensible como la migración. Desgraciadamente, el silencio en estas narrativas visuales centradas en el sufrimiento de las personas que huyen tiene completo sentido al ser problemáticas frecuentemente silenciadas desde las políticas occidentales (Duckels y Jacques, 2019). Este tipo de investigaciones parten de la relación con el libro y su lectura como proceso transicional: “Reading is a transactional process that goes on between a particular reader and a particular text at a particular time, and under particular circumstance” (Rosenblatt, 1986, p. 123). En ese proceso, el álbum sin palabras tiene un sentido implícito en su lectura que se activa a través de los conocimientos previos del lector.

Al igual que Mendoza-Fillola (2001) definía el intertexto lector y su función para la ampliación de la experiencia lectora como conectar y conversar con diferentes textos, también se incluyen en la experiencia lectora un conjunto de conocimientos enciclopédicos y culturales. En este tipo de narrativa visual, no son menos importantes en la experiencia lectora ese bagaje previo del lector. Pese a que hay diferentes términos que se asimilan a esa conexión entre referentes visuales como el de interpictorialidad (Hoster-Cabo et al., 2018) o los diferentes tipos de alusiones a obras de arte (Beckett 2010), el equivalente en el álbum sin palabras como propone (Bosch, 2022) sería el de intericonicidad. En el caso de las alusiones a obras de arte, Beckett (2012, p.154) también señala que este proceso, pese a que pueda no ser reconocible en el lector infantil, les permite participar en la contemplación y apreciación de un patrimonio cultural.

Otro aspecto esencial en la investigación académica es el análisis del álbum como texto multimodal, en el que influyen el modo en el que se representan las relaciones sociales o la composición del espacio visual, porque también tienen un valor en la construcción del discurso narrativo (Painter et al. 2013). Un álbum sin palabras que se cita en este trabajo está referido al uso que hace Jeannie Baker en *Window* (1991) de la ventana como un marco experiencial en el que la vista del personaje desde el mismo punto es compartida por el lector colocado como espectador omnisciente del paso del tiempo. En este aspecto, Serafini y Reid (2022) sintetizan las diferentes aproximaciones a este soporte desde estudios semióticos, literarios y artísticos con la necesidad de combinar estos ámbitos para desentrañar la complejidad y potencialidad del álbum.

Otro de los elementos habituales en el estudio del álbum es la relación entre el texto y la imagen (Nodelman, 1988; Nikolajeva y Scott, 2001), que sintetiza Sipe (2012) en una perspectiva en la que las diferentes aportaciones teóricas intentan delimitar ese espacio entre la congruencia y simetría hasta la oposición e ironía en la relación bimodal. Como señalan Zaparaín y González en ese proceso de comprensión entre texto e imágenes: “El aprendizaje visual de un niño es equiparable con su aprendizaje de letras, palabras y frases: son primeros escalones que, si se piensan despacio, son asombrosos saltos de nivel” (2010, p. 116). Un punto que también señala Sundmark (2018) como esencial en el desarrollo de un itinerario que contemple estas cuestiones como la relación texto-imagen o la secuencialidad en el itinerario lector desde las primeras edades.

Pese a que frecuentemente se ha optado por la denominación de espacio (traducción de “gap”) en la relación entre texto e imagen, Hallberg (1982) conjugaba esta relación con el término “iconotexto”, siendo un término bastante aclaratorio. A este respecto, el papel del adulto en la mediación literaria debe evitar imponer su visión o entender su labor didáctica con fines utilitaristas como indica Beauvais (2015). En este sentido, es preciso atender a estas cuestiones en la formación docente y contemplar las diferentes potencialidades que representan los álbumes sin palabras. Si bien anteriormente se han expuesto ejemplos de propuestas de talleres y actividades creativas mediante estos recursos o la importancia de la promoción del diálogo y pensamiento crítico, se pueden añadir la de Pantaleo (2013) en el que contempla las peculiaridades del lenguaje multimodal para la creación. De este modo, la narración a través de imágenes contempla decisiones sobre la significación mediante el color, el punto de vista, la secuenciación o la perspectiva.

Así, dentro de propuestas para la educación secundaria y superior, Sundmark y Olsson-Jers (2022) proponen el desafío de la creatividad mediante ilustraciones sin palabras para la mejora en la competencia lectora y visual al ser conscientes de los elementos que definen al álbum. Así, la escritura se encamina a textos que acompañen la secuencia de imágenes propuestas, pero estos también deben contemplar la creación de espacios abiertos en la relación icónico-textual como desarrollo de su sensibilidad estético-literaria. No hay que olvidar la importancia de la lectura compartida desde las primeras edades y diferentes investigaciones han evaluado las capacidades narrativas y el lenguaje materno (además de las diferencias socioculturales en su estilo) empleando un álbum sin palabras (Melzi y Caspe, 2005; Tamis-LeMonda et al, 2012).

Los objetivos de esta investigación se formulan en [...] proponer una propuesta didáctica mediante el álbum sin palabras en la formación docente para contemplar las características del soporte [y] apreciar la complejidad en la escritura de textos literarios que generen espacios interpretativos a partir de la relación entre secuencia, materialidad, texto e imagen.

Resulta evidente que la tarea de añadir una narración a un álbum sin palabras es una labor compleja dada la precisión de la secuencialidad de su narrativa visual. Si trasladamos esta práctica al ámbito didáctico, bien sea con la creación de una narración compartida en los ciclos iniciales o para la promoción de la escritura creativa en etapas posteriores, la mediación literaria debe enfatizar en la importancia en la relación icónico-textual en la creación de estas narrativas. Por este motivo, los objetivos de esta investigación se formulan en un doble sentido. En primer lugar, proponer una propuesta didáctica mediante el álbum sin palabras en la formación docente para contemplar las características del soporte. En segundo lugar, apreciar la complejidad en la escritura de textos literarios que generen espacios interpretativos a partir de la relación entre secuencia, materialidad, texto e imagen.

2. Metodología y corpus seleccionado

La investigación se centra en la descripción de una propuesta didáctica para la formación docente en los Grados de Magisterio, que contempla la precisión en el que el texto y la imagen se relacionan. Esta propuesta pretende el desarrollo de la escritura creativa y afianzar el aprendizaje de los elementos comunicativos del álbum. De este modo, el reto de crear una narración a partir de un álbum sin palabras también pretende afianzar la importancia de todos los elementos en los criterios de selección de obras para el aula.

La metodología empleada para estimular su creatividad propone la investigación-acción como forma de trabajo con el alumnado y sigue diferentes fases:

a) Fase de activación. En primer lugar, se desarrolla una dinámica colectiva en la que escriben un texto para uno de los álbumes sin palabras seleccionados en la investigación. En este caso es *La ola* (Lee, 2008) con el que pueden compartir en el aula sus relatos numerando el texto que han empleado en cada una de las dobles páginas. Es necesario que tengan un tiempo previo para su exploración antes de escribir el texto y compartirlo en el aula. Una vez realizado, se comentan sus peculiaridades: extensión, elección de voz narrativa, tipo de final propuesto y dificultades.

b) Fase formativa. En estas sesiones teóricas se analizan los elementos del álbum y las relaciones de significación entre texto e imagen. Hay diferentes propuestas teóricas para la aproximación de estos conceptos relativos al álbum (Van der Linden, 2015; Colomer et al., 2018), pero se han seleccionado diferentes títulos para mostrar las diferentes opciones de significación entre texto e imagen. Una propuesta sería el inicio con un “imaginario” donde imagen y texto concuerdan, como *Pequeño museo* (Le-Saux y Solotareff, 2000), la libertad transformadora en esta relación en *Los pájaros* (Zullo, 2012) y

la oposición o disyunción entre texto-imagen en *Mi gatito es el más bestia* (Bachelet, 2005) o *El mejor libro para aprender a dibujar una vaca* (Rice, 2015).

Otro recurso que facilita la comprensión de la relación entre imagen y texto es la presentación de obras poéticas que se han ilustrado a posteriori de su creación. Es importante seleccionar ejemplos que opten por la creación de metáforas visuales que expandan la experiencia lectora. Como señala Senís (2019, p.134) en la creación de estas ilustraciones también se produce el reto de emplear todos los elementos del soporte que precisen la aportación del lector para la construcción de su significado como las ilustraciones de Sean Mackaoui en *Garra de la guerra* (Fuertes, 2002). El interés creciente en la promoción de la poesía también se refleja en el reconocimiento de la Feria de Bolonia con una categoría especial que otorgó el premio a *Cajita de fósforos: antología de poemas sin rima* (Córdova, 2019) con las sugerentes ilustraciones de Juan Palomino.

c) *Fase de creación*. En este sentido, la propuesta de títulos se ha limitado para contemplar las diferentes fases y la aplicación con tres temáticas de interés en la formación docente. La primera, se centrará en el reconocimiento de los diferentes elementos que inciden en la construcción del discurso narrativo como la importancia de la materialidad a partir de la importancia del pliegue central, identificados como (1). En segundo término, la peculiaridad de narrar el paso del tiempo a partir de la secuencia de imágenes manteniendo el espacio inalterado (*time-lapse*) o jugando con la materialidad del objeto libro (2). Por último, la identificación en una narrativa visual relacionada con uno de los tipos de textos más habituales en las primeras etapas como son las narraciones acumulativas (3).

En las Tablas 1 y 2 figuran la relación de títulos para estas diferentes propuestas (P) y categorías (1,2,3), así como la autoría de estos. En primer lugar, incluimos álbumes con palabras y en la segunda tabla los álbumes sin palabras, específicos de nuestra propuesta. En ambas se hace referencia a la voz narrativa del relato, en la Tabla 1: omnisciente o integrada. En el caso de los álbumes sin palabras, Tabla 2, se precisa la voz de los personajes en línea con la diferenciación de Bosch (2015): silenciosa, silenciada, imagoparlante o ininteligible. Cabe resaltar que se han priorizado álbumes cuya unidad narrativa sea la doble página.

La selección de estas propuestas tiene como objetivo el reconocimiento de las peculiaridades en la construcción del discurso narrativo en el álbum con palabras: desde el plano literario, artístico y semiótico. En la segunda se propone una selección acorde con los diferentes álbumes sin palabras para desarrollar la escritura creativa.

P	Álbumes	Autor/ilustrador	Voz narrativa
1	<i>Donde viven los monstruos</i>	M. Sendak	Omnisciente
1	<i>¡De aquí no pasa nadie!</i>	I. Minhos Martins/B. P. Carvalho	Integrada
1	<i>El muro en mitad del libro</i>	J. Agee	Integrada
2	<i>Little tree</i>	K. Komagata	Omnisciente
2	<i>La casita</i>	V. Lee-Burton	Omnisciente
2	<i>Érase una vez y mucho más será</i>	J. Schaible	Omnisciente
3	<i>Una jirafa y media</i>	S. Silverstein	Omnisciente (en verso)
3	<i>Estaba la rana</i>	R. París	Omnisciente (en verso)

Tabla 1. Relación de álbumes para cada propuesta

P	Álbumes sin palabras	Autor/ilustrador	Voz personajes
1	<i>Le mauvais pli</i>	J. Binet	Silenciosa: requerimiento narrativo
1	<i>Yo</i>	A. Ladrillo	Silenciado
1	<i>La ola</i>	S. Lee	Silenciado
2	<i>Las estaciones</i>	I. Mari	Silenciosa: incapacidad de hablar
2	<i>Popville</i>	A. Boisrobert y L. Rigaud	Silenciosa: incapacidad de hablar
2	<i>Desde 1880</i>	P. Gottuso	Silenciado
3	<i>Een touw in de lucht</i>	M. de Leeuw	Silenciado

Tabla 2. Relación de álbumes sin palabras para cada propuesta

d) *Fase de presentación.* Se comparten los relatos y las decisiones tomadas en el proceso para la creación de los textos. También la comparación con sus textos iniciales, las referencias o alusiones en el texto y el debate en grupo sobre la reflexión de la práctica dentro del proceso formativo. En este sentido, se presenta un breve informe con las ocho etapas del proceso creativo propuesto por Sawyer (2021): iteración en el proceso, ambigüedad sobre la tarea, exploración, emergencia, fracasos y callejones sin salida, deliberada e intencionada, reflexión consciente y la importancia de las restricciones. También es necesaria la respuesta del resto del alumnado sobre las impresiones generadas a partir de la experiencia de los textos creados junto a la secuenciación del proceso creativo.

3. Desarrollo de las propuestas didácticas

3.1. Propuesta de escritura para el reconocimiento de los elementos del álbum

En el reconocimiento de los elementos del álbum (materialidad, secuencia, texto e imagen) se ha propuesto la presentación de diferentes títulos que emplean el pliegue central en la construcción del discurso narrativo. Uno de los títulos más emblemáticos de la LIJ contemporánea es *Donde viven los monstruos* (Sendak, 2014), originalmente publicada en 1963, en la que la ilustración se extiende a medida que la imaginación de Max desborda la narrativa. Desde un inicio en que la imagen y el texto aparecen disociados, llegando a las tres páginas centrales en las que la narrativa visual prescinde del texto en su coronación y la vuelta hasta su habitación, recuperando la diferenciación de espacios. La valoración de la economía del texto y la minuciosidad de detalles escondidos permite un acercamiento a las características del álbum como un soporte en el que todos los elementos tienen potencial de significación.

En línea con este juego con el pliegue, un álbum como *El muro en mitad del libro* (Agee, 2019) permite la aproximación a una narración en primera persona en la que se realizan interpelaciones al lector y en el que se le revela información visual del otro lado del muro en oposición con el texto. Esta interpelación también se realiza en la imagen con la mirada del personaje dirigiéndose al lector. El mismo sentido del pliegue central como elemento material y narrativo se observa en la conjunción de elementos en el álbum *¡De aquí no pasa nadie!* (Minhós-Martins, 2017) empleando recursos narrativos como los bocadillos para los diferentes personajes (en los que se incluyen alusiones intertextuales como a Caperucita Roja). Álbumes que cuidan todos sus elementos materiales, desde la concepción y diseño en el cuerpo central como en sus guardas.

A partir de este juego, en el segundo listado se proponen tres álbumes sin palabras que tienen en el

El empleo de recursos como el diálogo, la alteración del punto de vista, si dan nombre a los personajes o el empleo de onomatopeyas e interjecciones pueden ser elementos de análisis en la construcción narrativa

pliegue un elemento esencial en la construcción de su discurso narrativo. Para el reconocimiento de este juego con el pliegue central las consecuencias de traspasar el límite de la página con *Le mauvais pli* (Binet, 2014) y el juego de espejos en *Yo* (Ladrillo, 2017). Álbumes que proponen el reconocimiento del libro como objeto y que se completan con la práctica de escritura a partir de *La ola* (Lee, 2008). Este forma parte de *La trilogía del límite* (Lee, 2014) en el que su personaje se enfrentaba al muro invisible que diferencia dos mundos en cada página sencilla

(Figura 1). En esta narración silenciada (observamos en diferentes ilustraciones a la protagonista exclamar) se contempla una narrativa visual evocadora del recuerdo de un primer día de playa y con

el acompañamiento coral de las gaviotas acompañando a la protagonista en sus tentativas por acercarse a la orilla. El empleo del color también tiene un valor semiótico al cubrir de azul el mundo en blanco y negro inicial que implica la pérdida del miedo para adentrarse a jugar con la ola que llega a la orilla. Finalmente, la apreciación de la diferencia en las guardas al inicio (la arena de la playa) y al final de la narración (la arena repleta de corales de silueta azul).



Figura 1. Ilustración del álbum *La ola* (2008) de Suzy Lee. Imagen cedida por la editorial Barbara Fiore Editora

El interés en las creaciones del alumnado a partir del texto sin palabras está centrado en sus decisiones para la elección de la voz narrativa (omnisciente o psicológica), el género empleado (si optan por la prosa o el lirismo en su construcción) y si otorgan voz a los elementos de la naturaleza (las gaviotas y la ola). El empleo de recursos como el diálogo, la alteración del punto de vista, si dan nombre a los personajes o el empleo de onomatopeyas e interjecciones pueden ser elementos de análisis en la construcción narrativa. Del mismo modo, resultan relevantes sus decisiones sobre la extensión total del relato, si la ubicación del texto en la página también contempla el pliegue central o emplean recursos relacionados con el cómic como los bocadillos.

3.2. Propuesta de escritura para reflejar el paso del tiempo

En esta segunda propuesta se pone de relieve la importancia de las estrategias artísticas en la creación del álbum y en el componente semiótico para reflejar el paso del tiempo. De esta manera las obras se conectan icónicamente al escoger la misma forma de reflejar desde la composición visual estática para apreciar el cambio temporal a cada paso de página. Se han seleccionado tres álbumes para reflejar las diferentes técnicas compositivas del espacio visual y la materialidad en este cambio. Con *Little tree* (Komagata, 2008) se observa el paso del tiempo y crecimiento de un árbol desde que es una pequeña semilla en la nieve. Un libro-objeto de gran belleza artística con el árbol creciendo (pop-up) en cada estación en el pliegue central de la página y con las páginas cambiando de color según el follaje y la luz del día. El texto, por otra parte, complementa de manera poética con la creación de una metáfora visual del ciclo de la vida humana a partir de la transformación de la naturaleza.

Otro álbum que juega con el mantenimiento del espacio es *La casita* (2016) de Virginia Lee-Burton, una obra clásica publicada originalmente en 1942, con la narración omnisciente que conecta con el desarrollo de la industrialización. El texto en comparación con el de Katsumi Komagata es más extenso, pero también emplea el punto de vista de un elemento fijo: la casa. Con la estructura clásica de inicio de los cuentos, se disocia la lectura del texto en la página izquierda y la imagen en la derecha, pero a medida que avanza el tiempo con el consiguiente desarrollo se observa cómo se traspasa la ilustración al lado derecho. El paisaje rural cambia progresivamente por el desarrollo alrededor de la casa que se deteriora y empequeñece al lado de grandes edificios, medios de transporte y la eclosión de una gran urbe.

Esta aproximación se complementa con *Érase una vez y mucho más será* (Schaible, 2021) y su particular forma de emplear el tamaño de la página para secuenciar una línea temporal: pasado, presente y futuro del planeta. Cada paso de página evoca el paisaje de un tiempo pasado (comenzando con la formación de la tierra hace miles de millones de años hasta hace un minuto) hasta un presente que se representa con el menor tamaño de la página en el centro. En ese punto temporal (ahora), interpela al lector para que formule un deseo (con la imagen de una estrella fugaz) y comience de nuevo ese avance a partir de preguntas que cuestionan desde el futuro más cercano y concreto hasta su expresión más general. Con este juego con las dimensiones de la página, la autora altera los diferentes elementos de la narración según avanza en el tiempo.

Estos álbumes pueden aportar una orientación para la escritura de álbumes sin palabras que representan la evolución del tiempo con un plano fijo alterado con el paso de página. Uno de los ejemplos icónicos es *Las estaciones* (2007) de Iela Mari, originalmente publicado en 1973, que junto al álbum de Katsumi Komagata puede invitar a una aproximación poética de la evolución circular de la naturaleza en los textos y la búsqueda de otros referentes poéticos como la prosa poética de Mario Benedetti en *Árboles* (2012) ilustrado por Javier Zabala.

La crítica al desarrollismo industrial de la obra de Virginia Lee-Burton podría ser un estímulo para la creación de un texto para el álbum sin palabras *Popville* (Boisrobert y Rigaud, 2009). También resultaría conveniente observar el peritexto de acompañamiento (en la edición original en francés con un texto de Joy Sorman) que, como critican Ramos y Ramos (2014, p.12), propone una visión demasiado restrictiva de la obra. Esta consta de seis dobles páginas en las que se despliega materialmente (pop-up) una pequeña capilla en el pliegue central y que en cada paso de página se observará el desarrollo de una gran ciudad a su alrededor. En este caso, resultaría interesante la reflexión sobre las opciones en la escritura para que presentase la mayor ambigüedad interpretativa y espacio entre su texto creado con respecto a la narrativa visual para evitar la instrumentalización moralista.

Por último, el álbum *Desde 1880* (Gottuso, 2020) también propone la identificación de una unidad temporal (década) a cada paso de página y manteniendo su espacio visual invariable. En este caso, se consideraría un álbum casi sin palabras al contener el texto del cartel de los establecimientos integrados en la imagen (Bosch, 2012). El título y la portada indican claramente el protagonismo de la obra centrada en los cambios sucedidos en cada década desde la apertura de una librería en 1880. Esta parte será una constante en la que se reconocerá el paso del tiempo entre diferentes generaciones que se encargan del negocio. Por el contrario, en la parte derecha se observará otro establecimiento que irá renovándose a medida que el paso de las décadas avanza (en la Figura 2 se ejemplifica el paso de 1900 a 1910). La última doble página muestra cuál es el presente (el año 2020, el mismo de publicación) y la situación de ambos establecimientos con un final negativo expresado visualmente con el cierre de la librería.

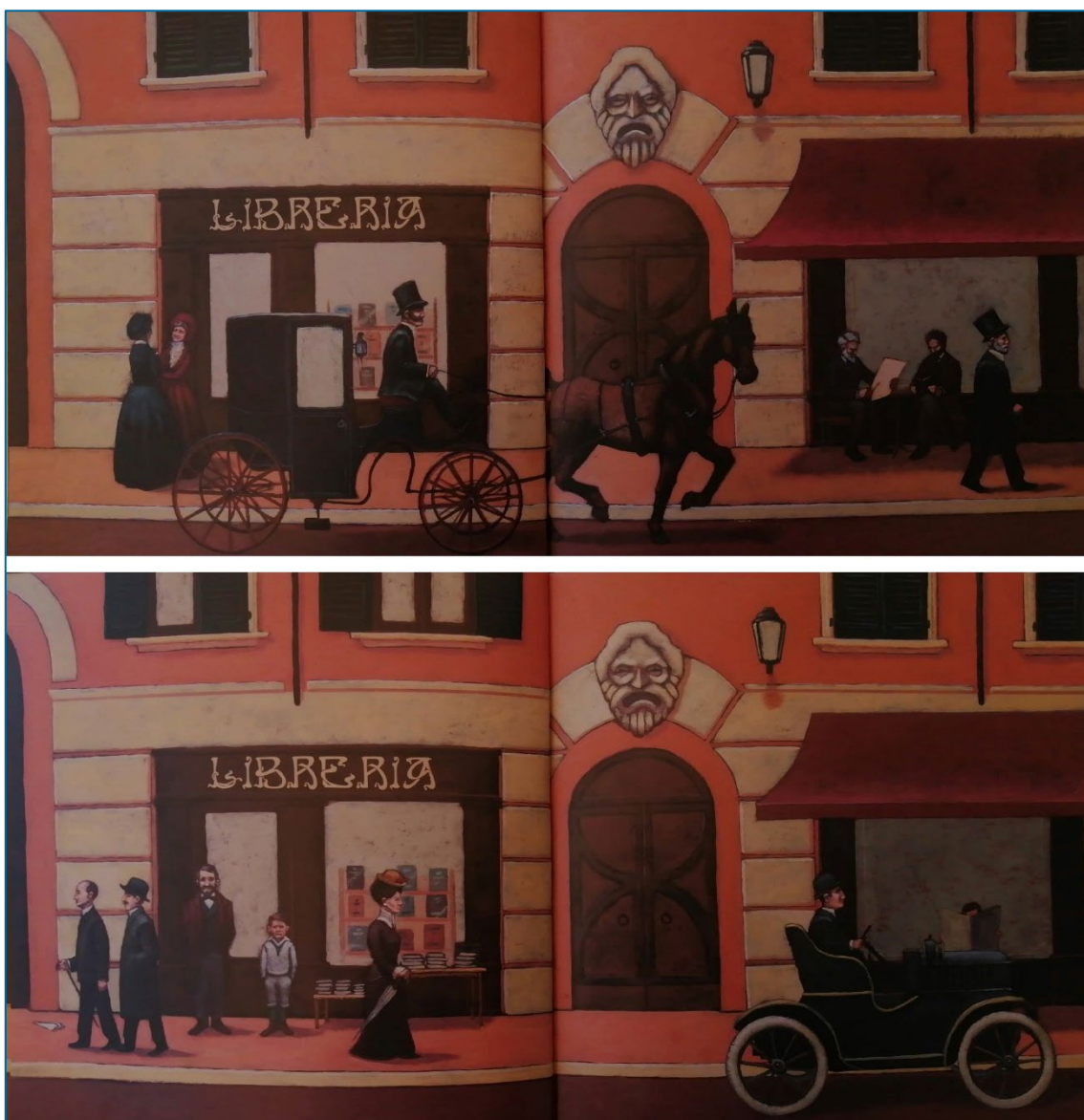


Figura 2. Doble ilustración del álbum *Desde 1880* (2020) de Pietro Gottus. Imágenes reproducidas con el permiso de la editorial Kalandraka

3.3. Propuesta de escritura para la creación de un texto acumulativo

Esta última propuesta se encamina al reconocimiento de una estructura habitual en las narraciones de la literatura infantil como son los textos acumulativos en verso. En esta, especialmente en la narrativa de tradición oral, el texto acumulativo es un recurso habitual para promocionar el juego con el lenguaje desde las estructuras poéticas como las enumeraciones, la adición (o sustracción) o la concatenación de elementos. El empleo de rimas, fórmulas repetitivas y onomatopeyas son recursos expresivos que facilitan la aproximación a este tipo de textos. Dentro de los innumerables ejemplos que se pueden encontrar en la poesía infantil o en el cancionero, la preservación y diálogo con estos textos resulta en un ejercicio creativo especialmente en la formación docente de las primeras etapas educativas.

Las referencias que pueden representar un modelo para la posterior creación se justifican en línea con el empleo de este tipo de textos y el empleo del sinsentido. El primer ejemplo se centra en otro autor reconocido en el ámbito de la LIJ como Shel Silverstein y la traducción de *Una jirafa y media* (2018), originalmente publicado en 1964, en el que se formulan las consecuencias de las acciones que realiza la jirafa del protagonista. Estas se acumulan en el texto en cada nuevo verso y se recuerdan después hasta alcanzar un total de catorce (primando la extravagancia en los personajes para potenciar el sentido descabellado de la narración). La segunda parte se centra en la sustracción de elementos hasta la vuelta a la situación inicial.

El texto acumulativo es un recurso habitual para promocionar el juego con el lenguaje desde las estructuras poéticas

El segundo ejemplo para la identificación de estas estructuras sería el álbum lírico *Estaba la rana* (París, 2015) que secuencia cada nueva iteración de un personaje en la doble página para acompañar los versos de la canción popular. También se selecciona por su cuidada plasmación en las ilustraciones ambientadas en un club de jazz (reforzando la musicalidad) en las que se observa cómo se acumulan los personajes: rana, mosca, araña, ratón, gato, perro, hombre y vieja. Este ejemplo también resulta interesante por la fragmentación de las acciones en la doble página y la complejidad de trasladar un texto a un formato ilustrado. Finalmente, otro ejemplo que podría resultar estimulante para la creación un texto en prosa sería la ilustración con las imágenes de Antonio Santos de un texto de Eduardo Galeano con *Historia de la resurrección del papagayo* (2008) con el encadenamiento de acciones y personajes a raíz del ahogamiento del papagayo en la sopa caliente.

Así, después de mostrar estos ejemplos, el objetivo con el alumnado de los grados de Maestro/a de Infantil y Primaria está centrado en la transformación de un álbum sin palabras como *Een touw in de lucht* (2020) del holandés Mattias de Leeuw hacia un texto en el que el ritmo de la narración se plasmasse de manera lírica (desde la prosa poética hasta la creación de una canción). Este álbum fue incluido en la lista de *White Ravens* en el año 2021 y la traducción del título sería “Una cuerda en el aire” como revela su portada y materialmente al incluir una cinta roja en el álbum. La narrativa visual se vertebra a partir de la misteriosa aparición en el cielo de una cuerda roja que surca diferentes espacios (desde la montaña, hasta una piscina o la ciudad) atrayendo a todo tipo de personajes que intentan alcanzarla.

En segundo plano, estos espacios y sus diferentes personajes resultan cada vez más variopintos y se quedan sujetos a esa misteriosa cuerda roja siendo incapaces de detenerla: una bañista, un operario, un superhéroe, un mono, un preso y los bomberos (Figura 3). Finalmente, se revela el origen de esa cuerda y a su propietario que, de nuevo, propondrá el reinicio de una nueva aventura. Como se puede comprobar, el humor sinsentido y la concatenación de acciones en la narrativa visual replica una estructura humorística disparatada cuyo ritmo evoca textos donde el ritmo también sea un elemento central.



Figura 3. Ilustración de *Een touw in de lucht* (2020) de Mattias de Leeuw. Imagen cedida por Mattias de Leeuw

4. Discusión y conclusiones

La finalidad de estas propuestas didácticas en la formación docente busca el reconocimiento del soporte del álbum como un organismo narrativo en el que todos sus elementos tienen capacidad de combinarse para la creación de significados. El desarrollo de la competencia literaria en la formación docente es un aspecto esencial en su futura faceta como mediadores de lecturas en el aula y una formación que les permita seleccionar nuevas obras que expandan la experiencia lectora en su alumnado. Por este motivo, en línea con Serafini y Reid (2022), no se puede obviar el componente semiótico y artístico en estas obras. En este sentido, las propuestas buscan la integración de estos tres ámbitos a través de la práctica creativa de textos que acompañen a narrativas visuales de una manera precisa para que integren el conocimiento de las formas en que texto e imagen crean espacios de interpretación.

La competencia literaria en la formación docente es un aspecto esencial en su futura faceta como mediadores de lecturas en el aula y una formación que les permita seleccionar nuevas obras que expandan la experiencia lectora en su alumnado

El reto en la formación docente es posibilitar el contacto con un corpus de lecturas diversas y criterios de selección para su futura labor en el aula (Lluch y Sanz -Tejeda 2021). En primer lugar, uno de los objetivos era apreciar las características comunicativas del álbum y cómo la relación entre texto e imagen tienen una capacidad para transformar el acto lector. Unido a este, el interés se centraba en el álbum sin palabras y la precisión con la que articula su narrativa mediante la imagen y que esta peculiaridad sea vista como una capacidad de expansión de la lectura y no una restricción. En este sentido, la complejidad y contemplación del álbum sin palabras son elementos esenciales en los procesos de alfabetización visual (Read y Smith, 1982; Bosch y Duran, 2009), así como desde la aproximación semiótica y multimodal en la valoración de la comunicación visual del álbum (Painter et al., 2013).

Ubicando al alumnado, futuros docentes, ante un conjunto de obras y diferentes estrategias narrativas, semióticas y artísticas permitirá la valoración de ambos soportes y el reconocimiento de sus características. Cada taller supone el reconocimiento de elementos clave en la construcción de significados y una indagación previa que conecte las obras para ejemplificar sus estrategias narrativas. Como destaca Sawyer (2021), el proceso de creación no es lineal y la ambigüedad de la tarea puede reducirse desde la propuesta de estas obras que acompañan al estudio de los diferentes álbumes sin palabras. También resulta necesaria una reflexión consciente sobre la precisión narrativa de los

álbumes sin palabras y si necesitan un texto de acompañamiento. En la lectura de este tipo de álbumes hay un texto implícito que el lector activa a través de sus conocimientos previos, pero también es necesario el conocimiento de las estrategias multimodales y artísticas en la comunicación visual (Kress y van Leeuwen, 2006).

Así, el álbum entendido como texto multimodal (Serafini, 2010) supone una lectura compleja considerando sus dimensiones perceptivas, estructurales e ideológicas que necesitan el estudio de sus elementos comunicativos, pero también de un contexto sociocultural y la recepción por el lector. En el caso de los álbumes sin palabras ese espacio interpretativo se libera del texto y supone un espacio completamente abierto a las respuestas. Por eso resulta tan complejo la creación de textos que tengan una capacidad de un acompañamiento a este tipo de álbumes, que deberá enfrentarse a restricciones que deberemos sortear para transformar la lectura. De esta manera, los futuros docentes tendrán oportunidad de identificar y analizar la precisión de unas narrativas visuales que no restringen el texto, sino que expanden la concepción interpretativa del álbum en su conjunto.

El creciente interés del álbum sin palabras en el ámbito de la investigación (Martínez-Carratalá, 2022) muestra la capacidad comunicativa de títulos que han centrado su interés en el ámbito didáctico con las respuestas lectoras y la práctica dialogada sobre temas sensibles como la migración (Arizpe et al., 2014). Por otra parte, las investigaciones desde el ámbito clínico se centran en variables centradas en el desarrollo del lenguaje y con prácticas pautadas en el tiempo de creación de narrativas a partir de estos recursos. En este sentido, cada vez son más los investigadores que inciden en la necesidad de desmontar que la lectura de imágenes sea un ejercicio sencillo (Coderre, 2019) y recomiendan la lectura calmada para encontrar todas las claves encerradas en el soporte del álbum (Pantaleo, 2020). Asimismo, la ejemplificación de sus características, delimitación y peculiaridades narrativas (Bosch, 2012; Bosch, 2015) encuentran un conjunto de propuestas creativas como la de la misma Bosch (2020) que exploran las diferentes modalidades comunicativas en la lectura de imágenes tanto para el alumnado escolar como para formadores.

Esta propuesta se plantea como una secuencia didáctica para que el futuro profesorado conozca más detenidamente las posibilidades del álbum sin palabras, y otros muchos conceptos que hemos ido desarrollando a lo largo de las distintas lecturas. Se plantea en los grados de Educación, pero podría ampliarse también al Máster de Secundaria. Así pues, esta propuesta posteriormente permitirá a los futuros docentes llevar el álbum sin palabras como una lectura abierta, que fomente la creatividad del alumnado de cualquier etapa educativa y múltiples elementos de la lectura multimodal.

Juntamente a este análisis de los álbumes sin palabras el profesorado en formación debe reflexionar sobre la construcción de significados en el soporte del álbum. La pluralidad de denominaciones y

clasificaciones de estas relaciones ha sido investigada como analizaba Sipe (2012) y con la consecuente disparidad de tipologías según el estudio de cada investigador. No hay que olvidar que el álbum es un soporte en constante evolución artística y material en el que sus autores rompen continuamente con las convenciones establecidas (Kiefer, 2008; Beckett, 2012; Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2015; Van der Linden, 2015). Como apuntaba Serafini (2014) la propia definición de álbumes sin palabras resulta restrictiva y en la propuesta didáctica no se fundamenta en la adición del elemento restante, sino en desafiar al alumnado en formación a que estudie la precisión de ambos lenguajes.

De esta manera, el desafío a la creación de textos en dos momentos diferenciados (antes y después de la fase teórica) permite al futuro profesorado identificar la progresión en su aprendizaje, las ideas

Los álbumes sin palabras suponen un recurso artístico y literario dentro de las narrativas gráficas con un gran potencial didáctico

preconcebidas sobre el valor de la imagen en la narración y la precisión estético-literaria del álbum (con o sin palabras). La reflexión metacognitiva sobre el proceso creativo poniéndoles en el lugar del autor para la creación de espacios interpretativos y la importancia de identificar las estrategias para incrementar la experiencia lectora son los principales retos en estas propuestas. Por este motivo, las restricciones en el proceso

creativo posibilitan que la creación de una narración en el álbum no puede quedar en un plano superfluo o redundante. En definitiva, las propuestas en formación docente deben abarcar alfabetizaciones múltiples como señalaba Arizpe (2021) que expandan el concepto literario con la inclusión de los desafíos propios de la alfabetización visual y el pensamiento crítico.

Recapitulando, los álbumes sin palabras suponen un recurso artístico y literario dentro de las narrativas gráficas con un gran potencial didáctico. Del mismo modo, la precisión en la creación de espacios interpretativos a partir de los diferentes elementos del álbum resulta otra pieza clave en la formación docente. El reconocimiento de ambas estrategias y el espacio interpretativo que proponen ambos tipos de álbumes conectan con la necesidad formativa de que no se instrumentalice esa ambigüedad interpretativa desde la figura docente.

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6. Agradecimientos

A las editoriales Barbara Fiore Editora y Kalandraka por la concesión de permisos de reproducción de las ilustraciones (Figuras 1 y 2, respectivamente). Así como a Mattias de Leeuw (Figura 3) y Suzy Lee (Figura 1) por el interés y permisos de reproducción de los álbumes señalados.

How to cite this paper:

Martínez-Carratalá, F.C. & Rovira-Collado, J. (2022). Álbumes sin palabras y creatividad: propuesta didáctica para los grados de Educación Infantil y Primaria. *Journal of Literary Education*, (6), 28-49. <https://doi.org/10.7203/JLE.6.24341>

Creative writing in the Correctional Institution: a Greek example

Escritura Creativa en la Institución Correccional: un ejemplo en Grecia

L'escriptura creativa a la Institució Correccional: un exemple grec

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Abstract

Creative writing is a field that has been flourishing over the last years in Greece. Creative writing projects are being implemented in many different institutions and a continuously increasing number of partakers engage in them. A special case of such a project is the one that takes place in the 3rd Second Chance School (SCS) of the Correctional Institution of Diavata. There, in collaboration with the University of Western Macedonia in Greece which imparts a Master's in Creative Writing program and the voluntary participation of many students of the program, creative writing activities give the chance to the inmates that are involved in them, to express their thoughts and communicate their ideas to the world outside of the prison. This paper aims to present one of the numerous creative writing activities that were carried out during the project in the SCS of Diavata, an activity that evolved around the notion of *truth*.

Key words: Creative writing, Second Chance Schools, truth, correctional institution.

Resumen

La escritura creativa es un campo que está floreciendo en los últimos años en Grecia. Los proyectos de escritura creativa se están implementando en varias instituciones y un número cada vez mayor de participantes se involucra en ellos. Un caso especial de estos proyectos es el que se lleva a cabo en la 3^a Escuela de Segunda Oportunidad (E2O) en la Institución Correccional de Diavata. Allí, en colaboración con la Universidad de Macedonia Occidental en Grecia que imparte un programa de Maestría en Escritura Creativa y la implicación voluntaria de muchos y muchas estudiantes del programa, las actividades de escritura creativa dan la oportunidad a los reclusos y las reclusas que participan en ellas, de expresar sus pensamientos y comunicar sus ideas al mundo fuera de la prisión a través de sus escritos. Este estudio trata de presentar una de las numerosas actividades de escritura creativa que se realizaron durante el proyecto en la E2O de Diavata, una actividad que evolucionó en torno a la noción de *la verdad*.

Palabras clave: Escritura creativa, Escuelas de Segunda Oportunidad, verdad, institución correccional.

Resum

L'escriptura creativa és un camp que ha florit els darrers anys a Grècia. Els projectes d'escriptura creativa s'han vingut implementant en moltes i diferents institucions i un nombre cada vegada major de participants s'hi involucra. Un cas especial d'aquest tipus de projectes són els que tenen lloc a la 3a Escola de Segona Oportunitat (E2O) a la institució correccional de Diavata. Ací, en col·laboració amb la Universitat de Macedònia Occidental a Grècia, la qual imparteix un Màster en Escripció Creativa i la participació voluntària de molts i moltes estudiants del programa, les activitats d'escripció creativa donen l'oportunitat als reclusos i les recluses que hi participen, d'expressar els seus pensaments i comunicar les seues idees al món fora de la presó. Aquest article tracta de presentar una de les nombroses activitats d'escripció creativa que es van dur a terme durant el projecte d'E2O a Diavata, una activitat que va tractar sobre la noció de *veritat*.

Paraules clau: Escripció creativa, Escoles de Segona Oportunitat, veritat, institució correccional.

1. Introduction

Education is a universal human right. As such, it follows the core principles of all human rights, which determine that they should be accessible to all with no distinction, and that no individual should be exempt of their rights under any circumstance. The Second Chance Schools (SCS) are an institution that embraces this philosophy. Initially established in 1995 by the European Commission with the intention of giving a second chance to education to those who had dropped out of school or had been excluded for some reason from education, especially young adults (European Commission, 2001), the SCS have extended their presence to many European countries ever since. In Greece, the SCS have been functioning over the last two decades following the standards set by the law 2776/1999 (Greek Government Gazette, 2008) and in accordance with the European directives. As the law states, a flexible educational program is provided to all adult citizens over the age of 18 who have not completed the compulsory education. Attending the SCS for two years gives the adult students the opportunity to acquire a degree equivalent to that of the Greek secondary school. In addition, based on the idea of equality, the participation in the SCS programs aims at the acquisition of the appropriate qualifications, skills and knowledge that are essential for the integration of excluded adults in the labor market and for their social integration; as Bitsakos assures "taking into account the perspective of the impact of the institution of SCS [...] on the multifaceted development of the individual, we conclude that it is the training to complement the existing knowledge, skills and competences of the adult learner with new ones, providing resources that are prerequisites for avoiding social and labor marginalization" (Bitsakos, 2021, 3). Furthermore, the engagement in the SCS programs is concentrated on the empowerment of the participants' self-esteem, so as to

stimulate their involvement in social development and give them a chance to improve their well-being (Greek Government Gazette, 2008).

Most importantly, the function of the educational plans in the SCS revolves around what is essential to the learner. According to Bekris (2003) the aim of the SCS programs is to adjust the educational activities to the needs of the participants because this is a vital condition that assures their active engagement in the acquisition of the knowledge and skills that could benefit them in a more holistic sense. As research has shown, apart from the practical gain in skills, participating in such a way gives the students the chance to communicate, analyze, reflect, express thoughts and feelings, interact, share ideas, socialize, accept criticism and respect others (Grompanopoulou, 2021). To achieve this, the program of the SCS does not use any specific school books. Instead, the content of the lessons and the educational activities relies on the choice of the educators who organize their teaching considering the necessities of the students (Grompanopoulou, 2021).

The participation in the SCS programs aims at the acquisition of the appropriate qualifications, skills and knowledge that are essential for the integration of excluded adults in the labor market and for their social integration.

Today, out of the 76 SCS that operate throughout the Greek regions, 12 are encountered in Correctional Institutions (Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation, 2022), abiding by the law 2776/1999 which also ensures the right to education to all those who are imprisoned in the Greek penitentiaries. To complement it, the *Code of Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners* states that their education should aim not only at the acquisition of knowledge but also, and most importantly, at the development of their body, mind and soul to that extent that would provide them with a chance to become responsible and independent persons, ready for their re-integration into society (Kouroumichaki, 2020).

In the SCS in the correctional institutions, the educational program follows the same curriculum as the one in every other SCS, fostering training and education in Greek language, Mathematics, English language, Information technology, Social education, Environmental education, Physical sciences and Cultural-Aesthetic education (Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation, 2022), for all the inmates who are interested in participating. These fields cover 20 hours weekly, leaving two hours for counseling services and three for the implementation of different artistic or cultural activities in the form of projects, which depend on the flexibility of the educational program in combination with the creativity and the dedication of the professors and many times, of that of volunteers.

2. Creative writing in the 3rd Second Chance School of Diavata in Greece

An example of such a project takes place in the 3rd Second Chance School, which functions in the penitentiary institution of Diavata. In collaboration with the University of Western Macedonia in Greece which imparts a Master's in Creative Writing program, a project of creative writing for the inmates of the correctional institution of Diavata who attend the SCS in it, started being implemented in the academic year of 2012-2013. There, with the guidance of the then Associate and now Regular professor and director of the Master's program Triantafyllos Kotopoulos, the assistance of the director of the school and the voluntary participation of many students of the Master's program, a weekly project that evolved around literature started (Kotopoulos & Mavroudis & Balai, 2015).

In this first attempt, the main aim was for the inmates to come to an understanding of literature and poetry and the core elements of various literary texts. While doing so, the participants were also instigated to produce their own texts, narrating their personal stories, a fact that had a staggering outcome, since many of them were immigrants or refugees that had been through a lot of ordeals (Kotopoulos & Mavroudis & Balai, 2015). And that was only the beginning of a long tradition of creative literature in the SCS of Diavata; ever since, the literary program has been successfully continued with the participation of both men and women inmates as well as that of the Master's students, along with the engagement of many different poets, writers and artists, that enrich the project with ideas from many different artistic fields.

The most outstanding effect of the project is that it gives the inmates the opportunity to express themselves. Being enclosed in the environment of a prison is a condition that produces a lot of negative feelings. The reaction is mostly linked to depression due to the fact that an enclosed person cannot but be excluded from an ordinary life, separated from the family and the loved ones and also isolated from society (Voutsas, 2019). In addition, the obligatory coexistence in a limited space with a big number of unknown people makes everyday life even harder, leading often to sentimental numbness, boredom, aggression and lack of will (Voutsas, 2019). A creative getaway is, therefore, an excellent counterpoint; and, in the case of the SCS of Diavata, this has been the project of creative writing.

Creative writing has the ability to turn the negative feelings into creation. As a result, it can have a healing effect on the writer.

Creative writing has the ability to turn the negative feelings into creation. As a result, it can have a healing effect on the writer. Writing creatively can give "a symbolic or aesthetical meaning of feelings or ideas instead of just a description of them" (Costa & Viegas Abreu, 2018, 73) which brings the

author closer to the inner self. Taking into consideration that the produced text is addressed to the one that creates it and not to a third party, the emotions are most likely expressed in a spontaneous and sincere manner (Chryssantopoulou, 2014) which can be very relieving. Besides, the fact that the thoughts take a direct form in written right when they are developed in the mind, makes creative writing a very familiar procedure and thus one of the most important therapeutic techniques (Xesfiggi, 2020); that is because "a story in written demonstrates the way in which a person conceives the facts [...] and it is often only through writing that (someone) can express all that is difficult to be said [...] (and so) the created text is going to be the reflection of the writer's personal truth"¹ (Xesfiggi, 2020, 16). And that is exactly what the inmates in a correctional institution need; a chance to be creative and communicate their own life stories, their own personal truths. Such an activity could help in that the scars caused by the life in prison heal.

So, developing to a further extent the initial idea of the literary program in the SCS of Diavata which now focuses specifically on creative writing in imprisonment, the project has already completed ten

Research that has been conducted on the effects of creative writing on the prisoners has shown that participating in such a project has made them escape from the reality of the correctional institution.

years of successful presence. From what it seems, it has a long way to go. Research that has been conducted on the effects of creative writing on the prisoners has shown that participating in such a project has made them escape from the reality of the correctional institution. Apart from helping the partakers better their skills in the Greek language and learn to discuss and collaborate with their fellow inmates (Grompanopoulou, 2021), the creative writing project has also

boosted their self-esteem, has given them sentimental stability and made them reflect on their feelings and redefine their behavior towards them (Balai & Alevriadou, 2018).

But, most importantly, the creative writing project has given them a voice to be heard by the others. Because participating in this project, not only has provided the inmates with the chance to adopt the role of the writer instead of that of the prisoner and to express themselves by producing their own texts where they narrate their ideas, thoughts and personal experiences (preface of the book *Sentimental shades*, 2019), but it has also given them the confidence to share all this with the rest of the outside world: "for the voice of the prisoners to be heard out there, that we are also human beings with feelings as everybody else. Yes. We are not ruthless criminals put here because we are

¹Original Greek text: " Μια ιστορία «στο χαρτί» δεν είναι παρά ο τρόπος με τον οποίο το άτομο αντιλαμβάνεται τα πράγματα [...]. Συχνά, μόνο μέσα από τη γραφή καταφέρνει να εξωτερικεύσει όλα όσα δυσκολεύεται να εκφράσει προφορικά [...]. Το κείμενο που θα δημιουργηθεί θα είναι η αντανάκλαση της δικής του αλήθειας".

not good for society"² (Balai & Alevriadou, 2018, 670). The outcome of the creative writing project every year, starting from 2015 until today, year 2022, is the publication of a compilation of the texts produced in this project. The publication is the result of the collaboration of the SCS of Diavata with the University of Western Macedonia and different Greek publishing houses, which take over the financing of the publication and its presentation in several events. Even though it is not mandatory for any of the participants to publish their texts, they are all very proud of themselves to do so: "It was something very beautiful to me. I did not expect to feel so good. This is the first time that something I have done myself goes public in general, in any field, let alone in writing. I put some of my experiences in these texts, some of my feelings, and it feels nice that someone else reads about them and reflects on them"³ (Balai & Alevriadou, 2018, 669).

The result of the creative writing adventure of the inmates in the SCS of Diavata has led to the publication of six compilations of their texts; *Keys to liberty*, *#Front_page*⁴, *Chance to escape*, *Dreams of getaway*, *Sentimental shades*, *Breaths of writing*⁵, through which the SCS students connect the life in prison with the one they used to have or dream of having away from it. No words could express that better than those of Hektoras, one of the participants:

The lack of the sense of living as a human being makes you long for an everyday life. I dream of sleeping on a normal mattress so that I don't hurt in the morning from the humidity; of waking up by the sound of the alarm clock and not by that of the lock, that the guard opens and then counts us as if we were sheep; [...] in lunch time, of choosing my food and not eating it as a civilized dog in plastic plates and with plastic spoons; in the afternoon, of going for a walk to feel the spring and look at the color that the trees and the flowers take and forget the smell of mold; [...] at night, of going for a night swim and lying on the sea and enjoying the glow of the stars, because I am tired of lying at night and counting the cockroaches. And all these are dreams that I desire and make me a real human being⁶. (Cover page of the book *Dreams of getaway*, 2018)

²Original Greek text: " Για να ακουστεί η φωνή των κρατουμένων προς τα έξω, ότι κι εμείς είμαστε άνθρωποι με συναισθήματα όπως όλοι. Ναι. Δεν είμαστε τίποτα συγνοί εγκληματίες που μας βάλανε εδώ γιατί δεν είμαστε καλοί για την κοινωνία "

³Original Greek text: " Ήταν κάτι πολύ όμορφο για μένα, δεν το περίμενα ότι θα νιώσω τόσο ωραία. Πρώτη φορά εκδίδεται κάτι που το κάνω εγώ γενικά, σε οποιοδήποτε τομέα, άλλο τόσο που είναι στη γραφή. Πέρασα κάποιες εμπειρίες στα κείμενα, κάποια συναισθήματα και μ' άρεσε πολύ που κάποιος άλλος κάθεται και τα διαβάζει αυτά τα πράγματα και τα σκέφτεται "

⁴Word play with the words exterior and page which when they are combined mean front page in Greek. The word play is lost in the translation from Greek to English.

⁵The titles of the books and the following quotes from one of them are all made by the author of this article. None of the books or the texts found in them has been translated to English yet.

⁶Original Greek text: " Η αίσθηση που σου λείπει να ζεις ανθρώπινα, σε κάνει να ποθείς την καθημερινότητα. Ονειρεύομαι να κοιμάμαι σε στρώμα κανονικό για να μην πονάω το πρωί από την υγρασία· να ξυπνάω από το

3. Creative writing activity: Talking and writing about Truth

3.1. Day of the project

In May 2022, on one of the Fridays that are dedicated to the creative writing project, the writer of this article visited the SCS of Diavata to voluntarily participate in the project. As it was arranged beforehand, the creative writing activity of the day would focus on the notion of *truth*. The participants in the class had all attended regularly the creative writing class before and were familiar with the process. However, for them to meet with a new instructor and talk about an idea as strong as the truth is, revealing their thoughts and their feelings to a complete stranger, would not be an easy undertaking and for that it needed a careful handling. In the environment of a correctional institution, it is common to face the incredibility of the inmates. Being enclosed, in their majority, for a long period of time in the limited area of the penitentiary while being deprived of their freedom, it is only normal that they develop a sense of mistrust towards the people that come from the outside world (Kotopoulos & Mavroudis & Balai, 2015).

The first step was to make the initial introduction and to get to know each other before starting to talk about truth. Due to the SCS schedule on that day and the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic had caused some disruption to the typical program, only five of the regular participants (X, A, T, G, K)⁷, who usually reach up to the number of fifteen, were present. From the participants, two were Albanians, two Greek Romani and one Kurd, the four of them between the age of 30-35 and only one at the age of 50. All of them have already served a sentence of between two to ten years, have limited educational background and attend SCS in order to get a high-school degree. The subject of the day made them think that the instructor was a psychologist who was trying to find out truths about them through the activity. That made them a little bit reluctant and suspicious at the beginning. But once it was made clear that the instructor was an educator participating in the project as a student of the Master's in Creative Writing program, they started relaxing, showed a lot of interest in the subject and were willing to engage in a discussion.

ξυπνητήρι και όχι από τον ήχο της κλειδαριάς, που ανοίγει ο φύλακας και μας μετράει σαν πρόβατα [...] το μεσημέρι να διαλέγω εγώ το φαγητό που θα φάω και όχι να τρώω σαν ένας πολιτισμένος σκύλος με πιάτα και πιρουνία πλαστικά· το απόγευμα να βγαίνω βόλτα και να αισθάνομαι την άνοιξη, να δω τι χρώμα παίρνουν τα λουλούδια και να ξεχάσω τη μυρωδιά της μούχλας [...] τα βράδια να πάω για νυχτερινό μπάνιο, να ξαπλώσω πάνω στη θάλασσα και να απολαύσω τη λάμψη των αστεριών, γιατί βαρέθηκα τα βράδια να ξαπλώνω και να μετρώ τις κατσαρίδες. Και όλα αυτά είναι όνειρα, που ποθώ και με κάνουν άνθρωπο αληθινό”.

⁷For the purposes of this paper, the full names of the participants are going to be omitted. The initial letter of each one's name is going to be used instead. It is a policy of the SCS of Diavata that the names of the participants in the projects are fully published for the first time only when the book which comprises their texts is published. The book with the texts of the participants of this project has not been published yet.

3.2. Procedure of the activity

3.2.1. Brainstorming about *Truth*

Since the purpose of the activity was to instigate the reflection of the participants around the notion of *truth*, in order to start a dialogue among them, the first step was to let them express their initial thoughts. The participants were asked to think about how they would define truth and to feel free to express their opinion about truth as they see it. Brainstorming around truth started a vivid conversation. K said that there is no concrete definition because the truth is a multi-dimensional idea. A said that the truth is not only one and it is different for each person. T seemed to agree to that but added that there are some things that could be considered by everyone as universal truths; to support his opinion he gave the example of the sun rising every day. X declared that he cannot say many things about truth because to him everything is a lie; at least this is what his life has taught him. G agreed that there is no truth in this world and that everybody is lying to get what they want because people have lost their values. K then added that this is an exaggeration and that not everything is as negative, that there is still honesty in this world and that we should not generalize and put everyone in the same position. Liars might prevail sometimes, he admitted, but the truth is always revealed in the end.

3.2.2. Images open the way to the idea of *Truth*

The following part of the activity was based on a visual stimulus. The participants were shown three different ambiguous images that provoke optical illusions and as such, can have many interpretations. After looking at each image for a few seconds, the participants were asked to write down, without commending anything, the first idea that came to their mind. In the first image, X said he saw the face of a woman with beautiful lips whereas G saw a bird nest and birds flying towards it; then K added that the woman's face was made of the birds and the nest in the tree and that her lips were actually a bird flying with the wings wide open; A, the poet of the group, confessed that the image made him think of his mother and the warmth that a mother and a family brings.

In the second image wild animals, birds, fish, a tree and the sea were distinguished. T said that the fact that the image had no other colors but black and white gave him the sensation of anxiety and made him think that there are two limits in life, it is either black or white and nothing in between, meaning that if you are lucky, you are on the right side and if you are not, you always have to struggle. A said that the image of the wild makes him think that the world is a jungle and that we all have to struggle to survive because life is not easy. G then commended that even if life is difficult there is space for everyone, this is why in the picture all these different species seem to live together in the same environment in absolute harmony.

The third image provoked an even stronger impact. It was an image filled with many different colors that made K think of paradise; he confessed that this is how he wished his life to be. T saw the nature blossom in springtime while A distinguished a face among the flowers. X then said that the leaves and the branches of the tree in the centre of the image had the shape of a human brain; and G added that all these colors reminded him of his childhood in the village where he grew up and brought him a memory of happy children playing in the fields.

3.2.3. Discussing about *Truth*

So, who is telling the truth? Based on the comments on the images, this question opened the discussion about truth. A said that everybody was telling the truth, it was just that each one sees things in a different way. K agreed and added that this happens because people's minds create different ideas according to the experiences they have encountered in the past and the knowledge they have accumulated over the years.

But how could that be happening when everyone had the same stimulus, hence the same experience simultaneously? Since we all look at the same thing but still see it in a different way, who is telling the truth? And how could that fact relate to the truth? X commented that this is why at the beginning he supported that there is no truth. Because even in the same incident people come up with different ideas and one can never know who is being honest and who is not. At the end, it depends on the moment and the person to choose what and who to believe in each time.

T then argued that even if that is the case, that does not mean that there is no truth. Even if two people have opposite views of the same thing this does not imply that one is lying. It just happens that there are always different points of view and different people express different ones. K then commended that he cannot go along with that idea because to him different points of view distort the truth and make people believe in things that are inaccurate. He gave the example of history books that describe an incident of discordance among two countries, where each of the countries describes the occurrence in a way that favors its own side, while at the same time, outlines the menace that the other one incarnates.

Since we all look at the same thing but still see it in a different way, who is telling the truth? And how could that fact relate to the truth?

X then commended that what is important is not whether the truth is honestly and absolutely said but whether the one that hears it, is willing to believe it. Since the beliefs of each person relate to their personality and their life experiences, the truth is always affected by them. To support his opinion he gave an example of the court and argued that in many cases, the prejudice towards foreigners and law offenders, and even more in the case of those who combine both of these

characteristics, makes justice biased towards them. As a result, they end up being charged with harder charges even when they confess the truth and they have no way of making anybody believe that they are not lying.

K agreed to that and said that sometimes it is better not to tell the truth even if you know it because you might get into trouble. Most importantly, he added, sometimes you could tell a little lie if you know that it will not cause any problems but instead it might make life easier and make someone happy. To lighten up the discussion with a sense of humor, he gave the example of a woman that asks if her dress looks good on her when she is about to go out. In that case, he said, one should always answer yes because the gain will be double; he would make a person happy and also save himself from some nagging afterwards.

This comment then led to the question whether they themselves would like to be told the truth always. If a small lie keeps someone away from trouble, than it should be accepted by everyone since it could make their life easier. X said that he cannot distinguish any more the truth from lies because they have been very mixed in his life, he has been repeatedly deceived and he has believed in the wrong thing or person so many times, that now he is being very cautious and doubts everything he is being told. A then said that this should not make someone embrace the lies because when people get used to lying, they end up losing their humanity. It is his belief that everyone lies at some moment and there is no exception to this truth. But if the lies are of no significance and they do not hurt or lead to any irreversible negative consequences than they are acceptable.

X then spoke up and said that he completely disagrees with that. He confessed that for him it is a big disappointment when he realizes that somebody has lied to him. He added that when this happens he always loses trust in that person and finds it unlikely to regain it, no matter the effort he might put into it. He acknowledged though that he himself does not always tell the truth because sometimes it is easier to lie and also because some people are not worth it. T then interrupted him and argued that no one is perfect but in every case, we cannot ask from people to behave towards us in a way that we do not behave towards them. It is only to expect, he added, that if someone's attitude and habit is to hide the truth, distort it or even present some chosen parts of it, then this is the behavior that he should await from the others too.

3.2.4. Writing about *Truth*

The discussion was really interesting and the participants showed very eager to go on with the subject. The limited time though made it impossible to continue that same day so a promise to meet again in the near future was made by both sides. To conclude on the activity the participants were

asked to write an idea they would take with them from all that was discussed about truth during the project. Their suggestions were expressed as follows⁸:

- Truth hurts and it cannot be easily told because if you tell the truth you end up losing⁹.
- The truth is the face of people¹⁰.
- Truth, a word that, to a large extent, is absent from today's world. People now live mostly in lies to have a better quality of life in many fields, such as their profession or their personal affairs¹¹.
- The smell of a jasmine is the truth.

Forget the lies that are told

Sunrise that is falling in your eyes are the words

It takes courage to express it

I feel happy near it

Priceless ideal

Truth is what each one believes and what one sees for himself¹².

4. Comparing former inmates' writings about Truth

The frustration and the difficulties that the imprisonment represents find their expression in the writings of the inmates. The backgrounds of their ideas and mostly their life experiences have a lot in common (Kotopoulos & Mavroudis & Balai, 2015). It is not thus a surprise that the perceptions of the participants in the project collide with the ones of other inmates that had taken part in a similar project in the past. Once more, the mistrust is evident: "I do not trust anybody because the truth in our days is lost. No matter how hard one might try to be honest, their real self (face) is not

⁸From the participants in this project, only one is a native Greek speaker. The other four come from neighbor countries. As a consequence, they have not developed their writing abilities in the Greek language to an extent that would make them produce large texts. Even so, their participation in the creative writing project is helping them better their skills along with the fact that it gives them a way to self-expression. In addition, the text of one of the participants is lost so it cannot be presented in this paper.

⁹ Original Greek text: " Η αλήθεια πονάει και δεν λέγεται εύκολα γιατί πας χαμένος".

¹⁰ Original Greek text: " Η αλήθεια είναι το πρόσωπο του ανθρώπου".

¹¹ Original Greek text: " Αλήθεια, μια λέξη που λείπει από τον τωρινό κόσμο σε μεγάλο βαθμό. Πλέον ο κόσμος ζει με περισσότερα ψέματα για να έχει καλύτερη ποιοτική ζωή σε πολλούς τομείς, όπως στην επαγγελματική και την προσωπική του ζωή".

¹² Each verse of the poem starts with a letter of the word truth (ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ) in Greek.

" Άρωμα γιασεμιού είναι η αλήθεια

Λήθη στα ψέματα που ειπώθηκαν

Ηλιοβασίλεμα στα μάτια σου οι λέξεις

Θάρρος χρειάζεται για να την ξεστομίσω

Ευτυχία νοιώθω κοντά της

Ιδανικό ανεκτίμητο

Αλήθεια είναι ό,τι πιστεύει ο καθένας και ό,τι βλέπει ο ίδιος "

important. I have lost my trust in everyone and everything"¹³ (Amaya in *Sentimental shades*, 2019, 30)¹⁴. The belief that the lies prevail in life is also constant: "The only truth of my life at this moment is a light that will lead me out of prison. I believe that only then the truth will be evident because until now I only see lies. It hurts a lot, because I am locked in a cell and I am away from the hearts of my people who wait for me to get out of here"¹⁵ (Teresa, p 30).

The existence of a sometimes prejudiced judicial system where truth and lies are mixed is also a frequent issue: "I was convicted to thirteen years in jail. When I went to the court house I told them my truth. They did not believe me and they convicted me. I went to the appellate court after four and a half years, I talked to my lawyer, I told him the truth and instead of making my conviction smaller they added a year to it. Maybe if I had told them lies I would be out of here now"¹⁶ (Maria A, 30). On the other hand, honesty is still a valuable virtue for many: "Truth is the nicest and most important word for me. I like to always tell the truth and be honest. The same thing I expect from the people that I love and who are close to me. I want them to respect me and to tell me at least half of the truth they see in their lives. If they do that, I will always be there for them"¹⁷ (Angie, 31). Hope is also vital for most of the prisoners; because it is the one thing that keeps them going and enduring: "I will write about the truth of my sister Alice. She is doing life in prison and the only hope she has, that is keeping her alive, is her little angel. This little kid is what keeps her in life"¹⁸ (Gardenia, 31).

¹³Original Greek text: " Δεν εμπιστεύομαι κανέναν γιατί η αλήθεια στις μέρες μας έχει χαθεί. Όσο και να προσπαθείς να είσαι ειλικρινής δεν μετράει σήμερα το αληθινό πρόσωπο που βγάζεις. Έχω χάσει την εμπιστοσύνη μου σε όλα και σε όλους".

¹⁴The quotes in this section are all taken from the book *Sentimental shades*. The book has been published and the writers have agreed to the use of their names in it. As mentioned before, it is the policy of the SCS of Diavata to use the full names of the participants in the creative writing project only after the book that includes their texts has been published.

¹⁵Original Greek text: " Η μόνη αλήθεια της ζωής μου αυτήν την στιγμή είναι ένα φως που θα με βγάλει από την φυλακή. Πιστεύω πως μόνο τότε θα φανεί η αλήθεια γιατί προς το παρόν υπάρχει μόνο το ψέμα. Πονάω πολύ, γιατί είμαι κλεισμένη σε ένα κελί και είμαι μακριά από τις δικές μου καρδιές που με περιμένουν να βγω έξω".

¹⁶Original Greek text: " Καταδικάστηκα σε δεκατρία χρόνια φυλακή. Στο δικαστήριο όταν πήγα είπα την δική μου αλήθεια. Δεν με πίστεψαν και η έδρα με καταδίκασε. Πήγα εφετείο μετά από τεσσεράμιση χρόνια, μίλησα με τον δικηγόρο μου, του είπα την αλήθεια και αντί να με κατεβάσουν χρόνια με ανέβασαν έναν χρόνο επιπλέον φυλάκιση. Ίσως αν έλεγα ψέματα μπορεί να έβγαινα από εδώ μέσα".

¹⁷Original Greek text: " Η πιο ωραία και σημαντική λέξη για μένα. Μου αρέσει πάντα να λέω την αλήθεια και να είμαι ειλικρινής. Το ίδιο θέλω και για τους ανθρώπους που αγαπώ και τους έχω κοντά μου. Θέλω να με σέβονται και να μου λένε τουλάχιστον τη μισή αλήθεια που υπάρχει στη ζωή τους. Αν το κάνουν αυτό θα είμαι για πάντα δίπλα τους".

¹⁸Original Greek text: " Θα γράψω για την αλήθεια της αδερφής μου, της Αλίκης. Έφαγε ισόβια και η μόνη ελπίδα που έχει για να συνεχίσει να ζει είναι το αγγελούδι της. Το παιδάκι της είναι αυτό που την κρατάει στη ζωή".

Poetry too can flourish behind the walls of a correctional institution:

What is the truth I wonder?
Does it really exist?
Does the truth hurt?
It brings joy and tears.
This is my truth¹⁹. (Sveti, Angie, 30)

Because there are a lot of «Truths locked in the cells»²⁰:

- My truth is that the others don't believe me.
- My truth is that I am in jail because of my mistakes.
- The truth hurts.
- The truth is that I was selling drugs and I got caught.
- The truth is that I am scared.
- The truth costs one euro.
- The truth is that nobody can feel you in these four walls.
- The truth is that I have two children and I miss them.
- The truth is that I have one brother and I miss him.
- The truth is that I was drinking outside and I was telling lies to people.
- The truth is my mother. (compilation, 80)²¹.

5. Conclusions

What was interesting is the fact that at the end of the activity, when the participants shared their writings among each other, they admitted that thinking and writing about truth made them have second thoughts about the perceptions they had about truth before doing the activity. Creative writing has the ability to provoke that effect. As Kotopoulos & Mavroudis & Balai suggest: "We all have our personal story that influences our perception of the world and of ourselves. But sometimes

¹⁹Original Greek text:

" Τι είναι άραγε η αλήθεια,

Υπάρχει πραγματικά;

Πληγώνει η αλήθεια;

Φέρνει χαρά και δάκρυα.

Αυτή είναι η δική μου αλήθεια "

²⁰ Compilation of the ideas of eleven men and women inmates.

²¹ Original Greek text: " «Αλήθειες κλεισμένες στα κελιά»

-Η δική μου αλήθεια είναι που δεν με πιστεύουν οι άλλοι.

-Η δική μου αλήθεια είναι πως βρίσκομαι στη φυλακή από τα λάθη μου.

-Η αλήθεια πονάει.

-Η αλήθεια είναι πως πουλούσα ναρκωτικά και με πιάσανε.

-Η αλήθεια είναι πως φοβάμαι.

-Η αλήθεια έχει ένα ευρώ.

-Η αλήθεια είναι πως κανείς δεν μπορεί να σε νιώσει μέσα στους τέσσερις τοίχους.

-Η αλήθεια είναι ότι έχω δύο παιδιά και μου λείπουν.

-Η αλήθεια είναι ότι έχω έναν αδερφό και μου λείπει.

-Η αλήθεια είναι που έπινα έξω και έλεγα ψέματα στους άλλους.

-Η αλήθεια είναι η μάνα μου. "

our inner voice is not right. Writing makes us process our stories and reformulate them [...]. Through their writings people realize who they are and where they want to go. Writing is a way of correcting life"²² (2015, 246). So, T said that he will take his time and rethink of what was discussed because as he admitted, he might be exaggerating about truth. X suggested for everyone to reflect and then re-write something about truth to share with the others in a following meeting. K said that the idea of truth being the face of the people made him think of different people he has met and that some of them were really as sincere as they seemed. That brought him a sense of hope, he added.

G said that the experience of life in prison makes people more careful because they constantly need to be mindful of whom they trust but even in that circumstance, he added, one can create honest friendships. A, who was left last to help arrange the class, admitted that he had lied about his identity to the instructor and that he had not even given his real name. The fact that the instructor had no reason why doubting him and believed him, made him think that a lie sometimes can seem to be the truth, but it could also make the liar feel bad when it is addressed to someone how has been honest towards him. To correct his former behavior he then felt the need to share some personal details about himself and his family life outside of the correctional institution. He swore he was now telling the truth!

A sole visit and a limited in time project cannot lead to generalizing conclusions. However, the first impressions of the outcome of the activity collide with the ones of past research that has been done in correctional institutions. The need of the inmates to express their feelings was obvious. Letting aside their initial discomfort in front of a stranger asking them to talk about their truths, the participants quickly got involved in the discussion and shared their ideas and even some personal experiences without hesitating. This proves that their desire to communicate is stronger than their suspicion, especially when they take part in something that connects them with the outside world and makes them forget their imprisonment for a while. For the same reason, they are eager to let their writings and their engagement in the creative writing program be published because it is an escape from their everyday reality and a chance to approach the life that they are being deprived of and are missing.

On the other hand, the power of art once more has proven to be a great stimulus to reveal the thoughts and the feelings of a person. The first part of the activity that was dedicated to the focus on the ambiguous images was in practice very triggering and served as a great starter to talk about a

²²Original Greek text: " Όλοι έχουμε μια προσωπική αφήγηση που διαμορφώνει την άποψή μας για τον κόσμο και τους εαυτούς μας. Αλλά μερικές φορές η εσωτερική φωνή μας δεν έχει το απόλυτο δίκιο. Το γράψιμο μάς υποχρεώνει να επεξεργαστούμε τις ιστορίες μας και να τις επαναδιατυπώσουμε [...] Μέσα από τα γραπτά τους οι άνθρωποι συνειδητοποιούν ποιοι είναι και πού θέλουν να πάνε. Η γραφή είναι μια πορεία διόρθωσης της ζωής".

notion as deep as the truth is. It was impressive how the image of something in appearance irrelevant to the truth could bring all these ideas and interconnections to the conversation. But also writing, which constitutes another form of artistic creation, manifested its power in revealing people's views and ideas and more importantly, showed its ability to make them revise their beliefs. This leads to the suggestion of researching academically and more in depth the connection between creative writing and transformative learning both in the general population in programs of lifelong learning, and in the SCS in the environment of a correctional institution.

The truth is that talking about truth could be an everlasting discussion. Writing about it could be an everlasting task too. Maybe A was right when he said that there are many truths because people see things in a different way. It could be then that the truths are as many as the ones that speak them. But one thing is certain: everyone should be free to express their truth and communicate it to the world. Maybe this would make us see that the truth is that those who spend part of their life in a correctional institution are not that different from the ones that have the chance to live freely away from it.

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How to cite this paper:

Kalouptsi, M. (2022). Creative writing in the Correctional Institution: a Greek example. *Journal of Literary Education*, (6), 50-65. <https://doi.org/10.7203/JLE.6.25543>

Los paratextos del álbum ilustrado: la presencia de la función hermenéutica en los ganadores del Premio Internacional Compostela

Picturebook's paratext: the presence of the hermeneutic function in Compostela International Prize's winners

Els paratextos de l'àlbum il·lustrat: la presència de la funció hermenèutica en els guanyadors del Premi Internacional Compostel·la

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Resumen

Los procesos de interpretación de las narrativas contemporáneas se hallan cada vez más sujetos a la detención de los lectores en sus paratextos. Este cambio es especialmente palpable en el género del álbum ilustrado, cuyos paratextos asumen progresivamente más funciones con diferentes grados de relevancia para su recepción global. Se presenta un estudio analítico y sintético que explora el nivel de impacto de los paratextos en la composición literaria verbovisual de los 14 títulos galardonados con el Premio Internacional Compostela desde su primera edición, proponiendo la categoría hermenéutica como una nueva función. Para ello, se elabora una tabla en la cual se registran las diversas funciones paratextuales reconocidas por la teoría literaria, identificando, por una parte, su presencia o ausencia y, por otra, los matices que diversifican su misión como respaldo interpretativo, más allá del uso ornamental. Los resultados muestran que, si bien es cierto que se observa una clara tendencia a dotar de sentido y relevancia a los paratextos en la composición literaria, aún no se aprovecha todo su potencial narrativo.

Palabras clave: álbum ilustrado, paratextos, función hermenéutica, Premio Internacional Compostela, lectura profunda.

Abstract

The processes of interpretation of contemporary narratives are increasingly subject to the detention of readers in their paratexts. This change is especially tangible in picturebooks, where paratexts progressively assume functions of different degrees, relevant for their narrative's global reception. In this analytic and synthetic study, the level of paratext's impact in the verbal and visual literary composition of the 14 International Compostela Prize's winners is explored, proposing the hermeneutic category as a new function. To do this, a grid was designed, in which the various paratextual functions recognized by Literary Theory are recorded. On one hand, their presence or absence were identified and, on the other, the nuances of interpretive support for the picturebook's narrative, beyond mere decoration, were distinguished. The results show that, although it is true that there is a clear tendency to give meaning to paratexts and relevance in literary composition, their full narrative potential has not yet been exploited.

Key words: picturebook, paratext, hermeneutic function, International Compostela Prize, deep reading.

Resum

Els processos d'interpretació de l'entramat literari de les narratives contemporànies es troben cada vegada més subjectes a la detenció dels lectors en els seus paratextos. Aquest canvi és especialment palpable en el gènere de l'àlbum il·lustrat, en el qual els paratextos assumeixen progressivament més funcions amb diferents graus de rellevància per a la seva recepció global. Es presenta un estudi analític i sintètic que explora el nivell d'impacte dels paratextos en la composició literària verbovisual dels 14 títols guardonats amb el Premi Internacional Compostel·la des de la seva primera edició, proposant la categoria hermenèutica com una nova funció. Per a això, s'elabora una graella, en la qual es registren les diverses funcions paratextuals reconegudes per la teoria literària, identificant, d'una banda, la seva presència o absència i, d'una altra, els matisos que diversifiquen la seva missió com a suport interpretatiu, més enllà de la mera decoració. Els resultats mostren que, si bé és cert que s'observa una clara tendència a dotar de sentit i rellevància els paratextos en la composició literària, encara no s'aprofita tot el seu potencial narratiu.

Paraules clau: àlbum il·lustrat, paratextos, funció hermenèutica, Premi Internacional Compostel·la, lectura profunda.

Extended abstract

In the last decade, several investigations have focused on picturebook's paratextual aspects, which, unlike other genres, are integrated into the narrative and acquire literary relevance. The paratexts, which represent a substantial percentage of picturebooks (Nikolajeva and Scott, 2006), increasingly subvert the formality of the literary contexts conceived by Genette (1989, 2001), assuming notable roles in the plot's development, starting at the cover and finishing at the back cover, going even beyond the last page, complementing and contradicting the narrative (Lambert, 2010).

The general aim of this research is to identify the paratextual typology used in Compostela International Prize's winners, since its first edition in 2008, observing what functions they fulfill and how they do so. To do this, we adapted for picturebooks Gross and Latham's (2017) paratextual functions, found in the Paratextual Literacy Framework (PLF), a tool applicable to a wide variety of non-fiction works with the aim to identify paratexts' functionality and so be useful for readers. We use it to set two specific aims:

1. Introduce the hermeneutic category to paratextual functions to reveal how paratexts are textualized within the narrative of the Compostela International Prize's winner.
2. Understand the hermeneutic use of paratexts in the selected works from an analytical and synthetic point of view.

The analytical approach of Van der Linden (2015) –originally conceived to identify the text-image relationship– is used to scrutinize the text-paratext framework. This analysis is complemented with a

synthetic approach, since the meaning of each paratext and its function can only be grasped from a global reading, which relates them to the main text (Harris, 2005; Martinez, Stier and Falcon, 2016, Sotto Mayor 2016). The previous theoretical supports allowed the design of a grid in which the observed aspects were collected.

As a hermeneutic function we understand the diegetic use of paratexts, which Consejo Pano (2014) calls the textualization of paratexts. Previous studies have identified that paratexts introduce information about the characters, make geographical, landscape and time references or references to the theme, present the common thread, anticipate the end of the story, introduce the tone of the narrative, reveal a turning point or indicate the presence of two narratives (Martinez et al., 2016; Sotto Mayor, 2016). In this way they can create a redundant, complementary or disjunctive relationship with the text, which expands, confirms, complements or contradicts the main text.

We found that paratexts in picture books are important. We witness a high number of unique images that positions them as spaces that are receiving special attention, as being conceived specifically and conscientiously for paratexts. Although, we have only identified hermeneutical paratexts that are redundant or complementary to the text, and none that are disjunctive. This may indicate that, because the disjunctive function implies a high degree of modification on the text, since it contradicts or develops parallel narratives, it is avoided in paratexts, as these can easily be ignored in global reading.

However, the hermeneutic function is identified in all the covers, back covers, endpapers and title pages, concordant to previous research (Consejo Pano, 2011; Duran and Bosch, 2011; Martinez et al., 2016; Mattos, Ferreira Neves and Vianna, 2016; Sipe and Mc Guire, 2006; Sotto Mayor, 2016). Though in our findings the dominance of the complementary use on the back cover stands out, which is especially significant, since it can be assumed that the inclusion of this paratext in the reading is less common, due to the simple fact that the main text ends before the back cover. This would mean the loss of a significant part of the picturebook's content.

Less frequently, typography and editorial credits are used hermeneutically. Although it is not a dominant trend, we see that they are paratexts that authors-illustrators and/or editors-designers take into account. We believe that the editorial credits are a paratext with potential and that their incorporation into the narrative will probably grow in the coming years, consistent with the trend identified in endpapers and title pages, especially given the evidence that their inclusion in the analyzed picturebooks tends to complement the main text, rather than creating redundancy, through intertextual references, significant key objects, or by starting the story.

As for the other paratexts, it should be said that they are still little explored in this award, especially with regard to the use of dust jackets and bands, as well as bar codes, which have only been incorporated into the visual repertoire of two of the analyzed albums, although in none of them with a hermeneutic function. The absence of informative paratexts has also been verified, especially the biographies of the authors, which broaden the horizon of young readers and can contribute to literary interpretation beyond the story itself. Finally, it is worth noting the little presence of navigational paratexts, and we underline the timid incorporation of interactive paratexts. The latter, in the transmedia context of the 21st century, project new narrative possibilities that involve a high commitment of the reader with the picturebook's content, as it is a genre that increasingly demands an active attitude of its readers, who must identify and relate the verbovisual clues throughout the book (text and paratext), interpret them and, above all, validate them. Therefore, an analysis of paratextual readings must contribute to the reader's transaction with the text.

As Genette (2001) said, it is not necessary to know the information of the paratexts, but the readers who integrate it do not read the same way as those who ignore it. Even more in picturebooks, in which the paratexts seem to be unwilling to continue supporting the graphic materiality of their literariness with silent discretion, and prefer to connect with the text assuming a clear hermeneutical function.

1. Introducción

Las destacadas aportaciones de Nikolajeva y Scott (2006) y de Nodelmann (1988) en el campo de la investigación literaria del álbum ilustrado consideran los aspectos materiales (formato, papel, tipografía, etc.) y paratextuales como elementos significativos para la interpretación de las obras. En la última década, diversas investigaciones se han inscrito en esta línea, focalizando en los aspectos paratextuales del álbum, desde un alcance macro (Consejo Pano, 2014; Díaz Armas, 2006; Harris, 2005; Lluch, 2009; Martínez, Stier y Falcon, 2016; Sipe, 2001; Uluğ y Bayraktar, 2014) y también micro: las cubiertas y contracubiertas (Mattos, Ferreira Neves y Vianna, 2016), las sobrecubiertas y fajas (Mattos, 2016; Ramos y Mattos, 2018), las guardas (Consejo Pano, 2011; Duran y Bosch, 2011; Sipe y Mc Guire, 2006), las portadillas (Sotto Mayor, 2016), los códigos de barra (Ramos, 2017), el diseño de los formatos (Ramos, 2016, 2019), la tipografía (Phinney y Colabucci, 2010; Serafini y Clausen, 2012; Timpany et al., 2014), entre otros aspectos que conforman la textualidad del libro y que devienen trascendentales en los álbumes ilustrados porque, a diferencia de otros géneros, se integran en la narrativa y adquieren relevancia literaria.

Los paratextos, con cada vez más frecuencia, subvierten la formalidad de los contextos literarios

Los paratextos representan un porcentaje sustancial de la información verbovisual del álbum ilustrado (Nikolajeva y Scott, 2006), lo cual implica que la investigación en torno al género ha de incidir en la funcionalidad diegética de lo paratextual.

concebidos por Genette (1989, 2001), asumiendo roles notables en el desarrollo de las tramas, desde la portada hasta la contraportada, yendo incluso más allá de la última página, complementando y contradiciendo la narrativa (Lambert, 2010). Los paratextos representan un porcentaje sustancial de la información verbovisual del álbum ilustrado (Nikolajeva y Scott, 2006), lo cual implica que la investigación en torno al género ha de incidir en la funcionalidad diegética de lo paratextual.

La presente investigación tiene como objetivo general identificar la tipología paratextual utilizada en las obras ganadoras del Premio Internacional Compostela, desde su primera edición en 2008 hasta la última publicada en 2021, observando qué funciones cumplen y de qué manera lo hacen. Para ello adaptamos al álbum ilustrado las funciones paratextuales en textos de no-ficción de Gross y Latham (2017), la cual nos permite plantear dos objetivos específicos (OE):

1. Introducir la categoría hermenéutica a las funciones paratextuales para desvelar cómo se textualizan los paratextos dentro de la narrativa de las obras premiadas.
2. Entender el uso hermenéutico de los paratextos en las obras seleccionadas desde una mirada analítica y sintética.

Se utiliza el enfoque analítico de Van der Linden (2015) —concebido originalmente para identificar la relación texto-imagen— para escudriñar el entramado texto-paratexto y también el enfoque sintético, ya que el significado de cada paratexto y su función solo se puede captar desde una lectura global, que los relaciona con el texto principal¹ (Harris, 2005; Martínez et al., 2016, Sotto Mayor, 2016). Los anteriores respaldos teóricos permitieron el diseño de una parrilla en la cual se recogieron los aspectos a observar.

2. La teoría paratextual

Según Genette (2001), el texto literario raramente se presenta de forma *desnuda*, normalmente va acompañado de un cierto número de producciones —verbales y no verbales— que nos lo presentan: nos referimos a los paratextos. Es “un discurso más ‘obligado’ que muchos otros” (17), la materialización gráfica sin la cual un texto no puede existir o, como dice Genette, “un *umbral* o [...] ‘vestíbulo’, que ofrece a quien sea la posibilidad de entrar o retroceder” (7). Para el autor, independientemente de qué pretensiones estéticas o ideológicas tengan, los paratextos siempre están subordinados al texto, y esta funcionalidad determina los rasgos esenciales de su aspecto y de su existencia. Rodríguez-Ferrándiz (2017) considera que actualmente el término *paratexto* sugiere una interesante amalgama entre el centro y la periferia de las narrativas, porque dibuja no solamente una zona de transición entre espacios textuales, sino también un espacio de transacción. Esta nueva concepción, con respeto a los álbumes ilustrados, introduce que la subordinación no debe interpretarse desde la irrelevancia, sino muy por el contrario, desde sus posibles reciprocidades significativas.

Genette diferencia entre los paratextos epitextuales —cualquier elemento paratextual que no está anexo al volumen publicado, como entrevistas al autor o anuncios del libro— y peritextuales —elementos por los cuales un texto se hace libro. No obstante, Gross y Latham (2017) se dan cuenta de que muchos estudios dicen analizar paratextos, cuando en realidad únicamente centran su observación en los peritextos. Siendo conscientes de esta diferencia, este estudio se centrará exclusivamente en los peritextos, aunque nos referimos a ellos con el término *paratextos*, con el fin de no perder el significado del prefijo *para* —‘junto a’, ‘semejante a’, ‘al margen’ o ‘en contra de’ (Real Academia Española, 2014)— más propio de aspectos de función, que el prefijo *peri* —‘alrededor de’ (Real Academia Española, 2014)—, que se limita a aspectos espaciales. Como precisa Rodríguez-Ferrándiz (2017), el prefijo *para* “suggests what is parallel and attached and evokes [...],

¹Como texto principal nos referimos al texto que empieza habitualmente después de la portadilla y acaba antes de los paratextos finales.

what is subsidiary, auxiliary, clandestine, unregulated and even usurping" (170), incidiendo de esta manera en la relación entre paratexto y texto.

Es precisamente por esta razón por la que nos interesa el Marco de Alfabetización Paratextual (PLF, por sus siglas en inglés), una herramienta aplicable a una amplia variedad de obras de no-ficción con el afán de identificar la funcionalidad de los paratextos para una lectura más crítica y reflexiva (Gross y Latham, 2017). Diferencia entre seis funciones paratextuales que exponemos a continuación (tabla 1).

Paratexto	Función	Ejemplos
Promocional	Interfaz entre el texto y su público potencial: comercializa la obra, haciéndola atractiva, proporcionando información que aumentará el interés del lector potencial.	cubierta y contracubierta, fajas, premios concedidos, extractos de notas de prensa
Productivo	Ayuda al lector a identificar un texto, a localizar una determinada obra y/o a diferenciarla de otras similares.	título, nombre del autor, editorial, créditos
Navegativo	Ayuda al lector a comprender cómo se organiza el texto y cómo puede buscar o vehicular el contenido. Es particularmente importante para obras que no están destinadas a ser abordadas de forma lineal, como por ejemplo las obras de consulta.	capítulos, índice, números de página
Documental	Conecta el usuario a fuentes externas utilizadas en la producción de la obra, o que permiten ampliar los contenidos y son de gran ayuda para comprender de dónde proviene la información contenida, para valorar su credibilidad y para revelar datos que fundamentan el punto de vista del autor.	bibliografías, lecturas sugeridas, webgráficas, créditos de imágenes
Intratextual	Tiene un impacto directo en el texto y podría tener funciones interpretativas: propicia la interacción entre el texto y el usuario, transmite los objetivos y el posicionamiento del autor, informa sobre cómo leer el texto facilitando su comprensión.	prólogos, prefacios, epílogos, dedicatorias, agradecimientos
Suplementario	Amplía la comprensión del contenido a partir de material visual.	imágenes, dibujos, mapas, mesas, fotografías, glosarios, líneas de tiempo

Tabla 1. Paratextos del PLF y sus funciones. Elaboración propia a partir de Gross y Latham (2017).

Esta clasificación es simple y útil para acercarse y evaluar también los paratextos de obras literarias. No obstante, para adaptarlo a las idiosincrasias específicas del álbum ilustrado haría falta alguna modificación. El paratexto suplementario, por ejemplo, no tendría sentido para un género en el cual la imagen es considerada parte fundamental del texto. Además, el modelo se centra en la funcionalidad principal de los paratextos, su razón de ser, pero no en cómo son aprovechados como espacios diegéticos, una tendencia en auge en el álbum ilustrado. En consecuencia, no proporciona vías de interpretación de la interrelación entre los diferentes paratextos, cuestión imprescindible en la lectura de un álbum ilustrado (Sotto Mayor, 2016).

La incorporación de los paratextos en la lectura activa establece nuevos caminos en los itinerarios lectores, acercándonos a un modelo de lector correspondiente al de este siglo, que exige la interrelación constante de medios diversos y la búsqueda de significado en cualquier lugar.

Martinez et al. (2016) señalan, por ejemplo, que el significado completo de la cubierta no puede ser desplegado hasta el final de la lectura, cuando podemos determinar si el contenido es una anticipación, un principio, una contradicción o incluso una información esencial que completa la historia, una afirmación que podemos ampliar a todos los paratextos de entrada (guardas delanteras, portadilla y créditos editoriales, si procede). Esta observación señala que hay una relación entre paratextos y texto principal que debe ser identificada por parte del lector.

La propuesta sintética de Harris (2005) focaliza, precisamente, los aspectos hermenéuticos y la capacidad mediadora de los paratextos en su conjunto, es decir, de forma global. Para la autora, los paratextos de los álbumes ilustrados pueden devenir asuntos laberínticos y la relación entre paratexto y texto puede ser discontinua, requiriendo una lectura oscilante para construir el significado global. Además, como afirma Consejo Pano (2011), la incorporación de los paratextos en la lectura activa establece nuevos caminos en los itinerarios lectores, acercándonos a un modelo de lector correspondiente al de este siglo, que exige la interrelación constante de medios diversos y la búsqueda de significado en cualquier lugar. Desde esta función medial, el paratexto deja de estar sujeto al texto para formar parte de él.

2.1. La textualización de los paratextos

Ahora bien, hemos de aclarar cómo un paratexto se convierte en significativo para el relato, es decir, cómo adquiere una función hermenéutica añadida a otras funciones como la promocional, productiva o navegativa. Consejo Pano (2014) denomina este proceso *textualización de los paratextos*.

El estudio de Martínez et al. (2016), que analiza 247 álbumes ilustrados galardonados con el premio Caldecott entre 1938 y 2013, revela que en general no se hacen referencias a la trama en los paratextos, probablemente por no avanzar información desde un buen principio, donde se encuentran la mayoría de paratextos que analizan. Identifican un cambio del contenido entre los libros anteriores a 1980 y los más recientes (de 2000-2013): mientras que antes era habitual reutilizar una imagen del texto, en los casos más recientes se opta por ilustraciones únicas que aportan información adicional para explicar partes importantes de la historia; una tendencia que se asemeja a la introducción de escenas previas antes o durante los créditos de apertura cinematográficos. La información sobre los personajes es la que más destaca en los paratextos, especialmente en las portadillas y sobrecubiertas, y su influencia en la lectura es relevante. Las referencias geográficas, paisajísticas y temporales, más allá de ambientar la historia, pueden contener información para afinar los personajes o crear conflictos, por lo cual introducir esta información en los paratextos de entrada puede aportar claves para interpretar la historia.

Sotto Mayor (2016), en un estudio en torno a 89 títulos (ganadores, menciones especiales y recomendaciones) del Prémio Nacional de Ilustração de Portugal del periodo de 2000 a 2009, determina que solo un 13,5% de las portadillas carece de recursos ilustrativos (una imagen o un fondo colorido), aunque no siempre son significativos para la historia cuando los hay. Los valora como tal cuando presentan un personaje, hacen referencias al tema, presentan el hilo conductor, anticipan el final de la historia, introducen el tono de la narración, revelan un punto de inflexión o indican la presencia de dos narrativas.

Este fenómeno del uso de la ilustración puede identificarse también en las guardas. Nikolajeva y Scott (2006) observan que la mayoría de los álbumes ilustrados utilizan guardas blancas y neutras, y que incluso aprovechan este espacio para plasmar los créditos editoriales o como portadilla. Pasada una década, Consejo Pano (2011) constata que "la mayoría de los álbumes y libros ilustrados contienen guardas impresas con colores, imágenes, símbolos o patrones repetidos que permiten adentrarse en el mundo creado en la obra" (116). Se hallan aquí los primeros brotes del paratexto hermenéutico porque median, con cada vez más frecuencia, significados necesarios para predecir y confirmar interpretaciones sobre los personajes, la trama, la ambientación, el tono de la historia (Sipe y McGuire, 2006), sobre el inicio o el cierre de la narración (Consejo Pano, 2014; Duran y Bosch, 2011), o para solucionar ambigüedades y disonancias creadas por la misma historia (Harris, 2005).

Los paratextos en los álbumes ilustrados se incluyen en la historia y a veces incluso en la narración a través de las ilustraciones. De esta manera, los paratextos crean unas relaciones con el texto principal

La tendencia a textualizar los paratextos fue identificada también, aunque en menor medida, en otros paratextos como las fajas (Mattos, 2016) o los códigos de barras (Ramos, 2017). Sobre estos últimos, domina el afán de esconderlos dentro de la ilustración para reducir su carácter "molesto", aunque existen unas pocas excepciones en las cuales el código comercial se incluye en la narrativa. No existen todavía estudios que observen cómo otros paratextos incluso más específicos, como los créditos editoriales, las citas o las biografías autoriales participan en la textualización del álbum ilustrado.

Los paratextos en los álbumes ilustrados se incluyen en la historia y a veces incluso en la narración a través de las ilustraciones. De esta manera, los paratextos crean unas relaciones con el texto principal, que se podrían resumir con las relaciones que Van der Linden (2015) identifica entre texto e imagen: redundante, cuando el texto principal y paratexto dicen lo mismo; complementaria, relación mutua entre texto principal y paratexto o aportación suplementaria al otro; y disyuntiva, en la cual texto principal y paratexto sostienen un discurso autónomo, contradiciéndose o desarrollando narrativas paralelas.

3. Método

3.1. Diseño del instrumento y recogida de datos

Para identificar en qué paratextos se produce textualización, es decir, una función hermenéutica que contribuya significativamente al desarrollo de la historia y que condicione su recepción, hemos desarrollado una parrilla (ver Anexo 1) que conjunta las funciones paratextuales, basadas en el PLF de Gross y Latham (2017), y la forma de relación (hermenéutica) entre paratexto y texto, basada en las relaciones entre texto e imagen de Van der Linden (2015). El sendero hacia la consecución del OE 1 comporta, pues, armonizar esas funciones a las necesidades específicas de análisis del álbum ilustrado, razón que justifica las siguientes decisiones que mantienen o adaptan las funciones:

- Mantenemos las funciones promocional, productiva y navegativa.
- Ampliamos la función documental, denominándola informacional.
- Transformamos la función intratextual, convirtiéndola en hermenéutica.
- Introducimos las funciones material e interactiva.

Según los autores antes mencionados, la función documental permite al lector comprender de dónde proviene la información recogida en el texto y ampliar los contenidos con fondos exteriores, una

función raramente presente en los álbumes ilustrados. En este género, la información adicional son sobre todo biografías de autor e ilustrador, dedicatorias y agradecimientos, y raramente prólogos o epílogos. Si bien los paratextos documentales están recogidos en el PLF dentro de la función intratextual (que incluye funciones interpretativas), se propone introducir la distinción entre una función informacional y otra hermenéutica, subrayando así la importancia que algunos paratextos tienen para la interpretación del texto principal. Finalmente añadimos las funciones paratextuales material, que revisa el papel, el formato, la forma de encuadernación, la tipografía y las guardas (si procede), y también incluimos la función interactiva que define aquellos paratextos que pueden ser manipulados, usados, activados o incluso modificados por el lector. Nos parece una función de suma relevancia, teniendo en cuenta las nuevas posibilidades que proporcionan las tecnologías digitales y las ingenierías papeleras del siglo XXI, entre ellas, la de producir nuevos formatos manipulables (solapas, acuñados, tiras, pop-ups), añadir herramientas (lupas o gafas) y ofrecer oportunidades de conexión con otros medios (códigos QR).

En el Anexo 1 encontramos la parrilla de recogida de datos. Se observa por separado cada función paratextual y los paratextos respectivos para la consecución del OE 2. Es necesario tener en cuenta que no son excluyentes entre ellas, es decir, en un álbum podrían hallarse más de una función a la vez, e incluso en casos concretos podrían revelarse funciones no esperadas. Las guardas, por ejemplo, devienen a menudo una "zona polivalente" (Consejo Pano, 2014) que es aprovechada por el editor para situar otros paratextos, como los créditos editoriales, la portadilla o la biografía de los artistas (autoría e ilustración). Asimismo, en los casos de encuadernación rústica, las guardas no tienen una función material, no obstante, a veces son mantenidas para no perder la complementariedad narrativa.

En la tabla 2 se expresan los aspectos particulares de los paratextos más frecuentes, los códigos que los abrevian para la recogida de datos y los referentes bibliográficos de donde son extraídos, si procede:

Aspectos paratextuales	Códigos	Fuente teórica
1. Encuadernación	- Cartón [c] - Rústica [r] - Otras [o]	Kunde, 2021
2. Papel	- Mate [m] - Brillante [b] - Otras [o]	Kunde, 2021
3. Guardas	- Lisas o monocromáticas [l] - Estampadas [e] - Ilustradas [i]	Duran y Bosch, 2011
4. Tipografía del texto principal	- Deshonrosa [d] - Honrosa [h] - Realzadora [r] - Expresiva [e]	Phinney y Colabucci, 2010
5. Cubierta, contracubierta, sobrecubierta, créditos editoriales y portadilla	- Idéntica [i] - Única [u]	Martinez et al., 2016; Sotto Mayor, 2016
6. Créditos editoriales y portadilla	- Idéntica [i] - Única [u] - Sin imagen [s]	
7. Lomo	- Con imagen [i] - Sin imagen [s]	Kunde, 2021
8. Código de barras	- Sin manipulación [s] - Incorporado en la ilustración [i] - Modificado [m]	Ramos, 2017

Tabla 2 Aspectos paratextuales analizados.

Respecto al cuarto aspecto, es necesario destacar que se entiende por tipografía honrosa o deshonrosa el nivel de armonía de la fuente alfabética con el contenido y el tono del texto; por tipografía realzadora, la que contribuye de forma activa en la experiencia lectora; y por tipografía expresiva, la que enfatiza elementos específicos y adquiere significado idiosincrático, *per se* (Phinney y Colabucci, 2010). El quinto aspecto observa si la originalidad de los paratextos es nula porque es una simple reproducción de imágenes que ya forman parte del contenido visual del relato troncal (idéntica) o si, por el contrario, corresponde a una imagen nueva, original respecto del resto de ilustraciones que conforman el relato visual (única). En el caso de los créditos editoriales y la portadilla, incluimos la posibilidad de que no haya imagen [s]. En el caso del lomo, solo se analiza si hay o no una imagen y no se tiene en cuenta en el caso de que la imagen sea una extensión de la

cubierta, es decir, cuando el lomo carece de un diseño exclusivo. Finalmente, en cuanto al código de barras, vemos si no se manipula [s], si se incorpora en la ilustración [i] o incluso si se observa modificado *ex profeso* [m] (Ramos, 2017). En estos casos se identifica el tipo concreto con la letra indicada en la primera columna del instrumento (anexo 1).

En cuanto a los paratextos hermenéuticos, diferenciaremos entre la función redundante, complementaria y disyuntiva, incluyendo, además, la categoría inclusiva, haciendo referencia a paratextos en los cuales empieza o acaba la obra, es decir, que son extensiones del texto principal (véase Consejo Pano, 2011; Duran y Bosch, 2011).

De esta manera, la parrilla del Anexo 1 permitirá, en primer lugar, cuantificar las tipologías paratextuales encontradas e identificar qué funciones hermenéuticas vehiculan, y, en segundo lugar, analizarlas de forma cualitativa a través de las observaciones específicas recogidas para cada obra.

3.2. Corpus

Aplicamos este instrumento analítico y sintético a los 14 ganadores del Premio Compostela publicados en la editorial Kalandraka desde su primera edición en 2008, siguiendo las metodologías de Martínez et al. (2016) y Sotto Mayor (2016), los cuales consideran que entre los ganadores de los premios más prestigiosos podemos identificar las tendencias contemporáneas del uso paratextual en el mercado del álbum ilustrado. Este premio tiene gran preponderancia en el círculo editorial de la LIJ por su impacto a nivel nacional e internacional.

4. Resultados

En el Anexo 2 se puede observar el detalle de la codificación llevada a cabo para analizar los 14 libros mencionados. En la parrilla solo constan las categorías que han arrojado datos. Aclaramos que, en cuanto a la tipografía del texto principal, solo hay 12 entradas, puesto que dos de los libros galardonados son álbumes sin texto.

4.1. Paratextos materiales

4.1.1. Formato

El hecho que la medida de los álbumes no sea estándar, podría ser indicio de un uso significativo para la historia. Y a pesar de que en todos los casos es un formato pensado para la expresión adecuada de la obra, solo en el caso de *La última carta* (Papatheodoulou y Samartzi, 2016)² se puede considerar hermenéutico: el libro mide 20x15cm, el tamaño de un sobre grande, imitando así el motivo de la historia. Mientras que el formato es diverso, en todos los casos se opta por la encuadernación

² Solo referimos los libros la primera vez citada.

acartonada, la más habitual en el mercado español. Ni el tipo de encuadernación, ni los paratextos resultantes (como los pliegos o las costuras) son utilizados de forma significativa en las narraciones de los ganadores del premio.

4.1.2. Papel

En cuanto al papel, domina el uso de papel brillante a pesar de que algunos especialistas consideran que el mate es el más adecuado (Uluğ i Bayraktar, 2014), puesto que las impresiones sobre el papel brillante dificultan la lectura visual de detalles y la discriminación de objetos específicos (Nodelman, 1988). No obstante, podemos considerar que la brillantez en tres de las obras analizadas hace énfasis en aspectos de la historia: en el protagonista de *Un gran sueño* (Ugalde, 2009), un cocodrilo que acaba brillando en una constelación estelar del cielo, así como en los personajes claves de *El camino de Olaj* (León Barreto, 2011) y de *Después de la lluvia* (Cerro, 2015), en ambos casos unas luciérnagas que iluminan en la oscuridad. Asimismo, el papel mate utilizado en *La última carta* se asemeja al habitual de las epístolas. *Desde 1880* (Gottuso, 2020), por su parte, es un caso especial en cuanto al uso de papel: mientras que el texto principal es imprimido sobre papel brillante, las guardas lisas de color marrón son de un papel mate y rugoso que traslada al lector a la época del álbum.

4.1.3. Guardas

Observamos, luego, que en todas las obras las guardas tienen una función hermenéutica, confirmando la tendencia a aprovechar este paratexto para transmitir contenido o algún mensaje (Consejo Pano, 2011). Como mínimo son utilizadas de forma redundante para ambientar la historia o hacer énfasis en algún contenido específico. La mitad de las obras analizadas contienen guardas ilustradas que ponen énfasis en algún objeto o personaje significativo como *El camino de Olaj*, o dan inicio a la historia, como en *Ícaro* (Delicado, 2014) y *Selva* (Gibert, 2021).

También encontramos algún caso en el cual la guarda delantera es diferente a la última, lo cual es especialmente significativo en el álbum *Cerca* (Colombo, 2008) porque la ausencia de los protagonistas en las guardas del final abre vías a la interpretación de que la esperanza abierta al final del texto principal en realidad no es más que eso, el deseo de que el pato y el conejo alguna vez lleguen a ser amigos.

Como afirman Martínez et al. (2016) la complementariedad del contenido de los paratextos a menudo no se entiende hasta haber leído toda la obra, como es el caso de *Cándido y los otros* (Pintadera y Inaraja, 2018): el lío confuso expresado a través de garabatos representa la incompreensión del mundo del protagonista. No obstante, es precisamente esta incompreensión del paratexto lo que sitúa al lector en el estado emocional del protagonista.

4.1.4. Tipografía

Respecto a la tipografía, en 5 de los 12 álbumes se hace un uso hermenéutico. La mayoría son paratextos redundantes, que realzan aspectos de la historia, principalmente a través del tamaño de las letras, como en *Un gran sueño* y *La huerta de Simón* (Alejandro, 2017). En cuanto a las tipografías expresivas, podemos ver cómo en el álbum *La familia C* (Bruno y Cabassa, 2010) se utiliza de forma redundante y en el álbum *Cerca* de forma complementaria. En el primer caso, las primeras letras de cada frase tienen un estampado, igual que las letras del título de la cubierta y la portadilla, que introduce un elemento más que hace referencia al circo, el tema del álbum. En el segundo caso, cada letra está escrita en un color diferente, algunas incluyen texturas estampadas que encontramos también en otros paratextos (cubierta, contracubierta, lomo y guardas), así como en el texto principal. Estas barras, leídas en combinación con las guardas, entre las cuales los protagonistas se encuentran, pueden ser interpretadas como las barreras de la sociedad que evitan que personas diferentes puedan relacionarse, dotando al álbum de una crítica social agregada que va más allá del texto principal. Además, el hecho de que el mismo estampado se encuentre reproducido en varios paratextos guía al lector hacia estos espacios significativos y le permite encontrar también otras pistas significativas, como los paraguas en la contracubierta, analizados en el siguiente apartado.

Finalmente, hay que destacar el caso de *Ícaro*, la surrealista historia de un niño cuyos padres se han convertido en pájaros, quien explica su situación a una psicóloga en un hogar de acogida. En este caso, las tipografías marcan el diálogo con la profesional a través de la fuente Sans, y cuando explica su historia, escrita en Serif.

4.2. Paratextos promocionales

4.2.1. Cubierta y contracubierta

Hallamos, como era de esperar, que todas las cubiertas y contracubiertas son hermenéuticas, por ser el paratexto que presenta y vende la historia. Por lo que es más interesante como este paratexto específico se relaciona con el texto principal. Para empezar, no se ha detectado demasiada diferencia entre el uso de imágenes idénticas y únicas, pero sí entre la función redundante y complementaria, sobre todo si miramos la diferencia entre la cubierta y la contracubierta. Es esperable que una imagen idéntica represente simplemente un detalle del texto principal y, por lo tanto, que tenga más posibilidades de ser redundante; mientras que una imagen única, como señala Consejo Pano (2011), merece especial atención, ya que probablemente ofrece nueva información. No obstante, aunque la cubierta y la contracubierta utilicen el mismo número de imágenes idénticas (6/14) y únicas (8/14), domina el uso complementario en la contracubierta (9/14), mientras que en la cubierta hay un claro dominio redundante (10/14). Eso puede ser explicado porque la cubierta, como paratexto de

entrada, se limita a introducir personajes y cronotopos, mientras que la contracubierta, situada al final del texto principal, permite revolver y hacer énfasis al contenido e introducir nuevas reflexiones y vías de lectura.

En *Cerca*, por ejemplo, encontramos dos paraguas de distintos colores en la contracubierta que demuestran, que, aunque parecemos distintos, en el fondo somos iguales, en alegoría a los dos protagonistas de la historia, que realza lo absurdo que resulta que los personajes no lleguen a cultivar una amistad cuando todo está dado para que así sea. En el caso de *La huerta de Simón* encontramos un estampado de zanahorias, enfatizando el objeto clave (también representado en la cubierta y los créditos editoriales) que abre vías alternativas de interpretación. El texto principal narra la historia de Simón, un conejo hurraño, que tiene un huerto grande donde planta zanahorias. Poco a poco, llegan otros animales que se ofrecen a ayudarlo con la cosecha y, simultáneamente, aprovechar el espacio no plantado para cultivar otras hortalizas. Mientras que el texto puede ser interpretado desde la alusión a la importancia de compartir, los paratextos destacan la zanahoria y derivan la atención del lector hasta el final de la historia, donde ya no hay ni una zanahoria plantada en el huerto. De esta manera, el estampado incide en la observación de uno de los otros personajes: “No le habéis dejado espacio para sus zanahorias”, una secuencia narrativa intraicónica que de otra manera podría ser subestimada. Recuerda, así, al lector que, a pesar de que es importante compartir, también lo es respetar. En la contracubierta de *La familia C*, un álbum que representa la vida cotidiana de una familia que disfruta con la magia del circo, encontramos un segundo final: se aprecia una mesa gris, que indica que la familia ha vuelto a su rutina diaria, ya abstraída de la espectacularidad del circo, aunque la experiencia de visitar una representación caló hondo en su vida, un hecho representado a través de unas tazas amontonadas en una torre de equilibrios. En el caso de *Ícaro*, después de que el protagonista se convierta en un pájaro y se vaya volando al final del texto principal, se hace alusión en los paratextos al reencuentro de la familia, concretamente, a través de la reproducción de un detalle visual del texto principal, fútil a primera vista: un reloj de cuco con tres pájaros. La contraportada convierte, así, un contenido que en el texto principal parecía meramente decorativo, en contenido significativo.

4.2.2. Lomos

En cuanto a los lomos, el tercer elemento de la tapa, aunque sea habitualmente el primer paratexto con el que el comprador es confrontado (Lluch, 2009), es raramente incorporado en la narrativa. Evidentemente, es un paratexto limitado en espacio y, por lo tanto, no puede contener una gran densidad visual, aunque la obra *Cerca* demuestra cómo puede ser aprovechado: encontramos las barras ya descritas en relación con la tipografía, tal y como se resalta en otros paratextos y, por lo

tanto, ayudan a focalizar en este elemento de opresión y a obtener nuevos datos para evaluar la situación de los personajes.

4.2.3. Sobrecubiertas (y fajas)

Finalmente, cabe destacar que en el caso del Premio Compostela no es habitual el uso de sobrecubiertas y fajas, aunque, en cuanto a su función hermenéutica, son paratextos ingeniosamente empleados en otros álbumes (véase Mattos, 2016; Ramos y Mattos, 2018). Solo hemos encontrado una sobrecubierta en *La última carta*, la cual tiene forma de sobre y que el lector tiene que abrir para acceder al libro. De esta manera no solo se enfatiza el tema principal del álbum, sino que también sitúa al lector en el contexto del destinatario, implicándolo en la experiencia lectora. Por esta misma razón consideramos que también tiene funciones interactivas.

4.3. Paratextos productivos

4.3.1. Portadillas

En tercer lugar, hemos analizado los paratextos productivos: créditos editoriales, portadillas y códigos de barra. De estos, como era de esperar y confirmando las observaciones de Sotto Mayor (2016), la portadilla es un paratexto frecuentemente utilizado de forma hermenéutica. La gran mayoría de álbumes (10/14) utiliza una imagen única que en 7 de los 10 casos tiene una función complementaria. Hemos identificado que incluso en los casos que no hay imágenes, *Cerca*, *La familia C* y *Desde 1880*, la portadilla tiene función hermenéutica complementaria, ya que el título escrito con tipografías expresivas añade un significado, hace referencia al tema o introduce el cronotopo, respectivamente. Puede ser que esta sea la razón por la cual la persona editora o autora se ha abstenido de añadir una imagen.

La portadilla es, además, un paratexto que frecuentemente tiene que ser leído junto con otros paratextos: en los álbumes *La última carta* y *Selva*, se une en una imagen de doble página con los créditos editoriales, la cual forma parte del texto principal en ambos casos. En los álbumes de *Bandada* (Díaz Garrido y Álvarez Hernández, 2012) y *Después de la lluvia* se relacionan con las guardas. En el primer caso, una crítica social hacia el abuso tecnológico de la humanidad a través de una parodia con pájaros antropomorfizados, encontramos representadas las comodidades que proporcionan los inventos en el paraguas de la portadilla, justo después de una pluma mojada en la guarda. Ahora bien, cuando leemos el texto principal, podemos ver cómo este paraguas aparece precisamente en todas las escenas donde se evidencia una situación de abuso de estos inventos. En el segundo caso, una versión moderna del arca de Noé, vemos cómo en la portadilla se aprecian unas nubes negras, las que llevan al diluvio universal, que emergen de las guardas negras. Además, las guardas lisas representan la oscuridad, en alusión a la incertidumbre y al miedo. También cabe

destacar el uso hermenéutico de la portadilla de *Ícaro*, que representa el final, cuando el protagonista sale volando, aunque esta vez desde el punto de vista de los psicólogos de la historia. Este final avanzado da credibilidad a la historia, que de otra manera parecería inverosímil.

4.3.2. Créditos editoriales

En cuanto a los paratextos productivos, lo que más se destaca es el hecho de que en la mitad de obras los créditos editoriales son utilizados de forma hermenéutica, hecho aún poco estudiado. Antes hemos descrito cómo a través de los créditos y portadillas se introducen escenas del texto principal. También hemos identificado el uso alegórico de imágenes parecido al ya descrito en el apartado 4.2.1. Pero son las referencias intermediales identificadas en dos casos las que demuestran una textualización hasta ahora no identificada. En *Después de la lluvia* encontramos dos palomas, personajes del cuento, que hacen referencia al mito del Arca de Noé. Son un símbolo más de esperanza, complementando, así, el significado de las luciérnagas, descritas en el apartado referente a las guardas, que en esta historia llevan luz a la oscuridad. Las plantas que vemos en la parte baja de la página subrayan esta interpretación, recordando a la rama de olivo que llevó la paloma como prueba en el mito original. Otra referencia intermedial es la del cocodrilo que sale del huevo de *Un gran sueño*, que dialoga simbólicamente con el protagonista de *Cornelius* de Leo Lionni (2019), una obra con un trasfondo axiológico similar que nos cuenta que con esfuerzo y convicción se pueden conseguir cosas increíbles. Consideramos que estas son las funciones intertextuales identificadas a la luz del trabajo de Harris (2005), y que solo hemos identificado en este paratexto.

4.3.3. Códigos de barras

Finalmente, podemos decir que en ningún caso se ha hecho un uso hermenéutico de los códigos de barras. De hecho, solo en dos casos se ha incorporado este paratexto productivo en la imagen, lo cual disminuye el estorbo que puede suponer para los lectores principiantes (Ramos, 2017).

4.4. Paratextos navegativos

Los paratextos navegativos son escasos en los álbumes ilustrados porque, dada su brevedad, no suelen requerir ni índices, ni números de página, aunque hay ejemplos ingeniosos de integración significativa al diseño editorial y también a la narrativa (Kunde, 2021). También entre los ganadores del Premio Compostela constatamos su casi completa ausencia, con excepción de la obra *Ícaro*. Destacamos en esta obra el ingenio literario dividiendo la narración en capítulos: los antecedentes de transformación familiar, la partida del padre, de la madre y finalmente del protagonista, marcan la diferencia entre la narración del niño y la conversación con la psicóloga, la cual también está indicada por el uso de tipografías diferentes, como se ha analizado anteriormente.

4.5. Paratextos informativos

Uno de los paratextos informativos que se suele introducir cada vez con más frecuencia son las biografías de los autores (Kunde, 2021). Sin embargo, en el caso de los ganadores del Premio Compostela, en cuanto a los paratextos informativos solo hemos identificado el uso de dedicatorias o de agradecimientos (6/14). Entre ellos hay tres casos con un uso ingenioso relativo a la historia. Pep Bruno y Mariona Cabassa (2010) dedican el libro *La familia C* a “la familia B” y a “Pol, que siempre me hace reír con sus payasadas”, respectivamente, utilizando de esta manera el título y el contenido en la dedicatoria. Además, estas son escritas en rojo, un color significativo en la obra, en referencia al circo, que encontramos también en otros paratextos, como las guardas. Asimismo, Mariana Ruiz Johnson (2013) dedica su obra *Mama* “a todas las madres del mundo, en especial a la mía, Sally Johnson”, relacionando también el tema con la dedicatoria, universalizando, así, el contenido. Una generalización que también encontramos en el texto principal, donde aparte de la protagonista se ven otras madres. En cuanto a la dedicatoria de *Después de la lluvia*, vemos que es aquí donde se han situado las palomas, hecho que permite interpretar que la familia y Sara, a quien se dedica esta obra, aportan esperanza al autor, especialmente en conjunto con el final de la dedicatoria, la cual dice “sin ellos eso nunca hubiera llegado”.

4.6. Paratextos interactivos

Finalmente, por lo que respecta a los paratextos interactivos, se observan algunos artefactos o ingenierías papeleras extraíbles que permiten un uso fuera del texto. Encontramos en *Un gran sueño* estrellas fosforescentes, en *Bandada* un póster y en *Después de la lluvia* una lámina que permite construir un títere del protagonista. Mientras que el póster es meramente decorativo y requiere un bajo grado de interacción, en los otros dos encontramos la posibilidad de que el lector profundice en la narración a través de estos extras de forma más activa: las estrellas le permiten diseñar su propio sueño, y el títere reproducir y ampliar la historia leída. También es necesario destacar cómo la sobrecubierta de *La última carta* implica al lector en la experiencia lectora, como ya se ha hecho notar.

5. Conclusiones

Los paratextos en los álbumes ilustrados son relevantes. Asistimos a un elevado número de imágenes únicas que los posicionan como espacios que están recibiendo especial atención porque se cuidan y se organizan cada vez más concienzudamente. Sea responsabilidad del editor, el diseñador, el ilustrador, o de los tres, su incorporación al texto principal desempeña una función significativa creciente que es cada vez menos extraliteraria y decorativa, dando lugar a aportaciones hermenéuticas exclusivas.

En primer lugar, hay que decir que únicamente hemos identificado paratextos hermenéuticos redundantes o complementarios con el texto, y ninguno disyuntivo. Por un lado, eso no es de extrañar, ya que también es la función menos habitual entre texto e imagen. Por el otro, esta constatación se puede interpretar por el hecho de que la función disyuntiva implica un alto grado de modificación sobre el texto, ya que él contradice o desarrolla narrativas paralelas, una información significativa que puede ser obviada fácilmente en un espacio aún no considerado texto por muchos lectores.

Los paratextos en los álbumes ilustrados son relevantes. Asistimos a un elevado número de imágenes únicas que los posicionan como espacios que están recibiendo especial atención porque se cuidan y se organizan cada vez más concienzudamente.

En segundo lugar, hemos podido destacar que en las obras ganadoras del Premio Compostela hay paratextos que se utilizan más que otros como espacio para ampliar la narración. No es nada sorprendente que en los 14 casos se utilice la cubierta y la contracubierta como paratexto hermenéutico, teniendo en cuenta que es el principal recurso comercial del libro y, por lo tanto, tiene que atraer y generar expectativas sobre la narración. Sin embargo, destaca el dominio del uso complementario de la contracubierta, lo cual es especialmente significativo, ya que se puede suponer que la inclusión de este paratexto en la lectura es menos habitual, por el simple hecho de que el texto principal acaba antes de llegar, lo que hará perder una parte significativa del contenido del álbum. Asimismo, hemos identificado la función hermenéutica en todas las guardas y portadillas, concordando con las investigaciones que se han hecho sobre estos paratextos (Consejo Pano, 2011; Duran y Bosch, 2011; Sipe y Mc Guire, 2006; Sotto Mayor, 2016).

De forma menos frecuente, se utilizan hermenéuticamente la tipografía y los créditos editoriales, que a menudo coinciden en la página con las dedicatorias y agradecimientos. Aunque no es una tendencia dominante, vemos que son paratextos que autores-ilustradores y/o editores-diseñadores tienen en cuenta. Consideramos que los créditos editoriales son un paratexto con potencial y que su incorporación en la narrativa probablemente crecerá en los próximos años, concordando con la tendencia identificada en las guardas y portadillas, especialmente ante la evidencia de que su inclusión en los álbumes analizados tiende a complementar el texto principal, más que crear una redundancia, a través de referencias intertextuales, objetos clave significativos o iniciando el relato. Es un paratexto aún poco estudiado y que probablemente contiene sorpresas diegéticas ingeniosas, que podemos destapar con futuros análisis de otras obras.

En cuanto a los otros paratextos, cabe decir que en los títulos de este premio aún son poco explorados, especialmente en lo que refiere al uso de sobrecubiertas y fajas, así como los códigos de

barra, que solo se han incorporado en el repertorio visual de dos de los álbumes analizados, aunque en ninguno de ellos se le otorga una misión significativa.

Los paratextos abren una dimensión lectora que permite ampliar, confirmar, complementar o contradecir el texto principal y, por lo tanto, son un elemento en el que merece la pena profundizar.

También se ha constatado la ausencia de paratextos informativos, especialmente las biografías de los autores, que amplían el horizonte de los jóvenes lectores y pueden contribuir a la interpretación literaria más allá del mismo relato. Finalmente, cabe destacar la poca presencia de paratextos navegativos y subrayamos la tímida incorporación de paratextos interactivos. Estos últimos, en el contexto transmedia del siglo XXI, proyectan nuevas posibilidades

narrativas que comportan un elevado compromiso del lector con el contenido del álbum, un género que, con cada vez más frecuencia, reclama una actitud activa por parte de sus lectores: estos deben identificar y relacionar las pistas verbovisuales a lo largo del libro (texto y paratexto), interpretarlas y, sobre todo, validarlas. Por ello, un análisis de las lecturas paratextuales ha de entender y contribuir a la transacción del lector con el texto. Como puntualizan Gross y Latham (2017), atender el paratexto puede ayudar a profundizar en la historia y ayudar a los lectores a sumergirse en ella. El desconocimiento de las funciones y utilidades de los paratextos, como señalan los autores, priva a los lectores de la oportunidad de valorar de forma crítica el texto de forma holística.

En definitiva, los paratextos abren una dimensión lectora que permite ampliar, confirmar, complementar o contradecir el texto principal y, por lo tanto, son un elemento en el que merece la pena profundizar. Como decía Genette (2001), no es necesario conocer la información de los paratextos, pero los lectores que la integran no leen igual que los que la ignoran. Esta observación es todavía más relevante en el género del álbum ilustrado, en el cual los paratextos se han rebelado y parecen no estar dispuestos a seguir sosteniendo la materialidad gráfica de su literariedad con silente discreción, sino conectándose con el texto con una clara función hermenéutica.

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How to cite this paper:

Kunde, K.; Arenas-Delgado, C. & Masgrau-Juanola, M., (2022). Los paratextos del álbum ilustrado: la presencia de la función hermenéutica en los ganadores del Premio Internacional Compostela. *Journal of Literary Education*, (6), 69-90.
<https://doi.org/10.7203/JLE.6.25357>

7. Anexos

Anexo 1) Parrilla de observación

	Paratexto hermenéutico				Observaciones
	redundante	complementario	disyuntivo	inclusivo	
Paratextos materiales					
Formato (medidas en cm)					
Encuadernación (cartoné [C]; rústica [R]; otros [A])					
Papel (mate [M]; brillante [B]; otros [A])					
Guardas (lisas [L]; estampadas [E]; ilustradas [I])					
Tipografía (deshonrosa [D]; honrosa [H]; realizadora [R]; expresiva [E])					
Paratextos promocionales					
cubierta (imagen idéntica [I], imagen única [U])					
contracubierta (imagen idéntica [I], imagen única [U])					
lomo (con imagen [I], sin imagen [S])					
sobrecubierta (imagen idéntica [I], imagen única [U])					
fajas					
Paratextos productivos					
Créditos editoriales (sin imagen [s], imagen idéntica [I], imagen única [U])					
Portadilla (sin imagen [s], imagen idéntica [I], imagen única [U])					
ISBN (sin manipulación [S], incorporado [I], modificado [M])					
Paratextos navegativos					
Índice					
Capítulos					
Número de página					
Otros					
Paratextos informativos					
Prólogo					
Epílogo					
Notas informativas					
Biografías					
Dedicatorias y agradecimientos					
Citas					
Premios					
Otros					
Paratextos interactivos					
Ingenierías papeleras (solapas, tiras, troqueles, pop-ups...)					
Artefactos					
Elementos personalizadores					
Elementos jugueteados					
Enlaces externos					
Otros					

Anexo 2) Resultados

	Paratexto hermenéutico				Total	
	redundante	complementario	disyuntivo	inclusivo		
Paratextos materiales						
Formato (medidas en cm)		1	0	0	0	1
Encuadernación cartoné [C]	14	0	0	0	0	0
Encuadernación rústica [R]	0	0	0	0	0	
Papel mate [M]	4	1	0	0	0	4
Papel brillante [B]	10	3	0	0	0	
Guardas lisas [L]	4	4	0	0	0	14
Guardas estampadas [E]	3	1	2	0	0	
Guardas ilustradas [I]	7	1	6	0	2	
Tipografía deshonrosa [D]	0	0	0	0	0	5
Tipografía honrosa [H]	8	1	0	0	0	
Tipografía realzadora [R]	2	2	0	0	0	
Tipografía expresiva [E]	2	1	1	0	0	
Paratextos promocionales						
Cubierta imagen idéntica [I]	6	5	1	0	0	14
Cubierta imagen única [U]	8	5	3	0	2	
Contracubierta imagen idéntica [I]	6	2	4	0	1	14
Contracubierta imagen única [U]	8	3	5	0	1	
Lomo con imagen [I]	1	0	1	0	0	1
Lomo sin imagen [S]	13	0	0	0	0	
Sobrecubierta	1	1	0	0	1	1
Fajas	0	0	0	0	0	0
Premios	14	0	0	0	0	0
Paratextos productivos						
Créditos editoriales sin imagen [S]	7	0	0	0	0	7
Créditos editoriales imagen idéntica [I]	2	1	1	0	0	
Créditos editoriales imagen única [U]	5	2	3	0	2	
Portadilla sin imagen [S]	3	2	1	0	0	14
Portadilla imagen idéntica [I]	1	1	0	0	0	
Portadilla imagen única [U]	10	3	7	0	2	
ISBN sin manipulación [S]	12	0	0	0	0	0
ISBN incorporado [I]	2	0	0	0	0	
ISBN modificado [M]	0	0	0	0	0	
Paratextos navegativos						
Capítulos	1	0	0	0	0	0
Paratextos informativos						
Dedicatorias y agradecimientos	6	2	1	0	0	3
Paratextos interactivos						
Ingenierías papeleras	3	1	1	0	1	2
Artefactos	1	0	1	0	0	1

Influenze digitali sull'albo illustrato: metamorfosi artistiche e sfide di "iper-lettura"

Digital influences on picturebook: artistic metamorphosis and "hyper-reading" challenges

Influencias digitales en los álbumes ilustrados: metamorfosis artísticas y desafíos de "hiperlectura"

Influències digitals als àlbums il·lustrats: metamorfosis artístiques i desafiaments d'"hiperlectura"

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Sommario

L'influenza "di ritorno" dei linguaggi elettronici e digitali sulla letteratura per l'infanzia rappresenta uno degli aspetti più interessanti delle produzioni artistico letterarie degli ultimi decenni. Segni del cambiamento profondo e irrevocabile avvenuto nella letteratura per l'infanzia e nell'ecosistema da leggere dell'età elettronica sono particolari albi illustrati, che rispecchiano come anche il libro stampato abbia attinto dalle strutture multilineari del digitale e dai codici espressivi degli schermi. Nel quadro di questa mutazione culturale, il presente contributo esplora due albi illustrati rappresentativi della mutazione e integrazione tecnologico mediatica, che, da un lato, mantengono la stabilità della lettura su un tradizionale libro stampato, dall'altro, contengono le sfide mentali e visive di un'esperienza di "iper lettura".

Parole chiave: letteratura per l'infanzia, strutture multilineari, albi illustrati illustrati postmoderni, tecnologie elettroniche e digitali, "iper lettura".

Abstract

The influence of electronic and digital codes on children's literature represents one of the most interesting aspects of the artistic and literary productions of the last decades. Signs of the profound and irrevocable change that has taken place in children's literature and in the ecosystem to be read of the electronic age are particular picturebooks, which reflect how even the printed book has drawn from the multilinear structures of the digital and from the expressive codes of the screens. In the context of this cultural mutation, the present contribution explores two picturebooks representative of the media technology mutation and integration, which, on the one hand, maintain the stability of reading on a traditional printed book, on the other, they contain the mental and visual challenges of a "hyper-reading" experience.

Key words: children's literature, multilinear structures, postmodern picturebooks, digital technologies, hyper-reading.

Resumen

La influencia de los lenguajes electrónicos y digitales en la literatura infantil representa uno de los aspectos más interesantes de las producciones artístico-literarias de las últimas décadas. Signos del cambio profundo e irrevocable que se ha producido en la literatura infantil y en el ecosistema de lectura de la era electrónica son particulares álbumes ilustrados, que reflejan cómo incluso el libro impreso se ha nutrido de las estructuras multilineales de lo digital y de los códigos expresivos de las pantallas. En el contexto de esta mutación cultural, la presente contribución explora dos álbumes ilustrados representativos de la mutación e integración tecnológica-mediática, que, por un lado, mantienen la estabilidad de la lectura de un tradicional libro impreso, por el otro, contienen los desafíos mentales y visuales de una experiencia de "hiperlectura".

Palabras clave: literatura infantil, estructuras multilineales, álbumes postmodernos, tecnología electrónica y digital, hiperlectura.

Resum

La influència dels llenguatges electrònics i digitals en la literatura infantil representa un dels aspectes més interessants de les produccions artística-literàries de les darreres dècades. Signes del canvi profund i irrevocable que s'ha produït a la literatura infantil i a l'ecosistema de lectura de l'era electrònica són particulars àlbums il·lustrats, que reflecteixen com fins i tot el llibre imprès s'ha nodrit de les estructures multilineals del digital i dels codis expressius de les pantalles. En el context d'aquesta mutació cultural, aquesta contribució explora dos àlbums il·lustrats representatius de la mutació i la integració tecnològica-mediàtica, que, d'una banda, mantenen l'estabilitat de la lectura d'un tradicional llibre imprès, de l'altra, contenen els desafiaments mentals i visuals d'una experiència d'hiperlectura.

Paraules clau: literatura infantil, estructures multilineals, àlbums postmoderns, tecnologia electrònica i digital, hiperlectura.

Extended abstract

Starting from the 1990s, the influence of the transformative wave of the digital on children's literature is manifested in new artistic-literary forms which, although on printed pages, reflect the aesthetics of new media and the profound differences between the technological context of the past and the contemporary one. If, until then, children's literature has been predominantly linear, basically illustrated only for younger children and with narrow margins of interactivity predefined by the author, the breakthrough of new technologies gives rise to non-sequential structures, which they abound with illustrations even in the proposals aimed at adolescent readers and which present metafictional characteristics with which they also reinterpret traditional stories of children's literature. Catalysts of these technological and cultural changes are picturebooks defined as postmodern, media that are based on an expressive interdependence between words and iconic-visual modes, which also electronic and digital technologies have always preferred. The importance of images in contemporary technological environments would have contributed to the growing acceptance of purely or predominantly visual narratives, with great advantage for the picturebook as medium.

In the context of the mutation between media and in the wider relationship between postmodern and digital, this contribution aims to explore two picturebooks that are particularly representative of the mutations of recent decades: *Black and White* (1990) and *The Three Pigs* (2001), respectively, by David Macaulay and David Wiesner. Both of these authors dealt in an original way with the profound media transformations, expressing their influence on contemporary arts and literature. Both of these picturebooks have achieved great success with young audiences, following which they were awarded the Caldecott medal. A member of the Caldecott committee who in 1991 has selected David Macaulay's creative enterprise has pointed out that the linear, sequential experience of reading, oriented exclusively on the printed page, was no longer the only way to approach the cultural universe of reading, nor the predominant one and how,

however, it was not yet so clear that the change was also extending beyond the network of digital connections. The illustrated book *Black and White* (Macaulay, 1990) represents the prototype of this new type of printed text, which demonstrates how even the book has drawn on hypertextual and hypermedia structures, becoming itself a hypermedia. From the very beginning of *Black and White* (Macaulay, 1990) *e*, the reader is made aware of the need to interact deeply with the text, urged to carefully read both verbal and iconic modes of expression, challenged to understand how many stories actually exist in this picturebook.

In the picturebook *The three pigs* (2001), David Wiesner has chosen to rewrite a universally known children's fairy tale, disregarding the reader's expectations with unexpected deviations from the original story. To the three little pigs, Wiesner gives a physicality, an imaginative capacity and an original plot, based on a new narrative level that is added, in particular, when the first pig voluntarily leaves the traditional story and begins to imagine another, followed by the second and the third pig. As in a *trompe d'oeil*, the three protagonists acquire three-dimensionality every time they leave the story and move away from the spatial confines of the sheet to start new adventures, far from the jaws of the wolf. Wiesner thus launches the challenge to the other media: the picturebook is a format that is only apparently rigid, which in reality has shown itself capable of reinterpreting and sophisticated on the blank page multilinear structures and expressive codes outside the box. Furthermore, the illustrations on its pages, unlike an image on a screen, do not fly in the blink of an eye (Wiesner, 2002).

Integrative synthesis between linearity and multilinearity, between printed tradition and narrative formulas typical of electronic and digital media of hypertext and their codes, the picturebooks explored have reflected and reflect a new way of imagining and representing art and culture, which invests young readers and the reading. Crossing the boundaries of both print and digital media, picturebooks as those considered combine the advantages of the stability of the printed environment with the mental challenge of a non-linear experience, which places the reader in front of a plurality of narrative lines, in the course of which a greater commitment is required in terms of choices and recomposition of the textual plot. The multilinearity of their plots, the multiplicity of stories and points of view, the textual fragmentation, and an unprecedented metatextual analysis orient towards a reading experience which –not surprisingly – has been defined as a journey into the ecosystem of the current storytelling.

1. Introduzione

Children's books changing with the culture around them (Goldstone, 2001)

A partire dagli anni Novanta del Novecento, l'influenza dell'ondata trasformativa del digitale sulla letteratura per l'infanzia si manifesta in nuove forme artistico-letterarie che, sebbene su pagine stampate, riflettono le estetiche dei nuovi media e le profonde differenze tra il contesto tecnologico del passato e quello contemporaneo (Burnett, 1993; Dresang, 1997; Burnett & Dresang, 1999; Dresang, 1999; Goldstone, 2001):

The characteristics of the digital environment have evolved in another communication mode—that of literature for youth, which traditionally has been considered sequential (“what comes next” clearly and directly related to what comes before), linear (a step by step “one way only” progression), graphic only for the very young, and with narrow parameters for interactivity prescribed by the author of the text.

Digitized media often, but not always, are associated with what is known as hypermedia, a term which, in turn, was preceded by a concept known as hypertext. (Dresang, 1997, p. 645)

Se, fino ad allora, la letteratura per l'infanzia è stata prevalentemente *lineare*, illustrata tendenzialmente solo per i bambini più piccoli e con ristretti margini di interattività predefiniti dall'autore, l'irrompere delle nuove tecnologie dà luogo a strutture *non sequenziali*, che abbondano di illustrazioni anche nelle proposte rivolte a lettori preadolescenti e adolescenti (Burnett, 1993) e che presentano caratteristiche metafinzionali con cui reinterpretano anche racconti classici (Pantaleo, 2004; Silva-Díaz, 2005a, 2005b; Ramos, 2020; Ramos & Navas, 2021)¹.

¹ A partire dalle specificità che distinguono stampa e digitale, si intende porre in risalto il modo in cui le caratteristiche delle tecnologie digitali e, più in generale, elettroniche, si sono riflesse sulla letteratura per l'infanzia e, soprattutto, come vedremo, sulle strutture di alcuni albi illustrati definiti postmoderni. Gli albi illustrati sono stati (e continuano a essere) vere e proprie officine sperimentali: si pensi – solo per fare un esempio fra i più eclatanti e noti – all'albo *Where the wild things are* di Maurice Sendak, e a come esso, negli anni Sessanta del Novecento, abbia scardinato i confini della pagina, il modo di illustrare ma, soprattutto, lo sguardo sull'infanzia. Al contempo, è da notare anche come l'albo di Sendak sia il classico esempio di capolavoro che è stato riconosciuto tale solo grazie al successo ottenuto presso i bambini. Pubblicato nel 1963, *Where the Wild Things Are* inizialmente suscitò un'enorme diffidenza, tanto che, quando, l'anno successivo, l'autore ottenne la medaglia Caldecott, usò il discorso di accettazione come manifesto per sostenere una maggiore libertà di parola nei libri per bambini. Questo, a ulteriore conferma di una prevalente considerazione della letteratura per l'infanzia da prospettive tutt'altro che prossime a quelle dei più giovani e tutt'altro che disposte a concedere spazi a temi considerati tabù, così come a strutture –per così dire– divergenti. Un discorso di questo genere può essere fatto anche con riferimento all'albo illustrato *Black and White* (1990), di David Macaulay, non ancora tradotto in italiano, a cui, molti anni dopo, è toccata la stessa sorte, come vedremo più avanti nel paragrafo

A fare da catalizzatori dei cambiamenti tecnologici e culturali sono albi illustrati definiti *postmodern* (Goldstone & Labbo, 2004; Weinkauff, 2006; Pantaleo, 2007; Dresang, 2010; Sipe & Pantaleo, 2008; Van Meerbergen, 2016; Ramos, 2020; Vouillamoz, 2022)²:

Historically, children's literature has reflected societal values, attitudes, and knowledge. (...)

Various conceptual and theoretical framework have been proposed to explain the changes evident in contemporary children's literature. (...)

Postmodernism is often used as a general term to describe the changes, tendencies and/or developments that have occurred in philosophy, literature, art, architecture, and music during the last half of the twentieth century. (...) Writing specifically about literature, Watson described postmodernism as "more of an extension of modernism than a reaction against it" (Sipe & Pantaleo, 2008, p. 1).

Circa la connessione degli albi con i più ampi sviluppi culturali e sociali, connessione contenuta nel termine "postmodern", David Lewis (2001) ha osservato: "This shift (...) to postmodernism is important for a number of reasons. It not only introduces a technical vocabulary into the discussion but explicitly connects picturebooks with larger social and cultural developments" (p. 87).

Caratteristica dei *postmodern picturebooks* – come *subgenre* di albi illustrati (Goldstone & Labbo, 2004) – è quella di essere testi che poggiano su un'interdipendenza espressiva fra parole e modalità iconico-visiva, alla quale anche le tecnologie elettroniche e digitali, da sempre, si rivolgono in via privilegiata. Eve Bearne (2009), autorevole studiosa di letteratura per l'infanzia e lettura, fa notare che:

destinato alla sua esplorazione. Per approfondimenti sul taglio specifico di questo tema, cfr. Carioli (in fase di stampa).

² Ampliando la specifica prospettiva qui adottata, è il caso di ricordare che l'interesse intorno ai *postmodern picturebook* è dimostrato da una vasta letteratura internazionale, non solo di matrice statunitense. Pur con la consapevolezza dell'impossibilità di menzionare l'intera mole degli studi che hanno posto al centro gli albi illustrati postmoderni, per una panoramica non esaustiva sono qui di seguito inseriti alcuni fra i più importanti riferimenti: cfr. Grieve (1993), Watson (2004), Sipe & McGuire (2006a & 2006b), Dresang & Bowie (2009), and Pantaleo (2009 & 2014). Per gli studi di matrice australiana, cfr. Anstey & Bull (2000 & 2004), Allan (2015). Sulla tendenza postmoderna negli albi illustrati fantasy coreani nel primo decennio del duemila, si veda Kim (2009). Fra gli studi di ambito cinese, Wu (2014). Nell'ambito degli studi europei, le caratteristiche postmoderne sono state riconosciute anche recentemente tra le tendenze più significative presenti negli albi illustrati del nuovo millennio (cfr. Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2015); al contesto postmoderno –«neutral, broad and international»– alcuni studi hanno ricondotto le allusioni artistiche di molti albi Fiamminghi contemporanei, insieme al gioco, alla parodia, all'intertestualità, che li rendono "campi da gioco semiotici", in cui i lettori sono coinvolti in modalità ancor più (inter)attive (cfr. Van Meerbergen (2012)). In Italia, la ricerca di ambito pedagogico sugli albi illustrati e sugli *wordless picturebook*, chiamati anche *silent book*, ha affrontato solo marginalmente i riflessi postmoderni, mentre, praticamente assente risulta la prospettiva di analisi che osserva e analizza le influenze delle tecnologie digitali ed elettroniche sull'albo illustrato stampato. Tra gli studi italiani più importanti che hanno fatto da apripista all'esplorazione e all'interesse nei confronti degli albi illustrati, cfr. Hamelin Associazione Culturale (2012), Terrusi (2012 & 2017).

Sebbene l'ubiquità dello schermo non possa essere sottovalutata, il dominio dello screen tende tuttavia a oscurare il fatto che molti testi multimodali non sono digitali. Fra questi, gli albi illustrati cosiddetti "postmoderni" (postmodern picturebook), riconosciuti (...) come genere particolarmente utile per dar vita a nuove forme di lettura «nel variegato e complesso panorama testuale di oggi». (Carioli, 2018, p. 53).

Proprio l'importanza delle immagini negli ambienti tecnologici contemporanei avrebbe contribuito alla crescente accettazione di narrazioni prettamente o prevalentemente visive, con grande vantaggio per il genere³ albo illustrato: quando gli effetti della postmodernità si sono trasferiti nel campo della letteratura per l'infanzia e l'adolescenza, l'albo illustrato sarebbe diventato il medium postmoderno per eccellenza, il principale campo di espressione delle innovazioni postmoderne, che ne avrebbe favorito il consolidamento⁴ (Weinkauff, 2006; Vouillamoz, 2022).

Nel quadro della mutazione fra media e in quello del più ampio rapporto tra postmoderno e digitale (Balbi & Magaudo, 2014), il presente contributo esplora due albi particolarmente rappresentativi delle mutazioni degli ultimi decenni⁵: *Black and White* (1990) e *The Three Pigs* (2001), rispettivamente, di David Macaulay e del suo allievo David Wiesner⁶, esempi di una nuova generazione di autori che

³ Pur non essendo oggetto di specifica trattazione all'interno di questo breve contributo, vale la pena di sottolineare come, sulla definizione di albo illustrato, la letteratura scientifica sia tutt'altro che concorde. A dimostrazione di quanto appena affermato, talvolta lo si trova definito come "genre", ad esempio: "The picture-book genre is a paradox. On the one hand it is seen as children's literature's one truly original contribution to literature in general" (Nodelman, 1998, p. 69); talaltra come "medium", ad esempio Nikolajeva (2002); altre volte come forma che incorpora generi e modalità espressive, sintetizzando la definizione di David Lewis (2001): "We can therefore say that whatever else it is, the picturebook is not a genre, despite the fact that it is frequently referred to as such. Rather than confining itself to exploring the byways of any one particular type of text, verbal or pictorial, it exploits genres. Nor is the picturebook a format, a template that can be dropped over any suitable material, providing it with new clothes in the form of illustrations. If this were the case then all picturebooks would look more or less the same and behave in more or less the same way. What we find in the picturebook is a form that incorporates, or ingests, genres, forms of language and forms of illustration, then accommodates itself to what it has swallowed, taking on something of the character of the ingested matter, but always inflected through the interanimation of the words and pictures. The immediate result of this ability to ingest and incorporate pre-existent genres is that already existing forms are represented –that is, re-presented– and in the process re-made" (p. 65). Pertanto, la scelta adottata nel presente contributo è stata quella di lasciare il termine utilizzato dagli autori via citati.

⁴ Anche in Italia, "lo scaffale dei picture book si è formato ed è entrato nella percezione generale" (Negrin, 2015) negli ultimi due decenni: "esistevano già prima picture book fatti in Italia (...), ma i picture book che si cominciarono a fare nel nuovo millennio erano in qualche modo diversi, più consapevoli di se stessi come medium" (Negrin, 2015).

⁵ Ulteriori esempi di albi illustrati postmoderni con strutture narrative non lineari sono: *Voci nel parco* (Browne, 1998/2017); *The Viewer* (Crew & Tan, 1997/2022); *Messaggero delle stelle Galileo Galilei* (Sís, 1996/2009); *Il muro. Crescere dietro la cortina di ferro* (Sís, 2007/2008); *L'albero rosso* (Tan, 2001/2017). Per approfondimenti, cfr. Carioli, (in fase di stampa).

⁶ Entrambi si sono formati e sono stati insegnanti presso la *Rhode Island School of Design* (RISD), un'università privata di belle arti e *design* fondata nel 1877, situata a Providence, in Rhode Island (US). Oltre a David Macaulay e David Wiesner, hanno frequentato il RISD noti illustratori di libri per ragazzi, fra cui, Brian Selznick e Chris Van Allsburg. David Wiesner ha ricordato il rapporto con il suo maestro anche in occasione del discorso di

hanno sfidato le profonde trasformazioni mediatiche, esprimendone l'influenza sulle arti e sulla letteratura contemporanee (Weinkauff, 2006). Entrambi gli albi hanno ottenuto un grande successo presso il pubblico giovanile, in seguito al quale sono stati premiati con la medaglia Caldecott, massimo riconoscimento assegnato ogni anno all'artista del più illustre *picturebook* americano dall'*Association for Library Service to Children*, una divisione dell'*American Library Association*. Eliza Dresang (1997), membro del comitato *Caldecott* che nel 1991 ha selezionato l'impresa creativa di David Macaulay, faceva notare come l'esperienza lineare, sequenziale del leggere, orientata esclusivamente sulla pagina stampata, non fosse più la sola modalità di avvicinarsi all'universo culturale della lettura, né quella predominante e come, tuttavia, non fosse ancora così chiaro che il cambiamento si stava estendendo anche al di fuori della rete delle connessioni digitali: "anche il libro sta attingendo dalle strutture ipertestuali e ipermediali e può esso stesso diventare un ipermedia, come dimostra l'albo *Black and White* di David Macaulay, descrivibile come prototipo di questa nuova tipologia stampata". (Dresang, 1997, p. 648)⁷.

2. *Black and White*⁸

Considerato l'emblema di una nuova forma testuale, *Black and White*⁹ è indubbiamente uno degli albi illustrati più rivoluzionari nel panorama della letteratura per l'infanzia degli ultimi decenni (Dresang & McClelland, 1995; Anstey, 2002; Pantaleo, 2007). Sulle sue pagine, l'influenza di ritorno dei media elettronici e digitali è resa immediatamente visibile dalla coesistenza di quattro storie che, tuttavia, possono essere ricondotte a un'unica storia principale – "four stories or maybe not, four journeys or maybe one" (Macaulay, 1991, p. 421).

Con *Black and White*, David Macaulay è riuscito a creare un albo trasformato che, se da un lato mantiene il comfort del tradizionale libro stampato, dall'altro, contiene le nuove sfide mentali e visive di un'esperienza ipertestuale non lineare interattiva e su più livelli di complessità (Dresang & McClelland, 1995, p. 708)¹⁰.

In occasione dell'accettazione dell'inaspettata medaglia *Caldecott*, Macaulay dichiara di aver scelto come soggetto principe il libro stesso: «*the subject of this book is the book*» (1991, p. 410). *Black and*

accettazione della medaglia Caldecott del 2002: "I first became truly aware of the picture book while taking classes with David Macaulay at the Rhode Island School of Design. (...) Whether through his teaching, or by the example of his remarkable work, David's enthusiasm for the possibilities of the picture book form was and is infectious. *The Three Pigs* represents my application of that creative spirit, and it was clear to me from the beginning that this book would be dedicated to David as well" (Wiesner, 2002).

⁷ Trad. it. dell'autrice.

⁸ Per approfondimenti sull'analisi svolta in questo paragrafo, cfr. Carioli (in fase di stampa).

⁹ Oltre che in inglese, l'albo è stato pubblicato anche in spagnolo, francese, cinese.

¹⁰ Trad. it. dell'autrice.

White è, infatti, un libro *di e sulle* connessioni tra immagini e tra parole e immagini, un perfetto metatesto imitativo di una struttura ipertestuale, le cui pagine alludono alla potenza comunicativa dello schermo e testimoniano il cambiamento profondo e irrevocabile avvenuto nell'ecosistema da leggere e nella letteratura per l'infanzia dell'età elettronica (Dresang, 2010).

L'albo si presenta con una sovracopertina, a cui è affidata l'introduzione nell'inedito universo narrativo. Il titolo è mimetizzato fra le macchie di colore che lo attraversano, prima sfida percettiva lanciata al lettore. Il tutto continua e sfuma nella quarta di copertina, in cui sono raffigurate le macchie del manto di una mucca che assumono divertenti sembianze, quale preludio all'enigma narrativo che il lettore si troverà a interpretare e sciogliere. L'intento ironico è presente anche sul frontespizio, dove il titolo, a dispetto delle due parole che lo compongono, *Black and White*, è scritto in rosso. Sotto, è raffigurata la finestra della cella di una prigioniera, con alcune sbarre mancanti e un lenzuolo annodato che pende lungo la pagina, scomparendo in fondo, come a voler indicare un'evasione appena compiuta. Rossa è anche la parola *WARNING* e il pesante contorno rettangolare che la incornicia. Gli altri caratteri tipografici, come quelli che compongono il nome dell'autore, sono scivolati dal rigo, e altrettanto disordinati appaiono i dettagli sull'editore (figura 1). Lettere scompigliate sulla pagina sono presenti, come vedremo, anche nell'albo di David Wiesner *The Three Pigs*.

Sin dall'inizio, il lettore viene messo a conoscenza della necessità di interagire profondamente con il testo, esortato a un'attenta lettura di entrambe le modalità espressive –verbale e iconico illustrativa– sfidato a capire quante sono effettivamente le storie. È a questo scopo che il riquadro intitolato *WARNING* reca al suo interno un messaggio, che suona come un vero e proprio avvertimento: "This book appears to contain a number of stories that do not necessarily occur at the same time. Then again, it may contain only one story. In any event, careful inspection of both words and pictures is recommended". (cfr. Macaulay, 1990). [Questo albo sembra contenere un numero di storie che non necessariamente si svolgono nello stesso momento. Ma può anche contenere solo una storia. In ogni caso, si raccomanda un attento esame sia delle parole che delle immagini]. Trad. it. dell'autrice.

Il frontespizio è seguito dalle quattro tavole di apertura distribuite su due pagine, che mostrano gli *incipit* delle quattro storie: *Seeing things*, *A Waiting Game*, *Problem parents* e *Udder Chaos* (figura 2). Immagini e parole riempiono i quadranti in un accostamento e giustapposizione di stili illustrativi, di caratteri tipografici e dimensioni diversi. Da questo punto in poi, ha inizio l'avvincente sfida proposta dal genio concettuale dell'autore, che ha mescolato gli episodi, li ha disseminati di indizi e spunti visivi da rintracciare per riprendere il bandolo dell'inconsueta trama narrativa.

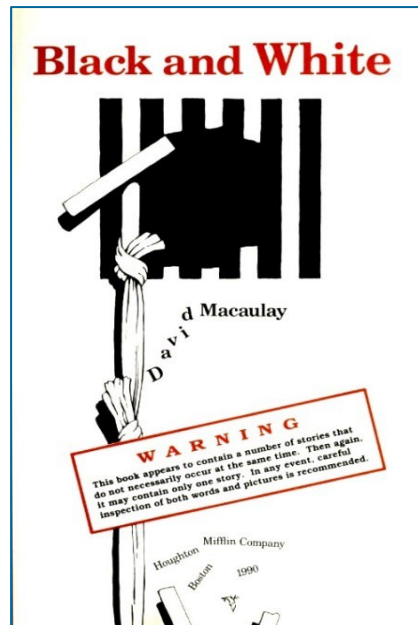


Figura 1. Macaulay, D. (1990). *Black and White*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin. Screenshot di pagine digitalizzate su Internet Archive.

2.1 Fra indizi visivi, verbali e collegamenti

Nulla, in *Black and White*, è come sembra e, all'interno di quelle che appaiono, a prima vista, come singole storie di viaggi e di fughe, compaiono indizi *iconici* e indizi *verbali*, talvolta tra loro in contraddizione, che stimolano il lettore a una caccia divertente, a scorgere i collegamenti interni, che permettono di combinare quelle storie, un po' come i *link* fra una pagina e un'altra. I collegamenti che costellano l'intero albo sono moltissimi ed è impossibile riferirli tutti. Solo a titolo di esempio, si può citare la già menzionata macchia nera sul manto della mucca raffigurata sulla quarta di copertina, a cui Macaulay fa assumere le sembianze di un personaggio: il condannato evaso. Un esempio di contraddizione fra le parole e le immagini si ritrova nel riquadro in alto di pagina 9, appartenente alla storia intitolata, non a caso, *Seeing things*, dove si legge che una "old woman enters the compartment" (Macaulay, 1990, p. 9), laddove, in realtà, è riconoscibile l'evaso. Continuando a menzionare alcuni fra i *link* iconici che hanno come *trait d'union* questo personaggio, è possibile notare che, fuggito anche dalla "sua" storia intitolata *Udder Chaos*, egli ricompare in *Seeing things*, poi sulla banchina ferroviaria di *A Waiting Game*, e ancora sullo schermo televisivo a un certo punto della storia intitolata *Problem parents*, e nella curiosa somiglianza con il muso del cane dal pelo bianco e nero.



Figura 2. Macaulay, D., (1990). *Black and White*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Screenshot di pagine digitalizzate su Internet Archive.

Nel gioco a più livelli di complessità imbastito da Macaulay, le somiglianze visive si intrecciano con coerenze tematiche più profonde: il tema dell'attesa, esplicito in *A Waiting Game*, ma presente anche in *Problem parents*; il tema del "vedere", oltre al "guardare", a cui è dedicato il titolo *Seeing things*, ma che è anche processo di connessione di tutte le storie; i temi del viaggio e della fuga. Filo conduttore dell'intera opera di David Macaulay, essi attraversano tutte le storie che compongono il *puzzle* narrativo di *Black and White*: la storia intitolata *Seeing things*, in cui il racconto è principalmente occupato dal viaggio in treno di un ragazzo; quella intitolata *A Waiting Game*, che si svolge completamente su una banchina ferroviaria; la storia dal titolo *Problem parents*, in cui si intravede anche un trenino giocattolo, che assumerà un ruolo non secondario nella complessità della narrazione; la storia intitolata *Udder Chaos*, che racconta di una fuga in cui è coinvolta in maniera rocambolesca anche una mandria di mucche di razza Holstein che, quando escono dal loro campo, si mimetizzano, fino a diventare difficilmente visibili.

Man mano che si procede verso la fine, le storie cominciano a deflagrare, compenetrandosi le une nelle altre, fino al sorprendente finale, che mostra la ragione per cui le quattro linee narrative potrebbero essere riconducibili a un'unica, più ampia, che le ricollega tutte, come se le storie fossero frammenti di un'unica narrazione.

Sul risvolto della sovracopertina è scritta una promessa: quella di una prospettiva diversa ogniqualvolta il lettore inizierà una nuova esplorazione dell'albo. E, in effetti, i livelli di complessità che permettono di apprezzarlo sono molteplici, e riuscire a coglierne la raffinata stratificazione, metatestualmente giocata fra linearità e non linearità, non è affatto semplice. La sua lettura è stata paragonata a un'esperienza ipertestuale (Dresang & McClelland, 1995; Mendoza, 2012) perché, analogamente a ciò che succede in un ipertesto, è possibile scegliere di seguire una delle quattro storie dall'inizio alla fine

del libro, ma certe linee narrative sono comprensibili solo attraverso un approccio non lineare: cogliendo le somiglianze visive come indizi di continuità fra le storie e/o individuando le coerenze tematiche come fil rouge che guida la ricomposizione della narrazione (Trites, 1994; Hammerberg, 2001). Il lettore, quindi, discerne e interpreta fra i molteplici significati mantenuti in sospeso, realizzando attività che ricordano da vicino la navigazione ipertestuale (Coles & Hall, 2001; Goldstone, 2001): “a reader of postmodern picture books may navigate multiple stories or may be directly addressed by a character within the story” (Swaggerty, 2009, p. 10).

2.2 Dal discorso pronunciato in occasione dell'accettazione della Caldecott Medal

Nel 1991, in occasione della *Caldecott Medal Acceptance*, Macaulay presentava le sue scelte artistiche come risposta a quelle che considera esigenze del pubblico giovanile. Il suo discorso rifletteva sostanzialmente lo stesso schema e i titoli delle storie che compongono il suo albo: *Seeing things*, *A Waiting Game*, *Problem parents*, e *Udder Chaos*, che cambia in *Utter Chaos*. In un contesto mediatico dove il *visivo* occupa un ruolo centrale, uno dei maggiori pericoli è proprio la *narcosi visiva*, di cui la mancanza di *curiosità* è il primo passo. Il problema di “non vedere” può apparire inoffensivo ma, quando diventa un’abitudine, iniziamo ad accettare ciò che il nostro ambiente ci propone senza porre, né porci, domande: mano a mano che la tecnologia si fa più complessa – osserva Macaulay – siamo sempre meno in grado di *vedere* come funzionano le cose, che rimangono nascoste e, parallelamente, perdiamo un po’ di terreno sulle capacità umane. Non riuscire a vedere cosa succede intorno si traduce, dapprima, in semplice mediocrità ma, a un livello più profondo, rischia di trasformare le persone in vittime isolate, insensibili e, in definitiva, indifese di fronte a un mondo in cui la complessità sta crescendo e l’umanità sta diminuendo. Per queste ragioni, *vedere le cose* (*Seeing Things*) diventa il primo obiettivo:

to distinguish between what they see and what they think they see. Thinking –at least the lazy, day-to-day kind of thinking– often gets in the way of the drawing process, which requires a stubborn curiosity about why things look the way they do. Nothing can be intelligently or intelligibly recorded on a piece of paper unless true seeing occurs: first on the part of the person making the picture, and then on the part of the person reading it (Macaulay, 1991, *Seeing things*).

[distinguere tra ciò che si vede e ciò che si pensa di vedere. Il pensiero – almeno quello pigro, del quotidiano – spesso ostacola il processo illustrativo, che invece richiede una curiosità ostinata sul perché le cose appaiono in un certo modo. Nulla può essere registrato in modo

intelligente o intelligibile su un pezzo di carta a meno che non si verifichi il vero vedere: prima, da parte di chi realizza l'immagine, e poi da parte di chi la legge]. Trad. it. dell'autrice.

Narrazioni di immagini e parole realizzate da un autore con questa consapevolezza attivano la ricerca di indizi non immediatamente evidenti, inducono a ripercorrere le storie o la storia più volte per trovare elementi che potrebbero essere stati trascurati a una prima lettura. L'obiettivo perseguito da Macaulay è proprio quello di far sì che il lettore sia messo nella condizione di *vedere* e creare connessioni che sono per lui significative, di portarlo gradualmente alla consapevolezza che tutto conta per riuscire a collegare i vari elementi della narrazione. Tuttavia – sottolinea – molta della letteratura per i più giovani soffre della piaga dei “libri prudenti”, superficiali e, sfortunatamente, spesso altamente redditizi sul mercato editoriale. A questo proposito, ricorda che, sebbene siano gli adulti a consegnare ad altri adulti la medaglia *Caldecott*, non dovrebbe mai essere dimenticata l'impressione che questo rituale suscita nei più giovani: quel piccolo sigillo di alluminio viene apposto sulla copertina per indicare un oggetto speciale, un libro che sarà aperto con grandi aspettative e, forse, anche con riverenza, il cui contenuto è fondamentale (Macaulay, 1991). Per queste ragioni, i vincitori di premi dovrebbero essere libri che i giovani aspirano a leggere. Ma in realtà –prosegue Macaulay– spesso, i Comitati optano per libri mediocri, ubbidendo alla ragione ultima della loro esistenza, ovvero quella di perpetuare il compromesso, e il compromesso porta sempre alla mediocrità: come possono coesistere i concetti di qualità –“most distinguished picture book”– e quello di compromesso?

This year I never gave the medal a thought. (...), I had already accepted the fact that *Black and White*, while it pleased me, was just not the kind of book that any committee of sound, compromising mind could possibly agree on.

But then came the call. Not the one which sent half a million soldiers into Kuwait. Not the one rush-ordering eight million yards of yellow ribbon. But the one that said, "Mr. Macaulay. You won!" Well, isn't that always the way. Just when you finally come to understand (...), they turn around and do something so entirely (...) uncharacteristic. (...).

The committee's choice this year goes far beyond making me the most difficult ego (...). It tells readers, especially young ones, that it is essential to see, not merely to look; that words and pictures can support each other; that it isn't necessary to think in a straight line to make sense; and finally that risk can be rewarded. (Macaulay, 1991, *A Waiting Game*)

[Quest'anno, non ho mai pensato alla medaglia. (...) Avevo già accettato il fatto che *Black and White*, sebbene mi piaccia, non sia il tipo di libro su cui qualsiasi Comitato sano di mente potrebbe trovarsi d'accordo.

Ma poi, proprio quando finalmente ero arrivato a capire (...) hanno fatto qualcosa di completamente (...) insolito. (...).

La scelta del Comitato, quest'anno, va ben oltre il mio ego (...) Dice ai lettori, specialmente ai più giovani, che è essenziale vedere, non solo guardare, che parole e immagini possono sostenersi a vicenda, che non è necessario pensare in linea retta per dare un senso ai contenuti; e, infine, che il rischio può essere ricompensato]. Trad. it. dell'autrice.

Il suo discorso si innesta nel dibattito sui cambiamenti tecnologici contemporanei e giunge ad affrontare questioni cruciali, che toccano l'influenza dei media sulle menti dei più giovani e le potenzialità di una letteratura di qualità di educare lo sguardo dei lettori a un'osservazione critica e consapevole sul mondo esterno. Macaulay non rinuncia ad affrontare un'analisi critica dell'intero contesto mediatico –composto sia da libri che da mezzi elettronici e digital –per trarre il meglio dalle varie tecnologie. In questo senso, *Black and White* si pone anche come manifesto di una complementarità e, se vogliamo, di un'integrazione tecnologica che appaiono, tutt'oggi, le vie più ricche di opportunità per i giovani lettori.

3. *The three pigs*¹¹

Nel discorso scritto in occasione della vincita della medaglia Caldecott per la creazione dell'albo illustrato *The three pigs* (2001), David Wiesner racconta di essere sempre stato affascinato dall'idea che dietro la "realtà" narrativa (di un cartone animato, di un albo illustrato) si nasconda il vuoto infinito, il vuoto e il bianco:

I played with this idea in my artwork as I was growing up, and when I eventually realized that making books was what I was going to do, I looked for ways to bring this concept to those books. I wanted to be able to push the pictures aside, go behind them or peel them up, and explore the blank expanse that I envisioned was within the books.

I had ideas for so many neat visual things that could happen. Characters could jump out of the story. The pictures could fall down, be folded up, crumpled; text could get scattered about. What I didn't have was a story. Every time I tried to turn these ideas into a book, I ran into the same stumbling block. If I created a story and then had the characters leave to take part in a new story, the reader would be left wondering what was happening in the initial story. To make this idea work, I realized that I needed a story that as many kids as possible would already know, so that when the characters took off, the reader would leave the story behind as well and concentrate on the new journey the characters would take.

So, I thought, what are the most universal stories around? (Wiesner, 2002)

¹¹ Per approfondimenti sull'analisi svolta in questo paragrafo, cfr. Carioli (in fase di stampa).

[Ho giocato con questa idea nelle mie opere d'arte mentre crescevo, e quando alla fine ho capito che realizzare libri era quello che avrei fatto, ho cercato dei modi per portare questo concetto in quei libri. Volevo essere in grado di mettere da parte le immagini, di andare dietro di esse o di staccarle dalle pagine, ed esplorare la distesa vuota che immaginavo fosse all'interno dei libri.

Avevo idee per così tante belle cose visive che sarebbero potute accadere: i personaggi avrebbero potuto saltare fuori dalla storia; le immagini cadere, essere piegate, accartocciate; il testo avrebbe potuto disperdersi. Ma quello che non avevo era una storia. Se avessi creato una storia e poi avessi lasciato che i personaggi prendessero parte a una nuova storia, il lettore si sarebbe chiesto cosa stesse succedendo nella storia iniziale. Per far funzionare la mia idea, avevo bisogno di una storia che il maggior numero possibile di bambini conoscesse già, in modo tale che, quando i personaggi decollavano, anche il lettore si sarebbe potuto lasciare alle spalle la storia per concentrarsi sul nuovo viaggio che i personaggi avrebbero intrapreso.

Quindi, ho pensato, quali sono le storie più universali?]. Trad. it. dell'autrice.

Ecco il perché della scelta di *The three pigs*, ed ecco perché tutto inizia come nel familiare racconto popolare tradizionale, con il classico *incipit* "C'erano una volta tre porcellini...", il lupo che arriva, che bussa alla porta, e che poi soffia, e sbuffa, e spazza via la capanna... e si mangia il porcellino o, almeno, così è scritto nelle didascalie. Ma subito dopo, sin dalla terza pagina, la storia presenta un'inattesa deviazione con parole e illustrazioni tra loro in contraddizione: il testo del racconto originale procede solo nelle didascalie, in contrasto a una narrazione visiva in cui, viceversa, al lupo non rimane nessun maialino da divorare. Ai tre protagonisti, apparentemente consapevoli di abitare un tradizionale racconto in cui la loro sorte è già scritta, Wiesner dona una fisicità (sin dalla copertina, i porcellini sono raffigurati con magnifico realismo), una capacità immaginativa e un originale intreccio, basato su un nuovo livello narrativo che si aggiunge, in particolare, quando il primo porcellino lascia volontariamente il racconto tradizionale e inizia a immaginarne un altro, seguito dal secondo e dal terzo porcellino. Come in un *trompe d'oeil*, i tre protagonisti acquistano tridimensionalità ogniquale volta escono dalla storia (Gralley, 2006) e si allontanano dai confini spaziali del foglio per dare avvio a inedite avventure, lontani dalle fauci del lupo.

Dopo aver costruito un aeroplanino con una pagina, che diventa oggetto di scena, ed essersi alzati in un volo¹² (figura 3) che dura lo spazio di due fogli bianchi –nuovo luogo di sospensione dal quale

¹² L'idea della sfida alla bidimensionalità dei fogli di carta e dell'interazione con le pagine, che vengono smontate, accartocciate, piegate, rievoca un espediente narrativo già usato agli inizi degli anni Ottanta del Novecento nell'albo senza parole *Histoire d'une petite souris qui était enfermée dans un livre* di Monique Felix (1980), edito in Italia da Editoriale Libreria nel 1981 con il titolo *C'era una volta un topo chiuso in un libro...* e, nel 2009, da Emme edizioni.

accedere ad altre storie, nonché vuoto bianco che, nel contesto della storia crea un senso del luogo tanto quanto un'illustrazione riccamente dettagliata (Wiesner, 2002 – i tre porcellini atterrano maldestramente. Inizia, a questo punto, la fase della scoperta, dell'esplorazione di altre storie in cui i tre protagonisti fanno il loro ingresso assumendo, di volta in volta, il nuovo stile illustrativo, che abbandonano all'uscita dalla storia: dallo stile piatto e lezioso della filastrocca, a quello in bianco e nero della fiaba, in cui si calano dopo aver evitato con decisione di entrare nelle schede di un vecchio abbecedario inglese. Nella fiaba incontrano un drago, che salvano da morte certa, sovvertendo ancora una volta la trama originale, intesa dall'autore come fin troppo prevedibile.



Figura 3. Wiesner, D. (2001). *The three pigs*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Screenshot di pagine digitalizzate su Internet Archive.

Ai riferimenti letterari, si aggiungono le citazioni alle illustrazioni di utensili antropomorfizzati e del gatto con il violino, che alludono ai disegni di Randolph Caldecott, combinati con una modalità espressiva tipica del *medium* fumetto: i *balloon*, con cui viene introdotto il discorso diretto, che vivacizza il dialogo fra i protagonisti (figura 4). I diversi stili illustrativi utilizzati da Wiesner e mostrati in questo albo come fosse una pinacoteca possono essere interpretati anche come un viaggio attraverso la metamorfosi artistica delle illustrazioni nei libri per l'infanzia.

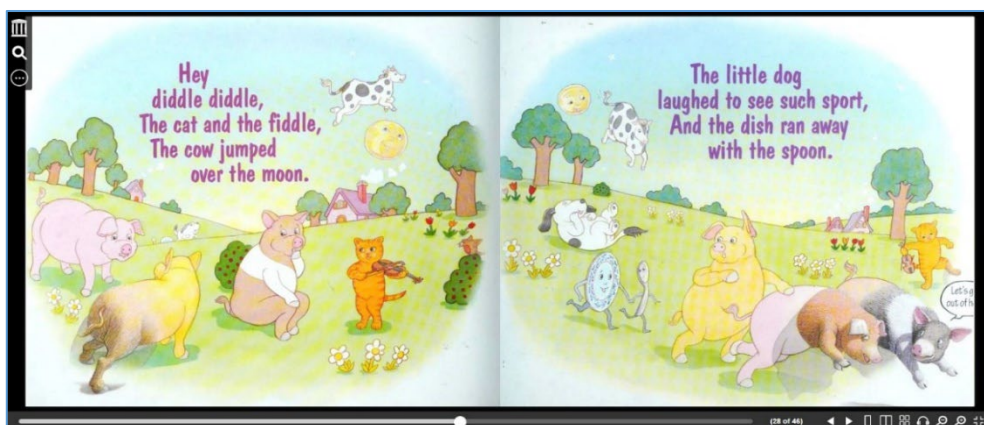


Figura 4. Wiesner, D. (2001). *The three pigs*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Screenshot di pagine digitalizzate su Internet Archive.

All'operazione di insolita reinterpretazione partecipano anche i caratteri tipografici, travolti come sono dall'irruenza di personaggi che, con i loro movimenti imprevisi, occupano anche le parti della pagina originariamente destinate alle parole delle didascalie, che vengono letteralmente staccate dalla loro posizione, precipitando su oggetti, personaggi o per terra (figura 5).



Figura 5. Wiesner, D. (2001). *The three pigs*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Screenshot di pagine digitalizzate su Internet Archive.

L'espedito letterario che porta alla sovrapposizione di storie e personaggi, in una storia che ne contiene altre, è riconducibile a uno dei meccanismi narrativi più tipici della scrittura postmoderna: la *mise en abyme*¹³. Il lettore si trova di fronte a una molteplicità di citazioni a classici della letteratura per l'infanzia, a una frammentazione della narrazione in coriandoli narrativi che, infine, ritrovano una nuova, originale, ricomposizione. Lo sguardo visionario dell'autore sovverte le aspettative del lettore (le sue inferenze anticipatorie¹⁴), spingendolo verso un impressionante livello *metatestuale*, in cui il racconto e la sua esplorazione si uniscono: il potenziale euristico insito nelle operazioni di significazione induce a rallentare i tempi, con giovamento per una lettura profonda e concentrata.

La frammentazione che richiama la struttura ipertestuale; la rottura –concettuale e letterale– dei confini della pagina; il sovvertimento delle aspettative del lettore contribuiscono a mettere in scena

¹³ David Wiesner riproporrà la *mise en abyme* anche in altri suoi capolavori, come *Flotsam* (2006), in cui foto narranti sono incorniciate ricorsivamente in altre foto, che fanno parte della stessa storia.

¹⁴ Attraverso l'inferenza, il lettore compie una sorta di lettura tra le righe, di esplicitazione di ciò che è lasciato implicito nelle parole e nelle immagini: interpreta il testo integrandolo con le sue conoscenze e connotandolo con la sua risposta emotiva. Nella lettura di un testo narrativo, il lettore si trova costantemente ad anticipare le mosse dell'autore, immaginandosi che cosa accadrà nelle fasi successive della narrazione: "il testo stesso stimola l'attività inferenziale del lettore attraverso una serie di segnali di suspense di cui esso è disseminato" (Volli, 2003, p. 132).

processi molto simili a quelli tipici della lettura del *corpus* ipertestuale *online* (Carioli, 2015), seppure all'interno di un libro stampato, con i vantaggi di stabilità che questo ambiente di lettura possiede, in quanto meno soggetto al flusso esterno di stimoli fuggitivi che caratterizzano invece gli ambienti di lettura digitale *online* (Carioli, 2015).

Anche i dispositivi di metafinzione richiamano l'attenzione del lettore disattendendo le sue aspettative, perché diluiscono la netta distinzione tra natura immaginaria della finzione narrativa e mondo reale: essi mirano a spiazzare il lettore attirando la sua attenzione sul libro come libro, piuttosto che sul suo mondo secondario, e lo fanno attraverso espedienti che gli ricordano che sta interagendo con le parole e con le immagini di una pagina. Se le narrazioni tradizionali sono progettate per creare realtà inventate, un albo come quello di Wiesner rompe intenzionalmente l'incantesimo e sfida la *suspensione dell'incredulità*¹⁵ con tecniche che sovvertono le convenzioni letterarie, alludendo in modo autoreferenziale all'artificialità del racconto sul libro (Vouillamoz, 2022). Un chiaro esempio è dato dalla tavola di *The Three Pigs*, in cui uno dei tre porcellini volge il suo sguardo fuori dalla pagina e, rivolgendosi direttamente al lettore, afferma: "– Mi sa che... là fuori c'è qualcuno" (figura 6).

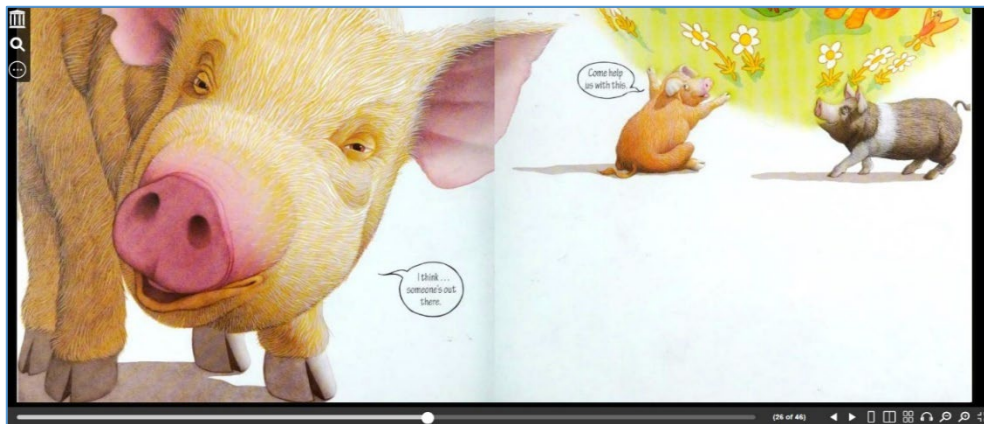


Figura 6. Wiesner, D. (2001). *The three pigs*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Screenshot di pagine digitalizzate su Internet Archive.

A partire dagli anni 2000 è stato coniato il termine metabook per identificare non solo una tipologia specifica di albo illustrato postmoderno in cui i personaggi sono consapevoli di trovarsi in un libro o in un mondo finzionale, ma per indicare più in generale tutti gli albi illustrati che incorporano livelli o mondi narrativi multipli o alternantisi grazie a narratori e personaggi o ad altri dispositivi verbo-visivi in grado di attraversare i confini millenari tra la realtà e la sua ludica simulazione... In *The three pigs* di David Wiesner, i tre porcellini viaggiano su un aeroplano di carta attraverso i livelli narrativi, incontrando nuovi personaggi e nuovi mondi finzionali visivamente rappresentati all'interno del libro fisico, ma

¹⁵ Di suspension of disbelief parla il poeta Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) nel capitolo XIV della sua *Biographia Literaria* (1817), a proposito del tacito accordo tra scrittore e lettore (Coleridge, 1817).

non appartenenti allo storyworld della storia principale. Attraverso l'utilizzo di diversi gradi di realismo, i personaggi sono raffigurati come i "trasgressori" che volano tra i confini narrativi (meta-lessi retorica) e sembrano guardare al di fuori del confine ontologico del libro fisico, rivolgendosi di-rettamente al lettore (metalessi ontologica) (Calabrese & Conti, 2020, pp. 21-26).

Nella realizzazione di questo albo illustrato, David Wiesner ha tratto ispirazione dall'incontro artistico con Macaulay e ha pensato soprattutto a far divertire i suoi giovani lettori:

The word most often used in reviews of *The Three Pigs* has been "postmodern." The word most often used by me while making the book was "fun." I saw an opportunity to have some great visual fun, and I wanted to share that with kids who may have thought the way I did when I was their age, and the way I do now. The beauty of the picture book is that despite its seemingly rigid format, it is capable of containing an infinite number of approaches to storytelling. (...).

Visual storytelling became the main focus of my work while in art school, although I wasn't really sure what form to apply it to. I first became truly aware of the picture book while taking classes with David Macaulay at the Rhode Island School of Design. (...). *The Three Pigs* represents my application of that creative spirit, (...). (Wiesner, 2002)

[l'aggettivo più usato nelle recensioni di *The Three Pigs* è "postmoderno". Ma il termine che ho usato più spesso durante la creazione di questo albo illustrato è stato "divertente": in questo lavoro ho intravisto un'opportunità di divertimento visivo, che ho voluto condividere con i giovani lettori. La bellezza dell'albo illustrato è che, nonostante il suo formato apparentemente rigido, esso è in grado di contenere un numero infinito di approcci alla narrazione. (...)]

La narrazione visiva è diventata l'obiettivo principale del mio lavoro durante la scuola d'arte, anche se non ero veramente sicuro a quale forma applicarla. Mi sono avvicinato per la prima volta all'albo illustrato durante le lezioni di David Macaulay alla "Rhode Island School of Design" (...). *The Three Pigs* rappresenta la mia applicazione di quello spirito creativo]. Trad. it. dell'autrice.

La sfida agli altri media è stata lanciata: l'albo illustrato è un formato solo apparentemente rigido, che in realtà "it is capable of containing an infinite number of approaches to storytelling" (Wiesner, 2002) [si è mostrato in grado di contenere un numero infinito di approcci alla narrazione] (Trad. it. dell'autrice), di prestarsi alle tante possibilità di "distort, crumple, and scatter the text" (Wiesner, 2002) [distorcere, accartocciare e disperdere il testo] (Trad. it. dell'autrice) e di reinterpretare e sofisticare sulla pagina bianca strutture multilineari e codici espressivi fuori dagli schemi.

Getting feedback from kids of any age is always great, but I particularly love hearing from kids in fifth grade, eighth grade, sometimes even high school. There comes a point with books when the words and pictures seem to part company. Whether with novels or textbooks, eventually the visuals fall by the wayside. I find this sad. The picture book at its best is a seamless blend of word and picture, where one is incomplete without the other. And unlike an image on a screen, they do not fly by in the blink of an eye. So I am heartened to hear from those older kids out there, and to know that someone is continuing to expose them to this unique art form. (Wiesner, 2002).

[Ricevere riconoscimenti da bambini di qualsiasi età è sempre fantastico, ma amo particolarmente ascoltare i preadolescenti e gli adolescenti. Arriva un momento con i libri che vengono proposti, in cui le parole e le immagini sembrano separarsi: che si tratti di romanzi o di libri di testo, alla fine, le immagini cadono nel dimenticatoio. Lo trovo triste. L'albo illustrato, al suo meglio, è una miscela perfetta di parole e immagini, dove l'una è incompleta senza l'altra. E, a differenza di un'immagine su uno schermo, le immagini sulle pagine non volano via in un batter d'occhio. Quindi, sono rincuorato nel sentire parlare quei ragazzi più grandi là fuori e nel sapere che qualcuno sta continuando a esporli a questa forma d'arte unica]. Trad. it. dell'autrice.

4. Riflessioni conclusive

Linda Hutcheon (2011) ritiene che categorie come postmodernismo, parodia e adattamento, abbiano subito una "stigmatizzazione culturale esplicita e implicita" (p. 8), che avrebbe declassato a sottogenere secondario e inferiore oggetti testuali che rientrano in qualche modo in tali classificazioni. E non è da escludere che anche gli albi illustrati considerati nel presente contributo, che evidenziano come –non unica– particolarità l'influenza di ritorno dell'ipertesto e dei linguaggi elettronici e digitali sulle permeabili pagine della letteratura per l'infanzia possano aver risentito di una tale considerazione. Se così fosse, tale prospettiva avrebbe contribuito a costruire di questo *medium* un'idea piuttosto vaga e riduttiva, che avrebbe impedito di riconoscerne l'apporto alla letteratura per l'infanzia nella sua unicità.

Esito di una sintesi integrativa fra linearità e multilinearità, fra tradizione stampata e formule narrative tipiche dei media elettronici e digitali dell'ipertesto e dei loro codici, gli albi esplorati hanno rispecchiato e rispecchiano un nuovo modo di immaginare e di rappresentare l'arte e la cultura, che tocca da vicino i giovani lettori e i processi stessi di lettura. Oltrepassando i confini sia della stampa, che dei media digitali, essi combinano i vantaggi della stabilità dell'ambiente stampato con la sfida mentale di un'esperienza non lineare, che pone il lettore di fronte a una pluralità di linee narrative, nel

corso della quale è richiesto un maggiore impegno in termini di scelte e di ricomposizione della trama testuale. Anche se, evidentemente, l'interpretazione di tutta la letteratura dipende dalla risposta del lettore, in albi come quelli visti, la necessità di cooperare con il testo è superiore, poiché la convivenza di più storie, con intrecci che disattendono le aspettative e modi inusuali e sorprendenti di sviluppo della trama, che sfidano previsioni interpretative o ipotesi anticipatorie del lettore, rendono più difficile la messa in atto di tentativi di "attualizzare in anticipo la fabula" (Eco, 1979, p. 118). Di fronte a un libro che non cerca di fornire un significato specifico, ma di offrire un'esperienza di esplorazione di una serie di possibili significati, secondo la prospettiva di un lettore coautore, la lettura si traduce nella significazione di una vera e propria opera aperta (Eco, 1962), ampia, suscettibile di essere rivista e riletta a vari livelli. La multilinearità delle loro trame, la molteplicità delle storie e dei punti di vista, la frammentazione testuale, l'ambizione –secondo vie differenti– a indurre a una co-costruzione della storia e a una inedita analisi metatestuale orientano, dunque, verso un'esperienza di lettura che –non a caso, stando anche alla presente analisi– è stata definita come un viaggio nell'attuale ecosistema narrativo.

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How to cite this paper:

Carioli, S.(2022). Influenze digitali sull'albo illustrato: metamorfosi artistiche e sfide di "iper-lettura". *Journal of Literary Education*, (6), 91-113.
<https://doi.org/10.7203/JLE.6.25365>

Redefining the margins: intertextual and secondary characters in children's historical novels

Redefinir los márgenes: personajes intertextuales y secundarios en las novelas históricas infantiles

Redefinir els marges: personatges intertextuals i secundaris en les novel·les històriques infantils

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Abstract

Historical fiction for children is the kind of literature that allows young readers to gain historical knowledge in a pleasant, easier way thanks to engaging characters who are at times entertaining. The fictional heroes in most children's historical fiction are examples to follow for the young readers whose behaviours and motivations we discover through our observation as readers. Additionally, the postmodern attestation of history as narration, with the appointment of microhistory is favoured when the psychography of fictional heroes is in the foreground. Or, when historical facts are interpreted from different perspectives and under various visual angles. These elements of historical fiction impel many writers to provide marginal characters with space as well as speech.

The Byzantine era is a subject in Children's Literature and contemporary novelists try to educate children and at the same time bring out Byzantium's charm either by highlighting neglected historic events or by examining already known faces and facts from a fresh angle. Bearing that in mind and given the fact that the concept of intertextuality in literature is a way to build up interpretive communities among young readers, this paper examines five Greek historical novels for children written by Penelope Maximou (1904-2001). More specifically, we will focus on the way the author attempted to make "visible" fictional characters who were until recently considered of less or least importance, such as slaves. In this paper will be also pinpointed the way the writer chose to make use of History so as to reflect female difference and multiplicity in historical records, aiming to deconstruct the gendered identity patriarchy had constructed.

Key words: children's literature, historical novel, intertextuality, marginality, Byzantium

Resumen

La ficción histórica infantil y juvenil es el tipo de literatura que permite a los jóvenes lectores adquirir conocimientos históricos de una forma amena y sencilla gracias a personajes entrañables que en ocasiones incluso los entretienen. Los héroes de ficción en la mayoría de las novelas históricas infantiles y juveniles son ejemplos a seguir para los jóvenes lectores; descubrimos sus comportamientos y motivaciones a través de nuestra observación como lectores. Además, la declaración posmoderna de la historia como narración,

con la designación de la microhistoria, se ve favorecida cuando la psicografía de los héroes ficticiales está en primer plano. O bien, cuando los hechos históricos se interpretan desde diferentes perspectivas y bajo varios ángulos visuales. Estos elementos de la ficción histórica impulsan a muchos escritores a proporcionar a los personajes marginales tanto espacio como discurso.

La era bizantina es un tema de la literatura infantil y juvenil, y los novelistas contemporáneos intentan educar a los niños y jóvenes al mismo tiempo que sacan a relucir el encanto de Bizancio, ya sea resaltando eventos históricos olvidados o examinando rostros y hechos ya conocidos desde un ángulo nuevo. Teniendo esto en cuenta y dado que el concepto de intertextualidad en la literatura es una forma de construir comunidades interpretativas entre los jóvenes lectores, este artículo examina cinco novelas históricas griegas para niños y jóvenes escritas por Penelope Maximou (1904-2001). Más concretamente, nos centraremos en la forma en que la autora intentó hacer "visibles" personajes de ficción hasta hace poco considerados de menor importancia, como los esclavos. En este artículo también se señalará la forma en que la escritora eligió hacer uso de la Historia para reflejar la diferencia y la multiplicidad femenina en los registros históricos, con el objetivo de deconstruir la identidad de género construida por el patriarcado.

Palabras clave: literatura infantil y juvenil, novela histórica, intertextualidad, marginalidad, Bizancio

Resum

La ficció històrica infantil i juvenil és el tipus de literatura que permet als joves lectors adquirir coneixements històrics de manera amena i senzilla gràcies a personatges entranyables que de vegades fins i tot els entretenen. Els herois de ficció a la majoria de les novel·les històriques infantils i juvenils són exemples a seguir per als joves lectors; descobrim els seus comportaments i motivacions a través de la nostra observació com a lectors. A més, l'atestació postmoderna de la història com a narració, amb la designació de la microhistòria, es veu afavorida quan la psicografia dels herois ficticials és en primer pla. O bé, quan els fets històrics s'interpreten des de diferents perspectives i sota diversos angles visuals. Aquests elements de la ficció històrica impulsen molts escriptors a proporcionar als personatges marginals tant espai com a discurs.

L'era bizantina és un tema de la literatura infantil i juvenil, i els novel·listes contemporanis intenten educar els nens i joves alhora que treuen a la llum l'encant de Bizanci, sigui ressaltant esdeveniments històrics oblidats o examinant cares i fets ja coneguts des d'un angle nou. Tenint en compte això i atès que el concepte d'intertextualitat en la literatura és una forma de construir comunitats interpretatives entre els joves lectors, aquest article examina cinc novel·les històriques per a nens i joves escrits per Penelope Maximou (1904-2001). Més concretament, ens centrarem en la manera com l'autora va intentar fer "visibles" personatges de ficció fins fa poc considerats de menor importància; menors i adults que estaven sent oprimits durant l'època bizantina, com els esclaus. En aquest article també s'assenyalarà la manera com l'escriptora va triar fer ús de la Història per reflectir la diferència i la multiplicitat femenina als registres històrics, amb l'objectiu de desconstruir la identitat de gènere construïda pel patriarcat.

Paraules clau: literatura infantil i juvenil, novel·la històrica, intertextualitat, marginalitat, Bizanci

1. Historiographic narration: between Literature and History

The borders between Literature and History have never been crystal-clear. As the postmodernist history philosopher Hayden White (1973) argued, 'History' as a text is a construct and cannot be represented objectively because historians can ignore or give significance to certain historical events, according to their ideology. For White (1973, p. 9), the narrative form is the only acceptable form of representation in the writing of History. Historical narration and literary narration constitute two different genres still, as many studies indicate, both involve many common traits such as the hermeneutic approach, the invocation of emotion, the spiritual development and the admonishment. In neither historical nor in literary narration is reality reflected faithfully. The narrative techniques and the rhetoric found in both genres are similar (Megill, 1994; Attwood, 1998, pp. 49-50).

When referring to the common rhetorical structure of these two types of discourses, the literary theorist, critic, philosopher and semiotician Roland Barthes (1963/1986) stated that:

The narration of past events, commonly subject in our culture, since the Greeks, to the sanction of historical 'science', placed under the imperious warrant of the 'real', justified by principles of 'rational' exposition – does this narration differ, in fact, by some specific feature, by an indubitably pertinence, from imaginary narration, as we find it in the epic, the novel, the drama? (p. 127).

Considering that a historical work combines knowledge and imagination (Collingwood, 1946; Nussbaum, 1991), we might wonder if the composition of historical knowledge denotes the presentation of the historical reality and the linguistic–narrative representation of the social imaginary which takes place within the historical novel.

With the advance in historical science, the historical novel (for adults) flourished, subsequently influencing History as a science. A novel is reckoned to be historical when its story is about figures and facts of a past period –a period which the novelist attempts to depict on the pages of the book depending on his/her imagination, lyricism, and observation (Davies, 1996; Parkes 2011). Excluding the element of fiction, the historical novel is based on a share of truth that the novelist has pumped from historical records and sources; a historical novel may be a work of fiction, but at the same time, it portrays the author's effort to convey in detail and as promptly and realistically as possible the socio-historical context of a past period (Furet, 1982; Gossman, 1990, pp. 227-284). It is vital that the protagonists of the historical novel behave according to their age, gender, nationality and the setting of the story. Moreover, the characters' dialogues add realism and persuasiveness to the novel (Taylor, 1938; Pasco, 2004).

Taking under consideration that one of the historical novels essential functions is the conveying of the aura of a historical period and the representation of the ethos of a society, we consider that it serves as a supplement to History. Historical novels partially reflect the historical reality and, as the setting that they portray is all-engrossing, it becomes identified with History itself. However, in a historical novel, reality is constructed and includes the author's contemporary and historical reality. What the novelist writes is the reality he/she conceives depending on his/her origin, education and general culture. This reality is considered to be inscribed within a social, anthropological and historical context, exceeding a personal experience (Nelson, 1975; Brown, 1998; White, 2001; Zhang, 2004; Travaglini, 2019).

2. Historical novels for children

The children's historical novel is a peculiar genre of fiction: it has a solid composition which is dispersed with fictive elements interspersed with historical information. In children's historical novels, reality is considered to enclose both what is known as historical reality and the writer's reality; young readers have the opportunity to witness History through the lens of another person's view, with the help of the pathos that Literature offers. By dint of its entertaining nature, it is considered to transmit historical knowledge in a pleasant and effortless manner to young readers. For this reason, Literature (and, in particular, the historical novel) is considered an alternative method of approaching historical knowledge (Adamson, 1987; Parkes, 2009; Howell, 2014).

The historical novel for children is considered as a demanding genre of Literature which challenges the readers, on condition that the novelist succeeds in unleashing the imagination and unlocking the emotion of the child reader. The novelist aims to create a novel with an interesting plot, accentuated by the element of adventure, with the intention of offering a realistic and distinct depiction of the story and protagonists. What is more, describing a person's physical appearance in a children's historical novel fulfils a double role: it functions as a means of attaching attributes to the protagonists and at the same time it may serve as a metonymic link between the internal and external cosmos (Rimmon-Kenan, 1985, pp. 59-62; Norton, 1995, p. 511; Power, 2003).

Since the 19th century onwards, an increasing number of European and Greek scholars have studied the Byzantine era. More specifically, the Byzantine civilization has been considered as an integral part of the Modern Greek national identity (Zannas, 2006, pp. 291-312; Wertsch, 2008). Byzantium and its religious, spiritual, artistic, political and cultural influence and ecumenical spirit has inspired numerous children literature authors to write about true stories or historical figures that played a major role in the Empire. Authors have presented in their books the philosophy and ideology of the multicultural

Empire, where Orthodoxy and the Greek contemplative spirit were the indispensable elements on which the Byzantines based their development and their political expression (Spanaki, 1998; Angelaki, 2018, pp. 93-96).

3. Intertextuality and microhistory in Children's Literature

Intertextual relationships in literary books are characterized by the production of a new text through

Intertextual relationships take on greater value if children, while trying to remember any literary allusions, focus on the very link between the original and the new text through phrasal passages or references. And once young readers attempt to infer the meaning of a discourse merged with another by making associations through their own intertextual metaphors, they have the possibility to become engaged in the text and to make synchronic and diachronic assumptions, while responding to new ideologies

its projected connection to another, earlier or contemporary. In contemporary books, writing intersects with tradition through intertextuality, whether the latter is distinct or inconspicuous: stories have over time become embedded in others as if they were living organisms and constitute a body of interesting information (Barthes, 1972; Wienold, 1981; Siafléakis, 2020). However, intertextual relationships presuppose an experienced reader –a reader who is not necessarily a vulnerable child, whose thoughts and ideology are yet to be shaped (Kristeva, 1986; Cairney, 1990; Desmet, 2001).

Intertextuality is linked to ideology –and, consequently, to language, culture and society (Briggs & Bauman, 1992; Millán, 2018, p. 195; Orr, 2003, p. 28). Intertextual relationships take on greater value if children, while trying to remember any literary allusions, focus on the very link between the original and the new text through phrasal passages or references. And once young readers attempt to infer the meaning of a discourse merged with another by making associations through their own intertextual metaphors, they have the possibility to become engaged in the text and to make synchronic and diachronic assumptions, while responding to new ideologies (Hollindale, 1988; Lundin, 1998; Millán, 2018, p. 195). Intertextuality is one of the main narrative trends found in contemporary books for children, together with interior monologue, multiperspectivity, self-referentiality and the investigation, revelation and narration of particular people's lives, with the approach of microhistorical studies (Murray, 2004; Ginzburg, 2012). In fact, by revealing how historical agents perceived marginality and representing these agents perspectives to literature, the authors could be considered to be intent on revealing the past to young children, not only by presenting it, but also by explaining the answers to great historical questions through different narrative voices (Ginzburg, et al, 1993;

Mímisson & Magnússon, 2014). Additionally, as the authors try to interpret experiences of unknown people of the past to young readers, the marginalized “others” become acquaintances, accepted and understood by the child reader, who no longer feels that they belong to the so-called “dominant group”, since, in the marginal literary figures’ universe, what it is most personal, becomes most universal.

4. Penelope Maximou’s historical novels

Above all, we should stress that contemporary books for children in Greece include elements, thoughts and experiences of the first and second post-war generation, the generations of the 1970s and 1980. Many Greek authors who address children chose –and continue to choose, to this day– to write about Byzantium and, specifically, to explain to young readers that the Byzantine world was an extension of the Roman Empire, and that its legacy was not just linked to Roman territories but also to the vast amount of people who lived within these territories. Particularly, an awarded Greek novelist, Penelope Maximou (1904-2001), introduces to her readers the Byzantine ideology; as history constitutes the first intertext in her books, she points out that the Byzantines interacted with many other cultures (such as the Islamic world, the Slavs, the Armenians, the Georgians and, of course, Western Europe), as the cultural radiance of Byzantium was really powerful, without disregarding to state that the Byzantines were trying to achieve the dominance over those groups. Her five historical novels are examined in this article. Additionally, in all her books she remarks that the Byzantines were trying to preserve the peace among the groups that lived under their dominance and that they strived to Hellenize them.

The reason why we decided to deal with this specific writer is the fact that she has delved deeper into Byzantine history than most and, she has tried to depict Byzantine culture in her novels in a positive light. However, she did not try to beautify characters and situations related to the narrated era as it

She has delved deeper into Byzantine history than most and, she has tried to depict Byzantine culture in her novels in a positive light

seems that she felt it as her duty to be truthful to children. The fact that she also highlighted the multicultural character of Byzantine culture makes evident that she tried to promote the acceptance of ethnic diversity among her readers. Furthermore, it seems that Maximou not only wanted to portray the Byzantine society to young readers, but also to invite them to make comparisons between the narrated and the synchronic era. Perhaps she tried to demonstrate how –beyond the objective truth of History– there are always subjective interpretations of the historical events (all of them cohesively linked) (Martin, 1993; Mitrophanes, 2004).

Apart from demonstrating the literary and subjective sources of historical interpretation, we could argue that Maximou also considered that it was of utmost importance for children to confront their own misinterpretations of history. She makes obvious that she wants children to understand the motives of the historical personalities which she depicted in her novels, as empathy is critical when it comes to historical understanding and critical thinking; additionally, it is evident that she made an effort to portray the “lived experience” of the marginal characters’ in her books as well (Ashby & Lee, 1987; McCallum & Stephens, 2011, p. 364; Levins-Morales, 2016).

Historiographic metafiction is used by the author in order to demonstrate the co-existence of different perspectives (and of other voices) of historical facts along with their “official” interpretations (Bakhtin, 1992, pp. 300-324). Given that intertextuality is linked to identity and ideology, as aforementioned, Maximou’s books are populated with intertextual relationships. The author makes use of women’s and children’s characters in her novels –women and children who were until recently considered of less or least importance for the development of the story or plot itself– in such a way, so as to make them visible to young readers, who are at the stage of forming their own historical and social understandings. And indeed, since the fictional and at the same time intertextual protagonists share the same age and have common traits with the readers, we assume that Maximou uses this narrative technique so as to install the values and ideals of her fictional characters (values concerning the respect for women, for the poor, for people from other countries, etc.) to her readers, displaying that she considers Literature as a pathway for gender equality and intercultural communication (Nikolajeva, 2002, p. 183; Wilkie-Stibbs, 2004). At this point it should be underlined that Maximou decided to rewrite and subvert the historical material in her books in order to emphasize the silenced histories of marginalized groups as well as to present the female characters of her novels and their efforts to express their emotions freely and/or interfere with Byzantine society, long before the ideas of multiculturalism were widespread in Greek Children’s Literature.

4.1. Κοντα στην Αθηναίδα [*Close to Athenais*] (1972)

The plot of this particular historical novel for children takes place in Athens and Constantinople, in the 5th century AD. The narrator and protagonist is Daphne, a young girl hailing from Antioquia, a region that belonged to the Byzantine Empire at that time. On her way to Miletus along with her family, she and her parents were under attack and ever since her life changed drastically: from a little princess she became a slave herself, sold to a philosopher called Leontios. Her new master's name was Athenais, Leontios's daughter. Daphne, now separated from her family for good, appears within the novel to never lose hope that she would be reunited with her family and she often recalls happy moments with them –episodes that assumingly enable children to value and embed an optimistic point of view considering life.

Also, Daphne proves to have a highly dynamic personality, as she is a Hun. Huns were hated, according to the third-person narrator, due to their barbaric instincts and sporadic invasions against the Byzantine Empire. Daphne is described to present some brutal characteristics, something that the writer makes evident to her readers –especially at the episode of the book where a secondary character asks her: “What kind of animal was your soul before it came to you and you finally came into life in a human form?” (Maximou, 1972, p. 163). What is interesting, though, is the fact that the little girl is described to feel proud about belonging to this tribe and she does not hesitate to stop speaking with her best and sole friend in Athens, where she was sold as a slave, when she heard him saying that all Huns should be slaughtered. Undoubtedly, we could claim that, through her behaviour, the author aims to help children make connections between Literature and their everyday lives, help them gain pride for their past and culture and, also, show them that is possible to overcome preconceptions in cross-cultural relationships (Colby & Lyon, 2004).

Daphne’s rebellious character is also displayed at an episode where she hears others talking about her marriage with another secondary character called Ermolaos, who was kind, obedient, prude and low-key person. Daphne “did not want such a man” (Maximou, 1972, p. 52) and she refused to get married, because in her belief, by doing so, she would lose her autonomy forever. But Maximou continues to challenge the boundary between story and history and bring the untold stories to the fore: as Daphne was a little girl, she had, of course, some fears to overcome. Her master, Athenais, is described as a tender person who, from the very beginning, treated her with love and helped her overcome any doubts about herself. She even protected her from being treated like a “common slave”: she never had her hair shaven and she was not forced to work in the fields along with other slaves –with whom, according to regulations, she should eat and sleep (Lemerle, 1971; Economides, 1983). This kind of information allows children to realize the complicated, multi-faceted socio-economic situations with legal and political dimensions that people used to deal with and, definitely, highlights that Children’s Literature can be used as a powerful tool for young readers to value themselves.

It is also worth mentioning that Athenais is shown to increasingly realize how clever, discreet, responsible and studious Daphne is and tries to develop her skills. This is why, in the book, she makes efforts in order for the little Hun girl to receive an education besides other comforts: Athenais initiates her into art and at the same time spurs her to improve qualities suitable for a girl of that era, like knitting, etc.. Therefore, it is easily understood why Daphne was truly committed to her new master and did all her best to cheer her up. Someone could argue that behind the description of the little girl being really sentimental and moral (apart from being quite stubborn and short-tempered), and appreciating everything she enjoyed next to Athenais, the author’s displays a use of marginal,

adolescent and female characters in her literary work as positive role models for children (Grogan, 1996; Louie & Louie, 2001).

4.2. Στα χρόνια του Αλέξιου Κομνηνού [In the years of Alexios Komninos] (1984)

The plot unfolds in the early 12th century. Accordingly to the custom of that era, Andreas, one of the main characters, has a slave woman in his house, named Hypatia. She is a well-educated, discreet woman who takes good care of the housework and looks after Andreas' family members with true devotion. She is described preparing everyday meals with dedication, but also making sure that everyone in the family is warmly dressed and always given a snack whilst working; she even spends her salary on buying their favorite food. Her contribution is, according to the narration, acknowledged; for instance, in one chapter, Andreas is described as telling his family members: "Listen! I've seen it a long time ago –no, not a long time ago, but since forever! This woman loves us!" (Maximou, 1984, p. 154). Consequently, as they all feel so lucky to have such a hardworking and compassionate woman at their service, they even stop calling her "slave"; she is considered as a family member thanks to her kindness, rationale and devotion. It is also mentioned that she is trusted with matters of high concern.

However, through the listing of her duties, the readers of this novel are again provided with information concerning slavery and the role of women in the Byzantine society. As in *Close to Athenais* (Maximou, 1972), the voices of women and marginal characters are unveiled in this novel as well. It is worth noting that the traits of the "subcultural", the non-dominant characters, are revealed to the readers in all of Maximou's novels through their own words, by the narrator's voice and via the narrative voice of other characters, who may be also marginal and play significant roles in the books, as they let the readers know what happened in the past through their thoughts and deeds. For example, as children read the novels, they become informed about the fact that marginalized or not so privileged people (who were considered as such due to their gender or age) were mainly engaged in home care, were excluded from attending festivals, charitable activities, or visiting the baths, etc. Thus, Maximou, via intertextuality and metafictional elements in her non-linear narratives, achieves a multiplicity of histories and lights up the silenced lives and activities of the suppressed "others"; the existence of the non-dominant culture within the general culture (Angelaki, 2021).

4.3. Οι πρώτοι σταυροφόροι στο Βυζάντιο: 1096 - 1099 μ.Χ. [The first crusaders in Byzantium: 1096-1099 AD] (1989)

Maximou links her novels with intertextual relationships in such a way that many readers could easily get the impression that her work is published in sequential pieces. In this particular example, Hypatia appears again as an intertextual character and, more specifically, as a housekeeper in Eusebius' home, the son of her former boss, as she had practically raised him. She is described as "the angel of Eusebius'

home, who took care of everything” (Maximou, 1989, p. 28). As an intertextual character, she still possesses all the traits given beforehand: she is educated, soft-spoken, and skillfull. Moreover, she is well organized and that is the reason she has a plethora of marriage proposals –despite the fact that she is a slave. However, the family members in Eusebius’ home are described in the novel to be heart-broken when they are told that she was to leave Constantinople in order to finally get married.

Eusebius is particularly sad about her leaving, according to the third person narrator; he does not want her to get married since he was a little child, as he thought he would lose his mother figure. Hypatia’s kind heart is underlined at this particular episode, as she is described to “try hard to explain to young Eusebius the constitution of engagement and marriage” (Maximou, 1989, p. 12) and assure him that she would always love him and take care of him and his family, something that she actually does, as, before moving to Thessaloniki to get married, she makes sure that her trusted friend Athena, another marginal character of the book that supports its plot, replaces her and takes care of Eusebius’s family. Another example of how the writer uses marginal characters in her novels is the presence of Nathaniel, who is actually a beggar, and who is introduced to the Eusebius’ family by Athena. Nathaniel proves to be skillfull as well, since he is described to be an honest, hardworking young man who cooks, washes, does the shopping, takes care of the housework and, most importantly, has a vigilant eye.

4.4. Μανουήλ Κομνηνός, ο ιππότης αυτοκράτορας [Emmanouel Komninos, *The knight emperor*] (1990)

Once more, it becomes evident that Maximou creates specific characters in order to present details concerning the era she wishes to revive in her books, as well as the status and the living conditions of the Byzantine slaves and women, in general. The plot in this novel also takes place in the 12th century in Constantinople. According to the story, Helen, a tenant slave, is hired as a housekeeper in the house of Andreas, the father of Eusebius. A main character herself, she is presented as a hardworking person, with a sympathetic personality. Helen is diligent despite working in somebody else’s house for she is literate and can keep the household. Her social status never prevents her from being outspoken and audacious –combined with some female nagging, according to the narrator’s voice, as she never misses the chance of criticising people and situations and “especially the emperor, of whom she wasn’t fond and she was always ready to curse on him” (Maximou, 1990, p. 53), even though she is a religious person. At the same time, it is underlined that she is also really superstitious, following medieval Byzantium’s religious culture and customs (Marwick, 1970, pp. 11-13). Therefore, alongside with keeping the traditions of Eastern Christianity, she believes in astrology and practices magic.

We could argue that the impression received by the reader is that Helen’s character is somehow possessed by an anxiety that doesn’t allow her to unwind, to feel relaxed or grateful for all the good

things happening to her, such as the fact that she has the same civil rights as her former masters and that her children were literally free citizens (Lemerle, 1978). The character who points out her so-called ungratefulness is Maria, the second woman who works in the house of Eusebius's parents. According to the narrator, her mother sold her –as it was customary back then– when she was young to a seamstress, who raised her as a real mother. When Andrea's family meets Maria, they give her accommodation and a place to work next to Helen. Maria is presented as a trustworthy, giving, calm and tactful person, who never complains about anything, as for every setback she has the motto “that’s life” (Maximou, 1990, p. 165). She is also described to speak rationally, to make wise choices and to accept the fact that she is not allowed to be present along with a guest in Andrews’ house, or that she can never dine with her landladies and consume wine –this, particularly, is because she was a woman, the same reason for her not being able to participate in politics. In this way, Maximou uses marginal characters in her book not only to incorporate history and create a literary plot, but also to instruct children about the virtues of humility, prudence, wisdom and gentleness. Additionally, Maria’s silence is not a sign of weakness, but can be seen as the author’s effort to destroy the monologic discourse of the canonical history (Herndl, 1991).

4.5. Η καταστροφή της Θεσσαλονίκης [The sack of Thessaloniki. In the years of Andronikos Komninos] (1987)

The story of this book is situated in 1185, when the Normans of the Kingdom of Sicily sacked Thessaloniki –which was one of the worst disasters to befall the Byzantine Empire in the 12th century. As already mentioned, a young novel character could influence in the creation of a young person’s personality. Maximou took advantage of this fact by presenting a 12 years old slave called Mathew in her book, a boy who was actually a model of morality with an exemplary conduct, and tries to show young readers paths to follow by describing his feelings, his tactful reactions and his wise decisions.

Maximou informs her readers that child slavery was common in medieval ages and the exposure or abandonment of infants was considered to be the simplest solution for families who could not function as social and economic units (Hennessy, 2008). She also does not omit that orphaned children were the one of the most vulnerable collectives. Matthew, the main marginal character, was an orphan, whose cruel step-mother abandoned him. According to the narrator’s words, a couple living in a nearby house took pity of him and decided to put him up permanently and treat him well. This young character is presented to be quite sober and mature in the novel, regardless of his age. He is described to be well aware, not only of the turbulent socio-political situation occurring, but also of the offered love and care by his foster parents: that is the reason for which Matthew prefers to stay by their side instead of leaving them at God's mercy, even though they offer him the chance to escape Thessaloniki –as his foster mother did, who “stood by her husband’s side, as it was her duty” (Maximou, 1987, p. 35). It

could be argued that, in this specific novel, Maximou tried to combine historical information with literature in order to familiarize young children with the traces of the past and asks them to contemplate them from a contemporary perspective. We could also assume that she tried to point out the virtues of courage and bravery to children and aimed to help them appreciate parental love. The role of women in the Byzantine era is also illustrated in the novel, through the presence of Matthew's step mother.

5. Conclusions

Penelope Maximou's historical novels embark upon the construction of a dramatic structure of fictionalization and of a plot with a clear-cut beginning and end within a clear time context. Studying them, it becomes evident that she loves children as much as she loves History –and, especially, the History of Byzantium. In all of her books the historical events unfold through layers so as to help the readers understand not only the actions, but also the values of both the famed historical and the marginal characters of her novels (Finn, 2002; Bateman & Harris, 2008). Her novels are fraught with intertextual relationships, but the use of intertextual and also serial characters is not the only interesting technique concerning her work; many of the fictional characters in her stories belong to the so-called marginalized groups and, even though they are portraying real-life experiences from the Byzantine past, they are not assigned traditional gender roles and behaviour traits (Crenshaw, 1989; Lenski, 2001).

In her books Maximou promotes the stories, the perceptions and the personalities of secondary characters: Hypatia's, Matthew's, Helen's, Maria's and Daphne's marginalized experiences, perspectives and voices are presented as historical and literature narrative. All individuals appear to be realistic and speak as they would in their daily life, without the narrator distorting their language (Lukens, 1982; Wilkie, 1996). It is remarkable to consider how far ahead she was for her time, since she chose to give an official voice to the marginalized groups –something that the hegemonic ideologies denied to do– many years before the representation of the “underprivileged” and “disempowered” became a trend in Greek Literature for children.

Maximou tried, through history, to include an account of the marginalized groups' experience over time, as well as to transform her stories into a multifocal analysis, in order to highlight the multiplicity of social representations. Women in her books may be presented to be occupied with domestic chores and the upbringing of children, but they are described to overcome limitations and, also, to make their own choices. Despite the fact that they were maids, tenants and, basically, their role was interwoven

with domesticity, according to the Byzantine concepts, female characters are not described to be under the total control of men, but they were rather considered as family members and were treated as equal. Maximou makes clear that it was possible for women to fight for their rights and, at the same time, continue spinning, weaving and sewing inside or outside the house. Moreover, given the fact that her books combine both historical facts and fiction, she invites children to study History and make their own assumptions, as she implies that socio-economic, political and religious factors have contributed to the increase of the roles of women (Kazhdan & Epstein, 1990, p. 163). Of course, men were still considered to be the dominant gender, but readers realize that female characters had opportunities: to become educated, or choose if, when and who they would get to marry.

Maximou illustrated how, in Byzantine society, children worked in households and were exposed and enslaved too; she states that child labour was not an unusual phenomenon in the Byzantine era, as it was a built-in social component of a typical Byzantine household's economy. The author tried to engage young readers to interpret historical events, whose repercussions impacted numerous members of marginalized social groups. We argue that she did so with the aim of helping her readers develop their historical conscience and their capacity for critical thinking through Literature (Seymour, 1978, pp. 104-105; Booth, 1987; Rycik & Rosler, 2009; Anwaruddin, 2016).

However, the writer also implies in her books that children and their work were not considered simply as a commodity. Maximou's juvenile characters are described as self-confident people who begin to seek their identity, who want respect and try to gain it by continuing their own family's economic organization and by trying to beat "tomorrow's uncertainty". Nonetheless, while children's characters in her novels play important roles in the development of each story, she makes sure that the adult employers and foster parents of those characters disregard the Byzantine legislator's boundaries between childhood and adulthood, understand the children's need for love and appreciate their rationality and responsibility (Bruner, 1988; Sköld & Vehkalahti, 2016).

Since children are considered to learn certain behaviours through role models that appear not only in society, but also in stories, Maximou presents children's characters in her books as brave, trustworthy, diligent and hard-working. We believe that the author used this narrative technique to influence young readers' empathetic engagement with the young characters and maybe help them adopt their values and ideals. Judging by her fictional characters' personalities, she may have wanted to influence readers' concepts of morality, as well as deconstruct any stereotypical images and ideas concerning gender –which can still be found in every aspect of our modern lives (Docherty 1983, p. 17; Higbie, 1984; McCallum, 1999).

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How to cite this paper:

Angelaki, R.T (2022). Redefining the Margins: Intertextual and Secondary Characters in Children's Historical Novels. *Journal of Literary Education*, (6), 114-131. <https://doi.org/10.7203/JLE.6.21735>

Literary learning: A proposal for using literature for the acquisition of emotional competencies

El aprendizaje literario: una propuesta para el uso de la literatura para la adquisición de competencias

L'aprenentatge literari: un proposta per a l'ús de la literatura per l'adquisició de competències

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Abstract

The concept of literary learning is based upon the conception that there are learning processes, which through the use of literary texts have a productive result. The linking element between both terms is the development of some competencies, in particular, emotional as well as discursive. By presenting these considerations, new answers to old questions, are provided: Why is literary reading necessary in Foreign Language Teaching (FLT), what goals are being pursued, how should literary reading be directed, and which learning processes they are intended for? The article deals with the aesthetic experience of literature on the basis of a lesson example. It is aimed at the aesthetic perception, whereby not only is a pleasurable reading understood, but it is also a critical examination of the represented reality in the text. The result is a productive and dialectic literary dialogue, in which the topics of narration are a starting point to an aesthetic judgment that also requires the ability to empathize with the characters and situations, so that learners ultimately improve their discursive skills.

Keywords: language education, literary learning, empathy, FLT

Resumen

El concepto del aprendizaje literario se basa en la idea de que hay procesos de aprendizaje que tienen un resultado productivo mediante el uso de textos literarios. El elemento unificador entre ambos conceptos es el desarrollo de competencias, especialmente de las emocionales y discursivas. Al presentar estas consideraciones, se ofrecen nuevas respuestas a cuestiones viejas: ¿Por qué es necesaria la lectura literaria en la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras? ¿Cuáles son los objetivos? ¿Cómo debe dirigirse la lectura literaria y qué procesos de aprendizaje se pretenden? El artículo aborda la experiencia estética de la literatura mediante un ejemplo didáctico. A través de la percepción estética, por la que no sólo se procura una lectura entretenida, sino que también se pretende un examen crítico de la realidad representada en el texto. El resultado es una conversación literaria productiva y dialéctica en el aula en la que los temas de la narración son el punto de partida para un juicio estético, pero que también requiere la capacidad de empatizar con los personajes y las situaciones, de manera que el alumnado acabe mejorando sus habilidades discursivas.

Palabras clave: didáctica de la lengua, aprendizaje literario, empatía, enseñanza de idiomas

Resum

El concepte de l'aprenentatge literari es basa en la idea que hi ha processos d'aprenentatge que tenen un resultat productiu mitjançant l'ús de textos literaris. L'element unificador entre tots dos conceptes és el desenvolupament de competències, especialment de les emocionals i discursives. En presentar aquestes consideracions, s'ofereixen noves respostes a velles qüestions: Per què és necessària la lectura literària en l'ensenyament de llengües estrangeres? Quins són els objectius? Com s'ha de dirigir la lectura literària i quins processos d'aprenentatge es pretenen? L'article aborda l'experiència estètica de la literatura mitjançant un exemple didàctic. A través de la percepció estètica, per la qual no sols es procura una lectura entretinguda, sinó que també es pretén un examen crític de la realitat representada al text. El resultat és una conversa literària productiva i dialèctica a l'aula en la qual els temes de la narració són el punt de partida per a un judici estètic que també requereix, però, la capacitat d'empatitzar amb els personatges i les situacions, de manera que l'alumnat acabe millorant les seues habilitats discursives.

Paraules clau: didàctica de la llengua, aprenentatge literari, empatia, ensenyament d'idiomes.

1. Introduction: Literature and emotional development

Readers experience different emotions and states of mind through identifying with characters when reading fiction. Teachers who are committed to the aesthetic approach, (Schier, 2014, p.53; Delanoy, 2002, p.2) when exploring this verbal art form, differentiate the process of reading literature in the classroom from teaching literature with certain verifiable and evaluable objectives in the foreground.

The experiential concept of literature and aesthetics means that readers bring literary texts to life through their personal internal acts of understanding. This position supports the idea that the interaction between text and reader is a dialogue

The experiential concept of literature and aesthetics means that readers bring literary texts to life through their personal internal acts of understanding. This position supports the idea that the interaction between text and reader is a dialogue. The intentional use of interesting and realistic topics in foreign language teaching (FLT) is designed to improve students' linguistic skills. Reading fiction offers occasions for debating real world problems as well as encouraging students to reflect on different contemporary themes. In this way, the approach of literary learning in teaching literature in the current didactics

of literature (Bogdal, 2002, pp. 88-89) is oriented towards emotional competences - applying learner-centered procedures in order to promote learning skills and competences which may be useful to students in their daily lives (López Valero et. al., 2001, pp.203-208). Spinner (2006, pp.6) argues with the concept of literary learning that there are learning processes which relate specifically to

engagement with literary texts. He distinguishes these ideas from the concept of reading literacy, which is strongly pragmatic and refers indiscriminately to both literary and non-literary texts.

We consider literary learning suitable in language teaching for speaking and writing about desires, fears, and conflicts that the characters live through as a means of facing questions, problems and different points of view, thoughts, perceptions and opinions, which learners have to manage linguistically. Such narratives lend themselves to reflecting on situations and circumstances, which foreign language students have to understand in order to handle them linguistically in an appropriate way. Thus, leading students to understand that expressing one's own emotions in a correct way is an important part of the language learning process. With these premises in mind, it is necessary to promote an emotional access to readings, rather than simply insisting on a purely analytical one. As a result, reading fiction as a verbal art form will foster the process of personal interpretation - enriching the students' linguistic and conceptual knowledge. From a pedagogical viewpoint, readings will allow for a high degree of identification if they are related to what the students know personally, thus reaffirming their ideas, experiences and possibly reinforcing their convictions. On the other hand, students will be able to reflect on new experiences, which may contradict or seem irreconcilable with their worldview and experiences. These cognitive conflicts may possibly extend their powers of imagination and perceptive abilities beyond their current limits and those that their daily lives allow. Closely related to these purposes, the current requirement of the acquisition of some linguistic and communicative competencies in B1 levels refers to the following capacities:

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[The student] Can produce simple and coherent texts on familiar topics and areas of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and give brief reasons or explanations for plans and opinions. Can understand texts containing mainly very common everyday language as well as understand private letters describing events, feelings and wishes. (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)ⁱ

Within this framework of the communicative approach (Reyzábal, 2018, pp. 135; Mata Anaya et.al., 2015, p. 17), which focuses on speaking, where the competence to act linguistically in concrete everyday situations is realised through authentic occasions for communication, fiction can also be used successfully and in a motivating way for language and culture-related learning. FLT oriented towards literary texts focuses, among other things, on their linguistic-aesthetic dimension. Thus, I use the

literary language or the specific literariness of literary texts (Dobstadt, 2010, pp. 203-216), as described

When dealing with foreign-language literature, they should also be guided to acquire cultural values, which should encourage their willingness to relate to other people according to the principles of tolerance, justice and solidarity.

below with a B1 course as an example, in a much more comprehensive way, in order to develop the necessary skills to enable the learner to deal with everyday reality. Using literary texts has to do with current learning objectives such as empathy, perspective change and understanding of the other, which can be better achieved with certain literary texts than with the usual language learning material (Hogan, 2011 ; Wild, 1989) As a consequence, in both literature teaching and foreign language didactics, my approach is based on the concept of

experience-oriented learning (Kultusministerium Hessen, 2021). This means that the content of the reading should address learners' thinking, feelings and acting. This will be achieved through the experience of everyday life situations in a fictional space where learners can conceive it as a lived process in which thoughts and feelings come together, and in which he or she tries to interact with the characters of the text by reflecting on one's own living environment, perception, sensitivity and expression skills and strengthening the ability to criticize, to develop openness in facing the world and the ability to deal with problems. It can help students to explore other people's experiences and motives for action and to get to know a variety of feeling, thinking and acting ways. When dealing with foreign-language literature, they should also be guided to acquire cultural values, which should encourage their willingness to relate to other people according to the principles of tolerance, justice and solidarity. Since the literary text aims to foster new impressions, this experience includes not only intensive participation in the text, but also moments of distanced reflection. Distance and reflection serve to deal with the surprises, irritations and unfamiliar perspectives with which literary texts confront their readers. With respect to the skills of reading, speaking and writing, which are used in comprehension and interpretation, they offer original problem-solving situations, which require a wide range of the learner's active involvement. This might range from comprehending the characters and their problems, making personal connections, drawing conclusions, and finally reflecting on real life.

In numerous publications (Hallet et al., 2014, pp. 107-121; Saupe et al., 2012, pp. 95-98; Bredella et al., 2004, pp. 7) concerns are raised which plead for an aesthetic approach to literature which should be connected with imagination, pleasure as well as an emotional experience. These authors point out that literary texts place different demands on the recipient in terms of reading and experience than non-literary ones do as, literature, just like music or any other aesthetic experiences, can move its recipients emotionally because it touches them inwardly, or may even make them cry or laugh. Kramersch (2006, p. 251) formulates these ideas as follows:

What literature can do is foster the three major components of symbolic competence: The production of complexity, the tolerance of ambiguity, and an appreciation of form as meaning. What literature can bring to the development of symbolic competence is precisely the sense that human communication is more complex than just saying the right word to the right person in the right manner. Most of the time there is not even a right or wrong way of communicating; characters in novels get trapped by language into situations that offer neither good nor bad solutions, just tragic dilemmas. Works of literature can serve to discuss openly the contradictions between myths and realities, between words and deeds, not with a view to resolving these contradictions but to showing how language can be used to support conflicting and historically contingent truths.

So, the focus is always on personal benefit, which can only be achieved by experiencing literature aesthetically. In addition to didactic tasks, these complex literary reading processes should be oriented towards an aesthetic perception, it is worthwhile to deal with the connection between fiction and perception of reality as one of the ways to reflect on reality and search for truth (Leibrandt, 2016). Especially recommendable are those texts that stimulate meaning-making processes (ambiguities, ambivalences, citing speech, intertextuality, the relevance of the form, the complexity of the formation of meaning, Schiedermaier, 2017, p. 73) and exert a fascination because, they can be used much better for a literary discussion than if the text is clear and evident for everyone. Interesting questions arise precisely when ambivalences come up on which everyone can have a different opinion. During the reading, learners relate emotionally to the literary characters by sharing their emotions. Consequently, they develop emotions such as empathy or sensitivity of the human being, the capacity for compassion (Reyzábal, 2018, pp.112-113). In this way, it deals directly and psychologically with different experiences and ways of thinking, which contributes to being able to empathise with the protagonists, helps to produce identification, and at the same time, it expands the space of experiences. From a critical and reflective point of view, this empathic reading should involve ways of thinking that stimulate a critical reflection (Delanoy 2002, p. 22), so it has a bridging function between the fictional and the real world, the language learners in class and the countries whose language they learn. Literary learning is thus viewed as gaining new insights in the interest of a reflected and differentiated understanding of oneself and the world. By encountering literature, learners are invited to discover new possibilities for understanding and action.

2. Current approach to the emotional competence regarding the socializing aspects of reading

A point on the way to a successful aesthetic empathy and sensual perception concerns the ability to empathize with situations, characters and their linguistic representation. Fictional narratives evoke aesthetic emotions and one of them is empathy, which is a prerequisite for understanding a character. In this respect, Hogan (2011, p. 276):

Empathy is always fundamental to literature. Our emotional response to narratives is inseparable from our empathic response to figures, their situations, actions, capacities, etc. Of course, in the first place it is an aesthetic empathy, not the class of practical empathy that we could experience in the real world. After all, literary figures are not real. At the same time, however, literary works are connected with our empathic relationships to real people outside of fiction stories. Our relationships with the social identity groups (races, nations, classes) in the stories tend to be continuous with those relationship stories outside the stories.

This endeavor of empathy turns out to be particularly complex whenever the chosen form of language or the description of the characters seem strange to us. However, being able to empathise with others who may seem strange to the learner due to an unusual situation, expands the boundaries of his or her own context, and possibly allows him or her to understand others who are different. However, the following principle should not be disregarded: Without the assumption of a minimal similarity or equality by the observer, empathy does not take place, Breithaupt (2017, p.22), who defines empathy as follows:

Empathy consists of a co-experience with another, whereby the empathetic observer sees himself in the situation of the other and views this situation from his or her perspective, at least with a minimal component of self-interest and experiences it emotionally.

The approach of literature and its didactics to connect with an emotional access aims to open up some new ways of linguistic application, both for the linguistic acquisition and an emotional implication with the learning content. Learners should be able to empathise mentally and emotionally from their own experience with characters and situations, transporting themselves into the described circumstances and problems in the lives of the protagonists or narrators. As Hogan argues (2011, p. 276), literary works are connected with our empathic relations to real people outside the fictional stories. Our relations to social identity groups (races, nations, classes) in stories are likely to be continuous with those relations outside stories. In reference to the relevance of literature as part of the literary learning

process, Wild (1981, pp. 84-97) presents the following theses about realism in literature which can be very helpful when choosing a suitable reading: Literature, like all art, presents a form of knowledge of reality. Its anthropological origin lies in the need to order the apparently chaotic and threatening reality in order to face it. That is why, according to Wild, literature is a means of knowledge and provides this knowledge through mimesis, which is the representation of reality without being purely a reproduction as it modifies it at the same time. Therefore, realistic literature is based on human life with the aim of a better understanding of both, the social and natural reality, which depends on the historical changes of what is considered realistic. But fiction also allows us to represent possible forms of human behavior which do not exist in reality, and therefore implies surreal moments. Authors who write in an age-appropriate way, as in children's or young adult literature, present examples of conditions in which the protagonists live in different parts of the world by showing problems such as their coexistence, their relationship problems, questions about the self and other issues such as political or ecological ones.

But as Voss (2004, p. 109) rightly points out, maturity and the level of language, which determine the emotional level of feeling and understanding, are indispensable in this type of empathy:

The maturity of a personality is measured, among other things, by the sovereignty with which he or she is able to interpret correctly even non-stereotypical, unconventional or even paradoxical behavior as an expression of a certain emotion. Thus, children and naïve persons are hardly able to correctly assess ironic expressions and behaviors because they have no second level of interpretation.

Considering the fact that literary reading is an excellent opportunity to acquire or improve emotional and linguistic competences, through the didactic use of literature I seek a spontaneous and emotional encounter with the text, while at the same time I attempt to lead the learner to a reflection, and so offering him or her another way to progress in these processes. As literature covers all the emotions experienced by the characters in different phases and situations such as death, separation, love or violence, as well as the relationship between the young and elderly, for the learners, living the lives of the literary characters and feeling with them means a very good way of facing questions, problems and different points of view, thoughts, perceptions and opinions, which they are supposed to manage linguistically in their everyday life. Foreign language learners, who in the case under study university students, face the challenge of correctly understanding the fictional conflicts, and learn in this way that a correct way of emotional expression is an important part of the language learning process, in order to handle possible problems linguistically in an appropriate way,

In opposition to an 'adequate' understanding of a text, Bredella (2012, pp.33-48) points out that the importance of reading lies in the quality of the reception itself, in other words, in the intensity of what is lived through or the type of experiences, which a reader can have in the reception. The reader is put to test when thoughts and feelings of the other/protagonist are to be understood, but often cause astonishment, perhaps even incomprehension. Therefore, the text should encourage interaction, so that the reader has to bring his prior knowledge and understanding of facts into the reading process. Therein lies the dialogue character of reading and the function of reading literature is precisely to put these competencies into practice by finding out its correspondence in the development of non-literary competencies, which are required in different stages of a person's development, the most important of which is social interaction. This means that in the reception of literature, the same forms of interaction occur as in the personal social interaction, and these learning processes in one of the two worlds will be transferred into the competences of the other one. With this, Bredella (2010, p.31) refers to the dialogic structure of understanding the other: Literary texts are only educationally relevant if they address and challenge their recipients, so that their views and values come into play. In stories, learners experience how others make plans, how they justify their actions, how they get into conflicts and look for solutions. The reader is thus encouraged to wonder what he would have thought, felt and acted in their place, and what the alien world is revealing about his own world.

Therefore, the text should encourage interaction, so that the reader has to bring his prior knowledge and understanding of facts into the reading process.

In the competence concept, which refers to the mastery of a set of skills, the emotional ones are highlighted: They are also known as social-emotional competencies, a set of skills, which allow us to understand and express the emotional phenomena in an appropriate way by facilitating a better performance in life circumstances such as interpersonal relationships or problem solving. Here I focus on the ability to recognize what others are thinking and feeling, the social skills, empathy, and to capture non-verbal communication (Bisquerra, 2007, p.6). These skills are more pertinent to our field:

1. Awareness of feelings: Ability to perceive one's feelings accurately, and to label them.
2. Considering another's perspective: Ability to perceive accurately the point of view of others.
4. Analysis of the social norms: Ability to critically evaluate the social and cultural norms and the individual behavior.
5. Respect for others: Intention to accept and appreciate individual and group differences and to value the rights of all people.

6. Problem solving: Ability to develop solutions to problems.

Today neuroscientists, like Ciompi, recognise the interdependence between feeling and thinking, or in other words, between emotions and cognition (2005, p.12). An important first step, as shown above, is to become aware of one's own feelings, to express them adequately linguistically, as well as recognize and understand the emotions of others. For Saarni (1999), these emotional skills are especially relevant in the area of social interaction:

1. Being aware of their own emotions (implies knowing that in certain situations various and contradictory emotions can be experienced).
2. Perceiving and understanding the emotions of others (involves interpreting the emotional issues which occur in a situation or the behavior of others).
3. Communicating about emotions (implies knowing the correct vocabulary in a given culture regarding emotional expressions).
4. Empathizing (allows us to participate in the emotional experience of other people).
5. Being aware of the emotional communication in a social interaction (to know that the social relationships depend on the way the emotions are communicated).

As mentioned before, empathy through identification is considered to be the most competent form of social interaction, especially required in the FLT-classroom as students have to deal with other habits, customs and practices of the foreign country. By reading literature. they can be trained in meeting all these requirements. Not only does empathy allow them to immerse into the world through other identities, but it also requires exercising a cognitive act through which they have to anticipate and assimilate feelings and emotions by interpreting and identifying certain effects, and so make it possible to draw conclusions about the internal state (Schön 1995, p.101). Therefore, empathy consists of being able to put one's own self in someone else's shoes.

Using literature for this purpose in the classroom lends itself to experimenting in a playful way with the frontiers of one's own identity and that of others, especially with situations and emotional states, which lie outside one's own experiential sphere in order to exercise the empathic mode. It can be a good way to develop the capacity for empathy, which implies identification with the others' perspective and will have a positive influence on social competence.

It seems crucial for a narrative understanding and an essential prerequisite that first the perspective of the fictional characters must be adopted in order to immerse in a narrative (Coplan, 2004, p. 141).

The reader empathises, but also reacts to the information, which then allows him to access worlds unknown to him. This would result in true learning growth, ultimately leading to an emotionally satisfying experience. Hence, the central didactic position is to provide experiences, emotions and the possibility of self-questioning, as well as to know the reactions and arguments of others. In this way, another aspect closely related to these requirements are different decision-making situations, which concern moral development, as literature invites reflection on basic ethical positions. Therefore, through guided reading, many possibilities are opened up to broaden reading experiences. It is through the psychological and emotional depth of the literary characters that authors offer a way to access the characters' emotional state thus contributing to readers' better understanding and reflection on the world that surrounds them. This is why literature has a lot of validity and quality as a substitute means for a lack of authentic encounters with the foreign country in the classroom, leading to themes and emotions, which can provide these kinds of experiences.

3. Contemporary realistic literature as a supplement to FLT

As mentioned before, I focus on realistic literature, which offers learners different perspectives on conflicts, structures and relationships in contemporary society, but above all, the environment they usually experience such as family, school or university. Offering stories of a real everyday environment

I focus on realistic literature, which offers learners different perspectives on conflicts, structures and relationships in contemporary society, but above all, the environment they usually experience such as family, school or university.

with its conflicts, problems and feelings involved makes it possible for teachers to offer situations that, like a mirror, provide learners with experiences requiring a profound understanding of different ways of life. Certainly, it depends on the respective text as well as on learners' maturity in the reception process whether more own experiences and previous knowledge or more features of the text are in the foreground. Therefore, a

preliminary assessment of the text quality and its demands on the participants are indispensable for a successful learning process. If elaborations, i.e. productive links between what is known and what is new, emotional involvement and textual distance should take place, the teacher has to know in advance how much prior knowledge (subject and content-related knowledge, experiences, feelings) needs to be activated and how precise text perception is to take place with the aim of relating what is known and what is newly perceived. In the framework of communicative language teaching, literary texts seem to be dispensable, and literature is often used only as a means of lexical and grammatical

practice or as a mere occasion for conversation and writing as Dobstadt and Riedner (2011, p.6) point out:

In communication and action-oriented foreign language teaching, the acquisition of communicative intercultural competence is the central overriding learning objective. With conventional foreign language teaching, literature is often only used as a means of working out lexicon and grammar or as a mere reason for speaking and writing. When it comes to regional studies, it serves often as authentic material that is intended to offer insights into foreign ways of thinking and the opportunity to exchange views on cultural differences. However, their literacy is usually not taken into account, let alone used for language and culture-related learning processes.

As argued thus far, literature as authentic material provides the best way to bring learners closer to understanding other cultures, points of view and feelings. Therefore, the authors cited before perceive foreign language teaching as a space in which aesthetic-creative processes take place, which need to be identified, reflected upon and promoted so that throughout language learning, learners are not limited to acquiring merely instrumental application skills. Competences, on the other hand, are skills and abilities to solve problems and to use problem solving in different situations. The concept of competence is characterised by an emphasis on the individual contribution to problem solving and the use of knowledge and skills in real life social situations (Bredella, 2010, p. 31). Kråling, Martin and Caspari (2015, pp. 93-95) see literary learning and the aesthetic function of language as a means of learning related to language and culture, and advocate a re-evaluation of the aesthetic aspects of literature. Therefore, they demand a change of perspective in the conception of literature in language teaching towards communicative purposes, but in a more authentic way. In this way, I conceive FLT as a space in which learners, in the course of their language learning; not only acquire instrumental application skills. Hence, I suggest addressing the following questions before selecting a novel and a brief orientation regarding the criteria for the choice and suitability of a text for the treatment in foreign language classes:

- Which competences of a linguistic level can be integrated into literary reading and promoted better than in conventional language teaching?
- Which tasks can be stimulated by literary aesthetic narratives and be made productive for the processes of language learning?
- For what purpose do you want to use this text?

- Which methods do you want to use in the classroom?
- What kind of learners do you have?
- Which information in the text can they understand, and which can they not?
- With regard to the content, it is important that the story does have an emotional and social impact on the reader, so that he or she can interpret it by making it his or her own. So, the content should be close to the learners' life and experiences.
- The solutions to the conflicts should be developed by the protagonists to encourage an active attitude in the reader. Presenting new strange situations will require reviewing the possible prejudices, thus leading to reflections on ethical positions and moral development.
- It should have a motivating effect by offering learners something new and interesting, having personal relevance, and leading to identification.
- In determining the suitability of a text, the specific aspects of age, situation and culture must be taken into account. In terms of content and reference to everyday topics, it can provide information of all kinds (political, historical, geographical, anthropological), which can be used to learn more about the real life of a country, and so develop historical understanding, which in turn might result in a change of perspective.

The topicality of a certain theme makes it possible to catch up with the present and to create possible applications in the world of the learners. This aspect, and the final important benefit of all literary reading, is that fictional worlds are opportunities for the learner to transcend his or her own reality, to acquire new knowledge and to integrate it into his or her own knowledge of the world. The reference to life practice is a part of comprehension called application. By relating the meaning of a narration, certain experiences and knowledge from a reading to one's own life situations, complex situations of application arise, through which literary texts acquire a cultural, social and personal relevance characterised by multiple relationships: the literary text and its situation, the reality of the learner's life, his or her interpretation of the world and all that he or she brings to the texts in terms of knowledge, perspectives, emotions and evaluations. This means that topics relevant to everyday life can be addressed in a way that the learner has to deal with his or her own emotions, experiences, attitudes and competences. Since the effect of a narration is based on basic human experiences or constellations of problems, it offers meaning and truth.

I have discussed that texts, which contain recognisable information gaps are particularly suitable for triggering a controversial conversation in the classroom. In this way, students will be involved in

dealing with the comprehension problem. Any text, which poses coherence problems, is more suitable for this method than texts in which no coherence problems are encountered because the latter does not challenge the learners. This reader-oriented approach starts from the reaction of the learner and places him/her in the foreground of the text's interpretation. According to the hermeneutic approach and reception-aesthetics (Schier, 2014, pp. 51-53), the meaning of a literary text, which is open and indeterminate, only emerges through reading, thus allowing for several equally valid interpretations. In this way, reading is conceived as an interaction between text and reader, and not only invites spontaneous and also affective expressions, but requires the activation of an attitude of expectation, prior knowledge or creative anticipation, i.e. an activity which precedes the actual reading. In this sense, I understand using literary texts in FLT as a communicative action by giving students an active and self-determined role in the process of understanding them. Kramsch (1993, p.13) also points to this possibility of reading texts on different levels of meanings from which arise the educational challenge and a dialogical pedagogy:

The educational challenge is teaching language 'as context' within a dialogic pedagogy that makes context explicit, thus enabling text and context to interact dialectally in the classroom. Dialectic means a dialogue between two opposed or contradictory viewpoints. In the course of this dialogue, each party comes to understand the other's position from a broader, less partial perspective, which does justice to the substance of each point of view, but allows the search for a common ground. It is in the course of this search that understanding between people may emerge, based on a recognition of difference and an acceptance of continued dialogue despite differences.

4. The example of Peter Härtling's *Oma*, (Grandma) in German as a foreign language

As an example of a literary learning process, I present the short narration *Oma* (Grandmother) from Peter Härtling (1977), one of the most distinguished contemporary German-language writers, who received the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany and was awarded a Jacob Grimm Prize in 2010. I use it every year in a B1 German language university course with students aged 18-22. As it belongs to youth literature, it can also be used with younger learners, although the tasks may need to be adapted, but the main objectives are improving reading comprehension as well as speaking and writing skills, in order to make learners participate in conversations about everyday life, which should correspond to the linguistic competences of the CEFR.

In this story, the author explores the themes of generational conflict, upbringing, and strangeness, as he writes about the loss of parents, so that Grandma takes over the upbringing of her grandson, which leads to frequent misunderstandings and conflict situations due to the age gap. Learners might empathise with both main characters, the Grandma and her grandson Kalle, but they have to find their way into this special relationship, the coexistence of two different generations, and understand these two opposed positions in various situations, and finally take a critical standpoint. For Kalle, since he lives with his Grandma, everything has been very different from the way it used to be with his father and mother. Many problems arise, so both frequently argue and try to find solutions. At the end of each chapter, Grandma reflects upon a particular problem she has to deal with, so that learners have to empathise with her position, discuss it from different points of view and reach a solution. Here are two examples about the problem of upbringing, and her own behavior when always telling the same stories:

Kalle quickly realised that it's different here than at home. Dear heaven, this free education! Am I supposed to run out of the bathroom naked in the morning or in the evening just because he's used to it from his parents? He doesn't know what old people look like. And besides, I'm ashamed. I can't go along with that. I come from a different time. People weren't so - how shall I put it? -so shameless. But shameless is the wrong word. They don't have to be ashamed any more, and that's actually right. But I can't do that. He must understand that. (Härtling, 1999, p. 21)

All right, the boy must know how it used to be. For example, when I was young and my name wasn't Erna Bittel, but Erna Mauermeister. Why is he bored with these stories? Only when I tell him about the war does he sit up and take notice, he wants to know exactly whether I experienced shooting and whether there were casualties. The warlike must be in the children. It's horrible. Today, when I remembered how I met Otto and how I got hiccups from excitement which lasted for hours, Kalle just said: I already know that story. I know very well that I have never told it before. Maybe it was all too long ago. (Härtling 1999, p.33)

The main objectives of the didactic approach and examples of tasks are the following :

Differentiating views (describe the main character from his or her point of view).

Change of perspectives: What different perspectives do you learn about in this story?

Opinions: What are the opinions of the different characters in the book? Compare the characters with people you know, e.g. the grandmother in the book with yours, etc. Explain, criticise and evaluate the behaviour of the characters in the book.

Task 1: Explain Grandma's and Kalle's positions, their thoughts, feelings. What does the author want to show the reader? Have you ever experienced a situation like this?

Task 2: What do you talk with your parents or grandparents about and how does the discussion go? What arguments does Grandma have and what arguments does Kalle have? What conclusion does Grandma come to?

Task 3: Expressing your own opinion on a topic: What is your opinion about raising children? What are the differences between your grandparents and your generation regarding this topic? How does Grandma understand justice? And how do you understand it? Are you on Granny's side or on Kalle's? Justify your answer.

Task 4: Why does Kalle sometimes argue with Grandma? Formulate the problem Kalle has with Grandma. Can you give Grandma and Kalle some advice? If I were you,, I would ... You could ... You should...

Example for writing a comment on a chapter:

- The text is about/ deals with the topic.....
- The Grandma/Kalle argues that....., thinks that....., is of the opinion that..., Negative: I do not agree with Grandma/Kalle, as I think that..... In my opinion, Positive: I agree with Grandma/KallePartly: I only partly agree with Grandma's/Kalle's opinion.....
- Personal opinion: In my opinion..... As for me.....
- Conclusion: For all of the above/In my opinion .../I am certain that.../I am convinced that.../I believe that... /I think that.../In conclusion.....

Some guiding questions for the writing part, which intend a change of perspective and empathic understanding, are the following:

- What do you learn about Grandma and about the relationship between Grandma and Kalle? How are Grandma and Kalle described? What does Kalle like and dislike?
- Identify the narrative perspective: What thoughts does Grandma have? Where does she see a problem?
- When Grandma tells stories about past times: What is typical for Grandma and how does Kalle react? What is her problem and what does the author want to show with it? How does Grandma react and how does Kalle react? What does Grandma think about it?

As an example for a perspective takeover and the capacity to put yourself in the position of others, I show here a letter which a student has written from the grandson's point of view to Grandma during her stay in hospital, and two final blog entries where others reflect in a final comment on what they have learned with the book and what they liked.

Dear Grandma,

I hope you are well. I'm sorry I can't come and see you, but I'll join you soon. Don't worry, you will soon recover. When I visit you, we can organise a trip together to a village nearby, would you like that? We'll go by train because you're afraid of planes. We can go somewhere quiet so you can read, be in nature and go for a walk. We won't watch TV, so we won't argue. I have a lot to tell you. We will see each other again soon.

Many greetings, Kalle

- 1) There are many parts of the book that I find interesting, but the most interesting is when Grandma and Kalle argue. It has been shown throughout the story that they have very different views because of the age difference between them. For example, when Grandma doesn't want Kalle to play football with his friends because she is afraid he will get hurt. I don't like the ending because Kalle realises that his grandmother is old and close to death and that she is also not in the best shape because of her old age. And also because I feel sorry for Grandma getting older and Kalle suffering. But I think it's a very realistic chapter, because although we don't like to admit that our grandparents are getting older, it's something we all live with. Besides, Kalle is already 10 years old and it's normal that his grandmother tells him that. I think what the author wants to teach is that age differences mean that everyone has very different views, and that learning to listen and putting ourselves in the shoes of others are very important. I also think he wants to show that family is something very important, and even if we have bad days and argue, everything makes us grow as people. At the end of the day, our parents and grandparents only tell us all this because they love us. Another message of the book is that we have to love each other.
- 2) A very important moment in the story seems to me to be when Kalle has problems at school and hides them from grandma and grandma defends Kalle anyway. Another important point for me is the character of the caretaker and how she makes Granny react and defend herself. The title brings us to the core of the book: *Oma* is the story of Erna Bittel and her grandson Kalle and how they have to learn to live together and overcome their differences after the death of Kalle's parents. I find the part of the book where Grandma argues with Kalle about

the TV while herself watching a film the most interesting. I was surprised by this story and how the author shows that grandma is not only a tough person, but also weak and old. I don't like the ending of the story so much because it's very sudden, it's hard to connect with the characters, and towards the end, when I started to get to know them, the book was over. That is partly bad and partly good, because it allows me to think about the ending I prefer, rather than settling on one. I have the impression that the author wants to show us through the book how old and modern life clash and coexist, represented by the characters of Grandma and Kale respectively. I think the author wants to show us what happens to old and young people in contemporary life. I would recommend the book because I think it is a good way to learn German, with a curious and entertaining story.

As the examples may show the following competences, which follow the description by CEFR as quoted at the beginning, based on the reading have been practiced:

- Describing experiences, events or wishes in simple coherent sentences.
- Explaining and briefly justifying opinions.
- Asking and answering questions, commenting on information: I find it interesting ... /I'm surprised that.../ I wouldn't have thought that.../ I was angry/sad because.../ it's funny that....
- Talking about everyday problems or something unreal, commenting on a situation.
- Expressing one's own opinion on a topic: Arguing - good or bad? Evaluating actions, behavior and motives.
- Giving advice, justifying something, agreeing or disagreeing with someone.
- Recognising, understanding and resolving conflicts, talking about stages of life, problems, fears and hopes: What difficulties and conflicts are described?
- Empathising: Choose a character from the text and express what you have in common with them.

Regarding the emotional competences, the experience-oriented learning as well as the dialogical pedagogy, I consider the narrative of *Oma* as an ideal opportunity for students in this level to reflect on the experiences and images of what childhood and the intergenerational relationship are from two opposite points of view. With the example of the family environment, they get to know very clearly that the emotional competencies and interpersonal relationships play a key role in the good functioning of a family and their coexistence because of different attitudes, wishes and responses. That

is why I choose readings which appeal to them primarily emotionally in terms of content. On the other hand, the methodology of literary learning gives them the possibility of experiencing other situations by recreating them in fictional worlds.

5. Conclusion

Based on the reading of the short novel *Oma* by Peter Härtling in a B1 course in German as a foreign language, the underlying didactic objectives were presented: The learners were introduced to a sensitive dialogue with the characters through an aesthetic text and an action-oriented approach. The reflection on certain difficult moments in the lives of the characters brought them into contact with surprises, irritations and unfamiliar perspectives and situations, which was intended to promote their emotional competence. The didactic learning objectives presented before the reading of such a novel focus on the interpersonal and social competence, the capacity of perception in order to consciously interpret one's own feelings and those of others as well as to know how to evaluate them. It allows the students to acquire a more in depth understanding of what it means to experience empathy, by feeling what others think and perceive, and to be able to understand it. But, above all, they practice the capacity to communicate and learn how to talk about emotional experiences. In conclusion, it seems to be crucial to encourage the use of the fictional narratives in FLT when they are intimately linked to the linguistic competences learners have to acquire. They will most likely engage in the different tasks when they feel emotionally involved in those stories, which are linked to the emotions experienced in real life. Such type of narratives, like the realistic one by Härtling, offer affective responses to a situation, both real and fictional, which can be transferred and expressed in oral as well as in written communication. By focusing on emotions and identity through fiction, it becomes especially attractive to consider the possibilities of identification, which connect directly with the world of the learners' particular experiences. In this sense, perhaps more changes still have to be made in the didactic use of literary texts, but as the above example hopefully has shown, literature not only offers the possibility of entertainment, but also an opportunity to grow emotionally.

It allows the students to acquire a more in depth understanding of what it means to experience empathy, by feeling what others think and perceive, and to be able to understand it. But, above all, they practice the capacity to communicate and learn how to talk about emotional experiences.

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How to cite this paper:

Leibrandt, I. (2022). Literary learning: A proposal for using literature for the acquisition of emotional competencies. *Journal of Literary Education*, (6), 132-151. <https://doi.org/10.7203/JLE.6.23656>

“Eating through Books”: Reading Aloud Practice in Middle Grades Literacy

“Alimentarse de libros”: Prácticas de lectura en voz alta en la alfabetización del ciclo superior de Primaria

“Alimentar-se de llibres”: Pràctiques de lectura en veu alta en l’alfabetització del cicle superior de Primària

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Abstract

This article examines the virtual teaching practices of a middle grades (grade 6) language arts/English teacher during the COVID-19 pandemic period. Data were collected through co-written responses and an interview process, followed by narrative analysis. The study focused on the practices of the teacher and, as such, did not include student responses and student data. This article presents the teacher’s seminal steps in literacy, their choices in selecting and sharing texts, and the challenges they faced in their pivot to online instruction in the context of the pandemic. The analysis considers building experiences of communal activity, and creating and establishing emotional connections, as well as educational ones as the key results of the practices of the teacher, highly linked to the selection process of the texts for the classroom. The study fits into the wider perspective on digital literacy, virtual instruction, and middle grades literacy.

Keywords: virtual teaching, literacy, narrative analysis, reading out loud

Resumen

Este artículo examina las prácticas de enseñanza virtual de una maestra de lengua de primaria (grado 6) durante el período de la pandemia del COVID 19. Los datos se recopilaron a través de respuestas coescritas y un proceso de entrevista, seguido de un análisis narrativo. El estudio se centró en las prácticas de la profesora y, como tal, no incluyó las respuestas y los datos del alumnado. Este artículo presenta los pasos cruciales de la maestra hacia la educación literaria, sus decisiones al seleccionar y compartir textos, y los retos que se encontraron al trasladarse la enseñanza al modelo remoto en el contexto de la pandemia. El

análisis presenta la construcción de experiencias de actividad comunitaria y la creación y el desarrollo de conexiones emocionales a la vez que educativas como los resultados más relevantes de las prácticas educativas de la maestra, estando estas relacionadas con la selección de textos para el aula. El estudio se suma a una perspectiva más amplia de la alfabetización digital, la instrucción virtual y la educación literaria en los últimos años de primaria.

Keywords: enseñanza virtual, alfabetización, análisis narrativo, lectura en voz alta

Resum

Aquest article examina les pràctiques d'ensenyament virtual d'una mestra de llengua de primària (grau 6) durant el període de la pandèmia del COVID 19. Les dades es van recopilar a través de respostes coescrites i un procés d'entrevista, seguit d'una anàlisi narrativa. L'estudi es va centrar en les pràctiques de la professora i, com a tal, no va incloure les respostes i les dades de l'alumnat. Aquest article presenta els passos crucials de la mestra cap a l'educació literària, les seues decisions en seleccionar i compartir textos i els reptes que es van trobar en traslladar-se l'ensenyament al model remot en el context de la pandèmia. L'anàlisi presenta la construcció d'experiències d'activitat comunitària i la creació i el desenvolupament de connexions emocionals al mateix temps que educatives com els resultats més rellevants de les pràctiques educatives de la mestra, profusament relacionades amb la selecció de textos per a l'aula. L'estudi se suma a una perspectiva més àmplia de l'alfabetització digital, la instrucció virtual i l'educació literària en els últims anys de primària.

Paraules clau: ensenyament virtual, alfabetització, anàlisi narrativa, lectura en veu alta.

1. Introduction

This manuscript highlights the work of a 6th grade teacher, Kassie, who engages in the practice of reading aloud regularly. In order to present this work as co-authored research, we utilize the methodology of narrative inquiry and, in so doing, present the story of this teacher as a foregrounded component of the process. This article is the collaboration and co-construction among two researchers and a teacher, organized according to the teacher's seminal steps in literacy, their choices in selecting and sharing texts, and the challenges they faced in their pivot to online instruction in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study focused on the practices of the teacher and, as such, did not include student responses and student data

The teacher's work as a primary voice speaks to the details and ramifications of the account presented here, arranged as a series of findings drawn from the words of the teacher. We present these words collected in tables alongside our collective notes, connections, and wondering. Additional implications are included as we have moved to a conclusion. In particular, we focused our attention on the process

of modeling and thinking aloud about text and the ways in which this practice might be worth retaining at all levels of literacy instruction, including the middle level.

The researchers first became aware of the teacher’s work through a separate publication that examined the use of reading aloud as a literacy practice in middle school instruction. Data were collected in the 2020-2021 school year through virtual interviews and shared documents with the teacher.

The research question which guided the project was, “In what ways do educators engage in reading aloud practices in middle school English/language arts classrooms?”

2. Literature Review

In a recent review of the literature, researchers indicated that reading aloud to students is a form of literacy practice that is given little attention consistently in middle and high school settings (Ward, Warren, & Gabriel, 2019). This paucity led to further questions of how much reading aloud occurs in grades 6-12. The benefits of the practice have been documented, but are often focused on early elementary literacy. Reading aloud in class has served as a space for promoting lexical and orthographic knowledge development (Coltheart et al., 1993; Coltheart et al., 2001; Glushko, 1979), facilitating access to sophisticated texts and ideas (Albright & Ariail, 2005; Ariail & Albright, 2006; Warner et al., 2015), and fostering overall literacy and language development (Duursma et al., 2008).

It has been suggested that reading aloud is a practice that typically drops off in late elementary school and is scarce in secondary instruction, especially in subjects other than English Language Arts or Social Studies (Cunningham & Allington, 2016; Warner et al., 2015). The assumption seems to be that by the time students reach middle school and high school, reading aloud is a practice that is less needed; instruction then moves toward independent silent reading practices (Reed et al., 2014). Yet, despite

The process of modeling and thinking aloud as part of reading aloud is an especially rich context for understanding the delicate work on meaning making and engagement with texts and ideas

the paucity of research on reading aloud as a practice with students beyond the elementary years, potential benefits in terms of students’ perceptions of reading and reading motivation and engagement at all grade levels have emerged (Lyman, 2010; Richardson, 2000). Studies noted the positive impacts of reading aloud on developing student vocabulary and conceptual knowledge for middle school students, with students with reading challenges

reaping the most benefits (Braun, 2010; Mims et al., 2012; Schmitt et al., 2011).

Additionally, Dreher (2003) has pointed to the power of read-alouds in high school courses for presenting texts in more dramatic ways, and for generating dialogue. While Dreher (2003) suggested that titles as complex as Camus can be read aloud, Giorgis (1999) has also noted the affordances of picture books with high school students, with potential improvement in active listening skills and exploring new perspectives. Pointing to the varied use of materials that teachers in middle grades can employ for read-aloud, Lesene (2006) argued that “[t]eachers across the country should be reading aloud to their classes on a regular basis (daily is best)” (p. 50). Furthermore, the existing work on using reading aloud with middle and high school students collectively points to the key role educators can play in demonstrating ways of navigating a range of texts through oral reading activities (Albright & Ariail, 2005; Ariail & Albright, 2006; Reed et al., 2014). The process of modeling and thinking aloud as part of reading aloud is an especially rich context for understanding the delicate work on meaning making and engagement with texts and ideas. As a foundation for this study, we focused on the role of the teacher. The educator’s first-hand knowledge is a considerable source of data that is sometimes overlooked.

3. Narrative Inquiry

We draw on the narrative inquiry as particularly helpful for capturing stories and accounts of the lived experiences of people, holding the notion of co-authorship as central to our work (Clandenin and Connelly, 2000). The identity and interaction of the person involved in this study is valued as a part of narrative inquiry, and is invited to the work as an embodiment of “lived stories” (Clandenin & Connelly, 2000, p. 43). As an additional source of data, Kassie shared recordings of her read alouds during the project, which demonstrated a consistency between her described and enacted teaching practices.

As a narrative project, Kassie’s words are central, they are named as a co-author, and their storytelling practice continues from the classroom to the journal page. Bhattacharya (2017) united the concepts of research and story in their description of narrative inquiry. In this story, we begin with an exposition of where Kassie is from, as well as early influences on the teacher’s experience. We then examine a central tension together, as one would encounter in a narrative. Finally, we allow for the climax of the story to occur as this teacher shares about classroom practices, and we discuss the effects that Kassie has witnessed in the context of the classroom. We end with what we hope will be an intriguing hook to a potential new chapter in this teacher’s story, as well as an indication of the types of steps in research that may be needed moving forward with examinations of read aloud practices in grades 6-12. We co-present four vignettes in the teacher’s experience, which align their history as a reader with their on-going classroom practices, and which speak to their work in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“New Pronunciations”

Kassie noted that they are probably in the minority among their friends, in that they still read aloud to their middle school-aged children at home, as well as in their classroom practice. While this educator focuses reading aloud on particular lesson objectives, they also indicated that they sometimes share books for the sake of student enjoyment and “pleasure reading.” These ideas about what counts as quality reading stem from some place in their life.

As a child, Kassie enjoyed being read to and recounted the story of moving to France as they were beginning to develop as a young reader. Because of this change in their literacy history, Kassie encountered “new pronunciations” and felt they had to go “back to the basics” of reading. Even though both of this teacher’s parents were engaged in literacy work at home and as part of their profession, there were still challenges that Kassie faced. In effect, reading became an experience at school that was not enjoyable for Kassie, and they were pulled out for more individualized instruction.

In situating their practices, this teacher returns to their early experiences with childhood literacy, and notes the unique role that their family played in demonstrating such practices through their recreation and work. The teacher also reflects on a reluctance to read, echoing a challenge that literacy educators face when working with adolescent readers (Tovani, 2021; Wilhelm & Smith, 2016). The teacher notes a trend in their experiences, an avocation for being read to, which informs their current practices.

<p>I come from a family of teachers as well as a family of avid readers. One might think that since both of my parents taught English (my dad was a teacher at Tufts University and my mom taught English at the private high school my sisters and I went to) and read to my sisters and me regularly, that I would naturally be as interested in reading and as good at it as they were.</p>	<p>We note the immediate turn to origins as part of the teacher’s account of themselves, rooting their practices and beliefs in early experiences and note the tension/dissonance of being a reluctant reader in a family of avid readers.</p>
<p>However, in my early life, this was not the case at all. I did love being read to and I especially enjoyed when my parents told me stories about our family, but I could have thought of a thousand things I would have rather done than pick up a book to read for pleasure. I could never understand how my big sister seemed to actually want to read! When I was seven years old, my family moved to Rennes, France, for a year so that my parents (who at the time taught at Philips Exeter Academy) could teach abroad. My sister and I went</p>	<p>Here, we note that the teacher solidifies her early stance in reluctance, and note that reading aloud was a practice she enjoyed in her childhood. The dissonance with reading/family members who enjoy reading continues through this quote.</p>

<p>to the local French public schools where I quickly became fluent in French and relearned how to read.</p>	
<p>Since I was learning a new language, my parents had me do first grade again in France as a way to help me be successful. When we returned home a year later, my parents assumed that I would be able to enter school as a third grader, but very quickly realized that I was completely lost academically--especially in reading--and decided to have me move to second grade.</p>	<p>New problems arise as the teacher/then child navigated different language practices and spaces – and we note the differences in grade levels and reading work that the teacher encountered as a child. The feel of being lost is clear here.</p>
<p>The next year we moved outside of Boston and I started in the school at which I would remain through 12th grade. I continued to be behind my peers in reading fluency and comprehension, so I took supplementary English classes in very small groups to give me extra help. I did this from fourth grade through 7th and finally caught up to my peers.</p>	<p>The continued work toward reading/reader who is striving identity is evident here as the teacher recounts continuing through the school experience, and the teacher notes supplementary experiences for additional help throughout their school experience.</p>

Table 1. Narrative Entry 1

In this account, the teacher notes their awareness of what it means and feels like to be behind, highlighting a sense of empathy. At the same time, they note the importance of linking one language to another, and point to the difficulty that can sometimes arise as children move from one language to the next and move from one place to another. The affection for reading that this teacher would build is evident in this account of early literacy, and their note that they were a reluctant reader early on suggests further that both empathy for students with striving reading behaviors and knowledge of multiple strands of reading engagement would be part of this teacher’s conceptual framing of classroom practice.

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In middle school, Kassie discovered Judy Blume, and this experience with a book created a more positive foundation for reading later in life. This experience with the powerful nature of encountering an engaging text continues to inform Kassie’s teaching.

<p>This moment, when I realized that I was reading a book and actually loving it was a brand new and surprising discovery for me. I think before this, I just hadn’t been taught how to choose books that appealed to me and I thought that all books were boring and hard to follow. Once I found Judy Blume, I started reading all of her books and it changed how I saw reading.</p>	<p>The teacher continues their narrative of early experiences and notes the moment that connection to an author and text were found. The notion of being taught how to choose books later echoes in the teacher’s discussion of their practices with students.</p>
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<p>One of the things I spend time on in the first few conferences I have with my students is not only how they feel about reading, but what types of books they read or don't read, and how they choose their books. A few years ago, I realized that, like the younger me, many of my students thought they didn't like reading, but really it was just that they weren't choosing books that they enjoyed.</p>	<p>Here, the teacher shifts to present tense, and makes direct connections to their early experiences as a reader, noting an emphasis on choice and connecting current students to a vision and understanding of their younger self.</p>
<p>Since I try to give my students choice in their reading material as often as possible, I spend time giving direct instruction to some of them on how to choose a good book for themselves. One of the ways we do this, is by building up some practices that avid readers do: start finding people who share similar book tastes to trade recommendations with, start keeping track of books completed that include title, author, and star-rating to see what patterns we can find in helping them choose a good variety of books, and, when a book is nearing the end, be ready with what will be read next.</p>	<p>Moving from their belief in choice, the teacher talks through the steps in what this looks like, including a focus on reading practices and explicit, scaffolded steps in choosing books.</p>
<p>We use their book lists in our conferences, too, to help them set goals, decide if they're successfully picking good books, and to see how to incorporate variety in genres.</p>	<p>Next steps in teacher practice are evident in goal-setting, reflecting on the experience and noting progress, and reaching across genres to read more widely. This is reading advocacy or, as Harvey and Ward (2017) describe it, an intentional and active role in book-matching from reader to text on the part of the teacher.</p>

Table 2. Narrative Entry 2

This connection to finding materials that students can engage with speaks to the teacher's early experiences in reluctance with reading, as well as their notes about the importance of finding a book that connects with experiences. In their practice, this teacher notes the power that texts play in sharing

Reading aloud is generative for other aspects of literacy development.

characters, elements of mood and tone, and reliable and unreliable narrators, citing *The Wednesday Wars* by Gary D. Schmidt as an example of a book that encourages this range of work. Their work with students highlighted this connection in their own story between finding a powerful voice/author,

and locating texts that students could engage with.

They noted that choosing books and reading aloud is “intentional” on the part of the teacher and allows students to connect their knowledge to the text. They also noted that reading aloud occurs daily in their classroom, which in a typical academic year allows Kassie 150 minutes with students each day.

<p>When I'm thinking about what I want to read aloud to my students, I start with picking the genre that I'm</p>	<p>The teacher here begins to move through descriptions of their process in choosing books</p>
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<p>also teaching about in reading and writing. For me, that means that I start the year with fiction, then move into nonfiction, and then end with both or either. After I settle on the major genre, then I try to make sure that the books I choose within that genre are really varied. In our fiction unit, for example, I might start with historical fiction, then go into dystopian fiction, and then adventure, or realistic fiction.</p>	<p>by genre and matching these books to students, beginning with fiction. This movement through genres is also a schema for how they organize the year's instruction. The teacher then explores sub-genres of fiction that they use in instruction, expanding on the number of choices students have.</p>
<p>For nonfiction, I find that many of my students think they don't like it, so I often start with nonfiction that is written like fiction. I also love this opportunity to introduce articles, magazines, and other high-interest informational reading. One of the books I've used over the past couple of years is <i>Fast Food Nation</i> by Eric Schlosser. Overall, this book is written for adults and is too mature and complex for my 6th graders, but there are several wonderfully written parts, which are great for reading aloud and for modeling that nonfiction is often read differently than fiction.</p>	<p>The teacher then describes the move to incorporate nonfiction in the school year and reading diet. Just as with fiction, a multitude of types/sub-genres within the genre are described. A particular title is mentioned that has proved to be a go-to choice for the teacher, while they also note the complexity of the text and connect these difficult aspects directly to the scaffolding that can be accomplished for building comprehension and guiding readers in a read aloud routine. This is a direct explanation of the role of modeling afforded by the read aloud.</p>
<p>Even if I'm only reading for 10-15 minutes a day, our read alouds are infused in every part of our lessons as I am constantly referring back to them for modeling good writing that we can try to emulate, or trying to think more deeply about our ideas connected to them.</p>	<p>Here, the teacher notes the iterative nature of the read aloud not just as a classroom event, but a practice that is ongoing and becomes a referential point even at other times during the day. The teacher points to the potential for modeling writing through sharing these texts as an additional connection and possibility with next steps in instruction.</p>

Table 3. Narrative Entry 3

Evident in this account is a note of many factors which go beyond engagement to qualify what is included in a read aloud experience, including considerations of time, genre, and text complexity. Text choice can sometimes be an agonizing process. The constant referencing to books for connecting to writing experiences demonstrates the teacher's awareness of how reading aloud is generative for other aspects of literacy development.

"I Turned to Books"

In relating the story of their work in reading aloud, Kassie shared that they "turned to books," and sought a diverse classroom library that allowed students to experience stories that were not "stuck" in a particular "zone." For example, Kassie noted that many books in their classroom library that featured Jewish characters were set in the Holocaust, and many stories of African American characters were depicted in the Civil Rights Movement. This entry exists as a stand-alone response, in which the teacher describes the need to update the library and continue to ensure that a variety of identities/experiences are represented in texts, pointing to a critical literacy aspect of the work they do.

I wanted to include more stories of Jewish people and Black people that were not solely from those time periods and I wanted to also include books that my students recommended to me. Books can be expensive, so I visit a second-hand book store in our community and I use my Scholastic book points to get new and fresh stories in my library. I also try to pay attention to what my students are getting out of the school library or bringing in from home so that I can keep the choices varied. I really want every student in my classroom to feel connected to at least a few characters in my classroom library books either because they are so similar to those characters, or because they can relate to them despite being so different. (Kassie, Narrative Entry 4)

There was a continual sense of empathy in the work that Kassie sought to share in this unit, illuminated by their book choices. There was also a sense of expanding notions of how to select texts, including titles that expand awareness of cultural identities and intersections of experience. The teacher also pointed to material needs and considerations with attempting to create a living and diverse classroom library, that is both “fresh” and “new,” constantly updating to keep up with what is current. In particular, Kassie highlighted the text, *A Long Walk to Water*, a story focused on a refugee experience and noted that students thought the story “cannot possibly be real” when they first encounter it, but are often surprised when they reach the end of the narrative and discover that the book is based on a true story. In this way, Kassie opened up the text as a story first, and visited the reality of the narrative as a revealing aspect toward the end of the reading. The teacher was not developing these literacy events and encounters by accident, but reflected on a step-by-step process that took into account the power of the read aloud experience. Building on and framing this need for reaching out to a range of texts that offer diverse perspectives, the teacher notes the importance of reading aloud as a practice that can invite students to consider new ways of seeing the world.

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Reading aloud is such important work because it allows us as readers into a world that might differ from our own where we can make connections unexpectedly that help to improve our understanding of each other as human beings. When we make those connections at the same time that we’re sharing the experience with others, it just feels special. (Kassie, Narrative Entry 5)

Based on their framing of providing access to books, Kassie indicated that they likes to include lots of choice. They went on to say that the first trimester in the school year is devoted to fiction, the second trimester is devoted to informational text, and the final trimester is open to both.

<p>Usually, my students have a definite preference between fiction and nonfiction and often they do not like one of those genres at all, but I have found that they actually can learn to really appreciate each genre if they give it a chance. To do this, I tell them that while they can choose to read anything for homework (when I have them read for 30 minutes a night) or when they have free reading time during the school day, they must read fiction --any book of their choosing -- for their 30 minutes of daily independent reading time.</p>	<p>The teacher here notes preferences among students for genres, and points to the need to expose students to multiple types of texts to build appreciation. The focus on choice evident in earlier entries is still part of this process, with some time devoted to particular genres.</p>
<p>The read aloud is also fiction for this and so are the mentor texts I use, the small group work reading, and the writing we do. This way they have several opportunities to incorporate and practice the skills I'm teaching them in their chosen books.</p>	<p>Here, the teacher notes further the relationship of reading and writing in the classroom, building from the read aloud experience.</p>
<p>For their independent reading, I just let them read. I have found that if I give them work to do with their independent reading books, then they tend to resent that reading time, but if I just let them read, they actually seem to really get absorbed in their books and read for much longer periods of time.</p>	<p>At the same time, the teacher juxtaposes the need to allow students to read freely for the pleasure of reading and notes that this has positive results. In this classroom, what is striking is that reading occurs in multiple ways throughout the class period.</p>
<p>I use our small group time to practice the skills I'm teaching, and I mostly use our read aloud time for whole group discussions and for writing about reading. For me, this way of varying the work and pleasure has worked the best and I have found that all of my readers grow in their reading skills because of it. When I conference with my students about reading, I am listening for how they talk about books and how they are liking their books. We also use that time to think about what they're doing well already and to create goals for them.</p>	

Table 4. Narrative Entry 6

Kassie noted that reading aloud text helped students to see that the work they did in informational text was not separated from the moves readers make in fiction, and that this focus on informational text helps students see that they could enjoy this genre, as well. By using read alouds and a variety of writing experiences, Kassie works to “build up thinking in reading.” A central question that this teacher likes to ask students is, “Are you enjoying the books you’re picking?” If the answer is no, they advocate for new choices. Furthermore, they look for “suspenseful” and “action-packed” texts to create a sense of engagement and draw upon the interests of young readers. Kassie wrote:

<p>My own children (aged 12 and 14) are very different readers. My oldest loves to read as often as possible, whereas my younger son has only just started to enjoy</p>	<p>The teacher connects literacy practice first to their own childhood, and here connects their thinking to their role as a parent. This is a key section in that the</p>
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<p>reading independently since the pandemic started and he didn't have much else to do. I am a firm believer that to get better at reading you must read more, and he has proved this true in how much stronger of a reader he has become in the last 8 months.</p>	<p>teacher begins to think through the pandemic context, and the teacher again returns to a belief in reading volume.</p>
<p>When I am choosing books to share with my kids or my students, I'm thinking about the variety of people who will be listening. Sometimes I will read the first book in a series that I think some of my reluctant readers might like enough to continue on their own. I love Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key and Among the Hidden for this.</p>	<p>Metacognition takes focus in this section as the teacher describes their thinking in terms of texts and audience, with particular connections for readers who are reluctant. The teacher then points to specific texts which are go-to titles for their work.</p>
<p>Other times I will read a book that I think will teach a great deal about something important to me (building empathy for example) and that I don't think students would otherwise find on their own. The Wednesday Wars is a great example of this. I have not yet had a student who has even heard of this book, much less read it, but it's always one of our favorites by the end. It is one that appeals to avid readers and kids who don't like reading, boys and girls, and students who are at the highest academic level as well as those who struggle. It's one of those books that draws in the reader. Another thing I think about when I'm choosing a read aloud book is how to expose my listeners to experiences completely outside of their normal lives.</p>	<p>The teacher addresses another layer in text choice here in terms of thinking about topics that are important or issues that are relevant. The text, The Wednesday Wars, makes a second appearance in the narrative a key title. The teacher then describes the affordances of that text, as well as general affordances for the read aloud routine for exposing students to stories that are outside of their experience.</p>
<p>These books are the ones that tend to create the best conversations and the most heart-felt writing. I feel like I can practically see my students' hearts and minds growing. Some of the books that have really hit home for my listeners have been ones where they really care about a character--especially if that character is being treated unfairly or has something hard they're dealing with. I have seen this with Ghost by Jason Reynolds where the main character is trying to fit in, with Everything Will be Okay by James Howe where the main character feels very misunderstood in his own family, with One for the Murphy's by Lynda Mullaly Hunt where the main character deals with abuse and being a foster child, and with Al Capone Does My Shirts Gennifer Choldenko where the main character has a sister with severe autism.</p>	<p>Further expanding on this notion, the teacher points to additional texts that offer insights into empathy and social justice issues, with connections for the types of writing that they want students to encounter. The teacher notes the kind of response they receive as a kind of formative feedback experience. Connections to relevant experiences of belonging and being included, experiences of being misunderstood or even abused, are other threads of experience that the teacher is able to touch on through the use of appropriately and carefully-chosen texts.</p>

Table 5. Narrative Entry 7

“Like the Movies”

Kassie indicated that they were drawn to reading aloud because they saw it as a communal practice, much “like the movies.” They noted that reading aloud has the potential to pull in “kids who don't think they like reading,” and that the astonished looks on their students' faces were visible evidence of the power of the experience of hearing a story. This tie to popular culture and the role of media and

visualizing, as well as performing content with emotion and attention to performance, lined up with Jolly's (1998) suggestions about both the popularity and ubiquity of film, as well as Opitz and Rasinski's (2008) notion of the importance of oral reading activities for developing fluency and engagement with text.

When I taught 4th grade and Pre-K, I also read to my students daily and I also loved it, but reading to my middle school-aged kids and students is so much more satisfying and stimulating because the conversations we can have and what they can contribute to them is much more meaningful and mature. It's a lot less of me just sharing my thoughts and a lot more of them sharing their perspective on what's happening and how it affects them. I would imagine that that's even more true as kids get into high school. And it makes sense that this would be true since book clubs for adults are so popular; people love stories and people love connecting with each other about those stories. Reading aloud to older kids becomes less, perhaps, about showing good reading fluency or reading skills, and more about how to be a good person and how to coexist with others who are different from us. It teaches us that our ideas matter--and so do those of others--and that we must continue to help our ideas evolve by continuously reading and learning about all sorts of stories. (Kassie, Narrative Entry 8)

Table 6. Narrative Entry 8

They noted that this practice builds confidence for students and exists alongside a repertoire of other practices, including reading conferences, writing instruction, and attention to authentic literacy tasks. In all of their work, Kassie focuses on practices that encourage, rather than "kill" reading and writing:

Some of the best lessons for me about reading and how to incorporate the best practices for teaching reading came from my own children. My daughter loves reading so much, but every so often I would see the bright light in her eyes dim and it seemed to happen when she was made to do too many repetitive activities with her books that took the joy out of reading. That's why I decided to separate independent reading from small group work reading, so that during independent reading they're becoming better readers in general (without realizing they're actually working hard to build stamina) while small group work is spent building specific skills and applying them to the reading. And that leaves read aloud, which combines the two practices: during the actual read aloud they're just enjoying the story, contributing to the conversation and listening to things I point out to them to notice, but afterwards they're showing their individual thinking about it and developing those ideas more deeply and thoroughly through writing about reading. (Kassie, Narrative Entry 9)

Table 7. Narrative Entry 9

During the second trimester, teen activism forms a large part of this teacher's practice, and expands on the communal nature of the read aloud by exposing students to a variety of narratives, including the story of Malala Yousafzai in the young reader's edition of *I Am Malala*. In this use of the text, Kassie moves from stories that build empathy to stories of action and real consequences in the world.

4. Discussion, Further Analysis and Conclusions: “Eating through Books”

At the time of our first interview, Kassie was beginning to plan on transitioning to online learning and noted that, in the spring of 2020, they had to make alterations to their reading aloud plans as they went through their usual text choices more quickly than anticipated, and then had to find other books to share. They noted that her students were “eating through books.”

The work of this teacher, rendered largely in their own words as co-author, demonstrates the practice of engaging with literacy as a member of a classroom community. The face-to-face and online context of the work that the teacher has done echoes the relevance of building experiences of communal activity, centered around texts, to create and establish emotional connections, as well as educational ones. Kassie included intentional text choices based on their potential for developing areas of study and community-building within the classroom, regardless of the physical or virtual location of that community. What is more, Kassie traces their pedagogical choices and interests in avenues of literacy instruction to their individual and familial roots as a reader.

Next steps in this research process might entail finding other teachers who include read alouds as part

The face-to-face and online context of the work that the teacher has done echoes the relevance of building experiences of communal activity, centered around texts, to create and establish emotional connections, as well as educational ones

of their work with older students. Kassie was able to highlight specific texts that are notable for providing consistent engagement in classroom practice. Expanding the study of reading activities with middle school and high school students might afford further exploration of nuances in these teaching practices, as well as textual alignments with a wider community of educators. In terms of policy, administrators, stakeholders, and developers of curriculum

might expand some of the framing around literacy engagement practices for older readers.

Finally, Kassie’s work speaks to the need to retain some practices from early childhood/elementary literacy, albeit in a different context and perhaps with more complex texts. The possibility for comparative descriptions in a study on vertical alignment serves as yet another potential avenue for further work.

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How to cite this paper:

DeHart, J.D, Ward, N. A. & Cimo, K. (2022). "Eating through Books": Reading Aloud Practice in Middle Grades Literacy. *Journal of Literary Education*, (6), 152-166. <https://doi.org/10.7203/JLE.6.23754>

The Depiction of the Loser Teenager in the Film and Television Adaptations of John Green's Young Adult Novels

La representación del adolescente perdedor en las versiones cinematográficas y televisivas de las adaptaciones para jóvenes de las novelas para adultos de John Green

La representació de l'adolescent perdedor en les versions cinematogràfiques i televisives de les adaptacions per a joves de les novel·les per a adults de John Green

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Abstract

In the last few decades the teen movie genre has left behind the genre of light comedies or farce comedies and deals with more substantial and fundamental issues concerning teenagers and young adults. In the literary universe of John Green, which has been the basis and source of inspiration for corresponding film and television adaptations, the form of the good-natured and well-intentioned loser teenager dominates. This hero watches with longing and anxiety the lives of his popular peers, longing to be given a chance to join their company. When this finally happens, he finds that things are not as they seem and the values that decorate his own universe are not as meaningless as he originally thought. The heroes in Green's books possess culture, dreams and ambitions and an already complete personal universe that their more popular peers often lack, lost in the abyss of adolescence, its changes and dilemmas. Their depiction in the mass entertainment media of film and television also reflects social changes in teenage and school culture, as well as the broadening of the personal outlook and expectations of the teenagers themselves. In the recent article we are going to analyse the type of loser geek/nerd hero in the film and television adaptations of his young adult novels *Paper Towns* (2015) and *Looking for Alaska* (2019).

Key words: Teenager's literature, John Green's novels, literature adaptations

Resumen

En las últimas décadas, el género de las películas para adolescentes ha dejado atrás el género de las comedias ligeras o las comedias de farsa y aborda cuestiones más sustanciales y fundamentales que afectan a los adolescentes y adultos jóvenes. En el universo literario de John Green, que ha sido base y fuente de inspiración para las correspondientes adaptaciones cinematográficas y televisivas, domina la forma del adolescente perdedor bonachón y bien intencionado. Este héroe observa con anhelo y ansiedad la vida de sus populares compañeros, anhelando tener la oportunidad de unirse a su compañía. Cuando esto finalmente sucede, descubre que las cosas no son lo que parecen y que los valores que decoran su propio universo no son tan insignificantes como pensó originalmente. Los héroes de los libros de Green poseen

cultura, sueños y ambiciones y un universo personal ya completo del que suelen carecer sus coetáneos más populares, perdidos en el abismo de la adolescencia, sus cambios y dilemas. Su representación en los medios de entretenimiento de masas del cine y la televisión también refleja los cambios sociales en la cultura adolescente y escolar, así como la ampliación de la perspectiva personal y las expectativas de los propios adolescentes. En el presente artículo vamos a analizar el tipo de héroe *geek/nerd* perdedor en las adaptaciones cinematográficas y televisivas de sus novelas juveniles *Ciudades de papel* (2015) y *Buscando a Alaska* (2019).

Palabras clave: literatura juvenil; novelas de John Green; adaptaciones literarias

Resum

En les darreres dècades, el gènere de les pel·lícules per a adolescents ha deixat enrere el gènere de les comèdies lleugeres o les comèdies de farsa i aborda qüestions més substancials i fonamentals que afecten els adolescents i els adults joves. En l'univers literari de John Green, que ha estat base i font d'inspiració per a les adaptacions cinematogràfiques i televisives corresponents, domina la forma de l'adolescent perdedor bonàs i ben intencionat. Aquest heroi observa amb anhel i ansietat la vida dels seus populars companys, anhelant tenir l'oportunitat d'unir-se a la companyia. Quan això finalment ocorre, descobreix que les coses no són el que semblen i que els valors que decoren el seu propi univers no són tan insignificants com pensava originalment. Els herois dels llibres de Green tenen cultura, somnis, ambicions i un univers personal ja complet del que solen mancar els seus coetanis més populars, perduts en l'abisme de l'adolescència, els canvis i els dilemes. La seua representació en els mitjans d'entreteniment de masses del cinema i la televisió també reflecteix els canvis socials en la cultura adolescent i escolar, així com l'ampliació de la perspectiva personal i les expectatives dels mateixos adolescents. En el present article analitzarem el tipus d'heroi *geek/nerd* perdedor en les adaptacions cinematogràfiques i televisives de les seues novel·les juvenils *Ciutats de paper* (2015) i *Buscant Alaska* (2019).

Paraules clau: literatura juvenile, novel·les de John Green, adaptacions literàries

1. Introduction

Young audiences, children and teenagers, were soon targeted by the cinema industry as a special

The teenage heroes of John Green long to live all this and to be fully incorporated in the group of their peers. Their dream is unexpectedly fulfilled through a series of events that totally transform their micro world.

audience. After the establishment of the Disney Studios they were officially recognised as a distinctive category with its own needs and quests. The age group of adolescents has occupied kept the cinema busy for the last decades with radical works breaking the traditional mould and the depiction of characters and circumstances out of the ordinary.

The young adult novels by the American author John Green have initially attracted the interest of the youth in the USA and Europe. In the core of Green's novels, we usually find as a non-popular, introvert, diligent teenage

student with an interesting personality and well developed critical thinking a protagonist (Topali, 2015). Adolescence is the era of self-image, friendship, companionship, adventure and the monopoly of love. The teenage heroes of John Green long to live all this and to be fully incorporated in the group of their peers. Their dream is unexpectedly fulfilled through a series of events that totally transform their micro world. Many of John Green's books have been adapted for the cinema and television like *The Fault in Our Stars*, *Paper Towns*, and *Looking for Alaska*. In this presentation we are going to analyse the film and TV adaptations of the last two novels.

2. Paper Towns (2015)-film adaption

Paper Towns (2015) was adapted for the cinema in 2015 and directed by Jack Schreier. Seventeen-year-old Quentin Jacobsen (friends call him Q) lives in Jefferson Park, Florida and attends the local high school. Quentin is a quiet, reserved kid, with a small group of friends, Ben and Radar. During his childhood he is a close friend to his neighbor Margo Roth Spiegelmann. In adolescence Margo becomes one of the most popular girls at school, who frequently runs away from home and leads a very adventurous life. Their intimate friendship is interrupted. Her favourite quote is *everyone deserves a miracle*.

One night, Margo sneaks in his room from the window, as she used to, asking him to follow her to a nocturnal adventure. They visit Jason's house together who is Margo's boyfriend and to her friends', Rebecca and Lacey. Jason has cheated on her with Rebecca and she believes that her best friend Lacey knew about it and didn't tell her anything. They are pulling them some ugly pranks, as well as to some other classmates. At the end of the night, Quentin thinks that he and Margo will be again good friends the following day.

The next day Margo misses school and as days go by it seems like she doesn't intend to come back. Her parents report her as a missing person to the police. Q finds himself to be in the position he was dreaming about in his whole adolescence. He is popular; boys who used to bully him are now afraid that he will betray their secrets and ruin their shining lives. Quentin starts to believe that Margo has left signs for him to help him trace her. He investigates with his friends and when they track her down, they travel along with Ben's girlfriend, Angela and Lacey to the paper town *Anglo* to meet her. A *paper town* is a town that appears on the map but doesn't exist so that the editor can be reassured that the map will not be copied. When they get there and don't find her immediately, they leave again to attend the graduation ball. Quentin stays behind. He finally meets Margo and reveals to her that he is in love with her. She doesn't respond to his feelings and tells him she left as to find herself. She left the signs

to let him know she is safe. Quentin returns to his hometown, attends the graduation prom with his friends and they spend together the summer.

3. Looking for Alaska (2019)-television adaptation

The young adult novel *Looking for Alaska* (2019) was adapted for television in an eight-episode mini-series directed by Josh Swartz. The main character of the series is sixteen-year-old Miles Graves, who is transferred to a new boarding school, Culver Creek Academy, in Alabama from his hometown in Florida in 2005. He didn't have many friends at his old school and he felt he needed a change. He likes reading the last words of famous people just before they die. His favourite quote is the one by Francois Rabelais: *I am leaving for the Great Perhaps*.

The first person to meet there is his new roommate, Chip Martin aka *Colonel*. Gradually, he meets all the people, who are going to be his close friends in the new school, Alaska, Takumi and Lara. They inform him about the conflict between the Colonel and the *Weekend Warriors* group and the strict headmaster of the academy known under the nickname *Eagle*. Miles doesn't want to take any sides, but the Weekend Warriors made him do so after an ugly prank they unleash against him.

Miles is instantly fascinated by Alaska due to her unpredictable personality and her knowledge over literature. She dates an older college boy, Jake and tries to set Miles up with another student, Lara. The conflict between the two groups rages. Miles is led to the disciplinary board of the school after a prank against the Warriors. He chooses not to snitch his friends. Alaska breaks up with her boyfriend because she believes she is not good enough for him. She, also, appears to have snitched a pair (a boy and a girl) of students to the headmaster for spending the night together, although this is against the school's rules. Colonel and Takumi hate to think she is a snitch. Alaska doesn't want to go home for Thanksgiving and pleads Miles to stay with her. The war between the two rival groups continues. Things culminate when Miles and his friends hack the college files of the members of Warriors. One night Alaska asks for help from Miles and Colonel to sneak out of school. The next morning Eagle informs the students that Alaska is tragically killed in a car accident. Miles, Colonel and Takumi investigate Alaska's death. They are not sure if it is an accident or a suicide. They find out that she wanted to visit her mother's grave because it was the anniversary of her death. They get some answers but they are not entirely sure if it has been an attribution of responsibilities. At the end of the series, they unleash a funny prank to honour her memory.

4. Historical review of teenage films in the American film industry

Teenage films in their classic form come forward in the '50s. Nevertheless, the Hollywood industry have already created films starring wonder kids in the corresponding roles during the '30s and '40s, like Shirley Temple and Judy Garland. Mary Pickford and Gary Cooper started their career playing roles of troublesome youth (Shary et al., 2005). The '50s are an essential milestone for the development of teenage films. The urbanisation of American society and the rise of consumerism highlighted the teenage audience as a special consumer category (Driscoll, 2011/Doherty, 2002). Films of the decade like *The Wild One* (1953), *The Blackboard Jungle* (1955), *Rebel without a Cause* (1955) brought to light the hidden concerns, fears, agonies and hopes of the teenagers of that time (Shary et al., 2005/Driscoll, 2011). A series of matters which were regarded as taboos back then: drugs use, homosexuality, racism, abortions etc. is touched up (Doherty, 2002).

During the '60s the interest of the film industry turns to more entertaining topics. In the '70s teenage cinema declines and there are no longer teenage star actors. Only at the end of the decade do films like *Saturday Night Fever* (1977) and *Grease* (1978) herald the film topics of the next decade. The '80s are characterised by the emerge of new subgenres, which previously were addressed to adults: thriller, melodrama, science fiction, school dramas, sexcomedies. The depiction of teenagers' life is schematic and unrealistic. Love scenes are censored. In the middle of the decade things change with the release of films such as *Breakfast Club* (1985) and *Pretty in Pink* (1985). This replenishment is also attributed to emerge of multiplex cinemas. In the '90s and until the dawn of the 21th century the topics and the representation of teenage life are continuously expanding (Shary, 2002).

5. Bildungsroman

Bildungsroman made its appearance as a literary genre when the novel by Goethe *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* was published in 1795-96. In this novel Goethe narrates a young boy's course to maturity and this is exactly the central subject matter of the genre, a young person heading to adulthood facing obstacles and tests (Ambatzopoulou, 1994). The term was used for the first time by Karl von Morgenstern in 1810 and was established a few decades later by the philosopher Wilhelm Whitley (1870/1906). Originated from the German word *Bildung* which means configuration, conformation and education in a metaphorical sense (Schaarschmidt, 1931/Dohmen, 1964, 1965/Vierhaus, 1972)/Løvlie et al., 2002/Horlacher, 2004), the term also influences the reader as he sympathises with the hero throughout the novel (Moretti, 1987). The notion *Bildung* has a religious dimension, too, as it is immensely connected to human existence as an image of God (Ampatzopoulou, 1994) and became fertile ground for the German religious protestant circles (Kiosses, 2008).

The hero in Bildungsroman, who is usually male (Kiosses, 2008), feels suppressed, special, different from everybody else and ends up in conflict with his family and society (Swales, 1991). One of the main targets of Bildungsroman literary genre is to finally bridge the gap between a person and the society (Chaniadaki, 2014). There is certainly a dialogue between the hero and society in the novel (Hirsch et al., 1976). According to Mikhail Bakhtin (1986), the readers are not only observing the shaping of the hero's personality but also have the chance to receive information about the historical, social and political changes of the time he lives in which either influenced him or he influenced it.

Bildungsroman is divided in two subgenres: the *rebellious* novel (*Entwicklungsroman*) and the *pedagogical* novel (*Erziehungsroman*). In *Entwicklungsroman* the hero develops his mental and physical abilities, just like in Bildungsroman. He conflicts with his school, family and social surrounding (Gerhard, 1968). In *Erziehungsroman* we can watch the hero growing up under the guidance of a teacher or a mentor without conflicting with the perceptions of the close social and family environment (Koehn, 1969).

6. Nerds, geeks and losers in teen films

Quentin, Miles and their friends are an almost typical example of what Americans call *nerd/geek loser* in school society. In a humorous definition of geek, Benjamin Nugent (2008) defines them as a person who: a) is passionate and interested in very specific subjects which don't include emotional and physical embroilment, sex, food and beauty (everything that interests non-geek people), b) speak sophisticatedly, c) obey to common sense only and d) like to play and be occupied with technology much more than average people.

In *The Cambridge English Dictionary* (2022) a *loser* is defined as: a person who doesn't win in a game or a contest, someone who fails in everything, who is not appreciated or something that loses all the time a part of its value. The combination of these two notions is almost the norm in American teenage films.

More specifically, the image of nerd hero has been through a lot of changes as time passes by, until we reach the modern image in contemporary films. In the '80s they are mainly presented as the ultimately devoted, diligent student having a few or no friends at all. They would give everything to be incorporated in the mainstream school society and mostly appear in secondary roles. In the '90s nerdy characters begin to have more depth, claim bigger roles and their complexity and the depth of their personality is significantly stressed. They are not always willing to sacrifice their integrity for popularity.

Boys have a harder time than girls (Driscoll, 2011). In the films of the last two decades nerd characters star in more and more films conquering the space they deserve.

7. Paper Towns (2015)-the image of the loser teenager

Quentin comes from a middle class American family. Both his parents are psychologists and believe for this reason, too that they have a really good relationship and communication with their son. He is an excellent student; he has been accepted to the college of his choice and spends his last weeks at school. He has never been in trouble and it looks like he is bullied from time to time. Along with his best friends, Ben and Radar, they wish could be members of the school elite.

At first, the teenage companions seem like they meet the criteria of what we call geek and loser. Quentin remains focused on his goal to create a flawless college application file which will lead him to an excellent university. His friends did the same but in addition they are the ones who are more occupied with computers and technology in general. The real image is very different than it seems. Each and every one of them would prefer to have more friends, take part in more group activities and to be invited in *legendary* parties. Ben is the only one who has got a girlfriend, Angela, although the school cool students would say their relationship is conventional and boring. Radar is, perhaps, the only member of the company who can be considered to be a nerd or a geek. At the beginning of the film he is mostly interested in kissing a girl or having sex apart from computers, in order to become a cool person.

Quentin is special in his own way from the start. He is aware that adjusting and following his teachers' advice is beneficial not only for him but for everybody. According to research, this is a distinctive feature of gifted children and teenagers (Baska, 1989; Tuttle et al., 1983). Q falls in love with his neighbour, Margo. It is not just another teenage obsession. He falls for her of what she is and all the things he will experience and learn by her side. Recent research has shown that for a number of people good looks is not enough to attract their love interest. They pay more attention to the inner world and the personality of their potential partner. This trend is known as *sapiosexual* people (Gigniak et al., 2018). Ben is in a serious relationship and Radar is trying to single out what he wants.

At the adventurous night, Q and Margo live in order to take revenge on her ex-friends for betraying her, which partly fulfils his unrequited love for her. However, Margo functions more as a motherly figure than his future girlfriend. She tries to make up to him for not hanging out as teenagers and to help him finally become *visible* and enjoy his last days at school. Realism of adult life has already

affected Margo before she is even an adult. Quentin can still dream, hope and not think of human relationships as a type of exchange as Margo like does.

The signs Margo has left behind, which Quentin falsely believes were meant for him in order to find her, bond him even more with his friends. All of them contribute to decode them. During their research they get to know each other better, with some of their classmates and especially Lacey, Margo's ex best friend. Lacey feels that the boys see her as a person too not only as a pretty girl like everyone else and that they are much more than geeks and nerds. They revise their opinion for each other and become friends. Psychologists claim that a strong network of friends can protect children and teenagers from being bullied and set the foundation for a successful and happy adult life (Lester et al., 2013; Schuh et al., 2014; Furrer et al., 2014). The classmates' opinion of the three boys as a gathering of losers and outcasts is, in fact, the springboard for future happiness and success.

The decision of Q's friends' to accompany him to his quest journey proves their love and devotion to him even further, which is an element found in many come-of-age stories. In the 18th and 19th century the sons of noble families of Europe used to take a long journey of knowledge and adulthood, known as *Grand Tour*, mainly to Italy, the Ottoman empire (they preferred Greece for its glorious ancient past) and the Middle East (Goldsmith, 2020). The journey of Quentin and his friends in the paper town to meet Margo constitutes their entrance to adulthood. Things in life don't always turn the way we want but this doesn't mean it isn't worth trying. Margo may not be in love with Quentin or wish to be a part of his everyday life, but there are so many things for him to enjoy in life: his friends, college, the summer holidays and the possibility of a new love. And this is Quentin's act of adulthood.

Margo may not be in love with Quentin or wish to be a part of his everyday life, but there are so many things for him to enjoy in life: his friends, college, the summer holidays and the possibility of a new love. And this is Quentin's act of adulthood.

8. Looking for Alaska (2019)

Miles wants to have a start fresh in the new boarding school. His new friends are the school's outcasts (Vincent, 1994). Colonel, Takumi, Alaska and Lara are considered nerds and losers, according to their classmates' opinion. They are old-fashioned, out-dated and not trendy at all. Colonel comes from a poor family. He is a computer nerd and occasionally does drugs. He is committed to Angela but isolated from everybody else. Takumi is a computer nerd, clumsy though. Lara is an immigrant from Romania. She attends the private school thanks to a scholarship she has received. She is an introvert and a

diligent student with a good command of computers. Alaska matches more to the loser's profile. She may be beautiful, restless, cultivated and a good student although she resents school. She openly scorns her classmate and dates an older, adult boy. Her mother has died and doesn't get along with her father. The scars in Alaska's soul seem to be hidden behind her impressive looks and her unique ability to charm people around her.

The director focuses on issues ranging between the social truth and objective reality, what people are in contrast to what they seem to be. The companionship of the teenagers mentioned above is just boring for the average school society (Azizi-Kalatzki, 1996; Dragona, 2007). They consider them as colourless personalities, with a settled life, who are studying all day and chase academic success. This lifestyle, while being still teenagers, will possibly lead to a similar ordinary adult life without any fun or joy. Preferring fun to the stillness of Miles' and his friends' deadly routine they would never befriend them. Miles' classmates, like every teenager, judge things based on their small life experience and immaturity. On the contrary, Miles and his friends show great maturity and responsibility towards school and people around them. They don't need to make a fuss to feel special or desirable.

Miles and his friends have also developed a great sense of empathy (Goleman, 1999) in comparison to their classmates. They support each other and especially Alaska who is having a rough time. Miles and Colonel (being her older friend) support her with all their heart. The companions will face Colonel's troubles with his girlfriend united as a fist, when he must escort her to an event of the higher social class she belongs to. The consequences of the pranks they are unleashing against Weekend Warriors and Warriors against them also constitutes a team problem. Generally, they never give in, when it comes to moral issues.

In the love field, there is a variety of views and stances. Miles sees love romantically as he falls for

In Looking for Alaska the outcast teenagers don't pursue to be make up with the mainstream school society but rather to guard the group they've created as losers so as to share mutual values, expectations and dreams.

Alaska, Colonel is in a serious relationship, Takumi is the stereotypical immature adolescent, Alaska is confused, Lara is also romantic. Alaska holds an unconventional role by exploiting greatly Miles' love for her. Confused and lost in her own blurry labyrinth, Alaska wishes to be loved but cannot understand that she must love people back because she has never felt it or thinks that she is not obliged to. The bonding of the companions emerges stronger after Alaska's death during their search to find the truth and whether they were responsible for it. To sum

up, in *Looking for Alaska* the outcast teenagers don't pursue to be make up with the mainstream school

society but rather to guard the group they have created as losers so as to share mutual values, expectations and dreams.

9. Conclusions-discussion

Teenage nerdy or geek loser heroes who star in the cinema and television adaptation of John Green's youth novels seem to have all the features their peers attribute to them. Languid, isolated, introverted and fully occupied with studying, unwilling to follow the trends their peers do. This image is shed if someone looks deeper. In *Paper Towns*, the heroes express a strong desire to assimilate at first. With Quentin leading Margo's quest, they soon realise the common elements that connect them and how precious their friendly bonds are. Just a step before adulthood, they have more important things to do than school dramas and childish repressed hopes. Miles and his friends in the television adaptation of *Looking for Alaska* choose to stay in the school's social margin. Miles feels really happy to have lots of friends in his new school because he didn't have any in his previous one. There are composed teenagers like Colonel, naïve ones like Takumi, disoriented ones like Alaska. Tragedy urges them to face the harsh side of life and to learn how to survive for the first time. The teenage boys starring in the cinema and television adaptation we analysed above manage to overcome many of the stereotypes we find in teen films about boys in adolescence (Shary, 2014). Their lives do not revolve around sex (Shary, 2014) and they respond to the contemporary male role models away from the toxicity of the previous decades (Cann et al., 2021). The foundation of a true friendship is established through conflicts, happy moments and tragedies. There is no *Great Perhaps* that everybody is entitled to a *Miracle*.

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How to cite this paper:

Pourni, G.E (2022). The Depiction of the Loser Teenager in the Film and Television Adaptations of John Green's Young Adult Novels. *Journal of Literary Education*, (6), 167-179. <https://doi.org/10.7203/JLE.6.25373>

Analysis of Simon Stranger's novel *Lexicon of Light and Darkness*

Análisis de *Lexicon of Light and Darkness*, una novela de Simon Stranger

Anàlisi de *Lexicon of Light and Darkness*, una novel·la de Simon Stranger

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Abstract

The main goal of the paper is to point out the obscure model reader of the publication *Lexicon of Light and Darkness* by Simon Stranger, and thus substantiate our opinion on certain limits in defining the implicit reader of some texts with the theme of Shoah in relation to their goals. The analysis of the narrative was carried out through a content analysis of a qualitative nature. We work with the intentions of close contextual analysis, which means that we work only with the researched artistic narrative, or with other fiction, which we prove our claims. Prior to the analysis, the following research questions were determined: 1) How does the depiction of the effort to eradicate Jewish nationality differ in Stranger's publication in comparison with other artistic narratives on the same subject? 2) How is the influence of the social environment on the mental orientation and maturation of the adolescent? 3) What strategies did Stranger choose in relation to the reader? 4) How does the perception of selected aspects of World War II by people living at different times in the context of Stranger's publication differ? 5) To what extent is the text devoted to space and support for pluralistic interpretation by recipients?

Key words: Simon Stranger, *Lexicon of Light and Darkness*, Qualitative Content Analysis, Model Reader, Literature for Children and Youth.

Resumen

El objetivo principal de este artículo es hacer visible el lector modelo difuso de la novela *Lexicon of Light and Darkness*, y, al mismo tiempo, argumentar nuestra opinión sobre ciertos límites a la hora de definir el lector implícito en algunos textos que tratan el tema de la Shoah. El análisis de la narración se llevó a cabo a través de una metodología cualitativa. El objetivo era desarrollar un análisis contextual profundo, y, para respaldar la tesis principal, se manejó una serie de narrativas artísticas y ficticias. Antes del análisis, se consideraron las siguientes cuestiones: 1) ¿Qué diferencia hay entre la visión de Stranger y la de otras obras que tratan el tema del exterminio judío? 2) ¿Cómo influye el ambiente social en la orientación mental y la maduración de los y las adolescentes? 3) ¿Qué estrategias usa Stranger en relación con la persona lectora? 4) ¿Qué diferencias hay en la concepción de la Segunda Guerra Mundial entre personas que han vivido en un contexto diferente al de Stranger? 5) ¿Hasta qué punto este texto está relacionado con el espacio y puede dar lugar a interpretaciones diversas por parte de los receptores y receptoras?

Palabras clave: Simon Stranger, *Lexicon of Light and Darkness*, Análisis cualitativo, Lector Modelo, Literatura Infantil y Juvenil

Resum

L'objectiu principal d'aquest article és fer visible el lector model difús de la novel·la *Lexicon of Light and Darkness* i, al mateix temps, argumentar la nostra opinió sobre certs límits a l'hora de definir el lector implícit en alguns textos que tracten el tema de la Shoah. L'anàlisi de la narració es va dur a terme a través d'una metodologia qualitativa. L'objectiu era desenvolupar una anàlisi conceptual profunda i, per donar suport a la tesi principal, es va manejar una sèrie de narratives artístiques i fictícies. Abans de l'anàlisi, es van considerar les següents qüestions: 1) Quina diferència hi ha entre la visió d'*Stranger* i la d'altres obres que tracten el tema de l'extermini jueu? 2) Com influeix l'ambient social en l'orientació mental i la maduració dels i les adolescents? 3) Quines estratègies fa servir *Stranger* en relació amb el la persona lectora? 4) Quines diferències hi ha en la concepció de la Segona Guerra Mundial entre persones que han viscut en un context diferent al d'*Stranger*? 5) Fins quin punt aquest text està relacionat amb l'espai i pot donar lloc a interpretacions diverses per part dels receptors i receptores?

Paraules clau: Simon Stranger, *Lexicon of Light and Darkness*, Anàlisi qualitativa, Lector Model, Literatura Infantil i Juveni

1. Introduction

At present, there is a considerable development of publishing books, in the middle of which is some aspect of World War II. Yudkin (in Abramovich, 2019, p. 9) notes:

Holocaust literature (...) is writing that takes its subject and starting point from the war conducted against the Jews from 1933 to 1945. Although that is the point of origin, the continuation is less certain, less defined, and less crystalized. The effects go on, and writing allows these to move in different directions. The writer as narrator may be the prime focus of the narrative or a reporter of a distant event. Such an account may be a chronicle in which the chronicler is the principal actor or a subsidiary actor. Or he may not be involved in the story at all.

For understandable reasons, the testimonies of Shoah¹ or Holocaust² survivors are published in books (most recent, for example, Šmrha, Rosenberg, 2021; Waisman, McClelland, 2021; Weinberg, 2020), re-editions of various forms of registration of persons who participated in the murder of various groups

1 Arndt (2020, pp. 13–14) sees the Shoah as a culmination of “centuries of persecution, discrimination, robbery, and ultimately murder in all parts of Europe”.

2 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum defines the Holocaust as follows: “The Holocaust specifically refers to the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews. However, there were also millions of other victims of Nazi persecution and murder. In the 1930s, the regime targeted a variety of alleged domestic enemies within German society. As the Nazis extended their reach during World War II, millions of other Europeans were also subjected to Nazi brutality”. (Holocaust Encyclopedia, 2021)

of persons, especially Jews, are published (see, for example, Liblau, 2021; Merle, 2005; Tamminen, 2020) and, last but not least, various reflections are published in this factual area experts on different aspects that led to the development of the National Socialist idea in interwar Germany (see, for example, Cílek, 2021; Padevět, 2021; Weil, 2021). The second group of Shoah-literature is artistic narratives. Many experts this area of a given literary work divide it into two subcategories in relation to its implicit readers. Literary texts with a defined theme, intended primarily for children and young, in most cases aim to introduce these recipients to a given historical phase, mostly focusing on persecution and stigmatization practices against Jews. Many authors choose a strategy for depicting the effects of the policies of Nazi leaders on a particular individual³ (Lindquist, 2013).

We believe that the chosen creative approach can lead to the abstracting of the given events, and thus to a certain extent increase the impact of this area of fiction on the reader. The second circle of Shoah-literature are texts that are not primarily intentional (i.e., they are not primarily intended for reading by children and youth), which does not mean that they are unsuitable for reading by children and young. In these texts, most of their authors go “behind the story” which can form a certain backdrop for the presentation of general human characteristics, to find parallels with the present, to give some warning against repeating history or as a model of human aid, cohesion, and cooperation, but also as a prelude. These are efforts to apply in society under all conditions and the like. Liblau (2021, 189) notes about the given events in connection with the implementation of certain persecution and other practices in connection with the desire for power of some members of global society:

The fifth hood is at large, and every dream is between us. It occupies a place in the social or state hierarchy, determines laws, sometimes draws up constitutions and decides on the course of events, shapes them, and gives them a rhythm. He usually wears the mask of a moralist or preacher and stands guard for big affairs.

We believe that the chosen creative approach can, to a certain extent, lead to the abstracting of the given events, and thus to a certain extent increase the impact of this area of fiction on the reader.

It presents arguments from noble ideals and halls them into suitable slogans, thanks to whose catchiness and stubborn repetition in the press, radio, television, and cinema, they penetrate the broad social strata and ensure the trust. In this way, it is easy to saturate low and primitive instincts, to play one's own skirmishes, to incite one against the other, to pit

³ This approach is one of the best ways to present the phenomenon in institutional education (see for example Martin, 2007; Porat, 2004).

different social classes, nations and races (compare Acedo, 2010; Kinloch, 2001; Roth, 2020).

We may ask ourselves what are the impulses that lead to the publication of a lot of Shoah-literature. We believe that one of the key aspects is their certain readership, which to some extent guarantees their commercial success for the respective publishers. Of course, another of the main attributes is the effort to warn against recurring these events through artistic narratives, to form the desired axiological profile of adolescent recipients or to acquaint readers from one phase of history. Jordan (2004) notes that literary texts are one of the best tools for acquainting children and adolescents with the events of the Holocaust or the Shoah. The choice should of course, respect the age of readers and the cognitive and reading experience associated with them.

In connection with the number of books published about one line of events of World War II, the Shoah, or the Holocaust, Esi (2012, 73) claims:

The contextual dimension of education involves the setting of some criteria of eligibility regarding the assumption of some competitive strategies. Such an assumption emphasizes a series of educational paradigms whose pragmatic substantiation depends many times on the attitude of the actors involved in the instructive process but also on the courses of action initiated within the social reality. Moreover, the dynamics of such a process emphasizes the need of an educational psychology whose scientific foundation should legitimize the prosocial behaviors of the actors involved in the educational activities. Therefore, the expression of an educational pragmatism at a social level supposes a character peculiar to the system in which it functions and resides in the human activity's form of manifestation itself.

We should strive for as many different stimuli as possible that correspond to the events of the Shoah or the Holocaust and present them to all members of society. One of the most accessible forms seems to be the presentation of selected aspects of World War II through literary texts. In connection with the aim of the article, we mean artistic narratives (fiction). We believe that compositions and not very defined boundaries of art literature provide authors with sufficient space to fulfill those goals that correspond to the need to constantly remember a given phase of history, and at the same time, these events can be modified to some extent in terms of adaptation. Implicit readers in connection with their previous cognitive, reading, life and other experiences and, of course, in correspondence with their expected preconceptions related to the issue interpret publications.

Simon Stranger's *Lexicon of Light and Darkness* (2021) is one of the publications found at the interface between children's and youth literature and unintentional texts. In our opinion, the book is not intended primarily for reading by children and young, which leads us to its relatively complicated

composition, intertwined time zones, changing the pace of narration or reminiscence of various events and, finally, a naturalistic depiction of torture of prisoners by minions of the Nazi regime. On the other hand, we are of the opinion that certain passages can also be introduced to adolescent readers. We are led to this statement mainly by our conviction that today's adolescents are presented with similarly horrific scenes through various media. Other reasons why we dare to include the publication at the interface of so-called adult and intentional literature is the fact that within one narrative line the author acquaints the reader with the motives that led him to write this novel, while also presenting excerpts from the interview with his children. In addition, adolescent readers are acquainted with the course of the Nazi occupation of Norway during World War II, with the regime's representatives in this country and with Norway's relations with neighboring countries, especially Sweden, in direct connection with the events of World War II.

It is not our goal to include the selected publication in one or the other area of artistic texts. We only wanted to point out the possible limits of this stratification in connection with the selection of publications suitable for reading by children and youth. In correspondence with our claim about the current "boom" in the publication of books on the Shoah, our view takes on another dimension. Connoted with the majority goals of the narratives, at the core of which is the presentation of various aspects related to one line of events of World War II, i.e., to warn of recurrence of these events, developing skills to recognize hate speech and behavior in the embryos themselves and be able to face them and prevent them. Escalation and the like, we believe that specifically in the field of Shoah-literature, these books cannot in most cases be divided into intentional and non-intentional publications. The statement is, of course, meant in the line adult reader - adolescent reader. Literary texts on a given topic intended for (youngest) recipients are categories in themselves; especially in most cases their different composition: illustrations or acquaintance of readers with basic stigmatization and persecution principles⁴) play an important role (see for example Kushner, 2020).

The main aim of the article is to point out the answers to the research questions (see below) to point out the obscure model reader of the *Lexicon of Light and Darkness* by Simon Stranger, and thus substantiate our claim about certain limits in defining the implicit reader of texts on a given topic in relation to their goals. We focus mainly on the composition of the work, on depicting the influence of the social group (family, classmates, etc.) on the opinion orientation of children and adolescents or on the main idea or mission of the narrative discussed in relation to the possible expected reader.

⁴ For example, wearing a yellow (David's) star.

2. Methodology

The narrative was analyzed through a qualitative content analysis. According to Kerling (1972, 528 in Klapko, 2013, 140), this method can be used

to determine the relative dominance or frequency of various communication phenomena, propaganda, tendencies, styles, changes in content and readability.

Among the objectives of quantitative content analysis are besides to understand statements in context and in procedural development. We focused on changes in the views of speakers and the author in terms of communication with the reader. We work with the intentions of close contextual analysis, which means that we work only with the researched artistic narrative, or with other fiction, which we prove our claims.

Prior to the analysis, the following research questions were determined:

- 1) How does the depiction of the effort to eradicate Jewish nationality differ in Stranger's publication in comparison with other artistic narratives on the same subject?
- 2) What is the influence of the social environment on the mental orientation and maturation of the adolescent?
- 3) What strategies did Stranger choose in relation to the reader?
- 4) How does the perception of selected aspects of World War II by people living at different times in the context of Stranger's publication differ?
- 5) To what extent is the text devoted to space and support for pluralistic interpretation by recipients?

2.1. Theoretical Justification of Research Questions

To formulate the first research question, we are guided mainly by many artistic narratives in which Nazi persecution practices against persons of Jewish nationality are thematized (most recently, for example, Epsteinová Rabínková, 2021; Iperen, 2021; Orte, Bonfiglioli, 2021 or Thompson, 2021). In most of these publications, the events are viewed - considering the narrative strategy at the ich-form level⁵ - from the perspective of members of the Jewish nation. If we narrow the group of fiction to publications in which the events are viewed through the prism of Nazi leaders and their minions, in most cases it is a depiction of the motives for their actions and those that led to the decision to join

⁵ This means that the story is told in the first person.

the Nazi party and try to achieve what of the highest hierarchical position. Stranger's publication, which is at the core of the present contribution of our contribution, is in a way unique in the literary texts: although it depicts the motives leading the main character, Henry Rinnan⁶, to join the Nazi party in Norway, the author places creative emphasis on depicting the influence of his environment (family, friends and similar social groups) to shape his personality profile in conjunction with his efforts to prove to everyone that despite his relatively small stature he can achieve something significant. We believe that this level of narration is crucial within the mission of the selected artistic narrative in the sense of the desired meaning of fiction texts with the given theme. In the second research question, we will try to answer the question of what narrative strategies the writer uses to explain the influences that affected Henry.

The third research question is related to the problematics of the used strategies. We reflect on what procedures Stranger has chosen to ensure that the meaning of texts with a defined theme is, given the development of the desired axiological values of readers in relation to maintaining and developing a democratic establishment, in maintaining civil society or connoting with skills to recognize undesirable behaviors and actions (for example persecution and stigmatization practices of certain groups of the population against other, minority, groups with different political views, sexual orientation or religion). Stranger chooses a creative tactic based on the interconnection of the space where the sadistic practices of some representatives of the Norwegian Nazi party depicted in the publication took place in the narrative. In the house, in the cellar of which Henry Rinnan and his assistants abused members of various resistance organizations, a second line of story takes place. For pragmatic reasons, the young couple decides to buy the house, not all members of the family are familiar with its history. The process will uncover horrific facts that also lead to the breakup of the couple. The third narrative line is taking place at a time when the writer is presenting some of his impulses to the reader as part of the story, which led him to write an analyzed publication based in part on historical facts. It is the connection between the three narrative lines - the one that took place during World War II, the story from the post-war period and a kind of reflection on the writer's work today - that can provide an answer to this research question.

In some parallels drawn at three different times, in our opinion, one can find the main idea or mission of Stranger's work. We will try to substantiate this statement, based on our commentary on some of the secondary topics that the writer has integrated into the narrative.

The answer to these two mentioned research questions will be related to the answer to the last postulated research question. We are convinced that the combination of the story of three groups of

⁶ For Rinnan, see, e.g., Hansson, 1972; Flyum, Wangen, 2007 or Lind, 2012.

people and their interconnection with the space in which the pivotal moments of their lives take place, characters of different ages perceiving similar historical events and at the same time finding and drawing parallels between their lives provides potential for different reception of Stranger's text. Of course, its primary perception by readers will be based on the reception of certain horrors associated with World War II, but as related to the above, it can be perceived on a deeper level in terms of various analogies or efforts to achieve one's own happiness in general.

3. Analysis of the novel *Lexicon of Light and Darkness*

Stranger's novel was published by *Aschehoug Forlag* in 2018 and won the *Norwegian Booksellers' Award* in the same year. So far, it has been translated into twenty-two languages. In our analysis, we will be based on a translation into the Czech language (in the Czech Republic, the publication was published in 2021). We differentiate the presentation of the analysis results into six parts, based on formulated research questions. In connection with the fact that our contribution does not act as a spoiler, we will try to make the stated statements in the level of generally tuned knowledge about the selected narrative. We are convinced that the goal of our study can be fulfilled in the chosen way, i.e., through the analysis of the novel *Lexicon of Light and Darkness* to point out certain limits in the division of literature on the Shoah or Holocaust into children and youth and non-intentional. As already indicated, we will achieve the goal by gradually answering the postulated research questions.

3.1 Depiction of the Effort to Eradicate the Jews

In the analyzed publication, the effort to eradicate Jews is represented through the personal story of a particular individual. Henry Rinnan. As we indicated in the previous part of the article, this real figure has almost reached the top of the Nazi hierarchy of power who occupied Norway. Readers are acquainted with Rinnan during his adolescence, when he suffers from many complexes, especially of a physiological nature. It should be noted that certain minor physical disabilities (such as short stature) are, used by his classmates, who bully him in various ways.

Nazi Germany occupied Norway during World War II, which applied the same monstrous racial laws as in Central, Eastern and Western Europe. Norwegian citizens, especially Jews, tried to escape through neighboring secret routes to neighboring Sweden, which was more open to them. Henry Rinnan, who had been climbing the power ladder from the very beginning (he had infiltrated various resistance groups at the time, such as communists or people smugglers into Sweden), embarked on a career in the Nazi extermination machinery. On the one hand, his membership provided him with a sufficient financial income, which in the context of food vouchers

In the analyzed publication, the effort to eradicate Jews is represented through the personal story of a particular individual

and the like was not a small benefit, but also realized in this way and, finally yet importantly, membership and work for top Nazi party leaders in Norway gave him a degree of freedom. Especially that which stems from the possibility of pursuing one's profession outside the home.

In the hunt for promotions, Henry Rinnan set up an interrogation room equipped with many torture instruments in the basement of his house. It is in this space that the pivotal part of the depiction of the effort to eradicate Jews in Stranger's publication takes place. On the one hand, the author uses naturalistic descriptions of torture practices, the aim of which was to obtain as much information as possible from other prisoners, who were in most cases members of Rinnan-infiltrated resistance groups, leading to other members of the group, clues to concealed weapons and the like. Thus, within these descriptions, the writer links raw, sometimes even detailed descriptions of torture with the presentation of interviews, the aim of which was to obtain certain information from the prisoners. Part of these narrative passages is the presentation of introspection and Rinnan's self-reflexive practices, which show that he made many of his decisions and some of his actions to draw attention to the top Nazi leaders with a view to his promotion.

To summarize the answer to the first research question, it can be stated that depicting the suffering of Jews in Norway in connection with Nazi persecution and stigmatization practices is not very different from portraying this topic in publications of a similar genre. In a way, the original is the connection of Rinnan's monstrous actions about his thought processes, which in part reveal the impulses of his behavior and which to some extent (in the context of art, fiction, literature) justify his actions. The contrast between Rinnan's thoughts and his actions may be interesting. In the analysis of this narrative line, we hardly encountered introspection in connotation with those who were abused. To some extent, therefore, it can be assumed that the writer placed particular emphasis on finding possible attributes that led Rinnan and that shaped his views. It is at this point that, in our opinion, one of the possible limits can be found in the division of literature into adult and intentional. We are guided by the considerable representation of Rinnan's shaping aspects in the self-reflective passages of the text on the possible affiliation of the *Lexicon of Light and Darkness* in the field of literature for children and youth.

3.2 The Influence of the Environment and the Social Environment on the Thought Direction and Maturation of the Adolescent

The topic under study is represented in a considerable amount of literature, in which a certain line of World War II is depicted, in both areas of artistic narratives. Henry Rinnan's actions affected his adolescence. He was bullied by his peers because of some of his handicaps and felt underestimated by his employer (uncle). It was these attributes that gradually shaped Rinnan's personality. He

increasingly felt the desire to prove to everyone that he could defend himself (he bought a firearm for stolen money) and that he could do something despite his small stature. The beginning of World War II gave him the perfect opportunity. Gradually, thanks to various coincidences, he becomes one of the leading people who decide on life and death. Many of his actions are led or associated with reminiscences during adolescence: he also perceives these as certain impulses for the continuation of his activity.

These excerpts can be generalized in such a way that a significant influence on the formation of the personality profile of individuals has its surroundings, both on an explicit level, i.e., purposefully, and implicitly, i.e., what the individual tracks, observes and the like. Of course, influencing works reciprocally in the sense of pretending both positive and negative patterns. Considerable space is devoted to the depictions mentioned in Stranger's publication. This creative approach is completely understandable, because it is at this time that impulses of Rinnan's behavior can be found.

Henry Rinnan's actions affected his adolescence. He was bullied by his peers because of some of his handicaps and felt underestimated by his employer (uncle). It was these attributes that gradually shaped Rinnan's personality.

We believe that this narrative line has considerable potential for reading children, especially the age of Rinnan and adolescent recipients. They may experience similar problems, they may perceive the world similarly, and they may feel inferior, underappreciated, or oppressed. Based on the reception of the whole of Stranger's narrative, they may conclude that a given teenage period can be overcome, that it is not desirable for the traumas they experienced during it to be carried over into their next life. What negative consequences this can have is shown in the analyzed publication.

3.3 Strategies in Relation to the Reader

The answer to this question can be guided by a certain symbiosis of responses to the previous two research questions. Stranger chooses in relation to the child/adolescent reader a strategy of approaching their mentality and their age. He also consistently explains all Rinnan's actions at the level of introspection (narrator-spotlight). In our opinion, this procedure is very well chosen in relation to the acquisition of the desired personality profile of the recipients, as we indicated in the introduction to the article. While reading the novel, adolescent readers may conclude that they must find their place in the world, that they should not pass on their traumas to their "adult life". The text is also supplemented by the author's observations in writing this artistic narrative, when he implemented parts of interviews with his children into the book. At the same time, in this way, he reveals largely influenced by the effort to answer the questions asked to his children. At the same time, through

formulated answers, he also plays the game with adult readers, with a certain overlap of his answers. Through the chosen author's strategy, adult recipients can find parallels to some aspects of their lives in the text. At the same time, the writer integrates many great ideas into the narrative, which do not influence the primary storyline too much, but which complement it and shift its message beyond the story, sometimes with transcendental overlaps. Once again, it is confirmed that both groups of readers can find satisfaction in receiving Stranger's book, which stems, among other things, from Stranger's well-chosen approach to writing the publication.

3.4 Differences in the Perception of Selected Aspects of World War II by People Living at Different Times

In the discussed publication, Stranger develops three stories, which are interconnected by the space in which the representatives of these stories live. The first storyline depicts Henry Rinnan's maturity, his actions during World War II in Norway, and his post-war destiny. This level is partly based on real facts that the author drew from professional publications (some are mentioned in our paper). Henry sees World War II as a personal opportunity; in the basement of his house, he does not hesitate to set up an interrogation room in which monstrous things happen to obtain information. People who are close to Rinnan perceive war in a similar way in most cases: it is a means of ensuring a comfortable existence for them, but for which they must do something, i.e., carry out the orders of senior Nazi officials. They excuse all their actions by the fact that the victims can blame themselves for them - they did not defend themselves, they should not have done the thing, they should not have been caught, they should not be trustworthy.... Even after the end of World War II, Rinnan continues to think for personal gain: he thinks that he would use his knowledge gained during the infiltration of various groups in Norway's secret services. He is therefore unaware of the implications and implications of his actions; he is still convinced of the necessity of his actions with a view to ensuring the well-being of his family and friends.

The second narrative line is the story of a family who move into the same house after the end of World War II. The man and the woman have different information about the area; respectively the woman is not familiar with the detailed history of the house. Gradually, everything that took place in the basement of their house, he learns. The considerable psychological pressure that is exerted on her, among other things, because of worrying about her children, she gradually loses her control and begins to distance herself from the man and her children. The house and its history thus cause the disintegration of the hitherto functioning family; Rinnan's legacy transformed into another negative consequence.

The third narrative line consists of reflective passages related to the author's writing. He focuses on the impulses that shaped him when he decided to write the novel. At the same time, he tries to answer the questions asked by his children. Finally, yet importantly, it reflects on the legacy of the victims of

The text is also supplemented by the author's observations in writing this artistic narrative, when he implemented parts of interviews with his children into the book. At the same time, in this way, he reveals largely influenced by the effort to answer the questions asked to his children.

World War II for the present and reflects on what needs to be done to ensure that this does not happen again. One of the contributions to this is his novel.

All three narrative lines are connected by space, house, and cellar and in a way character. One of the children who witnessed the breakdown of his parents' marriage was his grandmother. The author therefore has a personal relationship to the space that plays a pivotal role in the novel being discussed.

3.5 Space to Support Pluralistic Interpretation of the Text by Recipients

We will answer the last research question at the level of a certain summary of the above observations. The very potential of the pluralistic perception of the narrative stems from the composition of the novel. As we have already mentioned, the three narrative (storyline) lines have a considerable principle of incompleteness, so that all readers of different ages, reading experiences, cognitive levels, knowledge of World War II and the like can fill the reception of Stranger's text with their imagination, they can relate it with their lives. This is the basis of this pluralistic interpretation. The characters and depictions of their opinion, as well as their physiological development, provide additional space for various interpretations of text passages. It is in the part where the influences influencing the genesis of Henry's views are depicted that they can be close to adolescent readers, especially with the age of the character. Adult recipients can find in them references to the development of the story, or they can reciprocally realize what led Rinnan to his behavior in relation to his mental maturation.

The space for pluralistic interpretation is therefore considerable within the novel. Certain barriers set him the basic aspects that connect all three generations united with the house, in the basement of which the torture of people took place, especially from the resistance. The author himself, who built his story on real events connected with a non-fictional character, also functions as a certain connecting element. Of course, many plot lines (especially intellectual, introspective) are conceived, but it is the illumination of Rinnan's actions that ensures that certain moral and ethical appeals are implicitly integrated into the text, which we believe most recipients will be able to recognize in a (not)relationship. Desirable conduct and behavior in connection with life in a democratic society. Nevertheless, the narrative provides considerable space for various (pluralistic) interpretations,

without which there would be no field of art literature that plays an important role in human development.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

The main aim of the paper was to point out the obscure implicit reader of Stranger's book *Lexicon of Light and Darkness*, and thus to point out certain boundaries in determining the implicit reader of texts on one line of World War II events in connection with the sound of most of them. We fulfilled the goal of the paper by answering research questions. Their theoretical justification was followed by a presentation of a qualitative analysis of the narrative.

Summary answer to the first research question 1) *How does the depiction of the effort to eradicate Jewish nationality differ in Stranger's publication in comparison with other artistic narratives on the same subject?* can be formulated in such a way that the author naturally depicts the abuse of various members of resistance organizations in Norway during World War II, but with considerable emphasis on the explanation of Henry Rinnan's ideas, which to some extent explain his actions. We are convinced that the author decided to take this step mainly due to a certain prevention of these monstrous acts (in relation to the adolescent reader) and due to pointing out possible manifestations of trauma from adolescence, which are reflected in the actions of an adult. The second research question was *What is the influence of the social environment on the mental orientation and maturation of the adolescent?* Based on the analysis of the narrative, it can be stated that the author focused on depicting the influence of the social group on the formation of the personality profile of individuals. Considerable space is devoted to this issue in the discussed publication, in our opinion, mainly due to the prevention of negative aspects of education, which can manifest themselves in the behavior of individuals only after several years, even if they gradually mature and gain strength in them.

In relation to the reader, Stranger has chosen strategies on several levels. One of them is conducted in relation to the reader: based on the creative approach and application of specific motifs to the narrative, the publication can be perceived "only" in the primary storyline, which will be appreciated especially by readers who do not yet have sufficient readership or factual knowledge. However, that primary plot contains a considerable number of deeper, transcendent ideas that lead more experienced reader to various analogies to today's global world, which is one way to prevent the development of persecution and stigmatization practices today.

Through characters (mostly real) from three generations, Stranger points out a certain mystery of a place that attracts negative phenomena. The house, or its cellar, is the area where the Nazi victims were tortured during World War II, and the children of a family that moved into the house after World

War II found a bullet fired from a weapon. The first impulse is leading to the breakdown of marriage and the family. The author is also connected to the house in his own way, through his wife. The house became the impetus for why he began writing the novel and with what purpose or mission he created it.

All storylines provide ample space for a pluralistic interpretation. Every reader (whether child/adolescent or adult) can give them a different meaning in the boundaries determined especially by space, characters and self-reflexive Rinnan passages. This fact is at the heart of the reception of art literature. Stranger's novel fills it completely; at the same time, the number of places of incompleteness leads us to state that the analyzed novel is ambiguously assigned to the field of literature for adults or to the field of literature for children and youth.

We believe that we have fulfilled the goal of the paper by answering the formulated research questions. We are convinced that through Stranger's publication it is possible to point out certain guidelines in the classification of selected publications into the two mentioned areas of art literature. In our opinion, the interpretive tools through which we tried to answer the postulated research questions (space, time, characters, etc.) can be applied to various artistic narratives, which cannot be clearly included in the children's literature, which is characterized by its compositional arrangement (for example, the role of illustrations, etc.).

We do not want to claim that all Shoah-themed narratives, which are straddled between two basic areas of literary texts, can unconditionally be offered for children's reading. It always depends on the specific use of the different layers involved in the composition of a particular work. However, we believe that the range of literary texts found "in no man's land" is perhaps more extensive than it may seem at first glance. Moreover, it is good, because in many of them they display the warnings that one line of events of World War II presents us with, which should serve as a certain model, where the development of our increasingly globalizing society should not go.

We do not want to claim that all Shoah-themed narratives, which are straddled between two basic areas of literary texts, can unconditionally be offered for children's reading.

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How to cite this paper:

Mašát, M. (2022). Analysis of Simon Stranger's novel *Lexicon of Light and Darkness*. *Journal of Literary Education*, (6), 180-195. <https://doi.org/10.7203/JLE.6.22976>