



**THE IMAGE OF HOME AS A
MARKER OF SAFETY/DANGER
IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE
FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

doi: [https://doi.org/10.34142/
astraea.2024.5.2.03](https://doi.org/10.34142/astraea.2024.5.2.03)



Tetiana KACHAK

Doctor of Sciences (Philology), Professor,
Department of Primary Education and Educational Innovations,
Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University (Ukraine)
tetiana.kachak@pnu.edu.ua
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6863-1736>

ABSTRACT

This article analyses the artistic representation of the image of home as a marker of safety/danger in contemporary Ukrainian literature for children and youth. The artistic features of the image of home as a building, locus, spatial image, and an image of the sacred – connected to the spiritual and moral world, as well as the feelings and experiences of the main characters – are highlighted. Additionally, home is portrayed as a national-symbolic image, especially in works and children's books about war and the struggle against the enemy. The meanings embedded by the authors in the images of a destroyed, looted, and abandoned home and a new home, which provides

temporary shelter or should become a new home for emigrants, are examined. The verbal and visual components of books for children are interpreted with an emphasis on how the main characters perceive their home.

It is noted that the image of one's own home has several meanings: a person's material well-being in life; a place that characterises a person's self-identification in the world, his or her worldview; and a sense of protection from external factors of influence. For a child, home is usually associated with a carefree childhood in a loving family, their personal space filled with favourite toys, and safety. It has been proven that the concept of "home" takes on different meanings in war stories and novellas. The looted house in Volodymyr Rutkivskyi's novella "Poterchata" symbolises the young protagonist Volodko's lost childhood. The image of the home, in particular the basement of the building, is first a marker of safety and unity of people, and then a danger for the girl, Vira, and her family in Kateryna Yehorushkina's story. The image of the destroyed home in Oleksandr Mykhed's fairy tale represents the shattered universe of one family, which personifies the lives of millions of Ukrainians ruined by the war and russian aggression. Whereas, the characters, such as the Cat, the Rooster, and the Cupboard serve as images and symbols of the resilience of the Ukrainian people that the whole world saw in the photos of Borodianka near Kyiv, destroyed by russian shelling.

The image of the home takes on a sacred meaning in Nadiika Herbish's story "The Apples of War". The characters lose their native home and seek refuge in a new one, turning a stranger's or a new, other home into their own by creating comfort and spiritual space for their family. The image of the home is closely tied to the issue of identity since the house embodies the lost integrity of perception of the world and one's place in it due to emigration.

Keywords: the image of home, locus, a marker of safety, a marker of danger, chronotope of war, contemporary literature for children, lost childhood, books for children.

АНОТАЦІЯ

Образ дому як маркер безпеки / небезпеки в сучасній літературі для дітей та юнацтва

У цій статті – аналіз художньої репрезентації образу дому як маркера безпеки / небезпеки в сучасній українській літературі для дітей та юнацтва. Висвітлено художні особливості зображення дому як будівлі, локусу, просторового образу й образу сакрального, пов'язаного із духовно-моральним світом, почуттями і переживаннями головних героїв, та образу національно-символічного, насамперед у творах і дитячих книгах про війну та боротьбу з ворогом. Розглянуто смисли, закладені авторами в образах зруйнованого, розграбованого, покинутого дому і дому нового, який дає тимчасовий прихисток чи має стати новим власним домом для емігрантів. Інтерпретовано вербальний і візуальний компоненти книг для дітей з акцентом на тому, як сприймають свій дім головні герої.

Зауважено, що образ власного дому має кілька значень: матеріальна влаштованість людини у житті; місце, яке характеризує самовизначення людини у світі, її світогляд; захищеність людини від зовнішніх факторів впливу. Для дитини ж домівка, як правило, асоціюється з безтурботним дитинством у люблячій сім'ї, власним простором з улюбленими іграшками, безпекою. Доведено, що в оповіданнях й повістях про війну він набуває інших смислів. Розграбований дім в повісті «Потерчата» Володимира Рутківського стає символом втраченого дитинства юного героя Володка. Образ дому, зокрема підвалу дому, в оповіданні Катерини Єгорушкіної є спочатку маркером безпеки й єдності людей, а потім небезпеки для дівчинки Віри та її сім'ї. Образ зруйнованого дому у казці Олександра Михеда – це зруйнований всесвіт однієї родини, який уособлює зруйновані війною та російською агресією життя мільйонів українців. Тоді як Котик, Півник і Шафка – образи - символи незламності українців, які весь світ бачив на фото зі зруйнованої російськими обстрілами Бородянки під Києвом.

Сакрального значення набуває образ дому в оповіданні Надійки Гербіш «Яблука війни». Герої втрачають рідний дім і шукають прихисток в новому домі, перетворюючи чужий чи новий, інший дім на власний, створюючи в ньому затишок, духовний простір Роду. Образ дому тісно пов'язаний з проблемою

ідентичності, оскільки будинок втілює в собі втрачену в результаті еміграції цілісність сприйняття світу і свого місця в ньому.

Ключові слова: образ дому, локус, маркер безпеки, маркер небезпеки, хронотоп війни, сучасна література для дітей, втрачене дитинство, книги для дітей.

INTRODUCTION

Most people associate their family, home, and native land with childhood and security. Since the beginning of the full-scale war between Russia and Ukraine, millions of Ukrainians have been forced to leave their homes, and some of them have lost them forever. The image of home comes up in memories, hurts each of them, and becomes one of the key concepts in contemporary literary works. The artistic locus of home, the topos of a city or village, is especially emotionally evocative in the plot of works addressed to children on the theme of war. In the context of contemporary literature, these include “Poterchata” by Volodymyr Rutkivskiy, “The War That Changed Rondo” by Romana Romanyshyn and Andrii Lesiv, “One Cry from War” by Tirtsa Atar, “We live on the edge of a volcano”, “The Apples of War” by Nadiika Herbish, “The wolf, who straddled the bomb” by Yuriy Nikitinskyi, “My forced vacation” by Kateryna Yehorushkina, “The Cat, the Rooster, and the Cupboard” by Oleksandr Mykhed, “Home” by Kateryna Tykhozora, “Young War” by Svitlana Vertola, “Apricots Bloom at Night” by Olha Rusina, etc.

This article analyses the artistic representation of the image of home as a marker of safety/danger in contemporary Ukrainian literature for children and youth. The article highlights the artistic features of the image of home as a building, locus, spatial image, and an image of the sacred associated with the spiritual and moral world, feelings, and experiences of the main characters. It also examines the national-symbolic image of home, particularly in works and children’s books about war and the struggle against the enemy. The meanings embedded by the authors in the image of a destroyed, looted, and abandoned home and a new home, which provides temporary shelter or should become a new home, are analysed. The verbal and visual components of books for children are interpreted with an emphasis on how the main characters perceive their home.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many literary scholars explore contemporary Ukrainian literature for children and youth (U. Baran, N. Bohdanets-Biloskalenko, M. Vardanian, O. Horbonos, T. Kachak, V. Kyzylova, L. Kutsa, N. Marchenko, L. Ovdiichuk, O. Slyzhuk, A. Tretiak, and others). However, the issue of depicting the image of the home in works about and for children has not been the subject of a separate, comprehensive study and it has only been partially addressed (Kachak, 2014). Nevertheless, there are studies devoted to the issue of artistic portrayal of the image of home in the works of T. Shevchenko (Boron, 2005), Ukrainka (Kocherha, 2008), V. Shevchuk and V. Vynnychenko (Pavlinchuk, 2004), V. Drozd (Yashyna, 2010), S. Zhadan (Herasymenko, 2022), N. Hurnytska (Krupka, 2023), novels by W. Styron and J. Barnes (Bondar, 2010), Marie-France Clerc (Yatskiv, Tsiupa, 2021), and other Ukrainian and foreign writers.

“The archetypal image of home is one of the most interesting and polysemantic concepts, both in global and Ukrainian culture particularly. Along with the World Tree and the four primordial elements, the home occupies a central place among mythopoetic images, which are considered fundamental in culture and art” (Demchenko, 2016, p. 207).

N. Bondar asserts that “Home, the road, and the child are fundamental archetypes in the mythopoetic dimension at all levels (psychological, general cultural, etc.) and, due to their frequency, they dominate in literary and artistic works” (Bondar, 2010, p. 1). The scholar outlines the characteristics that define the paradigm of the loci “home”, “non-home”, and “anti-home”. The “non-home” represents an intermediate space of being outside the locus of the “native home”, any temporary dwelling on the path to a certain goal or forced habitation in case of loss of the “native home” (Bondar, 2010, p. 8). This locus becomes particularly prominent in XX-century fiction, which “absorbed the historical, social, and existential post-war experience. As a result of social upheavals such as World War II, Nazism, the Holocaust, totalitarianism, the stable mythological attributes of the archetype of home (external security, the patronage of higher female and male beings, spiritual unity, etc.) begin to erode, shifting toward the “non-home” (a temporary or accidental shelter, sometimes unfriendly and often forcing its inhabitants into survival mode) and the “anti-home”

(concentration camps, prisons, captivity), where a person faces death directly, on the brink of existence (“transcendence,” according to K. Jaspers)” (Bondar, 2010, p. 6). These loci images are also present in contemporary children’s literature about war. We consider the theoretical matrix of their analysis proposed by N. Bondar to be an effective lens for reading children’s literature and consider it in this study.

In the context of interpreting Ukrainian works about war for young readers, Nataliia Marchenko (Marchenko, 2023) and Valentyna Vzdulska (Vzdulska, 2022a) pay attention to the image of home in their reviews of Kateryna Yehorushkina’s “My Forced Vacation” or in their overview of children’s literature, in particular, Oksana Lushchevska’s “This is a quiet night, my astronaut” (Vzdulska, 2022b). V. Vzdulska positions the latter book as “a successful and non-traumatic example of using a fairy tale framework to tell a story about war, aimed at the youngest readers” (Vzdulska, 2022b). She emphasises the description of the first ten days of the war through the eyes of the seven-year-old girl, Iia. The key concept of interpretation is the feeling of safety: “The world around turns into deafening chaos, and the only refuge in it is not so much the double walls but the protective microcosm created by the closest people, in which the sense of safety for the child, conveyed through the metaphor of silence, is constructed through constant small efforts” (Vzdulska, 2022b).

THE AIM OF THE ARTICLE

The purpose of the article is to analyse the artistic features of the representation of the image of home as a marker of safety/danger in contemporary Ukrainian literature for children and young adults; and to identify the key meanings conveyed by the authors through the verbal and visual components of children’s book.

METHODOLOGY

The analysis of the poetics of the works that became the object of the study was conducted using tools from cultural-historical, typological, hermeneutic, comparative, contextual, and partially biographical methods. From a microanalysis perspective of the text, considering the principles of narratology and psychoanalytic studies, receptive poetics, and aesthetics, the article examines the artistic representation and

symbolic and semantic meaning of the image of home in various texts. The techniques of a multidisciplinary interpretive strategy (including elements of semiotic, aesthetic, and analysis of the relationship between text and illustrations) proved to be effective in analysing the visual component of children's books, while the typological approach was productive in creating a typology.

RESULTS

The locus of home is the key in the spatial paradigm of the native land, which is constructed as a system of spatial images within which the narrative unfolds. An example of building this paradigm through the depiction of a specific, real space in a work of fiction is Volodymyr Rutkivskyi's autobiographical novel "Poterchata". The writer recalls his happy pre-war life: "Just yesterday, as a four-year-old, I was my father's and mother's little darling, and everyone treated me with a respectful smile: after all, I was the son of the school principal! (Back then, that meant something very different than it does today!). And then, suddenly, I became an outcast. The war threw us out into the street, homeless (because a school apartment is not the same as a house with a garden)" (Marchenko, 2012). The war and the loss of home become markers of danger and vulnerability for the boy and his family, which is a theme the author writes about in his confessional novel.

The image of one's own home has several meanings: a person's material stability in life; a place that characterises a person's self-identification in the world, their worldview; and their protection from external factors of influence. For a child, home is usually associated with a carefree childhood in a loving family, their personal space with their favourite toys, and a sense of safety. Volodko remembers how, after fleeing from the Germans with his mother and brother, they returned home where "nothing was scary anymore. Our windows are small, and no German or bad person could get through them" (Rutkivskyi, 2013, p. 51). However, the house had been robbed, and when the boy lifted the blanket, he froze: "My toys, the ones I loved so much, were gone". The image of the looted house echoes the problem of the lost childhood of the main character. V. Rutkivskyi does not describe the house itself in detail, only certain fragments of its interior. Yet, the protagonist and his family no longer feel safe in this house.

In contemporary children's and young adult prose, the home often serves as a structural part of the urban space. The topoi of different cities, including loci such as homes, schools, public institutions, parks, and architectural landmarks, are depicted with varying depth in works such as Valentyn Berdt's "My friend Yurko Tsyrykul" (topos of the city of Kharkiv), Nina Bichuia's "Slavko Berkuta's sword", Oleksa Rosych's "Giovanni Trapattoni", Oksana Dumanska's "The schoolgirl from the suburbs" (topos of the city of Lviv), Mariia Morozenko's "I fell in love" (topoi of the city of Kyiv), and Zirka Menzatiuk's "How I destroyed the empire" (topoi of the cities of Kyiv and Chernivtsi), among others. Some texts lack specific place names, but the reader recognises the loci of small towns and cities in Ukraine, as in the novellas "Not Like That" by S. Hrydin, "Marichka and Kostyk", "In Love with the Sun", and "The Argonauts" by S. Protsiuk.

The images of home and city are particularly distinctive in the works set during wartime. On the one hand, home becomes a refuge from bombings and shelling, while on the other, it carries danger. Even children understand this. Vira, the main character and narrator of "My Forced Vacation" by Kateryna Yehorushkina, describes her family's life in the first days of the war within the confines of their home. As air raid sirens sound, the main character rushes down the stairs from the fourteenth floor to the basement with her mother and her younger brother because their apartment has become a dangerous place to stay in. Vira reflects on this, playing with the word "refugee" (the person who runs away). She admits she is scared: "What if I'm afraid to go into my room? Afraid to sit in our bathroom?" (Yehorushkina, 2022, p. 12). During the shelling, it is unsafe even to stay in the bathroom, where she slept on the second day of the war.

Vira's home has changed: the windows are taped over; airplanes are roaring and shells are whistling overhead. At first, the only "island" of safety remains the basement, where Vira's family has moved with only the essentials. Kateryna Yehorushkina describes how people occupied themselves in the basement, they encouraged one another, helped each other, and tried to keep themselves emotionally strong. In these episodes, she realises the idea that goodness, love, and light always conquer darkness. Valentyna Vzdulska also states this: "The basement, where Vira, her family, and neighbours spend their forced 'vacation,' turns into a place of human connection, mutual assistance, comprehension of values, overcoming fear, growing

up, dreaming, and self-identification. It gives a sense of safety and security not only because of its concrete walls. The reader plunges into this paradoxically nourishing atmosphere with the characters” (Vzdulska, 2022a).

Over time, even the basement becomes dangerous. Light, water, and heat disappear. The walls move under shelling. Children should not grow up in basements like mushrooms. These details prove that the home is losing its traditional function of protecting the owners and giving them family comfort.

The line between safety and danger in this work with a war chronotope has been erased. The author emphasises this with the lexemes “safe/dangerous”. Everything that happens near or outside the home, and eventually inside it, represents danger. Vira admits that emotionally she feels as if she is carrying a heavy backpack on her shoulders: “It is invisible. And I know for sure that in a safe place I will be able to take it off” (Yehorushkina, 2022). This safe place turns out to be the Puppet Theater in Lviv city.

The chosen type of narration, a first-person narration on behalf of a child, enhances its genre affiliation to diary and confessional prose; it attracts the reader with maximum frankness, dramatic experience, and autobiography. “Along with her deep knowledge of children’s literature and child psychology, the author based the story on her own dramatic experience of the first days of the war, when she was forced to leave her home with her children. This authenticity of her experience, maternal feelings, and observations gave the text that unique atmosphere, and filled it with subtle details and nuances that, though barely perceptible, unmistakably mark everything read as ‘reality’. That is why the book ‘catches’ you. You trust it. You can engage in a dialog with it about the most complex, intimate things” (Marchenko, 2023).

The image of a war-torn home with a detailed description of the things that have become a symbol of Ukrainians’ resilience and that the whole world saw in the photo of Borodianka, destroyed by russian shelling near Kyiv, is the basis of Oleksandr Mykhed’s fairy tale “The Cat, the Rooster and the Cupboard” (2022). This is the story of a family: grandmother Liza, uncle Andriy, and granddaughter Sonia, whose home is destroyed by war. The Cupboard made by grandfather Petro, which contains family belongings and old photographs, the Rooster, which is a jug of Vasylykiv majolica presented to Lisa for the twins’ seventh birthday, and the rescued Cat are the main characters of this book. The author describes in detail the contents of the Cupboard,

which “keeps Liza’s secrets” and reminds us of “the warmth of Petro’s hands” (Myhed, 2022, p. 1), and tells how the Rooster stood on the family table when the twins were children. He had to “guard the family’s peace, warn of danger, and with his ringing voice awaken them when the darkest, most hopeless night strikes. When the clock stops, the stars fade, and the sky burns. As it was in Petrus and Liza’s childhood, when the Great War was raging” (Myhed, 2022, p. 13). This parallel is not accidental. The current war, which began at night, destroyed this family’s home with a shell. Liza remembers how her parents were killed in their home when she was only seven years old: “Our house is on fire. The red flames, which look like a rooster, are spreading through the house and everything she loves is vanishing into the flames” (Mykhed, 2022, p. 23). “Mythopoetic motifs of ‘home’ imply safety and warmth as fundamental human constants of existence” (Bondar, 2010, p. 8), but in contemporary works, “home as a pillar and fortress ceases to exist along with the loss of the illusion of stability in the world” (Bondar, 2010, p. 6). Lisa and Petro lost not only their home, they lost their childhood. After their marriage, when they moved to a new apartment on the seventh floor of a tall building in a green village, they felt that they were finally safe. But “under the watchful eyes of the Cat, the Cupboard, and the Rooster, Lisa suddenly realises that she never truly escaped the War. The same crazed red horde that killed and raped, and called themselves heroes destroying other monsters, is now descending on little Lisa” (Mykhed, 2022, p. 26). O. Mykhed conveys a clear message: as long as totalitarianism, evil, and the russian horde exist in the world, there is no safety anywhere.

In the first days of the full-scale war launched by russia in Ukraine in the XXI century, people flee their homes, leaving behind everything of value, while their granddaughter Sofia arranges a shelter in the basement of their multi-story building. She is still looking for shelter there: “layer by layer, she sinks deeper into the basement, as if rooting herself into her home”; “as she sorts through the things, she seems to be picking up beads of her childhood and her family’s past” (Mykhed, 2022, p. 30). This episode emphasises the close connection between a person and his or her past, which protects the home and its household items. Unfortunately, the basement is not safe because explosions are heard everywhere, tanks marked with the letter “Z” enter the yard, and the occupiers are already breaking into the neighbouring entrance. However, the secret passageway that her grandfather Petro built in the apartment saves Sonia from the occupiers, who “do not enter the apartment, they storm in” (Mykhed, 2022,

p. 36). They rob and destroy everything. The writer uses metaphorical language to convey the full tragedy of this situation: “Everything that is yours is no longer yours. They are the ones who have broken in and broken everything. Your whole life is now an open fracture” (Mykhed, 2022, p. 36).

The story about the residents’ stay in the basement, life under occupation, and the atrocities of the russians continues with an episode about shells hitting the house. It’s like a still image, conveyed in short sentences: “Time stops. The Cat freezes in a leap on the Cupboard. The Rooster reaches out to the Cat. The Cupboard opens its doors to the Cat. The heavens are torn in half. The earth becomes the sky. The explosions scrape off part of the house as if with several scrapes of a huge, serrated knife. The Cat grabs onto the Cupboard. The Rooster helps it pull itself up. Everything that came before is now debris. All the lives that had been flickering in the house are buried under a pile of rubble. Just a cloud of nothingness” (Mykhed, 2022, p. 51).

The chronotope of a robbed and then the destroyed house is an indicative marker of war, of lost childhood, which is opposed by the Rooster, the Cat, and the Cupboard, who not only «survived» and preserve the family, but also give hope for the future (Kachak, Blyznyuk, 2024). Optimism and faith in books for children are an important element of the plot, the characters’ behaviour, and the story’s ending.

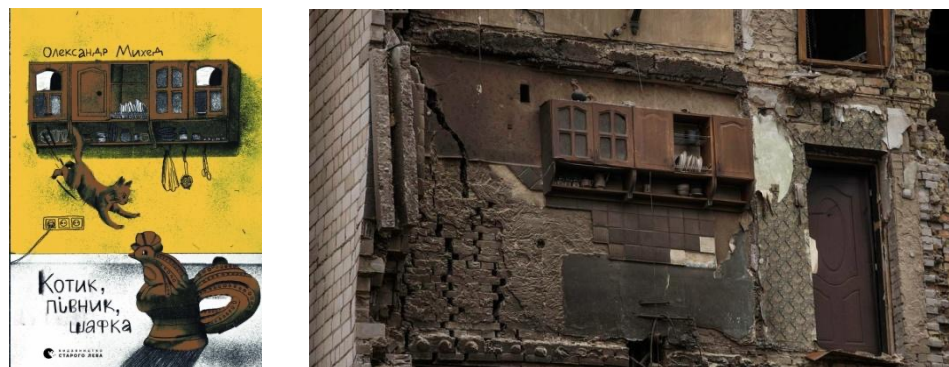


Figure 1. Cover of the book “The Cat, the Rooster, and the Cupboard” and a photo of a cupboard with a rooster made of Vasylkiv majolica that survived the Russian air strike on a house in Borodianka

The illustrations emphasise the image of home and the concepts of safety/danger in children’s books. The covers of books for children about the war by Nadiika Herbish (“We Live on the Edge of a Volcano”, illustrated by Olena London), Tirtsa Atar (“One Cry from War” by illustrator, Kateryna Sad), and Olia Rusina (“Apricots

Bloom at Night”) depict a house and children either near it or hugging it. Violation of proportions, dark colours, and signs of destruction enhance the tragedy of the situation, in which the young characters find themselves.



Figure 2. Books for children about war

The interior of the apartment, the entrance, and the basement of the building are the basis of Sofia Avdieieva’s illustrations for the story “My Forced Vacation.” The artist managed to convey the contrasting atmosphere of Vira’s family before and during the first days of the war, to capture the most expressive plot events, and psychological and emotional states of the characters, from the harmonious happy life of the family to Vira’s separation from her father and forced evacuation.

The image of “home” in Kateryna Tykhozora’s picture book “Home” is conceptual (2022). This is the story of a boy who is forced to leave his home, which was destroyed due to the beginning of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The narrative is told on behalf of the child, who describes his feelings on the way to a safe place in another country. The text is minimal, and this allows the illustrations to «speak» to children. At first, they depict the boy’s cosy home, a happy family in bright blue and yellow clothes. The image of war is visualised as a black cloud – a monstrous creature with bony hands that throws fiery bombs onto the ground. The house is leaning, and the parents are fleeing with the boy in their arms. The next scene is depicted in fiery red. The house is shown as a robot, protecting its owners from black rockets. It has saved the family but not itself. Illustrations of the destroyed house and shattered trees are rendered in grey. The boy contemplates where his home is now: in a shelter, at the train station, in his uncle Matvii’s house, or on the road. Short sentences highlight lexemes like “home,” “shelter,” “house,” “train station,” “the homeless,” “remember,”

“waiting,” and others. In this picture book, the image of home is dynamic and it is conveyed through both verbal and visual elements of the publication.

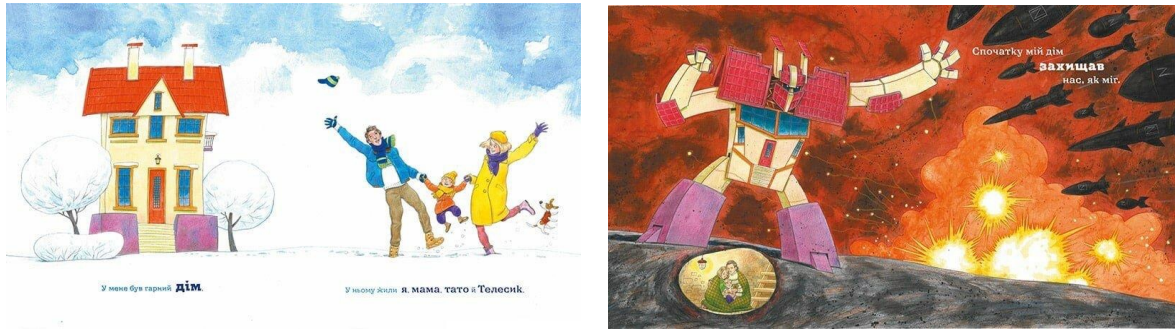


Figure 3. The illustrations by Oleksandr Prodan in Kateryna Tykhozora’s book “Home”

The loss of one’s home and the search for a new one, a refuge is a motif artistically explored in Nadiika Herbish’s works “The Apples of War” (2020) and “My Name is Mariam” (2017). The author articulates the paradigm of “my home” – “stranger’s home” – “new home” in these works. K. Tykhozora develops the idea of *home as a sacred image*, connected not that much to the feelings and emotions of the characters but to a physical location. It represents a spiritual space for the family.

The short story “The Apples of War” describes the life of a Ukrainian family that fled the First World War and immigrated to America. The young Sofia, the main character, tries to find her place in the new world, to comprehend the devastating impact of the war on their family. She wanted so much to ease the pain of her father, who was at war, to help her mother create family comfort, and to have a sense of safety in her new home. This story echoes the millions of stories of modern families who have become refugees and sought refuge in other countries, just like Mariam’s family in the mentioned story.

The characters often recall the home that the family is forced to leave when fleeing the war. They try to feel “at home” where there are family members, where you are safe. Sofia (“The Apples of War”) remembered their small house in Zhovkva but did not want to return there because of the danger. She cries as her father breaks the only small vase her mother brought to the States: “She was hurt by her dad’s pain and by her mom’s resilience. She didn’t want to return to the house where she was born and raised because it reminded her of the soldiers her mother had hidden her

from, of the hunger and cold, of the fear and destruction, of how much her mother cried when she thought her father had been killed in the war...” (Herbish, 2020, p. 12).

The image of home is connected with the national culture and identity of the characters. The house, originally intended to protect people from the natural elements, gradually acquires new functions and takes on different hypostases: home is a dwelling, independence, inviolability; home is a family, a woman, love, procreation, permanence; home is a tradition, a nation, a people, a history. Having received additional semantic loadings, the home has turned into a reduced copy of the model of the universe and human existence, revealing the peculiarities of the mentality of a particular people (Yashyna). In search of safety, the characters’ “stranger’s house” and “new house” become their “house,” a space of safety and family happiness. Creating a sense of comfort in a new home is made easier by bringing items from the old home, reviving traditions, and celebrations; while also cooking and baking national dishes. Sofia’s mother often cooked borsch and baked cranberry pies. She glued a broken vase back together and put it on the cupboard, in its usual place. She was preparing their small house for Christmas: “cutting out garlands of coloured paper with her daughter, tying green spruce branches with red ribbons,” and preparing kutia (a traditional Christmas dish, which is made of boiled wheat berries, adding honey and poppy seeds) and uzvar (one of the most popular drinks of Ukrainians made from dried berries). Gretchen’s mother, a girl from Austria, also followed her national Christmas traditions: she baked Sachertorte and apple strudel and placed Austrian Christmas decorations on the windowsills, namely: wooden arch candlesticks with tall candles, and hung a printed Advent calendar in the living room, which they brought from their home in Salzburg.

The culture of forming and filling the category of home has been created over the centuries and has acquired a deep archetypal meaning, therefore “home is precisely the place where an authentic memory of the past can find perhaps even the most secure refuge during the great wars of memory. Moreover, the home as a structure of symbolic order shapes those who live in it” (Ageyeva, 2023, p. 305). Thus, forced emigrants create their model of microcosm, family, and clan in a new home, turning a stranger’s home into their own. The home is a reduced model of the universe, a mastered and “domesticated” space where a person feels safe. The relationship

between family members remains strong here, because “the home for Ukrainians has been the equivalent of natural, constructed order, orderliness, family and kinship since ancient times” (Yashyna, 2010, p. 68). N. Herbish’s works are among those, in which the archetype of the home is presented in two dimensions: spatial (as a dwelling, a home for a family) and internal and metaphysical (as social initiation and identification of the main characters) (Herasymenko, 2022, p. 13).

The house becomes not just a place of action, but also an important symbol that reveals the story, emotions, and development of the characters. It gives the literary work an additional layer of meaning and makes it richer and more interesting for the reader.

DISCUSSION

The research of the artistic representation of the image of the home as a marker of safety/danger in contemporary Ukrainian children's literature may interest readers and scholars, taking into account several aspects.

For the first time, the artistic features of the depiction of the image of the home in contemporary children's literature as a building, locus, spatial image, and an image of the sacred – connected to the spiritual and moral world, as well as the feelings and experiences of the main characters are summarised. Additionally, home is portrayed as a national-symbolic image, especially in works and children’s books about war and the struggle against the enemy. The meanings embedded by the authors in the images of a destroyed, looted, and abandoned home and a new home, which provides temporary shelter or should become a new home for emigrants, are examined. The verbal and visual components of books for children are interpreted with an emphasis on how the main characters perceive their home.

What is original is that the article examines the image of the home in the context of global challenges of modern times, such as wars, social and political conflicts. This adds relevance to the research and shows how children’s literature reflects and responds to these issues.

Particular attention is paid to how the illustrations and visual range of contemporary children’s books complement or contrast with the textual representation of the house as a symbol of safety or danger, an interdisciplinary approach in literary studies.

The article examines how the image of home in contemporary Ukrainian children's literature helps young readers to understand their own post-traumatic experiences, particularly in the context of war conflicts and loss of homeland, which is an important topic for both Ukrainian and international audiences.

CONCLUSIONS

To summarize, the image of home is traditionally associated with a happy childhood and serves as a marker of safety in works for children and youth, but it acquires other meanings in contemporary Ukrainian literature and books about the war. For example, the looted house in Volodymyr Rutkivskyi's novella "Poterchata" becomes a symbol of the young protagonist Volodko's lost childhood, and the house in Kateryna Yehorushkina's story is first a marker of safety and then a danger to the girl Vira and her family. The image of a destroyed house in the fairy tale "The Cat, the Rooster and the Cupboard" by Oleksandr Mykhed is shaped by the story of the family that lived there and detailed descriptions of things that have become a symbol of the invincibility of Ukrainians as the whole world saw in the photos of Borodianka near Kyiv destroyed by Russian shelling. In Kateryna Tykhozora and Oleksandr Prodan's picture book "Home", the house is portrayed as a protective robot shielding its owners from black rockets but the war destroys it.

The image of home acquires a sacred meaning in Nadiika Herbish's stories "The Apples of War" and "My Name is Mariam". The characters of the stories lose their home and seek refuge in a new home, turning a stranger's or a new home into their own, creating comfort, and a spiritual space for the family. The image of the home is closely related to the issue of identity, as the home embodies the integrity of perception of the world and one's place in it that was lost due to emigration.

The image of home and the concepts of safety/danger are often visually emphasised through illustrations and cover designs in children's books.

REFERENCES

Ageyeva, V. (2023). *Za lashtunkamy imperii. Esei pro ukrainsko-rosiiski kulturni vidnosyny* [Behind the scenes of the empire. Essays on Ukrainian-Russian cultural relations]. 2-he vyd., vypr. K. : Vikhola (in Ukrainian).

- Bondar, N. Yu. (2010). Khudozhnia svoieridnist arkhetyviv domu, dorohy i dytyny (na materialy romaniv U. Stairona “Vybir Sofi” i Dzh. Barnsa “Istoriia svitu 10 ½ rozdilakh”) [The artistic originality of the archetypes of the house, the road and the child (based on the novels of U. Styron “Sophie's Choice” and J. Barnes “The History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters”)]. *Extended abstract of Candidate's thesis, Oles Honchar Dnipro National University*. Available at <https://uacademic.info/ua/document/0410U004767> (in Ukrainian).
- Boron, O. (2005). *Poetyka prostoru v tvorchosti T. Shevchenka* [Poetics of space in the work of T. Shevchenko]. K. : Ahentstvo “Ukraina”.
- Demchenko, A. (2016). Poetyka triady “Dim – Ne-dim – Antydim” u zbirtsi s. Zhadana “Zhyttia Marii” [Poetics of the triad “Home – Non-home – Anti-home” in the collection of p. Desired “Life of Mary”]. *Suchasni literaturoznavchi studii. Fenomen domu v literaturoznavchii perspektyvi. Zbirnyk naukovykh prats*, 13. K. : Vyd. tsentr KNLU, pp. 207–216 (in Ukrainian).
- Herasymenko, N. V. (2022). Arkhetyp domu v romani S. Zhadana “Internat” [The archetype of the house in S. Zhadan's novel “Boarding”]. *Akademichni Studii. Seriiia “Humanitarni Nauky”*, (1), pp. 9–16. doi: <https://doi.org/10.52726/as.humanities/2022.1.2>
- Herbish, Nadiika. (2017). *Mene zvaty Maryam* [My name is Mariam]. Kharkiv : Vivat.
- Herbish, Nadiika. (2020). *Yabluka viiny* [The Apples of War]. Kyiv : Portal.
- Kachak, T. B., & Blyznyuk, T. O. (2024). War in Contemporary Ukrainian Literature for Children and Youth. *Research bulletin. Series: Philological sciences*, (209), pp. 151–157. doi: <https://doi.org/10.32782/2522-4077-2024-209-23> (in Ukrainian).
- Kachak, T. (2014). Kraievydy z dytynstva: mistse i prostir u suchasni ukrainski prozi dlia ditei [Landscapes from childhood: place and space in contemporary Ukrainian prose for children]. *Prykarpatskyi visnyk NTSh “Slovo”*, 2(26), pp. 160–177 (in Ukrainian).
- Kocherha, S. (2008). Arkhetypni motyvy domu i bezdomivya v tvorchosti Lesi Ukrainky [Archetypal motifs of home and homelessness in the works of Lesya Ukrainka]. *Studia Methodologica*, 25, pp. 115–120 (in Ukrainian).

- Krupka, M. (2023). In Search of Your Own Space: The Image of the House in the Novel by Natalia Hurnytska “Coffee Melody in Cardamom Tone”. *Scientific Notes of Ostroh Academy National University: Philology Series*, 17(85), pp. 282–285. Available at: <https://journals.oa.edu.ua/Philology/article/view/3859> (in Ukrainian).
- Marchenko, N. (2023). *Kateryna Yehorushkina. Moi vymusheni kanikuly* [Kateryna Yehorushkina. My forced vacation]. Available at <https://chl.kiev.ua/KEY/Books/ShowBook/786> (in Ukrainian).
- Marchenko, N. (2012) *Volodymyrovi Rutkivskomu – 75!* [Volodymyr Rutkivsky is 75!]. Available at <http://www.chl.kiev.ua/key/Books/ShowBook/103#3> (in Ukrainian).
- Mykhed, O. (2022). *Kotyk, Pivnyk, Shafka* [The Cat, the Rooster and the Cupboard]. Lviv : Vydavnytstvo Staroho Leva (in Ukrainian).
- Pavlinchuk, T. I. (2004) *Obraz budynku yak oznachnyk doli u tvorakh V. Shevchuka “Pryvyd mertvoho domu” ta V. Vynnychenka “Istoriia Yakymovoho budynku”* [The image of a house as a signifier of fate in the works of V. Shevchuk “The Ghost of a Dead House” and V. Vinnichenko's “History of the Yakym House”]. *Volyn-Zhytomyrshchyna*, (12), pp. 93–97 (in Ukrainian).
- Rutkivskiy, V. (2013). *Poterchata. Dytiacha spovid dlia doroslykh, yaki tak nichomu y ne navchylisia* [Poterchata. Children's confession for adults who have never learned anything]. Ternopil : Navchalna knyha – Bohdan. (in Ukrainian).
- Tykhozora, K. & Prodan, O. (2022). *Dim* [Home]. Kharkiv : Ranok.
- Vzdulska, V. (2022). “*Moi vymusheni kanikuly*” – *vykhodyt nova dytiacha knyzhka pro viinu* [“My forced vacation” – a new children's book about the war is published.]. Available at <https://chytomo.com/moi-vymusheni-kanikuly-vykhodyt-nova-dytiacha-knyzhka-pro-vijnu/> (in Ukrainian).
- Vzdulska, V. (2022). *Naivazhlyvishi dytiachi knyzhky 20022 roku: Na shcho zvernuty uvahu?* [The most important children's books of 20022: What to pay attention to?]. *Chytomo*. Available at <https://chytomo.com/najvazhlyvishi-dytiachi-knyzhky-2022-roku-na-shcho-zvernuty-uvahu/> (in Ukrainian).

- Yashyna, L. I. (2010). Obraz “domu” u tvorchosti V. Drozda [The image of “home” in the work of V. Drozd]. *Aktualni problemy slovianskoi filolohii. Serii: Lihvistyka i literaturoznavstvo*, XXIII (4), pp. 66–72. Available at <http://dspace.nbuv.gov.ua/bitstream/handle/123456789/38391/08-Iashyna.pdf> (in Ukrainian).
- Yatskiv, N. Ia., & Tsiupa, L. V. (2021). The Image of Home in the Novel Five Zinnias for my Stranger by Marie-France Clerc. *Transcarpathian Philological Studies*, 17(2), pp. 143 – 148. doi : <https://doi.org/10.32782/tps2663-4880/2021.17-2.27> (in Ukrainian).
- Yehorushkina, K. (2022). *Moi vymusheni kanikuly* [My forced vacation]. Kharkiv : Vivat (in Ukrainian).

Received: 3.07.2024

Accepted: 19.10.2024

Cite this article as:

Kachak, T. (2024). The Image of Home as a Marker of Safety/Danger in Contemporary Literature for Children and Youth. *Astraea*, 5(2), 50-68. doi: <https://doi.org/10.34142/astreaa.2024.5.2.03>

