

A Testament Immortalized in Scarlet Letters: Literariness, Materiality, and Illustration in *A verdadeira história de Chapeuzinho Vermelho* [The True Story of Little Red Riding Hood] (2020) / *Testamento eternizado em escarlates letras: literariedade, materialidade e ilustração em A verdadeira história de Chapeuzinho Vermelho* (2020)

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ABSTRACT

Literature, as the art of words, presents its text in different forms and languages. Whether through its humanizing potential or, still, through its narrative quality, it reaches readers and offers them a plurality of tools to create texts, using established works as arguments. After all, literature holds within its scope narratives that are true treasures arranged as a testament for all of humanity. Thus, in this article, our goal is to analyze the literary work *A verdadeira história de Chapeuzinho Vermelho* [The True Story of Little Red Riding Hood]¹ by Agnese Baruzzi and Sandro Natalini, presented as a book-object with a keen materiality. We will seek to understand the characteristics of the work that promote literary aesthetic enjoyment, moving the work away from a didactic and moralizing perspective. To do so, we will comprehend the specificities of the verbal text, the imagery, and the materiality characteristics that pervade the work, understand the techniques, tools, and proposed interactions, as well as recognize the book's multimodal capacity.

KEYWORDS: Children's literature; Materiality; Illustration; Book-object; Little Red Riding Hood

RESUMO

*A literatura, enquanto arte da palavra, apresenta seu texto em diferentes formas e linguagens. Seja através de sua potencialidade humanizadora ou, ainda, por sua característica de fabulação, ela alcança os leitores e lhes oferece uma pluralidade de ferramentas que criam textos, utilizando como argumento obras já consagradas, afinal, a literatura guarda em seu escopo narrativas que são verdadeiras preciosidades dispostas como testamento para toda a humanidade. Assim, neste artigo, nosso objetivo é analisar a obra literária *A verdadeira história de Chapeuzinho Vermelho* (2020), de Agnese Baruzzi e Sandro Natalini, apresentada em livro-objeto e de aguçada materialidade. Buscaremos compreender as características da obra que promovem a*

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¹ The English edition of the book is: BARUZZI, Agnese; NATALINI, Sandro. *The True Story of Little Red Riding Hood*. London: Templar, 2009. As the analysis is not a linguistic one, but mainly an imagetic one, the author opted for translating from Portuguese to English some passages in the book for the sake of illustration of the discussion. For this reason, whenever “see footnote 1” appears, it will, in fact, refer to Brazilian edition BARUZZI, Agnese; NATALINI, Sandro. *A verdadeira história de Chapeuzinho Vermelho*. Tradução de Índigo. São Paulo: Brinque-book, 2020.

fruição estético-literária, afastando o livro de uma visão didático-moralizante. Para tanto, compreenderemos as particularidades do texto verbal, o imagético e as características de materialidade que permeiam a obra, compreendendo as técnicas, as ferramentas e as interações propostas, compreendendo, também, a capacidade multimodal do livro.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Literatura infantil; Materialidade; Ilustração; Livro-objeto; Chapeuzinho Vermelho

Of the Legacy That Was Left to Us

Literature, perceived here as the sublime expression of language, possesses a remarkable attribute in its works: no matter how old they may be, some of them manage to break the barriers of time and become ageless, as put by the prestigious Brazilian author Ana Maria Machado (2009) - eternal yet always new. Literary fiction transcends temporal and cultural constraints, becoming diverse and significant across various social contexts.

Thus, a literary text, whether serving as a representation of society or a proclamation, will always keep in its core the fact of being fabricated. The eminent literary theorist Antonio Candido (2011) understands literature not only as a human necessity, but as a fundamental and inviolable entitlement—something that cannot be subtracted without compromising the basic human rights, this encompasses writings from the oldest to the most recent.

Although literature is acknowledged as a fundamental right that should be offered in both quantity and quality (Candido, 2011), the process of distinguishing what is literary or not has proven to be intricate, complicating what should or should not be offered to readers. Antoine Compagnon (2010) points to the difficulty of defining literature, asserting that “the definition of a term like literature will offer no more than the set of circumstances in which the users of a language accept using that term”² (Compagnon, 2010, p. 44). Attempts to define literature arise more from the specific perspectives and insights of the era in which readers and theorists find themselves rather than from any absolute truth. Hence, there is no need to coin a single, inflexible designation for what is literary.

² In Portuguese: “a definição de um termo como literatura não oferecerá mais que o conjunto das circunstâncias em que os usuários de uma língua aceitam empregar esse termo” (Compagnon, 2010, p. 44).

Considering this, temporal dynamics redefine the comprehension of literature, but certain works seem to resist the erosion of time and inscribe themselves as timeless testaments. These books become part of the universal memory, turning into enduring classics that profoundly etch themselves into the annals of history, never to be forgotten, functioning as threads through which the tapestry of time is (re)counted.

Pondering this matter, Italo Calvino (2007, p. 10; emphasis in original) formulates definitions of what constitutes a classic, affirming that “*the classics are books which exercise a particular influence, both when they imprint themselves on our imagination as unforgettable, and when they hide in the layers of memory disguised as the individual's or the collective unconscious.*”³ From this perspective, we understand that classics withstand the test of time, influencing both society itself and the individual. Moreover, classics:

are those books which come to us bearing the aura of previous interpretations, and trailing behind them the traces they have left in the culture or cultures (or just in the languages and customs) through which they have passed (Calvino, 1999, p. 10; emphasis in original).⁴

Thus, classics occasionally acquire new imprints over time, whether from new cultures or language innovations.

As an inherited legacy, classics give us the right to engage with them. Machado (2009, p. 19) states that “this heritage has been built for millennia”⁵ and serves a dual purpose as both a right and a resistance: “right and resistance are two good reasons for us to approach the classics. But there is more. Perhaps the main one is simply the pleasure we derive from reading them” (Machado, 2009, p. 19).⁶ That being said, we are entitled to literature, and the literary text enables us to aesthetically enjoy it, as well as take part in it - a process of resistance that empowers us to reclaim long-inherited treasures.

In terms of production, literature has left numerous works as a testament to human legacy, regardless of the age demographic of the target readers. Literature targeting children and young-adults is a vast and important part of its collection, considered crucial

³ CALVINO, Italo. *Why Read the Classics?* Translated from the Italian by Martin Mclaughlin. London: Vintage Classics, 1999.

⁴ For reference, see footnote 3.

⁵ In Portuguese: “esse patrimônio está sendo acumulado há milênios.”

⁶ In Portuguese: “direito e resistência são duas boas razões para a gente chegar perto dos clássicos. Mas há mais. Talvez a principal seja o prazer que essa leitura nos dá.”

in the reader's formative process (Hunt, 1991).⁷ It also possesses its own constellation of classics - such is the case with many fairy tales written or collected throughout history by the likes of Charles Perrault (1628-1703), Jacob (1785-1863) and Wilhelm Grimm (1786-1859), Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875), among others.

Within a multitude of examples, one story particularly stands out for our research - the classic tale of *Little Red Riding Hood*, whose origins trace back to the 10th century. Initially collected by Charles Perrault and later revisited by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, the story has undergone numerous retellings. However, the version that has firmly embedded itself in the Western collective memory is that of a little girl in a red hood, bringing goodies to her grandmother who resides on the other side of the forest. Upon reaching her grandmother's house, she senses something amiss and ends up being devoured by a wolf, who had previously consumed the poor old lady. In the end, a woodsman saves both the girl and her grandmother by slaying the wolf and opening up his belly.

Throughout the years, many iterations of this fairy tale have been retold in various ways. The one presented in this study is called *The True Story of Little Red Riding Hood: A Novelty Book* (2020),⁸ written and illustrated by Agnese Baruzzi⁹ and Sandro Natalini.¹⁰ This version whimsically delves into the familiar narrative of the girl in a scarlet hood, encouraging readers to collectively speculate about the events preceding the well-known narrative of the girl and the wolf as we know it today.

Our goal in investigating this work is to understand whether and how aesthetic enjoyment is fostered, analyzing the literary techniques that gave new meanings to a widely disseminated text. Thus, we aim to examine the spectrum of literary strategies employed, looking into the illustrations within the work and recognizing the various skills and features applied. Additionally, we will investigate how the format provides materiality to the book, considering the interactive possibilities and new reading protocols implemented.

Therefore, for better access to the pictures and movements that will be analyzed, QR codes (Quick Response Codes) will be included in the body of the paper. These QR

⁷ HUNT, Peter. *Criticism, Theory and Children's Literature*. New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991.

⁸ For reference, see footnote 1.

⁹ Also wrote *The True Story of Goldilocks: A Novelty Book* (2000).

¹⁰ Also illustrated *The True Story of Goldilocks: A Novelty Book* (2000).

codes will be inserted at moments when the work addresses some relevant interactive elements and will direct readers to videos showcasing the described movement. The videos are hosted on YouTube¹¹ in a channel overseen by one of the authors of this paper. Access to these videos is restricted to the QR codes presented here, meaning they cannot be accessed through a search on the platform. Their use is confined to academic purposes, specifically for this article.

1 The Multiple Riches to Be Inherited

The True Story of Little Red Riding Hood: A Novelty Book (2020)¹² introduces its first point of analysis through the examination of its presentation format. The way the book is conceived stands out, attracting a materiality concept not anticipated in the canonical version of the tale. According to Candido (2011), form and content are integral and inseparable aspects of a book; the content here is presented in a distinct way that invites touch and interactivity. Consequently, we are engaging with a piece that aligns with the quality of the so-called book-object.¹³

In their examination of the subject, Eliane Debus, Maria Laura P. Spengler, and Fernanda Gonçalves (2020, p. 10) discern that:

The book-object reveals its purpose through the interplay of its material mechanisms and visual elements. This is evident as readers engage in various actions such as pulling, unfolding, fitting, unplugging, all of which constitute a dynamic interaction with the object itself.¹⁴

¹¹ Platform for hosting and watching videos managed by Google LLC, with free access.

¹² For reference, see footnote 1.

¹³ According to Eulalia Agrelo Costas and Isabel Mociño-González (2019, p. 67), such books “(...) while maintaining the physical consistency of literate culture books, through the materiality of their volumes, they embrace a fresh graphic expression of their content, and incorporate various supplements (strips, wheels, flaps, unfoldings, wraps, textures, scents...) offering readers with multiple sensory and cognitive experiences, all within the realm of playfulness and interaction.” In Spanish: “(...) sen perder a súa consistencia física dos libros da cultura letrada, mediante a materialidade dos seus volumes, a renovada plasmación gráfica dos seus discursos e a inclusión de complementos moi diversos (tiras, rodas, lapelas, despregables, envoltórios, texturas, olores...) lle abren ao lector múltiples experiencias sensoriais e de pensamento, sempre baixo os efectos do ludismo e a interacción.”

¹⁴ In Portuguese: “o livro objeto revela seu sentido por meio dos seus mecanismos materiais e visualidade, na medida em que o leitor manipula, por isso a necessidade de puxar, desdobrar, encaixar, desencaixar, dentre outras ações que demarcam uma interação intensa com o objeto.”

Therefore, the book-object commands attention to its material essence by facilitating hands-on interaction, thus creating a sensory connection with that format. This broadens the reading experience, which would primarily be visual, to other senses, such as touch. Regarding works potentially directed to a young audience, like *The True Story of Little Red Riding Hood: A Novelty Book* (2020),¹⁵ hereafter referred to as *TTSLRRH*, this material nature requires the reader's receptivity to exploring new formats. Accordingly, for Odilon Moraes (2013, p. 165),

The focus on the object, something so intimately connected to children nowadays, has its reason. A child's interaction with the book as an object occurs in a much more natural manner than that of an adult. The lack of familiarity with books opens up the possibility of exploration of without the cultural biases that impact the educated reader.¹⁶

Many works can be categorized as book-objects, forming a constellation that includes everything from toy books to pop-up books. In the context of genre definition, *TTSLRRH*¹⁷ assumes a hybrid position, integrating, as we will explore, elements of both toy books,¹⁸ and illustrated albums,¹⁹ as well as pop-up books.²⁰ This aligns with Moraes'

¹⁵ For reference, see footnote 1.

¹⁶ In Portuguese: "Essa atenção ao objeto, algo tão intimamente ligado hoje em dia ao infantil, tem sua razão. A relação da criança com o livro como objeto se dá de uma maneira muito mais natural que a do adulto. A falta de familiaridade com o livro é que abre para o pré-leitor a possibilidade de exploração desse objeto sem os vícios culturais que incidem sobre o leitor culto."

¹⁷ For reference, see footnote 1.

¹⁸ In the words of Eliane Debus, Maria Laura P. Spengler, and Fernanda Gonçalves (2020, p. 09), "the toy book, with its experimental nature, fosters a close relationship with the reader (...). Thanks to refined and sensitive graphic designs, its clever features imbue it with an exploratory essence, challenging the notion that it should be 'shielded' from children to prevent damage (...). Its multifunctional characteristics extend an invitation to play and interact (...). The toy book stirs affections, feelings, and impulses through the sensory connections that arise from interactivity." In Portuguese: "o livro brinquedo, com sua característica experimental, privilegia uma relação de proximidade com o leitor (...). Devido ao refinamento e sensibilidade nos projetos gráficos, seus artificios engenhosos lhe conferem um caráter de exploração, que rompem a ideia de que devam ser 'resguardados' das crianças para que não estraguem (...). Suas características multifuncionais lançam um convite à brincadeira e ao manuseio (...). O livro brinquedo mobiliza afetos, sentimentos e impulsos por meio das relações sensoriais que emergem da interatividade."

¹⁹ Synonymous with illustrated books, these works represent, according to Douglas Menegazzi and Eliane Debus (2020, p. 16), "one of the main contemporary formats of children's books (...), as it is characterized by presenting dynamic and engaging languages to children, primarily through the combination of text and images". In Portuguese: "um dos principais formatos contemporâneos de livro infantil (...), já que este tem por característica apresentar linguagens dinâmicas e atrativas às crianças, principalmente por meio da junção de textos e imagens."

²⁰ According to Rui de Oliveira (2008, p. 55), pop-up books are a type of "special book in which characters and pieces of the scenes are partially cut out, often movable. As the child turns the pages, the pieces come together." In Portuguese: "livro especial em que os personagens e as peças dos cenários são parcialmente recortados, muitas vezes móveis. À medida que a criança vai virando as páginas, as peças vão se armando."

(2013) assertion regarding book-objects — entities that exist on a spectrum from singular to myriad, shaped by distinctive characteristics and tools. Not by chance, Ana Paula Mathias de Paiva (2010, p. 91) adds that book-objects are “objects that foster a new emotion in the reader—informing, stimulating, intriguing, moving, and entertaining,”²¹ thereby paving the way for uncharted directions in familiar realms. With a quick flip of a page, the story by Baruzzi and Natalini (2020)²² visually presents a multitude of diverse resources that can be analyzed in terms of their material attributes.

As the cover of a work constitutes the reader’s first encounter with it, that of *TTSLRRH* resonates with Alan Powers’ (2008, p. 6) insight of how a cover “can serve as a sample of the delights to come—a sort of window into an inner world.”²³ The cover’s edges bear a resemblance to gift wrap (a gift to be bestowed upon the reader), at its center, an illustration featuring a tree, a girl with a red hood, and a wolf. The reliefs on the cover look as if the material itself is trying to rise above the book, an editorial decision that activates the reader’s tactile senses from the very first contact. Additionally, details in gold, varnished for effect, both illustrate and enhance the enchantment of the narrative. Ultimately, readers are left with the sensation that a colorful gift has been placed in their hands. Therefore, in a way, the color signals to the reader that the content within may likely be a joyful one, not something imbued with sadness. The color choice is not arbitrary, but rather anticipates what is likely to be revealed.

Opening the book, devoid of page numbering,²⁴ the first analysis to be conducted delves into the visual domain — the illustrations. Regarded as a pivotal and cherished element for children and young readers, as emphasized by Gê Orthof (2020, p. 9), “children’s books present themselves as one of the few spaces in publishing production where the picture is preserved.”²⁵ Illustrations have the capacity to foreshadow the stories that will unfold (Oliveira, 2008). Hence, we initially observe how visual language is

When the book is opened, the illustrations ‘pop-up’ toward the reader, transforming two-dimensional images into three-dimensional ones.

²¹ In Portuguese: “objetos que estabelecem uma nova emoção no leitor – informando, estimulando, intrigando, comovendo e entretenendo.”

²² For reference, see footnote 1.

²³ In Portuguese: “pode servir de amostra das delícias que virão – uma espécie de janela para um mundo interior.”

²⁴ Therefore, we will consider the first page found immediately upon opening the book as our page number 1.

²⁵ In Portuguese: “o livro infantil apresenta-se como um dos poucos espaços na produção editorial onde a imagem se faz preservada.”

presented — pictures are always surrounded by a colored frame, defining the boundaries of the scene being witnessed. This decision even influences how the illustrations may be perceived, as the frame design, crafted in geometrical figures, differs itself from the pattern used in the illustrations. This imparts a theatrical quality to the visual code, as if the book were a box with a cutout allowing a glimpse of its interior. When the reader observes the scenes, they realize that the boundaries of the frame are rigorously respected. The perspective created by the colors and style of the drawings introduces a noticeable distance to the observed content, fostering a sense of depth wherein the images appear set further back than the page's edge. This perspective contributes to the establishment of the fictional pact within the narrative. According to Rui de Oliveira (2008, p. 54), “the illustrator fundamentally utilizes various elements, including color, light, and, foremost, perspective, to build the narrative drama in its illustrations.”²⁶ Thus, the perspective ensures that what lies before the reader is always an evocation of the drama within its expansive fictional context.

Just beneath the second page of the book, where the title of the story is once again displayed, as if on a sign placed on a wall, a large red envelope invites the reader to unveil its contents (QR Code 1), even if doing so means violating the correspondence addressed “to Red Riding Hood” (Baruzzi; Natalini, 2020, p. 2).²⁷ The existence of this device marks the first moment when the book prompts the reader to interact with it and highlights the importance of interaction: the story can only be properly continued through the reader's inference and proactive engagement with the letter. If they choose not to engage with it, they would be in the dark as to why the next page begins with “Hi Wolf. I've read your letter and I will help you” (Baruzzi; Natalini, 2020, p. 3).²⁸ The reader would then be left wondering: help with what? What happened that was not revealed? Only through the acceptance and realization of interactivity will these details be discovered, and the work's purpose fulfilled.

²⁶ In Portuguese: “o ilustrador utiliza fundamentalmente diversos fatores, como a cor, a luz e, principalmente, a perspectiva, para construir o drama narrativo e suas ilustrações.”

²⁷ For reference, see footnote 1.

²⁸ For reference, see footnote 1.



QR Code 1 – Big Bad Wolf’s letter to Red Riding Hood. *Source:* produced by the authors.

Upon opening the envelope, a paper can be retrieved, constituting a message from the Wolf to Red Riding Hood. Regarding its visual aspect, the letter replicates, in color, the aging effect of a page, adorned with some heart drawings. The overall impression is that this is an object designed to delight the eyes of the recipient, in this instance, both Red Riding Hood and the reader of the book.

The textual field confirms what the visual proposes. The letter is sent from the Big Bad Wolf to Red Riding Hood, and it is intriguing to observe how the writing aligns to the context of its sending. The Big Bad Wolf is a character aspiring to be better (in various aspects) and who considers himself somewhat rudimentary. This is how he enters the narrative:

I know you`re going to be *supperised* to get this letter from me. We have been *enemees* for many *yeers*, but I`m fed up with *bein* wicked all the time and no one liking me. *Please* will you show me how to be good like you? I want to get better manners (and much better *spellin*) and learn how to be nice for a change (Baruzzi; Natalini, 2020, p. 2, our emphasis).²⁹

In this passage, there are elements that hold great significance for our analysis. On an analytical forefront, the internal logic of the verbal text stands out, stating that the wolf needs to improve his spelling and, therefore, showcasing such spelling mistakes in the writing to illustrate the issue, as highlighted in the passage above. Words like “supperised,” “enemees,” and “bein,” are deliberately written incorrectly, offering readers insight into the problem and showing that the wolf indeed needs to improve his spelling. In doing so, the authors adhere to the logic of the narrative’s universe. The verbal text, by intentionally presenting orthographic inconsistencies, is consistent with what is being told in the story. On the other hand, when writing the letter, a more informal tone is adopted, bringing the text closer to the language that would fit more naturally to a wolf

²⁹ For reference, see footnote 1.

who does not know the spelling rules and wants to learn them. Beyond showcasing adept language usage, it also reflects the text's internal logic's deference for the overall concept of the work. After all, it would be strange if the wolf, acknowledging these issues, wrote in the highest standard of formal language.

The level of interactivity is elevated in this instance, as the reader needs to use his sense of touch to open the envelope, then open the letter, and only then come into contact with the verbal text. The scope of manipulation of the work is increased, making it not only require tactile interaction when turning pages but also demanding the reader to handle the paper. This establishes a reading protocol where, if touch is not engaged, the literary reception will be compromised.

By extracting something from within the story, such as the letter sent by Big Bad Wolf to Red Riding Hood, whose meaning resides solely within the fictional pact established therein, the book forges a sort of connection between fiction and reality, blurring the boundaries of these two realms. This makes it possible for the reader's hand to physically enter the story, take something from it, and bring it into the real world. This process, according to Eulalia Agrelo Costas and Isabel Mociño-González (2019, p. 105) consists in:

a metafictional strategy shaping the discursive proposal of those works that enhance the material dimension of the book to generate meaning. This creates an overlap of referential planes that erases the distinction between the reader's reality and the fiction presented in the discourse. Thus, the reader is integrated into the discourse, as the boundaries between the real space and the fictional one are dissolved.³⁰

In this way, the presented resource transforms the dynamics between fiction and the reader, reshaping the spaces in which each of them exists. Rosa Tabernero-Sala (2018, p. 110) argues that in such cases, "(...) the spaces of the reader and the book converge, and the boundaries between reality and fiction cease to exist."³¹ This phenomenon of blurring the barriers between reality and fiction is not confined to this specific section of

³⁰ In Portuguese: "se trata de uma estratégia metaficcional que define a proposta discursiva daquelas obras que potenciam a vertente material do livro na criação de sentidos, através da qual se produz uma sobreposição de planos referenciais que anulam a separação entre realidade do leitor e a ficção do discurso. Assim, o leitor se integra no discurso, uma vez que se diluem os limites entre o espaço real e o próprio da ficção."

³¹ In Portuguese: "(...) os espaços do leitor e do livro se confundem, e as fronteiras entre realidade e ficção deixam de existir."

the work. We will go through other examples that illustrate how the aesthetic capacity of the book is enhanced through this interplay.

At a certain point in the story, Red Riding Hood declares: “Now, you need to take a bath” (Baruzzi; Natalini, 2020, p. 5).³² During this episode, there is an illustration depicting the wolf in a bathtub beneath a shower. The page adheres to the presentation pattern of a frame, with clearly defined fictional limits. The illustration is vibrant with warm colors (this book predominantly features warm and high-contrast colors like red and blue), complemented by elements such as holographic-finished³³ bubbles. Let us underscore the pivotal role of the visual aspect, which is as meaningful as the verbal counterpart: when showcasing, for instance, the wolf taking a bath in a yellow tub with a shower, no letters or words are required to convey this information. Therefore, it is possible to label this a narrative illustration (Oliveira, 2008), as the story is being narrated and described through the illustration just as well the text. At this moment, the fusion of fiction and reality transpires due to an element affixed to the page: a curtain made of transparent fabric covering the wolf in the bath.

This curtain is not a mere illustration, but an actual fabric affixed to the page (QR Code 2). Although translucent, the fabric obstructs a full visibility of the illustration it conceals, compelling the reader to manipulate it, removing it from in front of the wolf, and thereby gaining access to the complete scene. The act of manipulating this element once again establishes a close connection between fiction and reality. The hands of the reader can once more enter the narrative and exert influence on things that exist only within it. This resource is utilized again on page 07, where the wolf is portrayed wearing an apron to clean Red Riding Hood’s house (QR Code 3).



QR Code 2 – The wolf taking a bath. *Source*: produced by the authors.

³² For reference, see footnote 1.

³³ A sort of paint finish that creates a metallic and multicolored effect.



QR Code 3 – The wolf's apron. *Source:* produced by the authors.

The apron is again made of fabric, attached to the illustration, this time not translucent but with a flowery pattern. The fabric does not hide any characteristics of the wolf; it is merely luring the readers to handle it. This whimsical invitation is crucial, allowing not only the establishment of a connection between literature and its potential audience, such as the children and young readers, but also with adults who may be encouraged to explore these new possibilities. It is worth noting that, quite often, none of these readers are accustomed to this form of interaction, as pointed out by Yolanda Reyes (2012, p. 52):

knowing how to read and knowing how to play (...) demand an education that has yet to be integrated into our academic curriculum, from childhood to adulthood. (How little play continues in schools (...), what a lack of joy in school teaching, and, above all, in the “teaching” of the desire and pleasure that are inherent in the literary experience).³⁴

Therefore, we comprehend that this game, this playful engagement offered to the reader, is not a supplementary tool but rather an indispensable element for the appreciation of the book. The reader is tasked with embracing the act of playing and ensuring that the nuances meticulously designed by the authors and the layout artists come to life. It is important to emphasize that these elements, described thus far, are not isolated; they are instead seamlessly integrated into the book, fortifying its aesthetic capacity.

By combining verbal, visual, and material elements, the book manages to acquire a multimodal capacity that, in the words of Diana Navas (2020, p. 116), is described as “a simultaneous reading of the different languages that constitute it.”³⁵ In Navas’s words,

³⁴ In Portuguese: “saber ler e saber brincar (...) exigem uma educação que ainda não se introduziu ao nosso currículo acadêmico, desde a infância até a vida adulta. (Quão pouco se continua brincando nas escolas (...), que falta de graça no ensino escolar, e, sobretudo, no “ensino” do desejo e do prazer que são inerentes à experiência literária).”

³⁵ In Portuguese: “uma leitura simultânea das diferentes linguagens que a constitui.”

this type of work, exemplified by *TTSLRRH*,³⁶ “calls for a more interactive reader, who is invited to play, to read, to interpret and to manipulate” (Navas, 2020, p. 121).³⁷ Consequently, as a multimodal creation, the reader is prompted to not only observe the verbal text and visual elements but also engage with the material components of the book in a highly interactive manner. This results in an effect wherein readers are not merely reading the story but actively participating in it, whether by touching or making choices aligned with their reading preferences. All elements intertwine to compose the aesthetic strength of what will be read, and all are equally important for this literary form’s reception. As a result, the book’s forefront features an elevated narrative capacity, while, in its background, we find a process that can be even more enjoyable and successful in shaping readers and mediating reading — the ability to maintain the text near the reader.

Taking this multimodal ability of the work as a guide, another highly interactive element of *TTSLRRH*³⁸ is the interaction with structural elements that triggers actions. When examining page 08, for example, we see that the Wolf is picking up Red Riding Hood and her friends in a school bus (Baruzzi; Natalini, 2020, p. 8).³⁹ The illustration of a small yellow bus is presented in warm colors, a prevailing style in the book. A small indication at the front of the bus draws attention, a red tag for pulling (QR Code 4). By performing the action of pulling, readers will witness, through the force applied by their fingers, the simultaneous movement of the vehicle and the passengers inside. From a technical perspective, this involves a tab-pull lever system, a structure that, from a sturdy piece of paper, is pulled to produce a back-and-forth movement in the illustration constructed beneath it (Carter; Diaz, 1999). The effect produced by the technique makes it seem as if the object is moving, making the book come to life in front of readers, with the movement driven by their hand. Thus, readers’ interaction with that element can create and recreate the proposed animation in a back-and-forth motion controlled by them and at the speed they desire. The story gains not only a sensory characteristic but also the kinetic, which is the force of movement created from choices the reader makes with the object. Therefore, these elements are deliberately made to engage readers’ curiosity,

³⁶ For reference, see footnote 1.

³⁷ In Portuguese: “solicita um leitor mais interativo, que é convidado a jogar, a ler, a interpretar, a manipular.”

³⁸ For reference, see footnote 1.

³⁹ For reference, see footnote 1.

which is fomented by the possibility of pulling the tag, not providing any hints about what will happen, allowing them to be surprised by what will unfold:



QR Code 4 – Big Bad Wolf and Red Riding Hood in the bus. *Source:* produced by the authors.

Another moment in which the narrative calls for interactivity is on page 16, near the end of the book. By this point, we are already aware that the Big Bad Wolf's desire to become a good wolf is making Red Riding Hood jealous. Across the pages depicting this scenario (pages 15 and 16), we witness the girl wanting to test the wolf's goodness. The accompanying illustration on the page captures her with a mischievous expression, suggesting that she is about to do something... and indeed she was. Seeing the wolf's kindness as a challenge to her own virtuous role in the story, Red Riding Hood offers him a sandwich. At this moment, two elements unfold simultaneously. First, the verbal text informs the reader of a transformation within the Wolf: "when Wolf took a bite of the mysterious sandwich he changed back to his wicked old self, chasing Woodcutter round and round the table until he was kicked out of town" (Baruzzi; Natalini, 2020, p. 16).⁴⁰ The literary text clearly reveals the character's behavioral shift, telling the reader what will happen. Simultaneously, the illustration portrays the wolf with an open mouth, ready to eat the sandwich, but on the sandwich itself, it reads "Open. Mysterious sandwich." The mystery surrounding the consequences of this movement lingers, prompting readers to contemplate: what will come next? What further surprises does this book hold?

The book itself, as an object, plays with this surprise quality it contains, as if it always harbors a secret and allows the readers to discover by their own hands what the movement or structures will bring about. When opening the mysterious sandwich, once again through a pull tab but now in a parallel motion (Carter; Diaz, 1999), there is an effect on the wolf's illustration: as the tab is pulled, the wolf's eyes, typically round and ordinary, are replaced by spirals, indicating that he is hypnotized by what is in his hand, such is the power of that food (QR Code 5). While the literary text claims that it is merely a mysterious sandwich, the ultimate revelation in this part of the story is narrated through

⁴⁰ For reference, see footnote 1.

the synergy of interaction and illustration; only when the readers interact with the sandwich, a hidden hot dog is revealed. Illustration and motion once again establish a position of narrating the story with their unique details and language, not reliant on the verbal text to convey their part of the narrative. The illustration becomes a symbol, representing what Oliveira (2008, p. 31) defines as an element that “can transcend the text without transgressing it.”⁴¹ Despite the illustration independently telling the story through its elements, it remains true to the information provided by the verbal text. Interactivity, something so precious in this moment of the narrative, also extends beyond the text; it materializes the mystery and fosters the necessary anticipation for readers to manipulate the book’s tools and activate new features:



QR Code 5 – The Wolf and the mysterious sandwich. Source: produced by the authors.

Before the wolf eats the sandwich, Red Riding Hood had invited him to a party. Again, on this page, there is an envelope containing a letter to be opened by the reader. However, this time, the interaction introduced a new element. When the girl invites the wolf to her party, she is very upset about his popularity. To portray this moment, the illustration of the girl depicts her with clenched teeth, narrowed eyes, furrowed eyebrows, and her face adorned with a plastic finish. The page is entirely colored in shades of red, with graphic representations of rays emanating from it. Symbolically, red may foreshadow an impending battle or impulsive act, as Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant (2020, pp. 1030-1031) describe, it is “the image of ardor and beauty, of impulsive force... the warrior color. Thus, with this warrior symbolism, it seems that red perpetually represents the battleground,”⁴² a notion that will be confirmed in this story. At this point in the narrative, readers are accustomed to always seek interaction points – the story seemingly imparts the lesson that there will always be something to touch, pull, or open. In this exploration, the reader may notice that, in addition to the envelope and the letter,

⁴¹ In Portuguese: “pode assumir um caráter de transcendência do texto, que não significa transgressão.”

⁴² In Portuguese: “a imagem de ardor e de beleza, de força impulsiva (...) a cor guerreira. Assim, com essa simbólica guerreira, parece que o vermelho perpetuamente é o lugar da batalha.”

a sort of gear is positioned in the corner, at the center of the right edge of the page. Another set of movements lies there.

When manipulating the gear, the reader will cause the colors on Red Riding Hood's face to change, in hues ranging from green, yellow, blue, purple, to red. The mechanism enabling this is identified as a *double wheel* (Carter; Diaz, 1999), wherein, upon manipulation, one wheel rotates an internal gear of the sheet, which is connected to a colored plastic disc, responsible for altering the colors. The effect achieved is particularly intriguing at this juncture in the narrative: as the wheel turns, it showcases the girl's anger tones, rendering her face red, blue, or even purple with rage at what is happening (QR Code 6). Interactivity, coupled with the utilized tool, succeeds in embedding this visual whim into the story without the need of a single unit of verbal text. At no point did the authors explicitly state that Red Riding Hood turned purple with anger; there's no point in verbalizing what the combined elements of interaction, illustration, and kinetics will convey. The interactive level rises as it allows for the apprehension not only of scenarios but also of the characters' emotional states, which is something that greatly interests the reader. Interactivity, then, becomes a foundational element of the narrative; its removal would compromise one of the pillars that construct the literary pact of the work.



QR Code 6 – Red Riding Hood's face changing color. *Source:* produced by the authors.

This moment in the narrative is also noteworthy in light of what the verbal text produces, given that, at this point, Red Riding Hood is experiencing anger, jealousy, and even displays a vengeful behavior. The text informs that “Red Riding Hood began to find Wolf's behavior a bit annoying...” (Baruzzi; Natalini, 2020, p. 13).⁴³ Additionally, the girl says, “Right! That's enough! I'm supposed to be the most popular person around here” (Baruzzi; Natalini, 2020, p. 14).⁴⁴ This display of emotions such as anger and envy,

⁴³ For reference, see footnote 1.

⁴⁴ For reference, see footnote 1.

contradicts the prevailing image of Red Riding Hood as an inherently good and pure girl who just wanted to visit her grandmother, without any malicious or ignoble thoughts. The girl is once again humanized in this narrative, becoming capable of expressing complex feelings. The story, potentially targeting a child and youth audience, serves as a reminder that such emotions are part of the human experience. This brings the work closer to a parody, which, according to Linda Hutcheon (1985, p. 13), “is one of the most important forms of modern self-reflexivity; it is a form of interartistic discourse,”⁴⁵ it involves a text in response to a previously conceived one. However, as Hutcheon (1985, p. 17) aptly points out, “parody is therefore a form of imitation characterized by ironic inversion.”⁴⁶ The text employs this irony, portraying Little Red Riding Hood as the character endowed with malice, while the Big Bad Wolf is the righteous one who helps everyone. This highlights the creative prowess of the authors – after all, “parody becomes what a critic calls a creative/productive approach to tradition” (Hutcheon, 1985, p. 19).⁴⁷ By reinterpreting a narrative of an already established tradition, such as the classic *Little Red Riding Hood*, and instigating this inversion, parody reshapes established norms and introduces new meanings, forging diverse paths within the collective memory of readers. These paths confirm the notion expressed by Affonso Romano de Sant’Anna (2000, p. 13) that “in parody, the two planes must necessarily be discordant, displaced.”⁴⁸

Upon examining this excerpt, it becomes evident that the book, through its portrayal of behaviors and emotions, manages to embrace a humanizing essence as per the perspective advocated by Candido (2011), for whom the humanization in literature serves as a reminder of the innate humanity present in each individual, extending its significance to encompass even those who have not reached adulthood. By depicting anger, envy, and other similar feelings often considered controversial, the work moves away from what Aparecida Paiva (2008) labels *thematic sterilization* – a narrative that pursues an instructive tone, designed for educational use, with moralizing connotations. For her,

⁴⁵ In Portuguese: “é uma das formas mais importantes de moderna auto-reflexividade; é uma forma de discurso interartístico.”

⁴⁶ In Portuguese: “a paródia é, pois, uma forma de imitação caracterizada por uma inversão irônica.”

⁴⁷ In Portuguese: “a paródia torna-se aquilo a que um crítico chama uma abordagem criativa/productiva da tradição.”

⁴⁸ In Portuguese: “na paródia, os dois planos devem ser necessariamente discordantes, deslocados.”

themes like death, fear, abandonment, separation, and sexuality confront children in their daily lives. In other words: the school opts for a literature that best serves as a pedagogical companion; it censors themes deemed as delicate, controversial, dangerous, or bold; it advocates for thematic sterilization in its discourse with literature; it restricts the exploration of the mysteries of human existence and the intricacies of social relations that could be critically examined through fiction (Paiva, 2008, p. 45).⁴⁹

The narrative is crafted with an awareness that its audience is inherently human, and as such, they harbor complex and elusive emotions. The book doesn't dismiss this human trait; instead, it dialectically presents it to the reader. Through the cathartic effect, readers can understand reflections of the complexities presented in their real lives.

The way the narrative is crafted is also worth analyzing. The book performs a form of retelling of the familiar story, simultaneously paving the way for the creation of what existed before the canonical tale, using parody as a guide to outline new aspects of it. The main characters remain the same, but the focus of the story shifts to a timeline where the Big Bad Wolf is no longer bad, and Little Red Riding Hood is the one consumed by wickedness. This reversal challenges the values and expectations surrounding characters that might be perceived as concluded, demonstrating that they are not immutable; numerous other stories can find a place within them. By playfully inverting the canonical roles of the characters, the authors open a new horizon where the classic is revisited without losing its essence: after all, the story does not happen in the same timespan as the classic, it is a prequel. However, in this narrative, the book departs from its fairy tale vision (Coelho, 2012), diverging from familiar moral examples. Through the reclamation of characters, manipulation of story elements, and the creation of paths beyond the canonical writings, a new legacy is established. The classic, then, reveals its timeless characteristic, confirming what Machado (2020, p. 15) asserts: "A classic is not an old, outdated book. It is an eternal book that never gets outdated."⁵⁰ Moreover, it emphasizes a fundamental feature of fairy tales, as "eternal books that centuries cannot destroy and

⁴⁹ In Portuguese: "temas como a morte, medo, abandono, separação e sexualidade confrontam a criança em seu cotidiano. Em outras palavras: a escola opta pela literatura de entretenimento que melhor se adapta à função de coadjuvante pedagógico; censura os temas que considera delicados, polêmicos, perigosos, ousados; promove uma assepsia temática em seu diálogo com a literatura; coíbe a discussão dos enigmas da existência humana e da complexidade das relações sociais que poderiam ser problematizadas por meio da ficção."

⁵⁰ In Portuguese: "clássico não é um livro antigo e fora de moda. É livro eterno que não sai de moda."

are rediscovered with each generation, captivating readers or listeners of all ages” (Coelho, 2012, p. 27).⁵¹

The verbal text wraps up the narrative by highlighting that the book has been reintegrated into the well-known classic universe: “Red Riding Hood was very pleased to be the nicest person in the Forest again. To prove it she took a basket of goodies to Granny. As for what happened next... well, you know the official story” (Baruzzi; Natalini, 2020, p. 18).⁵² In this passage, the verbal text suggests more than it explicitly narrates. By stating “as for what happened next...” with the use of ellipses, the text alludes to what the reader already knows – after all, different stories could unfold, not necessarily the canonical one. Thus, as the work concludes, the verbal text hints that something occurred but does not define what it is, leaving it open-ended. It becomes the reader’s responsibility to draw conclusions or reopen this retelling cycle. Although it is later stated, “Well, you know the official story,” this depends on the reader’s interpretation of what this official story entails, offering room not for a single ending but multiple ones. If we consider the narrative where the wolf devours the girl and her grandmother, we ultimately realize that the malice instilled by Red Riding Hood consumes the wolf until he, in turn, desires to consume the girl.

On the other hand, the verbal text is the one that ultimately obscures the barrier between fiction and the reader. By constructing the phrase “well, you know the official story,” there is a direct communication with readers, using the pronoun “you” to establish a connection, akin to a character addressing a camera – an additional layer of proximity between fiction and reader. Apart from functioning as a means of interaction, it serves as a stylistic device that captures the reader’s attention, compelling the narrative into a direct dialogue with those who delve into it.

Many additional points of analysis could be enumerated for the work—numerous insights that surpass the confines of this article’s space, thereby bequeathing the task for either us or fellow researchers to undertake. Our study, as it is, approaches its final considerations.

⁵¹ In Portuguese: “livros eternos que os séculos não conseguem destruir e que, a cada geração, são redescobertos e voltam a encantar leitores ou ouvintes de todas as idades.”

⁵² For reference, see footnote 1.

2: A Silent Legacy: The Final Words as Heritage

Given what has been presented, we comprehend that the work, through various means, embodies features that foster the literary enjoyment, elevating it to a valuable reading experience. It demonstrates qualities on both the verbal and imagetic fronts, along with its materialities.

Regarding the verbal code, it exhibits cohesion and coherence with the narrative, crafting a new tale that breathes life into an already-established classic tale ingrained in the universal memory. This quality is reinforced by both the aesthetic attributes of the text and construction of its language, that remains true to the logic of the literary universe presented.

The aspects of the visual field were constructed considering its protagonist role for the story in communion with the other codes. The illustration, therefore, assumed a narrative function within the work, telling the story through its elements, utilizing distinctive resources (such as perspectives and colors), and thereby transcending the verbal text rather than merely reproducing it.

Given the diverse and multifaceted use of materiality tools, we can assert that they also exerted a decisive influence on the presented text, conveying meanings and nuances exclusively formalized through material resources. Various resources were employed, including fabrics, tools that respond to touch and induce movement, and flaps that, when pulled, modify the illustrations, transforming them from static to movable. Consequently, new meanings emerge and fresh reading protocols are embraced through the manipulation and materiality imparted by the book. Furthermore, the presented interactive capabilities promoted a more intimate connection between the reader and the work of fiction, contributing to altering the reading protocols of the book from a primarily visual conception to a tactile-visual one. This shift allowed for new perspectives not initially encompassed in the original scope of what was collected and subsequently transcribed by Charles Perrault.

In light of the array of interactive tools within the work, it is possible to perceive its hybrid nature, in harmony with the designation of a book-object. It incorporates elements from both toy books (utilizing diverse fabrics and, consequently, textures and modes of interaction) and features typically associated with pop-up books. Additionally,

the book presents various forms of language, underscoring its multimodal and multisensory attributes, reinforcing the diverse facets intrinsic to its composition.

To conclude, the work positions itself in relation to the classic text from which it was inspired — more than being a mere reinterpretation, it is a novel book that uses the pre-existing narrative as its guiding creative principle. Red Riding Hood and the Wolf briefly trade roles, giving birth to a universe that extends beyond the confines of the canonical story, persisting until the very last page, at which point the book is reintegrated within the well-known “official story.” It is then up to the reader to decide which path they should take to get to Granny’s house.

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Statement of Author's Contribution

We declare that both authors, namely, Lucas Silvério Martins and Silvana Augusta Barbosa Carrijo actively participated in the writing of the manuscript *A Testament Immortalized in Scarlet Letters: Literariness, Materiality, and Illustration in A verdadeira história de Chapeuzinho Vermelho* [The True Story of Little Red Riding Hood] (2020). Both had a substantial contribution in the design of the project; analysis and interpretation of the data; writing and review of the work, contributing to relevant modifications with applied intellectual production; final approval of the manuscript to be published and responsibility for the aspects of the text, ensuring its integrity. The two authors equally divide the credits by the process of elaboration of the text, its active writing, the process of previous revision and post opinions and, finally, the final revision that is presented here. The textual content presented is the result of the mutual collaboration of the two authors, in a four-handed writing process, the result of dynamic writing activity.

Research Data and Other Materials Availability

The contents underlying the research text are included in the manuscript.

Reviews

Due to the commitment assumed by *Bakhtiniana. Revista de Estudos do Discurso* [Bakhtiniana. Journal of Discourse Studies] to Open Science, this journal only publishes reviews that have been authorized by all involved.

Review I

The paper's aim is to conduct an interpretative analysis centered on the materiality of the book *A verdadeira história de Chapeuzinho Vermelho* [The True Story of Little Red Riding Hood] (2020). The text focus on studying the materiality of works aimed for young readers, engaging in a dialogue with general literary theory. It possesses relevant theoretical foundation, showcasing a command of concepts endorsed by experts in the field of children and youth's literature. The analysis goes beyond the application of concepts, providing a critical assessment of the narrative and pinpointing important categorizations that enrich our understanding of the book as an object, a toy-book, and an illustrated album of literary value for young readers, whether within an educational context or beyond. APPROVED

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Review II

The paper intends to perform an interpretative analysis of the literary aesthetics and materiality of *A verdadeira história de Chapeuzinho Vermelho* [The True Story of Little Red Riding Hood] (2020), reissued in its 10th edition. It successfully fulfills its objective by conducting a thorough, systematic, and well-documented analysis, even incorporating QR Codes for visualizing videos that demonstrate the use of the interactive features presented within the book. The bibliographic and theoretical references are coherent, providing good support for the analysis and relevant reports. The considerations and interpretations hold significance from both literary analysis and language standpoints, offering a distinctive perspective on the audience. However, the concluding remarks lack systematic exploration of the variety of materiality as a narrative resource and specific elements that enhance and reinforce the narrative, as a variation of Charles Perrault's original work. Furthermore, I suggest reviewing the abstract and some extra spaces between words throughout the text. Also, the title seems to work better if it is more concise; a suggestion is to remove the phrase before the colon. These refinements are mere recommendations, the text itself is already well-resolved and could significantly contribute to other researchers, particularly educators and childhood reading mediators; if implemented, it seems to me it will be even better. APPROVED

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