City Chicken Picture Book

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Introduction

The following paper is a picture book analysis report. In this case, the picture book analyzed is the *City Chicken* excerpt prepared by Arthur Dorros (Northrup; Stanek). The theme covered by the author in this piece relates to chickens from the village seeking greener pastures in the city. As such, it is a classic tale involving chickens wondering if the grass is greener on the other side. However, the most outstanding feature of the book is the fact that it uses full-color illustrations to pass on the message to its target audience, primarily children, whereby they are taught to learn and be satisfied with what they have as opposed to always looking for more, thinking that the more they get, the better they become. Nonetheless, the following paper reviews the picture book, particularly regarding the use of the color white in the illustrations made by the author in the book.

Color White

One of the primary reasons for the success of graphic novels is the use of colors. The storyline does matter, but books such as City Chicken, which primarily target the younger generation, need to have vibrant color combinations and textures. One of the fundamental colors the writer, Arthur Dorros, has employed is white. The use of color is very effective in bringing out Dorros' authorial success in preparing and publishing the excerpt. In this case, the use of color was very successful in the sense that it enabled the author to capture the attention as well as the concentration of the target audience, in this particular case, the children. Of specific consideration in this case is the use of the color white in the illustrations (Dorros). It is astonishing how Arthur Dorros came up with the idea of showing the chickens in his graphic novel as white, since only the eggs are white and the chickens are colored in shades of brown. It just goes down to the genius of the writer and his awareness and knowledge that the children would be amazed by the white chicken. The author used white primarily when illustrating the chickens in the book, as well as the eggs laid by these chickens. As such, the readers can readily associate the white color with the central concept of the book, which discusses the encounter of chickens in the city. For instance, most children who have not seen a chicken in real life would readily associate the white color with chickens. Furthermore, most chicken eggs are white, especially those of traditional chickens, the ones mostly found in rural areas, as opposed to the eggs laid by grade-layer chickens, most of which usually have a brown color.

Conversely, it is evident from the above analogy that the author's choice of color has been effective

in passing a clear message to the audience, especially regarding the specific features attributable to chickens. These include the fact that most chickens are white, as well as the fact that most eggs laid by traditional chickens have white shells. Furthermore, the use of white in the text is instrumental in enabling the audience to keep track of the story's developments, particularly the movement of the chickens from the rural farm to the urban farmhouse. In fact, this helps the readers relate to the story with much ease and, as such, easily understand the meaning or the intended message behind the literary work without necessarily reading through the wording.

Type of Colors

To make a graphic novel, one of the first things a writer should take into consideration is the use of the medium. The medium for the book can be anything like acrylics, Prismacolor markers, Ad markers, oils, pastels, watercolors, charcoal, airbrush spray paints, etc. The illustrator, Arthur Dorros, used watercolors in the pictures within the book. As such, this helps in making the inclusion of the illustrations in the book more pronounced and, as such, successful in achieving the intended objective. Watercolors have numerous advantages that the painter can capitalize on to bring out a clear as well as impressive picture. In this particular case, the illustrator used watercolors in the pictures to obtain transparency of the illustrations in the book. This is especially because, from a visual standpoint, watercolor paints usually have an inner brilliance as well as a significant clarity of color, which is, in most cases, absent in other types of paints. It is also of considerable importance to mention that watercolors, in comparison to different mediums, for instance, gouache, are more challenging to change if something goes wrong. Watercolors require and sometimes demand a certain level of patience from the artist. As such, the fact that watercolor paints are transparent gives the illustrations or pictures drawn with them a significant brilliance as well as unmatched clarity, as they do not reflect the color directly off the surface of the picture.

On the contrary, watercolor paints are useful when used for painting in the sense that they obtain their color as a result of the bouncing of light from the white background paper upon which the image is encrusted and then reflected back up through the paint. Conversely, this gives the paintings a peculiar and impressive appearance in the sense that they look as though they are lit from within, a feature that makes the pictures extremely versatile. In this regard, it is evident that the use of watercolors by the illustrator in this book has been instrumental in bringing out the most effective appeal of the paintings to the target audience. The illustrations have a higher level of clarity and transparency. In fact, it is appropriate to assert that the illustrator is indeed an expert in painting as well as in using watercolors for illustrations, noting that it is possible to obtain several different shades of the same color from one tube of watercolor paint by regulating the amount of water used in mixing the paint. As such, it is possible that the illustrator applied this concept to build colors to add richness, as well as incorporating colors on paper by layering one color over the other.

As such, the paintings show the usage of different colors in different scenes of the book, illustrating many various things relating to the story. This is a story about chickens seeking a greener future. On

the other side, the illustrator uses different shades of colors from the paint to present the exact developments in the picture. For instance, a perfect example of the exemplary use of watercolors in drawing by the illustrator is the painting showing Henry, the lead chicken character in the book, which is white, resting in her maroon shed in the barn against a city background of towers and skyscrapers of different colors. From this picture, it is worth noting that the critical application of watercolors by the painter in the book is useful in giving the images a compelling look. Furthermore, the use of both warm as well as fresh colors significantly elevates the perceptions of the audience in each picture relating to the message contained in them.

Analysis of Color Use

The fundamental and rudimentary step to success is to know your audience. Arthur Dorros knew precisely who he was targeting, and once the artist realized his target market, i.e., his audience, he would transform his art according to their taste. I believe that the illustrator has been very useful in the usage of colors in this piece, as the primary target audience of the book is children. Children love pictures, and as such, the use of bright colors in the images is one efficient way of gaining their attention as well as concentration in the story. Conversely, it is worth noting that the usage of watercolors has had a resounding impact on the author's target audience, subsequently leading to a broader readership of the book. The bright colors, warmth, and coolness obtained from each image, as well as the presentation of each color in a picture, are mainly instrumental in driving home the intended message by the illustrator regarding the message contained in the book (Marantz).

Furthermore, I also believe that the mixture of different colors used in the pictures in the book has a significant positive impact on the outcome of the illustrations. The reason for this assertion is that the transparent colors used to differentiate each item, object, or being in the picture enable the audience to depict the setting of the story and, as such, internalize the concept that the author is trying to pass across through the message. For instance, it is more accessible for the children reading the book to relate the eggs to the chicken because of the white color used by the illustrator in both cases. There are different graphic novels where the color combination and texture are darker, and the writers are more inclined to use different shades of gray and black, but it primarily depends on the theme of the novel and the age group that is the target. Since the author was dealing with young children as the primary target audience, it would be unprofessional to assume that the children would understand that eggs come from chickens because, as standard as it may sound, it may not be typical knowledge per se to all the children that would get an opportunity to read the book.

Other Elements Used

It is true that the main success and recognition the author received is because of his use of watercolors and the way he uses them. Arthur Dorros did tremendous work in using the texture and the design of the book, but there was a little more to the novel than the watercolors and figures.

Aside from the pictorial approach used by the author to present the story about the chickens to the young target audience, the author also used words to accompany the pictures. Similarly, the words also had a simple appearance, using an italic style as well as an appealing font to entertain the readers. The words contain a simple narration regarding the developments in the picture and, as such, assist the target audience in following the story keenly and understanding the message contained in them. Furthermore, since the primary approach used by the illustrator to pass the message to the target audience is through the pictorial approach, the wording used in this case is not only minimal but also shortened. This is to give more prevalence to the pictures as opposed to the wording.

The words can only do so much to get the attention of the children, who will always choose colorful and vibrant pictures over the words spoken by the characters. It is understandable for the writer to make use of the words as succinctly as possible because the children do not want to strain their brains by reading. Looking at the figures gives them joy and happiness. They would want to go leisurely through the book, hence the use of pictures more than words (Carrie).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is noteworthy that the use of color in the book has been very efficient in passing the intended message. Furthermore, the choice of watercolors in painting the pictures enabled the author to achieve the much-desired success of using images in narrating a story.

Works Cited

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