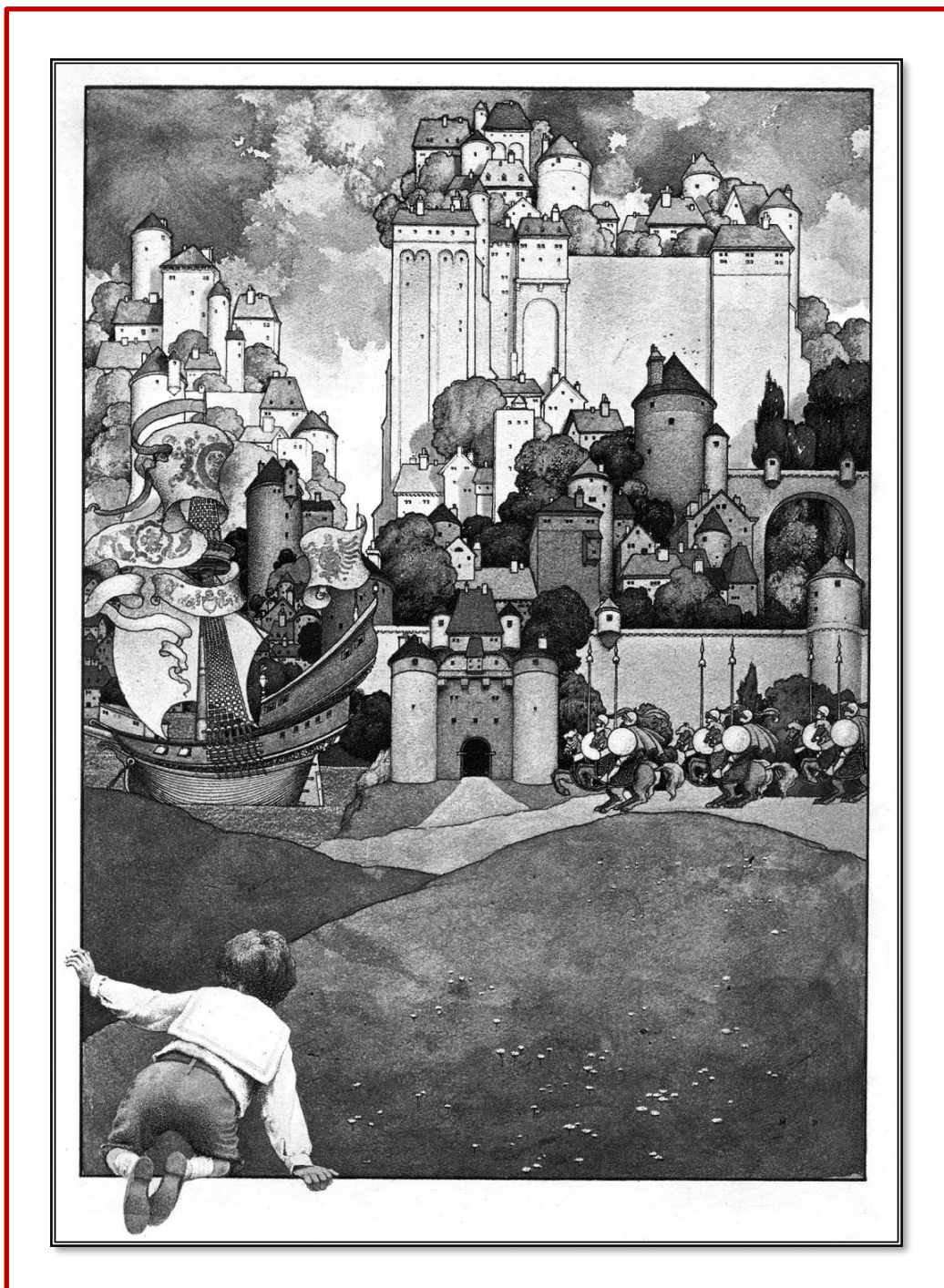


Call for Papers of the Special Issue «Rivista di Storia dell'Educazione» n° 1, 2025

**LITERATURE, VISUAL CULTURE AND CHILDHOOD:
HISTORICAL ITINERARIES AND HERMENEUTIC PERSPECTIVES**

Edited by Chiara LEPRI, Juri MEDA & Martino NEGRI



Its Wall Were as of Jasper by Maxfield Parrish (in: *Dream Days* by Kenneth Grahame, 1902)

Images have always been linked to stories, long before these began to be printed in books embellished — with the evolution of printing methods processes — with colourful illustrations and rich in details. Initially — for technical and economic reasons — the images reproduced within the books were few and were woodcuts and engravings that were simple in structure and crude in sign, printed in black and white. Later, thanks to the introduction of chromolithographic printing in the second half of the 19th century, images began to be published in bright colours and in larger formats, ideal for captivating readers, invited to the pleasures of lingering, immersion and rapture.

Books, however, were only accessible to children from the upper classes and were published in limited editions at very high prices. The improvement of printing techniques and the lowering of production costs made it possible, over time, to publish widely illustrated books at lower prices, generating a new, very fruitful publishing market that began to spread to a broader socio-cultural context; since antiquity, after all, pictorial and sculptural representations had represented a significant form of access to high culture for the illiterate people.

The seductive power of images began at this point to play an important role in the commercial dimension as well, becoming a powerful attraction for young readers and the adults who bought books for them. Around the 1870s, thanks to Randolph Caldecott, the modern form of the picturebook was born in England, while in Italy, in the same years, the increasingly communicatively effective images created by illustrators began to populate the collective imaginary, generating figurative models and true icons of modern mass culture.

Starting in the first decades of the 20th century — initially in books for younger children — illustrations gradually took over from words, questioning the historical balance of forces existing between text and image within the book and favouring the rise of a new idea of authorship, not limited to the writer alone, but extended to the illustrator. The author of the illustrations, in fact, was acknowledged as architect of a verbo-visual narrative device significantly characterised by a complex series of elements that were not only iconic and graphic, but also material. After centuries at the service of the word, the iconic language was finally recognised as having full artistic, narrative and semantic dignity.

This call for papers aims to bring together studies and reflections that allow us to focus on — in a diachronic perspective — the richness and complexity of this long and multifaceted evolution, characterised by bold paradigm shifts and abrupt slowdowns in the name of a presumed superiority of *lógos* over *eikón*.

This evolution can be grasped through multiple and complementary perspectives — editorial, aesthetic, literary, educational and semiotic — capable of detecting the multiple and multiform links existing between literature, visual culture and childhood, which only a multi-perspective can try to interpret, also — though not only — in the context of a historical reflection on education.

MAIN ISSUES

- from the book with illustrations to the picturebook: milestones and protagonists of a Copernican revolution;
- the function of images in books and picturebooks: between aesthetic tension and educational dimension, between fiction and non-fiction;
- illustrators and artists of yesterday and today: artistic production between tradition and innovation;
- fine books, books given as an award, handmade books, artists' books, photo books and limited editions, also with reference to the theme of technical reproducibility;
- game books, animated books, movable books, pop-ups and interactive books between book mechanics and grammar of play, from the forerunners of the 18th and 19th centuries to the inventions of the present;
- illustration techniques and graphic composition: from engraving to digital graphics; the text-image relationship and the layout design (*mise en page*); the lettering between text legibility and playfulness; allegory and paratextuality in books' endpapers;
- printing techniques and the materiality of the book: forms, formats and papermaking between handcrafted and industrial production;
- sequential art: illustrated magazines, comic books and graphic novels;
- children's literature in the face of the pictorial turn: the new forms of digital fiction;
- evolution of aesthetic taste and reader-response criticism in relation to the formation of the imaginary through the reading of images.

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GUIDELINES AND DEADLINES

By 02/29, 2024 authors should send an abstract (2,000 characters, including spaces) of their proposal, illustrating its contents, theoretical framework, methodologies and documentation considered, its position in relation to the studies on the topic, 3-5 keywords.

The proposal must be accompanied by a short biography (approximately 500 characters, including spaces).

The proposal should be sent to: segreteria@cirse.it and for information also to the editors of the special issue, to the following addresses: chiara.lepri@uniroma3.it; juri.meda@unimc.it; martino.negri@unimib.it.

Selection by the editors and the RSE journal's editorial board will take place by 03/31, 2024.

By 10/31, 2024 authors must send to the editors the complete manuscript, of no more than 40,000 characters (including spaces, bibliography and footnotes), drafted according to the editorial rules of the journal. A maximum of 5 colour images may also be included in the final version of each contribution. The images must be in .jpg or .tiff format with a definition of no less than 300 dpi and must be sent in files separate from the text, as well as their captions, in which the physical or digital sources must always be indicated. The images must be original or free of copyright or accompanied by releases authorising their use. Materials accompanying the text must be submitted at the same time as the contribution.

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