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## PROBLEMS OF CHILDHOOD IN FICTION OF THE 21st CENTURY

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**Abstract.** The article deals with the problems of childhood, reflected in modern fiction for children and about children. The study of the children's world and childhood memories in fiction reflects the spiritual mood of society as a whole and vividly characterizes the moral and ethical values of the modern world in all its complex manifestations. Modern prose is trying to rethink the theme of images of childhood and family. For several decades, the concept of family values has been lost in real life and literature. That is why the images of childhood in modern interpretation are quite different from those presented in classical literature. The author analyzes the time of childhood and its changes, research in the literature on the space of childhood and its content, myths of childhood, and the reasons for their creation. Drawing images of childhood, modern prose correlates them with those adults who emerged from those childhood memories that influenced the formation of their character and behavior in society. When writing the work, the following methods were used: the method of description, comparison, the method of analyzing the material, and synthesizing information. The article opens up a wide range of artistic scientific works from the perspective of reading to students, philologists, and teachers.

**Keywords:** fiction, childhood, relationships, globalization, problems, myths, experience, reading.

### Basic Provisions

The image of childhood in the literature of the 21st century is in the field of attention and the center of the study of various humanities: philology, sociology, pedagogy, and literary criticism. Even though the unique image of children is viewed from different points of view, there is a common center of attraction for the scientific search for its understanding - this is the time and space of childhood, its myths and resources, and its impact on the future development of all mankind. In the current situation, it is necessary to solve the problems of childhood "with the whole world", together, peacefully, and consciously. In the society of the era of globalization, there are global changes in the social status of childhood, characterized by an increase in the crisis in relations between an adult and a child, which is reflected in the literature of modern times.

### Introduction

The topic of childhood is interesting from the point of view of considering other aspects of human life. So through this prism, we can see a lot of interesting things: the role of the child in culture, child-parent relationships, and social interactions in the society under study. Such close attention to the topic of childhood is noted against the backdrop of a change in ideology. In the 19th century, interest in this phenomenon grew in world literature. This is due to a clearer understanding of the connection between the children's and adult worlds. In this era, the child acquires

social and psychological significance in the eyes of society. A small age is not an obstacle to the formation of laziness but becomes a logical and unique stage that needs to be studied [1, p.210].

The children's theme in the works of English and American writers of the second half of the 20th century loses the romantic coloring of the 19th century and acquires tragic features. The First and Second World Wars neutralize the peculiar optimism that permeated the children's theme in foreign literature of the early and middle of the 19th century. Bitterness, selfishness, confrontation, hostility, and deceit are the hallmarks of social relationships in the 20th century. The most indicative in this respect are the novels of W.D. Golding's "Lord of the Flies" (Lord of Flies, 1954), S. Hill's "I am the King of the Castle" (I am the King of the Castle, 1972), and J. Aldridge's story "The True Story of Spitter McPhee" (The true Story of Spit Macphee, 1988) in which children's images help to reveal certain social and psychological features of modern society. On the one hand, they show examples of oppressed childhood, and on the other hand, the formation of a personality ready to resist adverse life circumstances. [2, p.141]

In the second half of the twentieth century, a new postmodern vision of reality was formed in literature. In the works of W. Golding, I. McEwan, G. Swift, S. Hill, E. Tennant, D. Lessing, and others, a new image of childhood is born, in the content of which one can trace the transformed archetypal component associated with the motives of power and criminal desires [ 3, p.152].

### **Materials and methods**

The theme of childhood has been of concern to researchers for many centuries. As D.I. Feldstein, "childhood is a well-known (strange as it may sound) obscure phenomenon of the social world. There is no special definition for it in psychological and pedagogical dictionaries, but the term childhood is used widely, multifaceted and ambiguous" [4, p. 85]. I.S. Kohn considers childhood as "a cultural-historical phenomenon that can only be understood in terms of age-related symbolism, i.e. systems of representations and images" [5, p.236]. In philosophy, the phenomenon of childhood is understood as a phenomenon given in sensual contemplation [6, p.259], for the knowledge of which an image serves. In fiction, through the image of childhood, the whole value and the highest meaning of this stage of a person's life is known.

The image of childhood in literary texts corresponds to a certain initial unconscious motif of the child's imagery, which has passed through the prism of the individual author's consciousness. According to K.G. Jung, the unconscious in the artistic image exists due to the established archetype of the child. Having been fixed at the level of the author's unconscious, the image of childhood manifested itself in literary texts as an archetype for many centuries among all peoples [7, p.122].

Let us turn to the dominants of the image of childhood in modern fiction. It should be said that in literary criticism, childhood is included in the concept of artistic time and space, it is a multidimensional metaphor, which in the artistic world denotes the state of mind and the lifetime of a literary hero, in which he feels like a child. This is a special time of knowing oneself and the world, the time of origins,

the search for moral ideals, the acquisition of experience in spiritual decisions when life ahead is like an unopened book (Yu. Levitansky). Each author and reader has an individual experience of living childhood as a period of his life and therefore enters into a dialogue with the artistic time of childhood, reflected in the text of the work.

An important researcher who interpreted the development of the theme of childhood is Lloyd Demos, who proposed in his work *Psychohistory* a periodization of attitudes towards childhood that changed throughout history. In his opinion, the cruel attitude towards children that existed before the advent of Christianity, gradually changed, and only in the modern era has changed for the better, that is, the "discovery of childhood" has occurred only recently.

M. Mead's studies of childhood [8, p.126] made a significant contribution to the development of such disciplines as psychology, philosophy, sociology, pedagogy, and cultural studies. She explores the problems of childhood both at the intersection of sciences and in the context of culture. Her followers, who study the peculiarities of attitudes towards childhood among different peoples from antiquity to the present, are G. Fischer, I. Signorini, and J. Bonnet.

The 20th century is characterized by the strengthening of the archetype of the child in the depths of the author's unconscious. "Fiction literature becomes a field for solving a number of philosophical problems related to the content of the discourse of childhood: the formation of gender, the social design of childhood, cultural and social significance, the justification of childhood" [9, p.29]. Philosophical and literary analysis of understanding the image of childhood shows that children have always been thought of as the beginning of human life. The period of childhood is a process, as a result of which the potential of a person is revealed, and the foundation of his formation is laid. The child and childhood are considered in the context of anthropological, legal, moral, and ethical issues. Caring for children, the idea of education appeared long before the New Age, in almost all representatives of the history of philosophy and pedagogy, starting with Aristotle, we can find themes and motifs that interpret the image of childhood. The study of the archetypes of the child will allow us to get closer to understanding the formation of the image of childhood in English fiction [10, p. 111].

It is important to note that in the twentieth century, with the development of literature, the signs of a happy child with his idealized childhood are decreasing. Children cease to look like the embodiment of innocence, more often there are problematic heroes from dysfunctional families who are abused by their parents. The creative evolution of the authors is associated with the deepening of psychologism. Proof of this is the novel "Metroland", in which J. Barnes refers to the image of childhood to find answers to his questions: understanding the essence of man and his place in the world. An ironic attitude towards national stereotypes and an interest in French culture permeates the entire fabric of the artistic narrative of Barnes' novel. The debunking of these stereotypes occurs in the process of growing up as the protagonist, gaining knowledge about the world. Lost illusions, the potential of the personality, declared in childhood and not realized in the future, the conformity and opportunism of the hero, the erasure of personality - a characteristic of a typical young hero of the 1960s.

The experience of the twentieth century has shown how children are connected with the attitude of adults not only to each of them specifically, but also to childhood itself. It is the fate of childhood that becomes the main problem in fiction for and about children.

From the end of the 20th - to the beginning of the 21st century, global changes are taking place both in the child and in the conditions of his education and upbringing. Digitalization, technologization, distance learning demonstrate the birth of new concepts of childhood: the crisis of childhood (B.D. Elkonin, V.I. Slobodchikov, Yu.V. Ovinova), individualization and destandardization of children's biography (P. Buchner), the emancipation of childhood (W. Beck and H. Popitz), quasi-childhood (O.V. Besschetnova, S.N. Mayorova-Shcheglova), glamorization of childhood (V. Shure, S.N. Mayorova - Scheglova). During this period, research on the phenomenon of childhood intensified, and social projects began to be implemented, aimed both at children in general and at their categories (for example, children with disabilities). New problems are raised in scientific discourse: bullying (at school, in cyberspace), glamorization, and materialization of children's subculture [11, p.134].

This is shown by postmodern writers who create multifaceted images of childhood, based on traditional Victorian plots, and motifs and using the concept of archetypes. Using the techniques of intertextuality, writers explore the nature of man and reinterpret Victorian images, giving them a modern sound. In search of a solution to the pressing problems of our time, writers recreate a complex and contradictory portrait of a child who can no longer be characterized only by the categories of ideal, cruel, spoiled, or lonely. The image of childhood takes on the features of a "wandering image", a hero "wandering" through the pages of a classic novel. The hero of the latest literature combines archetypal, eternally and invariably recurring features inherent in childhood, and newly acquired qualities that are relevant and conditioned by the modern era.

### **Discussion**

Mankind knows one universal way to develop the spiritual powers of a child, to introduce him to the cultural experience of mankind - this is reading, which requires special intellectual, emotional, mental, and volitional efforts from a growing person [12, p. 42]. Writers help to "start with yourself": to read good texts in which "there are no gaps between thought and word ... but there is structure, order, unpredictability, tension, tone, and life." Publish smart and kind books, parents buy them, and teachers develop the need for reading in the classroom and create conditions for reading at home. Based on the analysis of modern changes in childhood as a strategic resource, we can identify the most important results that reveal the specifics of the development process of modern childhood:

- Under the conditions of mankind's transition to a new historical state - informational - general cultural barriers between different countries are being removed, a new way of human communication is being formed. There are profound changes in the need-motivational and emotional spheres, life rhythms, experiences,

and ethical aspects of being. The forms of obtaining knowledge, and the change of worldview positions are changing.

- Childhood is a social phenomenon, historical, therefore it stimulates the development of the adult world through the dictates of its developmental needs. In the process of relationships between children and adults, there is a removal of the adult world from the world of childhood. Children have left the system of constant contact with adults.

Scientists note the qualitative changes in the modern child, who, as a literary hero, remains the focus of literature for children:

1. In recent years, the cognitive development of preschool children has decreased, their energy has decreased, and emotional discomfort has increased, as a result - of a decrease in the level of development of the role-playing game of preschoolers, their curiosity and imagination. In older preschoolers, there is an underdevelopment of fine motor skills of the hands, insufficient social competence, and an inability to resolve the simplest conflicts.

2. Anxiety is caused by the introduction of children to the TV screen, the development of screen addiction, children lose the ability and ability to occupy themselves with something, they are distinguished by a low level of communicative competence.

3. The growth of the child's emotional problems, anxiety, memory loss, attention, muscle mass lag. The percentage of mental illnesses is growing, and the number of children with disabilities is growing. But at the same time, the category of gifted children with specially developed thinking, leadership qualities, and artistic abilities is also increasing.

It is a false statement that childhood is a happy, serene time of life. In fiction, childhood is a very difficult time for the formation of consciousness, the spiritual world of a person, the perception of a child is distinguished by integrity and vulnerability, the child initially loves the whole world, which gradually destroys trust in him. Therefore, mental trials in childhood, even with external well-being, radically determine the fate and biography of a person, are reflected in it.

In pedagogical science, education can work wonders, and with the help of a child, parents realize their unfulfilled dreams [13, p.56] Yes, upbringing can create conditions, it is a powerful source of influence on the formation of a personality, but it does not guarantee a 100% result, because a person has an internal vector of development, he is always wider than his ideas about himself, "a person is a constant effort to become a person" (M. Mamardashvili) [14, p.5]. Modern fiction constantly debunks the myth of the immutability of character and proves that a person is a mystery and he has the right to choose his path of development. Hence the task of "penetrating attention", the desire to peer into the destiny of the child, his inclinations, his dreams and open up opportunities for them.

## **Results**

Based on the analysis, the literature convinces that a child is a person whose age is not measured by the number of years lived. Age is determined not just by years, but by the outlook on life, attitude towards it, and state of mind. A person is

growing up who has experienced moments in which life has irreversibly changed, events that occurred in his worldview, changed his idea of himself. "Age is a view to which disillusionment brings not a disappointment, but purification and strengthening." The fates of literary heroes - adolescents convince us that in modern life these changes are very rapid and contrasting: on the one hand, infantile children, on the other, grow up very early, define their interests as the goals of life and go to them with the stubbornness of fighters for their freedom. and the right to live your way.

Fiction immediately responded to the decline in trust between adults and children, who never built a dialogue with each other [15, p.42].

The time of a carefree happy childhood has been drastically reduced to three years, because children go to schools of additional education, prepare for the first grade, and get the first experience of assessing their abilities.

Childhood is the time of the most difficult questions. Modern children pose questions that even a hundred adults cannot answer, they are very independent in their judgments, free in their priorities, and do not accept ready-made truths on faith. They are looking for answers to questions: how to become rich and successful, why people are different, what is death, is there a God, why do adults cheat, why are there wars?

Turning to the analysis of the space of childhood and its content, it is necessary to identify three losses of our time, this is the first decade of the new century, which, with the help of the Internet, created a new cultural context with its world, the rhythm of life, resources, work technologies. And the task of fiction is not just to reflect and designate them, but also to enable each reader to find a way to make up for these losses, to remember the conscientiousness and moral example of relatives whom he met in life, culture, and childhood.

Studying the childhood of literary heroes in the fiction of the new century makes it possible to see that we are dealing with "children of the digital age" and "society as a whole, parents, teachers and just ordinary people - do not think about the consequences of our digital present for future generations." The kids of the digital age are spending the most. part of life on the Internet and do not make a distinction between life on the Web and life outside it, experiment with changing their identity, do not ensure the confidentiality of information about themselves and their safety. The digital generation has more and more time to create informational, educational, and entertaining content in a networked environment, for children, news and information are not newspapers, but headlines, blogs, videos, and podcasts in a single digital environment.

Scientists and writers are coming to the conclusion that the active participation of children of the digital age in public life leads to an incredible change in culture.

Unfortunately, the principle of "do no harm" is forgotten in the modern school, the complete computerization of the educational process has a strong impact on the health of the child, who is constantly in wave flows and looking at the screen of the board or monitor. This danger was seen by the writers A. Zhvaleyevsky and E. Pasternak in the book "Time is always good", they predicted that children would forget how to run and talk in a living language with each other, their communication

would completely replace the mobile phone, and instead of names, there would be nicknames that hide the true face interlocutor.

Teaching methods will become radically different, they will force the older generation of teachers out of their work, and the school will suffer from a shortage of teachers who need to be prepared for teaching activities on the principle of "ahead of time". Fiction has identified the problem of loneliness in the lives of modern children and described three changes in the way of childhood.

Firstly, the word "walking on the street" has disappeared from the space of childhood, such a powerful factor in education as free role-playing and nature has almost disappeared, there are many reasons: the yards are clogged with cars, they left the villages and villages, everything was built up, free sports grounds do not work.

We need traditions of full-fledged children's recreation in nature, in the forest, by the sea, on hikes, and travels with their parents. The children have very few impressions of wildlife, they do not know how to observe and explore its phenomena.

Secondly, the lack of communication with people has been replaced by communication with a computer, the Internet, television, and the onslaught of information flows. Everything human is supplanted by a technical, irreversible process that accompanies the growth of cynicism, rudeness, aggressiveness, primitiveness of consciousness, and behavior that we see in various teenage groups. To overcome the child's insecurity, fears and loneliness, the inability to empathize can be "responsible parenting", which falls out of public policy, turns out to be a deadweight of written dissertations, and is not sufficiently demanded by society. Ian McEwan's novels *The Cement Garden* are about this problem. There is a loss of responsibility of parents for children, an inability to find a common language with them, children often find themselves in an atmosphere of "family" showdowns, domestic and emotional discomfort, hence the problem of orphanhood and reflection in the life of world literature, books by Albert Likhanov "Nobody", Jean Marie Gustave Lektzio "Goldfish", Romain Gary "All Life Ahead", Kenjiro Haitani "Rabbit Look". Children of different nationalities: the Russian boy Nikolay Toporov, the Arab girl Laila, the Arab boy Momo, the Japanese teenager Tetsuzo - have a common pain, in this life, they know the taste of orphanhood.

Often the consequence is the moral deafness of children who have not experienced the experience of love for their loved ones, absorbed in work or personal problems. B. Grachevsky's film "The Roof" screams about this, a conversation of a teenage daughter with her mother's dressing gown is shown, because there is no one else to talk to, the mother is at work around the clock. The loss of trust between children and parents becomes a pain point and is reflected in the literature on children around the world. D. Pennak's story "Dog Dog" shows the grief of a girl whose parents simply threw away their daughter's beloved dog. The Japanese writer K. Haitani in his story "The Look of a Rabbit" spares readers to worry about the fate of a boy who is friends with flies, because they do not offend him.

And the third loss of childhood, which is accurately indicated in works for children and about children, is the disappearance of the tradition of free home reading in the family.

### **Conclusion**

Turning to the theme of childhood and its comprehension in the 21st century, we got the following results: The fate of a child, depicted in an ocean of violence, cruelty, humiliation, and lawlessness, reflects the feeling of total trouble in modern Russia. Against the background of childhood, the deformation of the moral qualities of an adult is visible. The image of childhood is perceived as a protest of memory against moral impoverishment and the loss of cultural soil. The child in the new story is far from being a hero around whom fundamental human values are formed. He is a victim of this story, a small person in the full scope of this concept, a creature deprived of attention and unfairly suffering from the disorder of the world. Today's children are not like their predecessors. Today they have different guidelines, views, and beliefs. The traditional norms and values of culture fade into the background, giving way to the ideology of pragmatism: only that which can further ensure success in life, the necessary level of financial position and social status is taken from culture. All the changes taking place in the life of society are naturally reflected in the literature. The perception and attitude towards the texts of the past centuries have changed: now an array of Soviet children's literature is published with comments and explanations, accompanied by photographs because modern realities differ significantly from Soviet realities. The present epoch in many respects has drastically changed consciousness, and "turned" on its head what seemed unshakable. However, we are confident that to preserve itself, the nation must do its best to defend a transparent system of values, which is purposefully (and not very) inculcated by "children's" literature about children and childhood. Preaching love for the family, upholding the most important moral values, dear to every child, and the warmth of relationships between relatives and friends. All these are important, "eternal" values, thanks to which children's literature has been and remains the most important niche of literature in general.

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## **XXI ҒАСЫР КӨРКЕМ ӘДЕБИЕТІНДЕГІ БАЛАЛЫҚ ШАҚ МӘСЕЛЕЛЕРІ**

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**Аңдатпа.** Мақалада балаларға арналған көркем әдебиеттегі балалық шақ мәселесі қарастырылады. Көркем әдебиеттегі балалар әлемін, балалық шақ естеліктерін зерттеу жалпы қоғамның рухани көңіл-күйін көрсетеді және қазіргі әлемнің моральдық-этикалық құндылықтарын оның барлық күрделі көріністерімен айқын сипаттайды. Қазіргі проза балалық шақ пен отбасы образдары тақырыбын қайта қарастыруда. Өмірде және әдебиетте бірнеше ондаған жылдар бойы отбасылық құндылықтар туралы түсінік жоғалып кетті. Сондықтан қазіргі интерпретациядағы балалық шақ образдары классикалық әдебиеттегі образдардан біршама ерекшеленеді. Автор балалық шақ және оның өзгерістерін, әдебиеттегі балалық шақ кеңістігі мен оның мазмұны туралы зерттеулерін, балалық шақ мифтері мен олардың жасалу себептерін талдайды. Қазіргі проза қоғамдағы мінезбен, мінез-құлқының қалыптасуына әсер еткен балалық шақты бейнелеу кезінде оларды балалық шақтағы естеліктерден шыққан ересектермен салыстырады. Жұмысты жазу кезінде келесі әдістер қолданылды: сипаттау әдісі, салыстыру, материалды талдау әдісі және ақпаратты синтездеу. Мақала студенттерге, филологтарға, мұғалімдерге оқу перспективасы үшін көркем ғылыми еңбектердің кең ауқымын ашады.

**Тірек сөздер:** көркем әдебиет, балалық шақ, *қарым-қатынастар*, *жаһандану*, мәселелер, мифтер, тәжірибе, оқу.

## **ПРОБЛЕМЫ ДЕТСТВА В ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЕ XXI ВЕКА**

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**Аннотация.** В статье рассматриваются проблемы детства, отраженные в современной художественной литературе для детей и о детях. Исследование детского мира, детских воспоминаний в художественной литературе отражает духовные настроения общества в

целом и ярко характеризует морально-этические ценности современного мира во всех его сложных проявлениях. Современная проза пытается снова осмыслить тему образов детства и семьи. За несколько десятилетий понятие семейных ценностей было утрачено в реальной жизни и литературе. Именно поэтому образы детства в современной интерпретации достаточно сильно отличаются от тех, которые представлены в классической литературе. Автор анализирует время детства и его изменения, исследование в литературе пространства детства и его содержания, мифы детства и причины их создания. Рисую образы детства, современная проза соотносит их с теми взрослыми людьми, вышедшими из тех детских воспоминаний, которые оказали воздействие на формирование их характера и поведения в обществе. При написании работы были использованы следующие методы: метод описания, сравнения, метод анализа материала, синтеза информации. Статья открывает широкий спектр художественных научных произведений для перспективы чтения студентам, филологам, педагогам.

**Ключевые слова:** художественная литература, детство, отношения, глобализация, проблемы, мифы, опыт, чтение.

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