

Lived spaces in Croatian picturebooks: public and private places and the sense of belonging¹

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Abstract

The paper presents a study of the visual discourses of Croatian picturebooks in the period 1945–2010. It focuses on realistically depicted places and explores how their representation changes during a period of 65 years. A comparative content analysis focuses on visual representations of home, school, street and other spaces, the way they are presented as a child's space of belonging and how they are informed with specific meanings. The aim of the study is to establish the image of child inscribed in the representations of lived spaces during the observed period and to reveal how the child's role changes in relationship with the society. A diachronic analysis reveals a general shift in focus from outside towards inside spaces and from public towards private places. This is explained through changes in the ideological and political contexts in different periods of Croatian history and interpreted as a shift from collectivism as a dominant social value after WWII, towards re-establishing family values and individual identity. In the process, open didacticism gives way to an acknowledgment of the child's individual, cultural and literary needs.

Keywords: Croatian picturebooks; visual discourse; sense of belonging; visual representation of space; diachronic perspective

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Introduction

The aim of this study is to establish the image of child inscribed in the visual representations of lived spaces during a period of 65 years (1945–2010) and to reveal how the child's relationship with the society changes over time. The study is based on an analysis of a selection of Croatian picturebooks including visual presentations of living spaces and relies on a critical methodology established by John Stephens (1992), following his claim that pictures in picturebooks have “the same status as signifying systems as that ascribed to system of language, and in some cases greater status” (pp.5-6). Regarding the three components of the narrative as determined by Stephens (discourse, story and significance), in the present investigation the focus is on the significance. The significance is achieved through a secondary reading from the discourse and the story, and the story is “ascertained by an act of primary reading (reading for ‘the sense’)” (Stephens, 1992, p.12). Stephens (1992) points out that significance is the problem area for acts of interpretation: “narratives invariably have thematic purposes and functions” (p.14), and children's fiction “belongs firmly within the domain of cultural practices which exist for the purpose of socializing their target audience” (p.8). It means that children's fiction influences the lives of children to help them understand the world and behave in the society according to adopted values and conventions. Further, Stephen (1992) emphasises that childhood is “the crucial formative period in the life of a human being” and that “a society offers its children [...] a network of ideological positions, many of which are neither articulated nor recognized as being essentially ideological” (p.8). In a similar vein, Gillian Rose develops “a critical visual methodology” to address “questions of cultural meaning and power” and explains that it is “an approach that thinks about the visual in terms of the cultural significance, social practices and power relations in which it is embedded; and that means thinking about the power relations that produce, are articulated through, and can be challenged by, ways of seeing and imaging” (2001, p.3). Further, Frank Serafini proposes three analytical perspectives (perceptual, structural, and ideological) with each perspective “nested within subsequent perspectives” (Serafini, 2010, p.88). His approach reflects Stephens's methodology that brings together “the elements of narrative theory, critical linguistics, and a concern with ideology and subjectivity” (Stephens, 1992, p.5), that can be related to Serafini's structural, perceptual and ideological perspectives, respectively. Serafini also

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claims that structures and visual elements of multimodal texts, including picturebooks, “are always interpreted within a social context and through particular social practices” (Serafini, 2010, p.89). Therefore, the present study is guided by the critical methodology established by these three scholars and explores depicted spaces to establish how visuals in analysed picturebooks reflect the social and cultural contexts in a diachronic perspective and how the ideology derived from the significance of those narratives creates the images of the child in specific periods of time.

David Rudd (2010) states that different versions of the development of children’s literature presuppose different types of child, and that “the category ‘child’ has no intrinsic referent, only that which different societies have determined – and societies’ notions have differed substantially” (pp.3, 7). Croatian history was dynamic in the second half of the 20th century. Therefore, it is presumed that the image of the child represented in picturebooks has changed during the analysed period due to changes in ideological and political circumstances.

1. The corpus

The corpus (Table 1) consists of 39 picturebooks published during the observed period (three from 1945–1950 and six from each of the next six decades), labelled by letters (A–G) denoting decades, and numbers (1–6) for selected titles. Creators of both verbal and visual discourses of picturebooks included in the corpus are from Croatia. The corpus comprises 36 narrative and three non-narrative picturebooks (a collection of rhymes – A4, an alphabet book – A6, and a concept book – D3).

Selected picturebooks include visual representations of domestic spaces or other places where children spend time. They focus on human (child) characters or anthropomorphised animals. There are 33 picturebooks with child protagonists or characters, four with adults in focus (B1, B4, D4, E5), and two where animal protagonists’ age is not determined (D2, F6). Whenever possible, awarded picturebooks and those included in the recommended reading lists for primary schools have been included. However, as first Croatian awards for children’s books appeared in 1967, with separate prizes for text and illustrations, and the first Croatian specialised picturebook award only in 2005, our corpus contains only five awarded picturebooks (C6, D4, F1, G2, G6). Similarly, picturebooks were rarely seen on school reading lists before 1990, so

the selection comprises seven recent picturebooks recommended for school reading (E6, F1, F2, F3, F5, G3, G4), and two recommended in earlier decades (C5, C6)². Finally, the corpus comprises titles by picturebook creators who have repeatedly shown originality and quality in their work.

Spaces are realistically presented in most picturebooks, but some storyworlds³ include fantastic elements, which generally do not interfere with the dominant realistic mode. In several picturebooks the protagonists are fantastic beings, but the depicted spaces are realistic (B2, F4, G3, G4). Animal protagonists appear in either human-like settings (C5, F6, G2) or animals invade or share a realistically depicted human space (D2, E5, F2). Fantastic spaces that children imagine (C1, C6, F1) or dream of (D1) are combined with realistic places. An embedded story introduces a fantastic plot (C4), and there is an example of nonsense (G6), but the space remains realistic. The visual discourse of E6 presents realistic spaces as fantastic, but real places are easily recognised (street, kitchen). Here, the role of fantastic representations is to show the protagonist’s fear and discontent, i.e. the internal perspective.

Table 1 - The analysed corpus

Picturebook creators		Title	Year	Label	Special characteristics	Decades
Author	Illustrator					
Gustav Krklec	Anton Brilli	Pioniri grade [Pioneers Build]	1946	A1	- verses	1945–1950
Gustav Krklec	Nikola Mucavac	Pioniri pošumljavajmo [Pioneers Let us Afforest]	1947	A2	- verses	
Danko Oblak	Dalibor Parać	Razgovor o Titu [A Conversation about Tito]	1950	A3	- verses - format: close to illustrated books	

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Picturebook creators		Title	Year	Label	Special characteristics	Decades
Author	Illustrator					
	Ema Bursać	Pošla koka na Pazar: narodna priča [A Hen Went to the Market: A Folk Tale]	1952	B1	- folk tale	1951-1960
Petar Mardesić	Albert Kinert	Morski čovjek [A Sea Man]	1952	B2	- legend, history, a fantastic character	
Branko Špoljar	Oto Antonini	Medo [A Teddy-Bear]	1956	B3		
Anon	Jože Ciuha	Istarske pjesmice [Rhymes from Istria]	1959	B4	- rhymes (verses), non-narrative	
Mirko Jurkić	Lea Mašić	Tri potepuha [Three Vagabonds]	1959	B5	- verses	
Joža Horvat	Stevo Binički	Abeceda ludih želja [An Alphabet of Crazy Wishes]	1960	B6	- verses, non-narrative, ABC book, nonsensical	
Zlata Kolarić-Kišur	Oto Antonini	Uz pjesmu i šalu na jadranskom žalu [With Songs and Jokes on an Adriatic Beach]	1961	C1	- some imaginary images of the undersea world with fantastic elements, verses	1961-1970
Gustav Krklec	Vilko Gliha Selan	Drveni bicikl [A Wooden Bicycle]	1964	C2	- verses (poems), autobiographical, illustrated book	
Andelka Martić	Stevo Binički	Radovanov dar [Radovan's Present]	1965	C3		
Ratko Zvrko	Danica Rusjan	Svemirska bajka [A Space Fairy Tale]	1966	C4	- fantastic embedded story, realistic framing story, verses	

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Author	Illustrator					
Grigor Vitez	Danica Rusjan	Razbojnik sa žutom pjegom [A Scoundrel with a Yellow Spot]	1967	C5	- animal story, highly anthropomorphised - on the 1968 reading list	
Boris Kolar	Zlatko Bourek	Dječak i lopta [A Boy and a Ball]	1969	C6	- imaginative (fantastic) elements; - awarded - on the 1972 reading list	
Radovan Vučković	Rudolf Borošak	Danica i druge zvijezde [Danica and Other Stars]	1971	D1	- fantastic dream, realistic framing story	1971-1980
Vjekoslav Majer	Zdenko Svirčić	Slušamo radio [We Are Listening to the Radio]	1971	D2	- animal story, human living space, verses	
Zvonimir Balog	Ivan Vitez	365 braće: dani i mjeseci [365 Brothers: Days and Months]	1972	D3	- non-fiction, non-narrative, concept book, verses	
Dubravko Horvatić	Bojan Stranić	Hej, vatrogasci, požurite: brojimo od 1 do 10 [Hey, Firemen, Hurry Up: We Are Counting from 1 to 10]	1972	D4	- adult protagonists, counting book (concept book), verses - awarded	
Blanka Dovjak-Matković	Danica Rusjan	Tajana u zoološkom vrtu [Tajana at a Zoo]	1975	D5		

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Picturebook creators		Title	Year	Label	Special characteristics	Decades
Author	Illustrator					
Ratko Zvrko	Nedjeljko Dragić	Darko Indijanac [Darko the Indian]	1980	D6	- verses (a song)	1981-1990
Mladen Bjažić	Nina Kallay	Pioniri ratnici [Pioneers – Warriors]	1983	E1	- verses	
Drago Kozina	Danica Rusjan	U gradu [In the City]	1983	E2		
Milivoj Matošec	Branko Vujanović	Joža [Joža (i.e. Josip Broz Tito)]	1983	E3	- biographic	
Branislav Glumac & Marino Zurl	Josip Generalić	Zeko u autobusu [A Bunny on the Bus]	1985	E4		
Boris Kolar		Vilko s vrtuljcima [Will with Pinwheels]	1989	E5	- human and animal characters, adult protagonist	
Željka Horvat-Vukelja	Ninoslav Kunc	Hrabrica: ili kako je Perica postao hrabar [A Daring One: Or, How Perica Became Brave]	1990	E6	- fantastic elements - on reading lists since 1991	
Sunčana Škrinjarić	Nevenka Macolić	Kako sanjaju stvari [How Things Dream]	1991	F1	- fantastic elements – imaginative play, realistic settings - on reading lists since 1991	1991-2000
Nada Iveljić	Pika Vončina	Božićna bajka [A Christmas Fairy Tale]	1992	F2	- fantastic elements, realistic setting - on reading lists since 1993	
Božidar Prosenjak	Aleksandar Marks	Miš [A Mouse]	1997	F3	- on reading lists since 2001	

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Picturebook creators		Title	Year	Label	Special characteristics	Decades
Author	Illustrator					
Stanislav Marijanović		Knjiga čarobnih formula [A Book of Magic Formulas]	1999	F4	- fantastic protagonists and characters, realistic settings	2001-2010
Željka Horvat-Vukelja	Andrea Petrlik Huseinović	Zdenko Slovojed [Zdenko the Letter-eater]	2000	F5	- on the 2006 reading list	
Sanja Pilić	Andrea Petrlik Huseinović	Zaljubljeni medo [A Bear in Love]	2000	F6	- animal story	
Vojo Radoičić		Poruka [A Message]	2001	G1		
Svjetlan Junaković	Svjetlan Junaković	Sretan rođendan [Happy Birthday]	2002	G2	- animal characters, verses - awarded	
Želimir Hercigonja	Manuela Vladić Maštruko	Prašnjavko [Dusty]	2002	G3	- fantastic protagonist, realistic settings - on the 2006 reading list	
Željka Horvat-Vukelja	Dario Kukić	Leteći glasovir [The Flying Piano]	2003	G4	- fantastic elements, realistic settings - on the 2006 reading list	
Ana Đokić	Ivana Guljašević	Mali Mo [Little Mo]	2009	G5		
Grigor Vitez	Tomislav Torjanac	Kako živi Antuntun [How Antuntun Lives]	2009	G6	- fantastic elements, realistic settings, nonsensical, a poem - awarded	

2. Methodology

This study combines qualitative and quantitative methods. Visual representations of space in each picturebook have been analysed with respect to dominant or most important space, according to whether it is urban or rural, private or public, past or present, safe or dangerous (or disagreeable), and, finally, whether it belongs to inside or

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outside spaces. In the process, sub-categories have been introduced to distinguish among variants of inside and outside spaces. The category of threshold space has been introduced to cover representations of windows, shop windows, doors and other openings between inside and outside spaces, dividing and connecting them at the same time. Images have been categorised by means of reading for the sense (cf. Stephens 1992), i.e. establishing the meanings conveyed by visual discourses representing spaces (settings) as elements of stories (or contents in non-narrative picturebooks).

It should be noted that Henri Lefebvre (1991) introduces the concept of “social space”, which combines the notions of mental space and physical space (p.27), and which works “as a tool for the analysis of society” (p.34). He distinguishes among three main categories of social spaces: global (or public), private and intermediate. Public spaces embrace “temples, palaces and political and administrative buildings” and may be “subdivided into interior spaces open to the public and the closed headquarters of institutions”; private spaces “represent the level of residence and the places set aside for it – houses, apartments, and so on”, and they also subsume “entrances, thresholds, reception areas and family living-spaces, along with places set aside for retreat and sleep”; finally, the intermediate spaces include “arteries, transitional areas and places of business” and they also take in “avenues and squares, medium-sized thoroughfares and the passageways leading to the houses” (p.155). In the present study some of these categories have been adopted (private vs. public), and some redefined, for instance, thresholds that Lefebvre subsumes under the category of private spaces are here understood as a category of borderline places between inside and outside spaces. Spaces are also primarily analysed in terms of binary oppositions which would be meaningful from the point of view of a child so that they may more clearly reveal the shifts in meaning of the concept of child in the area of significance in the observed period.

The results of the quantitative analysis have been grouped around decades (A-G), expressed in percentage and compared to reveal trends in a diachronic perspective.

The main categories mentioned above allow for a general overview of the nature and character of depicted spaces, but a finer classification has been needed to achieve a deeper understanding of the ideologies implied in individual storyworlds and of the images of child created in different decades. Therefore, a more detailed qualitative content analysis of visual discourses in specific decades has been performed.

3. Contemporary spaces

A large majority of analysed picturebooks (28) primarily focus on contemporary spaces and local context, the immediate surroundings a child may experience in his or her life. Temporal frame is undetermined or irrelevant in seven picturebooks: a folk tale (B1), two animal stories (C5, F6), a book of rhymes (B4), an ABC book (B6), a concept book (D3) and a story with fantastic protagonists (and plot) and realistic spaces (F4).

There are four picturebooks depicting past spaces: B2, C2, E1 and E3. The first is based on a legend about the Mediterranean monk seal (*Monachus monachus*), popularly called *morski čovik* “sea man”, an endangered species which lives on the Croatian island of Biševo. The framing story is realistic and contemporary: a deck boy finds a “sea man” from the legend, looking like an old man, who tells him how ships developed throughout history, from personal experience (he sailed on each of them). In the end, the man turns back into a seal. The framing story is set in the present time, but the embedded story occupies most of the visual discourse.

The second picturebook recalls episodes from the poet’s childhood set at the beginning of the 20th century (Krklec was born in 1899). Depicted spaces do not offer strong signals of that period, but the verbal text provides clues.

The third picturebook focuses on child warriors who joined the partisans during WWII, and their activities during that time, largely embellished for the child readers of the 1980s.

The fourth tells the story about the childhood of Josip Broz Tito, born in 1892, the communist dictator and the president of former Yugoslavia, whose cult of personality was exceptionally strong, and largely supported and cherished by children’s literature of the time. Depicted spaces are set in rural Croatia and Slovenia at the turn of the 20th century.

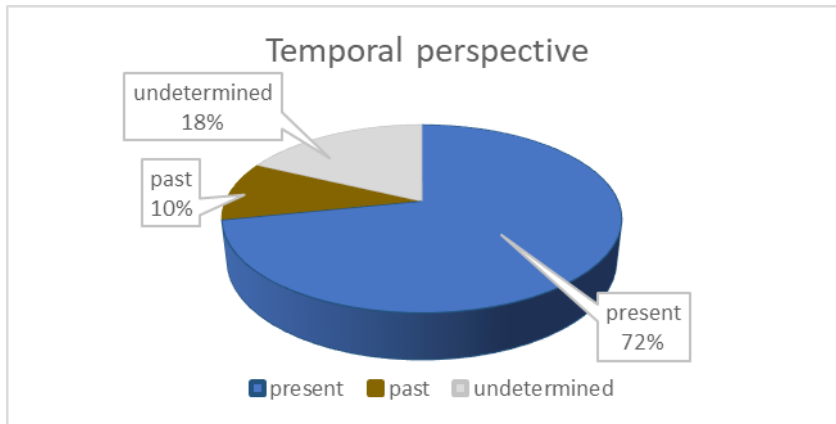


Figure 1. The distribution of temporal indicators in the corpus (1945–2010)

Another book refers to Broz and his biography (A3). It comprises 46 pages (50 including non-illustrated paratexts), with 24 black-and-white pictures and vignettes. Child protagonists do talk about Broz, but their main concern are plans for the future, so that most images (15) depict or implicate spaces set in their time, post-WWII years. The findings (Figure 1) show that the present (contemporary) time was in focus throughout the observed period, and that past events, and accompanying past spaces, appeared only occasionally, dispersed across the periods B, C and D. The 1990s (F) and further decades did see some picturebooks about Croatian history. These are not included because they generally focus on historical public places, and narrative picturebooks with child characters and their living spaces have been selected as more appropriate for the present study.

4. Developed environments

The second set of categories comprises different types of developed environments. While categories urban and rural easily describe quite a few spaces in our corpus, two more types, suburban and wilderness, have been introduced. Here the term “wilderness” refers to places which are not populated by humans and which are

uncultivated, such as woods, but not necessarily dangerous or waste territories as the word might imply.

Four picturebooks are undetermined regarding this category. Titles B6 and D3 provide examples of different types of space, but neither is dominant. One story (G2) is set inside and outside home, but there are no hints as to the environment. The protagonist of D1 “goes” outside in her dream, and the setting of the framing story remains undetermined.

There are 15 titles with plots set dominantly in urban spaces, and 16 in rural spaces. Two titles are set in suburban places (C3, F4) and two in wilderness: the one where a deck boy finds the sea man (the seal), and hears his story (B2), and an animal story (C5), where a titmouse and her two chicks live in a cottage in the wood, an outside space where a marten is a real threat. Figure 2 presents the distribution of different types of developed environments in the corpus.

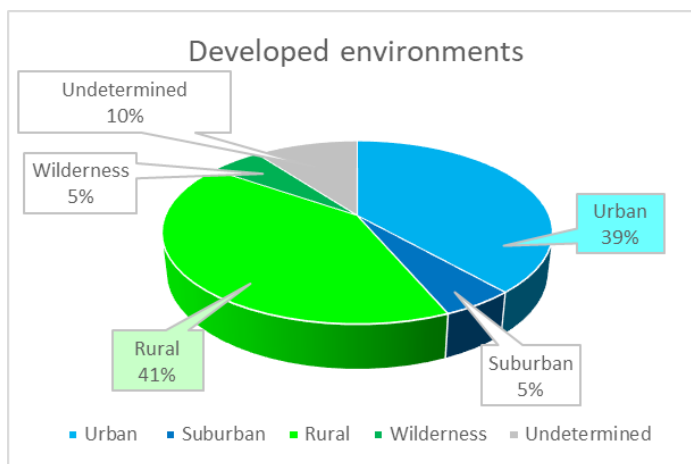


Figure 2. The distribution of developed environments in the corpus (1945–2010)

These results show a relatively divided distribution of space types, urban and rural being amply represented. As can be seen in Figure 3, both types have been found in every

decade of the analysed period, while suburban spaces and wilderness appear sporadically.

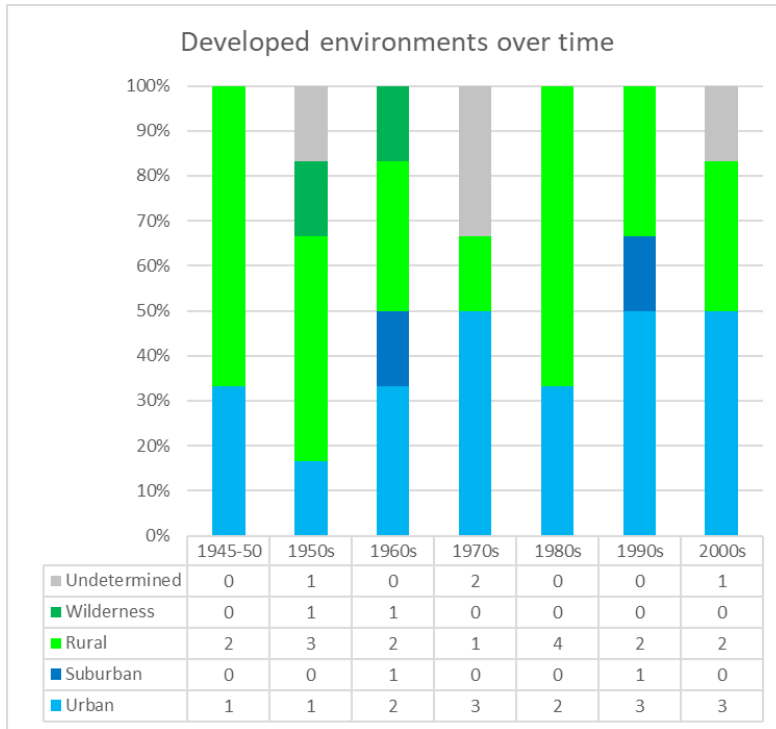


Figure 3. The distribution of developed environments in a diachronic perspective

To detect trends over time, urban and suburban settings, and rural settings and wilderness are combined to form two distinctive groups (Figure 4). Rural settings appear often at the beginning of the analysed period, but their popularity seems to drop in 1970s, rise in 1980s, and then drop again. On the other hand, urban spaces rarely appear in our corpus before the 1960s, but after that, and after a temporary drop in 1980s, they become constant.

This distribution of space types could be explained by our selection of picturebooks – the number of titles is rather small, and the results may not be representative enough to justify conclusions about the picturebook production in Croatia in general. However, the linear trends represented by broken lines indicate that there is a positive general trend towards a more frequent representation of urban (and suburban) spaces and a negative general trend towards a less frequent representation of rural spaces (and wilderness) in general. This is in line with the dominance of urban spaces in the European picturebooks of 1970s and at the turn of the 21st century, established by Teresa Colomer (2010), but in Croatia the dominance of the urban over rural spaces is not as strong in the 2000s as in the 1970s.

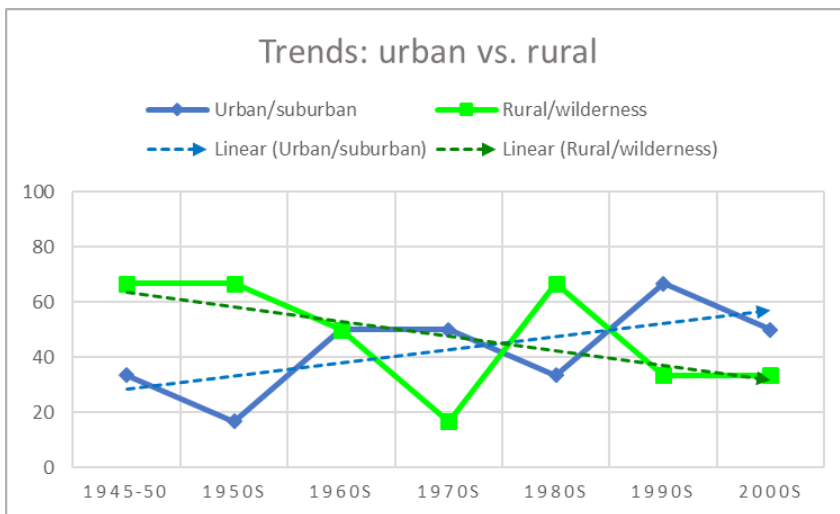


Figure 4. Trends over time: urban and suburban vs. rural and wilderness (relative values)

These findings lead to the conclusion that different types of developed environments were represented in visual discourses of Croatian picturebooks during the analysed period, and that there is a slight shift in preference towards representations of urban and away from representations of rural spaces in a diachronic perspective.

5. Private and public spaces

The analyses of depicted spaces as to whether they belong to public or private spheres has shown that most storyworlds in our corpus are dominantly or most importantly set in private places (22), half as many in public places (11), and that there are 6 cases where both spheres are equally important (Figure 5).

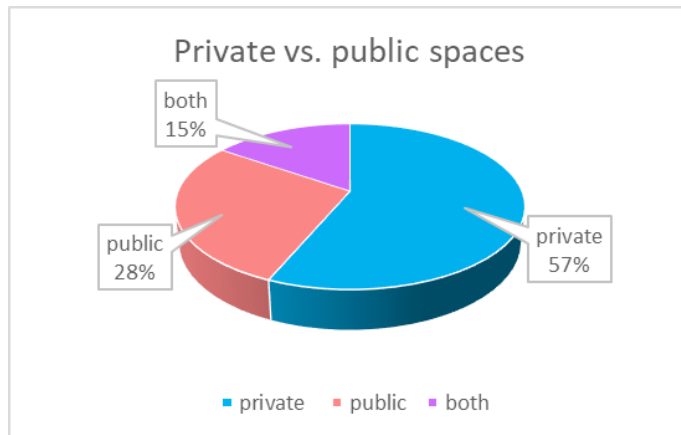


Figure 5. The distribution of private and public places in the corpus (1945–2010)

These results indicate that private spaces are by large the most popular, but this proportion is not mirrored in individual decades. Figure 6. shows preferences for private or public places over time and indicates that at the beginning of the observed period public places were dominant, while in the last three decades the situation was reverse. In the 1960s and 1970s, two spheres were in balance, at least in our corpus.

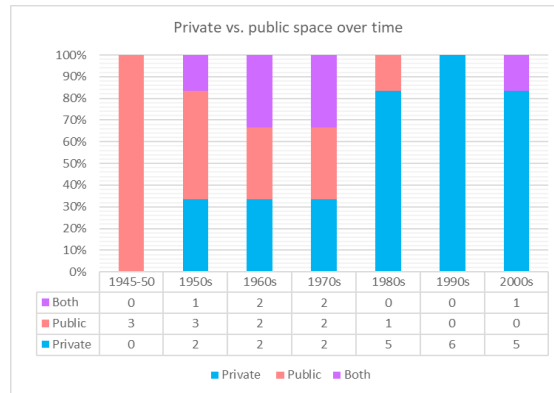


Figure 6. The distribution of private and public spaces in a diachronic perspective

The category “both” has been divided between private and public spheres for the next step so that, for instance, in 1950s the respective values ascribed to private and public places are now 2,5 instead of 2, and 3,5 instead of 3, etc. This allows for a more precise analysis of trends.

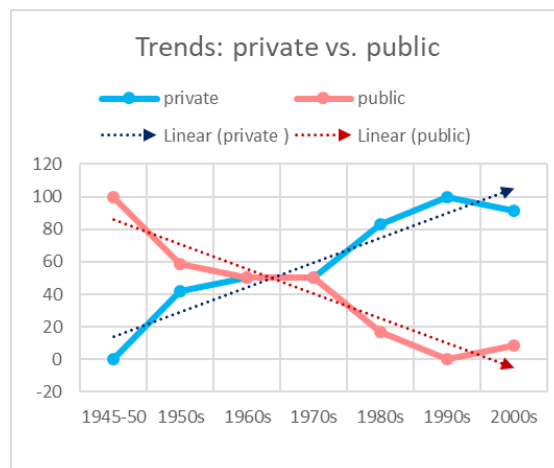


Figure 7. Trends over time: private vs. public places (relative values)

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Figure 7 shows the trends regarding the preferences for private or public places, which indicate a strong tendency towards a higher appreciation of private places, in contrast to public places, after the 1970s. The trends radically change their directions in the 1980s. Before that (and after the 1940s) two spheres coexisted. These findings indicate a significant rise of the importance of private spaces for the child's sense of belonging, which also implies a general acceptance and appreciation of family values in the final decades.

6. Safety

Dominant spaces in every picturebook have been analysed as to whether the child or other protagonists experience them as safe or dangerous. A large majority of places are presented as safe (30 titles). There are four examples where this distinction is irrelevant: three non-narrative picturebooks (B4, B6, D3) and the narrative counting book about firemen in action (D4). Adult protagonists are presented rushing to the site of fire and doing their job. The depicted places are safe, because the firemen feel confident, or dangerous, because the tasks to drive the fire-engine at a high speed through busy streets and to extinguish a fire, make the space unsafe. However, these categories do not refer to personal feelings of a child as there is no such protagonist, and the safety depends on the events and the course of action. The feeling implied by the visual discourse is that firemen can easily cope. The feeling of fear appears in E6, but it is not related to depicted places, which are safe. The protagonist is learning how to ride a bicycle. His fear is caused by the process and turns into happiness when he succeeds.

The remaining five titles require a more elaborate categorisation. There is only one title (D2) where the place can be described as unsafe for the protagonists throughout the visual discourse. The story is set in a (human) home, and the protagonists, a fox, a beaver and a hare, enter this space, attracted by classical music on the radio. They fear they may get caught, and when a human voice is heard in the radio programme instead of music, they run away in panic. The story is set in a domestic space, but not their own. In the story about three friends from different parts of Croatia (distinguished by their clothes, hats and bags) who travel around the countryside (B5), the dominant space is a rural area. On the way, the protagonists experience some unpleasant situations, besides the pleasant ones. They all go back home in the end, and happily return to their

everyday chores. The dominant space can be described as unsafe or unpredictable, but it is not dangerous. In contrast, it is at the same time attractive because the trio explores it with enthusiasm. However, it cannot be described as safe even though it may be argued that it is their own space, the space they all belong to, despite individual differences.

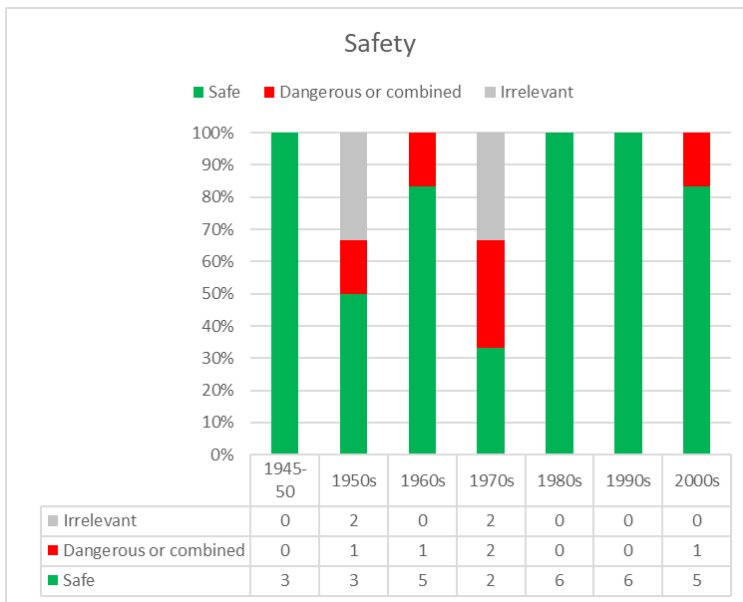


Figure 8. The distribution of safe and dangerous spaces in a diachronic perspective

In some picturebooks safe and unsafe places are confronted, and do not dominate the respective storyworlds. In the story about a titmouse and her two daughters (C5), their cosy little house is safe and warm. Yet, the crucial event happens outside, in the woods, where a marten bites off the feather tail of one chick before they manage to get back home. The outside space is dangerous and unsafe, and the chicks need to learn it from their own experience.

In the next example (D6), the situation is opposite. The story (told in lyrics of a popular children’s song) is about a boy who could not resist going to the cinema to watch a cowboy movie instead of going home after school. The city and the cinema are

presented as safe places and Darko enjoys the movie immensely. In the evening, his father is ready to beat him as a punishment. The beating is implied in the verbal discourse – it was “even more violent than at the cinema” and there was “a horrible tussle”. In the movie a cowboy was after an Indian, and at home, “Dad was a cowboy, and Darko was an Indian”.

The visual discourse does not present the actual punishment either, but it focuses on Darko’s frightened face and the father’s figure looming over him in a pose of a cowboy ready for duel and carrying a birch and a carpet beater in the casings hanging from his belt, in place of guns (Image 1). It remains unresolved if the actual beating really happened, especially as the scene is presented humorously, but for Darko, home is a place of fear, unlike the cinema, at least in this episode of his life. It should be noted that the final image in the visual discourse, the scene of a punishment about to happen (but maybe Dad is only joking?), is on the back cover, and a similar image appears on the front cover, where Darko is wearing a headband and three colourful feathers.



Image 1. Darko facing his father. D6 (1980).

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Finally, the story about a flying piano (G4), comprises several contrasted places. It begins when a girl spots the piano in a shop window, and the parents buy it for her after a while. A cosy place the piano is delivered to, the girl's room, soon becomes unpleasant when she shows her abusive side. The piano flies away, only to end up in a wet cellar, a dangerous and unpleasant place, especially for such an instrument. After another escape, and after a couple of other safe and less safe places and adventures, the piano finds his home at a young man's place. The story is about the process of finding a place of security, and the path is peppered with many obstacles and ups and downs.

The decade with the smallest count of visual discourses dominated by safe places is the 1970s (2). It is also the only period with an example that leaves the child protagonist in an unfriendly space at the end of the story (D6). In other cases, protagonists only temporarily stay in unsafe places and return to or find a safe home in the end. In all the examples from the 1980s and 1990s the stories are set in safe places, but some of the visual discourses refer to periods which were not always safe. For instance, in E1 children recall memories of pioneers fighting in WWII and in F2 images show ruins of villages destroyed during the Croatian War of Independence in the early 1990s. This picturebook was first published during the war, and it kindles hope for a peaceful life in the future.

The visual representations of space in the corpus of Croatian picturebooks usually show safe places that children are comfortable at. Even when dangerous places do appear, there is a change towards the end, so that the child protagonist is left in safety. This scheme is violated only in one picturebook with an open ending, which leaves the protagonist in a dangerous situation, about to be punished in consequence of mischief.

7. Inside and outside spaces

The findings about the previously analysed categories are based on an evaluation of dominant features of depicted spaces in individual picturebooks. In contrast, the analysis of the representations of inside and outside spaces is performed at the level of individual images in each decade. As mentioned above, most titles combine images of inside and outside spaces and many also include images of threshold spaces (19 titles). There is not a single picturebook in the corpus without at least one image of an outside space. To detect the relationship of the two categories over time, images found in all

visual discourses are analysed by decades according to the relative placement of the place they depict: inside spaces, outside spaces and threshold spaces (Table 2). There are 500 such images in the whole corpus (12.8 images of space per picturebook).

Table 2. Images of space according to placement in sets of picturebooks across time

Decades	Total number	Images per title	Distribution of types of placement in discrete time segments					
			Inside spaces	In. S %	Threshold spaces	Th. S %	Outside spaces	Out. S %
1945-50	36	13	5	13.9%	2	5.6%	29	80.6%
1950s	110	18.33	11	10%	3	2.7%	96	87.3%
1960s	60	10	11	18.3%	3	5%	46	76.7%
1970s	64	10.66	18	28.1%	3	4.7%	43	67.2%
1980s	78	13	24	30.8%	3	3.8%	51	65.4%
1990s	52	9.83	23	44.2%	5	9.6%	24	46.2%
2000s	100	16.66	45	45%	10	10%	45	45%
In the corpus	500	12.82	137	27.4%	29	5.8%	334	66.8%

The total count of images of depicted spaces varies in separate decades, largely due to different page counts of selected picturebooks. This data is thus not useful for comparison and it only offers a general overview, unlike the results given in the right part of Table 2, where the values are expressed in percentage for each segment of time.

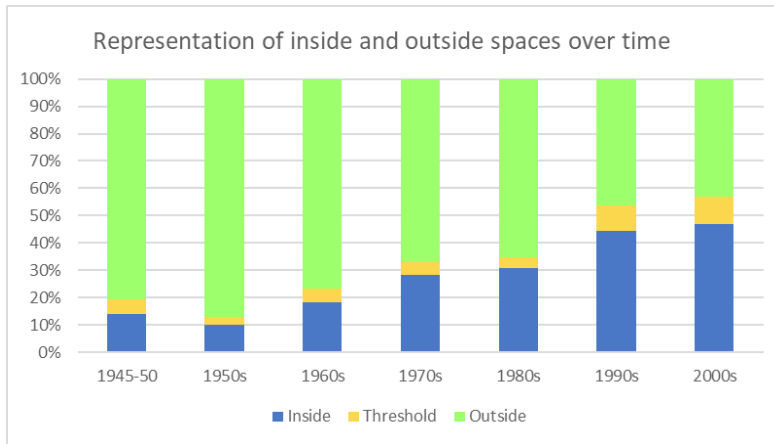


Figure 9. The distribution of inside and outside spaces in a diachronic perspective

Figure 9 shows the distribution of inside, threshold and outside spaces over time. All three categories are represented in each segment of the observed period. Until 1990s, outside spaces were represented much more often than inside spaces, but in the last two decades of the period, a balance was achieved. Domination of outside spaces over inside spaces in representations of living spaces is recorded particularly in the first three decades.

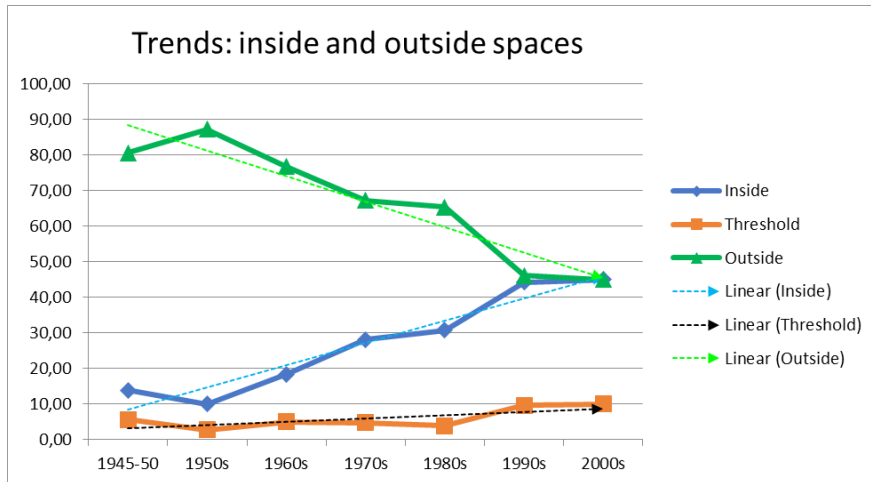


Figure 10. Trends over time: inside vs. outside spaces (relative values)

Regarding the trends over time (Figure 10), there is a strong and easily perceptible upward trend of the frequency of inside spaces in the visual discourses of Croatian picturebooks during the second half of the 20th century, and an analogous downward trend indicating a reduced interest for outside spaces. Analogous opposite trends are expected because these two categories are interdependent, but the level of the imbalance in the earlier decades is remarkable. Two kinds of space reached similar values towards the end of the period, which implies that both were important. The category of threshold spaces shows only a slight growth, indicating that an emphasis on the borderline between the two main categories is a persistent phenomenon in visual representations of space.

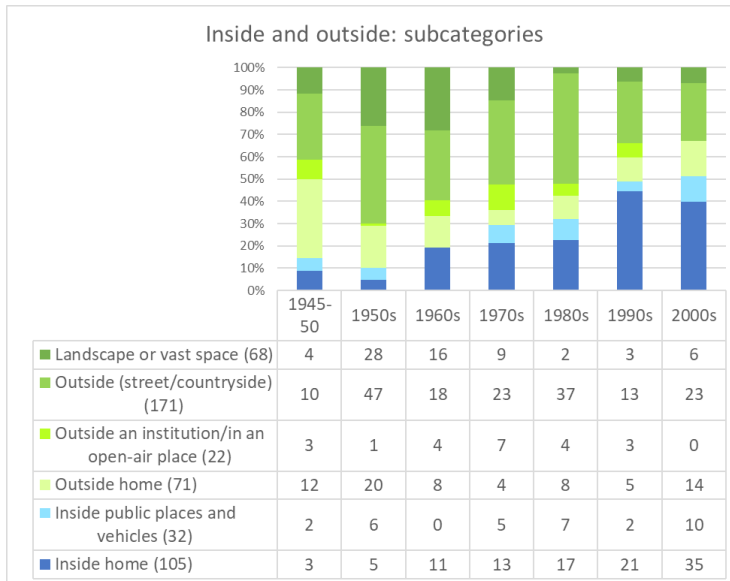


Figure 11. Subcategories of inside and outside spaces over time

Figure 11 shows the distribution of specific inside and outside spaces over time. There are 105 images of spaces labelled “inside home”. They include the following sub-categories: kitchen, bedroom, nursery or a child’s room, living room, dining room (or a combined space), study, corridor, hall, bathroom, cellar, garage, etc. They also embrace images undoubtedly indicating home space by a detail or a depiction of a child. There are 27 images showing spaces inside public institution: school (8), work places (5), and other public places (14) such as church, theatre, library, restaurant, shop, army headquarters, etc, as well as five spaces inside a vehicle: firemen in their fire-engine (D4), a bunny in a bus (E4) and little Mo in a tram (G5).

Outside spaces are divided into four groups. There are 71 images depicting spaces outside home, and they include these sub-categories: garden, yard, roof, balcony, on-board (vessels). There are 22 images of places outside an institution (school, other institutions, such as theatre, post-office, etc) and special open-air places (defined places such as park, zoo, playground, factory yard, railway station, beach etc.). Outside spaces such as street, square, road, railroad, as well as field, meadow, wood, seaside, island, etc.

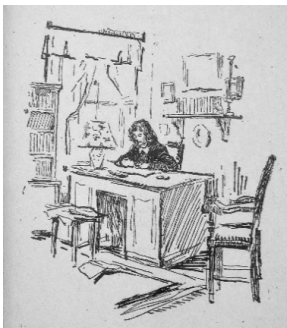
appear in 171 images. Finally, vast spaces such as sky/space, sea, air, landscapes and panoramic views make up the last group of 70 images.

An overview of the distribution of these six categories demonstrates the versatility of inside and outside spaces in our corpus but does not reveal the context and the way in which these places are represented in different periods.

To discover indicators of the image of child as a member of a wider social group inscribed in the representations of lived spaces, the following discussion focuses on the area of significance; on the interpretation of two categories: private spaces, i.e. home (including inside and outside spaces), and public spaces, especially street/countryside, as a sub-category of outside spaces.

8. Home and places of belonging

Home is the category most often connected with the feeling of belonging, being a central place for every individual. Yet, home is rarely depicted in the period 1945–1960. In the segment A, only one picturebook (A3) includes (three) images of places inside home. A woman is busy in her study (Image 2), showing a possible future occupation of one of the children. Two vignettes imply home: a barefoot child learning at home (Image 3), and a depiction of a detested rich man in an armchair (Image 4), followed by these words pronounced by a young teacher telling the story of J. Broz Tito's life (my free translation): "An armed heavy hand needs to fall strongly on the hateful rich man, just as on an insatiable wolf".



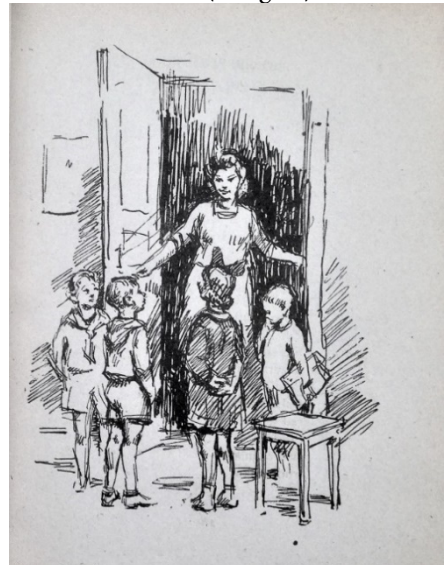
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Images 2, 3 and 4. Home places depicted in A3 (1950).

There is nothing home-like in the first two images of home. It is a place that has no relevance for a young pioneer's life. At the most, it offers a space for work and learning, and the only person who feels comfortable at home is a bourgeoisie from the past, who needs to be deprived of his comfort, and possibly also of his life. This attitude is not surprising if we compare this fragment with the guidelines in the official curriculum for the school subject "Croatian or Serbian" in primary school (grades 1–4), published by the Ministry of Education of the National Republic of Croatia (1950, p.7): The goal of teaching a mother tongue is: to develop Yugoslav socialist patriotism in pupils, the awareness of duties towards the homeland and the people and [to develop] the ardour for working on the socialist upbuilding, and [to develop] hatred towards the enemies of our homeland and the destroyers of peace in the world.

The image of child inscribed in these depictions of spaces does not indicate home as a place of belonging and thus requires a replacement place. In this example, it is school. Two images depict school, a classroom inside, with protagonists standing in a circle as a teacher enters (Image 5), and the building shown from the outside (Image 6).



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Images 5 and 6. Inside and outside the school building in A3 (1950).

School spaces are shown as places children belong to. The protagonists feel comfortable at school and develop a sense of belonging to the public institution and to the peer group: they are pupils and pioneers. In the final image, fully integrated in the post-war communist world, they wear pioneer symbols, the hat and kerchief, and carry a photo of their idol in the street (Image 7). The street is an extension of school, and these children do not seem to need any guidance but that of the political leader. The only adult person they turn to is their teacher, who also talks about Tito. Their world seems safe. There is no place for home or family.



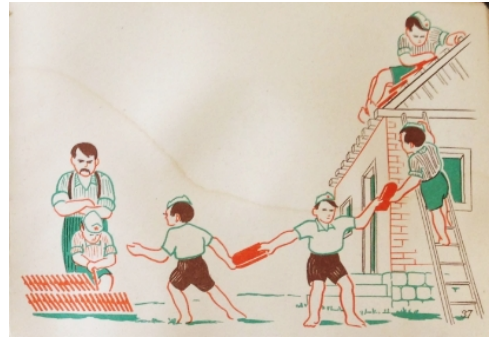
Image 7. A parade in honour of Tito in the street. A3 (1950).

The next example (A1) shows a process happening outside home. Pioneers, supervised by a mason, rebuild a house for a young woman with a baby, whose husband was killed by the “slaughterers” who also demolished her home. The group of children is guided by the “corporal Ivo”, a child himself (Image 8). They build the house from bottom to top, barefoot but tireless, while the mason Mato walks around, idle (Image 9). The children are at ease, they belong to their squad. The home they are building is not theirs, but that does not seem to bother them. They do not even enter it once.

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A bed is seen through the door of the ruined house: it is not meant for pioneers, but for the mother and her infant. Babies may need homes.



Images 8 and 9. Pioneers build a house, supervised by mason Mato. A1 (1946).

In A2, pioneers gather around a soldier (a partisan) who gives them instructions how to afforest the mountain. There are some ruins around. A home is rebuilt and a child is helping. The only building standing is the school, and children gather in front of the fence surrounding the school yard. The pioneers work “for themselves, for the people and for Tito”.

The second decade does not differ much. The only picturebook that presents inside spaces as spaces of belonging is B3. This is a story which develops around a teddy bear starting with its production in a toy factory. It is first bought for a spoiled girl who tears its parts off and throws it away. After a while, the father of a nice and sick girl sees it by the curb, and takes it to his daughter, who accepts the toy happily. Two girls’ characters and situations are compared, as well as their rooms. The spoiled girl lives in a bare room full of ruined toys, and feels angry and unhappy, and the poor sick girl lives in a nicely furnished and cosy space dominated by her comfortable bed. Although she is sick, the bed and the surroundings imply positive feelings and a sense of belonging. The message that happiness is not about wealth, but about love, gets through. This visual discourse stands out as the only one situated in an urban setting, the only one that primarily focuses on the private sphere and the only one that introduces parents as characters in the 1950s sample.

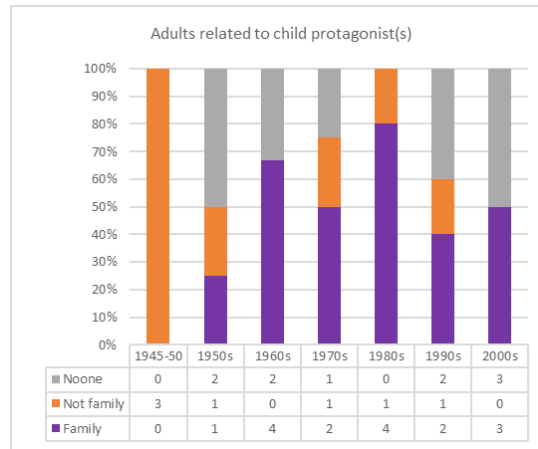


Figure 12. The distribution of adult characters in a diachronic perspective

Categories of adults, i.e. whether they come from a public or a private sphere, indicate the sense of belonging created in children. At the beginning of the analysed period, adult persons who support children regularly came from the public sphere, but this category disappeared over time (Figure 12). Except in one picturebook in 1980s (E1), there are no more soldiers or masons to look after children, because family members, parents and grandparents, step in.

9. A changing image

The analysis of the visual discourses of Croatian picturebooks in the period of 65 years has shown that the image of the child inscribed in representations of lived spaces changed over time.

The child in the late 1940s and 1950s is represented through depicted spaces as a responsible and solemn member of a group guided by identical ideas and ideology. This child turns for advice to an adult from a public sphere and feels comfortable spending time outside, in rural and public places, feeling safe and confident. The sense of belonging to these places is strong. It is ideologically and politically determined and peer-group oriented. Family relations are not relevant, and the real life happens in the public sphere. The child adopts the norms of the society.

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These children are typical representatives of the image of a child-hero. According to Berislav Majhut and Sanja Lovrić Kralj (2016a, p.53), this concept was developed during the Second World War, and was supported in the post-war period, when “new” children’s literature was used to build “the socialist society”. As they emphasise (2016a, p.46), the ideologists of the new communist Yugoslav state were aware that in order to achieve their goals, they could not leave education to parents who might have had different mindsets. Children were intentionally protected from the influence of their families and tied to the community through school and other organised activities, such as the pioneer organisation.

The child in the 1960s is imaginative and playful and lives in an urban or a suburban space. These children do not need company and simply enjoy toys or imaginative play in solitude. They are curious and like to explore but they are not particularly adventurous. They spend time close to home, but outside rather than inside, and they feel comfortable in their spaces. If there are adults around, they are family. Home is their place of belonging. They have no worries or social duties to share with adults. This image corresponds to the concept of “child – a citizen of the republic of children”⁴, described by Majhut and Lovrić Kralj (2016b, p.30) as a new paradigm which glorifies a cult of a happy childhood and where a child is isolated from the adult world, and free from any social or national constraints. They explain this shift by the foreign policy of Yugoslavia after the break-up between Stalin and Tito in 1948. The Non-Aligned Movement was established in 1961, initiated by Yugoslavia and based on the proclaimed ideas of internationalism, humanism and pacifism (2016b, p.28).

The sense of belonging in the 1960s is based on international ideas and the new ideology of an ideal world, which pacifies the society, and the child. The image of child inscribed in the representations of space in the 1960s perfectly fits the wider context.

The changes of the image of a child in the 1970s are indicated by the appearance of dangerous spaces (Figure 7). These children are willing to take risks. The characters spend more time outside than inside, mostly in urban settings. They are adventurous and open to new knowledge and experiences, even prepared to break rules and endure consequences. They explore public places, but they know that they can always go back home. Their sense of belonging is divided between home and their town or city, it is based on the community feeling. The most important adult persons in their lives are

parents and grandparents, and family relations become important. The inclination towards leisure time as a social value that Colomer has detected in European picturebooks is also present in our selection of 1970s picturebooks, at least in some examples, but “the inclusion of individual rights for children, which led to questioning the absolute authority of adults” (Colomer, 2010, p.43) is not detected.

The 1970s were turbulent years in Croatia. The awareness of the oppressive activities of the federal government rose in the previous decade, and Croatian people felt their national identity was endangered. Initiatives to regain autonomy within Yugoslavia culminated in 1971. A major issue was the mission to preserve the Croatian language exposed to a deliberate process of combining it with Serbian into a new speech. However, the Croatian Spring was soon pacified, and the main leaders imprisoned. Despite that, the sense of belonging to a national community, once rekindled, could not be extinguished easily. The sense of belonging inscribed in analysed images can thus be explained as related to the widespread awareness of the (endangered) Croatian national identity.

The child image of the 1980s inscribed in the depicted spaces is twofold. Besides visual presentations of spaces indicating more freedom and socialising, there was an obvious intention to regenerate the image of the child-hero of the post-war years and the sentiments of the cult of personality of now late Tito to preserve his heritage.

Pioneer Warriors (E1) is about children who were used as soldiers during WWII, about their life during the war and their actions, guided by partisans. Children are depicted inside, (cleaning their common room, learning together) and outside, taking messages, participating in diversions, carrying guns, and capturing a German soldier. As in the picturebooks from the 1940s, this is the image of a child-hero.

This renewed interest in propagating the values of the communist system in the 1980s was sparked by sensing changes. The fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 was not a complete surprise. Gorbachev’s politics in the 1980s preceded the gradual dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the world was changing. As for Yugoslavia, Tito’s death in 1980 also announced changes, and those who wanted to keep the system intact, turned to already abandoned concepts and propaganda.

Another picturebook from this period (E3), with a similar goal, is a biography of J. Broz Tito, focusing on his childhood. Inside spaces are amply represented, but the sense of

belonging is questioned. Although Tito's home is presented as important (even perhaps the only relevant home), there are problems. Joža has nightmares sleeping in bed. According to Nikolajeva and Taylor (2011), this can be ambivalent: Sleep in itself is an ambivalent state, in between life and death, a situation when one completely loses control, and dreams and nightmares bring forward our deepest and most secret emotions (p.158).

The meaning of this detail is not clear, but it may indicate a long and turbulent journey Joža would need to take. Bed is not a safe place for him, but it is a safe and cosy place in other picturebooks in the corpus (C6, D1, D2, F1, F2, F6, G5), where it creates positive connotations and contributes to the protagonists' sense of belonging.

The intention of reintroducing the image of a child-hero failed. The new winds were stronger. Children in the visual presentations of other 1980s picturebooks live between urban and rural environments, often travelling from one to the other. The visual discourse of E2 shows spaces in detail, including an overcrowded children's room, the first such representation in our corpus. Sharing a meal at a table⁵ was first presented in our corpus in 1985 (E3), and this implies a change of sentiment and a decisive step towards the private sphere. These children take in pets from the outside places. Their world is wider than the world of the previous decade. They spend most of their time outside, and they belong there because they embrace outside spaces into their private sphere. They feel safe and supported by adults in their family. They persist when they want to achieve something, even though they may encounter difficulties. They are problem solvers. Their sense of belonging is family-oriented and founded in the national identity.

The 1980s was the time when people became even more aware of the need for Croatia to leave Yugoslavia and continue as a separate state. This situation is reflected in the implied image of the child who understands that one may or may not succeed but perseveres nevertheless.

The 1990s are the years of war for Croatian independence, and of horrible experiences for many children. Visual discourses from this decade depict safe spaces in the private sphere, rather inside than outside, and rather in urban than in rural environments. In contrast to 1940s and 1950s, in 1990s children are protected from battles, as much as possible. Homes are destroyed, but despite that, there is always a place of hope.

Children are active and initiate complicated games, but they are protected by adults in their families when they return home at the end of day. They are not isolated, they live in the real world, and despite the war their childhood remains safe. The sense of belonging is home-oriented, and home also means family.

In the 2000s, the distinction between urban and rural spaces becomes less relevant. Private spaces are in focus, and positive changes in the private sphere are beneficial for public needs, too. Depicted spaces are of different kinds, shown in detail, full of various objects. These spaces are closely connected with characters and their feelings. The protagonists are often “different” and depicted spaces suit them. The image of a child inscribed in those representations of space implies a compassionate person who understands others and their needs. This child turns to family for help and support, or, if necessary, relies on own resources. The sense of belonging is an individual issue and a private matter and requires respect. The reader is invited to understand the plurality of individual needs. This result is in part similar to Colomer’s findings about children in the European picturebooks of this decade who are “invested with rights as individuals”, but there is also a difference as they are sometimes placed “against the family” and because childhood “is now a much more solitary time” (Colomber, 2010, pp.46, 47), unlike the children depicted in Croatian picturebooks at that time.

The beginning of the 21st century was a time of peace in Croatia, the war was over, and although the wounds were deep, turbulences were mostly in the political arena. Croatia had become a member of the UN by then, and the negotiations for its membership in NATO (realised in 2009) and EU (realised in 2013) were in full swing. Contacts with other countries were dynamic, and the ideas of tolerance, accepting differences, cultural contacts and mutual understanding became ubiquitous and reflected in the image of child in the 2000s.

10. Conclusion

Visual representations of space in the observed period in a diachronic perspective show a shift in focus from outside towards inside spaces, from dominantly rural towards a balance of rural and urban spaces, and from public to private spaces. These changes reflect the ideological and political contexts in different periods of Croatian history and represent a move from collectivism as a dominant social value after WWII, towards re-

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establishing family values and individual identity as circumstances of growing up in Croatia at the turn of the 21st century.

The image of child inscribed in the representations of lived spaces has changed from an active member of society sharing responsibility with adults, towards an active and understanding individual with a host of opportunities. Our findings confirm that “[i]n their tendency to reflect dominant social practices, picture books advocate values widely regarded as socially desirable” (Stephens, 1992, p.199), and that these values change over time with dominant ideologies.

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¹ The present research builds upon the methodology created for the BIRD UNIPD project “The construction of the sense of *espace vécu* in European children’s literature in the second half of the 20th century (1945-2010). An international historical and comparative survey on picturebooks”, coordinated by Professor Carla Callegari (2017-2018).

² The most recent recommended reading list for primary pupils appeared in 2006 (cf. Narančić Kovač & Milković 2018).

³ “Storyworld” is defined as a mental representation of a virtual world that a text must evoke to qualify as narrative (Ryan & Thon, 2014, p.3). Its components are: existents (characters and objects), the setting, physical laws, social rules and values, events (in a time-span frame), and mental events (Ryan, 2014, pp.34-37).

⁴ The concept of a universal republic of childhood was introduced by Paul Hazard (1944/1932).

⁵ Richard Wilk warns that “though everyone likes to think of the family table as a place of harmony and solidarity, it is often the scene for the exercise of power and authority, a place where conflict prevails” (Wilk, 2010, p.428). Nevertheless, in our corpus, when people sit down to eat together (E4, F2, F5, G2, G5), there is never a conflict.

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