

**BETWEEN METAPHORS, A DOCUMENTARY: REIMAGINING WAR AND
VIOLENCE IN COLOMBIA THROUGH PICTUREBOOKS**

by

Valeria De La Vega

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The following individuals certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled:

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Examining Committee:

Dr. Maureen Kendrick

Co-supervisor

Dr. Eric Meyers

Co-supervisor

Abstract

Colombian children have grown up in a country where there has been a constant internal conflict for more than five decades. Part of this conflict came to an end in 2016 with a signed peace agreement between the FARC-AP (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – Peoples Army) and the Colombian government. In the present, the country is going through a post-conflict phase and trying to negotiate peace with other armed groups that are still active. This reality makes children from both rural and urban areas aware of the conflict, and either they or their family members have been directly or indirectly affected by it. Picturebooks are one way that youth and their families can have conversations on the challenges of war and the consequences that come from it, provided that these texts are carefully crafted.

This thesis investigates picturebooks in Colombia that depict types of violence brought about by internal conflict. Limited academic research has interrogated the role of picturebooks in this specific region and addressing this conflict. Knowledge of this area is critically important to understand the possible benefits and difficulties that such books bring to Colombian children and beyond. With this in mind—by analysing the six interviews that form the basis of a documentary film entitled *Entre metáforas: re-imaginando la guerra y violencia en Colombia a partir del libro album (Between Metaphors: reimagining war and violence in Colombia through picturebooks)*—I sought to answer: how are picturebooks that focus on the violence in Colombia published? How are these picturebooks received by their readers, based on the experiences of the booksellers, authors and illustrators? Finally, what are the perspectives of Colombian children’s book specialists on this subject?

This thesis is both a qualitative analysis of the process of creating picturebooks about the Colombian experience from the perspective of authors, illustrators, and editors, as well as an act

of research creation, as the documentary film provides an alternate entry to this knowledge for diverse stakeholders, including educators, creative professionals, and scholars of children's literature.

Lay Summary

Through this thesis, I seek to understand three questions: What are the motivations for producing picturebooks that depict the violence in Colombia? From the perspective of the creators, how are these picturebooks received by their audiences? Finally, what are the perceptions of children's book specialists on the topic? I sought answers to these questions through interviewing and analyzing the voices of those who create these texts—illustrators, authors, and publishers—and those who work with them—booksellers and children's literature scholars. This thesis takes the form of a documentary film entitled *Entre metáforas: re-imaginando la guerra y violencia en Colombia a partir del libro álbum (Between Metaphors: reimagining war and violence in Colombia through picturebooks)*, and the subsequent analysis of the interviews that I recorded for its production. A key contribution of this work is the accessible knowledge of the interviews that can be used in schools or with diverse professional and non-professional audiences.

Preface

This thesis is the original, unpublished, independent work of the author, Valeria María De La Vega Fernández. It is the academic portion *only* of a hybrid creative/academic thesis. The creative portion consists of a documentary film, *Entre metáforas: re-imaginando la guerra y violencia en Colombia desde el libro album (Between Metaphors: Reimagining war and violence in Colombia through picturebooks)*, also filmed, produced, and edited exclusively by Valeria María De La Vega Fernández. The production of this study was approved by UBC Human Ethics Board ID No. H19-00052.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Motivation for the Study and Origins of Interest

The concept of war is not strange to me. I grew up in Colombia, a country with a violent history. The country has been dealing with an internal conflict since 1964, which means that I was raised, as were millions of other children, with the constant knowledge and fear of this reality.

Colombia's internal conflict started because of issues such as social inequality and political corruption. What had its origins in an idealistic social fight ended up being funded by kidnappings of civilians and drug trafficking. This led to more violence with armed combat between the Colombian armed forces and the FARC-EP (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army), as well as terrorist attacks in both rural and urban areas. As a result, one can number the victims of this conflict in the millions.

On November 24th, 2016, the government signed a peace treaty with the FARC-EP in hopes to put an end to this 52-years-long violent era. However, this is not an easy step to take as all Colombians, including myself, have been affected by the war directly or indirectly. Peace comes with forgiveness, and many are not able to accept this. The road to recovery is long and I believe people from every discipline must work to achieve it.

The past and present reality of Colombia affects the cultural materials that the country produces, which includes the production of children's literature. This is why I investigated how the recent history of the armed conflict has affected the production of picturebooks in Colombia.

1.2 Research Focus and Questions

For my study, I combined my personal history with my interest in children's literature, particularly picturebooks. I sought out to understand the production of picturebooks that depict war and violence in Colombia as there is limited academic research that tackles this topic. Knowledge of this area is critically important to understand the possible benefits and difficulties that such books bring to Colombian children and beyond. With this in mind, I framed this investigation through the following Research Questions (RQs):

1. What are the motivations for creative professionals to develop picturebooks for children that depict violence, specifically the present consequences of Colombia's internal conflict?
2. How do authors, illustrators, publishers, and booksellers understand the reception of these picturebooks?
3. What are the perspectives of Colombian children's book specialists on the value and importance of these materials?

To be able to answer these questions, I interviewed the children's literature professionals in Colombia who are involved in the production of these books: authors, illustrators, editors, booksellers, and Colombian children's books specialists. Since the primary data source of my study is these interviews, I decided that the ideal format to present my findings would be a documentary film. Additionally, the richness of this format also provides a unique opportunity to distribute the knowledge gathered to a wider audience beyond academia. An ethics application (H19-00052) was sought and approved on February 13th, 2019 to enable the collection of this data.

This thesis is comprised of two parts: a publicly available documentary film and an academic analysis of the interviews and my process of data collection. The documentary, or creative component of my thesis, *Entre metáforas: reimaginando la guerra y violencia en Colombia desde el libro álbum* (Between Metaphors: reimagining war and violence in Colombia through picturebooks)—which was filmed in Spanish and subtitled in English—is the primary component of my thesis. This academic analysis expands on the background knowledge and concepts of my creative project, as well as provides an explanation of the creative process, its significance, its audience, and an analysis of my findings from the interviews about these picturebooks.

1.3 Significance of the Study

Despite the significant duration and scope of the violent conflict in Colombia, there have been few studies on the production of children's literature in Colombia that depict the country's recent struggles. Castaño and Valencia's (2016) study *Forms of Violence and Strategies to Narrate it in Children and Youth Literature from Colombia* tackles this problem. The researchers perform an in-depth study of twelve titles of young adult and children's literature from Colombia written in the last thirty years and analyze the types of violence that are represented in each of them. These titles were selected due to their relevance to the topic, literary quality, and author trajectory.

Castaño and Valencia use sociologist Johan Galtung's three categories of violence—direct, structural, and cultural violence—to address the narrative strategies and the symbols found in their selection of books. They conclude that children have been kept away from the complex subject of violence in literature, as only twelve titles have been produced with this

theme in Colombia in the last thirty years. Nonetheless, authors who write for children are proposing diverse strategies to talk to children about violence through symbols or direct narrations. It can be argued that Colombian children face a complex reality, and literature may facilitate creating spaces of resilience.

The other example where picturebooks have been analysed in terms of their depiction of the country's violent history is Toro's (2016) web article *How to talk to children about war?*, published in the online magazine *Pacifista*. Toro argues that children's books that address the topic of war and violence in the Colombian national context are an important resource for children to develop personal understanding and empathize with other people affected by the conflict. As Toro phrased it, "Children must have the opportunity to understand war. Children's literature about conflict has enormous potential as a way of approaching the topic. With it, children may understand that there are multiple perspectives, other than those they listen to on the television or from their parents, so they can understand others and to grow with a disposition to listen beyond their opinions and to propose changes" (Toro, 2016).

This study and article provide knowledge about the picturebooks and young adult novels that depict the subject of war and violence in Colombia and the importance of these books. They also provide a foundation for the selection of texts for further analysis, as well as key authors and illustrators who are working in this conceptual space. However, researchers in children's literature and media have not examined in any depth how these books are made, what makes the authors and illustrators interested in tackling the subjects, or how authors, illustrators, and publishers understand the reception of these picturebooks. This is the information that my study will provide from the interviews conducted with the creative professionals involved in the production of these books.

1.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter introduces the origins of my interest on the topic of war and violence in children's literature in Colombia. I explore these research questions for my thesis: What are the motivations for creative professionals to develop picturebooks for children that depict violence, specifically the present consequences of Colombia's internal conflict? How do authors, illustrators, and publishers understand the reception of these picturebooks? Finally, what are the perspectives of Colombian children's book specialists on the value and importance of these materials?

I explain how the answers to my research questions were gathered in interviews of children's literature professionals in Colombia who are involved in the production of these books: authors, illustrators, editors, booksellers, and Colombian children's books specialists. Given the richness of these interviews, this thesis is comprised of two parts: a publicly available documentary film, which allows for wider knowledge distribution, and an academic analysis of the interviews and my process of data collection.

Finally, I clarify the importance that this study represents, as there have been few studies on the production of children's literature in Colombia that depict the country's recent struggles. I highlight Castaño and Valencia's (2016) study *Forms of Violence and Strategies to Narrate it in Children and Youth Literature from Colombia* and Toro's (2016) magazine article *How to talk to children about war?* as the few titles one can find on this subject. I explain how they provided me with the foundation for the selection of texts for further analysis, as well as with key authors and illustrators who are working in this conceptual space. I conclude by highlighting how the answers to my research questions will contribute to new knowledge of these picturebooks.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

My documentary film concentrates on three picturebooks that have been published by Colombian authors and illustrators. These picturebooks portray the life of children whose families have been subjected to forced disappearances and displacement, as well as the fears that a child might have because of the country's armed conflict. The film concentrates on the themes of the picturebooks, how they were produced, how creators and booksellers understand the value of these materials, and how the producers perceive the reactions of children to them. This chapter will provide background for this study and elucidate key concepts that helped frame and analyze the interviews. First of all, I introduce the reader to contemporary theory of picturebooks. More specifically, I introduce the definitions various scholars have made of picturebook theory and how meaning making occurs when children engage with picturebooks. Following this I will delve into the concept of reader response and why it is valuable to understanding the motivations of picturebook creators. I then elaborate on the relationship between picturebooks and empathy. Next, I examine violence in picturebooks, specifically forced disappearances in Colombia, as one of the predominant subjects in the picturebooks as mentioned in the documentary film. I conclude this section by exploring the importance of stories for reconciliation in contemporary society.

2.2 Defining the Picturebook

Arizpe and Styles (2003) point out that picturebooks are not just books with illustrations, but are ...

... [b]ooks in which the story depends on the interaction between written text and image and where both have been created with a conscious aesthetic intention (not just for pedagogic and commercial purposes) [...] picturebooks are composed of pictures and words whose intimate interaction creates layers of meaning, open to different interpretations and which have the potential to arouse their readers to reflect on the act of reading itself. (p. 22)

Nodelman (1996) argues that picturebooks are a vehicle used to integrate children into our culture. Their stories guide readers “to see and understand events and people as the narrator invites us to see them” (as cited in Arizpe & Styles, 2003, p. 22).

Pictures in a picturebook enhance the meaning of the story by illustrating the words (Landes, 1985). However, illustrators must go beyond the words and develop additional story material. This way, picturebooks deal with both the visual and verbal storyline where they “reinforce, counterpoint, anticipate or expand, one the other” (p. 52). Landes points out that picturebooks are efficient in *communication meaning* since the language is shaped by the illustrations and the illustrations are shaped by the language. This then allows for a “high semantic or semiotic capacity” (p. 53) that is crucial to children since they have “keen receptivity, but limited reading endurance” (p. 53).

Agosto (1999) identifies two types of picturebooks: twice-told tales and interdependent tales. In twice-told tales, the illustrations and the words are the same. The reader can look at the images or the words and understand the story without needing the other to make meaning of the

whole text. This way the story is twice-told, as it is told two times using different modalities that convey the same thing. Interdependent tales make the reader consider both the illustrations and the text to make meaning of the story. Hence, “interdependent storytelling compels these young children to concentrate on the words as well as the pictures, consequently increasing the development of their language comprehension skills while encouraging the development of a desire to learn to read” (p. 277). Together, the words and the illustration rely on each other to convey a single story that would be interpreted differently if only its parts were read separately.

2.3 Meaning Making and Picturebooks

When reading a picturebook, Sipe (1998) suggests that readers incorporate how they respond to the illustrations and the written text into a complete experience. In picturebooks, words and pictures should not tell the exact story; readers must work to resolve the conflict between what they read or hear and what they see. Kiefer (1991) expresses that reading picturebooks contributes to the development of both language skills and literacy. Here, “the visual content of the books helps to develop these skills but also enhances the effect of the text, develops children's aesthetic understanding, and provokes emotional response” (p. 63).

According to Sipe (2000), as young readers read or listen to narrative, three impulses guide their responses to literature. First there is a desire to know, then a need to connect stories to their own life, and finally readers are pushed to use their creative potential, shape the story, and make it their own. These connections children make with picturebooks are further demonstrated in Kiefer’s (1986) study, wherein the children’s first verbal responses showed their attempts to understand the book. Then children made personal comments on picturebooks, which could be

opinions, expressions of emotions, or connections to their own experiences. This showed Kiefer how the objects or events portrayed in picturebooks often recalled the child's life.

Sipe (1998) explains that the way we relate to words and illustrations in picturebooks are implicated by the ways we experience written language and visual art. With pictures, because of their primary spatial nature, we tend "to gaze on, dwell upon, or contemplate them" (p.100). In contrast, written or verbal language invites us to keep on reading. Given that picturebooks have both elements, they create a tension between these two impulses readers have: to read linearly, and to stop and look. Sipe uses the term transmediation to talk about this back and forth between pictures and text, and he explains that:

Picture books, through transmediation, give children the opportunity to engage in an unending process of meaning making as every rereading brings about new ways of looking at words and pictures. In other words, picture books allow children to have multiple experiences as they engage in creating new meanings and constructing new worlds. (p. 107)

2.4 Reader Response

Louise M. Rosenblatt, in her book *Literature as Exploration* (1995), states that the act of "reading a particular work at a particular moment by a particular reader will be a highly complex process" (p. 75). Personal factors, such as past experiences and present preoccupations, may condition the primary response of a reader to a text. These factors may either lead to a balanced reaction to the work, limit the interpretation a reader can have, or distort the meaning of the text. In the case of Colombian children, as expressed by the documentary participants, their past experiences with the armed conflict, their exposure to news, and situations of violence they have

lived or witnessed affect the reactions they have to books. For example, the picturebooks that tackle topics that relate to the country's violent past could incite a response from readers depending on how close they are to the reality that is being portrayed.

This is further supported when Rosenblatt argues that the reader's community background will affect their understanding of the work as well as the prejudices that they might bring to the book when reading a text. She states that:

With like inevitability, the task of helping a student understand a work of literature as a whole involves the context of the student's past experience as well as the historical, social and ethical context into which he must fit the particular work (p. 107).

Furthermore, classroom settings allow students to exchange ideas. This leads each student "to scrutinize his own sense of the literary work in the light of others' opinions" (p. 104).

Additionally, Rosenblatt clarifies that there is not one unique correct interpretation of a given work, since it will be "re-created by a specific personality with its own sense of values" (p. 108).

She goes on to argue that not even the author's aim of the work can be its correct interpretation, as the text can have more values than those he or she foresaw. This is an experience the authors of the picturebooks examined in the documentary often describe, as their texts have multiple interpretations around the world. Rosenblatt continues to explain that not all interpretations are equally defensible. There are some that will have more value depending on how they take into account the signs present in the text.

Similarly, Kiefer (1991) also examined the responses that children have had to picturebooks. She noted that children were intent on making meaning regarding picturebooks, and developed a classificatory scheme based on four of Halliday's functions of language for

children's verbal responses to the picturebooks. With these categories Kiefer explores "how it is that children learn how to mean in the world of the picture book" (p. 67).

Halliday's functions of language allowed Kiefer to examine children's responses and categorize them into four groups: informative, heuristic, imaginative, and personal. By taking this approach she found that in *informative language*, children compared illustrations in picturebooks to the real world and/or to other books. With *heuristic language*, children made inferences and predictions about the illustrations and the contents of the books. *Imaginative language* allowed children to participate in the world created by the author, assume roles of the characters, and create imaginary dialogue as they viewed the pictures. Finally, with *personal language*, children made connections between their lives and the books or discussed their opinions or feelings about the books. Her approach can be identified in the responses the creators gave regarding the reactions that readers have had to their texts. More specifically, *informative language* and *personal language* can be identified in the reactions that children and adults have had to the picturebooks explored in the documentary. As expressed by the participants, readers compare the illustrations to the real world as well as to their lived experiences.

2.5 Picturebooks and Empathy

Reading fiction has been linked to the enhancement of empathy. Empathy is "the ability to understand and share the feelings of another" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2018, n.p.). Kidd and Costano (2013) state that by reading fiction, readers expand their knowledge of others' lives and recognize the similarities between the lived experience of the reader and the imagined world of the text. Readers have empathetic responses to characters when they engage in mind reading and character construction. Kiefer and Tyson (2013) found that children prefer receiving the

messages of books by relating to characters rather than through books that tend to be didactic or preachy. Cain (2015) suggests that there are certain categories of literature that are likely to evoke empathy. She proposes that this is due to having well-developed characters with conflicts that are relatable to readers. These books fit into the following categories: 1) books representing people with disabilities, 2) books about bullying, 3) books with people from different cultures, 4) books with dystopian societies, and finally 5) “any work of fiction or fantasy in which the characters are multi-dimensional and evoke caring in readers” (p. 76).

Norton and Norton (2010) state that books are significant in how children learn about themselves, others, and the world around them. Prater and Dyches (2008) point out that books also enable children to reflect on themselves by comparing their experiences to the experiences of the characters in the book and noticing both similarities and differences with their lives. Gilmore and Howard (2016) express that children’s books may provide comfort, aid in healing, encourage reflection, help fight stereotypes, appreciate diversity, and promote empathy. To do this, good children’s books must be developmentally appropriate, with stories relatable to children, and engaging to the dual readership of both adults and children. Most importantly, they must “deliver their message cleverly through well-chosen words and skillfully blended illustrations” (p. 221).

On the subject of picturebooks and empathy, Nikolajeva (2013) clarifies that unlike novels, picturebooks evoke emotional engagement through images as well as words, and the images of characters may help children understand people’s emotions in real life. She suggests that since emotions are nonverbal, language cannot fully convey an emotion effectively. Given this gap, picturebooks offer the opportunity to engage with empathy circumventing the inadequacy of language. Picturebooks may offer several opportunities to identify with characters,

compelling the reader to engage in multiple instances of mind-reading, and “they are an excellent first step towards emotional intelligence” (p. 254).

2.6 Picturebooks, Violence, and Fear

Nimon (1993) finds that children’s literature may encompass violence and conflict. However, in doing so, it should show the suffering caused and offer solutions to it rather than show retaliatory violence. Nimon continues on to state that “there is a need for books which help young people face reality, however distasteful that reality may be” (p. 31). Following that idea, in Australia, the South Australian Branch of the Psychologists for the Prevention of War expresses that it is inevitable to portray conflict and violence in children’s literature as it is part of society.

Rycik (2006) identifies that “reading books give children the opportunity to identify with others undergoing the same problems, help them realize that they are not alone, provide catharsis, and facilitate the process of sharing their problems with others” (p. 5). Picturebooks, according to McNamee and Mercurio (2006), help children reflect upon the violence in their world and help them develop strategies to cope with the fears that different types of violence engender, such as war, riots, terrorism etc. The researchers make the distinction that when dealing with these types of picturebooks, the exercise with children is not to teach them how to read or to use the books for a lesson, it is a time to share what is important to them about the story. This might help them communicate their feelings and understand that they are not alone in their experience.

Education through picturebooks can play a strong role in peace building. Knutzen and Smith (2012) identify three examples. First, at the end of a conflict, governments can show a

greater commitment to improving social services through the quality of education. Second, if education has a conflict sensitive approach, it could contribute to stability. Finally, education can transform values, attitudes, and behaviors. If children's literature can educate and provide understanding of difficult subjects such as war and violence, it could help achieve these three roles. Furthermore, Valencia and colleagues (2016) consider that in Colombia's controversial and complex social context it is imperative to educate children with a social and moral conscience. Children are the most vulnerable population in violent conflict and war scenarios. Because of this, teachers and the academic community need to understand the direct and indirect consequences of violence. Education allows for analytical capacities to be strengthened, and in that way it supports the development of necessary abilities for post-conflict life (Valencia, Corredor, Jiménez, de los Ríos, & Salcedo, 2016).

2.7 Disappearances in Colombia

The subject of "disappearances" (or forced disappearances) is one of the themes found in the picturebooks examined in the course of this study and discussed in the documentary film and its analysis. The United Nations (2011) states that forced disappearances have been used as a strategy to create terror in societies, affecting not only the families of those directly involved but also their communities and society as a whole. Once largely the product of military dictatorship, forced disappearances are presently employed in internal conflicts as a means of political repression of opponents.

According to Colombia's Center of Historical Memory (Centro de Memoria Histórica) and the Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences, 80,000 people have been unaccounted for in Colombia since the start of the internal conflict in 1964, of which 25,000 are known to be

victims of forced disappearance. Heeke, Stammel, and Knaevelsrud (2015) have found that forced disappearances in Colombia have been linked to prolonged grief reactions, particularly in the case of those left behind who maintain the hope that their disappeared loved one is still alive. Guardiola-Rivera (2017) explains the pain disappearances cause people: “for the mothers of the disappeared, their loved ones are both dead and alive and remain so as long as they continue to await the moment when they find out what happened to them” (p. 157). Victims of forced disappearances have gone missing and no trace of them can be found. They could be kidnapped or dead. Families and loved ones are not asked for a ransom, so they do not know that their loved one is kidnapped, and they cannot find a body, so they do not know that they are dead. They have vanished without a trace. The magnitude of this problem in Colombia is so significant that it is one of the main themes examined in the picturebooks analysed in the documentary film. Both authors and illustrators feel this is a topic that must be discussed, and carefully include it in their books.

2.8 Reconciliation

Following the peace treaty agreement, it is important to comprehend what Colombians understand by reconciliation. Rettberg and Ugarriza (2016) took on the task of making a representative survey of what Colombians were expecting. Their findings suggest that people’s understanding of reconciliation “is tied to concrete action in terms of bringing individuals and communities together, adopting political reform, and providing the material (structural) underpinnings for such change” (p. 532). In other words, people think more about the future than about the past and are concentrated on how they can improve their daily lives and those of others. Rettberg and Ugarriza note that policy framework is largely concentrated in promoting

historical memory and the pursuit of justice to bring healing to the Colombian society, while survey respondents demand a psychological and material foundation to have a peaceful coexistence amongst the social groups.

On the topic of reconciliation, various countries have been in the process of peace treaties amongst political and social groups. An example of this is found in Northern Ireland, where researchers Maiangwa and Byrne (2015) found that “storying of the past is a crucial facet of transitional rebuilding and the initiation of reconciliation projects” (p. 87). With the support of the European Union, the researchers took on the task of studying the use of storytelling to promote peacebuilding and reconciliation amongst Northern Island and the Border Counties of the Republic of Ireland. In their study they uncovered that “telling stories through oral or written forms is a key experience in the lives of people, particularly for those who have encountered traumatic events” (p. 90). Storytelling was also found to promote reconciliation amongst different communities, as it enhanced dialogue and helped people externalize their emotions of grief and anger. Finally, this bottom-up approach made it possible for people to address their emotions “that rest in the affective realm of peacemaking and reconciliation and that are not addressed in the peace accords signed by national and international elites” (p. 105).

2.9 Chapter Summary

In this literature review chapter, I explored multiple concepts that are the theoretical basis of the topics dealt with in my documentary film. I first explored picturebooks—books where images and text each have a storyline and complement each other to create a narrative (Arizpe & Styles, 2003; Landes, 1985; Nodelman, 1996)—and how these produce meaning and a response

from readers when they decode both the visual and written language and make references to what they know or have lived (Kiefer, 1991; Rosenblatt, 1995; Sipe, 2000).

Similarly, reader responses to picturebooks can be empathetic, as they relate to the stories portrayed by the characters (Cain, 2015; Kidd & Costano, 2013; Kiefer & Tyson, 2013; Prater & Dyches, 2008). Stories that deal with difficult topics such as violence also allow readers to reflect on those topics and develop strategies to cope with the feelings that come from witnessing or knowing about that reality (McNamee & Mercurio, 2006; Nimon, 1993; Rycik, 2006).

The last sections of this chapter explore the topics of disappearances and reconciliation, both subjects suitable in the depiction of picturebooks in the Colombian context, as they represent part of the reality faced by the country. These two subjects portrayed in the picturebooks that are explored in the film present first a hurtful problem in the Colombian society, and second, a way forward to peace. The depiction of these topics in the picturebooks can act as a means of making sense of the situation to children, as expressed by the authors and illustrators of the texts whose answers will be presented in the following chapters.

Chapter 3. Creative Method

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I describe both my creative and analytic processes, beginning with how I came across the subject of picturebooks that focus on the violence in Colombia through a depiction of metaphors. I will then delve into the text selection for my investigation and the selection of the participants I interviewed in the course of my project. I expand on my process for developing questions and conducting interviews. I conclude by describing my multi-phase process of analyzing the recorded material and explain why I chose to present my investigation in the format of a documentary film, and how it would make my work available to diverse audiences.

3.2 Origins and Rationale for Text Selection

Colombia's internal conflict has been long and complicated. This has led to different public perceptions of the way to move towards an end. On the one side there are those who agree with forgiving the armed group (FARC-AP) and moving forward; on the other side there are those who cannot forgive and want punishment (jail time) for those who have perpetrated violence and fear in the country. This was demonstrated in 2016 after a failing vote for the peace agreement. The country's votes were split in half: 49.7% of them wanted to move past this long period of war, and 50.2% of them were not satisfied by the peace agreement and wanted different terms (BBC, 2016). However, voter graphics showed that the regions in the country that were the most affected by the war had the highest ratio of people voting to end the conflict, while other, less affected regions such as urban areas voted against the peace agreement (Semana, 2016). It was clear that this vote was not easy, since asking to forgive such terrible crimes brings back a

lot of pain and a need for justice. However, it was clear to me that this division shows a need for empathy, and more specifically empathy for those who have actually had to experience the conflict first-hand: the soldiers who put their lives on the line, the communities in the middle of the crossfire, the people who live in poverty because they have lost their towns, the children who were recruited when they were too young to even make a choice, and many others affected by the conflict. Even though the peace agreement was finally signed, the country is still divided, and it is my belief that the only way to bring people together is if an interdisciplinary community is formed in pursuit of this goal. With this in mind, before I started my program in children's literature, I knew that my thesis had to have this focus. I wanted to distribute my findings to a wider audience. Thus, as I was applying to the program, I visited *Tornamesa*, an independent bookshop in Bogotá, and asked a book seller if they had Colombian picturebooks that tackled our armed conflict. After searching around, she handed me *Tengo miedo*¹ (*I Am Afraid*), one of the three picturebooks that I focus on in my documentary film. It was just what I was looking for and I knew that I was on to something.

Nicholson and Pearson (2003) argue that scary books capture children's attention and, instead of scaring them, provide opportunities for children to explore and master their fears. Gillespie and Connor (1995) suggest choosing stories with appealing illustrations, recurring refrains, and an interesting story for the therapeutic use of books with children. Taking this into account, I decided that the books that I was going to use for my study should have the aforementioned qualities. This meant that they had to be picturebooks with stories that connect with Colombian children's violence-related fears and fears caused by the armed conflict. With this in mind, I read Castaño-Lora and Valencia-Vivas' (2016) paper *Forms of Violence and*

¹ In Spanish, only the first word of titles is capitalized.

Strategies to Narrate it in Children's and Youth Literature in Colombia. In this study they list 12 titles of quality children's books by Colombian authors that concentrate on the topic of violence. From this list two are picturebooks: *Camino a casa* (2008) (*Walk With Me*) by Jairo Buitrago and Rafael Yockteng, and *Tengo miedo* (2012) (*I Am Afraid*) by Ivar Da Coll. Upon further investigation I also found another book not listed in their study called *Eloísa y los bichos* (2009) (*Eloísa and the Bugs*), also written and illustrated by Jairo Buitrago and Rafael Yockteng.

These three Colombian picturebooks have been acclaimed by booksellers, librarians, and critics because of their hidden metaphorical messages of Colombia's violence in their illustrations. They have also been mentioned in Toro's (2016) article about how to talk to children about war. They are the three books on which I centered my documentary film, *Entre metáforas: re-imaginando la guerra y violencia en Colombia desde el libro album.*

3.2.1 *Camino a casa*

Camino a casa (*Walk With Me*) was published in 2008 in Mexico by *El Fondo de Cultura Económica*. It was written by Colombian Jairo Buitrago, and Rafael Yockteng, a Peruvian illustrator who immigrated to Colombia at a very young age. This picturebook follows the story of a girl on her way back home from school. In the story the girl asks a lion to walk with her, and through the illustrations the reader can see how people react to his company and how happy she is to have him with her. At the end she lets him leave and asks him to come again.

The book attempts to depict the life of the families of those who have disappeared in Latin America because of war or violent crimes. This girl's story illustrates how she has to take care of her home while her mother is at work. She has to pick up her brother from nursery school, buy the groceries at a store where they owe money, and cook dinner while she waits for

her mother. The lion can be thought of as a metaphor for the absence of her father, as the strength she wishes she would have to deal with her reality, or even perhaps the need to have something—other than herself—to receive the looks that are directed at her every day. The last spread of the book shows a photograph of her family. This is the only time where the reader gets to see the father, who has hair that looks like the mane of a lion. That last spread shows that he is missing from the picture of her life. There is also a small detail in the illustration of a newspaper rack where the reader can only distinguish the title of one article that says, “Families of people who disappeared in 1985.” This date corresponds to the year in which an armed group in Colombia (M19) held a historical attack on governmental property, leading to the disappearance of various civilians. This small detail can be read or ignored by the reader as it is blended in the illustration and is not salient. Without the historical knowledge of this attack the message can go unnoticed.

Through the text and the illustrations, the story shows how poor the girl’s family is and the hardship that they go through. However, it is not very clear that the father isn’t there because of violence; the metaphor of the lion can take many shapes depending on the reader’s interpretations.

3.2.2 *Eloísa y los bichos*

Eloísa y los bichos (*Eloisa and the Bugs*), written by Jairo Buitrago and illustrated by Rafael Yockteng, was published by *Babel Libros* in 2009 in Bogotá, Colombia. The picturebook takes place in a city filled with inhabitants who are human sized bugs. The story follows a girl and her father that are newcomers to the city. Her father tries to find a job and she goes to school. As the story progresses, the illustrations show how they interact with the bugs, how the bugs

gradually become friendlier, and how the bugs grow less indifferent to them. By the end, the final illustration shows Eloisa as a grown woman and a teacher in a classroom filled with children, not bugs.

The story's illustrations of bugs are a metaphor for the feeling of being a migrant in a new place, either a new country or city. It comes from the reality of Latin American families obliged to move from a rural area to an urban setting due to violence. This book is situated in Latin America but the illustrations do not represent a Latin American city, not with the architecture or the illustrations of the main characters. This is despite the fact that the illustrator, author, and editor of the book all come from Colombia.

Eloisa y los bichos uses a pastel colour palette that enhances the feelings of nostalgia and fogginess in a new place. The expressions on the characters' faces illustrate their sentiment of feeling sad and out of place, as well as the transition of moving from bewildered to happy. Every now and then in the illustrations we get to see another human being, which could be another migrant just like them, or a symbol for the process of them recognizing and identifying with the other. The final spread shows how, with time, Eloísa was able to learn how to live with others and see them as she saw herself, no longer as bugs but as human beings.

3.2.3 *Tengo miedo*

The third picturebook, *Tengo miedo (I Am Afraid)*, written and illustrated by Ivar Da Coll, was published by *Babel Libros* in 2012. The title of the picturebook, *Tengo miedo*, translates to "I am afraid." It directly refers to the emotion that is dealt with in the book: fear. The Oxford Dictionary defines fear as "an unpleasant emotion caused by the threat of danger,

pain, or harm,” as well as “a feeling of anxiety concerning the outcome of something or the safety of someone” (Oxford Dictionary, 2018).

In *Tengo miedo*, Da Coll uses monsters—frightening and dangerous creatures that can cause harm—to talk about what troubles Colombian children at night. The book has two editions; the first was published in 1989, and the second was published in 2012 with new illustrations and a new focus, both by the same author-illustrator. The two versions of the book follow the same narrative arc. It is set at night, when it is dark and time to go to bed. The main character, a kitten named Eusebio, cannot sleep because he is scared. This fear leads him to run to his friend Ananías’ house to seek comfort. Eusebio tells him that he cannot sleep and that he is scared of monsters. They reflect on them together until Eusebio is no longer afraid, returns home, and is able to rest.

Tengo miedo has two editions, one which was published in 1989 and a second published in 2012. Both of the versions of this picturebook deal with the nightmares Colombian children have. At a first glance the story portrayed by the text stays the same, up to where Ananías reflects about the monsters. The main difference between them is that in the first edition (1989), Eusebio is scared of fictional characters such as vampires, witches, and ghosts. When Ananías reflects with him about these monsters, he tells him that they also take baths, brush their teeth, and sometimes do not like to drink their soup. Robledo (1996) states that by doing this Da Coll humanizes them and brings them closer to children’s everyday reality. This first edition depicted monsters that are scary for children, but showed that because they are fictional, children have nothing to be afraid of in reality.

The second edition of *Tengo miedo* (2012) changes. Osorio, the book’s editor, shares that Da Coll wanted *Tengo miedo* to show the violence in Colombia caused by the country’s internal

war, as well as the natural disasters that have affected it (Osorio, 2016). The author realized that in the current national context, children's fears are not the same as they were a couple of decades ago. The first edition was for very young readers and talked about naive fears. The fears Colombian children face today are real and they cannot be ignored (Robledo, 2015). In this case, the monsters of *Tengo miedo* represent a real threat; they are a metaphor for the terrorist organizations that harm Colombia.

3.3 Documentary Participants

After finding the three picturebooks that were going to be the centre topic of my documentary film, I knew that three of the main subjects I had to interview were going to be the authors and illustrators of these books: Ivar Da Coll, Jairo Buitrago, and Rafael Yockteng. It was also clear that their book publisher, María Osorio, had an important role. I also wanted to include her voice and perspective. Additionally, I wanted to incorporate some context about the publishing industry in Colombia and the history of children's literature. For this reason I interviewed Zully Pardo, a children's book specialist who has focused her work on Colombian children's literature and has researched the history of this genre in the country. Finally, I also wanted to introduce the voice of a bookseller who has a long experience with the Colombian book industry. This is how I came across Ana María Aragón.

3.3.1 Ivar Da Coll

Author & illustrator

Ivar Da Coll is one of Colombia's pioneer children's literature author-illustrators. In the eighties he wrote and illustrated the first collection of picturebooks ever authored in Colombia

(Millán Guzmán, 2014). His characters are classics known all over the country which have accompanied children of various generations. His life-work and contribution to Latin American children's literature made him the first author-illustrator to receive the award *Premio Iberoamericano de Literatura Infantil y Juvenil SM*, one of the most prestigious awards in the field in the Spanish speaking world. His books can be found in the IBBY honor list (Muñoz Toro, 2014).

3.3.2 Rafael Yockteng

Illustrator

Although born in Perú, the illustrator Rafael Yockteng was raised in Colombia. In 2000 he won the IBBY Utopia contest for Latin American children's book illustrators and has illustrated many books for publishing houses all over the world. His books *Camino a casa* and *Eloísa y los bichos* alongside writer Jairo Buitrago have been part of the IBBY Honour List as well as part of the White Ravens Catalogue (Ediciones el Jinete Azul, n.d).

3.3.3 Jairo Buitrago

Author

Jairo Buitrago is a children's book author who has written more than 20 books for this audience. He specializes in picturebooks and focuses a great deal on the Colombian reality when tackling his stories. Buitrago has won several awards for children's literature and his books have been included in the White Ravens Catalogue as well as the IBBY Honour List (Pijao Editores, 2018).

3.3.4 María Osorio

Independent publisher, distributor, & bookseller

María Osorio is the founder and director of Babel Libros, one of the first independent book publishers in Colombia for children. She is the winner of the 2017 BOP—Bologna Prize for the Best Children’s Publishers of the Year for the Central and South American area—and the recipient of the 2018 Tribute for Editorial Merit from the Guadalajara Book Fair. She is also one of the founders of the Colombian Association of Independent Booksellers (Cámara Colombiana del Libro, 2018).

3.3.5 Zully Pardo

Editor & children’s book specialist

Zully Pardo is a children’s book specialist with a Master’s in Children’s Literature from the Autónoma Universidad de Barcelona. She is a scholarship winner of the Internationale Jugendbibliothek and is currently a professor of children’s literature at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. Additionally, she has participated in several published academic articles, such as *The development and the picturebook in Colombia* and in the series of *Notebooks of Colombia’s children’s literature* (Javeriana, n.d).

3.3.6 Ana María Aragón

Bookseller

Ana María Aragón is the founder and manager of the independent bookshop Casa Tomada. Casa Tomada thrives on having cultural events and literature for all audiences.

Previously, Aragón was the chair of the publishing program at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.

3.4 The Interviews

The interviews for the documentary film allow for a better understanding, from the perspective of experts in children's literature in Colombia (i.e., authors, illustrators, publishers, booksellers, and children's book specialists), of the production of picturebooks in Colombia that represent types of violence brought by internal conflict. The interviews were conducted to explore this phenomenon as well as understand its context, the process of creating these books, and the public's reception of them. The insights from the interviews shine a light on the issues, opportunities, and challenges that these picturebooks bring to Colombia. Moreover, I aimed to better understand the learning opportunities these picturebooks offer to children and the conversations that have developed because of them, from the perspective of these experts.

With this in mind, I created sets of questions that would allow each of the experts to answer what I sought to understand from their experience. The interviews regarded their work and knowledge of these picturebooks (*Camino a casa*, *Eloísa y los bichos*, and *Tengo miedo*), and the questions were tailored to each of the participants' specific work. For example, Ivar Da Coll's questions were regarding his work as an author and illustrator for his picturebook *Tengo miedo*. Given the different expertise of the participants, I created different sets of questions for authors and illustrators, editors, booksellers, and children book specialists. Nonetheless, there were questions in common for all participants, such as, "why do you think it matters to publish picturebooks on these topics in Colombia?" The complete set of questions can be found in Appendix B.

Participants for these interviews were recruited based on their level of expertise on the subject as well as their location. They had to be in Bogotá, Colombia, as that is where I situated myself for logistics; the capital of the country is the hub for publishing. For their recruitment I reached out to the study's participants using a formal letter of invitation. These can be found in Appendix C. Since some of the participants had been teachers of mine during my Bachelor's degree and I had a direct relationship with them, I hand delivered the letter. In the case of those participants with whom I did not have a relationship, I sent the letter by post or email. Following the initial contact, the participants who showed interest were provided consent forms and were asked to schedule an interview with me.

Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes. These were conducted at a time and location that was convenient for the participants. In order to create a comfortable environment for the participants, they each chose where and when they wanted to be filmed, either in their office, a bookshop, the university, or their home. The locations presented their own sets of technical challenges when filming; some of them had different lighting, people working around them, or outside noise. Nevertheless, these were trade-offs that I was willing to accommodate in order to work with the participants. All participants gave their consent for the usage of their image and any resulting media that came out of the interviews. Participants could opt out of answering any questions that they did not feel comfortable with. To make sure that this was the case I made sure to repeatedly remind them that they were under no obligation to answer any questions, and the final version of the documentary film would only be made available to the general public once they have given their approval of their contributions in the film. An example of the consent form can be found in Appendix D.

Video of the interviews was primarily recorded using a Nikon D3300 camera on 1080p Full HD quality video, and with a second angled camera—which did not end up being used in the final documentary film—filmed on an iPhone 8 on 1080p quality video. The audio of the interviews was recorded using Zoom H2n Handy Recorder, a portable digital sound recording device. B-Roll was also recorded on the Nikon D3300 camera with some participants—given their time constraints—in the location of the interviews. B-Roll of the three picturebooks that are the focus of the documentary film was also recorded. There was a total of 150 files (69.08 GB of data) that I worked with, composed of audio files, video interviews, and B-Roll.

In order to review the data, I catalogued each of the recordings according to their format and type of data. This way, the video files were catalogued depending on who was interviewed, B-Roll, and the videos recorded on the iPhone, as you can see in Figure 1.

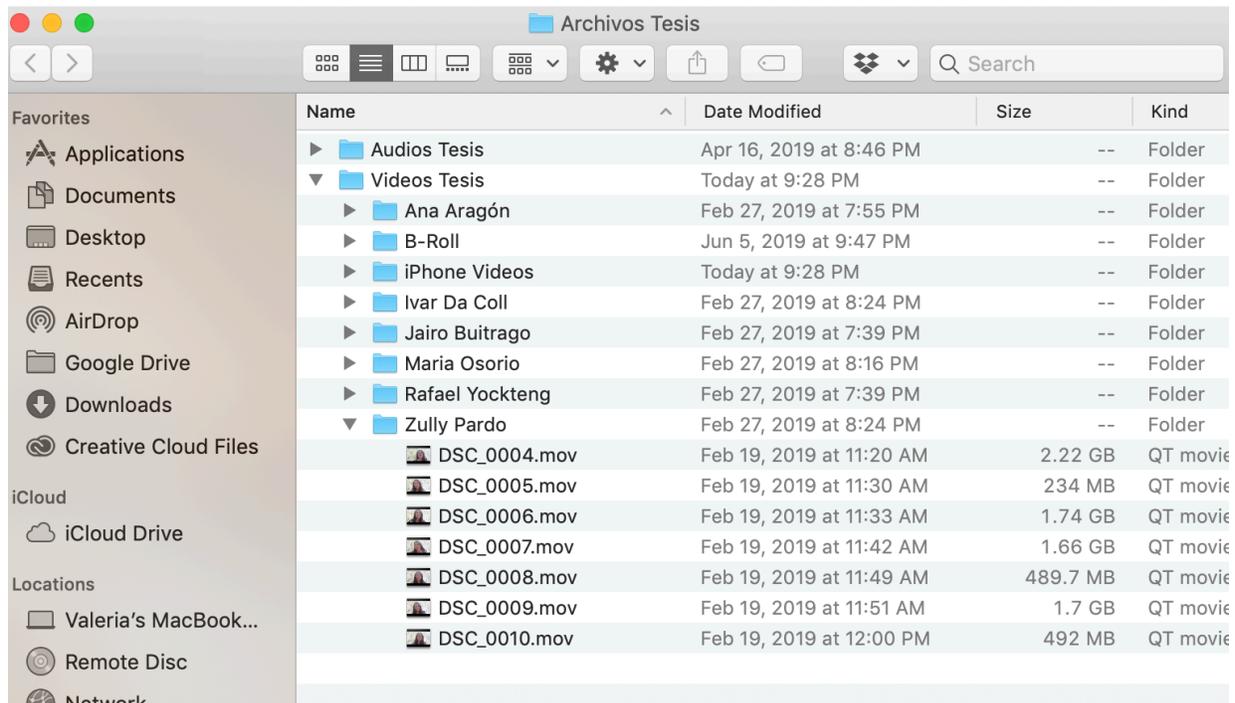


Figure 1. Documentary recording cataloguing

The video interviews were edited on Adobe Premier Pro CC 2019. For tracks that required audio editing, Adobe Audition CC 2019 was used. To edit the interviews for the documentary film, I had to first sync the audio with the video recording. For this purpose, I asked the participants to give a loud clap in front of their face before starting the interview. This allows for both a visual and an audio spike which allows me, as I edit, to sync both of the recordings seamlessly. An example of this can be observed in Figure 2.

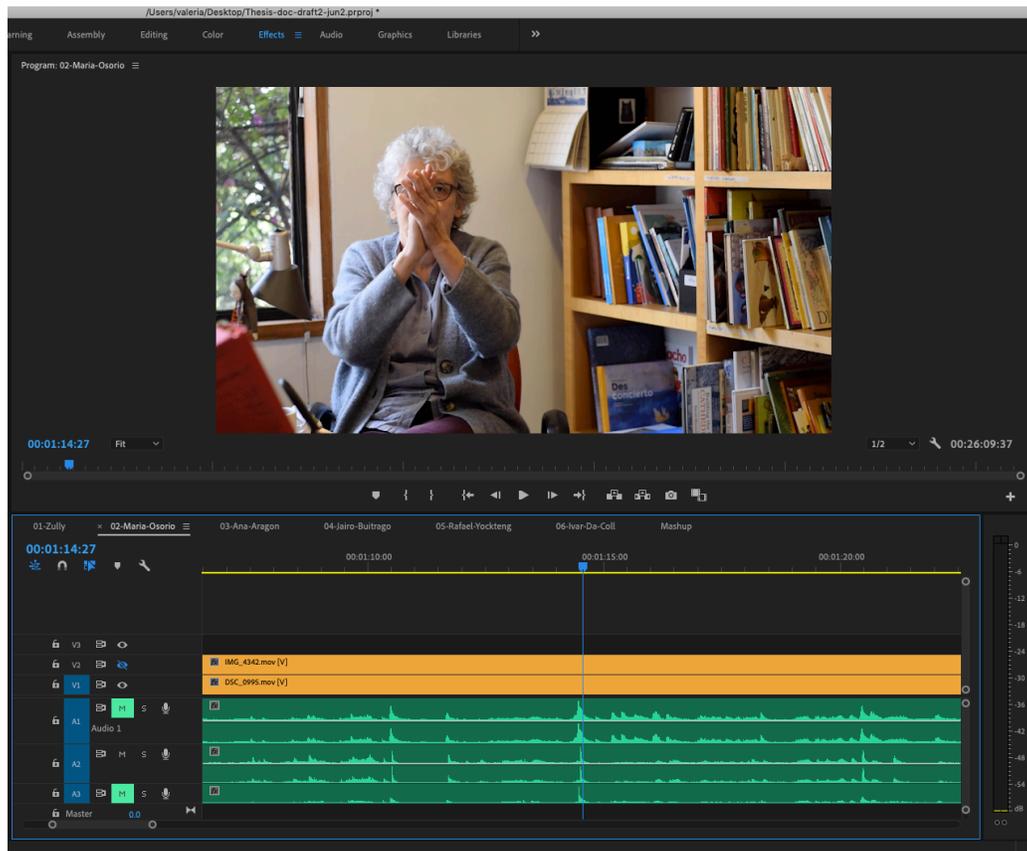


Figure 2. Syncing video and audio recordings of María Osorio’s interview in Adobe Premier Pro CC 2019

I then had to edit each of the interviews and only leave the clips where the participants answered the interview questions. This meant I had to cut off all the places where I asked the questions and any interruptions that occurred during the interview. You can see how the final

sequence of one interview would look after this phase in Figure 3. In this same phase I would make any colour corrections that would be necessary to achieve a homogeneous aesthetic among interview locations. This encompassed experimenting with the tone of certain interviews by modifying the colour balance and the shadows, whites, and blacks. This phase required me to view each interview once.

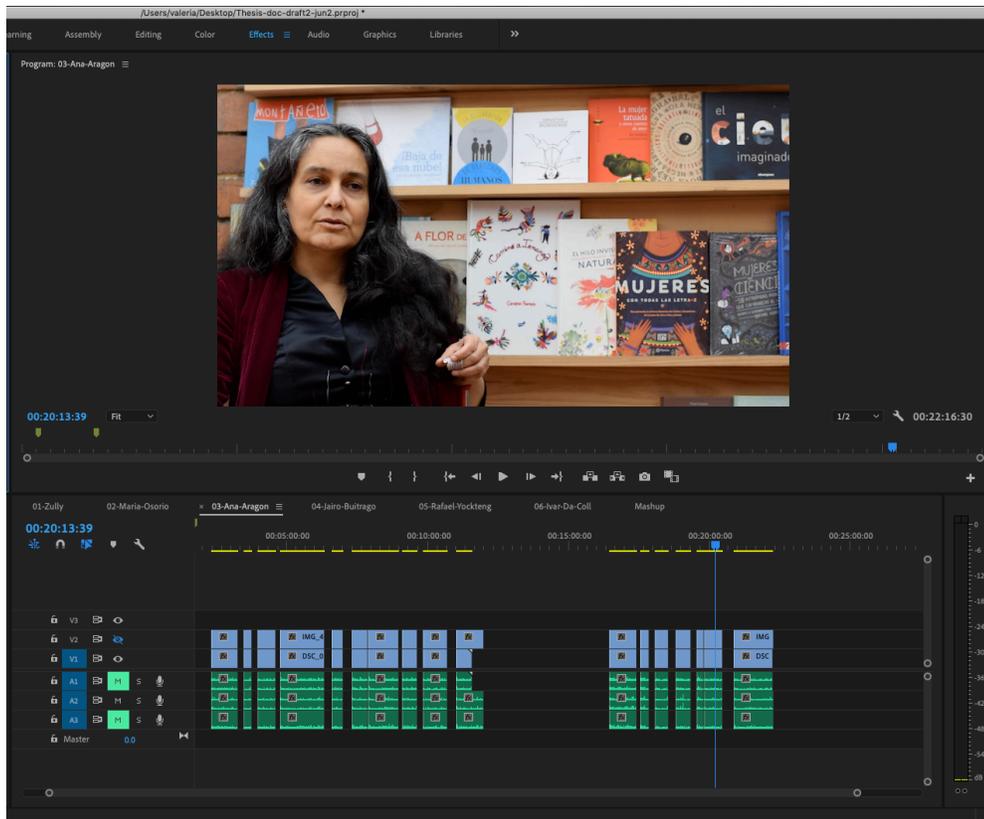


Figure 3. Final sequence of Ana María Aragón's edited interview in Adobe Premier Pro CC

2019

Subsequently, I took notes on each of the answers that the participants gave to me in their interviews. This required me to listen to their answers multiple times and take notes on them. In order to categorize their answers and for me to be able to find each of them easily afterwards (shown in Figure 5), I created a table for each of the interviews, which included the participant interview questions (found in Appendix B) and the time frame in the video where I could then

find the response. I then highlighted the answers that addressed my research questions and that were relevant for the documentary. Since the interviews were all in Spanish, and this documentary film is part of my thesis, I translated my notes so that my supervisors would be able to access them and understand the data I obtained from my interviews. The Spanish notes allowed me to easily find the part of the clip that I wanted to include in the documentary. This final document of the annotations had a total of 10,820 words. Figure 4 shows an example of the annotations.

Time	Question & Note/Comment
2:32	<p>1. Do you feel that the work that you do has a contribution to people or the country? In what way?</p> <p>Books contribute to the extent that we have a responsibility to readers because we are forming them. The freedom that one has is linked to children... I am interested that readers understand and comprehend what they are reading.</p> <p><i>Los libros contribuyen en la medida en que tenemos una responsabilidad con los lectores porque los estamos formado. La libertad que uno tiene está ligada a los niños... me interesa que los lectores entiendan, comprendan lo que están leyendo.</i></p>
3:50	<p>2. How has the style of the books you publish evolve? The topics you tackle for children? Why do you think this is?</p> <p>I would not feel comfortable writing about the same subjects... it's about writing about what you're passionate about... it's evolved from more sentimental stories to ones where children have fun...</p>

	<p><i>No me sentiría cómodo escribiendo sobre los mismos temas... toca escribir sobre lo que le apasiona... ha evolucionado de unas historias más sentimentales a unas donde los niños se divierten...</i></p>
<p>5:31</p>	<p>3. How did the present circumstances of the country affect the content you were creating?</p> <p>The circumstances of the country affect what you write especially if you are worried about what happens. It is something that comes hand in hand with being Colombian or Latin American because we are surrounded by complex things, from poverty, political instability, and you can talk about these issues with children’s books... and children also have that complex background of where they live. Your background permeates the work.</p> <p><i>Las circunstancias del país afectan lo que escriben en especial si estás preocupado por lo que pasa. Es algo que viene de la mano con ser colombiano o latinoamericano porque nos rodean cosas complejas, desde la pobreza, la inestabilidad política, y desde los libros para niños se habla de estos temas... y los niños también tienen ese trasfondo complejo de donde viven. Tu trasfondo permea la obra.</i></p>

Figure 4. Excerpt from annotations of Jairo Buitrago’s interview

With the highlights from the annotations, I worked to create the storyboard for the film. For this, I had a physical and hands-on approach. The purpose of this was to have flexibility as well as a visual balance of each participant’s responses in the final timeline. This required me to print out the annotations and colour code each of them. For example, Rafael Yockteng’s answers were orange, while Ivar Da Coll’s were blue. I then cut each individual answer and organized

them multiple times until I had a storyboard that followed a narrative structure: the identification of a problem, an explanation of the way the different children’s literature professionals approach the issue, and final conclusions. Figure 5 shows a picture of the physical storyboard and Figure 9 goes into greater detail of the storyboard for the first draft, located in Appendix E.

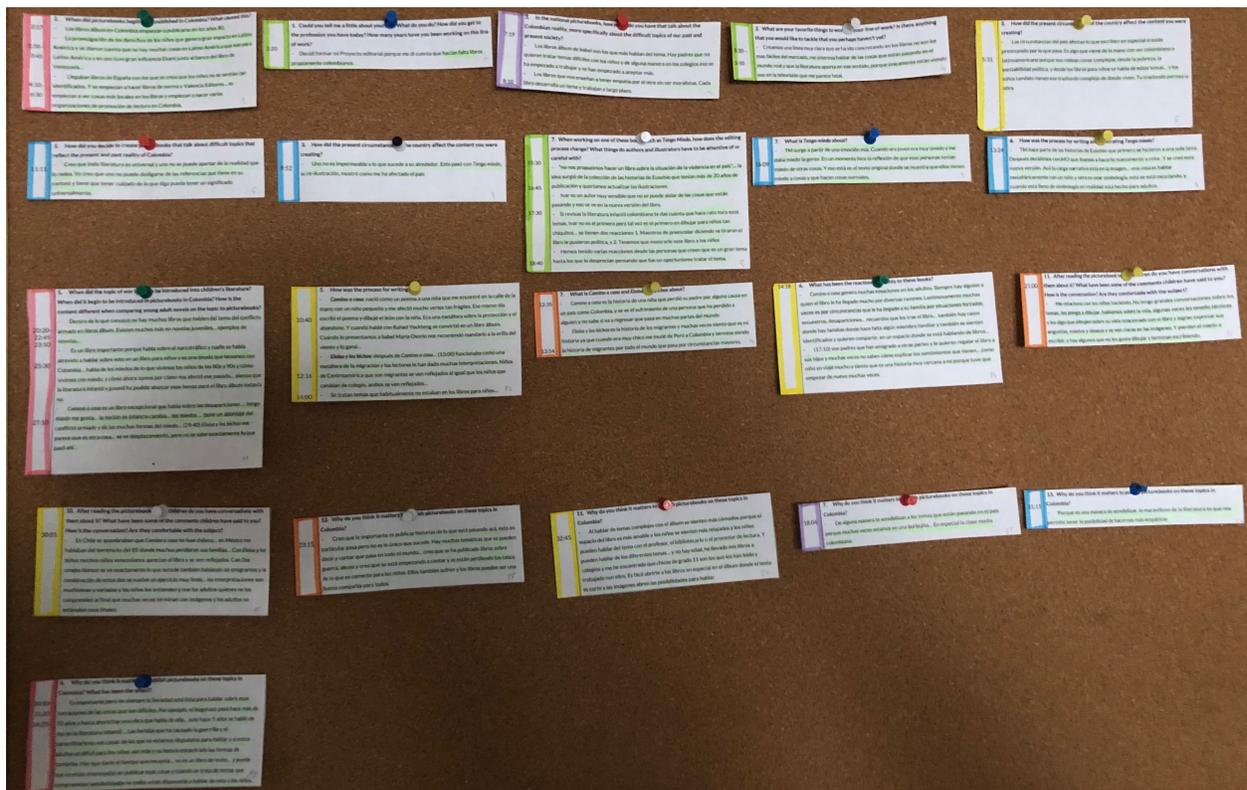


Figure 5. Storyboard

Once I had a clear idea of the storyboard, I translated it into a sequence in Adobe Premier Pro CC 2019. This required that I once again view multiple times the clips that I had chosen before. I then edited them until I had the information that I wanted. This editing meant that I would cut off sections where the participants would stumble over their words, trail off into other subjects, or repeat themselves. Once again, I colour coded each of the participant’s interviews so I could distinguish each of the clips, as well as create a visual of the balance of each participant’s

contribution to the documentary. Figure 6 shows the sequence for the first draft of the documentary.

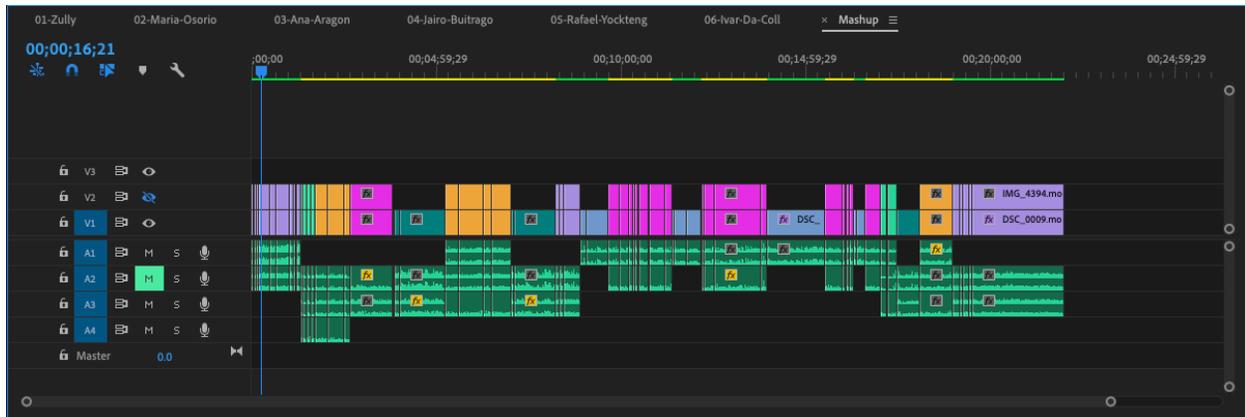


Figure 6. Sequence of the documentary's first draft in Adobe Premier Pro CC 2019

The first draft included no B-Roll and was over 22 minutes long. The purpose of this draft was to concentrate on a logical narration. Notwithstanding, there was still work to be done; the sequence needed to be shorter, elements of the B-Roll had to be incorporated (e.g., shots of the books and the participants in their work environment), and transitions had to be used to make the separation of themes understandable. As for the content, I found it had some elements of repetition, and some information that was not entirely pertinent to answering the research questions. For the second draft, I sought to solve these issues and added music, quotes, and space, and produced a shorter film which was less than 18 minutes long. The sequence for the second draft can be seen in Figure 7. In the third and final draft I refined elements of music, audio, legibility of the titles, addition of other B-Roll, a final quote as a conclusion, and end credits.

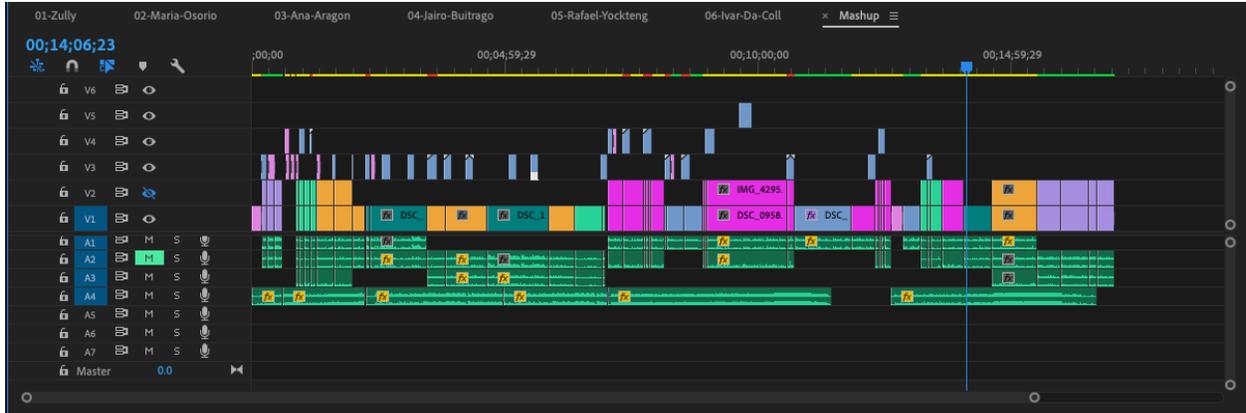


Figure 7 (Sequence of the documentary's second draft in Adobe Premier Pro CC 2019)

All drafts were uploaded to YouTube. The first two drafts were unlisted and only made available to specific audiences, such as myself and my supervisors. The final draft, once approved by the participants, will be made publicly available. Once uploaded to the webpage, I used YouTube Studio to add English subtitles to each of the drafts. For this, I transcribed the video in Spanish and translated it into English. Once in the studio, I had to carefully match the translation to the clip of the video that it belonged to. This process required viewing the film multiple times as I had to check and edit the subtitles to make sure they were accurately translating what was being said in that moment. Figure 8 shows the process for putting subtitles into the documentary.

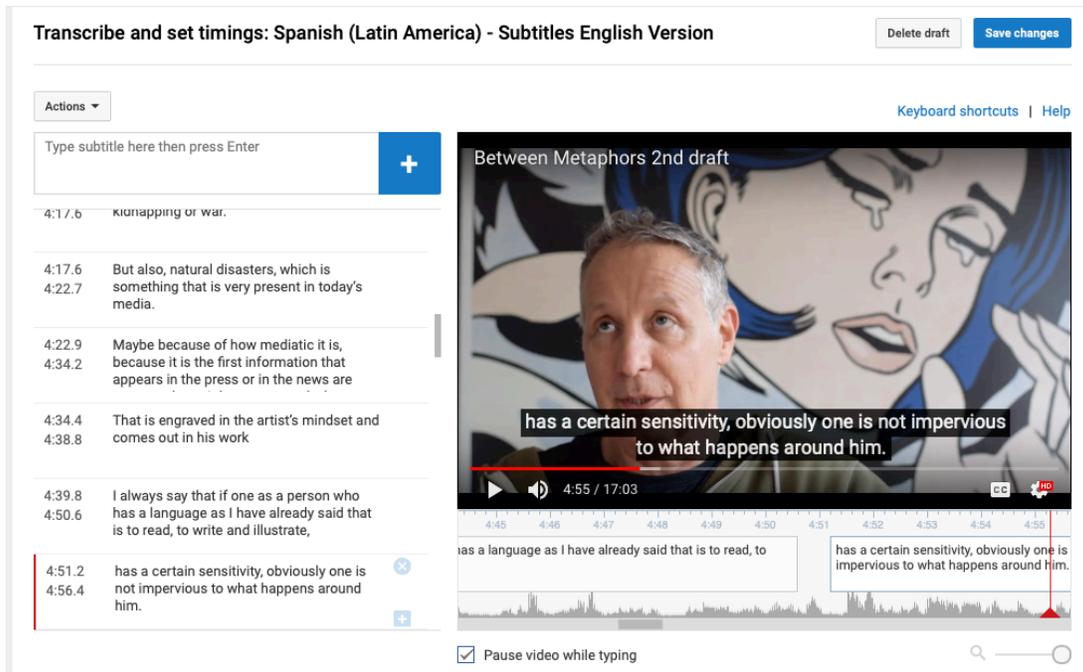


Figure 8. Transcribing subtitles in YouTube Studio for the second draft of the documentary

3.5 Format and Audience

Colombian picturebooks and the country's history are not widely known around the world. However, different media channels, especially video and online platforms, have made it easier for knowledge to be distributed to multiple audiences. Having these ideas in mind, I decided to create a documentary film about my thesis topic: picturebooks created in Colombia that have themes about the country's violence. This format allows for knowledge mobilization. First, it is a topic that is not widely known outside of Latin American countries. In Latin America the language is shared and allows for a wider circulation of books written in Spanish. However, Spanish language books—or translations of these—do not circulate as readily as English titles do around the world. Second, it is not a subject that many people are familiar with, as there are few picturebooks that address this topic. The three picturebooks featured in the film use metaphors to depict themes related to Colombia's violent history and create space for readers who are

unfamiliar with the context to construct their own meaning. On the other hand, the documentary allows the authors, illustrators, publishers, and booksellers that work with these books to have a voice. This affords them the opportunity to express their opinion on the importance these books may have as well as share the experiences they have had with the books.

The documentary film reaches multiple audiences that go beyond academia, specifically for a thesis, by being available in a format that can be seen in 20 minutes with free online access in a language that is readily accessible. This audience around the world includes: children's literature scholars, educators, editors, authors, and illustrators that are interested in tackling similar themes in their countries.

In the case of children's literature scholars, the film provides knowledge on a topic that is not widely known, as most of the information on children's literature is found in English. This sort of contribution would support a wider distribution for voices not commonly heard, by allowing the people who are being interviewed to speak about their experiences on topics that matter to them.

On the other hand, educators may also benefit from having material they can share with their students on topics that are different from their reality and that are not normally addressed in the classroom. Having a film like this could help teachers familiarize students with the Colombian conflict or offer a different approach to such topics through the example of picturebooks that talk about difficult subjects through metaphors.

Finally, for creatives such as authors, illustrators, and publishers in Colombia, as in other parts of the world, the documentary film could inspire their own work by offering an example of how others are working with the topic of war and the violence brought by it, and how through their art they strive to make a difference.

3.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter explores the creative method for the production of my documentary film *Entre metáforas: re-imaginando la guerra y violencia en Colombia desde el libro album* (*Between Metaphors: reimagining war and violence in Colombia through picturebooks*). The first section introduces the origin of my interest in the topic from my life experiences as well as my text selection process following Castaño-Lora and Valencia-Vivas' (2016) study *Forms of Violence and Strategies to Narrate it in Children's and Youth Literature in Colombia*. The three picturebooks *Tengo miedo* (2012), *Camino a casa* (2008), and *Eloísa y los bichos* (2009) use metaphors to portray types of violence—kidnappings, disappearances, displacements, destruction of environments—found in the Colombian society as a result of its long internal conflict. The following section describes the selection of the documentary participants who were interviewed. This includes the authors and illustrators of the books mentioned above—Ivar Da Coll, Jairo Buitrago, and Rafael Yockteng—as well as their editor: María Osorio. In order to have a wider perspective, I interviewed Ana María Aragon, a bookseller, and Zully Pardo, a Colombian children's book specialist.

Subsequently, I explored the process for performing the interviews and recruiting the documentary participants through a letter of invitation and a consent form for the use of their image and the production of the interviews. I then explained step by step the process of handling the interviews: creating notes and translating them, a storyboard, and the multiple editing processes. Finally, I illustrated how the format of the documentary film allows for a wider knowledge mobilization and broadens the audience of the thesis beyond academia. The documentary film format allows for an audience composed of children's literature scholars,

educators, and creatives such as authors, illustrators, and publishers, all from multiple places around the world.

Chapter 4. Findings

4.1 Introduction

Two themes emerge from my analysis of the interviews with Colombian picturebook creators and experts, specifically: the use of metaphor and the use of empathy as both a process and goal of their work. The first, metaphor, is how the authors and illustrators approach the topics of war and violence in the picturebooks, and how their poetic nature allows for multiple interpretations of the stories. The second, empathy, regards both the creation process—how the authors and illustrators felt affected by what they saw and what took place around them—and the reception of the picturebooks, more specifically the feelings people express when reading them and what importance these picturebooks have in the society. Below I explain each of these themes further.

4.2 Empathy

As defined in my literature review, empathy is “the ability to understand and share the feelings of another” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2018). The authors, illustrators, and editor that I interviewed are all highly empathetic people as they are constantly affected by the reality that they live and see. This was their impetus for creating the type of content that speaks to the reality that Colombian people live.

María Osorio explains how she is “interested in talking about the real world, about life, about what is happening, to children.” She believes that children’s literature provides an opportunity to explain these subjects. Da Coll, who has been writing and illustrating children’s books for decades, points out that he cannot avoid making references to what surrounds him. For him, if you have “a certain sensitivity, you are not impervious to what happens around you,”

which occurred when he re-illustrated *Tengo miedo*, almost 30 years after it had first been published. The circumstances of the country surfaced in the new illustrations. Similarly, Rafael Yockteng creates picturebooks that he feels reflect the circumstances of what he is living, what he is feeling, or what is happening in the country. These experiences affect the content that he is creating. His books have portrayed subjects such as displacement in *Eloísa y los bichos* and disappearance in *Camino a casa*. These picturebooks have highlighted recurring issues faced in Colombia—stories about everyday life. The author Jairo Buitrago describes it best when talking about how the circumstances that surround him affect him as a writer:

The circumstances of the country always affect what one writes. Above all, if you are somehow aware, interested, or at least concerned, sitting in your house worried about what happens. It's like something that comes almost hand in hand with being Colombian, with being Latin American. Because I feel that very complex things surround us, from poverty, inequalities, and economical and political instability.

Buitrago explains how all those subjects can be represented through children's literature, since as an author what you live and see affects you, and comes through in your work. In his case, he believes that his books *Camino a casa* and *Eloísa y los bichos* are books that can have a political reading. He intentionally writes about a topic with a political or social background.

Further, documentary participants also discussed how reading these picturebooks can help others become more empathetic. Bookseller Ana María Aragón discloses how these picturebooks sensitize readers to the current state of events in the country. She also expressed that “several of us are a bit far away,” and that “we live in a little bubble,” alluding particularly to the middle class. She continued on to express that “these books somehow make you sensitive

to the problems that other people suffer, right? Or even, it may be things that you have suffered as well, but that you have not rationalized it.” By this she explains how living in urban areas can distance many from the problems that people who live in the rural and war affected areas face, and how reading these picturebooks can remind the reader about others’ suffering. Along that same thought, Da Coll expresses his feeling that children’s literature that alludes to the reality lived in Colombia can be “a way to sensitize. I think that the wonderful thing about literature is that it not only allows us to learn to build an orderly thought, to express ourselves, or to think; it may offer the possibility of sensitizing us and perhaps making us more empathetic. Which is less and less common in this world.”

4.3 Metaphors

Zully Pardo asks important questions about how picturebooks that address war and violence should be produced. One of her questions is “how does one find a graphic project that expresses the things that were happening?” This is where metaphors play a crucial role in the production of these specific picturebooks.

María Osorio states that, for her, “it is essential to talk about what is happening, and show what happens, as I say, in a poetic way, because children are contaminated. They are contaminated by television, by newspapers because it is what floods the news daily. Children listen to what the adults are talking about.” With care, this poetic way is done through metaphors, and these metaphors can be understood by children since they represent a reality that they already know about. For Da Coll, metaphors are a poetic way of expressing thoughts and talking to children. When done correctly they can be understood by another and are able to transmit emotions. Similarly, Buitrago and Yockteng also include metaphors in the illustrations

of their books. For *Camino a casa* they include the lion walking alongside the little girl because, for Buitrago, “a lion was the best company I could think of for a little girl who is returning from school by herself in the middle of a crowded city.” Similarly, as Yockteng explained, the bugs in *Eloísa y los bichos* are also a metaphor for feeling out of place as “a weird bug.” This came from a Spanish idiom. Whatever the experiences the authors and illustrators have with the picturebooks, the usage of metaphors has allowed for different interpretations of the stories. Readers can interpret them according to their lived experiences and context, as I will explain in the findings section, which follows.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter identifies two themes prevalent in the documentary interviews: empathy and metaphors. The concept of empathy is present in both the creation process as well as in the reception. When creating the picturebooks, the authors and illustrators make references to what surrounds them. For example, when Ivar Da Coll re-illustrated *Tengo miedo*, the violent reality of the war and natural disasters in Colombia found themselves in the illustrations. Analogously, Jairo Buitrago’s and Rafael Yockteng’s picturebooks *Eloísa y los bichos* and *Camino a casa* contain political readings, as they were written and illustrated with this intention. Buitrago explains that Latin America is complex, and that complexity is translated into the picturebooks. Furthermore, the interview participants also concluded that for them, reading picturebooks can make readers more sensitive to realities that are far from their lives.

The second theme covered in this chapter is metaphors. María Osorio suggests that metaphors are a way to talk poetically about the reality children are already living. Following that thought, Ivar Da Coll finds that metaphors express thoughts poetically and, when done

correctly, can be easily understood and transmit emotions. Finally, Jairo Buitrago and Rafael Yockteng explain how metaphors allow for different interpretations of their stories according to the reader's lived experiences.

Chapter 5. Discussion and Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

To discuss my findings, I present my analysis by aligning my research questions with the answers I obtained from the participants in my documentary film. I first list my questions, then I follow up with my participants' related responses.

5.2 Answers to Research Questions

5.2.1 What are the motivations for creative professionals to develop picturebooks for children that depict violence, specifically the present consequences of Colombia's internal conflict?

Editors and authors are not set on publishing these types of picturebooks; they are not looking for opportunism, nor do they feel the need to publish or write stories with this topic at hand. When these picturebooks do get produced it is because the authors and illustrators have been moved or affected by their surroundings and this comes through in their work. As Ivar Da Coll phrased it, "literature is universal, what happens is that you cannot avoid making references to what surrounds you. I always say that if one has a language [...] that is to read, write and illustrate, has a certain sensitivity, obviously one is not impervious to what happens around him." In his case he explains what happened with his picturebook *Tengo miedo*, which had been originally published 27 years before. Along with María Osorio, editor of Babel libros, he set out to re-illustrate the book. In this exercise, everything that Da Coll had been seeing in the country and all that had happened were coming out in the images. For Da Coll, "if you have empathy with the human beings with whom you cohabit and have a language that you know how to

handle, at some point, that has to appear in the language you use and that is what happened with *Tengo miedo*.”

The same can be seen in the case of *Camino a casa*, where Jairo Buitrago wrote a poem after seeing a small girl in the middle of the street hand in hand with a smaller child. This image stayed with him; it affected him “to see a couple of children, so apparently fragile, in the middle of the city.” In the case of *Camino a casa*, it came to be published by el Fondo de Cultura Económica, a non-for-profit publishing group sponsored by the Mexican government, after Buitrago and Yockteng won their award *A la Orilla del Viento*. *A la Orilla del Viento* publishes new and compelling voices in children’s literature to propel the creation of picturebooks in Spanish.

Without the authors and illustrators, these books cannot come to life. Furthermore, they require an editor that can see the value in producing books that have a difficult subject. As Osorio explains, she “is interested in talking about the real world, about life, about what is happening to children.” She feels that children are influenced by what they see on television, and that literature offers the opportunity to have conversations with children about what is happening, allowing them to reflect. Nonetheless, topics should be handled in a poetic way. She finds it indispensable to talk about local subjects, because there are many others who are already “making children laugh with books, and who are telling other stories.”

5.2.2 How do authors, illustrators, publishers, and booksellers understand the reception of these picturebooks?

Audiences receive books differently and there is not one single reaction or opinion to these picturebooks. María Osorio explained that when *Tengo miedo* was first shown to educators,

they had various reactions to it; some people thought that the book was ruined because it now had a political reading, others thought it was opportunistic to use such a controversial topic in a children's book, and still others agreed that it was dealing with an important subject and that it had to be shown to children.

In the case of *Camino a casa* and *Eloísa y los bichos*, Jairo Buitrago explained that these books have been so widely accepted, they have been translated and sold in many countries. As a result, there are multiple readings and reactions to them. People interpret the picturebooks with their own lived experiences, and these interpretations go beyond the meanings that the author and illustrator had intended. According to Buitrago, when he reads *Camino a casa* in a book fair or an event, some adults have strong reactions to it. He explains:

There is always someone who has been touched by the book for various reasons. Unfortunately, many of these are reasons that have affected their family, let's say abruptly, or violently. The book talks about absence, and there are many people who have lived the forced disappearance, kidnappings, or the absence of someone in many ways [...] there is always someone, there are testimonies, there are usually tears, there are always memories. I always try to listen to the readers when they talk about the book and when they see their own story reflected—even if the protagonist is a girl and they are adults and parents. Another case are families in which a family member is missing. Because they left, because there was a breakup, because there was abandonment, things I could say are domestic and that happen to people and families all over the world.

However, amongst the three books that are discussed in the documentary film, the subject of violence is clearer in *Tengo miedo* than it is in the case of *Eloísa y los bichos* or *Camino a casa*. These two last books approach the subjects in a more subtle way, and this subtlety allows for multiple interpretations of the books. For example, Buitrago explained that *Eloísa y los bichos* can be interpreted as the story of a girl moving to a new school and feeling out of place, or it can be read as the story of migrant children who have moved from their country to another due to violent or political reasons—as is the case of Venezuelan children.

As mentioned above, audiences interpret these picturebooks differently and this is further supported in the experiences that booksellers, authors, and illustrators have with the picturebooks. Ana María Aragón finds that since these books cover such difficult topics and have been made so carefully and beautifully, parents purchase them easily. She clarifies that if this was not the case and the subjects were not handled with care, the books would be quite difficult to sell.

Rafael Yockteng says that he relates to children by doing activities in workshops. In the workshops, he and the children read the books together, he teaches some illustration techniques, and afterwards he instructs the children to draw things about their lives or how they feel about the book. He points out that by doing this the “results have been interesting because they really manage to express their anguishes, their fears, their desires, and these are clear in the images.”

Furthermore, Buitrago explains that he reads with children, allows them to contemplate the story with the images, and then listens to the interpretations they have:

In Chile they were amazed that *Camino a casa* was not Chilean. They thought it was a book that had been made to tell the story of Chile—the history of many families who had disappeared relatives. The same in Brazil. In Mexico they told

me about the earthquake of 1985, where many families lost loved ones. Other times they talk to me about *Eloísa y los bichos*, it has happened to me with Venezuelan children, in many places in Latin America, not only here in Colombia that appreciate the book and see it as a reflection of their own story.

With these experiences, the authors and illustrators have been able to see how their books can be interpreted beyond their original intentions, how they have multiple audiences, and how the experiences of children and adults around the world can be interpreted through a picturebook that was originally published to portray local Colombian issues.

However, as authors and illustrators must interact with children when reading or workshopping with the books, they are careful in their interactions with these picturebooks. They allow children to make their own interpretations and give them space to organize their thoughts. When the children have questions, they do not offer their own answers from their perspective as authors or illustrators; instead they give the questions back to the children and allow them to explain what they understood in the book. This way they do not force their ideas on children and instead allow them to make their own meaning out of the story and illustrations.

5.2.3 What are the perspectives of Colombian children’s book specialists on the value and importance of these materials?

Zully Pardo explained that both the young adult novel and the middle grade novel have been able to tackle the subject of Colombian war and violence in their stories, but that the picturebook still has not. She finds that with the picturebook there are “some flashes, but the issue is not addressed directly.”

There are various factors that contribute to this. One in particular is the history of the picturebook in the country. Pardo (2010), in her study about the evolution of the picturebook in Colombia, argues that up to the beginning of the 1980s, there was not a real market for children's literature in the country. Few books were published for this age group, and the rare materials that could be found were poetry books, chapter books, and some illustrated books. This started to change in the 1980s with a shift in society. Unlike previous generations, a new generation of parents had financial stability and a higher education level driving them to purchase books for their children. This new demand was met with the creation of publishing imprints for children in 1984. Thus, the first picturebooks were created. This also came with the enactment of children's rights; people started to think more about children and realized that there were not many children's books for Latin American children created in Latin America. This short history of the picturebook has allowed new authors and illustrators to propose new stories from their own environment in Colombia.

Nevertheless, as Pardo explained, Colombian society has a hard time talking about the subject of the internal conflict and the violence it has produced. The history regarding these particular topics is very close to the lives of Colombians. The forms of violence brought by war and the consequences that come with it such as inequality, poverty, disappearances, displacement etc. have not stopped happening. She suggests that if it is a difficult subject for adults to discuss, it might still be difficult to talk about with children. Picturebooks are not textbooks—their purpose is not to tell the official history of the country. They are sentimental; they may show a process and a story, but these particular picturebooks depict pain, and pain takes time.

In the case of these picturebooks, it is up to the editors, authors, and illustrators if they want to publish them. These are not the easiest books on the market to sell and many would

prefer to publish other stories that would be easier to retail and would not compromise the sensibilities of others. For Pardo, these are important books that should be produced, but it is not clear who will be the next person to tackle this subject.

5.3 Conclusion

My documentary film *Entre metáforas: re-imaginando la guerra y violencia a través del libro álbum* provides a glimpse into the production of children's literature in Colombia, an industry that is not widely known outside of Spanish speaking countries and academic communities. Producing this documentary as my Master's thesis in an English-speaking country and making it available to an English-speaking audience via subtitles allows for a wider distribution of knowledge about the production of children's literature in Colombia, particularly to an audience that does not have access to these books. More specifically, it opens a conversation about the creation of picturebooks that depict a reality that is not easy to talk about. Specifically, these three picturebooks portray disappearances, displacement, and the fears children have because of war, such as kidnappings, natural disasters, and destruction of home environments. These subjects, which depict a reality that is lived in Colombia, can be seen in other places around the world, as well; this makes the picturebooks featured in the documentary film applicable to audiences in other countries, not only for discussing what is happening in one's own country, but for conversations about the reality that people face around the globe. This documentary goes beyond the analysis of texts as it allows the creators of the picturebooks to have a voice about the book's production, their experiences with the books, and the reception that the books have had, creating a unique work which provides a contribution to the field of children's literature.

The production of this documentary also has limitations, specifically around the number of experts that I was able to interview in the timeframe that I had. Additionally, the film is limited in terms of the answers that I was able to include, as my purpose was to create a documentary film that lasted around 20 minutes. More specifically, by interviewing the creatives that are directly involved with the production of these picturebooks, I only portrayed their perspectives about their own work, which is subjective—they are sharing their thoughts and experiences that they have had with their own books. A broader study would include different perspectives from teachers, reading promoters, and librarians that have worked with the books with children. Future work might involve a wider selection of texts including middle grade and young adult novels that touch upon the subjects of war and violence in Colombia.

After interviewing the participants of my documentary film, I have come to multiple conclusions. First, from the information that I gathered in the interviews, the production of these picturebooks cannot be rushed; they have to be carefully crafted. María Osorio explains that they should be created because children already know what is happening around them and are influenced by the news and what they see on television. Literature provides an opportunity to talk about difficult topics poetically. This way, children can better understand their surroundings and the life circumstances of others. As Da Coll frames it, literature helps us become more empathetic with others and helps us understand that we are all human and all the same, and these stories can help children see that as well. His book, *Tengo miedo*, in particular, allows children to understand the fears that have been created by the environment they live in. Aragón points out that these picturebooks can sensitize you to what is happening in the country, as many people are not in contact with the war affected regions or with the circumstances of others. Yockteng illustrates that it is valuable to create picturebooks about what is happening locally. Violence,

war, disappearances, and displacement are things that happen in Colombia; however, they are not the only things that happen in the country, and stories like these happen in other parts of the world as well. In this sense, picturebooks concentrated on local themes can actually become global. As Buitrago shares, his stories have been read in other places of the world and taken as their own: in Chile, México, Brazil, etc. There is a need to create stories with which children can identify and see their own struggles. Picturebooks allow for a safe space to talk about subjects that can be troubling to children.

Additionally, the production of this documentary film allowed me to get a bigger idea of why these picturebooks are important and how they came to be produced in Colombia. I would have not been able to come to all these conclusions myself without having access to the creative professionals that produce these books and the people who have to work with them, such as booksellers and children's literature scholars. Their experiences with their readers go beyond the outcomes of a text analysis, and I find that sharing these results in the form of a documentary film can allow for a broader use of the books and possibly the production of similar picturebooks.

With the following conclusions in mind, there are several audiences that can benefit from the publication of this film. First, it will benefit other authors, illustrators, and publishers that might be tackling difficult subjects about the reality of their country and are looking for ways to deliver stories in an appropriate format for children. They will see how these picturebooks have carefully been tackled through metaphors. This could enable more content to be produced about subjects on which children and adults need to have conversations. Books can help mediate subjects as well as allow people to make out their own meanings. With this in mind, educators from various places of the world can have conversations with their students regarding the reality

that other people face and, through these stories, can connect with them on an emotional level, using empathy. Scholars of children's literature will have more material to expand upon in their investigations and be able to compare the production of books in other places of the world with these Colombian picturebooks. My wish is that more Colombian authors, illustrators, and editors will feel inspired by the documentary and will continue producing picturebooks that can help heal deep wounds and continue the conversation about what war and violence have brought to Colombia.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Documentary transcription

English subtitles

A picturebook is text, illustrations, total design; an item of manufacture and a commercial product; a social, cultural, historical document; and, foremost, an experience for a child.

Barbara Bader

Zully Pardo

Within what I know, I have not seen many picturebooks that are particularly focused on the armed conflict. I think that children's literature, young adult literature, has been able to cover these issues. Above all, young adult literature. But the picturebook still does not. So, I think we see some things, like some flashes, but the issue is not addressed directly.

Introduction credits

Between metaphors

Reimagining war and violence in Colombia through picturebooks

Ana Aragón

The ones who speak most of the Colombian reality, are those of Babel. There are parents who do not want to deal with difficult issues with their children, there is a certain reluctance. But somehow the subject has begun to be worked on in schools. So, I think that there is no longer so much reluctance to give a book to a child which has difficult subjects. I think that it has been changing.

María Osorio

In 2000 I retired from what later became Fundalectura, and I decided that I wanted to make a publishing house. Because it seemed to me that Colombian books were needed, that the publishers that had started to make national projects had disappeared, they had lasted very little time and we had to insist.

Let's say we continue with a line, which I think is very clear but also has materialized in a type of books that are not, let's say, the easiest books on the market, nor the happiest. I am interested in talking about the real world, about life, about what is happening, to children. I think literature is an opportunity to talk about that.

If you review Colombian children's literature, Colombian children's literature has touched on these issues a long time ago. Ivar is not the first, maybe he is the first one who draws it for such a young group of children.

Tengo miedo

Ivar da Coll

Tengo miedo arose from a particular emotion of mine. When I was very young, I was an overly shy person. And I was afraid of people. It really made me afraid to be with people. So, I kept silent, I stood aside in social meetings, and that only made my presence more noticeable. At one point I made the reflection that, if I was afraid of that, those people that were relaxed in a meeting and talking with one another, should also be afraid of other things. So, that is what is written in the text. That is, in the original text, not in the latest version of the book. So, if I am afraid of those who fly on a broom, of those who spit fire... And the text says: "did you know

that they also have to brush their teeth," in a way that humanizes them a bit. Shows that we all have fears and that we are all people and that we are always the same.

María Osorio

We did not set out to make a book about the situation of violence in this country. Not in the slightest. The idea came from this collection, which are *Las historias de Eusebio*, which are three stories by Ivar. And what we wanted was to make a new illustration. But obviously, when an artist like Ivar da Coll, who is a person who is, shall we say, so sensitive, who is so immersed in his context, cannot isolate himself from what is happening. And the idea was to tell the same story but when it came to it, what we had not really realized was that Ivar's fears had become the fears of reality. Which were not only fears of violence or kidnapping or war. But also, natural disasters, which is something that is very present in today's media. Maybe because of how mediatic it is, because it is the first information that appears in the press or in the news are catastrophes, violence, war, and what not. That is engraved in the artist's mindset and comes out in his work.

Ivar Da Coll

I always say that if one as a person who has a language as I have already said that is to read, to write and illustrate, has a certain sensitivity, obviously one is not impervious to what happens around him. For example, that's what happened with *Tengo miedo*. It was a book that had been written about 27 years ago. It was a book made in two colors. The original story was much simpler and put it in quotes "much more childish." And as it was re-illustrated in color, everything that I have been seeing in the country, what has happened, which of course hurts me,

because what happens in the country affects us. It was coming out in the images. I say that, if you have empathy with the human beings with whom you cohabit and have a language that you know how to handle, at some point then that has to appear in the language you use and that is what happened with *Tengo miedo*.

María Osorio

When people received it, there were two reactions. Preschool teachers who said, "Oh no, they put politics into the text, they've ruined the book." And they removed it. Or people who said, "No, this has to be shown to children we have to do it," and in that case we had to change the narration, because it was a silly and naive narrative. It was a very basic and very playful text with the child, and could not stay the same with those images.

Ana Aragón

For example, the book *Tengo miedo* by Ivar Da Coll, which is a very difficult subject, because it is the subject of displacement and the destruction of your vital environment, your home, the territory where you inhabit, it is a very difficult book. However, because it is so aesthetically beautiful, I believe that also allows us to comprehend the book. The aesthetic is so cared for, because if it was not that way surely people would not buy it.

Camino a casa

Jairo Buitrago

Camino a casa, was born as a poem that I wrote to a girl I met on the street. Who was hand in hand with a smaller child. It affected me a lot, or I was very impressed, to see a couple of

children so, apparently, fragile in the middle of the city. I drew the lion with the girl, thinking that, it would be the best company someone could have to come home from school alone.

Especially if you are a little girl.

That which was a poem and a kind of metaphor, about protection, about abandonment, became a picturebook when I spoke with Rafael Yockteng and we presented it in this publishing house, which is where we are: Babel Libros. And María Osorio, who is the editor, told us: "the book is very good, I would love to publish it, but send it to the contest A la Orilla del viento because it will win." And it effectively won and became the picturebook that it is today.

Eloísa y los bichos

Rafael Yockteng

Well, *Eloísa y los bichos*. It is the history of the migrants, of the displaced. I also feel that story very much my own because it is maybe the life I had, with my family. Arriving from Peru to Colombia very young into another environment, another city. And I drew, from my life, to make that particular book. It ended up reflecting the lives of many other people. That have had to be migrants. For reasons outside of their control.

Jairo Buitrago

Camino a casa is a book that creates many emotions in adults. Whenever I talk about the book in a seminar, or in a meeting or book fairs, there is always someone who has been touched by the book for various reasons. Unfortunately, many of these reasons are reasons that have affected their family, let's say abruptly, or violently. The book talks about absence, and there are many people who have lived forced disappearance, kidnappings, or the absence of someone in many

ways. Especially in these, which I find interesting where they are mediating violence, they feel very close to the book, there is always someone, there are testimonies, there are usually tears, there are always memories. I always try to listen to them, to the readers when they talk about the book and when they see their own story reflected, even if the protagonist is a girl and they are adults and parents. The other case are families in which a family member is missing; because he left, because there was a breakup, because there was abandonment, domestic things I could say, that happen to the whole world and to all families.

With *Eloísa y los bichos*, they are parents who emigrated to other places and always want to give the book to their children.

Rafael Yockteng

Usually the times that I do I interact with children; I relate in a very material way and it is by doing. I do not have big conversations about the subjects, instead I make them draw. We talk a little about their environment, we talk about life. I teach them some techniques, or not, I just give them a pencil and I tell them: draw something about what is happening or draw something about your lives. And those results have been interesting because they manage to express their anguishes, their fears, their desires. And they are all clear in the images.

Jairo Buitrago

So many things happen with interpretations. In Chile they were amazed that *Camino a casa* was not Chilean. They thought it was a book that had been made to tell the story of Chile. The history of many families who had disappeared relatives. The same in Brazil. In Mexico they told me about the earthquake of 1985, where many families lost loved ones. Other times they talk to me

about *Eloísa y los bichos*, it has happened to me with Venezuelan children, in many places in Latin America, not only here in Colombia that appreciate the book and see it as a reflection of their own story.

Good stories allow children to see themselves in the main characters and to be moved emotionally by the struggles and triumphs of the characters [...] As children are becoming increasingly fearful of personal attacks, war, and terrorism, helping them learn to cope with these fears is paramount.

Janice Nicholson & Quinn Pearson

Rafael Yockteng

More than the importance of producing books like this, it's about publishing books. Publishing stories of what is happening here. This in particular is happening here so we should publish it, but it is not the only thing that is happening.

Ana María Aragón

I believe that in some way they sensitize you to what is happening in the country. Several of us are a bit far away, and we live like in a little bubble. Speaking particularly of the Colombian middle class. So, these books somehow make you sensitive to the problems that other people suffer, right? Or even, it may be things that you have suffered as well, but perhaps you have not rationalized it.

Jairo Buitrago

I feel that with the picturebook, when talking about complex subjects they feel more comfortable than when speaking sometimes in another space. Because the space of books is usually kinder. You are in front of a piece of work, there are illustrations, the children are reflected, and they can talk with the teacher, or the reading promoter, or the librarian.

Ivar Da Coll

I think that the wonderful thing about literature is that it not only allows us to learn to build an orderly thought, to learn to express ourselves, to learn to think. But it may offer the possibility of sensitizing us and perhaps making us more empathetic. Which is less and less common in this world.

María Osorio

There are already people who are making children laugh with books, and who are telling other stories and whatnot. I do not know if it is because of my training, or because of my age, or because I started late, or because of whatever you want, I think it is essential to talk about what is happening, and show what happens. As I say, in a poetic way, because children are contaminated. They are contaminated by television, by newspapers because it is what floods the news daily. Children listen to what the adults are talking about. So, it seems to me that talking about issues of violence, or inclusion, or... In the naivest way, it even seems important to me. Even talking about local subjects, what it is to be in this country is indispensable at this time.

Zully Pardo

The wound that drug trafficking has done in our society, all the wounds that the paramilitarism has done, the different forms of guerrilla warfare and the different forms of violence, are issues that we are not ready to talk about yet. I think if it's hard for us to talk about this among adults, we may still have trouble talking or telling it to children.

So, in the future books may be published on these subjects, but I do feel that we have to give them the time they need. Finally, it ends up being like social processes closely linked to the emotional part. This is not a textbook; we are not narrating the official history or unofficial history of a country. But it is talking about uprooting, it is talking about pain, it is talking about different forms of violence that also have not stopped happening.

Another thing that you have to think about is: maybe people are not interested in publishing those things. That is also a possibility. When it comes to issues that compromise certain sensibilities, not everyone agrees to take it to the children. I think we have to talk about that, but let's see who is the first or the next to make a literary proposal related to those issues.

Reading books give children the opportunity to identify with others undergoing the same problems, help them realize that they are not alone, provide catharsis, and facilitate the process of sharing their problems with others.

Mary Taylor Rycik

Spanish transcription

Un libro álbum es texto, ilustraciones, diseño total; un artículo de fabricación y un producto comercial; un documento social, cultural, histórico; y, ante todo, una experiencia para un niño.

Barbara Bader

Zully Pardo

Dentro de lo que conozco no he visto muchos libros álbum que estén enfocados particularmente en el conflicto armado. Pienso que la literatura infantil, la literatura juvenil, ha podido abarcar esos temas. Sobre todo, la literatura juvenil. Pero el libro álbum todavía no. Entonces creo que se ven algunas cosas, como algunos destellos, pero no se aborda directamente el tema.

Entre metáforas

Re-imaginando la guerra y la violencia en Colombia desde el libro álbum

Un documental por Valeria De La Vega

Ana Aragón

Los que más hablan de la realidad colombiana pues sí son los de Babel. Hay padres que no quieren tratar de temas difíciles con los hijos, no, hay como cierta reticencia. Pero de alguna manera también en los colegios se ha empezado a trabajar. Entonces yo creo que ya no hay tanta reticencia a regalarle un libro a un niño que tenga temas difíciles. Creo que eso ha ido cambiando.

María Osorio

Cuando en el 2000 me retiré de lo que se convirtió después en Fundalectura, decidí que quería hacer una editorial. Porque me parecía que hacían falta libros colombianos, que las editoriales que habían empezado a hacer proyectos nacionales habían desaparecido, habían durado muy poco tiempo y tocaba insistir.

Digamos que seguimos con una línea, que a mí me parece muy clara pero que además se ha ido, como, se ha ido concretando en un tipo de libros que no son, digamos que, los libros más fáciles del mercado, ni los más felices. Me interesa hablar del mundo real, de la vida, de lo que está sucediendo.

Vea si usted hace una revisión de la literatura infantil colombiana hace rato, que la literatura infantil colombiana, toca esos temas. Ivar no es el primero, tal vez es el primero que lo dibuja para un grupo de niños tan chiquitos.

Tengo miedo

Ivar da Coll

Tengo miedo surgió a partir de una emoción particular mía. Cuando yo era muy joven era una persona excesivamente tímida. Y tenía miedo a la gente. Realmente me producía miedo estar con personas. Entonces guardaba silencio, me hacía a un lado en una reunión, y eso hacía más notoria mi presencia. En un momento dado hice la reflexión de que, si yo tenía miedo a eso, esa gente que digamos, debía estar en una reunión tranquilamente y conversar con otra, debía tener miedo a otras cosas.

Entonces, ahí está, en el texto está puesto eso. Es decir, en el texto original, no en la última versión del libro. Es decir, si yo tengo miedo de los que vuelan en escoba, de los que

escupen fuego... Y el texto dice: “sabías que a ellos también les toca lavarse los dientes”, cómo humanizarlos un poco. Mostrar que todos tenemos miedos y que todos somos personas y que somos iguales siempre.

María Osorio

No nos propusimos hacer un libro sobre la situación de violencia en este país. Ni mínimamente. La idea surgió de esa colección, que son *Las historias de Eusebio*, que son tres cuentos de Ivar. Y lo que pretendíamos era hacer una ilustración nueva. Pero obviamente, cuando un artista como Ivar Da Coll, que es una persona que es, digamos, tan sensible, que está tan inmersa dentro de su contexto, no se puede aislar de lo que está pasando.

Y la idea era contar la misma historia. Pero cuando fuimos a ver y no nos habíamos dado cuenta de verdad era que Ivar, los miedos se habían convertido en los miedos de la realidad. Es decir, no solamente los miedos a la violencia o al secuestro o a la guerra. Sino también a los desastres naturales, como qué es algo que está muy presente en el medio hoy. Tal vez por lo mediático que es eso, porque es la primera información que aparece en la prensa o en los noticieros son las catástrofes, la violencia, las guerras, no sé qué. Eso está también muy metido en las plumas del artista y sale.

Ivar Da Coll

Es decir, siempre digo que si uno como persona que tiene un lenguaje como ya lo he dicho que es el de leer, el de escribir e ilustrar, tiene cierta sensibilidad, obviamente no es impermeable a lo que sucede a su alrededor. Por ejemplo, con *Tengo miedo* lo que sucedió fue eso. Era un libro que se había escrito hace más o menos 27 años. Era un libro hecho en dos colores.

La historia original era mucho más simple, y ponerlo entre comillas “mucho más infantil”. Y a medida que se re-ilustró en color, todo lo que he venido viendo en el país, que ha sucedido, que desde luego me duele, porque lo que sucede en el país afecta. Fue saliendo en las imágenes.

Yo digo que, si uno tiene empatía con los seres humanos con los que cohabita y tiene un lenguaje que sabe manejar, en algún momento pues eso tiene que aparecer en el lenguaje que uno usa y eso fue lo que pasó con *Tengo miedo*.

María Osorio

Cuando la gente lo recibió había, hubo dos reacciones. Maestros de preescolar que decían “¡Ay no!, le metieron política al texto, se tiraron el libro”. Y lo quitaron. O gente que decía, “no, esto hay que mostrárselo a los niños lo tenemos que hacer”, en ese caso tuvo que cambiar la manera de narrar, porque era una narración ingenua y tonta. Un texto muy básico y muy juguetón con el libro y ya no podía ser lo mismo con esas imágenes.

Ana Aragón

El libro por ejemplo *Tengo miedo* de Ivar Da Coll, que es un tema súper difícil porque es el tema del desplazamiento y de la destrucción de tu entorno vital, de tu casa, del territorio dónde habitas, es un libro muy duro. Pero, como estéticamente es tan bello yo creo que eso también ayuda a que uno pueda comprender el libro. La estética es tan cuidada, porque seguramente si no fuera así la gente no lo compraría.

Camino a Casa

Jairo Buitrago

Camino a casa nació como un poema que escribí a una niña que me encontré en la calle.

Que venía de la mano con un niño más pequeño. Me afectó mucho, o me impresionó mucho ver un par de niños como tan, aparentemente, frágiles en medio de la ciudad. Dibujé el león con la niña, pensando que, esa sería la mejor compañía que podría tener alguien para regresar solo de la escuela a su casa. Sobretudo si eres una niña pequeña.

Eso que era un poema y una especie de metáfora, sobre la protección, sobre el abandono. Se convirtió en un álbum cuando hablé con Rafael Yockteng y lo presentamos en esta editorial que es donde estamos que es Babel Libros. Y María Osorio, que es la editora, nos dijo, “el libro está muy bueno, me encantaría publicarlo, pero mándenlo al concurso A la orilla del viento porque va a ganar”. Y efectivamente ganó y se convirtió en el álbum que es ahora.

Eloísa y los bichos

Rafael Yockteng

Pues bueno y *Eloísa y los bichos*. Es la historia de los migrantes, de los desplazados. También yo siento esa historia muy mía porque es tal vez la vida que yo tuve, con mi familia. Llegando de Perú a Colombia y muy chico y encontrarse con otro ambiente, con otra ciudad. Y yo traté desde mí vida, ese libro en particular. Que terminó reflejando la vida de muchas otras personas. Que han tenido que ser migrantes. Por muchas razones, de fuerza mayor.

Jairo Buitrago

Camino a casa es un libro que crea muchas emociones en los adultos. Siempre que hablo del libro en algún seminario, o en algún encuentro o ferias del libro. Siempre hay alguien que el libro le ha llegado mucho por diversas razones. Lamentablemente muchas de estas razones, son razones que han afectado a su familia. De manera, digamos abrupta, o violenta. El libro habla sobre la ausencia, pero muchas personas que han vivido en carne propia la desaparición forzada, los secuestros, la ausencia de alguien en muchas maneras, pero sobre todo en estas, que me parece interesante en donde están mediando la violencia. Pues se sienten muy cercanos al libro, siempre hay alguien, hay testimonios, generalmente hay lágrimas, hay recuerdos siempre. Yo siempre trato de escucharlos, a los lectores cuando hablan del libro y cuando ven reflejada su propia historia, y aunque la protagonista sea una niña y ellos sean adultos y ellos sean padres de familia.

El otro caso son familias en las que hace falta un miembro de la familia. Porque se fue, porque hubo una ruptura. Porque hubo abandono, cosas un poco, podría decir yo, domésticas que le pasan a todo el mundo y a todas las familias. Con *Eloísa y los bichos*, son padres que emigraron a otros lugares y siempre quieren regalarle el libro a los niños.

Rafael Yockteng

Generalmente las veces que yo hago, me relaciono con los chicos, me relaciono de una forma muy material y es haciendo. Entonces no tengo grandes conversaciones sobre los temas, sino, los pongo a dibujar. Hablamos un poco sobre su entorno, hablamos sobre la vida, les enseño algunas técnicas. O no, simplemente les doy un lápiz y les digo, dibujen algo sobre esto que está pasando

o dibuja algo sobre sus vidas. Y esos resultados han sido muy interesantes porque realmente logran expresar sus angustias, sus miedos, sus deseos, y se ven claras en las imágenes.

Jairo Buitrago

Pasan tantas cosas con las interpretaciones. En Chile se asombraban de que *Camino a casa* no fuera chileno. Pensaban que era un libro que se había hecho para contar la historia de Chile. La historia de muchas familias que tenían, pues, familiares desaparecidos. Lo mismo en Brazil. En México me hablaban del terremoto del ochenta y cinco, donde muchas familias perdieron seres queridos.

Otras veces me hablan de *Eloísa y los bichos*, me ha pasado con niños venezolanos, en muchos lugares de América Latina, no solo acá en Colombia. Que, digamos, aprecian el libro y lo ven también, es como un reflejo de su propia historia.

Las buenas historias permiten que los niños se vean a sí mismos en los personajes principals y se conmuevan emocionalmente por las luchas y los triunfos de estos. [...] A medida que los niños temen cada vez más a ataques personales, a la guerra y al terrorismo, ayudarlos a aprender a lidiar con estos temores es de suma importancia

Janice Nicholson & Quinn Pearson

Rafael Yockteng

Más que la importancia de producir libros así es publicar libros. Publicar historias, publicar historias de lo que está pasando acá. Esto en particular está pasando acá entonces deberíamos publicarlo, pero no es lo único que está pasando acá.

Ana María Aragón

Yo creo que de alguna manera te sensibilizan a lo que ocurre en el país. Varios estamos un poco lejos, y vivimos como en una burbujita. Hablando particularmente de la clase media Colombiana. Entonces estos libros de alguna manera te hacen sensible a los problemas que sufren las otras personas ¿no? O bueno incluso, pueden ser cosas que has sufrido tú también, pero que no lo habías, como, racionalizado.

Jairo Buitrago

Siento que con el álbum, al hablar de temas complejos se sienten más cómodos que al hablando a veces en otro espacio. Porque el espacio de los libros generalmente es más amable. Estás frente a una obra, hay ilustraciones, los niños se ven reflejados y se lo pueden contar a la maestra, o al promotor de lectura, o al bibliotecario.

Ivar Da Coll

Yo creo que, lo maravilloso que tiene la literatura es que, no solo nos permite aprender a construir un pensamiento ordenado, aprender a expresarnos, aprender a pensar. Sino que, puede tener la posibilidad de, ofrecer la posibilidad de, sensibilizarnos y quizás hacernos más empáticos. Cosa que cada vez tiene menos este mundo.

María Osorio

Ya hay gente que está haciendo reír a los niños con los libros, y que están contando otras historias y no se qué. No sé si será por mi formación, o por la edad que ya tengo, o porque empecé tarde o por lo que usted quiera, a mí me parece que es indispensable hablar sobre lo que

pasa. Y mostrar lo que pasa, como digo, de una manera poética, porque los niños están contaminados. Están contaminados por la televisión, por los periódicos porque es lo que inunda las noticias todo el día. Los niños escuchan lo que hablan los mayores. Entonces me parece que hablar de temas de violencia, o de inclusión, o... De la manera más ingenua, incluso me parece importante. Incluso hablar de lo local, de qué es estar en este país me parece que es indispensable en este momento.

Zully Pardo

La herida que hizo el narcotráfico en nuestra sociedad, todas las heridas que han hecho el paramilitarismo, las distintas formas de guerrilla y las distintas formas de violencia, son cuestiones de las que todavía no estamos listos para hablar. Creo que si nos cuesta trabajo hablar de esto entre adultos, puede que nos cueste todavía trabajo para hablarlo o contárselo a los niños.

Así que puede que en un futuro sean publicado libros sobre esos temas, pero sí siento que hay que darle el tiempo que necesita. Finalmente termina siendo como unos procesos sociales muy ligados a la parte emocional. Esto no es un libro de texto, no estamos narrando la historia oficial de un país o no oficial de un país. Sino que se está hablando de desarraigos, se está hablando de dolor, se está hablando de distintas formas de violencia que además no han dejado de ocurrir.

Otra cosa que hay que pensar es que puede que, que no estén interesados en publicar esas cosas. Eso también es una posibilidad, cuando se trata de temas que comprometan ciertas sensibilidades no todo el mundo está de acuerdo con llevárselo a los niños. Yo creo que sí hay que hablar de eso, pero vamos a ver quién es el primero o el siguiente en hacer una propuesta literaria relacionada con esos temas.

Leer libros les brinda a los niños la oportunidad de identificarse con otras personas que atraviesan sus mismos problemas, ayudan a que se den cuenta de que no están solos, proporcionan catharsis, y facilitan el proceso de compartir sus problemas con los demás.

Mary Taylor Rycik

Appendix B. Interview questions

The participants of the documentary film were asked a series of questions depending on their profession. There were some general questions that were asked to all participants and then a list of questions that are specific to each of their field. Since the interviews were conducted in Spanish, the questions can also be found in that same language after the list in English.

English transcription

General questions to all participants:

Introduction questions:

1. Could you tell me a little about yourself? What do you do? How did you get to the profession you have today? How many years have you been working on this line of work?
2. What are your favorite things to work on your line of work? Is there anything that you would like to tackle that you perhaps haven't yet?
3. Do you feel that the work that you do has a contribution to people or the country? In what way?

Final questions:

1. What are your thoughts on these types of picturebooks? Do you see more picturebooks of this type being produced in the future? What are your projections about them?
2. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your work? Or about your feelings on this particular topic?
3. Would you like to add anything else to the questions I have already asked?
4. Would you like to share any concluding thoughts with me?

Specific questions:

Independent Publisher:

1. How many years have you been editing and publishing books for children? How have the picturebooks that you publish evolved?
2. How long ago did you begin to publish picturebooks that talk about difficult topics that reflect the present reality and past of Colombia?
3. Why did you start publishing these picturebooks?
4. What response have you received from publishing them? From parents, children, bookshops, libraries, book critics?
5. Do other publishers in Colombia publish picturebooks that deal with these topics? Who? How many? Is it a popular topic to publish in the form of picturebooks?
6. When working on one of these books such as *Tengo Miedo*, how does the editing process change? What things do authors and illustrators have to be attentive of or careful with?
7. What are the challenges in publishing these books? Are there any risks?
8. How did the present circumstances of the country affect the content you were publishing?
9. What are the characteristics of the authors and illustrators you work with on these types of picturebooks?

Author/Illustrators:

1. How long have you been a picturebook author/illustrator?
2. How has the style of the books you publish evolve? The topics you tackle for children? Why do you think this is?
3. How did the present circumstances of the country affect the content you were creating?
4. What topics have you tackled in your picturebooks that are specific to Colombia?
5. How did you decide to create picturebooks that talk about difficult topics that reflect the present and past reality of Colombia?

6. How was the process for writing/illustrating:
 - a. Tengo miedo
 - b. Camino a casa
 - c. Eloísa y los bichos
7. What is _____ about?
 - a. Tengo miedo
 - b. Camino a casa
 - c. Eloísa y los bichos
8. What has been the reaction of parents to these books?
9. What are the challenges in publishing these books? Are there any risks?
10. Why did you decide to use metaphors to portray the story in the picturebook?
11. Could you explain some of these metaphors?
12. When reading the picturebook to children what has been their reaction? Do they understand the metaphors of the book? What connections do they make to them? Have you ever explained the metaphors to the children? Do the reactions to them change depending on their age?
13. After reading the picturebook to the children do you have conversations with them about it?
What have been some of the comments children have said to you? How is the conversation? Are they comfortable with the subject?
14. Why do you think it matters to publish picturebooks on these topics in Colombia?

Children's book specialist:

1. When did picturebooks begin to be published in Colombia? What caused this?
2. How were these first books? How have they evolved in the present?

3. How is children's publishing in Colombia?
4. When did the topic of war begin to be introduced into children's literature? When did it begin to be introduced in picturebooks in Colombia? How is the content different when comparing young adult novels on the topic to picturebooks?
5. Why do you think it matters to publish picturebooks on these topics in Colombia? What has been the effect?
6. What is the educational value of these books?

Bookseller:

1. How is the picturebook market in Colombia?
2. How many of the books you sell are national versus international?
3. In the national picturebooks, how many do you have that talk about the Colombian reality, more specifically about the difficult topics of our past and present society?
4. Compared to other picturebooks, how much do these books sell?
5. How many publishers tackle these topics with picturebooks?
6. To which audience do you find more books on this topic? Picturebooks, young adult novels, novels for adults?
7. What are parents reaction to these picturebooks? Who are the types of parents that buy these books?
8. Have you read these picturebooks to children? Which ones?
9. When reading the picturebook to children what has been their reaction? Do they understand the metaphors of the book? What connections do they make to them? Have you ever explained the metaphors to the children? Do the reactions to them change depending on their age?

10. After reading the picturebook to the children do you have conversations with them about it?

What have been some of the comments children have said to you? How is the conversation? Are they comfortable with the subject?

11. Why do you think it matters to publish picturebooks on these topics in Colombia?

Original interview questions in Spanish

Preguntas generales a todos los participantes

Preguntas de introducción:

1. ¿Me podría contar un poco sobre usted?, ¿a qué se dedica?, ¿cómo llegó a tener la profesión que tiene hoy?, ¿hace cuántos años trabaja en este campo?
2. ¿Cuáles son sus cosas favoritas para trabajar en su línea de trabajo?, ¿hay algo que le gustaría abordar y que quizás aún no haya abordado?
3. ¿Siente que el trabajo que hace tiene una contribución para las personas o para el país?, ¿de qué manera?

Preguntas finales

1. ¿Qué piensa de estos tipos de libros álbum? ¿Ve más libros álbum de este tipo siendo producidos en el futuro? ¿Cuáles son sus proyecciones sobre ellos?
2. ¿Hay algo más que quieras contarme sobre tu trabajo? ¿O sobre tus sentimientos sobre este tema en particular?
3. ¿Le gustaría agregar algo más a las preguntas que ya le hice?
4. ¿Le gustaría compartir algún pensamiento final conmigo?

Preguntas específicas:

Editor independiente:

1. ¿Cuántos años lleva editando y publicando libros para niños? ¿Cómo han evolucionado los libros álbum que publicas?
2. ¿Hace cuánto tiempo comenzó a publicar libros álbum que hablan de temas difíciles, y que reflejan el presente y el pasado de Colombia?
3. ¿Por qué empezaste a publicar estos tipo de libros álbum?
4. ¿Qué respuesta has recibido por la publicación de estos?, ¿de padres, hijos, librerías, bibliotecas, críticos de libros?
5. ¿Publican otros editores en Colombia libros álbum que traten estos temas?, ¿quiénes?, ¿cuántos?, y ¿dirías que es un tema popular para publicar en forma de libro álbum?
6. Al trabajar en uno de estos libros, como *Tengo miedo*, ¿cómo cambia el proceso de edición?, ¿con qué temas y aspectos del libro deben ser cuidadosos los autores e ilustradores?
7. ¿Cuáles son los desafíos en la publicación de estos libros? ¿Hay algún riesgo?
8. ¿Cómo afectaron las circunstancias actuales del país al contenido que publicaba?
9. ¿Cuáles son las características de los autores e ilustradores con los que trabaja en estos tipos de libros de imágenes?

Autor/ ilustrador:

1. ¿Cuánto tiempo ha sido un autor/ilustrador de libros álbum?
2. ¿Cómo ha evolucionado el estilo de los libros que publica?, ¿los temas que aborda para los niños?, ¿por qué cree que es esto?
3. ¿Cómo afectaron las circunstancias actuales del país al contenido que crea?
4. ¿Qué temas ha abordado en sus libros álbum que son específicos para Colombia?
5. ¿Cómo decidió crear libros álbum que traten temas difíciles que reflejen la realidad del presente y pasado de Colombia?

6. ¿Cómo fue el proceso para escribir/ilustrar?
 - a. *Tengo miedo*
 - b. *Camino a casa*
 - c. *Eloísa y los bichos*
7. ¿De qué se trata _____?
 - a. *Tengo miedo*
 - b. *Camino a casa*
 - c. *Eloísa y los bichos*
8. ¿Cuál ha sido la reacción de los padres a estos libros?
9. ¿Cuáles son los desafíos en la publicación de estos libros?, ¿hay algún riesgo?
10. ¿Por qué decidió usar metáforas para representar la historia en el libro álbum?
11. ¿Podrías explicar algunas de estas metáforas?, ¿qué causó su inspiración?
12. Al leer el libro álbum a los niños, ¿cuál ha sido su reacción?, ¿entienden las metáforas del libro?, ¿qué conexiones les hacen?, ¿alguna vez has explicado las metáforas a los niños?, ¿las reacciones de los niños cambian dependiendo de su edad?
13. Después de leerles el libro álbum a los niños, ¿tienen conversaciones con ellos sobre ellos?, ¿cuáles han sido algunos de los comentarios que los niños le han dicho?, ¿cómo es la conversación?, ¿se sienten cómodos con el tema?
14. ¿Por qué crees que es importante publicar libros álbum sobre estos temas en Colombia?

Especialista en libros infantiles:

1. ¿Cuándo comenzaron a publicarse los libros álbum en Colombia? ¿Qué causó esto?
2. ¿Cómo fueron estos primeros libros?, ¿cómo han evolucionado al día de hoy?
3. ¿Cómo es la edición de libros infantiles en Colombia?

4. ¿Cuándo comenzó a introducirse el tema de la guerra en la literatura infantil?, ¿cuándo comenzó a introducirse en los libros álbum en Colombia?, ¿en qué se diferencia el contenido de este tema cuando se comparan las novelas juveniles con los libros álbum?
5. ¿Por qué cree que es importante publicar libros álbum sobre estos temas en Colombia?, ¿cuál ha sido el efecto?
6. ¿Cuál es el valor educativo de estos libros?

Librero:

1. ¿Cómo es el mercado del libro álbum en Colombia?
2. ¿Cuántos de los libros que vendes son nacionales frente a internacionales?
3. En los libros álbum nacionales, ¿cuántos hablan de la realidad colombiana, más específicamente de los temas difíciles de nuestra sociedad pasada y presente?
4. En comparación con otros libros álbum, ¿cuánto venden estos libros?
5. ¿Cuántos editores abordan estos temas con libros álbum?
6. ¿Para qué audiencia encuentra más libros publicados sobre este tema?, ¿libros álbum, libros juveniles o novelas para adultos?
7. ¿Cuál es la reacción de los padres a estos libros álbum?, ¿cómo son los tipos de padres que compran estos libros?
8. ¿Has leído estos libros álbum a niños?, ¿cuáles?
9. Al leer el libro álbum a los niños, ¿cuál ha sido su reacción?, ¿entienden las metáforas del libro?, ¿qué conexiones le hacen?, ¿alguna vez has explicado las metáforas a los niños?, ¿las reacciones a ellos cambian dependiendo de su edad?

10. Después de leerles el libro álbum a los niños, ¿tienen conversaciones con ellos sobre esto?,
¿cuáles han sido algunos de los comentarios que los niños les han dicho?, ¿cómo es la
conversación?, ¿se sienten cómodos con el tema?
11. ¿Por qué crees que es importante publicar libros álbum sobre estos temas en Colombia?

Appendix C. Letter of invitation

English translation



The University of British Columbia
iSchool (Library, Archival and Information Studies)

Letter of invitation

Between Metaphors: picturebooks depicting a side of Colombia

Dear [name of participant],

We are writing to invite you to participate in the study *Between Metaphors: picturebooks depicting a side of Colombia* a study involving Colombian picturebooks which talk about the violence in the country. With this study we wish to better understand, from the perspective of experts in children's literature in Colombia (i.e. authors, illustrators, publishers, booksellers and children's book specialists), the production of picturebooks in Colombia that represent violence brought about by internal conflict.

For this study we will conduct a 45-60 minute interview with you to explore this phenomenon, understand its context, the process of creating these books, and the public's reception of them.

This investigation is done to understand the issues, opportunities and challenges that these picturebooks bring to Colombia and share this knowledge with other parts of the world.

Specifically, we aim to better understand the learning opportunities these picturebooks have brought to children and the conversations that have developed because of them from the

perspective of these experts. To disseminate this research, the final product of this investigation will be a documentary film.

The principal investigator for this study is Dr. Eric Meyers, who is an Associate Professor at the University of British Columbia. He will be conducting this study with co-investigator Valeria De La Vega as part of her thesis investigation in order for her to obtain her Master of Arts in Children's Literature.

Attached you will find the consent form where you can further read about the study and accept to participate in the study or turn down your participation.

Sincerely,

Valeria De La Vega

Masters of Arts Student at the University of British Columbia

Email

Telephone

Original letter of invitation in Spanish



The University of British Columbia
iSchool (Library, Archival and Information Studies)

Carta de invitación

Entre metáforas: libros álbum representando un lado de Colombia

Estimado [nombre del participante],

Le escribimos para invitarlo a participar en el estudio *Entre metáforas: libros álbum representando un lado de Colombia*, un estudio sobre libros álbum colombianos que hablan sobre la violencia en el país. Con este estudio deseamos comprender mejor, desde la perspectiva de los expertos en literatura infantil en Colombia (es decir, autores, ilustradores, editores, vendedores de libros y especialistas en libros infantiles), la producción de libros álbum en Colombia que representan la violencia provocada por un conflicto interno.

Para este estudio, realizaremos una entrevista de 45 minutos con usted para explorar este fenómeno, comprender su contexto, el proceso de creación de estos libros y la recepción de estos por parte del público. Esta investigación se realiza para comprender los problemas, las oportunidades y los desafíos que estos libros álbum traen a Colombia y compartir este conocimiento con otras partes del mundo. Específicamente, nuestro objetivo es comprender mejor las oportunidades de aprendizaje que estos libros álbum han brindado a los niños y las conversaciones que se han desarrollado a causa de ellos desde la perspectiva de estos expertos,

como usted. Para difundir esta investigación, el producto final de esta investigación será un documental.

El investigador principal de este estudio es el Dr. Eric Meyers, que es profesor asociado en la Universidad de British Columbia. Él llevará a cabo este estudio con la co-investigadora Valeria De La Vega como parte de su trabajo de tesis para que ella obtenga su Maestría en Artes en Literatura Infantil.

Adjunto encontrará el formulario de consentimiento donde puede leer más sobre el estudio y aceptar participar en el estudio o rechazar su participación.

Sinceramente,

Valeria De La Vega

Masters of Arts Student at the University of British Columbia

Correo

Teléfono

Appendix D. Consent Form

English Translation



The University of British Columbia
iSchool (Library, Archival and Information Studies)

Consent Form

Between Metaphors: picturebooks depicting a side of Colombia

Principal Investigator: Dr. Eric Meyers
Associate Professor
iSchool (Library, Archival and Information Studies), UBC
Phone
Email

Co-Investigator(s): Valeria De La Vega
MA in Children's Literature Student
iSchool (Library, Archival and Information Studies), UBC
Phone
Email

This investigation is part of Valeria De La Vega's graduate thesis to obtain her Masters of Arts in Children's Literature at the University of British Columbia. The result of the study will be part of a public document as well as a video documentary with general access to whomever chooses to consult the investigation.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to better understand, from the perspective of experts in children's literature in Colombia (i.e. authors, illustrators, publishers, booksellers and children's book specialists), the production of picturebooks in Colombia that represent violence brought about by

internal conflict. We seek to conduct interviews to explore this phenomenon, understand its context, the process of creating these books, and the public's reception of them. This investigation is done to understand the issues, opportunities and challenges that these picturebooks bring to Colombia and share this knowledge with other parts of the world. Specifically, we aim to better understand the learning opportunities these picturebooks have brought to children and the conversations that have developed because of them from the perspective of these experts.

Procedures

The student investigator will interview you regarding your work and knowledge of picturebooks by Colombian authors and illustrators, specifically on the works produced with the theme on Colombian violence. We will ask you questions such as, "Why do you think it matters to publish picturebooks on these topics in Colombia?". With your permission, we will video and audio record these interviews for the development of a documentary film.

Duration

The interview will last approximately 45 minutes. The interview will be conducted at a time and location that is convenient to you.

Confidentiality

With your consent, your identity (both image and voice) will be used to develop a documentary film. As such, your words and ideas will be made public and connected to your name. In this case, written consent of usage of image will be obtained before any attribution and publication

will be made. We will consult with you before the audio or video are made public in any way, and give you the opportunity to withdraw any portion of the interview that you do not wish to make public. All of original audio and video will be kept secure, and will only be viewed by the research team prior to publication of the edited documentary.

Dissemination of research

The findings of this study will be presented as part of Valeria De La Vega's graduate thesis in order to obtain her Masters of Arts in Children's Literature. The final product of the study, a documentary film, will be published online and it will be available to participants to share with others as well.

Potential risks of the study

We do not think there is anything in this study that could harm you or be bad for you. All of the questions that are being asked are about published works that are of public knowledge. Some of the questions we ask may seem sensitive, personal, or it may be information that you do not wish to disclose. You do not have to answer any question if you do not want to. You can end the interview at any time. We will also give you the opportunity to review and, if you desire, withdraw your interview from the study before it is published.

Potential benefits

There are potential benefits to the people who participate in this study. This study may give participants a platform to speak of their expertise to new audiences. Teachers, children, and

other book creators may also benefit from what we learn in this study by sharing the participants' work outside of the Colombian national context.

Inquiries

We will be happy to answer your questions about the research. Please do not hesitate to contact us either in person, by e-mail, or by telephone. If you have any questions or concerns about what we are asking of you, please contact the investigators: Valeria De La Vega or Dr. Eric Meyers.

Contact for concerns

If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics.

Consent

Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part, you may choose to pull out of the study at any time without giving a reason and without any negative impact on your work or reputation.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records. Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

I give consent to the usage of my image for the documentary film and wish to have my name included with the publication of my video interview responses and insights. By signing this

consent form, I am communicating my desire to have my responses and insights attributed to me in any print, digital or other media used to communicate the results of the research project.

Name (please print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Original Consent Form in Spanish



The University of British Columbia
iSchool (Library, Archival and Information Studies)

Formulario de consentimiento Entre metáforas: libros álbum representando un lado de Colombia

Investigador principal: Dr. Eric Meyers
Profesor asociado
iSchool (Library, Archival and Information Studies), UBC
Teléfono
Correo

Co-Investigador: Valeria De La Vega
MA in Children's Literature (estudiante)
iSchool (Library, Archival and Information Studies), UBC
Teléfono
Correo

Esta investigación hace parte de la tesis de posgrado de Valeria De La Vega para obtener su Maestría en Literatura Infantil en la Universidad de British Columbia. El resultado del estudio será parte de un documento público, así como un video documental con acceso general a quien elija consultar la investigación.

Propósito

El propósito de este estudio es llegar a una mayor comprensión, desde la perspectiva de los expertos en literatura infantil en Colombia (es decir, autores, ilustradores, editores, libreros y especialistas en libros infantiles), la producción de libros álbum en Colombia que representan la violencia provocada por el conflicto armado y problemas del país. Buscamos realizar entrevistas

para explorar este fenómeno, comprender su contexto, el proceso de creación de estos libros y la recepción de estos por parte del público. Esta investigación se realiza para comprender los problemas, las oportunidades y los desafíos que estos libros álbum traen a Colombia y compartir este conocimiento con otras partes del mundo. Específicamente, nuestro objetivo es llegar a una mayor comprensión de las oportunidades de aprendizaje que estos libros álbum han brindado a los niños y las conversaciones que se han desarrollado a causa de ellos, desde la perspectiva de estos expertos.

Procedimientos

La investigadora estudiante de postgrado lo(a) entrevistará acerca de su trabajo y el conocimiento de los libros álbum de autores e ilustradores colombianos, específicamente sobre los trabajos producidos con el tema sobre la violencia colombiana. Le haremos preguntas como: "¿Por qué cree que es, o no, importante publicar libros álbum sobre estos temas en Colombia?". Con su permiso, haremos grabaremos de video y audio de su entrevista para el desarrollo de un documental.

Duración

La entrevista durará aproximadamente 45 minutos. La entrevista se llevará a cabo en un horario y lugar que sea conveniente para usted.

Confidencialidad

Con su consentimiento, su identidad (imagen y voz) se utilizará para desarrollar un documental. Como tal, sus palabras e ideas se harán públicas y estarán conectadas con su nombre. En este

caso, se obtendrá un consentimiento por escrito del uso de su imagen antes de realizar cualquier atribución y publicación.

Consultaremos con usted antes de que el audio o video se haga público de cualquier manera, y le daremos la oportunidad de retirar cualquier parte de la entrevista que no desee hacer pública.

Todo el audio y video original se mantendrá seguro, y solo será visto por el equipo de investigación antes de la publicación del documental editado.

Circulación de la investigación

Los hallazgos de este estudio se presentarán como parte de la tesis de posgrado de Valeria De La Vega para obtener su Maestría en Artes en Literatura Infantil. El producto final del estudio, un documental, se publicará en línea y estará disponible para que los participantes la compartan con otros.

Potenciales riesgos del estudio

No creemos que haya nada en este estudio que pueda perjudicar o ser malo para usted. Todas las preguntas que se hacen son sobre libros publicados que son de conocimiento público. Algunas de las preguntas que hacemos pueden parecer delicadas, personales o puede ser información que no desea revelar. No tiene que responder ninguna pregunta si no desea hacerlo. Puede finalizar la entrevista en cualquier momento. También le daremos la oportunidad de revisar y, si lo desea, retirar su entrevista del estudio antes de que se publique.

Beneficios potenciales

Creemos que existen beneficios potenciales para las personas que participan en este estudio. Este estudio puede dar a los participantes una plataforma para hablar de su experiencia a nuevas audiencias. Los maestros, niños y otros creadores de libros también pueden beneficiarse de lo que aprendemos en este estudio al compartir el trabajo de las personas que serán entrevistadas fuera del contexto nacional colombiano.

Consultas

Estaremos encantados de responder sus preguntas sobre la investigación. No dude en ponerse en contacto con nosotros personalmente, por correo electrónico o por teléfono. Si tiene alguna pregunta o inquietud sobre lo que le estamos pidiendo, comuníquese con los investigadores: Valeria De La Vega o Dr. Eric Meyers.

Inquietudes

Si tiene alguna inquietud o queja sobre sus derechos como participante de la investigación y/o sus experiencias mientras participa en este estudio, comuníquese con la Línea de quejas de participantes de investigación en la Oficina de Investigación Ética de la UBC.

Consentimiento

Participar en este estudio es completamente voluntario. Tiene derecho a negarse a participar en este estudio. Si decide participar, puede optar por retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento sin dar una razón y sin ningún impacto negativo en su trabajo o reputación.

Su firma a continuación indica que ha recibido una copia de este formulario de consentimiento para sus propios registros.

Su firma indica que usted acepta participar en este estudio.

Doy mi consentimiento para el uso de mi imagen para el documental y deseo que se incluya mi nombre en la publicación de las respuestas y las ideas filmadas en mi entrevista. Al firmar este formulario de consentimiento, estoy comunicando mi deseo de que mis respuestas y conocimientos se me atribuyan en cualquier medio impreso, digital u otro medio utilizado para comunicar los resultados del proyecto de investigación.

Nombre (por favor imprimir): _____

Firma: _____

Fecha: _____

Appendix E. Storyboard (first draft)

<p style="text-align: center;">Zully Pardo</p> <p>The picturebook in Colombia begin to be published in the 80s.</p> <p>The promulgation of the rights of children that generates great impact in Latin America, and they realized that there are not many things in Latin America that are for Latin America and in that Ekaré had great influence next to the Book Bank of Venezuela...</p> <p>Books arrived from Spain; it was believed that children did not feel so identified with them. Norma and Valencia editors begin to make books... with this, children begin to see more local things in books... Several organizations of reading promotion in Colombia are born.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">María Osorio</p> <p>I decided to form my publishing project because I realized that proper Colombian books were needed.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ana María Aragón</p> <p>The picturebooks from Babel are the ones that talk the most about the subject. There are parents who do not want to deal with difficult issues with children, however somehow in schools they have treated the subject and has led to a bigger acceptance of them.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">María Osorio</p> <p>We create a very clear line of books are not the easiest of the market, I'm interested in talking about things that are happening in the national context and literature contributes in that sense, because they are only seeing these topics treated in the television that I find awful.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Jairo Buitrago</p> <p>The circumstances of the country affect what you write especially if you are worried about what happens. It is something that comes hand in hand with being Colombian or Latin American because we are surrounded by complex things, from poverty, political instability, and you can talk about these issues with children's books... and children also have that complex background of where they live. Your background permeates the work.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ivar Da Coll</p> <p>I believe that all literature is universal, and one cannot depart from the reality that surrounds us. I believe that one cannot separate oneself from the references that he has in his context, you have to be careful of what you say, and sometimes if you say it right your story can have a universal meaning.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Ivar Da Coll</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">María Osorio</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ivar Da Coll</p>

<p>One is not impervious to what happens around him. This happened with <i>Tengo miedo</i>, the re-illustration, showed how the country has affected me.</p>	<p>We did not set out to make a book about the situation of violence in the country"... the idea came from the collection of the stories of Eusebio that had been published more than 20 years ago and we wanted to update the illustrations. Ivar is a very sensitive author who cannot be isolated from the things that are happening and that is seen in the new version of the book. If you check the Colombian children's literature you realize that a while ago it touches upon those subjects, Ivar is not the first to talk about them but maybe he is the first to draw for children so small... The adult public has two reactions 1. Preschool teachers saying they ruined the book by putting politics in it, and 2. We have to show this book to children We have had several reactions from people who believe that it is a big issue that should be talked about, and those who despise it thinking it was an opportunism to deal with the issue.</p>	<p><i>Tengo miedo</i> is part of the collection of Eusebio's stories that when I first wrote and illustrated them they were made in one ink. Then María Osorio and I decided that we were going to do it again in color. And this new version was created. Here the narration is mostly carried out by images... one thing is to speak metaphorically with a child, which a child can understand perfectly and another is to use symbology, and mixing these two is wrong in a picturebook - when it is full of symbology it is actually made for adults. <i>Tengo miedo</i> arises from an emotion of mine. When I was young I was very shy and I was afraid of people. At one point I made the reflection that these people were afraid of other things. And that is in the original text where it is shown that monsters are afraid of things and that they do normal things just as we do them as well.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Zully Pardo</p> <p>Within what I know there are not many books that talk about the topic of armed conflict in picturebooks. There are many more in young adult novels... <i>Camino a casa</i> is an exceptional book that talks about disappearances... <i>Tengo miedo</i> I</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Jairo Buitrago</p> <p><i>Camino a casa</i>: it was born as a poem to a girl that I saw on the street, hand in hand with a small child, and it affected me a lot to see them so fragile. That same day I wrote the poem and drew the lion with the girl. It was a metaphor about protection and abandonment.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Rafael Yocktengo</p> <p><i>Camino a casa</i> is the story of a girl who lost her father for some cause in a country like Colombia. In this story you see the suffering of a person who has lost someone and does not know if he will return that happens in many parts of the world.</p>

<p>like it - the notion of childhood changes... fears... it has an approach to armed conflict and the many forms of fear... (29:40) However, <i>Eloisa y los bichos</i> I think it's something else... it looks like a displacement, but you do not know exactly what happened there...</p>	<p>And when I spoke with Rafael Yockteng it became a picturebook. When we presented it to Babel, María Osorio recommended we send it to a prize, and it won...</p>	
<p>Jairo Buitrago <i>Eloisa y los bichos</i>: after <i>Camino a casa</i>... (13:00) it worked as a metaphor for migration and readers have given it many interpretations. Children from Central America who are migrants feel reflected as well as children who change schools, both feel reflected ... Our picturebooks deal with topics that were not usually in children's books ...</p>	<p>Rafael Yockteng <i>Eloisa y los bichos</i> is the story of migrants and I often feel that it is my story because when I was very young, I moved from Peru to Colombia and it ends up being the story of migrants all over the world that go through major circumstances.</p>	<p>Jairo Buitrago <i>Camino a casa</i> generates many emotions in adults. Sadly many times it is due to circumstances that have come to their family due to forced situations, kidnappings, disappearances... memories that the book brings... there are also cases where there are families where a family member is missing and they also feel identified and want to share, in a space where you are talking about books... (17:10) are parents who have emigrated to other places and want to give the book to their children and often do not know how to explain the feelings they have... as a child I traveled a lot and I feel that it is a story very close to me because I had to start over many times.</p>
<p>Rafael Yockteng I interact with the children by doing. I do not have great conversations about the subjects, I make them draw, we talk about life, sometimes I teach them techniques and I tell them to draw about their</p>	<p>Jairo Buitrago <i>Camino a casa</i> generates many emotions in adults. Sadly many times it is due to circumstances that have come to their family due to forced situations, kidnappings, disappearances... memories that the</p>	<p>Jairo Buitrago In Chile they were amazed that <i>Camino a casa</i> wasn't from Chile... in Mexico they told me about the earthquake of '85 where many lost their families... With <i>Eloisa y los bichos</i> many Venezuelan children</p>

<p>life relating their drawings to the book and they manage to express their anguishes, fears and desires clearly in the images. And they lose the fear of writing, and there are some who do not like to draw and end up writing.</p>	<p>book brings... there are also cases where there are families where a family member is missing and they also feel identified and want to share, in a space where you are talking about books... (17:10) are parents who have emigrated to other places and want to give the book to their children and often do not know how to explain the feelings they have... as a child I traveled a lot and I feel that it is a story very close to me because I had to start over many times.</p>	<p>appreciate the book and see themselves reflected. With <i>Dos conejos blancos</i> you can see exactly what happens also speaking of emigrants and the combination of these two becomes a very nice exercise... the interpretations are many and varied and the children understand them and it is the adults who do not understand them in the end, many picturebooks end up with images and adults do not understand those endings</p>
<p>Rafael Yockteng I think the important thing is to publish stories of what is happening here, this in particular happens but it is not the only thing that happens. There are many topics that can be said and told that happen all over the world... I think that books about war and types of abuse are being published in multiple places around the world. And I think that the taboos of what is right for children are being lost. They also suffer and books can be a good company for everyone.</p>	<p>Jairo Buitrago When talking about complex issues with the picturebook, they feel more comfortable because the space of the book is kinder, and the children feel more relaxed and they can talk about the subject with the teacher, the librarian or the reading promoter. And they can talk about the different topics... and there is no age, I have taken my books to schools and I have found that grade 11 kids are the ones who have read and worked with them. It is easy to open up to books especially in the picturebook where the text is short and the images open the possibilities to speak.</p>	<p>Ana María Aragón Somehow, they expose you to the issues that are happening in the country because many times we are in a little bubble... Especially the Colombian middle class.</p>
<p>Ivar Da Coll Because it is a way of sensitizing, the wonderful thing about literature is that it allows us to have the</p>	<p>María Osorio There are already books that make children laugh... it seems to me indispensable to talk about what</p>	<p>Zully Pardo It is important; however, the society is not always ready to talk about things that are difficult... The</p>

<p>possibility of becoming more empathetic.</p>	<p>happens because children are contaminated by newspapers and news broadcasts on the television of things that happen, and it is essential to talk about the local issues.</p>	<p>wounds caused by the guerrillas and paramilitaries are things that we are not willing to talk about, and if talking about it between adults is difficult, talking about it with children is even more. We have also not found the ways to tell them. You have to give it the time it needs... talking about this in children's books is not handled like it would be in a textbook... editors, authors and illustrators may not be interested in publishing those things and when it comes to issues that compromise sensitivities, not everyone is willing to talk about this to children.</p>
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Figure 9. Storyboard made out of the video notes