



## Illustration in children's literature

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**ABSTRACT.** Since the origins of children's literature, the image plays an important role in the construction of the meanings of this literary text, but its participation in the children's book goes from mere coadjuvant to primacy in relation to the written word. In line with the growth of the publishing production of picture books, its presence in the classroom and theoretical-critical reflections about its contribution to literary reading, I develop here some ideas about different roles played by the illustration in children's literature. To do so, I analyze some books in which the images have a preponderant role in the narrative progression, the construction of characters and the revelation of the child's perspective on the world.

**Keywords:** children's literature, image, construction of meaning.

## Ilustração na literatura infantil

**RESUMO.** Desde as origens da literatura para crianças, a imagem desempenha importante papel na construção dos sentidos desse tipo de texto literário, porém, sua participação no livro infantil vai desde o de mera coadjuvante até a primazia em relação à palavra escrita. Em sintonia com o crescimento da produção editorial de livros ilustrados e livros de imagem, sua presença em sala de aula e de reflexões teórico-críticas acerca de sua contribuição para a leitura literária, desenvolvo aqui algumas ideias sobre diferentes papéis desempenhados pela ilustração na literatura infantil. Para tanto, analiso algumas obras nas quais as imagens têm papel preponderante na progressão narrativa, construção de personagens e revelação da perspectiva infantil sobre o mundo.

**Palavras-chave:** literatura para crianças, imagem, construção de sentidos.

Since the beginning, words and images sprouted like branches on a single tree: mankind. (Alarcão, 2008, p.62).<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction<sup>12</sup>

Speaking of children's literature is recalling the ancestral practice of storytelling, that is, the verb in itself. As it happens, a word not only creates a mental picture of a referred object, but also a myriad of images understandable by the symbolic and imaginary conjunctions of each society. The act of storytelling is coupled with intonation that guides the listener into the silent suspense, with facial expressions that breathe life into the characters, and with motions capable of creating several different objects, settings or situations. Thus, essentially, a verb is already an image.

Imagery in children's books has been taking a more prominent place. Be it because technical and technological editing resources are being refined

every day; be it because the same industry pictures the contemporary reader as a subject already deeply inserted in a world of imagery much more intense than in the decade of 1960<sup>3</sup>, for instance, when picture books started to attract more attention (Linden, 2011).

The recurrence of images – and their relationships with the written word – in children's literature raises the question of what role illustration can play in these published works. Or better yet, it leads one to understand how “[...] reading implies establishing connections between what is told through the page sequences and ‘how’ it is told [...]” (Moraes, 2008, p. 54, emphasis added)<sup>4</sup>. The contributions from imagery directly affect the ‘how’: from the way literature narration is conducted to the directions in which imagination works, further

<sup>1</sup> This article was translated from Portuguese into English by the following undergraduate students of BA in Translation Studies at UEM: Cynthia Fujii Geraldelli and Kelly Hikary Ito. Revision was carried out by professors Fernanda Silveira Boito and Liliam Cristina Marins.

<sup>2</sup> Ito and Geraldelli's translation of "Desde o início, palavras e imagens brotaram como galhos de uma mesma árvore: o homem". (Alarcão, 2008, p. 62).

<sup>3</sup> According to Luís Camargo (1995), the first wordless Brazilian picture book was written by Juarez Machado in 1969, but the first international publishing was in 1975 and, on the following year, it was published in Brazil.

<sup>4</sup> Ito and Geraldelli's translation of “[...] ler implica em [sic] estabelecer relações entre o que é contado por meio da sequência de páginas e ‘como’ é contado [...]”. (Moraes, 2008, p. 54, emphasis original).

emphasizing the link between imagery and the written word. Aiming at collaborating with teachers' work in classrooms or reading advisors from the most varied places, I will dedicate myself to observe some contributions that illustrations have brought to children's literature. For this purpose, I will take into consideration children's books in which illustration, visual language and the link between verbal and imagistic sides of narration are notable.

As I am unable to explore all aspects of imagery, I have focused on elements that are fundamental and recurrent. The first aspect is 'narrativity' and it implies that imagery has a role in the building of essential parts of a narrative: the focus from which the story will be forged; the spatial configuration and time progression; the relationships between characters that lead the plot towards denouement. The second is the descriptive nature of imagery, which can be associated with the 'descriptive' function proposed by Camargo (1995, p. 35). Nevertheless, to my understanding, many books use imagery for far more than just describing "[...] objects, scenery, characters, animals, and so on [...]." By that I mean that any and all descriptions happen through a given perspective and that changes the way we see the described object, materialized in a picture. Every imagistic description has its share of ideology; there are no unbiased or naive descriptions. The third element is analysis of relationships between imagery and verb as a way to breathe life into the 'child's imagination,' an aspect that benefits immensely from the prominence of imagery. Camargo (1995, p. 35 and 37) attributes this prominence to the symbolic and ludic roles of illustration. To the author, the symbolic function applies to illustrations that "[...] represent an idea [...]" when "[...] the illustrator calls attention to the metaphoric nature of the story [...]." The ludic function is about books that present themselves as toys, just like cloth and tactile books or with moving parts. When put together, both symbolic and ludic aspects of imagery, while analyzing children's books, I respect the author that recognizes the interdependence and concomitance of these functions. At the same time, I propose that illustration should be appreciated not as something static, but organic. The metaphorical aspect of illustration in children's literature is an invitation to play and even the printed image on a page itself, devoid of any other technological device, is enough

to turn a children's book into a game, a ludic activity. The prominence of imagery happens when the visual elements in a book add something essential to the narration. That is why the symbolic, metaphoric and ideological plans of an image are related in it, as they are also intrinsic to any way an image is used.

Before I start my journey, however, a clarification is in order. Taking into consideration that I do not intend to discuss here the distinction between children's and young adults' literature, I will utilize the attributed genitive 'children's'. A reader that is well acquainted with the realm of children and young adults' literature knows very well how the boundaries among children's, young adults' and adult's labels are tenuous in this field of literary production. For instance, the first work to be analyzed is about death, a theme not always considered fit for children. I will echo Gregorin Filho (2009, p. 41) when I point out that children's literature, like all literature, addresses human issues. Even today, after all the knowledge coming from Psychology about children's development stages, we know that "[...] children keep in contact with the same discourses adults do, just like it happened before the creation of pedagogy and the concept of childhood."<sup>7</sup> Peter Hunt (2010, p. 100) recognizes the need and difficulty to outline the object of study concerning children's literature and recalls that

[...] about the instability of childhood, a children's book can be defined in terms of implied reader. When carefully read, it will become clear to whom the book was addressed: whether it is completely on the child's side, or if it favors their development or targets them directly.<sup>8</sup>

For this reason, what really matters in this train of thought that I now take over is not the discussion about what is the proper classification of such literature, but rather the role of imagery in building representation, conducting narration, creating a ludic and poetic world in which the reader is invited to live, after all,

A picture book is not just some book for children that cannot read. Based on their life experiences and the questions each reader asks those pictures, it can turn into a starting point to many interpretations that can result in a broadening of conscience: about ourselves, our surroundings, our culture and its

<sup>5</sup> Ito and Geraldelli's translation of "[...] objetos, cenários, personagens, animais e assim por diante [...]". Camargo (1995, p. 35).

<sup>6</sup> Ito and Geraldelli's translation of "[...] representa uma ideia [...]", quando "[...] o ilustrador chama a atenção para o caráter metafórico da história [...]". Camargo (1995, p. 35 e 37).

<sup>7</sup> Ito and Geraldelli's translation of "[...] que as crianças continuam entrando em contato com os mesmos discursos que os adultos, como acontecia anteriormente ao surgimento da pedagogia e à criação do universo infantil". Gregorin Filho (2009, p. 41).

<sup>8</sup> Ito and Geraldelli's translation of "[...] a despeito da instabilidade da infância, o livro para criança pode ser definido em termos de leitor implícito. A partir de uma leitura cuidadosa, ficará claro a quem o livro se destina: quer o livro esteja totalmente ao lado da criança, quer favoreça o desenvolvimento dela ou a tenha como alvo direto.". Peter Hunt (2010, p. 100).

entanglement to other cultures, to time and space (Camargo, 1995, p. 79).<sup>9</sup>

### Narrativity in picture books

Indubitably, visuals really showcase all their potential in picture books. As they do not rely on words, all the elements in a picture book have to rely heavily on imagery: setting, time, characters, narrative situation, the unraveling of conflict and its denouement – it all depends on imagery.

Therefore, the main interest in picture books is exploring how narrativity is built through imagery. In Marcelo Pacheco's book "*O Menino, o Jabuti e o Menino*" (The Boy, The Tortoise and The Boy)<sup>10</sup> (2008), it is possible to visualize how significance of the book begins with imagery (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Cover<sup>11</sup> of Marcelo Pacheco's book (2008)<sup>12</sup>.

It is a narrative in which the passage of time is fundamental, something that is represented specifically by spatial changes. All illustrations are double-page spreads and the first one depicts some classic style houses, a streetcar and three antique vehicles (the scene is akin to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century). The protagonist – the tortoise – occupies the center on the right side and its

expression reveals sadness. In the next double-page spread, a brief passage of time can be noticed by the streetcar's position, as it already crossed page border and a new character appears: a boy rolling a hoop with a wire stick. The boy's clothing is also an indication of time, as he wears short pants, a jacket with a bolo tie and a paperboy hat. The boy and the tortoise's meeting results into a lifelong friendship, changing the tortoise's expression to one of happiness. In the next double-page spread, there is a sequence of mutations in the scenery, indicating the passage of time: the houses turn into buildings a few stories tall, then into taller ones until they become skyscrapers. The city's skyline is adorned by antennas, then satellite dishes; the sky, once so endless and blue, is now full of skyscrapers and helicopters. Later on spaceships also appear. Streetcars are replaced by automobiles and afterwards by high tech buses. It is important to observe that all spatial and temporal changes utilize both historically dated elements, such as streetcars, and futuristic speculations, such as spaceships zipping through a metropolis' sky, further reinforcing the ludic aspect of children's literature and stimulating imagination.

In all of the double-page spreads, the tortoise is always on the left page and the boy on the right one. The animal retains the same appearance throughout: the same placid and satisfied smile. In contrast, the boy swaps the toy for a school backpack, then for a dress shirt, and later for a business suit with a suitcase and an umbrella; he reaches old age hunched over a cane, wearing glasses and almost bald, to finally show up on a wheelchair. The picture is clear: the world changed, a long time passed and the boy aged, but the tortoise and its fondness for the boy remains the same, pictured visually by the tortoise constantly following the boy-grownup-old man.

The life expectancy of a tortoise goes up to 100 years old, but independently from this realistic fact, the narrative shows that the tortoise survived longer than its friend. On the 11<sup>th</sup> double-page spread, the tortoise moves to the right page, offering a single red rose in its mouth to the boy-grownup-old man's tombstone. The following double-page spread shows the rose over the tombstone along with a red heart inside a thought bubble filling the left page as the tortoise walks to the right – one more hint indicating the passage of time is shown as the character moves along the page.

Despite going back to its sad facial expression from the beginning and also a thought bubble filled by a heart, a sign of affection between the tortoise and the boy, the story repeats itself: another boy

<sup>9</sup> Ito and Geraldelli's translation of "O livro de imagem não é um mero livrinho para crianças que não sabem ler. Segundo a experiência de vida de cada um e das perguntas que cada leitor faz às imagens, ele pode se tornar o ponto de partida de muitas leituras, que podem significar um alargamento do campo de consciência: de nós mesmos, de nosso meio, de nossa cultura e do entrelaçamento da nossa com outras culturas, no tempo e no espaço" (Camargo, 1995, p. 79).

<sup>10</sup> Ito and Geraldelli's translation of "*O Menino, o Jabuti e o Menino*". (Pacheco, 2008).

<sup>11</sup> Available on the publishing company's site: <https://www.pandabooks.com.br>.

<sup>12</sup> <sup>11</sup>Due to difficulties contacting the publishing company and to respect copyright, I will show only the covers of the analyzed books, available on their publishing companies' websites.

shows up – different clothes, different hair and electronic toy in hand (a remote controlled spaceship) – a similar meeting to the one in the beginning of the narrative. The new boy approaches the animal, inviting, in a gesture, the tortoise to follow him. It is the beginning of a new friendship.

At this moment, the reader is invited to go back to the first image, the one in which the tortoise fills the right page – the place of death, solitude, but also where life resurfaces and begins anew –, because its new friend will emerge from there. The reader finally understands the protagonist's sad expression, who was just at the cemetery we would only discover later on, at the end of the imagistic narrative. Only at the end the title will finally disclose its complete meaning: the cycle of life, once there is only one tortoise, but more than one boy-grownup-old man. The sequencing of terms on the title reinforces the cycle of life, the passage of time, the endurance of friendship.

Since it is a picture book, everything is built visually: the perspective from which we follow the tortoise's narrative; its unchanging appearance, in sharp contrast to the boy's aging and the city's transformation, both part of time and setting elements. The building bricks of the narrative; the characters and their transformations (or lack of them) are conveyable through imagery, without use of verbs. And a beautiful reflection about the ephemeral nature of time, the slow leaking of life, the inevitable arrival of death and above all else, happiness that comes with friendship, are all built through images.

### **Descriptive illustration: between hiding and revealing**

Illustration is also responsible for character creation and description – the second role we will explore –, not only because they are materialized visually, but because they are given birth through a certain perspective: the child's. Character creation is an aspect of narrativity that mixes with description and it is specially highlighted because its goal is to show how the process of creation and description happens either exclusively or primarily through imagery, in order to build the child's perspective from which the story unfolds. Thus, illustrations are not limited to simply shaping a character, but they do so through the child's perspective, in a way they imagine these characters.

The second work to be analyzed is also a picture book, written by Regina Rennó (2013). The cover – in which we have the silhouette of a man in black, with a partially visible sack on his back – and the title

"*Lá vem o homem do saco*" (Here Comes The 'Sack Man'<sup>13</sup>) – is sufficiently provocative (Figure 2).

The image depicts a mysterious, dark figure, whose shadow projects itself forward menacingly. The title evokes one of many imaginary figures used (especially) by (Brazilian) adults to discipline children through fear: a child unsupervised by an adult on the streets or a misbehaving boy could be taken by the *Sack Man*, who would either make them into soap, eat them or simply take them from their families without further explanations from adults about the elderly kidnapper's intentions. Therefore, the book cover reinforces the traditional oral legend, but why?

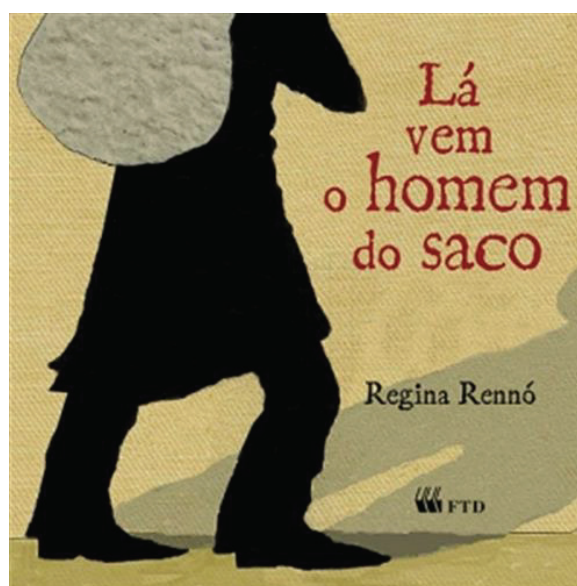


Figure 2. Cover<sup>14</sup> of Regina Rennó's book (2013).

The 'Sack Man' character is constructed from a child's view and this is shown in a figurative manner, since the first image is of a man passing by a house in which there is a boy who spies from a window. In contrast to the cover, the man now has a face, the sack is now completely visible, but nothing is shown from the torso down. The child's gaze from the window is what creates the character's face as the child sees the man from behind: he is expressionless not only in this first image, but also on the second illustration, when a boy also sees him from behind, walking the street. The facial expression on the first couple of children is a mix of curiosity and distrust. The following children are two girls wearing the same expression – wide eyes, mouths agape, looking as if they want to hide behind

<sup>13</sup> Ito and Geraldelli's translation of "*Lá vem o homem do saco*". (Regina Rennó, 2013).

<sup>14</sup> Available on the publishing company's site: <https://ftd.com.br>



the window – which showcases fear instead of the boys' distrust. The man's face alters in response to the glaringly obvious fear on the girls' faces; he faces the side, as if he is resentful and bothered by the children's anguish. On the next double-page spread, two more observers join in: one is on same plane as the 'Sack Man,' barely visible through the windowsill, with beady and fearful eyes; the other one, however, watches from above leaning against the windowsill, hands splayed outside. The second boy dares to observe the man without the window's glass between them, unlike the first one observing from behind. The man turns supercilious and wears the face of someone who is not bothered by observers.

The story continues, more windows and children watching the man as he walks, his expression returns to neutral, but not for long. The double-page spread that follows shows twin two-story houses right next to each other, a watchful child in each window with no glass, after all, they are out of the man's reach. Aware that he is the target of the boys' watchful eyes and talk – their mouths are open, indicating vocalizing movement – the troubled expression, now more intense and aggressive, reappears in the man's face. The seventh double-page spread is the first time there is no one standing watch as the man walks among the houses. Not surprisingly, his face cannot be seen; the man's facial expression exists only through the children's interpretation, which is, of course, warped by the threat of the 'Sack Man' being evil and dangerous as painted by adults.

At last, the man stops and places his sack on a step in the street. Now all gathered in one house, the children remain vigilant. A few were fearful, some were curious, and others looked somewhat offended by the man being so close to their homes. Their expressions change when the man opens his sack and the illustration gains a light touch of color for the first time. So far, the story was presented in sepia, as if to portray the fear the 'Sack Man's' presence instilled into the children. Close to the end, colors spread through the paper like a tenuous rainbow. A harmless accordion pulled by the man out of his sack radiates slight tinges of pink, yellow, green, and blue over the shades of gray.

The man keeps the same neutral expression on the sequence of three images: he puts the sack on the floor, opens it, and finally reveals what it holds. The last illustration shows an act of reconciling. The children, no longer hiding behind walls and windows, encircle the man with enthusiasm and smiling faces. The gray and black are discarded and replaced by the colorful clothes the children wear, the red of the accordion, and the colors of the

rainbow coming from cheerful musical notes. Metaphorically, colors may represent a new perspective for the children, who are no longer under an adult's interceding, behind the windows that protect but at the same time also block the direct contact with the outside world.

### Imagery in conjunction with language on revealing a child's perspective

"*Mamãe trouxe um lobo para casa!*" (Mommy Brought A Wolf Home!<sup>15</sup>), written by Rosa Amanda Strausz (2010) and illustrated by Laurent Cardon, is a good example of how construction of a child's perspective through imagery is even more noticeable. Verbal description matches perfectly with the visual representation of characters. The book was first published by Salamandra, illustrated by Fernando Nunes (Figure 3). Because this paper's aim is to reflect on imagery as another source of constructing meaning in children's literature, both issues will be addressed, though analysis is more focused on the most recent, published by FTD (Figure 4).



**Figure 3.** Written by Rosa Amanda Strausz (1995), illustrated by Fernando Nunes<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Ito and Geraldelli's translation of "*Mamãe trouxe um lobo para casa!*". (Rosa Amanda Strausz, 1995).

<sup>16</sup> This work is not longer available at Salamandra publishing. The cover art image was screenshot from Estante Virtual, a website of used books for sale:

As we focus on this book, we leave the picture book realm to investigate illustrated books according to Nikolajeva and Scott's (2011, p. 18) concept, which says that one must not mistake a book with illustrations – a standalone texts with images – for an illustrated book, in which word and image make up a whole. As such, reading one qualifies as "[...] extraction of meaning from the interaction between image and words [...]"<sup>17</sup> since an illustrated book is a "[...] text created by the interaction between verbal and visual information."<sup>18</sup> The authors call this type of work 'iconotext.'



**Figure 4.** Written by Rosa Amanda Strausz (2010), illustrated by Fernando Cardon<sup>19</sup>.

Regarding imagery, what is to be analyzed is how text and picture combine in order to construct and deconstruct the character of the mother's new boyfriend as seen through the child's perspective. The narrator comes home after school and finds a wolf, which he addresses as a monster. The first-person narrative and its construction through the child's perspective are key points to understand the narrative's outlook (language + imagery).

FTD's graphic design is to be commended because it compiles two works that were first published separately. Both follow the same subject matter, the parents' divorce and the children's

resistance in accepting their parents' new partners: one side of the cover features the story being analyzed, while the other pictures the second narrative, "*A coleção de bruxas de meu pai*" (Father's Witch Collection<sup>20</sup>). Both covers have a flap that once open reveal another perspective. The first layer has the parents and their respective, and metaphorical, new partners – the wolf and the witch – in an affectionate display. Thus, it does not really scare the adults. However, once the flap is open, parents are gone; in their place is the "intruder" in a manner that depicts the child's reaction to them and their relationship. The boy is contracted on the upper, right side, of the flap; the protagonists of the second story, a couple of brothers, have been transformed into small turtles by a spell cast by the witch – who is not that evil as their animal counterparts are quite adorable.

In "Mommy Brought A Wolf Home," the wolf – an old acquaintance of young readers from so many classic children's stories – seems quite bestial in his first appearance (aside from the cover): it is under the table (like a dog), a famished look in its eyes while guarding a share of meat with its sharp claws<sup>21</sup>. The boy is stuck to the door, hair standing and eyes wide opened. The second image proves the wolf figure to be a construction of how the boy perceives the newcomer, he tells his mother the wolf is dangerous while hiding on top of the counter; the monster appears as a shadow originated from the child's own silhouette. The shadow on the wall has no human traits left, nothing more than a bestial appearance in accordance to the child's perception; its posture is mildly crouched, the nose is wrinkled with teeth and tongue exposed, hackles raised, and hands are claw-shaped. The mother's answer further expands the child's imagination game since she does not deny the wolf's existence:

Oh, this is Levi. He's not a monster, he's just a wolf' mom said, as if that was the most natural thing in the world. And to my shock, she added, 'He got here this afternoon and will be living with us from now on' (Strausz, 2010, p. 9)<sup>22</sup>

Fernando Nunes's illustration of the mother and son's first dialogue about the wolf in their house deepens the intertextual connection with the wolf of

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.estantevirtual.com.br/>

<sup>18</sup> Ito and Geraldelli's translation of "[...] extração de um significado da interação entre imagem e palavras [...]" Nikolajeva and Scott's (2011, p. 18).

<sup>19</sup> Ito and Geraldelli's translation of "[...] texto criado pela interação das informações verbais e visuais". Nikolajeva and Scott's (2011, p. 18).

<sup>20</sup> Illustration available on the publisher's website: <https://ftd.com.br/>.

<sup>21</sup> Ito and Geraldelli's translation of "*A coleção de bruxas de meu pai*". (Rosa Amanda Strausz, 1995).

<sup>22</sup> Salamandra publishing's issue illustrates the wolf in a similar dog-like appearance, though it looks less frightening – its eyes are more serene while it drinks milk from a bowl with its name engraved, which is less shocking than a big raw steak.

<sup>23</sup> Ito and Geraldelli's translation of "Ah, este é o Levi. Ele não é um monstro, é só um lobo – ela explicou, como se fosse a coisa mais natural do mundo. E, para completar meu espanto, disse: Ah, este é Levi. Ele não é um monstro, é só um lobo – ela explicou, como se fosse a coisa mais natural do mundo. E para completar meu espanto, disse: – Ele chegou hoje de tarde e vai ficar aqui com a gente." (Strausz, 2010, p. 9).

fairy tales. The boy mentions the fable "The Three Little Pigs" to prove his point about the wolf's threat. The illustration has three little pigs running away, scared, one of them being the boy – his ears and nose like a pig's. He also reminds his mother of how wolves eat little girls and old ladies. The image shown has the boy alive inside the wolf's stomach while it licks its claws, satisfied with the meal. The imagery not only appraises Strausz's intertextuality, but also reinforces the boy's fear, albeit supported by representations of a fabulous universe.

Though the mother hugs him, as seen in the text and the illustration, it does not lessen the boy's terror. Instead, it reinforces the wolf's intent on devouring the child as it leers at him "with its big, red eyes" (Strausz, 2010, p. 12)<sup>23</sup>.

The boy tries to convince himself it is all but a dream, but the wolf is still there on the following morning. The parent's divorce is mentioned when the father and the wolf meet as he comes to take the child so they can spend the weekend together since it is a Saturday. On this instant, the reader (truly) understands the wolf is actually a metaphor.

Though the boy hesitates to open the door upon his father's arrival, fearing the wolf may attack him, he changes his mind when the father goes along with the story as he can defend them all with his laser shotgun. Through text, he thinks: "My dad doesn't fear anything, he's tough and strong. He could defend himself and save me and mom from that monster." (Strausz, 2010, p. 18)<sup>24</sup>. The illustration clearly shows father and wolf on opposite sides. A double-page spread has the latter pinning the boy on the ground, the wolf is so frightening that its mouth, by itself, is bigger than the whole body of the boy. On the opposite side – on the lower side of the left page – the father, dressed as a superhero – fists closed, a determined look, and a fluttering cloak – kicks the door open. The illustration clearly depicts the role of the father and the mother's new boyfriend: the first is an undefeatable protector, while the other is a cruel threat because not only he seeks to take the father's place, but steals the mother's affection from the child.

The father's speech does not deconstruct Levi's wolf characterization either, but to the boy's dismay, the expected confrontation does not happen. Both men only look and greet each other with no signs of amiability. Their unfriendly meeting is translated to

drawing by Fernando Nunes. The father is more good-natured and carefree, and older and less stylish than the most recent issue. The wolf is less scary – closer to "Little Red Riding Hood's" wolf disguised as the grandmother, wearing glasses with a book in hand – no signs of bestial hostility, instead, it shows the first step to the personification process through reading.

When he comes home on Sunday, the boy finds the wolf lying on the mother's lap and spread over the couch, which symbolizes all the mother's affection is focused on Levi as described in the text "[...] it wouldn't let her go! If mom went to the kitchen, Levi would follow her. When she watched TV, he was there too... / That wolf might not be evil. / But it was a pain!" (Strausz, 2010, p. 22)<sup>25</sup>.

Salamandra publishing's edition has the boy dressed as a superhero behind the couch, holding a watergun. This part paints the boy in different ways. Nunes illustrates the boy as courageous and daring while dressed similar to Batman, whereas Cardon depicts him as frightened, cowering behind the TV in face of the mother's lap being taken. Imagery represents opposite reactions for the same character: fear in one, and courage and boldness in the other.

From this point on, the boy's opinion about the wolf/Levi gradually begins to change. On Monday, the mother has to leave for work, but the cleaning woman is late and there is no one to take care of the child. Usually, he would be under the neighbor's care – whom he did not like in the least –, but today, there was no need because there was a wolf to look after him. Alone, they are forced to interact with one another. The illustration of when they are first left alone shows the wolf taking almost the entire double-page spread (Strausz, 2010), on the upper side, whereas the boy keeps himself away from the 'menacing' red-eyed wolf on the lower, right side of the page. The following image shows both characters on the same page, the left one (Strausz, 2010), close to one another. The boy seated on the armchair, the wolf, calm and closed mouth, rests on the back of the couch. The boy still has traces of fear and apprehension, though in a lesser scale.

Nunes' art for this part of the story seems to oppose what is on the text. Levi's laughter in response to the boy's question of whether the wolf would eat him while they played startled him. The image has the wolf next to the armchair, but its 'laughter' sounds more like a bark, seeing as the opening of the wolf's mouth is bigger than the boy.

<sup>23</sup> Ito and Geraldelli's translation of "[...] com seus enormes olhos [...]". (Strausz, 2010, p. 12).

<sup>24</sup> Ito and Geraldelli's translation of "Meu pai é um homem forte e poderoso, não tem medo de nada. Ele poderia se defender e ainda por cima salvar minha mãe e eu das garras daquele bicho.". (Strausz, 2010, p. 18).

<sup>25</sup> Ito and Geraldelli's translation of "[...] não desgrudava dela! Se minha mãe fosse para a cozinha, Levi ia atrás. Quando ela estava vendo televisão, ele ficava junto... / Podia até não ser mau, aquele lobo. / Mas era um chato!". (Strausz, 2010, p. 22).

The onomatopoeia “U Á ÁÁ!” (“BWA HA”) seems closer to a snarl than a friendly laughter, an unlikely remark of wanting to get close to the boy just to play with him.

Both are bored and try to find something to do. The boy thinks the wolf too big for most games and plays, which shows his resistance in allowing it inside his space, and the wolf is the one to suggest a pony ride. And for that a wolf was good. The next double-page spread (Strausz, 2010) has three images of the boy and the wolf, which indicates their moving around and the passing of time. The boy seems happy riding the wolf as if he were a medieval knight, and has the idea of striking the enemy whom he identifies as Mrs Cleide, the annoying neighbor. Similarly to “The Three Little Pigs,” the wolf roars at the door, the scene of the boy on the wolf is so frightening she passes out. It is important to note the adult's perspective cannot overwrite the child's, words and imagery still portray Levi as a frightening wolf.

The boy loves the play to the point of rethinking his opinion on having a wolf at home: “Maybe it was a good thing to have a wolf at home...” (Strausz, 2010, p. 36)<sup>26</sup>. The double-page spread shows the boy leaning on the wolf while both lay on the floor. They are now on the same level as the wolf is depicted more similar in size to the boy (on the lower corner). The shared laughter is a clear sign that fun has brought them together as they hide behind the couch while the neighbor arrives to complain at the mother as shown on the double-page spread.

The imagery of the wolf no longer shows him with a hostile expression, nor he is that much bigger than the boy – which is an important change in the child's outlook, a process detailed through both imagery and language: the wolf is under a process of personification. Thus, he is illustrated standing rather than crouching and clothed – wearing a pair of pants, a shirt, a belt, and shoes –, though he remains with a wolf's face, claws, and tail. The same process is illustrated on Salamandra's issue: Levi, who now is shown clothed, accompanies the boy through a walk in the park. It symbolizes the boy's security while walking outside next to the ‘unknown.’ While the wolf/man rides a bike, the boy follows on his rollers, holding his soccer ball. Both wear peaceful and satisfied expressions.

The text describes the wolf as on his way to becoming a ‘true friend’: “It started with talking, and then laughter. A few days later he learned to play

with a ball, walk like a person, play with block puzzles, wear clothes, use a knife and fork [...]” (Strausz, 2010, p. 41)<sup>27</sup>. However, the boy was not completely at ease, “he may act like we do, but Levi is still a wolf.”<sup>28</sup> Levi may be a man, but he is still a threat who can steal the mother's affection, take the father's place, thus he remains in the form of a wolf. The last illustration depicts Levi's transformation and his relationship with the child: Levi, the mother, and the boy are all happily together on the couch. Levi is drawn as human – his face, hands, feet and body –, though text and art show he still has his tail, a reminder that he remains a wolf.

The entire process of deconstructing the bestial male figure that intrudes the boy's home only makes sense due to imagery depicting Levi's characterization according to the boy's perspective. The way the boy faces the ‘intruder’ must change so the visual representation of the wolf can be personified as the story progresses. Nunes's illustration further explores the transformation aspect, which is also applied to the child. He too has learned “how to snarl, howl to the moon, and is [am] growing stronger. / At this rate, he [I] thinks he [I] will turn into a wolf pup...” (Strausz, 1995, s/p.)<sup>29</sup>. The illustration of the boy dressed in the same manners as in the previous ones, but with the addition of a pompadour hairstyle and sideburns, pointy ears and sharpened claws indicate the boy, like Levi, also metamorphosed as every relationship is prone to a change in all parties.

### Final considerations

Some issues must be reiterated now that this analysis has come to an end.

Analysis of imagery in children's literature is a well productive field, therefore, no detail of visual construction can be overlooked. Every component must be considered: shapes and colors, page layout, graphic design, and their relation to the story's content.

It is of fundamental importance that interaction between imagery and language be studied regarding picturebook narratives; whether they complement or contradict the other – similar to how a child and an adult's perspective are opposites. Additionally, one should observe how they interact and contribute

<sup>26</sup> Ito and Geraldelli's translation of “Talvez fosse mesmo bom ter um lobo em casa...” (Strausz, 2010, p. 36)

<sup>27</sup> Ito and Geraldelli's translation of “Primeiro começou a falar, depois a rir, uns dias depois aprendeu a jogar bola, a andar sobre os dois pés, a fazer jogos de armar, começou a usar roupa de gente e a comer com garfo e faca [...]” (Strausz, 2010, p. 41).

<sup>28</sup> Ito and Geraldelli's translation of “[...] mesmo parecido com a gente, Levi é um lobo [...]” (Strausz, 2010, p. 41).

<sup>29</sup> Ito and Geraldelli's translation of “[...] a dar grunhidos terríveis, a uivar para a lua e est[ou] já ficando cada vez mais forte. / Se continuar assim, ach[ou] que v[ou]jai acabar virando um lobinho...”. (Strausz, 1995, s/p.).



to narrative, character development, space-time indications, and the descriptive dimension of illustration.

Similarly to author's writing, illustrator's art is a manner to convey how he perceives the world, though its construction is also built through the reader's perspective as they insert their own ideals. Due to inherent ludic and polysemic elements in imagery, the process of constructing meaning will always be open to new interpretations of the story as well as the reader's reality.

The esthetic dimension and graphic design in children's literature must also be taken into account. The sensations and thoughts provoked by visual construction and various illustration techniques tested are part of the process of constructing meaning in literature.

At last, and most important, the teacher must be alert to what imagery in children's works has to offer – paying close attention to images because "[...] in a culture in which the ability to read many languages is mandatory and in which book and television exist together, learning cannot be limited to the alphabet." (Camargo, 1995, p. 79)<sup>30</sup>. Educator's literacy process must include imagery, reading the most diverse languages as possible.

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<sup>30</sup> Ito and Geraldelli's translation of "[...] numa cultura que exige a leitura de diversas linguagens, em que convivem a lira e a televisão, a alfabetização não pode se restringir ao alfabeto, às primeiras letras". (Camargo, 1995, p. 79).

