

Dealing with Historical Memory in the picture book entitled *Rose Blanche*

El tratamiento de la Memoria Histórica en el álbum ilustrado *Rosa Blanca*

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Abstract

Throughout the Historical Memory, History itself, with a capital "H", has evolved into an unlimited variety to tell big stories with a small "h". Concurrently, the oscillation from an eminently written culture to a more visual one with images has fostered the progressive incorporation of popular culture sources in the educational sphere. Some authors approach the historical fact from a more intimate and thoughtful perspective. In this article, we analyze the importance of the picture book as a complementary material to the school textbooks to reach the understanding of History. This material allows to approach the historical Memory such as the Jewish Holocaust. At the same time, we propose an analysis model that takes the characteristics of this literary and artistic genre into consideration, in which text and image appear as an indivisible unity. In order to achieve both objectives, we study *Rose Blanche*, a picture book about the Nazi occupation in the Second World War

Resumen

A través de la Memoria Histórica, la Historia con mayúsculas se ha convertido en una fuente inagotable para narrar grandes historias con minúscula. De manera paralela, el paso de una cultura eminentemente letrada a otra más visual con predominio de la imagen ha favorecido la progresiva incorporación en el ámbito educativo de fuentes procedentes de la cultura popular, cuyos autores se aproximan al hecho histórico desde una perspectiva más íntima y reflexiva. En el presente artículo se fundamenta el potencial del álbum ilustrado como fórmula narrativa complementaria al manual escolar o libro de texto de Historia, especialmente en el tratamiento de temas complejos y delicados, como el holocausto nazi. Además, se propone un modelo de análisis que tiene en cuenta las particularidades de este género artístico en la construcción de la historiografía por medio de la incorporación de imágenes que van más allá de ser una redundancia o aclaración del texto. Para el cumplimiento de ambos objetivos, una vez analizado la concepción actual de la narración histórica, se estudia en detalle el álbum *Rosa Blanca*, contextualizado en la ocupación nazi durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial.

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Introduction

History is a narrative that may also be built bottom-up, in other words, from the point of view of the oppressed and those silenced lives coexisting with the lives of the heroes and major events. This part of History, which must be recognised through the Historical Memory, may be approached through writing, pictures or, in the case of picture books, through an inseparable combination of both codes under the same form. A series of studies (Colomer, 1999, p. 91; Kress & Van Leewen, 2006, p. 1; Moya-Guijarro, 2014, pp.1-17; Painter, Martin & Unsworth, 2013, p. 4; Silva-Díaz, 2005, p. 55) believe this particular format, also known as “album-book” or just “album”, is one of the most suitable testing grounds when dealing with a broad range of subjects.

The objective of this study is to prove the potential of picture books to rescue certain aspects that are not normally covered by History from oblivion, as well as their potential as complementary academic materials to school textbooks. They are suitable due to the important role played by pictures in the storytelling process, which, in combination with the text, are open to multiple interpretations, promoting reflective, critical reading.

This study is divided into two different parts. The first part has a more general nature and corresponds with the theoretical framework and the issue of dealing with Historical Memory considering the linguistic turn of the second half of the twentieth century and the role played by school textbooks in the comprehension of this subject, which is traditionally founded upon rote learning. The second part is more specific and practical and deals with the characteristics of picture books within the framework of education. It is also linked to the reflection and debate of subjects falling within Historical Memory that in turn are somehow taboo in the eyes of society. This study focuses on the Nazi Holocaust as a universal subject representative of the Memory, and analyses the forms of interrelation established between

the text and the pictures of the picture book by Innocenti & Gallaz (1987) entitled *Rose Blanche*.

Dealing with Historical Memory

The French philosopher and anthropologist Ricoeur (1995) believes that presenting History, as well as novels and tales, is a highly narrative process, a “historical way of comprehension. [...] As History itself involves historiography, it turns into some kind of literary device” (p. 269). Or, in De Diego’s words (2005, p. 57): “History is what happened and narrative is the way selected to tell what happened”. As a result of the crisis of realism, in the past decades historians could present a science as appealing at their discretion, enabling people to understand historical facts and all aspects related thereto from a sociocultural point of view.

In an interview for the newspaper Informador.Mx (Jalisco, Mexico, 14th March 2013) to disseminate the International Colloquium on History and Literature (Universidad de Guadalajara, Mexico, 19th and 20th March 2013), the historian Florescano stated that Literature and History have always been disciplines in constant dialogue and underlined that the fact that “today’s historians are adopting literary techniques and methods, as well as films and comics, aiming at improving the way convey the past” is a positive development. He concludes that what is important is the fact that “the past can be relived and rethought so that it can really teach us something [...] we cannot reinfuse life to the past if does not have the appeal of a reality that is well told, well narrated, well conveyed”.

The book *Metahistory. The historical imagination in Nineteenth-century Europe* (White, 1992) is the starting point of History narration. It is the most influential work among those historians who study the narrative strategies of historical writing as a form of literary expression. White’s argument is premised on the fact that all historiographical writings are in part literary constructions. For this reason, he develops a new methodology of historiographical analysis based on the detection and

analysis of implicit literary in the relevant historiographical writings. White's methodology of historiographical analysis influenced the crisis of realism or historiographical naivety, therefore losing confidence in the existence of objectivity when writing about History. This coincided with the linguistic turn during the 70s and 80s, which had an impact on most human sciences. Thereafter, concern about the modes of representation arouse and prevailed over the subject matter of the different human sciences (White, 1992).

Presenting History through narration involves three stages: the «documentary stage» or research into bibliographic sources, the «explanatory-comprehensive stage», which involves thinking about History and the «historical representation stage» or the discourse's narrative writing. Two types of historical sources are used in the first stage: the documentary stage, aiming at reconstructing History as objectively as possible, and the personal memories stage, linked to subjectivity and reflection, aimed at constructing Memory (Florescano, 2012). Both types of historical sources face two apparently opposite forms of reproducing representations and knowledge when it comes to construct History or Memory, respectively (Crenzel, 2010). Leaning towards one or another is related to the selective aspect and the way historiography is sorted, because History itself is always the same (Felman & Laub, 1992). Some historians, such as Levi, are in favour of writing about all men, about the entire society and about all the stories that are part of History. In an interview with this historian, performed in 2009 by Muñoz-Arbeláez & Pérez-Pérez and published in 2010, Levi underlines the perspective of the British historian Thompson about the importance of constructing history of society as a whole and not only of kings and great figures. On his part, Benjamin (2005) utterly rejects historicism or the traditional historiography of victors that disregards the vanquished, and Historical Memory's debt to the latter. All these conceptions admit narratives of parallel stories based on verified

registers that are a useful tool to make historiography become a science to understand the present through reflection on the past.

The History school textbook

In education, the main study material of History is the school text book, the source of the institutional historiographical discourse. In Primary and Secondary education, its exclusive use and imposing rote learning of facts and dates often generates the students' rejection, who find this subject boring and do not see any application whatsoever that could make them feel motivated to study it. Simultaneously, unlike other subjects that are subject to scientific proof, History is controlled to a certain extent by competent authorities in the field of education. This control is exercised through selection of narrative elements that are to appear in school textbooks, as well as of others that are not to be mentioned.

In his doctoral thesis, entitled *Trato y maltrato de la Historia de España en los libros de texto de la EGB y la ESO*, Rodríguez-Garrido (2012) undertakes a comprehensive study of History conveyed by textbooks in Spain depending on the different political circumstances. He comes to the view that the different historical figures are differently presented -even well into the 21st century- depending on the political party in power at a particular time.

Although the narrative elements of History textbooks are both verbal and visual, greater emphasis is traditionally put on controlling the former, which are the historian's responsibility, while visual elements are seen as complements that help to clarify the text. This is reflected on the low number of publications on the analysis of pictures appearing in History textbooks. Valls-Montés (2012) classified the pictures accompanying the text of History textbooks as «illustrations» and «documents», depending on the role played by them. «I understand illustrations are those pictures that are primarily decorative and emotional, but which cannot be seen as primary sources of historical information». With regard to the second type of

pictures “in a narrow sense, documents would only be those school pictures that are perfectly presented and that also decode the symbols and visual conventions inherent thereto sufficiently” (Valls-Montés, 2012, p. 144).

The dominant power’s influence at a given time on the pictures is also clear in History textbooks. Valls-Montés (2012) finds quantitative unbalances when dealing with historical events. While the picture selection has improved, there is still a lot to cover concerning the incorporation of iconographic analysis. He also draws attention to the urgent need to evaluate the students’ interpretation of the iconography that accompanies the texts, given the polysemy of pictures, and of the dialogue that arises when studying History.

Cadaveira & Cañuelo (2014) state that the alienation imposed through textbooks can be corrected, because History as a science only becomes school knowledge when teachers transform it into something that can be taught. It would thus not only be necessary to modernise the textbooks’ but also to update the conception thereof, and teachers and society itself play a key role in this process (Valls-Montés, 2001). In another study, Valls-Montés (2012) states that it would even be advisable to resort to other sources such as regulations, memorandums of educational centres, oral testimonies, supplementary readings, workbooks and notably extracurricular activities proposed by teachers in order to analyse this subject’s entire teaching-learning process. The reflections of these historians, who are experts in education, confirm the need for other tools that generate a critical, reflective view about past events in the students, notably about those that were silenced in benefit of others that were highlighted.

Historical memory through picture books: the Nazi Holocaust

In order to create a permanent link with the past, it is necessary to look at History from the other side and pay attention to other parallel stories that are pushed into the background,

behind the major events. This narrative technique from individuality and memories is very important and is related to the way to construct History “from bottom-up” or “from the side of the vanquished” (Löwy, 2003, p. 69). On the other hand, a move from an eminently literate society to another, more visual society has promoted the incorporation of alternative graphic sources in the educational environment. These sources provide equally valid information compared to that provided by textbooks, which can highly attract the students’ attention.

Illustrations are traditionally seen as a tool that helps to capture young people’s interest in reading (Venegas, 2012). For this reason, they are usually included in books for children and young people. In 1650, Comenius published his most famous work, *Orbis sensualium pictus*, a document to teach Latin to children where pictures were first used in order to make learning easier. From this work, considered the first illustrated educational book designed specifically for children, different ways to combine texts and pictures emerged, albeit reducing the importance of the second constitutive element and always aiming at teaching while delighting (Schaller, 2007). As the readers’ age increases, words become increasingly important and pictures finally disappear. They only appear in the cover as a lure in the lower point of the scale.

The emergence of picture books in the 60s and their subsequent development in the 80s involved the revaluation of pictures as fundamental narrative elements. According to Silva-Díaz (2005, p. 32), while albums are seen in the publishing world just as a publication format, “about 24 or 32 pages long, with illustrations in most of them (in double pages almost always)”, researchers and specialists focus on the special relationship between two different languages. These are the spoken and the iconic language, which are in dialogue and in balance to offer “an experience richer than the mere sum of the parts thereof” (Moya-Guijarro, 2014, pp. 143-182, 2016, pp. 33-52; Nodelman, 1988, pp. 50-51; Painter, Martin & Unsworth, 2013, pp. 133-172). This idea aims at distinguish

between picture books and books clearly, a less specific literary genre where “the text works as a history guide and the picture offers an interpretation, embarking on a dialogue with the text, providing the reader with keys to unfold the plot and guidelines to build a meaning and, nevertheless, the interdependence relationship is smaller” (Taberner-Sala, 2005, p. 78).

The new concerns on Memory narration contribute to the interaction of History with other disciplines, besides Literature. Anthropologists, sociologists, ethnographers and artists work in the boundaries of History on complex social and individual interactions, such as social exclusions, cultural stigma or the construction of national or local identities.

Dealing with Memory from a historiographical point of view started in the 80s with the collective work directed by Pierre Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire* (1984-1993) and continued in the 90s, especially in western countries (Huyssen, 2002). It intends to bring the past to the present under the form of collective Memory as a form of justice, so that it boosts the emergence of a series of memorial laws to condemn discourses that are contrary to its recognition. One of them, the Gayssot Law (1990), penalises the Holocaust denial by fake historians who state that the genocide inflicted in Nazi Germany against the Jews did not exist, in an attempt to deny the reality of evidence.

Spiegelman (2007) was the first comic artist who questioned whether the comic (a sequential art of still, printed images which has the same conceptual basis as the picture book, Bosch 2007), could be a suitable narrative form to deal with historical themes, or whether, on the contrary, there are genres or forms of representation that are more feasible than others, especially when dealing with such a complex and sensitive issue as the Holocaust (Faxedas-Brujats, 2010). His work *Maus. A survivor's tale* (Spiegelman, 2007) was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1992, and is presented as a new way to think History marks a departure point in the field of graphic novels: the format in which it

is published is aimed at a mature, specialised public. In this work, the author poses himself as a cartoonist who wants to know and put his father's testimony—a Jew survivor of the extermination camps who is reluctant to remember those days—on record in a comic. Therefore, he takes on the role of a second-generation witness who acts as a bridge between the survivor and the reader and tries to know the “how's” and the “why's” of those aspects that appear to be inaccessible. Ibarra-Rius & Ballester-Roca (2015) recommend reading this work as a resource to generate empathy in students towards those characters who are living through a historical moment directly, while other concepts such as xenophobia, migration and rootlessness are worked on.

The high expressive capacity of picture books is able to face all kinds of stories, ranging from everyday anecdotes to more complex subjects that were traditionally excluded from children's literature. There are taboo subjects or subjects that are difficult to be dealt with (Evans, 2015, p. 243; Salisbury & Styles, 2012, p. 6). Moreover, the album's experimental nature is often aimed at impacting the reader emotionally through specially tough and disruptive subjects that are conveyed in a beautiful, subtle way. Some albums aimed at dealing with the Nazi Holocaust. Notable among these are *Rose Blanche* (Christophe Gallaz & Roberto Innocenti, 1987), which we will analyse in depth hereinafter and which takes a look at the Holocaust from the innocent eyes of a child; *The Little Boy Star* (Rachel Hausfater-Douïeb & Olivier Latyk, 2003), with plenty of metaphorical images that refer to the harshness of this historical context, when being a “little boy star” was very dangerous; *Erika's Story* (Ruth Vander Zee & Roberto Innocenti, 2005), a story with a hopeful ending based on a true story told by a war survivor to Vander Zee, the book's author; *Smoke* (Antón Fortes & Joanna Concejo, 2008), a first-person narration of the harsh reality of a little boy in a concentration camp; and *Bruno, the boy who learned to fly* (Nadia Terranova & Ofra Amit, 2012), which deals with war in a

more subtle way and focuses on the life of the famous Jewish writer Bruno Schulz.

The interaction of texts and pictures in picture books: suitability when dealing with Historical Memory

The progress made in the study of the narrative language of picture books shows that most of the messages and meanings that can be extracted therefrom are found in many subtle ways of interaction of texts and pictures that take place throughout the entire story that cannot be separated and configure some kind of imaginary calligram (Lapeña-Gallego, 2014). Giving the floor to pictures would make it possible to include highly complex narrative conflicts, generating a double-meaning game under cover of an apparent simplicity. For this reason, the analyses to evaluate the content thereof require a particular approach that studies what text conveys on the one hand and what pictures convey on the other, as well as what is conveyed by both elements combined.

Zaparaín & González (2010) analyse how the binomial text-picture is articulated to construct the meanings of each picture book: pictures are quite precise to denote reality because they work as *analogia* thereof, but they are also partial and imprecise because they can be read in many different ways (polysemy) or because there might be many signs to reflect the same reality (metaphors). For this reason, the text-implicit, at least- is necessary when focusing on or articulating the picture' interpretation and giving a meaning to the reality represented, but leaving it open to the reader which sense of the story they would wish to complete. On the other hand, the pictures spare words to the texts through visual representation of elements, which can thus enshrine on their own (Nodelman, 1988, pp. 213-214).

Silva-Díaz (2005, p. 53) identifies three characteristics resulting from the interaction of texts and pictures that foster the picture books' trend of breaking with the canon norms of literary discourse: "dialogism", "discontinuity" and "simultaneity". The dialogic nature of

picture books, where two codes limit each other, is beyond the authoritarianism of monologic texts. Narrative discontinuity implies moving from one code to another, which means that readers must fill in the gaps existing between both of them, breaking the discourse's linearity. In last place, the simultaneity that allows the narration made up both by a visual and a written text implies the possibility of multiplying the story in different storylines that take place at the same time.

Turrión-Penelas (2013) emphasises the importance of the resource of meaning ambiguity in picture books, in the sense that it makes the reader aware of the literary mechanisms and the possibility to handle them. Reading is no longer safe, comfortable and trouble-free since it challenges the reader's confidence and generates alienation from the known. It has certain ideological implications because the recipient is put in a more active position, which makes them less prone to manipulation and more prepared to think about History and retrieve elements from oblivion. Picture books thus turn into a place where readers can investigate, make assumptions and enjoy themselves.

The interaction of the visual and oral narratives determines to a great extent the quality of picture books, whether in order to narrate facts from the past or any other story. Salisbury & Styles (2012) even state that "the nature of the relationship between words and pictures is the key that makes a book be good, bad or very bad" (p. 89). For this reason, there are several studies that are dealt with in this context. One of the most interesting studies was proposed by Nikolajeva & Scott (2006). In their book, *How Picturebooks Work*, they identify two types of picture books depending on the relationship between texts and pictures: in "complementary" picture books, the picture and the text collaborate to tell the same story and fill in the respective gaps; in "counterpoint" picture books, the picture and the text tell different stories and are even somehow in contradiction, which results in different views or possible versions that show the author's

ironical attitude (Díaz-Armas, 2010; Salisbury, 2012).

As stated by Hidalgo-Rodríguez (2015) in a study on a representative sample of children's albums published in Spain between 2002 and 2014, there are very different relationships between texts and pictures -even within this classification-. Three different classifications are identified in this quantitative study for the complementary and counterpoint albums depending on three variables:

- The first one, "resources", refers to the methods used by the illustrator to face the text. Therefore, actions can be "selective" when part of the information included in the text is chosen; "of concreteness" when the picture is more concrete than the text; "symmetrical" if it only repeats exactly what the text says; and "symbolic", when it selects characters or elements to present them separately instead of illustrating the actions described in the text.
- The second one deals with the "contributions" made by the illustrator to the narration; it may refer to the "actions" or how things happen; "complementary", when it inserts elements that give information about the characters' personality; and "none", when the illustration does not make any contribution whatsoever but itself.
- In last place, the third one refers to the "concreteness level" or "ambiguity" of the story, and it identifies five possibilities in the sample: "concrete with a closed-ending", when the objective is achieved and there is a return to the beginning of the story; "concrete with an open-ending", when there is not any concrete ending; "concrete with a no-return-ending", when the initial objective is achieved, but there is no return to the beginning of the story; "ambiguous", if they are poorly concrete both from the text's- and the picture's point of view; and "text ambiguous and concrete picture", if the illustration is what concretises the story.

On the basis of this analysis, Hidalgo-Rodríguez (2015) identifies the following types

of albums, focusing on the first two variables described above:

- Selective complement album (of actions or complementary): The texts and pictures complement each other so that the illustrations show what is described in the text only partially. It is stated that it is about actions when text is complemented with actions that are important for the course of the story and are not described in it, and complementary when the artist only introduces elements that accompany the character or set the environment.
- Concreteness complement album: The text and the picture complement each other, but the picture concretises the story or concretises it to a greater extent than the text.
- Symmetrical complement album: It can be seen as the minimum complementary degree between texts and pictures, because they tell almost the same.
- Symbolic complement album: The text and the picture complement each other but the picture does not illustrate the actions described in the text and is very selective when choosing specific characters or elements instead.
- Complementary counterpoint album: The picture concretises the text but, in this case, the former offers an alternative to the text that plays a primary role or goes beyond the text.

Analysis of the interaction of texts and pictures applied to the album entitled Rose Blanche

The objective of this work is not the quantitative evaluation of the number of albums dealing with historical subjects published, nor does it recommend them as literature that should be used in combination with textbooks. We focus on an album that deals with the Holocaust: *Rose Blanche*, by Christophe Gallaz, with illustrations by Roberto Innocenti (1987). It aims at evaluating its potential as complementary material to History textbooks and at knowing the different points of view or approaches by analysing the

texts and the pictures of a picture book in the context of memorial historiography.

Analysis methodology

In order to analyse the album entitled *Rose Blanche*, we rely on the classification created by Nikolajeva & Scott (2006), which divides albums into “complementary” and “counterpoint” albums, and on the different types within them identified by Hidalgo-Rodríguez (2015), referring to the resources used by the illustrator, his/her contributions and the story’s concreteness. We also refer to Kertzer (2000), O’Sullivan (2005) and Tabernero-Sala (2005) & Youngs (2012) to specify or describe aspects found in the analysis by Bellorín & Silva-Díaz (2010) to concretise the different types linked to the surprising endings in picture books

Results and discussion of the analysis

This album’s quality has been awarded the following prizes: *Golden Apple of the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava* (Czechoslovakia, 1985), *American Library Association’s Mildred L. Batchelder Award* (United States, 1986), *Special Mention of the Fiera di Bologna Graphics Prize* (Italy, 1986) and *Gustav Heinemann Peace Prize for Children’s and Young People’s Books* (Germany, 1987). Teachers have taken advantage of its pedagogical value and this work is presented as an educational resource at different levels. In English-speaking countries such as the US and Australia, it is used to help primary education students understand historical events (Walter & March, 1993) and it is a good starting point for secondary education students to embark on debates and freely express themselves (Youngs, 2012). Nevertheless, its recommendation is more cautious in Germany, because children usually ask complex questions to teachers and adults. The Jewish people of Israel does not have any translation into Hebrew (O’Sullivan, 2005). These last two aspects confirm the reluctance of those affected social sectors to deal with subjects related to Historical Memory.

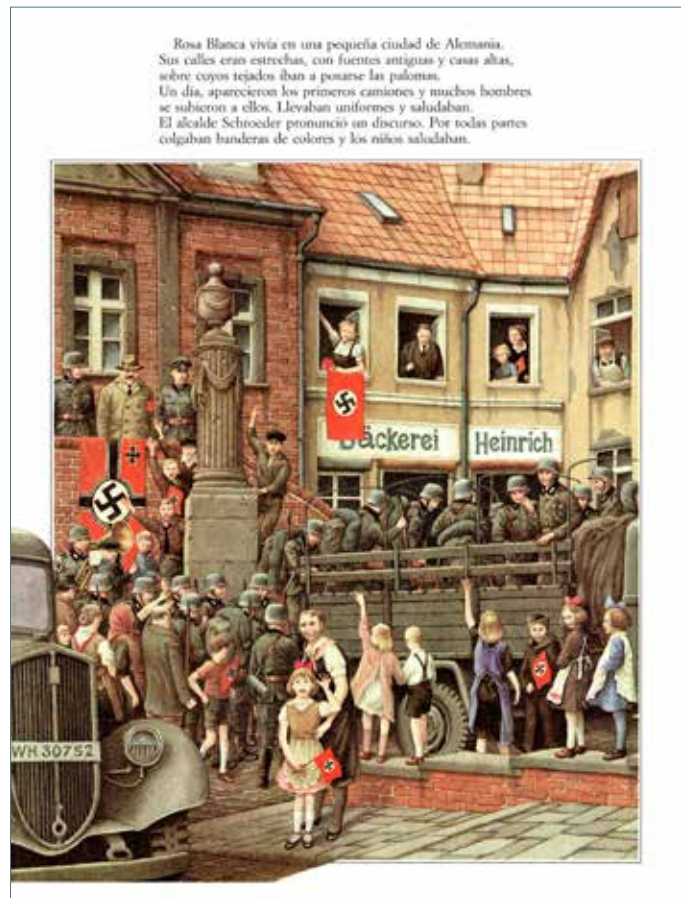


Figure 1. Concreteness illustration that places the story in a specific historical framework.

Source: *Rose Blanche*. Innocenti. Lóguez Ediciones, 1987, p. 5.

According to the method proposed by Hidalgo-Rodríguez (2005), *Rose Blanche* is a concreteness complementary album. It is complementary because the text and the image narrate the same story, while the illustrator fills in the text gaps by completing and extending the information. On the other hand, it is of concreteness because the text is ambiguous and needs the picture to complete its meaning. In other words, the textual ellipses are the secret: what illustrations “say” and texts “do not say”.

The sophisticated, exhaustive illustrations contrast with the simple, naïve text. The latter tells the story of Rosa Blanche, a girl who lives in a small German town. One day, she sees trucks coming and men in uniform getting into them. Thereafter, more trucks cross her city, which head for the other side of the river. Rose Blanche follows them and gets to a barbed wire,



Figure 2 (a & b). Left: Selective illustration where the frame acts as an aside that increases the level of information about a decisive aspect and gives the story a tragic meaning.

Source: Rosa Blanca. Innocenti. Lóñez Ediciones, 1987, p. 12. (Detail).

Right: famous picture of the Warsaw ghetto (1943).

Source: <http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2011/03/23/cultura/1300868669.html>

behind which she sees starving children. Many of them have a star on their clothes. She decides to help them and she generally gives them food. One day, an unexpected turn occurs and Rose Blanche does not return to her house. It should be noted that the main character's name, Rose Blanche, refers to the group of students who was mobilised peacefully against National Socialism, led by a woman, Sophie Scholl. Her audacity was punished with death, but her actions remained.

The story carefully flows between the voice that narrates it and the events represented in the illustrations. The latter present a story that is far beyond that evoked by the text, generating new meanings that activate the mind of the reader-observer. It should be noted that despite the fact that Christophe Gallaz is the author of the text, it is stated on the first page that the "idea" comes from the illustrator ("Idea and watercolours by Roberto Innocenti"). This fact reveals the joint work performed by the writer and the illustrator, which is often necessary to obtain that narrative balance, where the text pauses not to overlap or repeat the illustrations, and the latter replace the text when words are no longer efficient. Moreover, Innocenti is the only author whose name appears on the cover. This supports the idea that the book was born from the illustrations instead of from the text; this is an important feature of illustrated books, which are often created from the text.

Resources

With regard to the resources used by the illustrator, most are of concreteness. The text focuses on the events that take place in the city through the main character's naivety, while the pictures show the same events from a child's eyes, putting them in the context of another point of view that seems to have the ability to record all the significant details around Rose Blanche, of which she is not aware. In other words, the illustrator tries to translate all the information provided by the text in each page or double page through the pictures, providing many visual elements that enable to concretise

the story. To that end, he uses different planes and compositions (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 182) or visual metonymies that help to understand the story and draw the attention of children to the most relevant aspects (Moya-Guijarro, 2015, pp. 115-130). The illustrator of *Rose Blanche* uses great general planes, sometimes aerial views that offer birds-eye views. At the beginning of the book, there is a reference that “They hung colourful flags everywhere and the children saluted”, and the reader identifies the flags with the Nazi swastika on them (figure 1). In this album, the text -normally placed in the lower margin as a more legible basis to score the illustration above- always appears in the upper part, because it is the picture that “explains” the text and not the other way around. The presence of the frame separates the picture and the place where the text is placed, giving its own interpretative context thereto.

Sometimes the illustrator acts in a selective way and chooses only part of the information given in the text, aiming at going even deeper in the details. In one of the key moments of the story, the text narrates that the mayor “Grabbed the little boy from his shoulders and dragged him into the truck. The mayor smiled friendly at the soldiers, who thanked him”. The illustrator picks the initial moment of the action described in the text and approaches the point of view, so that the reader-observer can clearly see the expression and terror on the face of a 6-year-old boy, threatened by a SS soldier holding a rifle (figure 2). Innocenti reports this fact with the batches in the neck and helmet, a detail that cannot be appreciated in the photography the illustration reproduces (Kertzer, 2000). The Mayor’s satisfaction can also be seen when he is holding the little boy firmly from behind with one hand while the other fist clenched. Another man dressed as a general is watching. Although he is facing away, an expression of fun can be inferred in his face.

These examples show some dynamics based on the relationship between a narrator who lacks credibility (therefore, less directionist) and adopts a childish point of view in line with



Figure 3. Pictorial example that provides some information on how the events happened, which is omitted in the text.

Source: *Rosa Blanca*. Innocenti. Lóguez Ediciones, 1987, p. 13. (Detail).

the way children understand (or are supposed to understand) the world, and some illustrations that impair that simplicity and concretise the story, introducing a more adult and dramatic view of the facts. The power of suggestion and criticism perfectly creates that double reader who sees the world both from an adult’s and a child’s perspective.

Contributions

Given the text’s features, the illustrations make most of the contributions to the story. The contributions made by the illustrator are not under the form of complements only but under many contributions in terms of action , because they provide information on how the facts omitted by the text take place. Therefore,

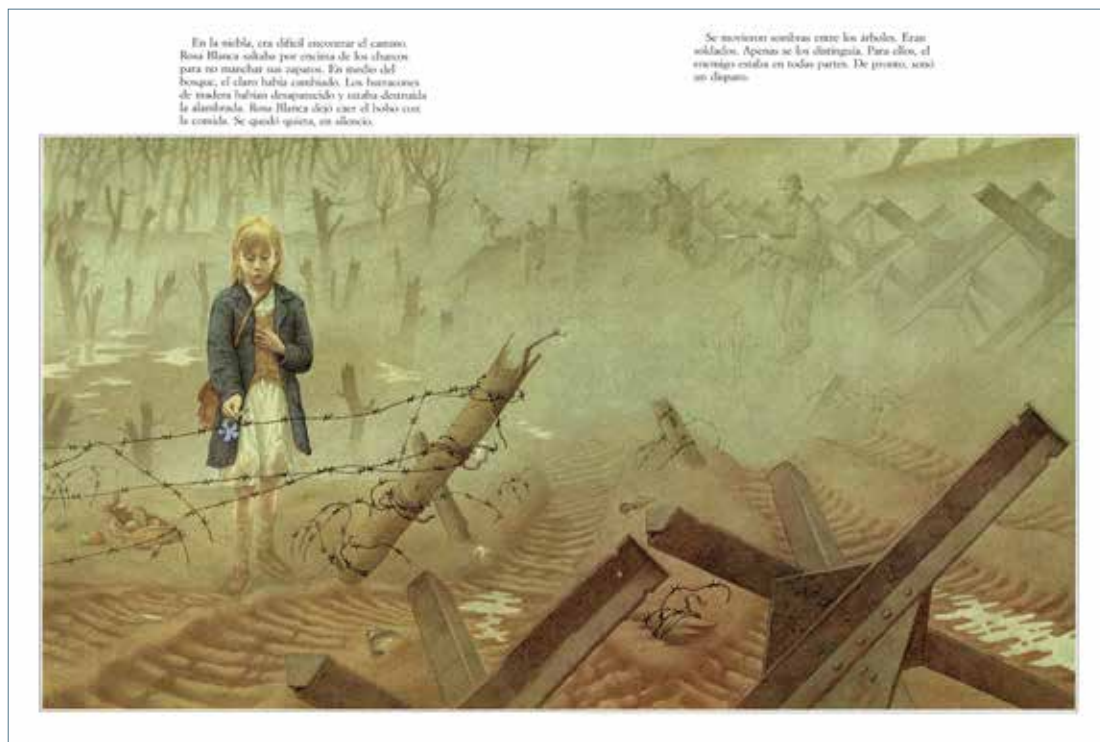


Figure 4. Pictorial example that provides some information that is ambiguously presented by the text.

Source: *Rosa Blanca*. Innocenti. Lóguez Ediciones, 1987, pp. 26 - 27.

when the narration goes “The soldiers grabbed the little boy into the truck, got into it and continued their journey”, the picture specifies how the little boy, who does not lose sight of one of the soldiers’ rifle, is pushed into the back of the vehicle, where “stock” is being transported. It is dark inside and a few people who are not wearing uniform can be seen (figure 3).

Likewise, the illustrator reveals information on aspects that cannot be deduced only through written information, such as when the narration goes “Suddenly, a shot rang out”. Many interpretations may be suitable from this narration, too mysterious and uncertain to stand on its own, but the illustrator represents the exact time when the bullet comes out of a soldier’s rifle that is aiming at Rose Blanche (figure 4).

We find another interesting example of contribution in terms of action thanks to the qualitative study performed by Youngs (2012) with 10-years-old students understanding of History through the illustrations of historical

fiction. Upon reading *Rose Blanche*, one of the albums chosen for that study, a debate started where students could see how the main character’s incomplete or partial vision of reality is represented in the picture where she is crossing the river. The concentration camp’s barbed wire is reflected on its waters but the origin of that reflection does not appear, because the picture is cut just above the little girl’s head (figure 5). This way, the picture predicts the encounter between the main character and the prisoners of the concentration camp before it is narrated by the text.

Another contributions made by the illustrator consists on amplifying the main story by representing several marks or hints that reflect the course of the war: doors blocked *ad-lib* with wooden planks, windows with broken glasses, writings in German on the walls, etc. The story’s environment, far from being neutral, adds implicit actions and details to what is expressly narrated. Therefore, while the text refers to the movement continuously generated by soldiers

and vehicles, the pictures shows that simultaneously there are fewer and fewer people on the streets and everyday life disappears. The evolution of the psychological situation of the characters is also shown as seasons pass, from spring-summer to winter.

Complementary contributions reveal significant details about Rose Blanche's and Major Schroeder's personality. The first detail is the Major's moustache, immediately associated to Adolf Hitler's by the reader since it is his most distinctive feature, with all the negative connotations inherent thereto. The second detail is the Nazi armband and the bow worn by the Major and Rose Blanche, respectively. They are leitmotifs that stand out with the same red colour against the prevailing range of ochre and grey colours. For this reason, they give importance to both characters and present them as antagonistic at the same time, because they represent two opposite elements: the bow and the swastika (figure 6). It is interesting how Tabernero-Salas (2005, p. 82) links the red bow with Little Red Riding Hood, a character equally referred to by the little girl dressed in red from *Schindler's List*, who walks around the city totally alien to the drama of the situation being narrated. This way, the fact that Rose Blanche is no longer wearing her bow represents the loss of innocence of a little girl who barely understands the situation around her. O'Sullivan (2005) links the main character's last representation (figure 4) to the figure of Jesus Christ martyr, with her eyes closed, with one hand lightly touching her head and placing a small flower with her other hand in the barbed wire in memory of the prisoners.

Level of concreteness

As far as the level of concreteness is concerned, we believe that, despite the fact that it is a story whose text is ambiguous and its illustrations concrete, the ending leads to ambiguity because it lacks concreteness, both from the point of view of the text and the picture. In the context of the clarification proposed by Bellorín & Silva-Díaz (2010)

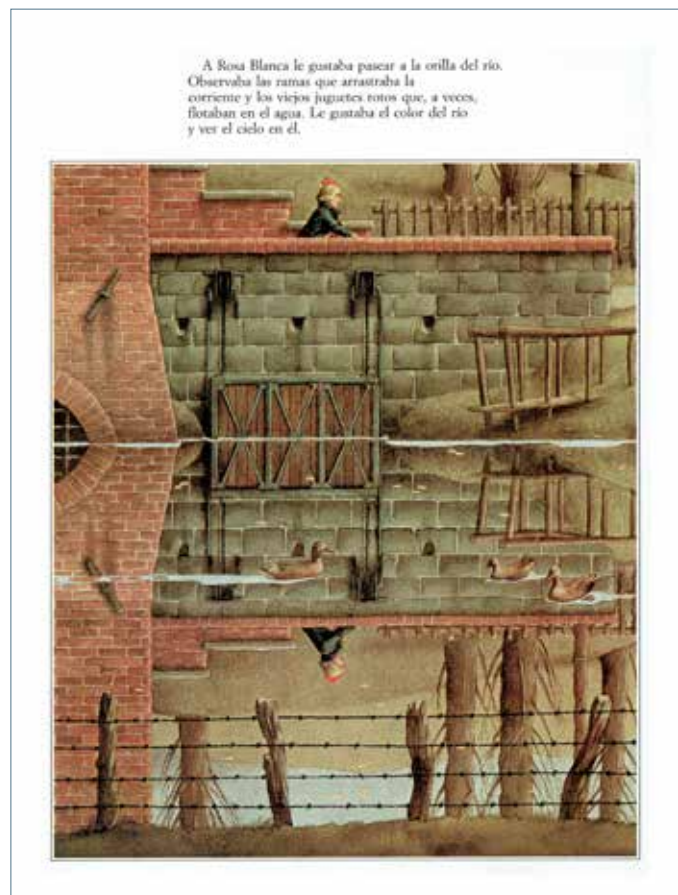


Figure 5. The illustrator provides some information when including the reflection of the concentration camp's barbed wire on the river, which Rose Blanche will find later.

Source: *Rosa Blanca*. Innocenti. Lóñez Ediciones, 1987, p. 9.

regarding the types of unexpected or surprising endings of book-albums, this is a case of non-explicit ending for the time being. This is due to the ellipsis used to hide relevant information to anticipate the ending, giving the reader the duty to recompose the story in order to give it an ending. In *Rose Blanche*, at the very moment when the soldier shoots his rifle, a quantum leap takes us to the city -which has just been taken by the enemy- and then back to the shooting scene -some time afterwards- again (figure 7). This is a skilful planning by Innocenti, which combines resources from film language to tell us many things in a short space of time, in a few pages in this case. He first uses what in the world of cinema is called "alternative montage", showing parts of the story that are simultaneous and take place in



Figure 6. Example where the picture provides complements that define the characters.

Source: *Rosa Blanca*. Innocenti. Lóguez Ediciones, 1987, p. 21 (Detail)

different spaces. It is the very moment when the soldier shoots his rifle and we then move to the city scene. This way, we can see what is going on in the city at that specific time, while what is happening to Rose Blanche is not shown. Hereafter, there is a great ellipsis to show us the same scene when the soldier shoots his rifle but an unspecified time space has passed. This puts us in a different and very suggestive sequence.

On the left page, the text reads “Rose Blanche’s mother waited for her little daughter for a long time. In the forest, the trees started to sprout, the flowers opened in the forest glade and covered remains of the barbed wire slowly.” and on the right page the text reads: “Spring has arrived”. This time, the text’s ambiguity the reader is already used to (How long “a long time” is? / Did she no longer wait for her because her daughter finally arrived or... ?) is not revealed in the illustration. There is no trace of the little girl or of the bag with food she dropped before the shot. Nevertheless, both the barbed wire and the flower (which is not wilted) placed by the little girl are in the same position. There are not any other offerings enabling us to

understand that her body was found. We only see a wild poppy that grows on the spot where Rose Blanche used to be. Nothing extraordinary happens in that scene but there seems to be plenty of secrets in it.

This way, there is a gap in the narration that makes it vulnerable, “without one only possible ending, just approaching the secret without revealing it, a secret that cannot be named” (De-Diego, 2005, p. 116). All the foregoing is concealed behind an argument that is very simple apparently. The reader obviously deduces that the story ends with the little girl’s death as a consequence of war but in a non-explicit way, so that it is not terrifying and to soften the Holocaust, which is part of the Memory. Rose Blanche represents hope to humanity; her memory is still alive under the form of the flower on the barbed wire,

a perfect balance between harshness and sensitivity. This illustration summarises Innocenti’s historiographical discourse. Before we close the book, ambiguity and the possibility to «save» the oppressed disappears, a fiction fact that can be real in the past and must not be forgotten, but also a reflection on current issues of war refugees and hope with the arrival of spring and the symbol of the flower in memory of the main character.

Conclusions

The current representation of historical narration is far from traditional positivism, where historiography is a chronological list of major events led by heroes and kings, and the reader is an individual who studies a selection of events without making room for reflection. From the second half of the twentieth century, historical narration gives something back to the past, where everyday events, citizens and the reflection on errors are also taken into account. The historian takes advantage of a linguistic turn to show their creativity when creating an

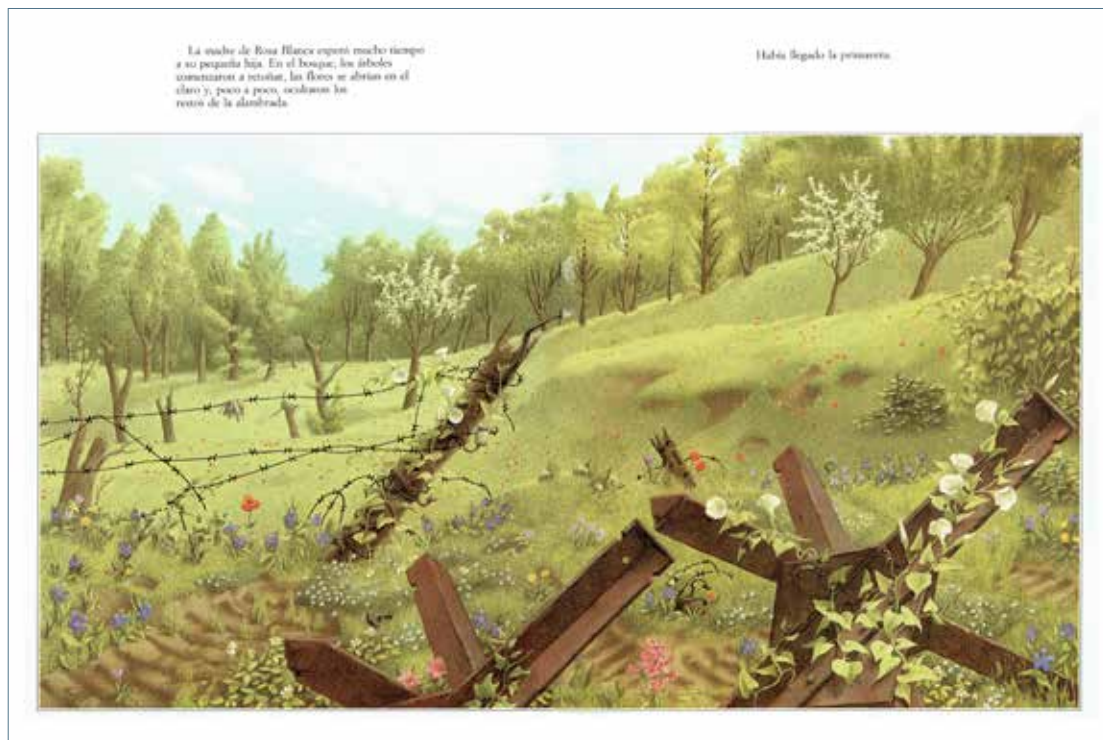


Figure 7. Last double page of the album, where the picture invites us to reflect.

Source: *Rosa Blanca*. Innocenti. Lóguez Ediciones, 1987, pp. 30 - 31.

appealing story; the writer takes advantage of the same linguistic turn to create structures similar to novels and tales; as well as the artist, who is aware of the narrative role played by the illustrations and the picture's power of suggestion. Regardless of the field of expertise of those working between History and Literature or between either of them and Art, the result thereof is the proliferation of publications where the text on its own or the text interacting with the illustration in the same space configure a remarkable historiographical bibliography.

These publications are used as new resources incorporated to the educational sphere to complement textbooks, to bring knowledge of History to students. This fact is especially interesting when narrating issues falling within Historical Memory, that is, those parts of History silenced by oppressive groups, who even describe them as malicious hoaxes. One of them is that related to the victims of the Holocaust and the genocides inflicted in wars in general. A problem of the past that is nevertheless not overcome or terminated.

On the other side, the increasing importance of pictures over the last few years in the visual culture we are living in has contributed to the emergence of new genres that have a double iconic-textual nature, such as graphic novels and picture books. Due to its apparent simplicity, picture books are often mistaken for illustrated books or tales, which are for children exclusively. Nevertheless, this apparent simplicity admits all sorts of complexity degrees and levels due to the different ways pictures and texts interact. For this reason, it is a field where there is still much to explore in terms of experimenting on different issues, including Historical Memory. On the one hand, picture books complement the information included in History textbooks and, on the other, they generate debate on current issues that resemble other infamous events from the past.

The different possibilities of interaction between texts and pictures covered by picture books make them an optimum means to reflect on events from the past and a perfect complement to History textbooks, always together

with the teachers' guidance. These new ways of narration have to be analysed using a particular methodology that assesses the interactions between texts and pictures in an itemised way.

In the album entitled *Rose Blanche*, which we believe is representative when dealing with Holocaust, illustrations can provide additional information that does not only verify but also extends or even questions, qualifies or contradicts oral information. This way, ambiguity games that blur the border between reality and fiction. Therefore, its meaning is not limited or concrete, but it allows guessing other realities that are parallel and simultaneous to that institutional History that deals with major events exclusively. Cooperation between illustrators and historians is essential when it comes to publishing these albums so that they have the required rigour when dealing with historical subjects.

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