

LANGUAGE, CULTURE, COMMUNICATION

V. NESTAİKO'S NOVEL "TOREADORS FROM VASYUKIVKA"
AS AN EXAMPLE OF ADVENTURE LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN**Inna Aponenko**

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Summary

The article analyzes the poetics of Vsevolod Nestaiko's adventure novel "Toreadors from Vasyukivka", which represents one of the most remarkable examples of Ukrainian children's literature of the second half of the 20th century. The study focuses on the plot and compositional features of the text, emphasizing the role of adventurous elements and unexpected narrative twists that create dynamism and sustain the interest of young readers. The combination of humorous and folkloric motifs, as well as the use of epistolary fragments, songs, legends and folk beliefs is explored as a part of the artistic mosaic of the novel. The article highlights the function of historical and cultural allusions that broaden the semantic space of the work and integrate children's literature into the wider context of national culture. Particular attention is paid to the portrayal of the main characters and the representation of friendship as a central moral and value-oriented category. The novel is presented as not only an entertaining text but also as a significant cultural phenomenon that merges traditional and modern artistic models.

Key words: adventure novel, plot and composition, children's literature, genre specificity, artistic mosaic.

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1. Introduction

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 Vasiukivka” which entered the golden treasury of Ukrainian literature.

In modern Ukrainian literary studies, there is a growing interest in the analysis of children’s and adolescent literature as an important component of the cultural and educational space. Vsevolod Nestaiko’s story “Toreadors from Vasiukivka” belongs to the classics of domestic literature, however, its poetic and genre features are not yet sufficiently understood from the point of view of modern methodologies.

The relevance of the study is due to the need for a comprehensive analysis of the artistic structure of the work and its value potential in the context of the formation of the reading culture of youth.

The novelty lies in the implementation of a holistic analysis of the plot and compositional organization of the story, taking into account the genre mosaicism, humorous and folklore elements, as well as in highlighting the role of cultural and historical allusions in the structure of the children’s adventure narrative. The proposed approach allows not only to understand more deeply the specifics of Nestaiko’s authorial poetics, but also to outline his work as a cultural phenomenon that combines traditional and modern artistic models.

The purpose of the work is to outline the specifics of the poetic organization of V. Nestaiko’s adventure story “Toreadors from Vasiukivka”.

The goal involves solving a number of **tasks**: to review the works of literary scholars whose subject was the specifics of children’s literature and the work of V. Nestaiko; to consider the features of the artistic organization of adventure literature for children and to outline the plot and compositional features of the work under study.

To achieve the goal and accomplish the tasks of the work, the following **methods** were used: analysis, synthesis, generalization, explanation, elements of a holistic analysis of a literary text, comparative-historical, biographical and hermeneutic literary methods.

2. Plot and compositional features of V. Nestaiko’s story “Toreadors from Vasiukivka”

The story “Toreadors from Vasiukivka”, written in 1964–1970, was firstly published in full in 1972 by the publishing house “Veselka” (the first story from the trilogy was printed in 1964) and since then has not lost its popularity among children and adolescents. This book has been awarded many prizes and translated into many languages. The work attracts with its ease, humor, as well as a deep understanding of child psychology. In essence, it is a story about two friends – Yava and Pavlusha, who constantly invent new adventures and get into various funny situations.

The writing of “Toreadors from Vasiukivka” falls on the 1960s – a period of the so-called “thaw”, when a certain liberalism was observed in society, including cultural life. At this time, children’s literature was experiencing a new upswing and writers had the opportunity to write more light, humorous works, focused on entertainment and not only on education. V. Nestaiko took advantage of this opportunity to create a book that is both funny and instructive at the same time.

The plot of the work unfolds linearly, while the entire picture of the narrative has the appearance of a mosaic, forming a single artistic canvas. The trilogy “Toreadors from Vasiukivka” consists of three adventure stories, namely: “Robinzon Kukuruza’s adventures”, “The stranger from the 13th flat”, “The secret of the three unknowns”. Each story consists of several chapters, containing a relatively complete story about a certain adventure.

According to the genre characteristics, the trilogy “Toreadors from Vasiukivka” is an adventure story aimed at readers of middle school age. Although the work is voluminous and resembles a novel in form, the author and many researchers, such as V. Kostiuchenko, N. Reznichenko and others, classify it as a story. This is explained by several factors: the trilogy lacks a wide panorama of events and a large-scale image; the main places of action are the village of Vasiukivka and the city of Kyiv, the time of the events is summer vacation and studies in grades 5–6, the main characters are school-age children, the final of the work is open, which is typical of the story genre, the work implements one storyline.

“Toreadors from Vasiukivka” is a work with a unique plot-compositional structure, where each chapter contains a description of a separate adventure, but together they make up a coherent story of the coming of age of two friends. The book is divided into three parts, each of which has its own internal logic and completeness, but all these parts are united by the general theme of the main characters’ – Yava and Pavlusha adventures.

The first part of the work (“The Extraordinary Adventures of Robinson Corn and His Faithful Friend and Classmate Pavlusha Zavgorodny at School, at Home, and on a Deserted Island Near the Village of Vasyukivka”) is devoted to the description of a happy childhood full of vivid adventures, memories of the beginning of friendship and adventures that sometimes contain detective elements.

The second part of the story, “The stranger from the 13th flat, or Thieves Are Looking for the Victim,” has a plot frame. Pavlusha’s story about the organization of a drama theater in the village and the production of Hohol’s “The Inspector General” includes a description of the friends’ adventures in Kyiv, where they went to return the found watch to its owner.

“The Secret of the Three Unknowns, or the Tale of How Ivan Vasilyevich and Pavel Denisovich Quarrelled and What Came of It” is the third part of the work. It deals with the conflict between the main characters.

The story begins with a dialogue between the main character hangman Java and his grandfather, where they argue, because Yava and his friend Pavlusha decided to implement a grandiose project and build a tunnel under the pigsty to run the subway there. Their actions were noticed by the grandfather and “properly appreciated”. In this episode, the author deliberately emphasizes the specificity of the relationship between the boys and the grandfather. Although the old man scolds them for the harm, threatens «знайдибіда, авантюрист шмаркатий! Ванько-о-о! Вилазь зараз же! Бо такого втру маку – тиждень чухатимешся» (Nestaiko, 2016: 7) the children argue with him almost on equal terms.

In the trilogy “Toreadors from Vasiukivka”, the first two parts are told on behalf of Pavlusha Zavhorodnii (“Part one, told by Pavlusha Zavgorodny. Extraordinary adventures of Robinson Kukurudzo and his faithful friend and classmate Pavlusha Zavgorodny at school, at home and on a deserted island near the village of Vasyukivka”; “Part two, told again by Pavlusha Zavgorodny. The stranger from the thirteenth apartment, or the thieves are looking for the victim”), while the third is told by Yava Ren (“Part three, already told by Java Ren. The mystery of three unknowns, or the story of how Ivan Vasilyevich and Pavel Denisovich quarreled and what came of it”). These compositionally united stories contain retrospective chapters, which, although they go beyond the main narrative, serve as an associative addition to events or their explanation.

For example, the story about the founding of the theater in Vasiukivka and the production of “The Inspector General” is suddenly interrupted by the characters’ memories of how it all began. In retrospect, they recall the first unsuccessful attempts to organize a performance, the search for actors among local residents and funny situations that arose during

rehearsals. This technique not only creates additional intrigue, but also reveals the development of the idea of the theater from an ordinary children's fun to a large-scale event in the life of Vasiukivka. Such a structure allows us to better understand the motivation of the characters and emphasizes their perseverance and imagination: «Я поправляю бакенбарди, спинаюся навшпиньки і дивлюсь у дірку в завісі. І серце моє мліє і зупиняється... Не я перший дивлюсь у дірку. До мене у таку саму дірку зазирали, мабуть, і Щепкін, і Станіславський, і Тарапунька зі Штепселем... Тисячі артистів усіх часів і народів дивились у дірку в завісі. І так само спокійно й весело вмошувалися глядачі по той бік завіси – у залі. І так само скакали дрижаки у душах по цей бік завіси – на сцені. А надто – коли прем'єра» (*Nestaiko, 2016: 184*). The inclusion of irrelevant generalizations in the narrative creates a comic effect. The narrator continues his reasoning, involving a pun in the artistic structure of the work: «Ми з Явою – Станіславський і Немирович-Данченко оцього нашого сільського МХАТу (чи пак, ВХАТу)» (*Nestaiko, 2016: 184–185*).

The following chapters describe the friends' summer vacation in Kyiv, where they accidentally end up at a film studio and take part in the filming of a film.

Or in the third part Yava Ren tells how and why they quarreled with Pavlo, their best friend. Such a transition between events in time and space not only creates intrigue, but also reveals the motives of Pavlusha's and Yava's adventures.

The author's irrepressible imagination, through the images of Yava (mostly) and Pavlusha, constantly generates ideas that become the beginning of new unexpected events. After all, surprises are both a characteristic genre feature of this story and a compositional technique inherent in adventure literature. Surprise is inherent in the intra-plot course of events: «Ранок почався з несподіванки. Коли я прокинувся, Ява уже був одягнений (він встав раніше за мене). Одягаюся я, і бачу – він мені підморгує і киває головою: ходім, мовляв, є якийсь секрет» (*Nestaiko, 2016: 229*).

The author uses the effect of surprise even in the chapter titles, emphasizing the dynamism of the depicted events, thus encouraging the reader to immerse themselves in Yava's and Pavlusha's adventures, as well as to develop their own imagination and try to predict the course of events: «**Несподівані** Ігор, Валька та інші» (розділ восьмий першої частини); «На студії. **Несподіванка** перша. **Несподіванка** друга» (розділ дев'ятий другої частини); «Вовчий ліс. Історія дота. **Несподіванка**» (розділ чотирнадцятий третьої частини); «Подвиг старшого лейтенанта Пайчадзе. **Несподівана** поява Павлуші» (розділ двадцятий третьої частини). Отже, в трилогії не лише частини, а й кожен розділ має назву. Як зазначає Л. Овдійчук, це називні, питальні, спонукальні (часто окличні) речення, які мають гумористичне забарвлення й, відповідно до вимог жанру, інтригують читача (*Ovdiichuk: 11*). Наприклад, «Екзамен. Де Ява? Що з ним?.. Переекзаменовка...» (розділ сьомий першої частини); «Шукаємо царя – незнайомця з тринадцятої квартири. Зустріч у театрі. Велич і падіння Яви Реня» (розділ п'ятий другої частини); «У хаті Гребенюків. Ой, нога, нога! Безславно додому. Все плутається» (розділ двадцять третій третьої частини).

Another atypical feature of the adventure genre in the trilogy is the parallel development of events in different places. For example, while Yava finds himself on a “deserted” island, Pavlusha returns home. The story of the adventures of each of the characters is presented in two separate chapters, which allows the reader to immerse themselves in their separate worlds. These situations, despite their separation, turn out to be interconnected: the events and decisions of one character affect the other. This technique demonstrates how the fates of the main characters are intertwined.

Each chapter is relatively autonomous: it has its own beginning, climax and resolution. Thus, the climaxes in the trilogy “Toreadors from Vasiukivka” really have a significant impact on the development of the characters. In the first part, when Ivan Ren (Yava) fails an exam, his grandfather imposes a severe punishment and forbids him to leave the yard and forces him to help and work around the house. Pavlusha also supports his friend in solidarity, giving up his dream trip to the sea. This caused his parents to be justly angry and as a result, his father gave his son «таку нагрузочку на день, що добрий наймит не впорався б». This situation becomes a lesson in responsibility for the boys and strengthens their friendship, forming internal changes in each of them.

In the second part of Vsevolod Nestaiko’s trilogy “Toreadors from Vasiukivka”, the climactic episode is connected with a watch that Yava and Pavlusha accidentally took from a stranger during a trip to Kyiv. They decide to return it to its owner, which sets off a series of adventures. The key moment is the situation when the guys discover the watch and realize their mistake: «І тут Павлуша дістав із кишені годинника. Той самий годинник! «Мамо рідна! – скрикнув я. – Та це ж не наш! Ми переплутали!» (Nestaiko, 2016: 223). After that Yava and Pavlusha begin their search for the owner, which, on the one hand, leads to many funny adventures in Kyiv. On the other hand, no matter what obstacles and adventures come their way, they emphasize the importance of feeling responsible for one’s actions, which is the central theme of the second part of the book.

In the third part of the trilogy “Toreadors from Vasiukivka”, the climax is connected with a flood, which becomes an important test for the main characters –Yava and Pavlusha. This natural disaster not only threatens their village, but also calls into question their lives. The guys and their families faced the horror of the flood: the natural disaster did a lot of harm (it flooded houses, swept away boats, people and livestock could have died). Both heroes showed initiative and courage – Yava reached the military for help and Pavlusha saved his best friend: «Зараз вода підніметься до стелі, заповнить усю хату, я булькну, захлинуся, і все...Але я не хочу вмирати! Не хочу! Я хочу жити!.. Сил ставало дедалі менше. Я почав ковтати воду і захлинатися. Невимовний жах охопив мене. Невже це кінець?! <...> Світло ліхтарика засліпило мене, і я нічого не бачив. Тільки чув Павлушин голос: “Давай руку! Давай руку!” Я важко звів над водою руку і відчув, як її цупко схопила його рука. І лише тепер я зміг віддіхатися. Павлуша мовчав. Він тільки міцно стискав мою руку. А я стискав його руку. І міцнішого, палкішого рукостискання не було в моєму житті» (Nestaiko, 2016: 470–472).

This part expresses the deep bond between the friends, their willingness to help each other in the most difficult situations. During his illness (Yava caught a cold and injured his leg) Pavlusha visits him and does not leave him, although their friendship was under threat at the beginning of the third part and after the flood it began to improve again and despite all the difficulties Yava and Pavlusha find again a way to mutual understanding and support.

This composition of the work captivates the reader, keeps his attention and at the same time emphasizes the main idea of the work: friendship is the greatest value that the characters have preserved, despite all the trials, mistakes and difficulties. The first-person narrative helps the author reveal the motivations of the actions, plans and deeds of the main characters, making their experiences more understandable and close to the reader.

At the same time, the work is distinguished by its genre versatility. The author skillfully weaves elements of various genres into the main plot: letters, folk and literary songs, legends, curses, oaths, etc. Such a genre mosaic enriches the text, giving it a special flavor and depth.

Studying this work, L. Miroshnichenko considers it as an authorial modification of an adventure story, in which the genre is updated through the integration of inserted elements of

other genres (Miroshnichenko, 2017: 37–38). A special role is played by the features of the epistolary genre, presented through correspondence. Letters provide an indirect characteristic of both the addressees and the addressees, emphasizing the relationships between the characters and also reflect the individual features of speech, intelligence and temperament of each. They are often marked by intertextuality.

For example, the boys' letter to their fellow villagers is an interesting creative interpretation of the famous letter of the Cossacks, written together with the Kosh ataman Ivan Sirko to the Turkish Sultan Mahmut IV. As L. Miroshnichenko notes, the inclusion in the trilogy of "Cossack-Turkish" letters has a historical subtext. The author provides an interesting background to their origin, telling about an expedition that, exploring ancient monuments (Miroshnichenko, 2017: 35–41), found an inscription on a scoundrel in the house of Stopa Karafolka (one of the characters): «Цю хату збудував 1748 року 10 квітня козак Титаровського куреня Гаврило Карафолька» (Nestaiko, 2016: 290). Thus, the Cossack origin of Stopa and several other heroes was revealed. This discovery became a reason for ridicule from the "Cossack descendants" of Yava Ren and Pavlusha Zavgorodny, who did not have "a single Cossack" among their ancestors. Insults and mockery forced the friends to come up with an original way to respond to their "enemies". They decided to write them a letter based on the famous message of the Cossacks to the Turkish Sultan: «Ти – шайтан дурепський... Який ти в чорта лицар?.. Слинько ти шепеляве! Дірка од бублика! Реп'ях ти з хвоста собачого! Латка на подертих штанах, шмат відмінника недогризенний!.. Не годе ти доброго слова, хай з'їсть тебе руда корова! Отак ми тобі відказали, плюгавче! І за це поцілуй нас у брудні порепані п'яти, свиняче порося ти!» (Nestaiko, 2016: 293).

Vsevolod Nestaiko originally rethinks and interprets the Cossack letter, using vocabulary that corresponds to the context (in the trilogy, the devil becomes not "Turkish" but "durepsky"). Thus, the author creates a similar, but at the same time completely different picture of reality. The heroes of the trilogy "Toreadors from Vasiukivka" fill the letter with bright emotional and expressive vocabulary that reflects the social and everyday features of rural "boyish" life. This contributes to the figurative reproduction of the artistic reality of the work. This approach not only enriches the text with historical allusions, but also demonstrates the connection of modern heroes with the traditions of the past, emphasizing the deep cultural context of their adventures.

The next letter, given in the text of the story is a kind of response to the previous one. The writer creates it as a fiction because history has not preserved the real response of the Turkish Sultan to the letter of the Cossacks. This letter, at first glance, is written in an official and restrained style, but in the context of the adventures of the heroes it acquires a distinct ironic tone. This technique skillfully reproduces the peculiarities of children's thinking, in which seriousness is often combined with humor and fantasy. The comic situation that arises thanks to this letter not only causes a smile, but also contains a certain educational content, emphasizing the importance of friendship, wit and mutual understanding: «Дорогі друзі! Ви лаєтесь дуже красиво, але тільки тому, що ви не козацького роду й вам прикро. Ми прекрасно це розуміємо. Ми залюбки прочитали вашого листа й навіть згодні прийняти вас у своє запорозьке військо писарями – хоч у вас двійки з мови. Між іншим, "недогризенний" пишеться з одним "н", а "відмінник", навпаки, з двома (див. правило подвоєння приголосних, підручник граматики, стор. 4, параграф 23). З привітом. За дорученням славного війська запорозького кошовий Степан Карафолька» (Nestaiko, 2016: 294).

In other episodes of V. Nestaiko's trilogy letters perform a predominantly informative function. They serve as a means of conveying important events, developing the plot, or explaining circumstances that are outside the immediate scope of the work. Thanks to letters, the

author reveals the characters, their relationships and motivations, thereby enhancing the dynamism of the narrative: «Дорогий дядьку Грицько! Вибачте і не сердьтеся, що ми взяли ваш стартовий. Він нам отако треба! Ми йдемо на серйозну операцію. Може й не вернемось. Тоді шукайте наші тіла у підземеллях Лаври. Інакше ми не могли. Йдеться про нашу честь. Ми обов'язково повинні повернути одному чоловікові його річ Ми не можемо, щоб нас вважали за злодіїв. Про всяк випадок прощайте. Павлуша. Ява...» (*Nestaiko, 2016: 299*). Such elements add realism to the work, allow you to diversify the structure of the text and deepen your understanding of the characters' inner world.

The writer organically weaves into the trilogy songs, which are presented by different thematic groups, which enriches the text and deepens its intertextuality. Historical songs are closely connected with the development of the Ukrainian people and reflect the specifics of certain historical eras.

Thus, having learned about their Cossack origin, Vasiukivka boys create their own Sich, dress in traditional Cossack clothes, choose koshevogo and perform the "cheerful Cossack march" "Oh, whether a master or a lost one – you can never die twice...". The soldiers in Vasiukivka sing a marching war song to the words of M. Dudin "On the Road". Yava's personal experiences are reflected in his performance of the song to the words of D. Pavlychko "Two Colors" to attract the attention of Grebenyuchka. And when the schoolchildren go on an excursion to Kyiv, they sing "Cheremshyna" to the words of M. Yuriychuk, which adds emotional color to their adventures. All these musical moments create a lively atmosphere, reflecting the mood and inner world of the heroes:

«Знов зозулі чути голос в лісі,
Ластівки гніздечко звили в стрісі,
А вівчар жене отару плаєм,
Тьохнув пісню соловей за гаєм...» (*Nestaiko, 2016: 26*).

According to L. Miroshnichenko, the author, describing these times, introduces into the text of the work excerpts from popular Ukrainian songs of the 70s, thus expressing the narrative. Each of the song fragments in the story implements a characterological function and in a certain way indicates the social status of the performer: Knyshe – representatives of the older generation, sing a social and everyday song, soldiers – a song of the war years, schoolchildren – pioneer songs "Solar Circle", etc. (*Miroshnichenko, 2017: 39*). The song in the work acts as a kind of associative marker for the characters, characterizing their social functionality.

In the story "Toreadors from Vasiukivka" by V. Nestaiko, there are folklore elements, the study of which makes it possible to understand the means of character formation, original forms of expression of ideas, ways of realizing the author's attitude to the depicted, etc. Thus, the author explains the origin of local Vasiukivka toponyms, such as Zakharkovo Lake and Gorbushina Grave – this is the subject of the third chapter of the third part of "The Legend of Gorbushina Grave": «То була страшна легенда. Начебто давно-давно, ще за козаччини, повертаючись із турецького походу, стояли біля нашого села у долині кошем запорожці. Сотня сотника Горбуші. І сталася тоді дивна річ. Несподівано щез уночі мішок золотих дукатів... <...> Та не принесли щастя сотнику Горбуші крадені козацькі дукати. Не минулося йому злодійання. Темними горобиними ночами став з'являтися йому привид безневинно страченого скарбника Захарка. У довгій білій сорочині, без голови, підходив він до Горбушиного ліжка і схилявся, простягав руки, чи то погрожуючи, чи то благаючи про щось. <...> Сім днів і сім ночей безперестанку копали джури. Викопали величезне ямище метрів сто завширшки, метрів двісті завдовжки Але тіла старого скарбника так і не знайшли. А на

сьому ніч на дні ями раптом роззявилось, зануртувало джерело, виповнилась яма водою і утворилось озеро, яке так і зветься – Захаркове» (Nestaiko, 2016: 364–365).

In addition, the work reveals the folk belief in rituals and love spells, which have a centuries-old history: «І він (Папуша) би заплатив навіть більше, ніж та рушниця коштувала, бо, крім усього вірив, що від неї залежало його мисливське щастя...» (Nestaiko, 2016: 45). For example, to attract or repel a person specially shaped bat bones were used: «Треба взяти казан і зробити у дні маленьку дірочку. Піймати кажана. Піти вночі до лісу. Накрити кажана казаном... На другий день, теж уночі, піти на те місце. Підняти казан. Там будуть лише кісточки кажанові... Знайти одну таку кісточку, наче виделка. А другу – як гачок... І от, якщо ти хочеш, щоб хтось від тебе одчепився, треба його легенько відштовхнути тою виделкою. А як хочеш, навпаки... то треба зачепити гачком...» (Nestaiko, 2016: 390).

The role of folk beliefs and curses (such as those of Baba Mokryna) emphasizes the power of words in the everyday lives of peasants: «Щоб вас чиряки обсіли! Щоб ваші язики до зубів поприрости! Щоб вас гикавка напала!.. Щоб вам ні дна, ні покришки! Щоб...» (Nestaiko, 2016: 300).

Belief in the power of words is traced in the oaths of Yava and Pavlusha: «Давай поклянемося (може, навіть кров'ю), що більш не брехатимем. І домовимось: якщо не можеш або не хочеш сказати правду – мовчи, хоч би як питали, хоч би як домагалися, – мовчи і все» (Nestaiko, 2016: 228).

In the trilogy “Toreadors from Vasiukivka” Vsevolod Nestaiko masterfully retells historical facts without overloading the text with dry data. He presents them figuratively and richly, enriching the atmosphere with emotions and vivid details.

The author, introducing historical events and elements of the past, makes them part of the interesting adventures of the heroes, which allows you to easily immerse yourself in the times of the Cossacks: «Роззявивши рота, слухали ми розповіді археологів про Запорозьку Січ, – про легендарного ватажка козацького Івана Сірка...» (Nestaiko, 2016: 223), or mentions of war: «У сорок першому, коли німці загарбали Україну, у цьому доті тримали кругову оборону троє наших бійців... Вісім днів трималися бійці без води, без їжі, до останнього патрона» (Nestaiko, 2016: 228).

These stories are intertwined with legends and mysterious stories, including about Cossack treasures, ghosts, and ancient rituals, which create a sense of historical depth. This approach allows the reader to experience the events of the past as if they were happening nearby, in their native village, which makes history accessible and fascinating for everyone.

In the imagination of the main characters, an alternative world is formed, with people and places familiar to them, but different from the reality in which they live. Time lines also shift, which allows the characters to enter an illusory future created by their own ideas about possible situations. The fantasy of the characters is built on the basis of real life adventures and, in their opinion, is a logical continuation of these events. Thus, the adventure plot moves from the real world to the unreal. The expression of the unreal is also manifested in dreams, which emphasize the adventurous nature of the work. As in real life, the characters face trials and surprises, but these events are filled with fiction and phantasmagoria. In the trilogy “Toreadors from Vasyukivka” Vsevolod Nestaiko uses dreams to enhance the emotional background and add brightness to the story. After meeting with Kyiv schoolchildren on Pereekzamenivtsi Island, Pavlusha has a dream in which everyday events take on an unusual, even comical appearance: «Стою я, значить, на березі острова Переекзаменовки і бачу: впливає на плесо корабель, величезний білий океанський корабель. З корабля спускають трап і по трапу йде на берег... Гребенючка. Підходить до мене й каже:

“Здрастуйте вам. До нас на острів приїхала німецька делегація піонерів. Ви будете за перекладача”» (Nestaiko, 2016: 125).

This dream is a reflection of real events, but the author adds fantastic elements: instead of a boat, there is a huge ship and instead of ordinary schoolchildren, there is a foreign delegation. Thanks to such exaggerations, Nestaiko creates bizarre situations, introducing elements of illusion and mysticism into the everyday adventures of village boys, which is typical of the adventure genre with elements of fantasy (Miroshnichenko, 2017).

Characteristic features of children's literature are the dynamics of the plot and humor. It is worth noting that there are age restrictions in the perception of the comic, because unlike adults, it is more difficult for the children's reading audience to track the funny in themselves and easier to perceive the comical situation in which others, for example, the heroes of the book find themselves. M. Slavova rightly notes that «перенос дитячої гри в межі художнього зображення, розкриття складних емоційно-психічних процесів у дітей під час гри і під час читання» (Slavova, 2002: 7). The game principle in fiction manifests itself as a means of world perception, as an attitude towards the world. It determines the nature of artistic convention, imagery and genre specificity of works. The game can be a motif in the thematic layer of works, a model of the character system, a conflict core.

Thus, Vsevolod Nestaiko's trilogy “Toreadors from Vasiukivka” is truly a multifaceted work that combines various genre elements, which makes it interesting and rich. It includes folklore motifs, the epistolary genre and is characterized by a chronological event composition that combines retrospective elements with a perspective on the future. The episodic use of dreams, imagination, mystifications and bizarre situations adds dynamics and emotionality.

This story not only entertains, but also has educational significance for young readers, forming in them such values as friendship, responsibility and courage in difficult conditions. This makes it an important work in modern children's literature.

3. Conclusions

“Toreadors from Vasiukivka” by Vsevolod Nestaiko is a work with a distinct structure, where each chapter can be an independent adventure, but together they form a single story. The book is divided into three large parts, each of which has its own logic and completeness (beginning, climax and denouement), but all parts are united by the common theme of the adventures of the main characters – Yava and Pavlusha.

This composition creates intrigue and keeps the reader's attention, while allowing the author to realize the main idea: friendship is the most valuable thing that the guys keep, despite all the trials and tribulations. The story is told in the first person (I-narration), which helps motivate the actions and decisions of the main characters.

The work is also distinguished by its genre diversity, as the writer skillfully weaves elements of different genres into the main storyline: letters, songs, legends, oaths, as well as elements of folklore. Surprises are not only a genre feature of this story, but also an important compositional technique of an adventure story.

The chronological sequence of events in the trilogy “Toreadors from Vasiukivka” contributes to a logical presentation of events, which is based on cause-and-effect relationships. Surreal elements, in particular dreams, emphasize the adventurous nature of the work. As in real life, the characters face challenges, but their adventures are filled with fantastical elements.

Vsevolod Nestaiko saturates the story with adventures, adventures and subtle humor – all this contributes to the formation of restless, vivid images and characters of the main characters,

emphasizing their childish naivety and recklessness. And the constant desire for heroism and bold deeds serves as a means of testing one's own courage and reminds of historical events.

Thus, the trilogy "Toreadors from Vasiukivka" by Vsevolod Nestaiko is not just a fascinating adventure story, but also a deep study of children's characters and relationships, which are revealed through life situations.

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