

THE DEPICTION OF THE TEENAGERS`
SOCIAL LIFE IN “HARRY POTTER”

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Abstract: *The given article deals with the psychological characteristics and depiction of teenagers` social life of the main hero in J.Rowling`s “Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone”. The characteristic features of modern children`s literature and specificity of children's literature are discussed. A vivid respond of modern children`s literature to the changes that society is now experiencing, and the depiction of realities in works of modern writers is investigated. A positive effect of children`s science fiction and fantasy literature on young generation is considered, the examples from the work are analyzed.*

Key words: *modern children`s literature, psychologism, escapism, frightening reality, fairy-tale characters, optimistic ideas, society changes.*

Introduction. Many publishers are of the firm opinion that our teenagers do not read books at all. They supposedly have something else in mind - discos, girls, computers, etc. And the exceptions only prove the rule. Therefore, when publishing books, they say, it is necessary to focus only on the “younger” age. In general, a real best-selling book for children is one that both children and adults read with pleasure. Literature often provides us with opportunities to gain new insights into our world, and J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series is no different. Harry and his cohort of wizards and muggles (nonmagical people) have taken our world by storm and, in the process; have brought the joy of magical literature to many children and adults. Rowling's work has also presented a new avenue for literature study. Everyone is aware of the numerous analyses of her work; however, after careful consideration, one perspective above all is perhaps the most appropriate is that when working with a children`s book, one cannot but take into account the psychological characteristics of the perception of children`s literature.

Main part. Our analysis shows that the psychological characteristics of the literature perception of children are identification - identifying oneself with a literary hero. This is escapism - leaving in the imaginary world of the book. Actively condemned in real world (“why go to an invented world when you have to live in nature, building future?!”), and completely deservedly received in the statement of J. P. Tolkien: “Is it really necessary to despise a person who come back home? Or who,

unacceptable opportunities to escape, and talking about something not related to the prison and the jailers?" [1] By adding to his real world the world of the books he has read, the reader thereby enriches his life, his spiritual experience. Especially prone to escapism are fans of fantasy literature, and in particular of the same J. P. Tolkien: arranging "hobbit games", distributing roles, making swords and chain mail, they often plunge so deeply into this world that it is not easy to return to the real one. So, here, in many respects, you need to know the measure, so as not to play too much completely.

A huge role in the selection and perception of fiction is played by its compensatory function. By what kind of books a person prefers, it is perfectly clear what he lacks in reality. Children, and then teenagers and young people, trying to overcome the everyday life around them, longing for a miracle, first choose fairy tales, then fantasy and science fiction. Women, tortured by everyday life, children and family, while reading women's romance novels, identify themselves with the heroine, satisfy the dream of a "handsome prince", a bright and happy ending (despite the stereotyped plot, images, etc.). Thus, at the expense of literature, a person gets what is missing in life and thereby also enriches it!

The orientation of the personality affects the selection of books of certain genres: young people, aspiring to the future, prefer science fiction; people of the older generation, on the contrary, are books about the past, historical genres, memoirs, etc.

Returning to children's literature, it should be noted that traditionally it is divided into children`s literature itself (books written specifically for children) and children`s reading, including works that were not originally addressed to children, but included in the circle of children`s reading (A.S. Pushkin`s fairy tales, books by J. P. Tolkien).

Is there a reverse process? Among the books addressed to children, we can name at least two that have become both a fact of adult culture, a source of inspiration, a subject of research and controversy. These are "Alice in Wonderland" by L. Carroll (a classic example) and the "Harry Potter" books by J.K. Rowling (a modern example).

The question of the specifics of children's literature arises, so, how does "literature for children" differ from "literature for adults", and are there any fundamental differences here? The question of the specifics of children's literature is still open. Not all researchers recognize this phenomenon as the right to independent existence: children's literature appeared much later than literature in general, and to a certain extent relied on the achievements of the latter.

Nevertheless, it is impossible not to notice the thematic, stylistic and functional differences between works addressed to children and works intended for an adult reader. These differences are all the more pronounced the more the works are addressed to a younger reader, therefore it seems appropriate to talk about the age specificity of children's literature and single out several groups based on the reader`s age:

- 1) books for the little ones,
- 2) books for children 4-7 years old
- 3) literature for younger readers,
- 4) works for teenagers.

The specificity of literature for younger readers is determined by the growth of consciousness and the expansion of the range of interests of readers. Yesterday`s preschoolers become school children; they are even more actively mastering the world around them. Works for children of seven to ten years old are saturated with new information of a more complex order, in connection with this, their volume increases, plots become more complicated, new topics appear. Poetic tales are being replaced by fairy tales, stories about nature, about school life. Their heroes are usually peers of readers, these books tell about the world in which the life of a small person takes place.

At the same time, the young reader is also interested in what is happening in the big world, so all kinds of children`s encyclopedias are addressed to him, presenting new knowledge in an entertaining way. In general, entertainment remains the main feature of literature for children of primary school age: they have recently learned to read, reading for them is still work, and making it interesting is one of the author`s tasks. Hence the dynamic plots, travel plots and adventure plots, full of events, and the means of characterizing the hero is often not a description, but a dialogue.

“What`s the use of a book,” says ten-year-old Alice from Lewis Carroll`s fairy tale, “without pictures or conversations?” (*Carrel L. “Alice`s Adventures in Wonderland”*) But at the same time, the little person`s value system begins to take shape, so entertainment is combined with an instructive element: the work is structured in such a way as to lead the reader to the conclusion about what is possible and what is not, what is good and what is bad. At best, this “morality” is not formulated directly, but follows organically from the plot of the work. Humor plays an important role here: negative characters are portrayed in a funny and ridiculous way.

The main feature of adolescence is the formation of a unique personality, awareness of one`s place in the world. A teenager is no longer just getting information about the world; he is trying to determine his attitude towards it. Literature for teenagers puts before the reader a number of global questions about the nature of man and the meaning of his life, and by answering these questions, he learns to live in the world of people.

Human relations come to the fore in works for teenagers; the plot is based not only on travel and adventure, but also on conflicts. The images of heroes become more complex, psychological characteristics appear. The evaluative component, instructiveness and edification fade into the background: a teenager learns to think independently, he is not inclined to trust ready-made truths, preferring to check them on his own mistakes. Therefore, books and their heroes at this age become no longer teachers and advisers, but interlocutors helping the grown reader to understand their own thoughts, feelings and experiences.

A characteristic example of prose addressed to adolescents is the stories of V. P. Krapivin, which tell about the difficult period of growing up and the conflicts of a grown-up child with the world of adults.

So, we can talk about the specifics of children`s literature on the basis that it deals with the emerging consciousness and accompanies the reader during his period of intensive spiritual growth. Among the main features of children`s literature, one can note informational and emotional richness, entertaining form and a peculiar combination of instructive and artistic components.

Modern children`s literature has vividly responded to the changes that society is now experiencing, and the realities of today`s reality quickly entered the works for children. As a rule, these are signs of adult life, with which the modern child is familiar firsthand. So children`s literature reflects a characteristic feature of our time - the blurring of boundaries between the children`s and adult worlds and the rapid maturation of a small person.

Here, for example, how a modern fairy tale begins - the story (genre-fantasy) of Emets D. “The Queen of Mutants”: “*The Mutant Country is spread at the exploded old nuclear power plant, from which only one foundation and several dilapidated blocks remained. Its territory is huge, and no one knows where it ends. There were cases when mutants sent expeditions to explore distant lands, but no one ever returned, and in the end they were no longer sent.*” [7.352] This is how modern reality enters children`s literature - the reality of catastrophes, crime, and bad news and market relations. However, different authors use the signs of modernity in a literary text in different ways. Some play on the craving of a young reader for everything dangerous and unknown and literally transfer the

atmosphere of frightening reality to the pages of their works; others create a parody picture of our time, thereby emphasizing the abnormality of the world in which today`s children live.

At the same time, literature for children also turns to chamber themes, and familiar situations reappear on the pages of children`s works: a child at home, in kindergarten, at school. Among the fairy-tale characters, one can meet not only monsters and mutants, but also ordinary pets: “A *white foal with large lilac eyes, a thick ash-colored mane and long grayish eyelashes of the same color, woke up far after midnight in an unfamiliar place*” (L. Nikitina, “About white foal”).[2]

Gradually, normal reality returns to children`s literature, what should surround a small person in childhood: a cozy home, loving parents, cheerful friends. But this is only one side of modern reality, and therefore the works written today are so diverse and multifaceted.

We should mention that, despite the fact that the action of modern works for children often takes place in the adult world; the main characters of these works are still children. These can be the most ordinary children: they go to kindergarten, do not obey their parents, and argue with their peers. However, completely different heroes are very popular with the modern reader - Harry Potter and his domestic counterparts. It is no coincidence that a superhero with the appearance of an ordinary schoolboy arouses such increased interest: he is endowed with fantastic abilities and easily solves the problems that every child faces in everyday life.

The world of secondary characters in modern works for children is very diverse: here are living household items, and talking animals, and absolutely fantastic creatures, for example, housewives and mutants. Along with the heroes of the new time in children`s literature, there was a place for fairy-tale characters from the past: fairies, dragons, princesses and kings. But even these familiar images are often filled with modern content, behave in accordance with today`s standards and are well acquainted with colloquial speech.

Modern children`s literature has its own stylistic originality. Together with new realities and new articles, literature for children also includes a new language. The stylistic originality of modern children`s literature occurs in the blurring of the lines between literary and colloquial language, or rather, active. Vocabulary changes first of all: with the advent of new concepts. Unfortunately, this is often a term with a negative connotation.

Here is how the adventures of the protagonist are described in E. Grachev`s book “Lupate Mittens”: “*Minka was returning from the market somehow, he sold the remnants of honey, it was evening, he dozed off in a cart, he opens his eyes, and in front of him are five racketeer robbers. One with a knife, the second with a pistol, and the rest with brass knuckles.*” [2] Together with neologisms and foreign borrowings, colloquial and slang words and expressions appear in books for children. As well as syntactic constructions characteristic of colloquial speech: incomplete sentences, inversions, repetitions appear in children`s literature. Here we have some examples of repetition from J.K Rowling “Harry Potter and Philosopher`s stone”: “*Shooting stars all over Britain? Owls flying by daylight? Mysterious people in cloaks all over the place? And a whisper, a whisper about the Potters...*” [6.255]; “*Harry had never even imagined such a strange and splendid place. It was lit by thousands and thousands of candles that were floating in midair over four long tables, where the rest of the students were sitting.*” [6. 262]

This borrowing did not begin today, but if earlier children`s literature included elements of children`s speech and children`s folklore, now the language of many children`s books is approaching the colloquial speech of adults. On the one hand, this phenomenon reflects certain processes in the public consciousness, and on the other hand, it changes the mind of the reader: modern children have long been speaking an adult language, and children`s literature of recent years has played an important role in this.

Children`s books have a very strong influence on people, up to a defining one. The Russian list of “school reading” has expanded over the past 25-30 years due to good translated literature, but has not fundamentally changed. Take, for example, J. Rowling with her phenomenal - and well-deserved - popularity. What do the books of the “Potter cycle” talk about, what do they teach? They teach that honor is higher than fear, friendship and devotion means more than obedience and success, the mind can help out almost everything.

Childhood in “Harry Potter” is not a magical world that adults want to return to, but a difficult period of a person`s life, with a lot of its own problems. The children`s characters created by Joan Rowling are striking in their psychological complexity. So the book about Harry Potter not only allows children to find themselves in a magical world, to be observers of wonderful adventures, but with all its content tells about the ups and downs and complexities of their children`s world, the features of children`s subculture.

The enchanting success of J.K. Rowling`s books about the wizard boy was not in vain. Our publishers, as if waking up from a lethargic sleep, vied with each other to produce children`s science fiction and fantasy. In Soviet times, there was a fairly clear age gradation in children's literature, which is still used today. There are books for preschool age, for school (junior, middle and senior) and, finally, for youth. In the West, there is also a division into “children`s books” and “young-adults books” (i.e. children's and youth).

Russian publishers practically do not use such a classification when publishing science fiction. As a result, in the series declared as children's, books are published for children, teenagers, and youth. But the younger generation has a couple of years - already a whole eternity. A book enthusiastically received by a 10-year-old child evokes boredom at 12, and causes irritation at 14. And vice versa - what is interesting at 14-15, not to mention 16-17, will seem too complicated, boring and even scary for a ten-year-old. [2] The changes in the life of society that have taken place in the last decade have significantly changed the situation in literature. It is no exaggeration to say that the 1990s 20th century became a crisis for literature in general, and for children`s literature in particular. The circulation of books for children has fallen significantly, some children`s magazines have closed, and children`s libraries have been emptied. Only in the last few years has the situation begun to change.

In addition, the tradition of literary competitions is being revived, revealing more and more new names of authors writing for children. However, another problem arises here - children stop reading books, the culture of reading, the level of reading is falling. Various factors contribute to this, including the development of new information technologies and the revolution in telecommunications.

In an effort to attract the attention of the reader at any cost, the authors use a variety of means, including those that are not at all childish. However, there are also examples of a successful combination of entertainment and artistic merit, when writers are looking for new ways to convey to the child ideas about eternal values and moral standards. On the whole, modern children`s literature is a mobile, contradictory phenomenon in the process of formation, and it will be possible to draw conclusions about which trends will prevail only after some time, when the situation stabilizes.

British doctors have found that thanks to Harry Potter, many children escaped the fate of getting into hospital emergency departments. Studies have shown that hospital emergency departments received half as many child patients during the weekend when the next book about the young wizard was published.

Since the release of the first Harry Potter book in 1997, the series of books about the young wizard has sold over 270 million copies in 62 languages in many countries around the world. This

summer, the sixth book about the young wizard, The Half-Blood Prince, set a sales record, selling more than two million copies in the UK alone in 24 hours. [3]

In terms of other positive aspects of the Potter effect, 84% of teachers said that Harry Potter had a positive effect on children's desire to read. 83% of children believe that the noble hero Harry Potter is a good role model. [4]

Conclusion. At the end of the 20th century, as well as at the turn of the 19th - 20th centuries, society is experiencing great upheavals, and the process of social transformation has not yet been completed. Certain shifts are taking place in the public consciousness, which cannot but influence the course of the entire literary process. Children's literature, like literature in general, is trying to master a new reality, which means that it inevitably turns to new topics and looks for new artistic means to reflect the changing reality.

But at the same time, modern literature for children continues to develop in the direction that took shape throughout the 20th century, and modern children's writers rely on the achievements of their predecessors. As has been noted more than once, the main discovery of children's literature of the twentieth century was the image of the inner life of the child in all its complexity and completeness. Like many generations of children's writers, modern authors also rely on folklore traditions. As before, one of the most popular genres of children's literature is a literary fairy tale, in which folklore plots and images are played out. The main characters of children's books are still the children themselves. The themes that entered children's literature in the 20th century are also preserved, primarily the theme of the relationship of children with adults and with peers.

However, in our time, children's literature not only preserves the traditions of the twentieth century, but also acquires features that were not at all characteristic of works for children in the last century. Although they say that, modern children's literature has a bad effect on young readers, revealing all the hardships of the world to an undeveloped personality, this is not so, because the main goal of modern children's literature is not to intimidate the reader, but to prepare for a difficult life.

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