

## Alzheimer's disease representation in the Picture Books

### La representación de la enfermedad de Alzheimer en los álbumes ilustrados

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#### Abstract

Representations of Alzheimer's Disease (AD) have become increasingly visible in communication media, cinema and literature. The present study centers on the analysis of the various representations of AD aimed at children via picture books. The growth of the picture book as a genre, especially when tailored to the youngest of readers, has facilitated the inclusion of new social issues, such as AD. This study intends to examine the different images that have been elaborated around AD and its place in the family and social environments, as well as to determine the use of a perspective free or not from stereotyped and stigmatized ideas about this type of dementia.

#### Resumen

La representación de la enfermedad de Alzheimer (EA) se hace cada vez más visible a través de los medios de comunicación, del cine o de la literatura. La presente investigación se centra en el análisis de las diferentes representaciones que llegan a la población infantil sobre la EA, a través del álbum ilustrado. El gran auge que ha cobrado este género, especialmente cuando se destina a los lectores más jóvenes, ha facilitado que nuevos temas tengan cabida, como es el caso de la enfermedad de Alzheimer. Este estudio pretende abordar las imágenes que proyectan de la enfermedad y de su entorno familiar y social, así como analizar si se da una perspectiva libre o no de ideas estereotipadas y estigmatizadoras sobre este tipo de demencia.

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## Introduction

In the past decades, the population in developed countries has gradually aged due to an increase in life expectancy and a falling birth rate. The individual's life cycle is longer but no solution has been found to different chronic and degenerative diseases, such as some types of dementia, notably Alzheimer's disease (AD). According to the 2015 World Alzheimer's Report, published by Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI), it is estimated that around 46.8 million people live with dementia worldwide; this number is estimated to double every twenty years. ADI (2014) estimates that between 50 and 75 % of people living with dementia suffer from Alzheimer's.

These data are very challenging for society, which aims at responding to a disease that does not only affect the sick person but their family and social environment.

AD's influence becomes more visible and shocking in the contemporary age (Adelman & Verbrugge, 2000; Segers, 2007). Nevertheless, its representations focus on different aspects of the sick person and their social environment. Both Clarke (2006) and Kirkman (2006) state that the AD's picture conveyed by the media emphasises the most negative aspects and consequences thereof. While other authors, such as Carbonnelle, Casini & Klein (2009), emphasise that the media especially focus on the terminal stage of the disease, others such as Werner, Goldstein & Buchbinder (2010), state that they focus more often on the burden faced by the sick person's family while they take care of him/her. On the other hand, sight should not be lost to the fact that testimonies from people who live with dementia telling how they deal with their condition are seldom heard in the news, but it is other people, professionals or carers, who normally speak on behalf of them (Clarke, 2006; Kirkman, 2006).

Some of the more significant aspects of the information provided by the media to society are reflected in the popular discourse, where dementia and its symptoms appear as some-

thing that occur naturally with ageing, and it is only seen as a disease based on a diagnosis. Therefore, the burden of the definition of AD is placed in what the biomedical perspective sees as its final stage, that is total dependency or terminal stage (Cañabate, 2003). Similar aspects were found by researchers such as Martorell, Paz, Montes, Jiménez & Burjalés (2010) in testimonies from non-professional carers from different social contexts, specifically in Spanish, Venezuelan and Mexican cities. Therefore, there is a tendency to globalise the AD discourse because the population affected by the disease is rising, which is considered as the "epidemic of the 21st century". Nevertheless, we find this globalisation notably stigmatises dementia and that irreversible memory problems are seen as something normal related to old age (Glueckauf *et al.*, 2005).

On the other hand, the globalisation of the AD discourse appears in different artistic fields where social reality is reflected. An example is cinema: well-known films have been produced in different countries hinging on Alzheimer's, such as *Son of the bride* (2001), *The notebook* (2004), *¿Y tú quién eres?* (2007), *La caja de Pandora* (2008) o *Still Alice* (2014).

Literature, as social discourse, also reflects the issue of AD, its presence being increasingly frequent in other contemporary works of different genres and other authors of different nationalities, which supports the idea of a globalised discourse. Several novels have also been published, such as *Elegy for Iris* (2000), *El oscurocer: (un encuentro)* (2002), *Ahora tocada música de baile* (2004) or *Still Alice* (2009). The issue of AD is also dealt with in poetry in works such as *Los cuerpos oscuros* (2005), *Alzheimer: la otra voz* (2006) or *Un espejo vacío: viaje poético hacia las entrañas del Alzheimer* (2012). AD has also been dealt with in examples of the essay genre such as *El cuidador: una vida con el Alzheimer* (2001) or *Memorias de Alzheimer* (2012), which tries to present this disease through testimonies of well-known people who have coexisted with EA as patients of family carers.

Literature does not exclusively present AD to adults but it has also been included in youth literature (*Yo, el desconocido*, 2007; *En la laguna más profunda*, 2011) and even in children's literature (*La abuela Teresa y el sol*, 2002; *Domingo de pipiripingo*, 2008; *La abuela durmiente*, 2015), where illustrated albums are becoming increasingly important in the past few years.

### The illustrated album and AD

For this reason, we are focusing on albums, since the number of publications aimed at children have increased and their subjects also cover very significant current issues such as AD more often, which is increasingly present in albums.

Although the first illustrated albums -as we see them today- were published in the 60s, Dresang (1999) highlights the growth of the number of albums published in the late 90s. Once again, even if illustrated albums are generally associated to literature aimed at young children (Silva-Díaz, 2005), they do not belong exclusively to the children's literature system.

This circumstance, together with the combination of verbal and iconic languages, makes it more difficult to define albums satisfactorily. It seems that there is only agreement between the different specialists and authors on the confluence of two codes (text and image), although disagreement arises when determining how they interact. This way, there are closed and systemic approaches that try to reflect the different types of relations between the text and the pictures. In this line, some authors as Shulevitz (2005) state that only those works where the text and the pictures are totally interdependent can be considered illustrated albums. Nikolajeva & Scott (2001), in an attempt to exhaustively classify books, ranging from those that only have text to those that only have pictures, refer to illustrated albums as this type of books with an indissoluble unity formed by the text and the

pictures, which necessarily collaborate in the delivery of the message.

On the other hand, open and dynamic approaches emphasise that it is the readers who establish relations and reject closed definitions because they believe the illustrated album is a flexible genre, as stated by Duran (2001): "the album puts and end to the academic dichotomy that opposes the text and the pictures. The album is heterodox" (p.322). Lewis (2001) also has the same approach and states that it would be dangerous to constrict the illustrated album to a rigid definition, because closed definitions leave out some of its very different manifestations. This way, the illustrated album is seen as "an open artistic creation that is continually changing where reader-creator children can participate actively" (Gómez-López-Quiñones, 2015, p.113).

Although it may be agreed that the definition of the concept of illustrated album is still debatable, it cannot be denied that this genre has been substantially recognised. The recognition of this type of books for boys and girls started in the 90s and at the beginning of the 21st century, when the first comprehensive works, conferences and monographs in periodicals started to appear (Silva-Díaz, 2005).

The illustrated album works as a mediator between adults and children because it turns into a means to convey current issues of great social relevance. Examples include those albums that deal with new forms of partner relationships (*Paula tiene dos mamás*, 2003), prostitution (*Marita y las mujeres de la calle*, 2004), death (*Como todo lo que nace*, 2000; *El pato y la muerte*, 2010), the expression of paternal affection (*Yo te tengo a ti y tú me tienes a mí*, 2001) or AD. In the first decades of the 21st century the number of books that deal with this type of dementia is increasing.

On the other hand, as far as AD is concerned, there have been several attempts to prepare guides or lists of literary resources on this issue. *Los mayores y la enfermedad de Alzheimer en la literatura infantil y juvenil*

(2011), published by Fundación Germán Sánchez Ruipérez, is an example, as well as *Guía de recursos documentales: La enfermedad de Alzheimer en la literatura* (2013), published by the State Reference Centre (CRE, as per its acronym in Spanish) of Alzheimer's and other types of dementia adhered to the Spanish Institute of the Elderly and Social Services (IMSERSO). Both guides propose a list of books that deal with the issue of AD, including different illustrated albums that bring this reality to children using different representations of this disease in contemporary society. A corpus to carry out an analysis has been obtained through compilation of these guides. This corpus is composed of *Remember, grandma?* (2004), *Yo soy yo* (2004), *Tengo una abuela diferente a las demás* (2006), *Meine Oma Anni hat Alzheimer* (2007), *Still my Grandma* (2007), *Mi abuelo Simón lo sabe* (2007), *Al atardecer* (2010), *La abuela necesita besitos* (2010), *Très vieux monsieur* (2010), *El zorro que perdió la memoria* (2011), *Hilos de colores* (2012), *Mi abuela no se acuerda de mi nombre* (2012) and *Los despistes de abuelo Pedro* (2012)<sup>1</sup>.

## Texts and paratexts

Although the concept of illustrated album has been delimited as a kind of book where the verbal and iconic codes are fairly on equal footing, it would also be necessary to approach the paratexts that play an important role in these books, an area that is necessary to reading mediators.

Gérard Genette proposes the concept of paratexts in his book *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, published in 1982, and he fully developed it in his study *Seuils* (1987). He sees it as an auxiliary or complementary element of the text, which helps the reader to enter the reading because it provides the first instructions on the contents of the book. Lluch (2009) highlights its privileged position and the action it takes on the readers to attain an appropriate reading for the the text to be well received.

In those illustrated albums that deal with AD, both texts and paratexts play an important role when approaching and representing the disease. It should be noted that in more than half of the albums that compose the corpus (53.85%)<sup>2</sup> the word "Alzheimer's" is never used in their texts or paratexts. The word is used in the remaining 46.15%, although its use is not equally distributed in the texts and paratexts. Regarding the albums where the word "Alzheimer's" is used, it appears in the paratexts, while it also appears in the texts of only two of all the albums analysed.

The paratexts that use the term "Alzheimer's" are clearly aimed not so much at children but at adults who buy the album instead. Therefore, there are albums in which the name of the disease is not used in the texts, but it appears in the paratexts aimed at the person who buys the album, with the intent to inform the adult about the story's background. *Hilos de colores* is an example. The back cover reads as follows: "Created in collaboration with the Alzheimer's Foundation of Spain, partially beneficiary of the profits derived herefrom" (Ferrándiz, 2012); or in *La abuela necesita besitos*, where, at the end of the stories, a series of ideas and advices aimed at the adult are shown to justify that it is not easy for children to understand this disease:

Certain diseases such as senile dementia or Alzheimer's result and disabilities and require care from their children or other relatives [...] It is hard for the child to understand that a grown-up loses control of his/her acts or has memory blackouts (Bergua, 2011, p. 34).

Nevertheless, whether the word "Alzheimer's" is used in the text or not, authors use a series of figures of speech such as metaphors, euphemisms and litotes to refer to this type of dementia and mitigate the impact on children.

For example, when explaining the symptomatology of the disease, metaphors and allegories help to make abstracts aspects visible and promote the course of the story in a way that is easy to understand for the child, instead of using difficult terms. In *Hilos de*



*colores*, Elena Ferrándiz uses the semantic field of sewing to introduce the symptoms related to the first memory problems of the person with Alzheimer's. In this case, the dress or suit refers to the memory, the thread refers to the moments lived and the holes and gaps refer to oblivion:

Everybody said the dress was still wonderful... But it slowly, almost imperceptibly, had more and more holes. It was reduced to a worn garment with separate threads and so many holes that it barely covered her. Memories started to slip into oblivion slowly (Ferrándiz, 2012).<sup>3</sup>

Metaphors and allegories are also used to explain the short-term memory loss suffered by the sick person in the album by Dagmar H. Mueller, *Meine Oma Anni hat Alzheimer*. This way, her life is compared to a tree. Her experiences are represented as tree leaves and AD is represented as fall, which takes the moments lived from him slowly:

Imagine -mum said- that it is Fall inside grandma's head. The leaves of her life tree are falling. They fall every month. But they all do not fall at the same time; the leaves from the top fall first. The leaves from the bottom fall later. It is always like that -mum said-. The leaves that are more strongly fixed are those that have been in the tree for a longer time. In other words, the leaves from the bottom [...] Grandma Anni's Fall sweeps the memories that have been there less time in first place (Mueller, 2007).

In the case of *Mi abuelo Simón lo sabe*, by Nieves Pérez, the temporal orientation problems suffered by the grandfather are supported by his granddaughter's explanation, who compares his blackouts to a cloud that clouds his ability to remember: "Mi grandpa Simón does not know what happens with time. Time only exists inside his watch and in the moon. Maybe sometimes a cloud unintentionally clouds his memory" (Pérez, 2007).

On the other hand, euphemisms referring to the disease help to mitigate the psychological impact the symptoms may have in children. For example, in *Yo soy yo* (2004), Fina Casadelrrey uses the word *strange* to refer to her great-grandmother, instead of saying that she is sick straight away: "The day I was

born, she sang songs to the moon. Now she is strange and does not remember any of them" (p. 20). *Lilotes* play the same mitigating role by saying something and reducing or denying the opposite of what is actually meant, just like in *Remember, grandma?* (2004) for example. The author, Laura Langston, uses this figure of speech not to say that the grandmother has a bad memory outright: "But some days, grandma's memory is not so good..." or in *Still my Grandma* (2007) by Véronique Van den Abeele, where the grandmother is defined by omitting her current reality and turning her eyes on the past to base the relationship on memories of moments of love lived: "It is true that she is not like she used to be but she is still my grandma and I love her so much".

## Representation and explanation of AD

When representing AD in illustrated album, texts do not exclusively play an important role but also pictures help to represent this disease. The reception process of these codes is complex and it requires activation of all the pragmatic elements of reading not just to give meaning to the text but some sense too (Ruíz-Domínguez, 2014). Therefore, the interaction between texts and pictures and the connection with the interpretation of the reader himself/herself results in representations of the disease that can be approached from different perspectives or frameworks. This way, this study analyses the use of different frameworks and perspectives used to define and explain AD, which are influenced by culture and society.

Culture plays a very important role to understand the world around us because it is the basis to build knowledge and its meaning (Hall, 1997). This construction can be influenced by frameworks, which can be defined as conceptual tools used to convey, interpret and evaluate information (Neuman, Just & Crigler, 1992). Frameworks are used to present an issue in a comprehensible way to a diverse audience, so that they draw the attention in core elements that are often shared by society (Entman, 1993).

One could think that frameworks can help to manipulate certain ideas, but nevertheless, as pointed out by Van Gorp (2007), using frameworks to convey information does not have to do with forging it, because the person using frameworks is not even fully aware that they are using them. Therefore, the author argues that any event can have different meanings depending on the framework or perspective used to define it. In this sense, it can be understood that both senders and recipients have different alternatives when defining different issues and that the very implementation of frameworks should foster some kind of interpretation when defining the problem and the casual relationship thereof (Entman, 2004; Van Gorp, 2007).

When people interpret the content, they are not exclusively driven by their own mental schemes in an intrinsic way but by their cultural processes too (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Frameworks are part of culture and, therefore, they do not exist in a strictly individual way because they are not personal mental schemes (Kinder & Sanders, 1990; Scheufele, 1999). The primary difference between schemes and frameworks is that schemes are defined as sets of organised knowledge that are gradually developed, become more complex and are related to personal experiences and associated feelings (Wicks, 2001). On the contrary, frameworks are quite more stable because they are part of culture and constitute broader interpretative definitions of social reality (Benford & Snow, 2000).

In 2012, Van Gorp and Vercruyssen carried out a study to know the frameworks that prevail over dementia. To that end, the authors analysed different formats, such as books, films, newspaper articles or public health leaflets dealing with this issue. The results showed that there are six prevailing frameworks and the authors identified an alternative or counter-framework for each one of them (table 1). Five out of the six prevailing frameworks found offer a negative view of dementia. When used, most sources combine different frameworks and no diffe-

rences between written and audiovisual media were found. On the other hand, the greatest achievement of this study was the creation of an inventory of prevailing frameworks and counter-frameworks, which is very useful to evaluate the different communication strategies.

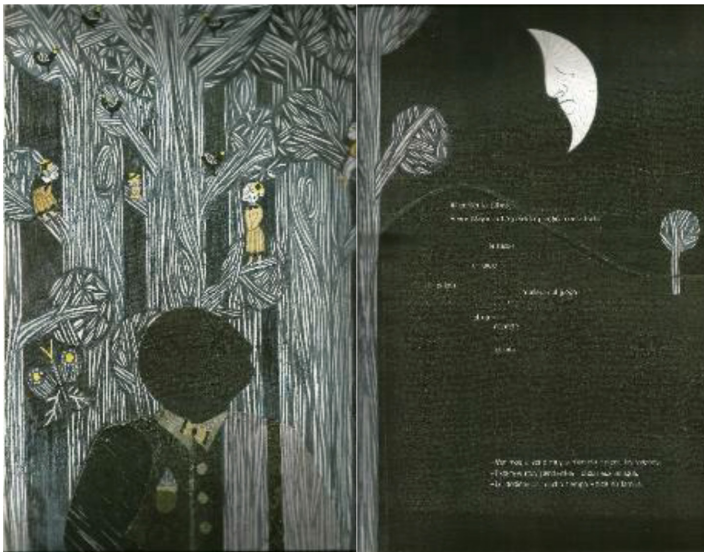
Table 1. List of frames and counter-frames giving meaning to dementia

<b>Frames</b>	<b>Counter-frames</b>
Body-mind dualism	Body-mind unity
The invader	The stranger travel mate
Faith in science	Natural ageing process
Fear of death and degeneration	<i>Carpe diem</i>
Role reversal	Each one in a turn
No <i>quid pro quo</i>	The good mother

Note: Adapted from "Frames and counter-frames giving meaning to dementia: A framing analysis of media content", by B. Van Gorp, & T. Vercruyssen, 2012, *Social Science & Medicine*, 74, pp. 1277-1278.

The illustrated albums that deal with AD are also included in the frameworks and counter-frameworks identified by these authors. As the state in their study, in these albums different frameworks are combined to represent the disease too. The number of frameworks and counter-frameworks is roughly similar. The latter include: *body-mind dualism*, *role reversal* and *faith in science*, while counter-frameworks include *body-mind unity*, *natural ageing process* and *the good mother*. All the foregoing progressively introduces to young readers what AD implies and all the aspects around it, together with others that do it to a lesser extent. Most albums, even those using frameworks with negative or stereotyped connotations, try to introduce AD to young readers in the smoothest and most sensitive way by using metaphors, euphemisms and lilies in their texts and by using bright and colourful pictures were the main characters show affection.

*Très vieux monsieur* (2010) by Adeline Yzac, with pictures by Éva Offredo, is a clear example of *body-mind dualism*. It is based on the Cartesian dualism theory and argues that human being is a combination of two parts: the body or matter and the mind or soul. Dementia confiscates the



Picture 1. *Très vieux monsieur*, double page, pictures by Eva Offredo

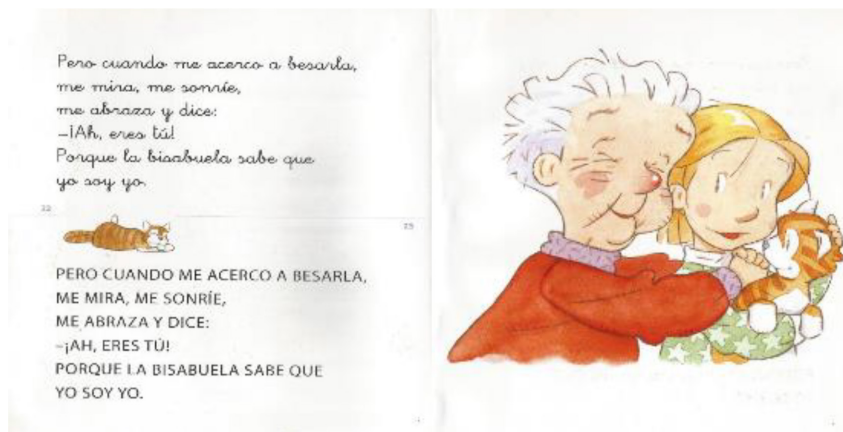
soul, while the body remains intact provisionally. This way, people who suffer this disease lose their identity and humanity because they exist just at a material level. This idea appears in the very title of the album, because “old man” is used throughout the entire book to refer to a person with AD without knowing his true identity. On the other hand, this makes the recipient generalise, because any old man could be this character. At the beginning of the story, Adeline presents a man “just like anybody”, “with his head screwed straight and on right”, while the characters are highlighted in pictures on a white background, body language expresses harmony and well-being with the activities performed. As the story goes on and the main character starts to suffer the disease, the *body-mind dualism* is increasingly present. This fact can be seen in the pictures, with darker colours and more abstract representations of reality. This way, the combination with the no “*quid pro quo*” framework starts to appear, focusing on the collateral damages of dementia, specially the heavy burden borne by the relatives and the people around the sick person, who are presented as the actual victims because they have to do everything and they get nothing in return. This album contains an example of excellent correlation between text and picture. While the text reads “He cannot eat his bowl of soup. He

spills it for any reason”, the picture shows the huge figure of an old man who falls down counter-clockwise and whose soup bowl spills upon his relatives, represented in a corner of the page in a very small size. The symbolic meaning of the picture has a powerful suggestive power of the impairment of the cognitive functions of the sick person and the heavy burden to the family. On the other hand, the pictures anticipate the signs of impairment suffered by the sick person and present him apart from the other persons on the scene, like an almost transparent shadow in the woods. His facial features are progressively blurred, evoking the loss of his identity, while the text insists on expressions such as “lose his mind” or “lose his way”, inherent to the *body-mind dualism*. On its part, the no “*quid pro quo*” framework is reflected through his sad relatives hanging on the trees’ branches, at a different level than the sick person, and who say they are watching and busy for him (Picture 1).

To invalidate the idea of the prevailing framework *body-mind dualism*, the counter-framework *body-mind unity* is used, which reverses or questions the reasoning of such framework. This way, the *body-mind unity* is defended as something indivisible, where reason is not superior and, therefore, the person who suffers dementia loses his/her intellectual capacity, not his/her identity nor his/her emotional or sensory capacity. People who suffer AD thus have rich emotional lives and are highly sensitive at a physical level. *La abuela necesita besitos* (2011) by Ana Bergua and with pictures by Carme Sala, contains a very good example of this explanation. There is a scene where the grandmother, who has Alzheimer’s, comes to her senses through emotional contact with their granddaughters, which is represented through pictures of kissing and hugging, related to the text:

Grandma is normally with a blank look on her face, as if she were gazing far away. When we see her like that, we seat on her lap and kiss her all over her face. And her eyes come back from far away, and she smiles (p. 33).





Picture 2. *Yo soy yo*, double page, pictures by Josep Vicó

*Yo soy yo* (2004), an album by Fina Casallerrey, with pictures by Josep Vicó, is also a good example of this *body-mind unity* perspective. Therefore, the great-grandmother has AD symptoms throughout the whole story. She copes with them thanks to the body contact and kisses of her great-granddaughter, which shows the emotional and sensory capacity kept by the sick person, despite several cognitive impairments (Picture 2).

*Faith in science* is another important framework of this type of albums. Among all the frameworks identified by Van Gorp y Vercruysse (2012), *faith in science* is the only framework that does not give a negative view of dementia, because it argues that the scientific community is comprehending this disease better and better. The consequences of dementia are brain damage, deficits in memory or in other cognitive aspects that can be diagnosed and treated. Therefore, medical science should be relied on as the only solution. *Meine Oma Anni hat Alzheimer* (2007), an album by Dagmar H. Mueller, with pictures by Verena Ballhaus, is in line with this perspective and a good example thereof.

AD is dealt with from the beginning of the story and is even given its own name, its denomination is explained and other symptoms of the grandmother are referred to in other pages. Mueller (2007) explains these symptoms to young readers, constantly underlining that they are caused by her con-

dition and not by other reasons. For example, in this album, it is stated as follows: "Living with a disease does not have anything to do with being insane", "You can see that grandma Anni is sick in many things. Especially, she forgets everything", or "This disease does not have anything to do with being a fool. But it is very weird that grandma Anni does not understand anymore or that she forgets very simple things". Other albums also use medical jargon inherent to this

framework or the figure of the doctor may even appear, just like in *Still my Grandma* (2008), by Véronique Van den Abeele, which expressly reads "The doctor said she has Alzheimer's".

The counter-framework that opposes this *faith in science* framework is *natural ageing process*. Those albums that use it define dementia as the extreme result of the ageing process because it is not seen as a disease. It should be noted that all the pictures representing people who suffer AD are represented by very old and shrinking characters, most of them have grey hairs, use canes or are sitting on their coaches, old age symbols. A good example of this perspective can be found in the album by Nieves Pérez Rivero, with pictures by Miguel Díez Navarro: *Mi abuelo Simón lo sabe* (2007), where the grandfather, after making a few mistakes that may occur in the early stages of AD, apologises repeatedly to his granddaughter saying: "That is right, Julia, do not pay attention to this old man" or "What did I do? I am so old...". According to this approach, dementia is incurable and trying to find a cure is like trying to find a pill for eternal youth. In the album *La abuela necesita besitos* (2011), by Ana Bergua and with pictures by Carme Sala, this approach is used when the mother explains to her daughter the disease suffered by the grandmother. In sight of this explanation, the little girl says that the grandmother should try syrup and her mother answers:



“Old people cannot be young again, Maite [...] There are no plasters for this disease, we can only love her a lot” (Bergua, 2011, p. 10).

*Role reversal* is another of the more frequently used frameworks in albums dealing with AD. In this case, the person with dementia is presented as someone who is a child again and behaves accordingly. This way, the sick person can notice he/she is having deviant behaviour because they do not follow social conventions and start to lose autonomy and sense of responsibility, just like children. In *Los despistes del abuelo Pedro* (2012) by Marta Zafrilla, with pictures by Miguel Ángel Díez, the main character is a little kid who argues that maybe he is not an only child anymore because his grandfather -who has AD- has moved in and he even says that “many things he does and says are childish”, as he describes episodes of deviant behaviour from the early stages of AD suffered by the latter. On its part, in *Die Geschichte vom Fuchs, der den Verstand verlor* (2010), by Martin Baltscheit, the story ends with a picture that is very significant regarding this framework. In this case, the sick character, an old fox, ends up sleeping pleasantly in a fetal position, almost like a baby, surrounded by young foxes with their eyes half open, watching over him (Picture 3).



Picture 3. *El zorro que perdió la memoria*, pictures by Martin Baltscheit



Picture 4. *Hilos de colores*, double page, pictures by de Elena Ferrándiz

In last place, the counter-framework that is more frequently used in this type of albums is *the good mother*. This is based on the fact that our nature makes us look after each other and this is also applicable to people with dementia. This counter-framework draws a parallel between the care and love of the relatives and that of a mother who sacrifices unconditionally for her children. It is a moral duty to show love and accept a sick relative, and his/her condition has to be accepted patiently and resignedly, as we give support and love. Most of these albums have pictures where images of affection towards the sick person and of help being offered by other characters prevail. In *Tengo una abuela diferente a las demás* (2003), by Mercè Arànega, there are scenes where the grandson assists his grandmother -who has AD- enormously. Love and help should be emphasised: “Grandma, I am Juan. I love you so much and I am eager to hug you. This is a present to make things easier for you. Here you are, it is a notebook. Now we can write down the things you forget sometimes (Arànega, 2003, p. 2). Likewise, in *Hilos de colores* (2012), Elena Ferrándiz uses this perspective of *the good mother* combined with the *no “quid pro quo”* framework, which it opposes. It is the story of a son and his mother’s condition is beyond him: he does not have time for other activities besides taking care of her, which is a *no “quid pro quo”* scenario. Nevertheless, other people come into play. These people offer their

help and support unconditionally, although the sick woman is not very pleased to depend on so many people. The picture shows many hands that conceal her nudity, while she is crestfallen. Just like other albums, the disease is represented by an old person. In this case, it is the bun that puts up her grey hair (Picture 4).

## Conclusions

AD influences society through different channels, such as the media (Segers, 2007), popular discourse (Cañabate, 2003; Glueckauf et al., 2005; Martorell et al., 2010) or literature (CRE of Alzheimer's and other types of dementia adhered to the IMSERSO, 2013; Fundación Germán Sánchez Ruipérez, 2011). Information on the disease is disseminated through these means and it helps to make members of our society form an idea on the implications of AD. Nevertheless, sometimes this information is not totally accurate because it basically focuses on the more stereotyped aspects of this disease (Clarke, 2006; Kirkman, 2006; Van Gorp & Vercruyssen, 2012).

As a matter of fact, AD is stigmatized (Lee, Lee & Diwan, 2010; Werner, 2014; Werner & Giveon, 2008) and the discourse used in illustrated albums dealing with this issue partly contributes to this circumstance. Not all illustrated albums refer directly to AD and those which include references to it contain them in the paratexts, which are aimed at the adult buyer. Nevertheless, this fact should be interpreted carefully. On one hand, the paucity of express references to AD are justified by literary language itself, since it is very rich in tropes, metaphors and all kinds of figures of speech when referring to reality without naming it directly. On the other hand, it is related to the stigma, because both sick people and their relatives tend to conceal the diagnosis of the disease for fear of being rejected or isolated, and the disease turns therefore into a taboo (Beard, 2004; MacRae, 1999; Vernooij-Dassen et al., 2005). This circumstance also arises in albums aimed at children because

they generally tend to protect the young recipient and try to mitigate the impact caused by the disease.

Likewise, when analysing the perspective or the frameworks used by the albums, when it comes to dealing with AD, it can be noted that not all the frameworks by Van Gorp y Vercruyssen (2012) are used. Those presenting the disease in a more negative way are hardly ever used in any album or, otherwise, they do it in a non-significant way, and this also applies to their respective counter-frameworks. Nevertheless, the other frameworks used by the albums' authors, even though they have a negative view of the disease, mitigate it in combination with other more positive counter-frameworks or using certain figures of speech or happier pictures that protect young readers from receiving that information in an abrupt way.

The use of frameworks and counter-frameworks is distributed among the albums, generally through combination thereof. Nevertheless, we find that *the good mother* counter-framework is used in most books to a greater or lesser extent. Children thus find models in those characters who interact affectionately with the sick person, offer their help and support because they love him/her unconditionally.

In short, albums dealing with AD try to safeguard minors from the impact this type of dementia may have in them. The disease is thus brought closer and explained to the child, although in most cases it is not clearly identified. Nevertheless, it is understood that these albums deal with this issue because it is explicitly represented in the paratexts generally aimed at grown-ups. The use of counter-frameworks focusing on more positive perspectives of the disease and the use of frameworks with more negative but mitigated views aimed at children is another attempt to safeguard them. It could therefore be stated that albums dealing with AD use frameworks that are generally used in different channels

to represent dementia (*body-mind dualism, natural ageing process, role reversal*). This way, children receive negative stereotyped representations that, nevertheless, tend to mitigate and deal with this issue more gently; both as far as the texts and the pictures are concerned.

## Notes

1. The entire reference of the albums that make up the corpus can be found in the section References\Primary texts.
2. This percentage has been calculated using the paratexts inserted in the book exclusively.
3. If page numbers are not be stated in the quote, this is because the book lacks them.

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