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## LITERARY-AESTHETIC AND MORAL VALUES OF ENGLISH CHILDREN'S LITERATURE OF THE 20TH CENTURY

**Summary.** The article examines the aesthetic and moral values of English children's literature of the twentieth century. The relevance of the topic is due to the fact that the widespread distribution of children's literature in modern times is associated with an interest in children's books on the book market, both among children and adolescents. Children's literature plays an important role in the spiritual and intellectual development of children. In the 20th century, the genre that children liked the most was fantasy. Based on this, it can be noted that English children's literature is an important field that shapes the worldview, spiritual development and creative abilities of children through its artistic, aesthetic and moral values. This field of literature performs not only an entertaining function, but also teaches children life lessons, develops their ethical and aesthetic feelings. English children's literature is not limited to lessons taught by adults, but also helps children explore their own world and become more creative. These works are both entertaining and informative and have a huge impact on their future lives. Fairy tales, myths and works written in the fantasy genre develop children's imagination. Fantasy novels and fairy tales teach children values such as justice, conscience, and honesty. Jobs that develop children's decision-making skills strengthen their sense of responsibility. Children are taught a sense of responsibility, sharing and helping habits. Mythology occupies an important place in English children's literature. Many popular children's books are inspired by ancient myths, folklore, and legends. These works not only give children exciting adventures, but also introduce them to the historical and cultural heritage. These books introduce children to classical myths and transport them to magical worlds. The struggle between Good and Evil is one of the oldest themes in literature. Such stories not only teach children to understand good and evil, but also encourage them to make the right choices in their lives. This topic remains relevant as the struggle between good and evil continues in real life.

**Keywords:** fantasy, children's literature, mythology, explorer, Britain

**Introduction.** It should not be forgotten that the formation of English children's literature began with fantasy elements in a number of epic works of general literature that were not written directly for children. In the history of English literature, fantasy elements are clearly visible in the epic poem "Beowulf", which is supposed to have been written in Middle English on the banks of the River Thames in 1010 and has survived to the present day. Scenes of battles with witches, monsters, and dragons roaming the landscape create a clear picture of elements and motifs typical of the fantasy genre. Elements of the fantasy genre appear in Thomas Malory's 15th-century English novel *The Temple of the Burial*, dedicated to King Arthur, the founder of the age of chivalry and its glorious tra-

ditions. English writer Terence Hanbury White (1906-1964), who created a kind of new adaptation of these themes and elements in the 20th century, is known for his fantasy works such as "Arthur: the Past and the Future" and "The Sword in the Stone".

Later, the extraordinary world of fairies in the comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by the great poet and playwright of the English Renaissance William Shakespeare creates a certain impression that the Lilliputians, the Brobdingnagians described in each of the four parts of Jonathan Swift's novel *Gulliver's Travels*, do not escape the attention of children, dwarfs and giants.

**The main purpose of the article** is to show that children's literature performs both educational and entertaining functions and prepares children for the future life. Works written in the fantasy genre allow children to discover new worlds, help them understand and express their feelings.

**The main part.** In the sphere of literary influence on the formation and development of literary fantasy in English literature, certain traces of influence on the development of fantasy literature were also exerted by the fairy tales of the brothers Grimm, known as collectors of German oral folk literature, and reconstructions of folk tales created by Charles Perrault, who is considered the author of such fairy tales as "Little Red Riding Hood", "Cinderella" and "Ricky of the Tuft", based on the plots of French folk tales [1].

Among the works written in the fantasy genre for children, there are "The Hobbit" by John Tolkien, the series "Darkness is Coming" by the English children's writer Susan Cooper (1935), "The Chronicles of Prydain" by the American writer Lloyd Alexander (1924-2007), known as the author of 48 books for children and teenagers, as well as the series "Earthsea" by the American writer Ursula Le Guin (1929-2018). However, there are also works written for children, which, although notable for their fantastic and other elements, do not always belong to the fantasy genre. For example, the works of the English writer Lewis Carroll (1832-1898) "Alice in Wonderland", or the English writer Charles Kingsley (1819-1875) "Children of the Waters", as well as the works of the English writer and poet George MacDonald (1824-1905), the founder of the fantasy genre, according to some researchers, "The Prince and the Goblin" – in many cases, they were not included in the fantasy genre [2, p. 7].

The axiom is that each researcher expresses his point of view on a particular issue based on certain facts. However, we must not forget that some writers, when they write their work, do not realize in which genre it primarily works. In this regard, when debates arise, sometimes involving conflicting opinions, it becomes necessary to express your opinion on them. For example, it raises questions that the work of a Scottish author George MacDonald "The Prince and the Goblin" is written in the fantasy genre, although most

researchers claim that the writer is the creator of the fantasy genre. However, such contradictory, half-hearted ideas sometimes create confusion among experts in children's literary criticism.

However, speaking about the important place that children's literature occupied in some decades of the 19th century, one should not forget that this literature was widely distributed both in Great Britain and in the USA since the end of the 18th century, many children's works were published that were read with interest by children [3].

Two centuries ago, in the 18th century, in England and the UK as a whole, children began to be seen as a national resource, which coincided with the publication of journals, books and reviews addressed to children at various stages of this century. More precisely, poets, writers, and publishers of this century have already paid special attention to reading, parenting, and educating children who could become ideal builders of the future. In Azerbaijan, the works of famous figures in the creation and development of children's literature, including children's magazines and textbooks, as well as literature for adults, such as Nariman Narimanov, Jalil Mammadguluzade, Mirza Alakber Sabir, Rashid bey Efendiye, Abdurrahim bey Hagverdiyev, Suleyman Sani Akhundov, Firudin bey, belong to the end of the XIX – beginning of the XX centuries. Kocharli, Abdulla Shaig, Abbas Sahhat, Sultan Majid Ganizade and other writers and educators dedicated to children.

It should be noted that since the end of the 18th century, attention to the works of publishers, writers and scientists devoted to children's literature, especially the issue of printing children's magazines, can be considered the beginning of a major stage in the development of children's literature. So, during this period, collections and anthologies of children's stories "Children's Literature of the last Century" and "Treasures" by Sarah Trimmer, a famous writer and critic of English children's literature of the XVIII century, as well as an education reformer, became an important event in the popularization and dissemination of children's literature in both the UK and the USA.

At the beginning of the 20th century, with the first publication of the List of Books in the USA in 1905, as well as with the first publication of The Horn Book in 1924, new editions of children's literature in the context of heritage and continuity became available to the readership [4].

At that time, children were even treated as half-humans. According to Michel Montaigne, one of the famous philosophers of the French Renaissance, who made a special contribution to the creation of the literary genre of the essay, "they (children) had neither mental activity nor recognizable physical form". The year 1658 marked a turning point in the history of memory focused on children. In the same year, the first illustrated book for children, *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* (The Visible Picture of the World in Pictures, 1659), written by the Moravian teacher Jan Amos Comenius, was published as a textbook [5].

Until the 19th century, two editions were mainly published in Western countries – the first of them was published in Latin in 1695 under the title "Pera Librorum Juvenillium" ("Collection of books for Young people"), and the second – "Petite Encyclopedie du jeune age" ("Encyclopedia for Young Children"). However, in 1857, another encyclopedia was published, the "Encyclopedie Larousse des enfants" (Encyclopedia of Larousse Junior), written by the French lexicographer and encyclopedist Pierre Larousse (1817-1875). The Children's Encyclopedia by British writer and edi-

tor Arthur Minn, published in Britain in 1910, as well as the Book of Knowledge, published in the United States in 1912, confirm that the study and popularization of children's literature plays an important role in socio-cultural life, and that the trend and direction have clearly shifted towards the progressive movement [6].

In the second half of the 20th century, special attention was paid to the publication of encyclopedias among the English literary audience. To cite just one fact: in 1960, the Encyclopedia Britannica was published in London on the initiative of London editor John Armitage. In 1970, 16 volumes of the Encyclopedia for Teenagers were compiled and published.

In his essay "Children's Literature" published in the Encyclopedia Britannica, American writer, critic and editor Clifton Fadiman wrote that it has "five colonies" or five categories based on the formula "Independent Republic of Children's Literature". According to the researcher, the first category includes books written for "adapted" adults. Books that meet both conditions include *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe, *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift, fairy tales by the brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, old German ballads called *The Boy's Magic Horn*, a collection of German folk poems and songs, and *Songs of Innocence* by William Blake. The second condition: Children's literature is about expansion, that is, defining the audience's place in its distribution. It is noted that Mark Twain's "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" and the fairy tales of the French poet, writer and storyteller Charles Perrault reach a wider children's audience. The third is illustrated books and easy-to-read stories; the fourth is first-class children's literary versions of the works of classics written for adults. This category includes new retellings of "Stories from the Bible" by British poet and writer Walter de la Mare and "Ballads and Tales of Robin Hood" by American illustrator and writer Howard Pyle. Finally, the fifth category includes samples of oral folk literature that once entertained, delighted children and were distinguished by a certain superiority – folk tales, fairy tales, jokes, riddles, folk songs, lullabies, hymns, Christian religious songs and other light poems, poems read on the street, performances of children outdoors, children's poems, or rather, songs of Mother Goose, poems are nonsense [5].

Thus, it can be said that the inclusion of literary and artistic samples written in various literary genres belonging to the five categories listed above among the classical works plays an important role in determining the ideological and aesthetic position of children's literature.

In his study "Children's Literature" in the Encyclopedia Britannica, American scholar and intellectual Clifton Fadiman notes that: "Children's literature first emerged as a clear and independent form of literature in the second half of the 18th century. But until that time, it was only in its infancy, in the best sense of the word" [5].

Although such a scientist's judgment may seem one-sided and controversial, the existence of children's literature as a separate field undoubtedly requires the definition of its canon. In the study we mentioned, the following statement by the author deserves attention: "It is assumed that since "canon" refers to "great" or general literature, it can be considered a meaningless term for children's literature. That is why the canon is considered completely alien to the whole structure of children's literature" [5].

However, even if such a statement of the question seems plausible, it is far from objective to question the canon of children's literature, which is recognized as a separate field. Therefore, it is especially important to determine the main canons and criteria

of children's literature, taking into account a number of parameters, including its genres, the division of this literature into age groups for children, as well as the subject matter, content and format of the works of individual authors of this literature. Thus, based on the main provisions of research on this problem, it can be said that it is of great importance to substantiate the fact that literature has its own canon or laws.

The struggle between good and evil in children's literature is undoubtedly a universal theme that makes everyone think, regardless of the age of ancient mythology and literature – the average reader, listener, and writer – and continues to be the central theme of modern literature, both in the object of description and in new variations of the storylines of works [7].

Professor Jalil Naghiyev, noting the connection of a number of epic and mythical motifs of ancient Greek and Roman literature with the East and the highly artistic development of universal philosophical motifs such as mortality, literary life, immortality in the ancient Eastern – Sumero-Akkadian epics and myths (asatir), writes: "Gilgamesh, like Alexander and Koroghlu, embarks on a long journey, to achieve immortality, he overcomes impassable mountains on the way, swims across the "River (Water) of Death" and arrives at the place where his great-grandfather Ut-napishtim lived. During the journey, Gilgamesh dreams of "immortality" and asks himself: "Will I die like Enkidu?" The gods said to him, "Gilgamesh, where are you going? You won't find the life you're looking for", he doesn't believe. "He does not lose hope until the last moment" [8, p. 109].

Some researchers believe that the history of ancient myths was written down about 2,700 years ago, and some claim that their creators were the Greek poets Homer and Hesiod. In the myths that arose, the fixation of such important elements of the history of thought as the creation of the world, the birth of mankind and the termination of human life by death undoubtedly became one of the main themes of myths that arose in subsequent centuries.

One of the main characteristics of fantasy literature is its happy ending. This is noted in literary criticism as the main feature that distinguishes it from broader literature.

Based on the myths of the ancient world, John Tolkien and J. K. Rowling created classic examples of the fantasy genre in children's literature with their novels, recreating new images of this world in modern fantasy literature, reflecting their echoes in the "second world". In these works, the reconstruction of mythological traditions, motifs and plots is striking in its definiteness and elements.

Although there was interest in mythology from time to time, myths opened up great opportunities for the creation of the fantasy genre, and so fantasy literature was formed. Thus, although John Tolkien and J. K. Rowling created their own unique mythological systems and thoughts, as well as mythological images, we can say that they remained faithful to the traditions of myth and created reconstructions of motifs and plots in their new fantasy literature.

It should be noted that mythology is a pillar, the basis of world literature and culture.

Myths, which occupy a special place, in particular, in children's literature, served as a kind of guide to the possibility of the reality of both ancient life, nature, gods, and the existence of evil forces, especially creatures that seem real to people and in which they are forced to believe. Myths that contain answers to eternal questions and have served as a beacon for humanity from generation to generation

are reflected in the artistic counterparts of modern myths in novels in the context of a new era of writers and poets.

Joseph Campbell, a well-known researcher of mythology, noted that myths perform four main functions:

- 1) metaphysical/mystical;
- 2) cosmological;
- 3) sociological;
- 4) pedagogical [9, p. 237].

Joseph Campbell, who noted that the hero is an important means of transportation in myths, presented his theory that the journey itself is a narrative archetype. He believed that the hero seeks adventure, learns a life lesson, achieves victory with the help of acquired knowledge and skills, and then returns to his homeland transformed. The hero's journey involves changing a person.

**Conclusion.** In Joseph Campbell's study "The Hero with a Thousand Faces" [9], he explored the world of mythical heroes to confirm that life is an adventure.

People have always tried to understand the meaning of life. In this regard, in the section "Myth and the Modern World" of the study "The Power of Myth", the following statement is noteworthy in a dialogue between American essayist and journalist Bill Moyers and Joseph Campbell:

"Moyers: why myths? Why should we care about myths? What will they bring to my life?" Campbell: My first response to you is, "Go on living, live your life, it's a wonderful life – you don't need myths". I do not believe that you are interested in this topic just because it is considered important. All I know is that somehow it will get someone's attention. But one day you'll realize that the myths have trapped you with their perfect introduction. "But if he doesn't catch you, he won't help you" [10, p. 9].

Joseph Campbell's reflections on myths, a plot-oriented part of fantasy literature, are naturally related to his deep insight into this field. Because myth is the main source of the creation of a second world, which has "migrated" to children's fiction.

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**Ханкішієва З. Літературно-естетичні та моральні цінності англійської дитячої літератури XX століття**

**Анотація.** У статті розглядаються естетичні та моральні цінності англійської дитячої літератури XX століття. Актуальність теми обумовлюється тим, що стала вельми поширеною дитячої літератури у час пов'язані з інтересом до дитячих книжок на книжковому ринку, як серед дітей, і серед підлітків. Дитяча література відіграє важливу роль у духовному та інтелектуальному розвитку дітей. У 20 столітті жанром, що найбільше подобався дітям, було фентезі. Виходячи з цього можна відзначити, що англійська дитяча література – важлива область, що формує світогляд, духовний розвиток і творчі здібності дітей своїми художніми, естетичними та моральними цінностями. Ця галузь літератури виконує як розважальну функцію, а й викладає дітям життєві уроки, розвиває їх етичні та естетичні почуття. Англійська дитяча література не обмежується уроками, які викладають дорослі, але також допомагає дітям досліджувати свій власний світ

і ставати творчішими. Ці роботи одночасно розважальні і пізнавальні і мають величезний вплив на їхнє майбутнє життя. Казки, міфи та твори, написані у жанрі фентезі, розвивають дитячу уяву. Фентезі-романи та казки прищеплюють дітям такі цінності, як справедливість, совість та чесність. Роботи, що розвивають у дітей навички прийняття рішень, зміцнюють їхнє почуття відповідальності. Дітям прищеплюють почуття відповідальності, звички ділитися та допомагати. Міфологія посідає важливе місце у англійській дитячій літературі. Багато популярних дитячих книг натхненні стародавніми міфами, фольклором і легендами. Ці твори не лише дарують дітям захоплюючі пригоди, а й знайомлять їх із історичною та культурною спадщиною. Ці книги знайомлять дітей із класичними міфами та переносять їх у чарівні світи. Боротьба Добра і Зла – одна з найдавніших тем у літературі. Такі історії не тільки вчать дітей розуміти добро і зло, а й спонукають їх робити правильний вибір у своєму житті. Ця тема залишається актуальною, оскільки боротьба добра і зла продовжується у реальному житті.

**Ключові слова:** фентезі, дитяча література, міфологія, дослідник, Великобританія.