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THE WORK OF V. NESTAİKO IN THE CONTEXT OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Summary. The article examines the phenomenon of contemporary Ukrainian prose for children and adolescents as a holistic artistic, aesthetic, and cultural phenomenon that plays a crucial role in the development of national literature and the formation of the reading culture of the younger generation. The authors highlight the key features of this literary direction, in particular the specifics of aesthetic communication between the adult author and the young reader. Such dialogue is achieved through the use of playful, imaginative, and humorous elements that create a special artistic space capable of combining cognitive, educational, and entertaining functions. The communicative nature of children's literature is analyzed, along with its ability to shape moral and ethical values and foster the development of aesthetic taste. The article outlines major literary approaches to the study of children's prose, emphasizing its multifunctionality and distinctive artistic system of images. Considerable attention is devoted to the works of Vsevolod Nestayko, whose trilogy *Toreadors from Vasyukivka* became a canonical example of Ukrainian children's literature of the twentieth century. The humanistic orientation of Nestayko's works, combining a sincere child's worldview with the resolution of complex moral and ethical issues, ensures their relevance for modern readers. The authors also consider the changes and adaptations made to the writer's texts to meet the needs of the younger generation and determine the significance of his legacy within both Ukrainian and global literary contexts. It is noted that contemporary Ukrainian children's prose performs not only cognitive and educational functions but also plays a significant role in shaping national identity, preserving cultural memory, and maintaining the continuity of the literary tradition. Particular emphasis is placed on the prospects for further research in this field, since children's and adolescent prose today actively responds to contemporary challenges, remaining open to innovation while continuing the traditions of the classics.

Key words: Ukrainian children's prose, contemporary children's literature, adventure genre, aesthetics of children's book, literature for teenagers, humor in prose, poetics of children's literature.

Problem statement. Children's literature of all times is directed towards the future. All the most interesting things in world literature are picked up and multiplied by children's imagination and emotionality. It is the works of literature that reveal to children the harmony between the past and the future, forcing them to

believe in the infinity of human creative possibilities. At the same time, creativity as a process consists of conscious and unconscious components, involves observation of phenomena, selective memorization of the essential, mental tension, emotional uplift, and vivid imagination.

Vsevolod Nestaiko is one of the most prominent Ukrainian children's writers, whose name has become synonymous with fun adventures and bright, optimistic literature. The writer's literary output includes not only humorous works, but also serious books, where the author highlights important moral and ethical issues. The most famous work of V. Nestaiko is the trilogy "Toreadors from Vasyukivka", which entered the golden treasury of Ukrainian literature.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Modern Ukrainian prose for children and adolescents has become the subject of deep scientific understanding, which is confirmed by the intensification of literary, pedagogical, cultural and psychological research over the past decades. New scientific publications demonstrate progress from a purely pedagogical or moral-instructional perception of children's literature to a full-fledged analysis of its aesthetic, genre, structural-narrative and communicative characteristics.

Thanks to the works of such researchers as T. Kachak, O. Papusha, Yu. Balan, L. Mazeiko-Bekelska, children's literature began to be considered as a special artistic phenomenon that requires a thorough interdisciplinary approach.

The works of M. Slavova emphasize the two-sided communicative nature of children's literature: the adult author adapts his artistic method to the child's perception, and the child acts as an active participant (co-author) in the interpretation of the text.

Among the priority areas of research, the genre-thematic analysis of new Ukrainian prose for children and adolescents is highlighted (V. Kyzylova, I. Boytsun, L. Ovdychuk). B. Salyuk and O. Papusha work on the typification of the image of the main character and the features of children's and youth narrative.

The works of I. Boytsun, O. Budugay, N. Sydorenko, N. Reznichenko trace the development of Ukrainian children's prose in a historical context, in particular, in the context of the Galician literary tradition of the late 19th – early 20th centuries.

Analyzing modern publications, it can be argued that children's literature is gradually overcoming simplified didactics. Researchers (in particular, O. Vovk and V. Kyzylova) emphasize the need for harmony between the artistic and didactic components.

A separate place in the analysis of recent studies is occupied by the study of the creative heritage of Vsevolod NESTAİKO. His prose is interpreted as a universal example of high-quality literature for children and adolescents (N. Virych, P. Kirchenko, Yu. Katsun, L. Ovdiychuk, etc.). The trilogy "Toreadors from Vasyukivka" is especially actively studied, which is considered not only as a classic of adventure literature, but also as an example of a modern view of the child as an autonomous subject.

Purpose. Outlining the specifics of the poetic organization of adventure literature for children does not lose its relevance and that is why it was chosen as the purpose of this investigation.

Presentation of the main material. New Ukrainian prose for children and adolescents is a clear and new artistic, aesthetic and cultural phenomenon, and the paradigmatic understanding of its main features and development trends demonstrates the relevance of the research topic. It is demonstrated by the presence of a comprehensive and complete understanding of this socio-aesthetic phenomenon from the point of view of traditional and current theoretical explorations through a qualitative analysis of poetic systems [1].

M. Slavova draws attention to the fact that the age criterion forms a specific type of aesthetic communication: an adult author, when creating a work, actualizes a child's perception of the world, writing in a language understandable to children. The child, becoming a "co-author", influences the choice of topic and methods of presentation, which helps to better perceive the text. Play and fantasy elements are important aesthetic components of children's literature [2, p. 5].

This "children's aspect" determines the proto-aesthetic specificity of children's literature. O. Papusha adds that children's literature is an aesthetic phenomenon that simultaneously functions as a literary form and has a value dimension. The author offers "three approaches" to understanding children's literature:

- 1) etymological (the reference word requires a literary context);
- 2) conditional (qualitative certainty depends on the social nature of the phenomenon as a process and product of social communication, which is generally included in the broad anthropological perspective of the cultural transmission of experience, but under the influence of everyday stereotypes is reduced to a project of a "pedagogical monologue" by means of the artistic word, where the child is an object of influence, not a subject of development);
- 3) marginal (requires additional justification and new, not yet reflected coordinates)" [3, p. 26].

Various literary studies offer a number of double terms: "children's literature", "literature for children", "literature for children and youth", "literature of the children's reading circle". In addition, the main attention in these definitions is paid to the communicative aspect of the nature of children's literature. However, this does not allow to fully understand its artistic specificity and aesthetic conventionality.

For a long time, the Ukrainian literary community did not take into account the importance of works of children's and youth prose in certain processes and did not position them as a serious object of scientific knowledge. However, with the growth of interest in children's books and reading, the situation is changing with the emergence of research devoted to the study of children's books as a literary and publishing phenomenon (E. Ogar), genre and thematic analysis of works (V. Kyzylova, L. Ovdiychuk, I. Boytsun), narrative aspects (O. Papusha), typology (O. Papusha), typification (O. Papusha), typification of the image of the main character

(B. Salyuk), understanding of communicative paradigms and norms (Yu. Balan), generalization of features and trends of development (T. Kachak), theoretical issues of text interpretation and poetics (L. Mazeenko-Bekelska). The focus of historical and literary research by I. Boytsun, O. Budugay, O. Harachkovska, S. Ivanyuk, V. Kyzylova, V. Kostyuchenko, N. Reznichenko, G. Sabat, N. Sydorenko, L. Tkachenko, O. Chepurna, and O. Tsalapova is mainly on children's prose of the 20th century.

The first attempts at theoretical and methodological knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon of youth literature in Ukrainian science date back to the end of the 19th – beginning of the 20th century and concern mainly the Galician region. As E. Ogar rightly noted, during this period Ukrainian children's literature was published in Galicia. The activation of research in this field was due, on the one hand, to the growth of activity of Ukrainians in the sphere of political and cultural public life, their attention to issues of national education and the publication of books and publications for children, and on the other hand, to the rapid development of European science, primarily pedagogy and age psychology, the focus of which was children, which was also facilitated by the "turning of face" to the subject [4].

The Russian Pedagogical Society (O. Balvinsky, V. Bilinsky, D. Lukyanovich, K. Pankivsky, etc.), starting with individual publications at the end of the 19th century, held fairly regular discussions about children's literature and children's reading in the 1920s and 1930s. M. Marytska, K. Pankivsky, etc. were especially active, publishing the children's magazine "Dzvinok" (1890-1914), developing and publishing "programs for further influence on children's literature". Over time, the circle of participants in the general discussion gradually increased, and the range of topics expanded.

The characteristics of children's literature are a fictional plot, the constancy of the rules of the game and the universe in a fictional world, writing texts on historical or exotic material that captivates with an interesting idea, real tension and the affirmation of specific ethical norms independent of the cultural background. For children's and young people's literature, the lyricism of the narrative, the sensitivity of the language of the work and the presence of purposeful, specific and realistic artistic images in the work are important. An important condition is also the author's skill, especially in the ability to present the artistic world in a format familiar to the reader, skillfully harmonizing the child's worldview and understanding of the world, as well as adult experience [5, p. 31].

Despite the fact that children's literature has its own specifics, it is also subject to the laws that apply to literature in general. Polyfunctionality is inherent in the very nature of the word, but different cultural and historical eras actualize the most important trends in a certain period of time. Among the timeless values for a children's book, it is worth mentioning the didactic and educational component. A children's book helps the reader better understand himself, express thoughts and feelings, contributes to the development of aesthetic taste, a sense of beauty, and is distinguished by the maximum specificity of what is depicted.

According to O. Vovk, youth (for high school students) and young adult literature is distinguished by a rich variety of themes and genres. Young people often prefer science fiction and adventure literature, are interested in childhood and school life, historical artifacts and biographical novels about famous people. Young people are interested in travel and strong-willed heroes. Young readers have always been fascinated by heroic stories. This is due to

their psychological characteristics, the desire for the extraordinary, the need for self-affirmation and greatness, the desire to become famous [6, p. 242-249].

An indispensable condition of literature for children and youth, as V. Kyzylova notes, is the ability to “present the artistic world to the reader in a format accessible to him, skillfully balancing on the verge of a child’s worldview and understanding of the world and at the same time the experience of an adult” [7, p. 93]. Vsevolod Nestayko is such a master and talented writer.

V. Nestayko is a classic of children’s and youth literature, who easily fits into the new literary process with his own modern and recent works. The author of novels, short stories, short stories, children’s fairy tales and plays in various genres. He republished talented works written during the Soviet era in new editions, giving them new life and removing ideological layers. In particular, the trilogy “Toreadors from Vasyukivka”, the novels “One of the Deceivers” and “Five with a Tail”. During the years of Ukraine’s independence, Vsevolod Nestayko created more than several dozen modern and interesting works: the novel “Super B in Meatballs”, a collection of detective stories “The Mysterious Voice Behind”, “The Fairytale Adventures of Grailyk”, “The Magic Talisman”, the fairy tale “Chorley”, “Magic Glasses”, “The Blacksmiths of Happiness, or the New Year’s Detective”, “The Latest Adventures of Kolya Vukhan and Kolya Kolka”, as well as a detective story – a continuation of the popular novels “The Amazing Adventures of an Unusual Princess”, etc. [8, p. 9].

In the field of modern literary studies, the writer’s creative output has been the subject of research by P. Kirchenko, O. Papusha, N. Reznichenko, B. Salyuk, N. Sydorenko and other scholars. Interest in studying various aspects of this artist’s work does not fade away today. Thus, from the point of view of N. Virych, the existential orientation of V. Nestayko’s prose deserves special attention. The researcher attempted to analyze the specifics of the existence of the characters in the artist’s prose. Studying the story “The Riddle of the Old Clown”, N. Virych notes that the writer focuses on the process of personality growth of the heroes, who go through a series of trials, skillfully builds psychological constructs. The author rightly notes that the artist’s attention is focused on the problem of character formation, a system of complex, sometimes traumatic choices that arise before a teenager [9].

For more than half a century, many critical articles, reviews, and methodological developments have been written in literature about the artist’s work. These materials explore various aspects of his famous trilogy, tales about the Forest School, the adventures of Kolya Vukhan and Kolka Kolyuchka, as well as his other works, such as “In the Land of Sunny Bunnies”, “Unit with Deception”, and “Five with a Tail”. V. Nestayko is a master of adventure fiction. Researchers distinguish adventure prose (novels and stories) based on plot and thematic features. Adventure literature is usually represented by novels and short stories, less often by short stories and novellas. In particular, adventure literature is “a work which plot is saturated with extraordinary events and whose main feature is surprise and great power of development” [10, p. 598].

L. Ovdychuk notes that the works of V. Nestayko were repeatedly censored by the author, correcting certain ideological shades of the past era and details that may be incomprehensible to the modern and future reader. Therefore, the researcher emphasizes, even without editing, without new episodes and “yellow submarines”, the book remains relevant due to the self-sufficiency and ease of plot

twists, lively dialogues and specific humor. Children of the modern era, in general, can feel all the hidden discoveries that the artist shared in “Toreadors from Vasyukivka” [8, p. 10].

The works of V. Nestayko meet the criteria for the selection of children’s literature. This is due to the fact that they are based on children’s experience and, more importantly, are examples of humanistic literature, and therefore, they correspond as best as possible to children’s experience. All of these works, without exception, fit into the extremely rich world of classical children’s literature, especially Scandinavian literature with its great authors, such as A. Lindgren, T. Jansson and S. Lagerlöf: “Pippi Longstocking”, A. Lindgren, “In the Happy Valley of the Moomin-trolls” T. Jansson, and “Nils Holgersson’s Wonderful Journey with the Wild Geese”, S. Lagerlöf. These are just a few examples. Their value lies in the absence of scenes of violence, in teaching, educating and forming a child’s sense of dignity [11, p. 112].

The trilogy “Toreadors from Vasyukivka” (stories: “The Adventures of Robinson Corn”, “The Stranger from the Thirteenth Apartment” and “The Secret of the Three Unknowns”) was published in 1973, and in 1979 the International Council for Children’s and Young People’s Literature included H. K. Andersen in its special honorary list. The work was chosen as one of the seven best books in the nomination “Books that influenced the Ukrainian world to the 15th anniversary of Ukraine’s independence”, and in 2004 it was named “Book of the Year” for Children’s Day. The Kharkiv film of the same name, shot based on the book by director Kornelii Zelikin, received the Grand Prix at the Munich International Film Festival in 1968 and was awarded the award for best film in Australia.

Yu. Katsun noted the presence of Gogol style markers in the artist’s prose. In her opinion, this is especially noticeable in the sections where the hero (Pavlusha) addresses the reader with rhetorical questions and affirmative constructions, thus creating a special atmosphere of communication with the reader [12].

V. Nestayko, in an interview published in the newspaper “Friend of the Reader”, emphasized this: “We found ourselves in a bad situation because of social optimism. There is social and property inequality, some people are rich and others are poor. We must ensure that our children grow up in an atmosphere of optimism. My article can be useful in this regard. Of course, laughter and humor must be taught” [13].

“Nestayko’s style” has a conceptual basis of a unique childhood, which is expressed in a cheerful humorous manner. Special attention is paid to the trilogy “Toreadors from Vasyukivka”. It is noted that the type of hero-beshketnik proposed by the writer does not correspond to the standard stereotypes of the image of a Soviet schoolboy. The key concept of the adventures of the main characters of the trilogy is a game, which acquires a distinct philosophical meaning. In the literature of the second half of the 20th century, where “social realism” was a “canonized crest” (according to V. Shklovsky), V. Nestayko avoids this trend in most of his works, deciding to give preference to the special world of childhood, filled with joy and adventure. However, in the dilogy “The Five with a Tail” he restores “social realism” in his creative style, which is an example of an educational work with an instructive function.

Vsevolod Nestayko chooses “sincerity and openness, the immediacy of a child’s perception of the world”, the ability to see beauty in every little thing, which is an immanent feature of the author’s style [1, p. 59]. The author himself admits: “I am proud that I have

not left childhood, that I have preserved a child's soul. This supports me in our harsh world and gives me the strength to create" [3, p. 12]. However, in the dilogy "The Five with a Tail" he restores "socialist realism" in his creative style, which is an example of an educational work with an instructive function.

In the writer's work, there is a balancing act between traditional "educational and imitative" literature and an artistic depiction of the children's world, which is as close as possible to the reader's consciousness. This task becomes especially important in the context of the Brezhnev era. In Nestaiko's work, one can notice the influence of the didactic principle, which is characteristic of Soviet literature for children, and this creates a challenge in balancing between the pedagogical approach and art in the presentation of the child's world [5, p. 31].

V. Ovdychuk emphasized that the artist made a number of constructive changes to the text. In particular, V. Nestaiko removed from the story the inevitable ideological layers of the past and details that would be incomprehensible to a modern and even future reader. However, even without these edits, new chapters and "underwater eloquence", the book remains surprisingly relevant. It is thanks to the self-sufficiency and simplicity of the plot, stormy dialogues and bizarre humor. Modern children, at least as well as their contemporaries of the 20th century, will be able to understand all the aphorisms and explanations generously sprinkled on the pages of "Tereadors from Vasyukivka". For example, the socio-economic hierarchy necessary to build your own metro – "Three kopecks in one direction. Free for relatives. Five kopecks from the math teacher" [8, p. 10].

Conclusions and prospects. New Ukrainian prose for children and adolescents is a powerful artistic and cultural phenomenon that requires a holistic literary analysis. Its combination of traditional approaches with modern aesthetic, pedagogical and psychological strategies creates a unique communicative model, where the child acts not only as a reader, but also as an active co-creator.

The study analyzed the artistic nature of children's and youth literature, its genre and thematic diversity, narrative features, as well as the historical and literary context of its development. Special attention is paid to the contribution of Vsevolod Nestaiko – one of the most prominent representatives of Ukrainian literature for children. His works demonstrate an exemplary combination of humor, play, adventure plot and humanistic values, which contribute to the formation of the child's personality, emotional and value enrichment and aesthetic education.

Indicative is V. Nestaiko's desire to adapt his work to changes in the historical and cultural context, cleansing the texts of ideological layers and making them understandable and close to the modern reader. His style, full of sincerity, humor, psychologism and respect for the inner world of the child, is an example of a high level of skill in the field of children's literature.

Thus, the new Ukrainian children's and youth prose not only reflects modern socio-cultural transformations, but also actively forms the reader of the future – thinking, empathetic, creative. Further study of this type of literature opens up prospects for a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of the influence of the artistic word on the formation of personality and national identity in a child reader.

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Апоненко І., Шубкіна К. Творчість В. Нестайка в контексті дитячої літератури другої половини ХХ століття

Анотація. У статті досліджується феномен сучасної української прози для дітей та підлітків як цілісне художньо-естетичне й культурне явище, що має важливе значення

для розвитку національної літератури та формування читацької культури нового покоління. Автори звертають увагу на ключові особливості цього напрямку, зокрема на специфіку естетичного спілкування між дорослим автором і юним читачем. Такий діалог реалізується через використання ігрових, фантазійних та гумористичних елементів, які створюють особливий художній простір, здатний поєднувати пізнавальну, виховну й розважальну функції. Окремо аналізується комунікативна природа дитячої літератури, її здатність впливати на формування морально-етичних орієнтирів і розвиток естетичного смаку. У статті простежуються основні літературознавчі підходи до вивчення дитячої прози, підкреслюється її багатфункціональність та специфічна художня система образів. Значну увагу приділено творчості Всеволода Нестайка, чия трилогія «Тореадори з Васюківки» стала канонічним прикладом української дитячої літератури ХХ століття. Гуманістична спрямованість творів В. Нестайка, поєднання щирого дитячого світосприйняття з розв'язанням складних морально-етичних проблем забезпечують їхню актуальність і для сучасного читача. Автори звертають увагу на зміни й адаптації у текстах письменника,

спрямовані на наближення до потреб новітнього покоління, а також визначають місце його спадщини у вітчизняному та світовому контексті. Зазначається, що сучасна українська дитяча проза виконує не лише пізнавально-виховну функцію, а й відіграє значну роль у процесах формування національної ідентичності, збереження культурної пам'яті та забезпечення безперервності літературної традиції. Окремий акцент робиться на перспективності подальшого дослідження цього сегмента літератури, адже саме дитяча й підліткова проза сьогодні активно реагує на виклики часу, зберігаючи відкритість до інновацій і водночас продовжуючи традиції класиків.

Ключові слова: українська дитяча проза, новітня література для дітей, пригодницький жанр, естетика дитячої книги, література для підлітків, гумор у прозі, поетика дитячої літератури.

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