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YOUNG URBANISTS: A CHILD IN A BIG CITY IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE DISCOURSE

The aim of the investigation is to review and make the analysis of the illustrated books, assisting a child in making an acquaintance with the modern urbanistic environment, becoming a part of it and mastering its rules and adapting to them.

Literature of the XX-XIX centuries as a whole have witnessed significant changes related to the problematic, thematic, narrative, compositional and language style aspects of the writing. Nowadays, literature is regarded as a constantly developing field at the intersection of science and art; therefore, sophisticated literary texts are considered to be a literary “*fusion*” – the combination of different art forms, trends, customs and tropes [22]. *Children's literature* of these days is not an exception, requiring scrupulous investigation, thoughtful analysis and interpretation through new literary views and approaches. In accordance with the new approaches children's literature should:

- correspond to all the adult book requirements;
- take into consideration the child's outlook as an additional literary criterium;
- develop artistic taste of a child;
- assist a child in his/her personality formation, self-understanding and perception of the surrounding environment.

“*Children's literature*” is viewed as an integral part of the general literature with all peculiar to it features at the same time being focused on the interest of a child as a reader and having specific nature defining child's psychology [6, p. 240].

Besides, children's literature scholars define the notion of “*children's literature*” according to two basic criteria stating that:

- it is actually created by children or for children [3, p. 220].
- it is written or adapted for children [13, p. 20].

The multitasking nature of *children's literature* lies in the functions it performs in relation to the reader like addresses to the imagination, emotions and feelings of a child, affects his/her cognitive capability, develops tastes and preferences. In addition to those, children's literature entertains a child [13, p. 20], promotes the contact establishment with the young reader and aims at getting him/her involved [20, p. 15], shares with a child the society's centuries-old experience [15], letting adults get into the world of excitement, entertainments and amusing discoveries [8].

Thereafter the issue of child's perception in children's literature is currently topical. Experienced writers and publishers state that writing a book for children is a challenge as children are sensitive to anything fake and have their unique outlook [12]. *Children's literature* is the piece of art world about what a child is, the way a

child perceives the surrounding environment. The uptake of content by a child is based on his/her perception and is considered to be one of the main components of child's creative activity – the starting point for the future creative activity. The better ideas of an object a child has, the more fulfilled and clearer the object will be. In its turn, *artistic perception* is a special form of creative cognitive activity, characterized by the emotional understanding of a work of art through the comprehension of a specific figurative language of art and the building up a certain aesthetic attitude expressed in evaluation [4, p. 208]. Attention is the key to a child's perception of the content and their understanding [14, p. 248]. Only through listening to the text, looking at the illustrations a child perceives it being an unexperienced reader for whom reading is a complex intellectual activity process, requiring great attention and concentration, distracting a child sometimes from the very content [7, p. 5].

The easiest way to draw a child's attention to the text is through illustration to it, as the bright cover of the children's book captures both the child's attention and prepares a child for perceiving the content, contributing to his/her aesthetic upbringing.

Illustrations to the text are an indispensable element of children's books, assisting a child in understanding more deeply the meaning of the text, getting into the world of described in the book events. Thus, visual perception is one of the main means of direct knowledge of objects and phenomena of surrounding reality. To all that, an illustrated children's book has a significant impact on the child's perception formation and is possible only because the attitude of a child toward the image as the reflection of reality is changing, the ability to correctly compare an image with reality is developing, the interpretation of an image, understanding of its idea is improving.

Naming and counting separate objects depicted on the image, giving a brief description of the, fully, accurately and figuratively characterizing an image by means of different means, – these are a few steps a child takes toward perceiving the illustrations met in a book [11, p. 236-238].

The interpretation of illustrations, understanding of the situations and events depicted on them depend on both the adequate perception and the nature of the illustrated plot, its complexity and accessibility. Adequate and clear understanding of the illustrations, quality of the children's narrations to a significant extent rely on the *communication* while getting through them. It is clear that the perception of illustrations by a child varies a lot depending on how complicated the content of the images is. In case a child is familiar with the idea of the image, he/she can describe it in details. However, when a child is unfamiliar, he/she proceeds to the naming the separate figures, objects being unable to understand the whole composition, gets distracted from the content and, of course, begins to fantasize, thinking up something new to the native content of the story, making it special [5, p. 206-208].

As soon as sophisticated literature has become less "*literary and profound*" but more "*dynamic*" [19], a new system of children's literature genres is being formed and beside the traditional literature genres like a novel, a fairy-tale, a legend, a poem there have appeared world-famous and widely read a "*picturebook*" and a *wimmelbook* (hidden picture book) etc [1].

A *picturebook* is focused on making an emotional impact on a child – joy, excitement, sympathy, laughter; it is a correlation between a visual and a verbal in which the content is transferred through illustrations and the text (if any) has a nature of inscriptions [10]. A *wimmelbook*, in its turn, is viewed as a large-size book made of board paper containing no inscriptions but for the front page, introduction and short lines integrated into illustrations. It can be interesting to readers of all ages, fosters the development of different perception forms and information analysis, motivates a reader, can be the first manual to develop skills of connected speech, encourages a child to observe and think up stories by discovering images [21].

The present day's market of children's literature demonstrates significant changes related to the artistic design of a child's book conditioned by, first and foremost, the increase of thematic variety. Publications aim at getting a child acquainted with the surrounding environment: house, shop, animals, plants, vehicles, important events, holidays, favorite cartoon or film characters.

The investigation focuses on the urbanization subject: a child in a big city (architecture, design) and the perception of a city by a child. These books are sure to visually delight readers of all ages while teaching kids how to become the next generation of smart thinkers, inventive creators, and model citizens.

Among the examples, the worth mentioning ones are: "*The Sound of Silence*" (2016, author: Katrina Goldsaito, illustrator: Julio Kuo) [16], "*Last Stop on Market Street*" (2015, author: Matt de la Pena, illustrator: Christian Robinson) [17], "*Maybe Something Beautiful: How Art Transformed a Neighborhood*" (2016, authors: F. Isabel Campoy, Theresa Howell, illustrator: Rafael Lopes) [18], etc. A big city, a megapolis, is the first hostile environment for children to get acquainted with it. For someone this acquaintance turns out to be an interesting journey into something before unknown just to broaden the outlook when for others it causes stress when facing challenges with the dangerous spirits of a city. A modern child is developing incredibly fast and preparation of a child to the "*adults' life*" in a big city addressing to *picturebooks* is a topical form of communication between the world of adults and the world of children and fostering the socialization process.

The Ukrainian market of children's literature is mostly stuffed with *picturebooks* of foreign authors and illustrators while the domestic publishing companies are taking first, but successful, steps in their upgrading the skills in this very genre of children's literature. The question of a child's perception of a big city and the process of socialization is of high importance these days requiring a more scrupulous investigation by the domestic literary scholars.

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