Scienza e Pace

Rivista del Centro Interdisciplinare Scienze per la Pace
Università di Pisa

ISSN 2039-1749

Rosa Bianca: A critical examination of young Italian people with and without personal experience of war responding to some war-related aspects in a postmodern picturebook

by *Chiara Castellani*

Research Papers

n. 33 – Gennaio 2016

Rosa Bianca: A critical examination of young Italian people with and without personal experience of war responding to some war-related aspects in a postmodern picturebook

By ***Chiara Castellani***

MPhil in Education – Critical Approaches to Children's Literature
University of Cambridge, Faculty of Education
E-mail: chiara.castellani@ymail.com

Abstract – The intent of my research was to explore young Italian people's responses to some war-related aspects in a selected picturebook. I adopted a qualitative case study approach in order to investigate the extent to which the interviewees were aware of the theme of moral responsibility in *Rosa Bianca* by Roberto Innocenti. I used a sample composed of young people without personal experience of war and young people with more direct experience of it, having a parent who has been serving in armed conflict situations. Indeed, I also wished to inquire into whether there were any differences in the responses given by the two categories of young people. After an initial analysis of the picturebook and a description of my sample, the ethical concerns and the processes followed in the data collection and analysis stages, I provide the reader with a detailed discussion of the data gathered. Data analysis shows that not all the young people interviewed are aware of the significant issue of moral responsibility. Personal attitudes and experience might explain this result. Indeed, the young people's culture, knowledge and experience often emerge from their responses. In particular, the army children's replies show aspects of their military backgrounds, as well as some of their preoccupations related to their fathers' jobs. However, all the young people in my study show an aversion to the use of force and to the extreme means of war. Moreover, to some extent, all of them prove to be sophisticated readers of visual texts.

1. Introduction

This research paper is an extract of my MPhil's thesis at Cambridge University. The project came into being after I heard a news item on television at the beginning of 2014. This newscast described the preceding year - 2013 - as the most violent, in terms of armed conflicts, since the Second World War. The Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, which publishes the annual Conflict Barometer, indeed states that "[t]he global number of political conflicts increased by nine, totaling 414 cases in 2013. Of these, 221 saw the use of violence" (HIIK 2014, 15).

This information led me to reflect: despite the large number of conflicts, despite the fact that Italy ("Operazioni Internazionali in corso" n.d.) is engaged in more than twenty international missions and despite these conflicts being geographically close to us, they actually seem to be very far away, because

they only condition our lives marginally (for example, through an increase in the price of oil). In my opinion, the risk exists, therefore, for a potential loss of the meaning of war and its implications, with regard to an issue that concerns the whole of humanity, not only those who are personally involved. This potential loss was also perceived by Maria[1], one of the girls who took part in my project, who, in her interview, states: *"[…] having also relatives who have been through it (war), you can trust a relative more because at least he goes into the subject more deeply because he's been through it, whereas teachers talk about it in a very… detached way. Maybe they don't know much about it, either […]".*

I decided, therefore, to investigate young Italian people's responses to a picturebook on a war-related theme[2]. Indeed, "picturebooks[3] can provide a safe space in which children can explore […] some of the big issues of life" (Salisbury & Styles 2012, 86). In particular, I identified the theme of moral responsibility, that was suggested to me by the reading of the book *Uno psicologo nei lager (Man's Search for Meaning),* in which Frankl (1946/2009) identified moral responsibility as one of the key elements in reacting to an unmotivated and cruel destiny, as is the case of war.

I therefore wanted to investigate the extent to which the young people would be aware of this theme and how they would respond to this issue in a selected picturebook. However, I left open the possibility of dealing with different themes that might emerge from the interviewees' responses. Moreover, in my sample, I wanted to include young people who had discovered war in books or on the news, but also young people who had more direct experience of it, having one parent that had taken part in at least one international mission. Indeed, I wished to inquire into whether there would be any differences in the replies given by the two categories of young people.

After establishing the theme I wished to examine, I chose the picturebook accordingly. Specifically, I knew that the theme of moral responsibility had been treated in *Rosa Bianca,* by Roberto Innocenti (2005/2011); thus, I chose this book and, since I carried out my study with young Italian people, the picturebook used in the interviews and, therefore, previously analysed is the version in Italian. In particular, the Italian text is much more essential than the British one by McEwan (1985/2004) and, unlike the American version (1985), it

1Maria is not the girl's real name (see the section on methodology).

2My MPhil's thesis also consists of an investigation into young Italian people's responses to another war-related theme, that of memory, especially considering *Memorial*, a picturebook by Shaun Tan and Gary Crew.

3Picturebooks are not books with illustrations, but books in which the story depends on the interaction between word and image (Arizpe & Styles 2006). Indeed, a picturebook is "text, illustrations, total design; an item of manufacture and a commercial product; a social, cultural, historical document; and foremost an experience […] it hinges on the interdependence of pictures and words, on the simultaneous display of two facing pages, and on the drama of the turning page" (Bader 1976, 1).

has no change in person or tense (from the first to the third, or from the present to the past). The Italian text is, indeed, entirely in the third person and in the past, a choice dictated probably by the will to create a certain distance between the events illustrated in the book and a readership with the burden of the inheritance of fascism (O'Sullivan 2005), since "first-person narratives place the reader in the story" (May 1995, 131).

After a brief analysis of the picturebook, I present my research question, the young people who took part in my project and the ethical choices that I made to protect the people involved and the positive outcome of the work. I also illustrate the processes I followed in the data collection and analysis stages. I then present an analysis of the data gathered, firstly observing how the young people's backgrounds of culture, knowledge and experience emerged from their responses to the picturebook and, secondly, analysing the young people's responses to the theme of moral responsibility in *Rosa Bianca,* leaving open the possibility of also treating other themes that emerged over the course of the research. The work ends with my conclusions.

2. The picturebook: *Rosa Bianca*

As Innocenti explains in the front flap of the book's jacket copy, The White Rose was a group of German students protesting non-violently against the Nazi regime, who were arrested and beheaded for their opposition. The rose and the colour white symbolise purity and martyrdom, a purity obtained through sacrifice up to the point of martyrdom ("Book of Revelation, 7, 13-14" n.d.). Pure and a martyr is Rosa Bianca, the protagonist of this story.

In the book titled with her name, Rosa Bianca is a little girl, as Innocenti was a little boy when he experienced the Second World War. He only "knew that something terrible was happening" (Innocenti 2011), which is precisely how Rosa Bianca experiences the war, without being able to understand it fully. Her world "has literally been invaded by the war and the cover of the novel makes this abundantly clear" (Myers 2008, 35): thanks to a sophisticated mirroring device, the external world Rosa Bianca is looking at through the window enters her reality, being reflected in her private world. The war enters her world and she enters the external world. Moreover, the cover illustration anticipates Rosa Bianca's constant role in the story "as innocent witness who sees, but is not seen" (O'Sullivan 2005, 153) and also who sees what happens but does not know or understand why it happens. Indeed, the pictures of the book highlight the fact that Rosa Bianca does not really understand the war experience she is living: apart from one of the first images where she is represented with her mother, the little girl is always pictured alone, distant from other people or separate from the rest by windows, low walls, barbed wire, railings, and so forth. This separation will also be a metaphor for her choices and actions that will be different from others'.

Rosa Bianca is a child living in Nazi Germany, in a village on the border with Poland (Dedola & Innocenti 2012, 79). Even though the name or the location of the town are not in the text, the images make it clear that the front line is to the east, corresponding to the right hand of the spreads: it is there that the German troops fight and it is from there that the Soviet Army allies come toward the end of the war. The verbal narrative is indeed extremely simple and sparse, there are no opinions or explanations and it does not even mention words like 'Nazi', 'concentration camp', 'war' ("war" is only found once, at the end of the book). War is communicated through the noise of tanks and the smell of diesel oil, and things are shown in the visual narrative, which is, on the contrary, rich in details, realistic, but at the same time full of symbolism and visual allusions. Certainly, the vivid images of war from Innocenti's childhood (Rauch 2009) and his constant desire to carry out extensive research before painting (O'Sullivan 2005; Myers 2008) are at the basis of the richness and precision of his figurative style. Therefore, in the picturebook illustrations, readers may find the German traditional architecture of that period (Innocenti 1996), the symbols of the Nazi regime, the soldier uniforms, the military vehicles with "SS" or "WH" number plates, and so on.

All these elements are clearly pictured in the doublespread with a child trying to escape from one of the lorries directed to the east. It is evident that this image is built on two diagonals, two streets, one going from right bottom to left top and the other one from left bottom to right top. Not only does the direction of the diagonals create a sense of uneasiness (Nikolajeva & Scott 2006) but also the bleak, subdued browns, greys and greens, predominant in this picture and throughout the book, contribute to this feeling. Here, to break the dullness of the colours, there are two splashes of bright red, the ribbon in Rosa Bianca's hair and the mayor's Nazi armband. These two red patches seem to highlight the contrast between the innocence and goodness of the little girl and the corruption and wickedness of the mayor. Moreover, Rosa Bianca is the only witness to the event, a witness not seen; however, following the diagonal where the girl is, another figure comes into sight, a woman with her back to what is happening. It seems, therefore, that Innocenti would like to picture three different attitudes toward the terrible events of the Second World War: around the street junction, where the escaping child is symbolically represented, the illustrator shows us examples of corruption, goodness and indifference – corruption, goodness and indifference that do not mark different populations but that are present within the same population, in this case the German one. The seriousness of this representation increases if we consider that the escaping child is accurately reproduced from a historical document, the photograph of a boy in the Warsaw Ghetto taken by Juergen Stroop, "an SS officer and functionary who documented the activities of the Nazis in Warsaw in memo and photographic form" (Stan 2004, 32).

Innocenti depicts this actual child to make people remember what happened (Dedola & Innocenti 2012), but here the little boy also becomes the reason for Rosa Bianca's action: she "wanted to know", says the text. In the following

double-page spread, the little girl is at a crossroads; the illustrator depicts her descending the stone stairs in the middle of the spread. “We do not know in this scene which way the young girl is going to turn once she reaches the bottom of the steps”, but it is clear that “her decision will be of tremendous significance” (Myers 2009, 37). The path would seem to draw her toward the choice of indifference, again metaphorically represented by a man with his back to the scene, in the bottom right-hand corner of the picture. However, turning the page, we discover that Rosa Bianca has opted for action and for goodness instead.

She decides to follow the lorry, demonstrating great courage especially when entering the forest alone. At a certain point, a barbed wire fence makes her stop. Rosa Bianca seems to look directly at us, she is “demanding that we respond directly to [her] gaze. We are drawn into [her] appeal and must consider what [she is] requesting” (Serafini 2010, 13). Therefore, also the reader needs to stop, in order to reflect on what is happening and on the discovery Rosa Bianca is about to make beyond that fence. However, it is especially in front of the following doublespread that the viewer needs to pause and reflect.

Indeed, Innocenti has carried the readers, together with the protagonist, along paths, streets and steps present in almost all the illustrations, but here there are no more paths to follow. Here we stop and “see what Rose Blanche sees” (Agnew & Fox 2001, 136): many children looking like ghosts, with blurred, pasty faces and black-dot eyes gazing at the viewers. All is motionless, lifeless, uniform. Silence is total, opposed to the initial loud celebrations in town. Muddy browns, greys and greens colour the prisoners, the naked ground, the puddles, the small fragments of sky, the huts and the background blocks with chimneys. Even though the double-page image expands the viewer’s perspective, the wire mesh, the constructions that occupy most of the spread and the overall tone of the picture make the readers feel claustrophobic.

This claustrophobic feeling often arises when looking at the book illustrations, where the town buildings fill most of the pages and the sky is absent, because “it is difficult that children look up during wartime. They look down, I don’t know why” (Innocenti 1996). Furthermore, the viewer feels a constant sense of detachment, provoked by the regular frames that enclose each image, only rarely broken by a roof, a car or a cannon. Nikolajeva (2006) explains that the sense of detachment created by frames suggests that the artist does not want the readers to come too close to the narrative. And indeed, Innocenti (2009, 30) believes that “[a] story about or against war must be seen from outside, as if we were witnesses unable to intervene”.

As witnesses, thus, we follow Rosa Bianca, who decides to help and feed the children beyond the wire fence, without knowing what kind of camp it is nor why those people are there. We continue to follow her until her actions make her separate from the other inhabitants, this time definitely. Indeed, in one of the

final doublespreads, in which the whole town is leaving, we actively search for the protagonist but we cannot find her anywhere. To make us foresee the worst, there is also the counterpointing element of the propaganda graffiti affirming that "Germany will win on all fronts", in front of which dispirited and wounded German soldiers are retreating.

However, Rosa Bianca reappears in the following opening. She stands in front of a changed clearing, covered with fog, the concentration camp completely destroyed with no traces of the children who were imprisoned there. Also the little girl has changed. Her transformation happens gradually throughout the book, making her resemble more and more closely the young inmates: she gets "thinner and pastier", she stands "still" in front of the barbed wire that remains, she no longer has the red ribbon in her hair and her pink skirt is now white, a symbol of her innocence and purity as well as a sign of her forthcoming martyrdom. Her figure transmits a powerful and silent sense of dignity and her posture, hand on heart and downcast eyes, reminds the viewer of a person absorbed in remembering a departed loved one. Her gesture of laying a flower on the wire increases the impression of being in a cemetery, along with the broken fence posts that look like large crosses plunged into the ground.

Fog dominates the whole picture, and Rosa Bianca will be a victim of this fog, "the fog of war", to indicate "how much damage in war is inflicted accidentally" (Butler 2008, 223). However, Innocenti chose not to represent her death directly, so that the readers can "empathize with […] the horror of Rose Blanche […] on their own terms, to the extent they feel comfortable" (Myers 2009, 35). Therefore, the viewer only notices the fire of a shot, headed toward the little girl, and her absence in the final double-page spread. The sameness of these two openings' settings makes Rosa Bianca's absence from the scene even more marked.

Innocenti sometimes prefers drawing two very similar images and putting them close, to highlight their differences (Innocenti 1996). Such is the case here. Besides some remains of the death camp, spring colours fill the picture and finally show the sky. Blue flowers, as the one held by Rosa Bianca, grow on the ground, plants in bloom creep along the remaining fence and red poppies "spread across the meadows, marking the deaths of those who were enslaved here" (Agnew & Fox 2001, 152). Indeed, a single red poppy stands in the place previously occupied by Rosa Bianca, exactly under the periwinkle she laid on the barbed wire, still there but faded. A close-up of this withering flower is used as the final image of the picturebook: a flower that is an offering, a sign of love and grief, an epitaph to the little girl and all the victims of war.

It is a war that is not directly pictured in the book but whose two sides Innocenti likely wants to show in one of the final doublespreads, illustrating the advancing allies. The picture seems to be divided in half: in the upper part, German propaganda graffiti and Soviet troops marching victoriously; in the lower half, wounded soldiers and a town destroyed. Considering that usually "what has

been placed on the top is presented as the Ideal, and what has been placed at the bottom is put forward as the Real" (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006, 186), in this image the viewer may clearly recognise the idealisation of war and the reality of war.

Finally, the spring arriving at the end of the book allegorically signals a rebirth, the end of war, after a winter of death – "a literal death for the Jews", Rosa Bianca and many soldiers, "and a more figurative death for the German townspeople, who are engaged in their own form of hibernation and know-nothingness" (Stan 2004, 24). However, the progression of seasons gives the book a cyclical time structure, reinforced by the presence of the same neutral endpapers opening and closing the book. History itself is cyclical with its recurrence of tragedies and revivals, but the cyclical nature of time is also, according to Nikolajeva (2000, 31), a profound marker of the idyllic mode. Circular time is mythical. The result is that *Rosa Bianca* blends the authenticity of history with the universality of myth, accuracy with fiction, obtaining a powerful and universal story on the importance of individual choices and actions. The same values of individual action and responsibility that gave life to *The White Rose* group, who thought that "every one of us has to choose and has to choose every day" (RAI & Negrin 1971, my translation).

3. Methodology

In order to gain a rich and detailed understanding of how young people respond to certain aspects of a selected picturebook, I wished to conduct an in-depth exploratory research. I therefore decided to adopt a qualitative case study approach (Denscombe 2007; Thomas 2013).

Since qualitative research "tends to be seen primarily as an inductive approach using a research question and moving from instances gained in the data collection to some sort of conclusion" (Grbich 2007, 196), I constructed my investigation upon the following research question: 'How do young Italian people with and without personal experience of war respond to some war-related aspects in *Rosa Bianca*?'. My intention was to explore if and to what extent young Italian people would be aware of the war-related theme of moral responsibility in *Rosa Bianca*. I was interested in analysing how they would respond to this issue and also if there were any significant differences in the responses by the young people with and without personal experience of war. By personal experience of war, I am referring to young people having a parent who has been serving in armed conflict situations.

However, having already experienced that "children are sophisticated readers of visual texts, and are able to make sense of complex images on literal, visual and metaphorical levels" (Arizpe & Styles 2006, i), I decided to remain attentive and possibly gain some valuable insights from what the people in my study might have to say regarding other aspects of the picturebook.

3.1. The sample

To conduct my research, I decided to employ a sample of four young people, equally distributed: Laura[4] and Matteo, who had no personal experience of war; Sara and Luigi, who had personal experience of war. Indeed, the fathers of Sara and Luigi are servicemen and both left on missions in war-torn countries, twice and nine times respectively. Moreover, in selecting the sample, I thought it was necessary that the fathers had left on a mission at least once in the last five years, so that their children could remember the experience of separation from the parent.

The age range I had in mind for my interviewees was from 11 to 15 years old, since *Rosa Bianca* is characterised by sophisticated artistic style, demanding themes and potentially disturbing topics, especially for army children. In my study, Laura and Matteo are 12 years old, Luigi is 14 and Sara 15.

Furthermore, I decided that the young people involved in my project should be Italian. I was interested in analysing the responses of young people from my own culture, even though the most important reason in making this choice was an ethical concern. Indeed, since "neither researchers not participants necessarily know what issues might emerge in the process of the research and how they will be responded to by participants" (Wiles 2013, 58) and considering the potentially disturbing subject matter of the picturebook, coming from the same culture and talking the same language of the young people was essential.

I encountered some difficulties in finding the army children for my study, since either the parents or the young people did not give their consent. Moreover, it was not easy to get in contact with servicemen, because many of them were abroad on missions. At the end, thanks to the help of an army wives' association and a military chaplain, I succeeded in finding Sara and Luigi, who were willing to take part in my research project.

Finally, to evaluate the possible reactions to the planned questions and better understand if my interview plan had some critical points, I "[gave] the interview a trial run under realistic conditions" (Drever 2006, 56). I conducted a pilot study with a 12-year-old girl, named Maria, who had no personal experience of war. Since her answers were extremely insightful and interesting, I decided to analyse them along with the other four young people's replies.

3.2. Ethics

"All research undertaken in situations which involve people interacting with each other will have an ethical dimension; educational research is no exception and the ethical issues are often complex" (Stutchbury & Fox 2009, 489). This was exactly my case, since the topic of the picturebook was potentially disturbing

4Laura, Matteo, Sara, Luigi and Maria (mentioned later) are not the young people's real names (see the following section on ethics).

and the interviews could open old wounds or recall painful memories (Patton 2002) in the army children. For those reasons, I forced myself to consider all the possibilities of overt and hidden dangers and, during the interviews, I constantly monitored participants for signs of fatigue or distress (Wiles 2013).

To protect the young people and myself, I explained to them and their parents the nature and the purpose of my study, even though I remained deliberately vague about the precise purposes in order not to compromise the research (Taber 2007), since research participants "may well change their behaviour (if not always intentionally) when they know someone is scrutinising them" (ibid., 134). I informed the parents of the possibilities of distress or discomfort the study might cause and I gave them time to consider all the implications (Bell 2005), as well as the opportunity to look at the picturebook and to ask me any questions or express doubts they might have. Both the parents and their children knew that the sessions would be audio- and videotaped and that the young people were free to refuse to answer particular questions and to conclude the interview and withdraw from the research at any time. The complete anonymity of the young people involved in the project was assured. Moreover, to create as comfortable an environment as possible, I gave the parents the possibility to be present during the interviews and to decide where these would be conducted; however, no parents chose to be present and only Sara's father wished the interview to be conducted at their home. Finally, I obtained written parental consent for their children to participate in my research project, but I also made sure that the young people genuinely wanted to be involved in the study (Taber 2007).

3.3. Data collection

In order to collect data, I recorded the whole sessions. I used a voice recorder, but also a video camera, since videotaping could offer a more complete record of events during the reading of the picturebook, interviews and periods of drawing, by capturing the young people's verbal and non-verbal communication (Denscombe 2007; Styles & Noble 2010).

The interviews took place in 'neutral' environments, selected because they were quiet, well-lit and offered privacy. The only exception was the interview with Sara, which was sometimes interrupted by her parents entering the room or by her mobile ringing.

After an initial reading of *Rosa Bianca,* I gave the young people time to look at it by their own, before a second reading of the book. I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews since they gave me the opportunity of "combining the structure of a list of issues to be covered together with the freedom to follow up points as necessary" (Thomas 2013, 198). When planning my research project, I decided to follow the same pattern with both couples of young people, conducting individual in-depth interviews followed by an in-depth paired discussion. However, the actual result was different: I could follow my original

plan only with Laura and Matteo, while I had to interview Sara and Luigi separately. Therefore, in the case of the two army children, I conducted longer individual in-depth interviews, without being able to know how Sara and Luigi would behave and respond in a paired discussion situation.

In constructing and conducting the interviews, I especially aimed at creating a relaxed atmosphere and obtaining open and personal responses from the young people. Therefore, I initially explained that there were no right or wrong answers (Bromley 2006; Evans 2010) and I constructed clear and neutral (Patton 2002), exploratory and open-ended (Grbich 2007) questions. I remained neutral all the time, attentive to what was said and what was not said and sensitive to the interesting channels of discussion that some replies could open up (Patton 2002; Arizpe & Styles 2006).

After each interview session, the young people were also asked to draw in response to the picturebook just considered. Indeed, this invitation to draw offers "a chance to get as close as possible to their understanding of the texts" (Salisbury & Styles 2012, 80). To let the participants express themselves at their best and in a distinctive manner, I provided them with a wide range of art materials.

Finally, to acquire a more complete context for the army children's replies, I asked their parents (after having obtained their consent) to tell me how they had explained the father's military job to Sara and Luigi and how the two young people dealt with this delicate situation.

3.4. Data analysis

The next challenge I had to face was making sense of the massive amount of data gathered, which is indeed the essence of qualitative analysis (Patton 2002; Denscombe 2007).

To get immersed in the data, I began by carefully watching and listening to the recordings and then I transcribed all the interviews verbatim, including those of the pilot study and those with the parents. Since I did not want to lose any aspects of communication, I also noted pauses, gestures, laughs, speech overlaps, etc. Finally, I checked the transcriptions, watching and listening to the recordings while reading the transcripts, in order to ensure accuracy during interpretation (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree 2006).

After reading the transcriptions several times and gaining familiarity with them, I went on to identify the primary patterns in the data, choose categories, code the various 'chunks' and select quotations (Patton 2002; Basit 2003; Denscombe 2007). Indeed, raw data may "help the reader to understand the social world under scrutiny" only if "such data have been systematically analysed to illuminate an existent situation" (Basit 2003, 144). What follows is my analysis of the essence of what the data revealed.

4. Data Analysis

4.1. Culture, knowledge and experience in the young people's responses

War is a horrible thing[5], affirm Matteo (12) and Laura (12) when talking about *Rosa Bianca*. This might seem an obvious statement at first sight, and yet their declaration means much more than that. First of all, it says something about these young people's culture. In Euro-American culture "great importance is attributed to life, in contrast to the great repulsion inspired by death" (Battistelli 2012, 32, my translation) and very few phenomena are more intrinsically linked to death than making use of force and, in the extreme, war (ibid.). Therefore, if we consider culture as whole values, norms, attitudes and behaviour patterns that have been sufficiently effective in the course of time to be transmitted and adopted by different generations (Schein 1986), it is evident that the aversion to the use of force and to war is a solid cultural aspect, shared by the young people in my study.

The culturally rooted suspicion with which Western societies regard the use of force has been strengthened, in particular in the European context, by the experience of the two world wars of the last century (Battistelli 2012; Lucianetti 2012). However, the Italian and the German cases are even more distinctive, since these two countries particularly feel the weight of the legacy of the Second World War and of the totalitarianism causing its outbreak (Battistelli et al. 2012). This feeling clearly appears from Matteo's and Laura's words. Matteo is conscious that *the Italians were allies of the Germans* and, talking about the Second World War, they say:

> *MATTEO: All wars are horrible […]. I think this one was the worst of all, also because there was the horrendous crime of the Shoah and the persecution of the Jews.*
> *LAURA: (overlap) Well, you know... it certainly was horrible. All wars are horrible, the First World War was certainly horrible, too, but...*
> *[…]*
> *LAURA: I think it's, well, not better because... but the Second was worse because of the Shoah, as he said.*

Indeed, "differences between populations ultimately depend on the civilisation and circumstances, on the events in their past and in their present" (Mead 2008, 41, my translation): the events in Italy's past caused people to internalise a feeling of hostility towards the use of force and the extreme means of war (Battistelli 2004). Therefore, it has not been surprising that Italian pacifist attitudes and reluctance to war, revealed by numerous public opinion surveys (Battistelli 2004; Battistelli et al. 2012), also characterise the responses of the young people I interviewed.

5The transcript excerpts inserted in the paper are in italics. I translated the excerpts from the original Italian language, trying to maintain all the nuances of speech.

Interestingly, their opinions differ in the way in which they have been expressed, but not in the intensity. Maria (12), for instance, shakes when thinking of the crimes perpetrated in the concentration camps. The same image of the children imprisoned behind a barbed wire fence engenders a strong reaction in Luigi (14, an army child), but he expresses his emotions and thoughts differently from Maria, by articulating them in words:

> *LUIGI: […] what we see here is a... let's say the ... power of man's animal nature, don't you think?*
> *[…]*
> *LUIGI: (overlap) Well... you know, we all know what happened so... I mean it, it makes you realise how far man can go in his ways of... let's say, well, of dominating other human beings, other races.*

Luigi's words find a perfect equivalent in the picture he drew in response to *Rosa Bianca*, where the red of Rosa Bianca's ribbon blends into black, gradually, *to show the degradation of this society that starts from this brightly coloured ribbon, you know, as if at a festival […] until it's black that… that, when they bomb the town (LUIGI).*

Luigi's drawing gives a visual shape to his thoughts, reinforcing them and making it clear how "drawing is thinking aloud, a powerful route into knowledge" (Sedgwick & Sedgwick 1993, 29).

In the transmission of values that constitute the culture of a population, school certainly plays an important role. Indeed, Italian school aims at providing children and young people with as complete an education as possible, made of educational content, but also of values and practical expertise (Capaldo & Rondanini 2002). With this goal in mind, in addition to the history lessons, students are encouraged to participate in events that should increase their awareness of their past and present. Sara's father (a serviceman), for instance, told me of a regional project[6] promoted in schools to explain the Italian mission in Afghanistan:

6 For ethical concerns, since it is a regional project, I do not mention its name.

> *SARA'S FATHER: So some colleagues of mine, while we were in Afghanistan, went around the schools to, to explain […] what, in general terms, we were doing there.*

Besides regional and local initiatives, schools also take part in larger events, such as *The International Holocaust Remembrance Day*, in which teachers show their students *some videos, for example, about Auschwitz…[…], the photos (MARIA)*, and so forth. However, it is significant that prior to the United Nations resolution designating this an international memorial day, the Holocaust Remembrance Day was already a national event in Italy. Indeed, five years before the UN resolution, law 211 of the Italian Parliament ("Legge 20 luglio 2000, n. 211" n.d., my translation and my emphasis) declared that:

> The Italian Republic establishes the 27th of January, the date of the demolition of the gates of Auschwitz, as "Remembrance Day" […]. On the occasion of "Remembrance Day" […], there are ceremonies, initiatives, meetings and common moments of narration of the facts and of reflection, *in particular in schools of all levels,* on what happened to the Jewish people and to the deported Italian soldiers and politicians in the Nazi camps, in order to preserve in Italy's future the memory of a tragic and dark period of the history of our country and of Europe, and so that such events never occur again.

Nonetheless, I noticed a certain degree of dissatisfaction in the youngest of my interviewees with regard to the quantity and quality of the information the teachers give to them. Matteo tells me that at school *something was said* to them, Laura is not even sure about this *(I think so, I mean, something was explained to us)* and Maria affirms that *wherever you go, they always tell you the same things which are very few, […] the minimum.* Moreover, Maria goes further in explaining her opinion:

> *MARIA: […] we'd like to know a bit more, but often... they show us a couple of little things and then that's the end of the subject. Maybe even the teachers are afraid of telling us, maybe also it's not exactly a complete truth or… I don't know.*

More than once, Maria mentions the will to know more, perfectly matching the fact that children are naturally curious, as Innocenti (2013) explains. Innocenti, indeed, creates his books "for children who are curious, who are eager to know more" (ibid.) and this might be the reason Maria particularly likes *Rosa Bianca*, to the point she suggests that this book should be used at school *because... maybe that's the only way to… to get a real understanding.* Talking about this picturebook, Maria adds:

> *MARIA: Well... this here, I mean, this story has added a lot to what I had studied […] I didn't think with just a book I... could understand so much, there.*

Therefore, reading *Rosa Bianca* has been a useful and vital experience for Maria, since the new situations, emotions and understandings set forth in the

book have been assimilated into her original background, modifying it (Rosenblatt 2005).

However, the values and the knowledge transmitted by school are not the only elements constituting the background of people and, specifically, of the young people in my project. This background is extremely important, since it is by drawing upon extensive personal knowledge and experience that the readers are able to co-construct the meaning of what they read. Indeed, Evans (1998, xiv) affirms that we interpret texts "depending on *who* we are, *where* we are, *what* we need from the text, consciously or subconsciously at any particular moment and *how* we relate to the text whilst interacting to the who, where and what mentioned above". Even though I do not think that the meaning of a text is to be found exclusively in the reader, as Barthes (1977) suggests by declaring the necessity for the author to 'die', I am entirely convinced that the reader brings to the text a whole range of sociocultural issues, background information, past experience and present preoccupations, in the process of making sense of it (Evans 1998; Rosenblatt 2005; Styles & Noble 2010).

This is especially true with regard to postmodern picturebooks, which "require the reader to participate actively in meaning making" (Anstey 2012, 147) and indeed the interviewees' responses to *Rosa Bianca* let me 'see' some of the background the young people brought to the book and how they tried to use it actively to construct 'their' meaning of the picturebook.

The first thing I noticed was the wide range of texts that Matteo, Laura and Maria mentioned. To be precise, in saying 'texts', I am referring to the "expanded notion of 'text'" embraced by Pantaleo (2010, 52), which includes books, films, characters, television, artefacts, video, etc. Matteo and Laura, for instance, when talking about *Rosa Bianca*, allude to *The Diary of Anne Frank* (the book), while Maria uses the image of Dante's *selva oscura (dark forest)* to describe the disquieting forest in the background of the destroyed concentration camp scene. However, the three younger interviewees especially draw on the visual medium of film and television: besides *Ulisse – Il piacere della scoperta*, *Jonah Who Lived in the Whale, Life Is Beautiful* and *Schindler's List*, they make several connections to *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (Heyman & Herman 2008).

With regard to this film, it is interesting to note the different ways in which Maria and Matteo 'use' it in making meaning of the picturebook. Indeed, Maria draws a first comparison between the children depicted behind the barbed wire in the book and the Jewish child in the film *(He had pyjamas just like these here [pointing to the pyjamas of the children drawn by Innocenti])* and a second comparison concerning *the story […] itself*:

> *MARIA: […] he too (the German child in the film, like Rosa Bianca) brought him (the Jewish child) something to eat every day in his schoolbag, on his way home from school, too.*

Matteo goes further: similarly to Maria, he creates a link between the picturebook and the film, in particular between the inhabitants of the village painted by Innocenti and the protagonist's mother in the film, but then he uses this comparison to understand the lack of action of the people from the same town as Rosa Bianca:

> *I: OK. And why do you think the other inhabitants, I mean, of the village didn't do the same (help the children, bringing them some food)?*
> *MATTEO: Because they didn't know the truth, either, apart from that you can also see, I'm still referring to the film of the Boy in Striped Pyjamas, you can see that the wife of, in the film, the wife of, of that Austrian general...*
> *I: (overlap) Yes.*
> *MATTEO: She didn't know everything, then when she found out, she was, she was angry with him. She said: "You just told me it was forced labour..." and that's what they thought in fact, and they didn't know they were killing them en masse like that, after working them to the bone […].*

I found particularly interesting how the young people used their diverse backgrounds in order to make inferences. Matteo, for example, when trying to identify the setting of *Rosa Bianca*, progresses gradually *(a village in Nazi Germany. […] a village for passing through. […] close to the border)* and finally succeeds in his intent. He is also able to articulate his deductive process, explaining that the key for his understanding has been the opposite movement of the tanks and lorries at the beginning and end of the book, together with the different uniforms worn by soldiers.

Moreover, "[m]aking 'personal connections' in their reading" is important for children "in order to engage actively with texts and draw on their own experience" (Arizpe & Styles 2006, 225). And indeed, according to Wolfenbarger and Sipe (2007, 277), one of the three main impulses that seem to guide children's responses to picturebooks is "the personal impulse or the need to connect stories to one's own life". It is especially with regard to the personal experience of the young people in my study that I found it particularly fascinating to explore their multiple interpretations of the picturebook. Indeed, since the fathers of two interviewees served in armed conflict situations, I was eager to discover what personal experience these two young people would have brought to the text. However, at first, when I started analysing the data collected, what most struck me was 'only' the variety of interpretations in the interviewees' replies. Only after having scrutinised the transcripts, did many interesting elements meaningfully emerge from this sea of interpretations.

One of the scenes that engendered the most multiple interpretations is *Rosa Bianca*'s harrowing doublespread where the young girl discovers the concentration camp to be destroyed and soon after is shot by an escaping soldier. In front of this scene, Matteo and Laura concentrate on Rosa Bianca's thoughts *(she thinks: what's happened? Where are they? (MATTEO); she is thinking: oh God, what's happened to those children? (LAURA))* and feelings *(she's a bit frightened about what's happened to them, she doesn't know*

(LAURA)). On the contrary, Maria, Sara and Luigi focus on the historical events, but in different ways. Maria thinks that the allies released the Jewish survivors, even though a close examination of the devastation makes her doubt her initial opinion:

> *MARIA: Well, even if they've freed them, at least that's what I think, it's just about everything... I don't know, it doesn't seem much, it seems more that everything has been destroyed.*

On the other hand, Sara (15, an army child) affirms that the Jews *were killed in the gas chambers at this point and the soldiers did it in such a way that everything collapsed.* She shows a greater historical knowledge and this might be due to the fact that, as she told me, Sara studied the Second World War for the third year secondary school exam. Finally, Luigi (14, an army child) focuses on the aspect of destruction, by saying that Rosa Bianca *finds everything destroyed, didn't she? Because they'd been bombed […] they'd been blown up, they'd blown everything up.*

Initially, I did not attach too much importance to Luigi's words, but then I realised that the theme of bombs recurred other times in his responses to *Rosa Bianca.* In particular, he creates a connection between the picturebook's words *"*[a] storm was approaching, you could hear the noise of it*"* and bomb explosions. He repeats this metaphor twice and finally he affirms to have been particularly struck by the *rumble of a storm* symbolising bomb attacks. I did not find this focus on bombs in any of the other young people's replies; more precisely, none of the other interviewees mentioned *bomb, bombs, to bomb* or similar words.

Luigi also demonstrates being conscious of the existence of a military hierarchy. Indeed, when I asked him to talk about the doublespread picturing a little boy trying to run away from the Nazis, soon after having considered the children destined for the concentration camps, he says:

> *LUIGI: I find it a bit strange that the burgomaster, I mean, given that he was one… I mean, he was walking round the streets, in town, because... […] the soldiers were there, I don't believe the burgomaster was necessary so, I mean, he was sent by someone […].*

Similarly, Sara points out that the soldiers did *what they were ordered to do.* Any citizen knows that servicemen go where they are ordered to go and do what they are ordered to do (Battistelli 2012a); however, only Sara makes reference to this aspect. Moreover, Sara differs from the other young people in her reply to Innocenti's use of colours in the doublespread mentioned above: she immediately dwells on *the colour of the lorries and cars* and she adds:

> *SARA: […] (Innocenti) used a, a green-grey to convey the idea that they aren't lorries and cars of, of common people, but of, of soldiers going to war.*

It is most likely that the above-mentioned interpretations of aspects of the picturebook reveal Luigi and Sara's 'military' background. However, more interestingly, these young people's responses also offer some insights into how "military families endure circumstances and demands that are unique" (Drummet et al. 2003, 286). Indeed, besides dealing with issues that are common to all families, military families are subjected to unique stress, such as frequent and prolonged separations from their loved ones and the knowledge of the constant danger of servicemen being injured or killed (Drummet et al. 2003; Howell & Wool 2011; Serangelo 2014). As Luigi's mother confirms, being aware of these risks causes mental and emotional strain in all the family members:

> *LUIGI'S MOTHER: […] we had explained something to him, we never never told him any lies, we never sweetened the pill, we told him in simple words but the truth, always the truth. In fact he was affected by it even to the extent of making him anxious […].*
> *[…]*
> *LUIGI'S MOTHER: So what he was told was actually the unvarnished naked truth, his father's task, the fact that he could also risk… […].*

Indeed, it often happens that, especially during separation from the parent, children in military families display behavioural problems, including anxiety (Drummet et al. 2003; Chandra et al. 2010). Even though Luigi no longer suffers from anxiety attacks, the burden of the frequent absence of his father *((Luigi) felt the lack (of his father) (LUIGI'S MOTHER))* and the fear of losing him emerge from many of his responses to the picturebook.

Significantly, when he looks at the cover of *Rosa Bianca* for the first time, he thinks that the book will be about:

> *LUIGI: […] a little girl who has been orphaned. From the image you get some idea, because all the soldiers are there behind, the soldiers… wounded soldiers and she's looking out of the window as if to say…I mean, as if she was waiting for someone.*

Only looking at the cover, Luigi understands that Rosa Bianca lost her father, an aspect that no one else inferred before reading the book. Luigi refers to this loss another time, affirming that the little girl's past is sad, because she *couldn't even remember what her father was like.* Moreover, Luigi is the only one to mention the fact the children imprisoned in the concentration camp were taken away from their family, adding that *it's difficult to explain because it's something... a feeling, I mean, that you have when... you know, you haven't got those most dear to you by your side.*

To a lesser extent, also some of the observations made by Sara show how parental deployment may affect military children. Indeed, when asked to talk about the emotions stirred by *Rosa Bianca*, she immediately mentions the little girl's mother and the fact that she wore black, a clear indication that *Rosa Bianca's father was killed and her mother is in mourning*.

However, considering all the military children's replies, a difference between Luigi's and Sara's responses becomes apparent: Luigi manifests his past and present preoccupations more than Sara. At first sight, this might seem unusual, since older children, and especially girls, appear to have more problems with parental deployment (Chandra et al. 2010), yet it is equally true that children's difficulties are greater for those families that experience longer periods of parental absence (Drummet et al. 2003; Chandra et al. 2010). Indeed, "[w]artime parental deployments can be one of the most stressful events of a child's life" (Sogomonyan & Cooper 2010, 4), and Luigi experienced nine times what Sara experienced 'just' twice:

> *LUIGI'S MOTHER: […] the missions […] it was like entering a tunnel […].*

Not only did Sara experience fewer periods of separation from her father, but also she was not fully conscious of what her father did in Afghanistan, and therefore of all the dangers he might have faced:

> *SARA'S FATHER: […] she was, she was told that we were there to do good for the children […].*

These differences between the two young people's situations helped me to explain their different responses to the picturebook. However, both Luigi and Sara found in their family the support they needed to cope with separation stress, as Luigi's *(I've had strong support from my family)* and Sara's mothers *(we've never been alone)* explained to me. In particular, the significant role of Luigi's mother in his life is mirrored in Luigi's comment on the character of Rosa Bianca's mother:

> *LUIGI: Then her mother […] I think she had helped Rosa Bianca in her childhood et cetera because in any case, you know, you can see that she (Rosa Bianca) was not a depressed child […].*

Therefore, Luigi has made sense of the relationship between Rosa Bianca and her mother, bringing to the text his personal experience. Indeed, "[c]hildren's responses also reflect their mothers' reactions […]. If the mother's reaction to her spouse's deployment is depression, then the children may mirror her depressive symptoms or behaviors […]" (Drummet et al. 2003, 281).

As my analysis has shown so far, it would be impossible, as well as senseless, to separate the young people's backgrounds from the responses they gave to the picturebook, and indeed "[p]ersonal factors will inevitably affect the equation represented by book plus reader" (Rosenblatt 2005, 75). Therefore, in investigating the young people's replies to the theme of moral responsibility in *Rosa Bianca,* I will continue to take into account aspects deriving from their cultural and personal background.

4.2. Young people's feelings about moral responsibility

"For many generations, morality was the central category for defining social relationships and development" (Kohlberg 1974, 383); however, it was only after the 1950s that research on moral values and moral development increased (Kohlberg 1974; Franz & Daeg de Mott n.d.). According to Kohlberg (1974), this increased interest in moral development was a consequence of the barbarities committed under the Nazi and Stalinist systems. Several different approaches and theories have followed since that time, but moral responsibility has always been central in those reflections. Indeed, moral responsibility is strongly "connected with our conception of ourselves as 'persons'" since "one distinct feature of persons is their status as morally responsible agents" (Eshleman 2014). Moreover, Weissbourd, in one of his recent studies on parenting (2009), points out that a key factor in children's moral growth is acquiring the capacity for caring and for considering one's own obligations to others, that is, becoming a morally responsible human being.

I was, therefore, eager to investigate how the young people in my study would respond to Rosa Bianca's choice to act, to be morally responsible towards the imprisoned Jewish children. Indeed, in creating this book, Innocenti did not focus "on the war, but on the decisions made by individuals" (Myers 2009, 36), aiming at stimulating questions and reflection in the reader (Dedola & Innocenti 2012).

Once again, the young people provided various responses to the theme, but, above all, a significant distinction emerged between Matteo, Laura and Sara on the one hand and Maria and Luigi on the other. Indeed, Matteo, Laura and Sara think that Rosa Bianca is a *naive* little girl, who helps the Jewish children because she is not aware of the situation. Only one person who *doesn't fully understand the gravity of the situation, manages, that is, to do what the little girl did,* affirms Matteo, and indeed:

> *I: Do you think if she'd realised before what was happening there in the camp she would have acted differently?*
> *SARA: (overlap) Yes, yes. In my opinion, yes.*
> *I: What...?*
> *SARA: Well, maybe she'd have gone back home... to her mother.*

Moreover, both Matteo and Laura affirm that if they were in Rosa Bianca's situation, they would have followed the lorries *maybe once (MATTEO* and *LAURA, with emphasis both on 'maybe' and 'once'), but then, never (MATTEO)* and only if the people taken away were *people you know, your loved ones (LAURA).* Matteo's opinion is even stronger, since he extends his point of view to *everybody*, explaining that:

> *MATTEO: […] In my opinion, we would all have had a different reaction from the girl's because the girl is the product of the imagination of... I mean in my opinion the girl in the story was a means of telling better what happened, but that the girl...*

> *maybe the author had her do that, had her, had her go back to that place (the concentration camp), when, normally, I don't think anyone would have gone back.*

Matteo demonstrates consciousness of the "fictional nature of fictions" (Lewis 2006, 94) and of the fact that fictional writing "self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality" (Waugh 1984, 2). However, his answer to the moral questions 'posed' by the picturebook is not in line with Rosa Bianca's choice of action.

Therefore, Matteo's, Laura's and Sara's replies show a sort of self-oriented morality, not able to see someone else's side, the one represented here by the children imprisoned by the Nazis. Interestingly, this individualistic attitude corresponds to the first of the three levels of moral development elaborated by Kohlberg, a level that should apply only to children up to ten years of age (Schaffer 1998; Franz & Daeg de Mott n.d.), while Matteo and Laura are 12 and Sara is 15. This phenomenon could reflect a defence mechanism, the so-called regression, that is the tendency to return to an earlier behaviour, thought or relational pattern, when dealing with a feeling of anguish (Gabbard 2011), as the one that the picturebook can arouse in its readers.

This self-oriented attitude is also reinforced by another series of observations made by the three young people with regards to other characters in the picturebook, in particular, the inhabitants of Rosa Bianca's village, the soldiers and the burgomaster. Indeed, to a greater or lesser extent, Matteo, Laura and Sara justify the behaviour of these characters. Laura, for instance, thinks that the inhabitants were unconscious of what was happening. Matteo goes further, since he believes that also the soldiers and the burgomaster were unaware of the situation, especially because of the Nazi propaganda *(their heads had been filled with Hitler's ideas, […] they thought they were doing good).* Yet, when looking at the doublespread picturing the Jewish child who is trying to run away, he seems to understand a different truth:

> *MATTEO: I was struck by the contrast, the, the contrast between the girl and the rest shows how all the others knew what was happening and so their minds were grey, brown […].*

However, this insight was an isolated case and indeed, later, Matteo strengthens his previous idea and adds that even if the other people in the book had known what was happening to the Jews, they would not have done *anything out of fear for what might have happened to them.* Finally, Sara focuses on the soldiers, justifying their behaviour in a manner similar to Matteo:

> *SARA: […] the soldiers […] did just what they were ordered to do…*

Sara's focus on the soldiers and her will to defend their conduct might also be the expression of a more general feeling, which her father's work could have generated in her. However, both she and Matteo seem to adhere to what

Bandura (2002) defines as 'displacement of responsibility', a mechanism that consists in obscuring or minimising the agentive role in one's own actions, not accepting personal responsibility for them but considering them a result of the dictates of the authorities. Moreover, it is interesting that, to explain this concept, Bandura (ibid., 106) makes precise reference to "Nazi prison commandants and their staffs", who "divested themselves of personal responsibility for their unprecedented inhumanities […]. They claimed they were simply carrying out orders".

Contrary to Matteo, Sara does not extend her justification to the burgomaster who, according to her, is *a bit too evil*. What most strikes Sara is *the satisfied expression* of the man when he obstructs the Jewish child's escape, to the point that she decides to represent that expression in her drawing, which shows the scene of the recapture of the little boy as he tries to escape.

Sara uses a brown-red tonality to colour in almost all her picture, thus evoking one of the dominant shades in the palette of *Rosa Bianca*'s illustrations. What creates a difference between the characters she portrays is their expression, highlighted in black: an *angry expression* for the soldier, a *fearful* one for the little boy and a *satisfied expression* for the burgomaster. It is noteworthy that in the picturebook, it is the burgomaster, and not the soldier as it is in Sara's drawing, who wears the red Nazi symbol and grabs the child by the collar. Indeed, Sara does not recognise the hierarchical role of the burgomaster and highlights the fact that *he wasn't even a soldier.* This most likely explains why her justification for the soldiers' conduct is not extended to the town's mayor.

Therefore, despite slight differences, Sara's, Matteo's and Laura's responses share the same perspective towards the theme of moral responsibility, one that is completely different from Maria's and Luigi's, according to the definition of moral responsibility given by Weissbourd (2009) and reported at the beginning of the section. Indeed, Maria deeply understands the importance of Rosa Bianca's action:

> *MARIA: […] I think that... she was very courageous anyway, because she didn't ignore... she got to the bottom of it.*
> *I: Yes.*
> *MARIA: And I liked how she wanted to deal with the thing.*

What drives Rosa Bianca to help the imprisoned children, according to Maria, is her *innocence,* because *it's what she would have wanted if she'd been one of them.* Moreover, Maria focuses on Rosa Bianca's care for and sensitivity to the needs of the Jewish children, and this could reflect the fact that "women, who value social interaction more than men, base their moral decisions on a culture of caring for other human beings" (Gilligan, as stated in Eshleman 2014):

> *MARIA: […] one significant thing for me was precisely, in my opinion, the food she took to them... I mean, as if she wanted actually... as if she wanted to take care of them. Like you do to a person you love, she was right, instead of... I don't know, taking useless things to them, to take what they needed.*
> *I: OK.*
> *MARIA: For survival […].*

Maria immediately recognises Rosa Bianca's will to act, analysing the doublespread that pictures the Jewish child's attempt to escape. According to Maria, here it is *the gesture she makes with her hands behind her back, like that with her body leaning a little forward* that reveals the little girl's astonishment at the scene and her desire to act. Maria succeeds, therefore, in making sense of the emotions and attitudes disclosed by the character's poses and gestures (Nikolajeva & Scott 2006). She demonstrates the ability to find her "[route] through the text that connect[s] words and images" (Lewis 2006, 32), filling the gaps in the written text with the information provided by the images. In the same way, Maria is able to identify the soldiers' *coldness*, the burgomaster's *lack of pity* and, above all, the inhabitants' indifference, thanks to the way in which Innocenti pictures a woman and a man, in the above-mentioned opening and in a following spread, respectively, both with their backs turned to what is happening. The contrast between Rosa Bianca and the inhabitants reinforces Maria's moral opinions, to the point that she becomes upset and exclaims:

> *MARIA: […] How did such a little girl become aware of such of such a big thing and... while others acted as if nothing was going on?*

Luigi, on the contrary, thinks it is possible that some inhabitants of the village behaved like Rosa Bianca, but he shares Maria's point of view on the little girl's conduct. Luigi highlights her *purity* and *generosity* and recognises her to be morally responsible, since *she doesn't just think of herself […], she's a girl who doesn't just care about herself, but also about others* and *she's a girl who wants […] to improve her situation and that of others.* Moreover, Luigi is the only one to notice this same responsible attitude in the imprisoned children. Through the interaction between the written and visual narratives, he understands that there is *fraternity between them:*

> *LUIGI: […] (the text) says that the younger ones asked for food and not the older ones because they wanted, I mean, they left more food for the little ones, didn't they? Small families are formed anyway, too […].*
> *[…]*
> *LUIGI: […] They're all in small groups that here… (he points to the little girl) if we see... here the little girl is in someone's arms...*

Luigi is perfectly aware of the different roles and communicative functions of words and images (Styles & Noble 2010), because he thinks that the text makes the readers *understand the story,* while the images communicate *the character's emotions.* However, he also believes that images and text need to be perfectly intertwined, since *if one of the two things is missing […], you can't understand completely.* This understanding of how the written and visual narratives work in a picturebook helped him make sense of the concentration camp scene.

However, it is most likely that a key role in his inferential process was played by the centrality of the theme of responsibility in Luigi's thoughts. Indeed, in analysing *Rosa Bianca,* he focuses on the importance of being morally responsible towards other people, considering one's own obligations to others: we should *struggle for the common good, defend it,* insists Luigi. Moreover, he is the only one of the young people in my study who used precisely, and more than once, the word *responsibility*. It is noteworthy that he points out:

> *LUIGI: I think she (Rosa Bianca) grew up a little after this experience... because in the end she had a kind of responsibility for these children, don't you think?*
> *I: Yes.*
> *LUIGI: And so I think she grew up a little because of that.*

Also Maria *((Rosa Bianca) matured sooner than, than expected)* and Sara *(she grew up in the course of the book, too)* identified a process of maturation in Rosa Bianca, but only Luigi created a connection between this process and moral responsibility towards the imprisoned children. Indeed, the concepts of growth associated with awareness and the capacity to cope with difficult situations are central to Luigi's life experience, as both he and his mother recognise:

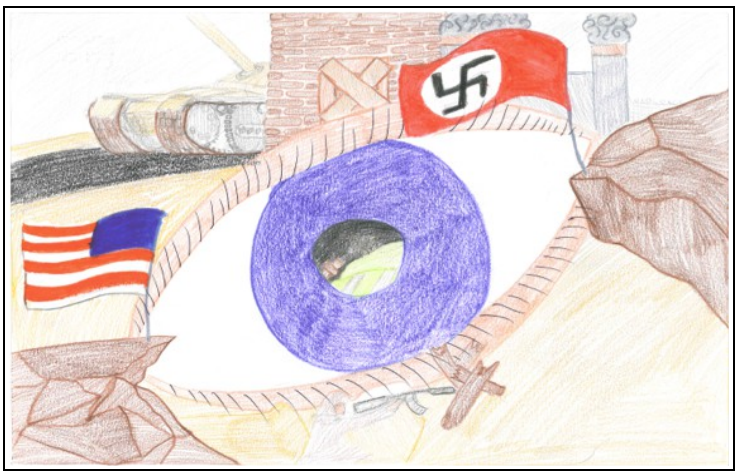
> *LUIGI: […] this experience (his father's work) helped to form our character a little, too.*
> *LUIGI'S MOTHER: You know, they don't lose themselves, in the sense that when they are in some difficult situation they also have the means to... because having had to face situations of distress from an early age, in some way they've cut their teeth […].*

Luigi's responses to Rosa Bianca also show that he creates a strong connection between the concept of moral responsibility and a sense of justice. Indeed, when he talks about the imprisoned children and Rosa Bianca's killing, in both cases he uses the term *injustice.* Interestingly, also Matteo mentions the concept of justice, in connection with that of awareness, but he does not make a

clear distinction between what is just and what is unjust. For instance, when he reflects on the fact that Rosa Bianca is not aware of what is happening, he thinks that *it's not just that she doesn't know anything, but […] it's just, too.*

On the contrary, Matteo uses the concept of justice in a definite manner when expressing his opinions on war:

> *MATTEO: […] the eye could also symbolize that all this that war, what happens is not human.*
> *[…]*
> *MATTEO: […] the eye, being human, is surrounded by all these things that you have during war that aren't... just, in my opinion.*



Matteo constructs his drawing on a series of juxtapositions, the most important being precisely that between humanity and inhumanity, between the 'human' eye representing humanity and all the things related to war (a tank, a soldier with his rifle, trenches, a barred window, etc.), which are, instead, inhuman. Matteo also pictures the flags of two opposing military forces, demonstrating to be particularly "concerned with balancing [the] salient features" (Styles & Noble 2010, 129) of his drawing:

> *MATTEO: I wanted to make the flags, one that went this way (towards the left), one that went this way (towards the right), but there was no point.*
> *I: How come?*
> *MATTEO: Because the wind only blows one way.*

Another significant contrast is the one between the blue of the eye and the dull colour in the background, behind the track and the concentration camp: *the sky as she remembers it (blue) and the sky as she sees it (grey). […] The sky as it is for children (blue), the sky as it is during a war (grey).* Matteo seems, therefore, to clearly understand one of the messages that Innocenti wanted to convey in his book, that war is not a thing that children should experience

(Dedola & Innocenti 2012).

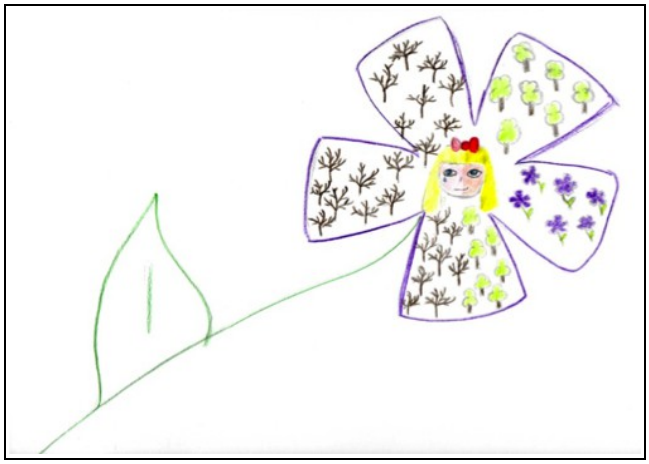
For Matteo, colours are a resource for making meaning (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006) of the picturebook and, due to their evocativeness, he tends to replicate them in his drawing. Indeed, it is noticeable that the tones used for representing war-related elements are dull shades of brown, grey and beige, which are dominant in the book and also colour its unillustrated and identical endpapers. Apart from Maria, Matteo is the only one among the interviewees who seemed to be perfectly aware of the semiotic significance of endpapers, especially of plain-coloured endpapers, that "are often used to indicate the overall mood or tone of the story to follow" (Sipe & McGuire 2010, 65):

> *MATTEO: It's more of a beige brown […] it's a dead colour, I think it's the worst colour there is. It might even be worse than black, black is at least the night, which is anyway something. This here is almost nothing, I mean it's... it bodes something bad […].*

A similar construction of the drawing, based on oppositions, is also present in Laura's picture. After drawing the outline of the periwinkle held by Rosa Bianca, she fills one half of the flower with bare trees and the other half with living trees and periwinkles:

> *LAURA: On one side (she points to the bare trees) how she saw during the war and here (she points to the green trees and the flowers), after, when the war had ended […] even though she didn't see it after the war […].*

The contrast of life and death is repeated in the shades of the little girl's face, where Laura uses a variety of colour brightness to articulate Rosa Bianca's feelings *(she is happy, she is sad).* In her drawing, Laura repeats an aspect that particularly struck her when looking at the picturebook, that is the transformation in the protagonist's colours, a feature also noticed by both Maria *(the rest […] succeeded in making her sad, too)* and Luigi *(the pink is lifeless, […] pink is a symbol of happiness and, let's say, of being human)*.



For Laura, Rosa Bianca's transformation takes place after her discovery of the children imprisoned in the concentration camp and the feeling of fear that followed:

> *LAURA: […] before, when she hadn't seen those children yet, right?, (Rosa Bianca) always wore brighter colours, she wore like...*
> *MATTEO: Really?*
> *[…]*
> *LAURA: […] but after, after seeing the children...*
> *[…]*
> *LAURA: […] She's frightened.*
> *MATTEO: Exactly, I think so, too, now that she has understood what's happening, I mean, she hasn't understood, exactly, completely what's happening, so for now the change has only taken place in her, not in her clothes, apart from the ribbon.*
> *[…]*
> *MATTEO: It's taken place only in her expression, in her fear […].*

It is interesting to see how, thanks to Laura's observation, also Matteo partly becomes aware of an aspect of the picturebook he had previously missed, which then helps him to more deeply explore Rosa Bianca and the other characters. Indeed, the collaborative approach "encourages children to explore their understanding of a topic and gives them the confidence to try out their ideas without the fear of being wrong" (Wells 1986, 115).

5. Conclusions

In my research project, I aimed to investigate young Italian people's responses to the war-related theme of moral responsibility in a challenging picturebook. I was interested in analysing the extent to which the young people would be aware of the significant issue emerging in *Rosa Bianca* and how they would respond to this topic. I was also eager to explore whether there were any significant differences in the responses of the young people without personal experience of war and of those who had one parent serving in armed conflict situations. Finally, I listened attentively to glean any valuable insight that might arise from what the people in my study had to say (Arizpe & Styles 2006) regarding other aspects of the picturebook.

The findings of my project revealed that not all the young people I interviewed were aware of the significant issue of moral responsibility in *Rosa Bianca.* Indeed, Matteo, Laura and Sara were not conscious of the importance of Rosa Bianca's choice to be morally responsible towards the Jewish children, whereas Maria and Luigi demonstrated to be aware of the significance of the little girl's action, of the fact that she considers her moral obligations towards the imprisoned children.

On the other hand, all the young people recognised the vital importance of memory. According to them, the flower laid on the barbed wire is used by the

illustrator *to preserve memory of what had happened (MATTEO), to remind (LUIGI)*, *not to forget certain things (SARA).* Similarly, in the final 'spring' scene, the remaining pieces of barbed wire, the broken fence posts plunged into the ground and the sign left by a tank not yet covered with grass represent *an unhealed scar (MARIA), indelible marks that can't be erased (MATTEO* and *LAURA), that take your mind back to what happened (MATTEO).* However, even though all the young people succeeded in recognising the importance of memory, only Maria and Luigi explored the topic more in depth, speaking about the responsibility to remember the past, to *not make the same mistakes again (LUIGI),* especially in our modern society in which the past is often devalued and abandoned (Jedlowski n.d.) and which *discourages people from remembering (MARIA)*.

It is interesting to notice that Maria and Luigi, who offered a deep understanding of responsibility in memory, are the same young people who recognised the importance of moral responsibility in *Rosa Bianca.* The reasons for the difference between Maria and Luigi on the one hand and the other interviewees on the other hand cannot be found in their age or in their military background, since Maria is 12 and Luigi 14 and only Luigi's father is a serviceman. I believe that the reasons are most likely to be found in their personal attitudes and experiences. Indeed, during the interviews, Maria often showed a desire *to know more,* to explore things in depth and to *understand the real meaning* of things, while the deep awareness in Luigi's responses might be explained with the necessity for he and his family to frequently cope with difficult situations and with the way in which they decided to face these situations (*what he was told was actually the unvarnished naked truth […] being aware makes you grow […] they've cut their teeth (LUIGI'S MOTHER)).*

Another aspect that all the young people demonstrated to have in common is their aversion to the use of force and to the extreme means of war. Also Luigi and Sara share this feeling, even though their fathers are servicemen who have been serving in armed conflict situations. Therefore, this shared reluctance to the use of force most likely reflects a cultural attitude. Indeed, since "[w]e can never neatly separate what we see from what we know" (Gombrich 1960, 329), the young people's background of culture, knowledge and experience often emerged through their responses to the picturebook. In particular, in Sara's and Luigi's replies, I could notice some aspects of their military background, as well as some of their preoccupations connected to their fathers' jobs and especially to parental deployments. These elements provided me with further confirmation of the fact that the reader "[responds] to the visual world with a body and mind shaped by the realities in which he or she grew up" (Raney 1998, 39).

However, interestingly, while in some cases the young people's background helped them make meaning of the picturebook, in other cases it limited their deductive processes. Such is the case when Matteo, Maria and Luigi all think that the allies arriving at the end of *Rosa Bianca* are American (as one of the flags painted by Matteo in his drawing clearly indicates): in this case, they do

not rely on the picturebook's images to identify the (Soviet Army) allies, but instead draw on their previous knowledge.

Finally, I could witness what sophisticated readers of visual texts young people are (Arizpe & Styles 2006): all the interviewees, to a greater or a lesser extent, demonstrated to be able to interpret and understand visual references and metaphors, to make sense of the colours used by the illustrator and to interpret the emotions and attitudes disclosed by the characters' gestures, postures and facial expressions. Moreover, they succeeded in making meaning of the relationships between words and pictures, showing awareness of "the inextricable connection of words and pictures and [of] the unique qualities of the form: a picturebook is not simply a book that happens to have pictures" (Sipe, as cited in Wolfenbarger & Sipe 2007, 273). Such a level of proficiency surprised me a bit, since the young people in my study told me that they had never seen a picturebook before, neither at school nor at home.

I am aware of the fact that I cannot generalise the results obtained in my research project, and indeed there is no intimation in the case study to generalise from one case to others (Thomas 2013). However, the sophistication that the young people taking part in my project demonstrated in making meaning of the picturebook, together with some observations made by the interviewees, led me to one final consideration. Indeed, while Maria, Matteo and Laura affirm that very little was said to them at school on war and related topics, Maria recognises that *Rosa Bianca* added a lot to what she had studied *(I... could understand so much, there)* and Matteo thinks that this picturebook allows people to *better understand the Second World War.* Luigi and Maria also believe that Innocenti's book may help people *to become aware […], to understand a piece of human history that should not be, should not be repeated (LUIGI)* and to realise *that it's up to us to avoid it being repeated (MARIA)*. Therefore, I believe it would be useful to include the use of picturebooks in the Italian national curriculum to "[help] children understand the nature and complexities of wars and the history that surrounds them" (Crawford & Roberts 2009, 371), as well as to help children and young people reflect on significant issues, such as moral responsibility, memory, and so forth. That is even more important if we consider that the interviewees with a more clear idea of what war really means were the army children only, as the analysis of the young people's responses to the picturebook in relation to their personal experience revealed.

References

Agnew, K., & Fox, G. (2001). *Children at War: From the First World War to the Gulf*. London and New York: Continuum.

Anstey, M. (2012). Postmodern Picturebook as Artefact: Developing Tools for an Archaeological Dig. In L. R. Sipe & S. Pantaleo (Eds.), *Postmodern picturebooks : play, parody, and self-referentiality* (2008, pp. 147–163). London: Routledge.

Arizpe, E., & Styles, M. (2006). *Children reading pictures: interpreting visual texts* (2003). London: Routledge.

Bader, B. (1976). *American picturebooks from Noah's ark to the beast within*. New York: Macmillan.

Bandura, A. (2002). Selective Moral Disengagement in the Exercise of Moral Agency. *Journal of Moral Education,* 31(2), 101–119.

Barthes, R. (1977). *Image Music Text*. London: FontanaPress.

Basit, T. N. (2003). Manual or electronic? The role of coding in qualitative data analysis. *Educational Research,* 45(2), 143-154.

Battistelli, F. (2004). *Gli italiani e la guerra: Tra senso di insicurezza e terrorismo internazionale*. Roma: Carocci.

Battistelli, F. (2012). I fattori sociali delle opinioni sulla guerra. In F. Battistelli, M. G. Galantino, L. F. Lucianetti, & L. Striuli (Eds.), *Opinioni sulla guerra : L'opinione pubblica italiana e internazionale di fronte all'uso della forza* (pp. 30–59). Milano: FrancoAngeli.

Battistelli, F. (2012a). Americani, europei, italiani : che cosa pensano dell'uso della forza? In F. Battistelli, M. G. Galantino, L. F. Lucianetti, & L. Striuli (Eds.), *Opinioni sulla guerra : L'opinione pubblica italiana e internazionale di fronte all'uso della forza* (pp. 60–78). Milano: FrancoAngeli.

Battistelli, F., Galantino, M. G., Lucianetti, L. F., & Striuli, L. (Eds.). (2012). *Opinioni sulla guerra : L'opinione pubblica italiana e internazionale di fronte all'uso della forza*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.

Bell, J. (2005). *Doing your research project: a guide for first-time researchers in education, health and social science* (4th ed.). Maidenhead: Open University Press.

"Book of Revelation, 7, 13-14". (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+7

Bromley, H. (2006). Putting yourself in the picture: a question of talk. In E. Arizpe & M. Styles, *Children reading pictures: interpreting visual texts* (2003, pp. 147–163). London: Routledge.

Butler, R. R. (2008). Depicting the Unthinkable: Graphic Imagery of the Holocaust in Children's Literature. In J. Harding & P. Pinsent (Eds.), *What Do You See? : International Perspectives on Children's Book Illustration* (pp. 221–225). Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Capaldo, N., & Rondanini, L. (2002). *Gestire e organizzare la scuola dell'autonomia*. Trento: Erickson.

Chandra, A., Lara-Cinisomo, S., Jaycox, L. H., Tanielian, T., Burns, R. M., Teague, R., & Han, B. (2010). Children on the Homefront: The Experience of Children From Military Families. *Pediatrics,* 125(1), 16–25.

Crawford, P. A., & Roberts, S. W. (2009). Ain't Gonna Study War No More? Explorations of War Through Picture Books. *Childhood Education,* 85(6), 370–374.

Dedola, R., & Innocenti, R. (2012). *Roberto Innocenti : La mia vita in una fiaba*. Pisa: Della Porta.

Denscombe, M. (2007). *The good research guide: for small-scale social research projects* (3rd ed.). Maidenhead: Open University Press.

DiCicco-Bloom, B., & Crabtree, B. F. (2006). The qualitative research interview. *Medical Education,* 40, 314–321.

Drever, E. (2006). *Using Semi-Structured Interviews in Small-Scale Research : A teacher's guide* (Rev. ed.). Glasgow: The SCRE Centre, University of Glasgow.

Drummet, A. R., Coleman, M., & Cable, S. (2003). Military Families Under Stress: Implications for Family Life Education. *Family relations,* 52(3), 279–287.

Eshleman, A. (2014). Moral Responsibility. In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved from http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-responsibility/

Evans, J. (Ed.). (1998). *What's in the picture? Responding to illustrations in picture books*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Evans, J. (2010). Reading the visual: creative and aesthetic responses to picturebooks and fine art. In J. Evans (Ed.), *Talking beyond the page : reading and responding to picturebooks* (2009, pp. 99–117). London: Routledge.

Frankl, V. E. (2009). *Uno psicologo nei lager* (1946). Milano: Edizioni Ares.

Franz, J., & Daeg de Mott, D. K. (n.d.). Moral development. In *Encyclopedia of Children's Health*. Retrieved from http://www.healthofchildren.com/M/Moral-Development.html

Gabbard, G. O. (2011). *Introduzione alla psicoterapia psicodinamica* (2005). Milano: Raffaello Cortina Editore.

Gombrich, E. H. (1960). *Art and Illusion*. London: Phaidon Press.

Grbich, C. (2007). *Qualitative data analysis : an introduction*. London: SAGE.

Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK). (2014). *Conflict Barometer 2013* (pp. 1–153). Heidelberg, Germany.

Heyman, D. (Producer) & Herman, M. (Director). (2008). *Il bambino con il pigiama a righe* [Motion Picture]. BBC Films; Heyday Films.

Howell, A., & Wool, Z. H. (2011). *The War Comes Home: The Toll of War and the Shifting Burden of Care*. Providence, Rhode Island, US: The Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University.

Innocenti, R. (1996). Roberto Innocenti. L'ultimo dei figurinai. Retrieved from http://www.ilpepeverde.it/005%20Argo%201.2%20Vetrina%20ILL%20INN.html (Interviewer: Parolai D.).

Innocenti, R. (2009). The War Inside Books. *Bookbird,* 47(4), 27–31.

Innocenti, R. (2011). *Rosa Bianca* (2005). Milano: la Margherita edizioni.

Innocenti, R. (2013). Immagini per Comunicare: Roberto Innocenti. (Interviewer: Castellani C.). In C. Castellani, *La Comunicazione attraverso le Immagini.* Master's thesis. Dipartimento di Filologia, Letteratura e Linguistica – Università di Pisa.

Innocenti, R., & Gallaz, C. (1985). *Rose Blanche*. Mankato, MN: Creative Editions.

Innocenti, R., & McEwan, I. (2004). *Rose Blanche* (1985). London: Red Fox.

Jedlowski, P. (n.d.). Memoria. In *Dizionario di Storiografia*. Retrieved from http://www.pbmstoria.it/dizionari/storiografia/lemmi/263.htm

Kohlberg, L. (1974). Development of Moral Character and Moral Ideology. In L. W. Hoffman & M. L. Hoffman (Eds.), *Review of Child Development Research* (1964, Vol. 1, pp. 383–432). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading images : the grammar of visual design* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

"Legge 20 luglio 2000, n. 211". (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/00211l.htm.

Lewis, D. (2006). *Reading contemporary picturebooks : picturing text* (2001). London: Routledge.

Lucianetti, L. F. (2012). L'uso della forza secondo l'opinione pubblica di cinque paesi occidentali. In F. Battistelli, M. G. Galantino, L. F. Lucianetti, & L. Striuli (Eds.), *Opinioni sulla guerra : L'opinione pubblica italiana e internazionale di fronte all'uso della forza* (pp. 79–106). Milano: FrancoAngeli.

May, J. P. (1995). *Children's literature and critical theory : reading and writing for understanding*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Mead, M. (2008). *America allo specchio : Lo sguardo di un'antropologa*. Milano: Il Saggiatore.

Myers, L. (2008). Roberto Innocenti : HCA Illustrator Medallist 2008. *Bookbird,* 46(4), 31–37.

Myers, L. (2009). What Do We Tell the Children? : War in the Work of Roberto Innocenti. *Bookbird,* 47(4), 32–39.

Nikolajeva, M. (2000). *From mythic to linear : time in children's literature*. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press.

Nikolajeva, M. (2006). Word and Picture. In C. Butler (Ed.), *Teaching children's fiction* (pp. 106–151). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Nikolajeva, M., & Scott, C. (2006). *How picturebooks work* (2001). London: Routledge.

O'Sullivan, E. (2005). Rose Blanche, Rosa Weiss, Rosa Blanca : A Comparative View of a Controversial Picture Book. *The Johns Hopkins University Press*, 29(2), 152–170.

"Operazioni Internazionali in corso". (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.difesa.it/OperazioniMilitari/op_intern_corso/Pagine/Operazioni_int.aspx

Pantaleo, S. (2010). Exploring children's responses to the postmodern picturebook Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Book? In J. Evans (Ed.), *Talking beyond the page : reading and responding to picturebooks* (2009, pp. 44-61). London: Routledge.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA; London: Sage Publications.

RAI (Producer) & Negrin, A. (Director). (1971). *La rosa bianca* [Motion Picture].

Raney, K. (1998). A matter of survival. On being visually literate. *The English and Media Magazine,* 39, 37–42.

Rauch, A. (2009). *Il mondo come design e rappresentazione : Ritratti d'occasione per ventisette maestri dell'illustrazione e della grafica*. Firenze: Usher Arte.

Rosenblatt, L. M. (2005). *Literature as exploration* (5th ed.). New York: The Modern Language Association of America.

Salisbury, M., & Styles, M. (2012). *Children's Picturebooks : the art of visual storytelling*. London: Laurence King.

Schaffer, H. R. (1998). *Lo sviluppo sociale*. Milano: Raffaello Cortina.

Schein, E. H. (1986). Verso una nuova consapevolezza della cultura organizzativa. In P. Gagliardi (Ed.), *Le imprese come culture*. Torino: Isedi.

Sedgwick, D., & Sedgwick, F. (1993). *Drawing to Learn*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Serafini, F. (2010). Understanding visual images in picturebooks. In J. Evans (Ed.), *Talking beyond the page : reading and responding to picturebooks* (2009, pp. 10–25). London: Routledge.

Serangelo, D. (2014). Sociologia/ Un'altra prospettiva. Le famiglie militari e il supporto "fai da te!". *Rassegna Stampa Militare*. Retrieved from http://rassegnastampamilitare.com/2014/04/26/sociologia-unaltra-prospettiva-le-famiglie-militari-e-il-supporto-fai-da-te/

Sipe, L., & McGuire, C. (2010). Picturebook endpapers: resources for literary and aesthetic interpretation. In J. Evans (Ed.), *Talking beyond the page : reading and responding to picturebooks* (2009, pp. 62–80). London: Routledge.

Sogomonyan, F., & Cooper, J. L. (2010). *Trauma Faced by Children of Military Families : What Every Policymaker Should Know* (pp. 1–12). National Center for Children in Poverty, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University.

Stan, S. (2004). Rose Blanche in Translation. *Children's Literature in Education,* 35(1), 21–33.

Stutchbury, K., & Fox, A. (2009). Ethics in educational research: introducing a methodological tool for effective ethical analysis. *Cambridge Journal of Education,* 39 (4), 489–504.

Styles, M., & Noble, K. (2010). Thinking in action: analysing children's multimodal responses to multimodal picturebooks. In J. Evans (Ed.), *Talking beyond the page : reading and responding to picturebooks* (2009, pp. 118–133). London: Routledge.

Taber, K. S. (2007). *Classroom-based research and evidence-based practice: a guide for teachers*. London; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Thomas, G. (2013). *How to do your research project : a guide for students in education and applied social sciences* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE.

Waugh, P. (1984). *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*. New York: Methuen.

Weissbourd, R. (2009). *The Parents We Mean To Be : How Well-Intentioned Adults Undermine Children's Moral and Emotional Development*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Wells, G. (1986). *The meaning makers : children learning language and using language to learn*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Wiles, R. (2013). *What are qualitative research ethics?* London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Wolfenbarger, C. D., & Sipe, L. R. (2007). A Unique Visual and Literary Art Form: Recent Research on Picturebooks. *Language Arts,* 84(3), 273–280.