

ABSTRACT

on the dissertation for degree of PhD in specialty
“6D021000-Foreign Philology”

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“Representation of the Concept of Childhood in Prose of the late 20th century (on the material of novels by S.Townsend, J.Irving and R.Seisenbayev)”

General description of the thesis. The research on the theme of childhood is one of the most relevant and interesting in modern philological science. The researchers' attention to it is due to the fact that this problem allows us to discover new facets in the writer's work, to trace the continuity of generations in his works, to reveal the peculiarities of the concept of personality and to determine the factors influencing the personal development.

The question of researching the concept of child and childhood, its connection with historical and psychological elements in fiction is becoming more topical. The works focused on the concepts of the child and childhood studies in modern science are still scarce. The authors explore the situation of children in society, their social status, ways of life, relationships with adults and peers. The main problem is determined by childhood itself, the status of the child in society.

This dissertation research is devoted to the analysis of three art works at the late twentieth century, in which the concept of childhood is represented: “The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole, Aged 13¾” by S. Townsend, “A Prayer for Owen Meany” by J. Irving, «Mertvyye brodyat v peskakh» (“The dead wander in the desert”) by R. Seisenbayev. On the example of these works, as an object of study, it is possible, on the one hand, to carry out a comparative analysis of the English, American and Kazakh literary traditions, in general, and the interpretation of childhood in the language picture of the world in three different nations in particular. On the other hand, these novels are significant in terms of representing the concept of childhood.

Despite the obvious differences between novels, on the subject and on the way of concept representation, all of them reflect the world of childhood in the national picture of the nation to which the writer belongs.

The analysis of the works of English, American and Kazakh writers at the 20th century conducted in this research allows to solve problems essential for understanding their work, to show the national, cultural and biographical reasons for the writers' discoveries in the field of anthropology of childhood, to trace the formation and development of the childhood theme in contemporary literature.

All three novels were written in the same time period, since the events described in them relate to the second half of the twentieth century, due to which it is possible to compare the problems that concern English, American and Kazakh society of the specified period.

Relevance of research topic is determined by the general trend of modern anthropocentrically oriented research of verbalized knowledge structures about human life, in particular, the conceptualization of the psychophysiological and social phenomenon of childhood in the consciousness of modern society. The importance of the research topic also lies in the fact that the phenomenon of childhood only relatively recently (from the second half of the twentieth century) became the topic of pedagogical, sociological, and psychological research (among researchers: K.-G. Jung [1], I.S. Kon [2], D.B. Elkonin [3], E.Erickson [4], D.I.Feldstein [5] and others).

Despite the rather significant contribution of these works to the study of the phenomenon of childhood, it is impossible not to note the fact that childhood is traditionally covered in only one aspect: as a process of growth, development, as a psychological or physiological state of the younger generation. However, as a holistic phenomenon, it often remains outside of cognitive interest and is not deeply understood, and this applies to both pedagogical and psychological discourse.

In modern science, the need has arisen to change not only the attitude towards the child as a person himself, who is at the beginning of his life journey, but also the perspective in which childhood is analyzed. According to O.O. Maslova, in the XX century, not only the adaptive paradigm “infant” - “child” - “teenager” - “youth” occurred, but also an understanding of childhood as a state of soul was formed [6, p. 3].

The relevance of understanding childhood becomes particularly acute in connection with the democratization of society, the need to become a harmoniously developed personality, which adequately responds to various events and has a high degree of adaptability. In this regard, the role of philological science is as significant as pedagogy and psychology.

Moreover, the study of the characteristics of the child’s (teenager’s) worldview, his attitude to reality, the processes and phenomena observed in it contributes to an understanding of the personality of the contemporary child, his behavior, and the motives of the acts committed. Studying the models of being, children can see the events depicted in a work of art from a different (childish) point of view.

The degree of scientific elaboration.

At the turn of the XX-XXI centuries, there is a growing interest in the topic of childhood, which is due to the influence of the historical, socio-economic and political processes taking place in modern society. Globalization, the rapid development of science and technology, the increase in information flows have a significant impact on the consciousness of man and, above all, of the younger generation. There are changes in the perception of the world, rethinking of spiritual and moral ideals and values. Consequently, the close attention of scientists to the topic of childhood. This problem becomes the subject of research in the work of psychologists, educators, sociologists, philosophers, and cultural studies. The theme of childhood is conceptualized in the works of philologists who are striving to comprehend the psychology of a child and the peculiarities of his world perception on the example of the world literature works analysis.

This problem was of interest to researchers from ancient times; however, the phenomenon of childhood was presented in their studies fragmentarily, in the works there is no holistic concept of childhood.

The ancient philosopher Socrates (470–399 BC) emphasized the role of the term “Childhood”. As the scientist believed, this is a period of human comprehension of himself with the help of which it is possible to solve various life tasks. According to him, the child should improve his morality through the knowledge of himself. Platon (427-348 BC) dealt with this problem. He founded a new system of raising children, the purpose of which was to raise the soul to the idea of Good. Aristotle (384-322 BC) built the theory of science and paid particular attention to the mind of the child. According to him, the child's mind is immortal and it is one with the mind of the Universe, in which it is necessary to create good, moral, beautiful things [7].

In the era of the Middle Ages, Renaissance and in subsequent periods, N. Kuzansky [8], Augustine [9], E. Rotterdam [10], M. Montaigne [11], I. Fichte [12], reflected this topic in their writings. Schelling [13], A. Schopenhauer [14], who substantiated the importance of childhood for the formation of man and his role in the development of society and the state, demonstrated the place of this phenomenon in the general laws of human life.

Domestic and foreign scientists who, representing various fields of knowledge and comprehending childhood within the research field of their own science, showed the depth and scale of childhood problems, turned to the study of childhood. In particular, based on the search for the origins of various images of childhood on the achievements of history, anthropology and ethnography, R. Apresyan [15], L. Belyaev [16], I. Bestuzhev-Lada [17], N. Kogan [18], A. Kislov [19] understands this phenomenon as a period from birth to adulthood. L. Bozovic [20], V. Kudryavtsev [21], I. Kulikovskaya [22], M. Osorina [23], and others substantiated the sociocultural conditionality of this phenomenon.

F. Aries identified new opportunities for his ethnological analysis [24]. He explores childhood in everyday life, in written documents, in painting. L. Levy-Bruhl [25], L. Levi-Strauss [26], conducted a comparative analysis of the phenomenon of childhood in primitive cultures with childhood in developed cultures of Eastern countries and America. M. Mead [27], E. Taylor [28], D. Frazer [29], who pointed to the symbolism of childhood and the need for its understanding as a product of social relations. P. Buchner, P., Kruger G.-G., Dubois M. [30], N. Postman [31] presented a detailed study of the current transformations of this phenomenon through the prism of the issues of individualization and emancipation, leveling the boundaries between two periods of human life. C. Flake-Hobson, B.E. Robinson, P.Skin [32] W. Beck [33], D. Richter [34], and others. In their understanding, the aspect of childhood as a special reality with its characteristic features, special structure, and laws of development becomes significant.

J. Garbarino [35], K. Davis [36], J. Quartrup [37], and others consider the problems of childhood from the point of view of sociology and attempt to construct it as a special reality with its own features, structure and laws of existence.

Significant for the study of childhood are the works of V. Zenkovsky [38], who combined the Orthodox Christian view of this phenomenon with the workings of psychology. V. Yeager [39], systematized the views of ancient philosophers on the problem of childhood. Sh. Amonashvili [40], linked teaching practice with the achievements of world philosophical and religious thought. B. Bim-Bad [41], T. Popkova [42], relied based on philosophical-anthropological reflection features of the history of studying the interaction of adults and children. L. Belyaev [43], provided a philosophical-anthropological and hermeneutic analysis of pedagogy.

However, despite the long history of studying the problem of childhood and a significant amount of accumulated information, this phenomenon still remains an insufficiently studied phenomenon, because the available scientific material cannot be considered a complete, perfect concept of understanding childhood.

Separate attention in the context of our work requires the study of the concept as an interdisciplinary phenomenon. The modern definition of this concept is connected with the works of N. Arutyunova [44], E. Kubryakova [45], Z. Popova, I. Sternina [46], A. Wezhbitskaya [47], V. Telia [48], V. Karasik [49], S. Vorkachev [50], V. Maslova [51] and others.

Kazakh people associate the study of childhood with the name of M. Zhumabayev. The scientist noted that parents should be more far-sighted in raising children, because they will live in a time that is different from the one in which they live now [52]. The concept of a family, considered in sociological and ethical-philosophical studies, is inextricably linked with the concept of childhood.

Among them, the work of Kh.A. Argynbaeva [53], S.Kh. Shalginbaeva [54]. M. Kabakova considers the modern Kazakh family, its values and traditions [55]. S.A. Uzakova [56] explores spiritual values and problems of education through the lens of a gender approach. I.A. Kornilko [57] writes about the educational significance of the family traditions of the Kazakhs. D.A. Sabirova explores the artistic world of the family in the literature of Kazakhstan, the typology and methodology of the study [58].

O.A. Agarkova and A.V. Mezentseva [59] consider this concept in the context of national culture. In Kazakhstani science, the concept of concept is explored in the works of A. B. Abdulina [60], E.R. Kogay [61], H.S. Muhamadiyeva, K. T. Kenzheeva [62], U.K. Isabekova [63], N.V. Dmitriuk [64], A.A. Kurmangaliyeva, G.M. Chumbalova, T.L. Berdalieva [65], B. Zhumagulova [66], L.V. Safronova, U. Amirbekova, U. Nurbaeva [67] and others. Researchers reveal the content of this term, the features of its functioning in the works of Kazakh and Russian writers.

Some researchers propose to understand the concept as a universal entity, which is formed in consciousness on the basis of direct sensory experience, human operations with objects, as well as on the basis of interaction with already formed concepts (Z. Popova, I. Sternin). Other scientists focus on certain points of interpretation of this concept, emphasizing that it is often marked by ethnic and cultural specifics (S. Vorkachev), emotional, expressive, evaluative components (V. Maslova), that their culture enters the human mental world (J. Stepanov). These scientists define the concept as a basic perceptual-cognitive-affective formation of a dynamic nature, depending on the individual perception of human life.

Golubovskaya [68] gives an idea of this concept as an exponent of ethnic characteristics of the worldview of speakers.

Accordingly, it is possible to single out the following approaches, which allow to reveal the essence, nature of the concept: semantic-cognitive, semantic-logical, linguocultural, culturological.

The basis of this study is the linguistic-cultural method, according to which, the concept is defined as “a cognitive unit aimed at a comprehensive study of language, consciousness, culture” (V. Karasik). The concept is determined by culture and is the minimum unit through which the projection of cultural elements in the human mind is carried out, as a result of which it belongs to a collective or individual consciousness and is expressed in language. This gives grounds to call the concept a unit of social consciousness, expressed in language, directing it to the highest spiritual values that ethnic culture defines. The ethnocultural coloring of the concept implements an anthropocentric approach to the study of linguistic phenomena.

Man becomes "the measure of all things." Accordingly, the formation or determination of a certain concept in relation to this phenomenon depends on the assessment or expression of a person's own attitude towards any cultural phenomenon.

(L. Bozhovich, L. Vygotsky, I. Cohn, M. Osorina, J. Piaget, D. Elkonin) investigated the specifics of the concept, as well as the work of scientists in the field of child psychology. (M. Mead, Paula S. Fass, K.T. Atemova, G. B. Isabekova) studied specifics in the field of national education. (E.M. Zagarina, L.V. Fedotova) analyzed the images of children and adolescents in various national literature. The works of these scientists constituted the methodological basis of the research.

In this study, we interpret the specificity of the concept of childhood in specific literary works of representatives of three national literatures.

The research object is the novels by S. Townsend, “The Secret Diaries of Adrian Mole aged 13 3/4”, J. Irving “A Prayer for Owen Meany” and R. Seisenbayev «Mertvyye brodyat v peskakh» (“The dead wander in the desert”).

The research subject is the forms of realization of the Concept of Childhood in the novels by S. Townsend, J. Irving and R. Seisenbayev.

The purpose of research is to identify the features of the verbalization of the concept "Childhood" in three national literatures.

To achieve this goal, the following **objectives are set**:

- 1) to study the approaches to understanding the concept and identify its artistic specificity;
- 2) to trace the traditions of disclosing the theme of childhood in world fiction of the XIX - XX centuries and to identify approaches to its study in modern humanitarian science;
- 3) to determine the specificity of the representation, core and the characteristics of the concept in the novels by S. Townsend, J. Irving and R. Seisenbayev;
- 4) to identify the role of artistic expression means to comprehend the phenomenon of childhood in the analyzed works;

5) to identify the genre specifics of the analyzed novels and its influence on the implementation of the concept of childhood in them;

6) to determine the folk literature system of national education influence degree of three people on the interpretation of the concept of childhood in the analyzed works.

The research material:

- “The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole, Aged 13¾” by S. Townsend,
- “A Prayer for Owen Meany” by J. Irving,
- “Mertvyye brodyat v peskakh” (“The dead wander in the desert”) by R. Seisenbayev.

The predominant **method** in the study is the comparative-typological one, due to which the similarities and differences in the implementation of the concept of childhood in three national literatures are established, thematic, figurative analogies and contrasts in the analyzed novels are revealed. An anthropological view of the problem made it possible to see adult ideas about childhood. Using a comparative historical approach, the prerequisites for the emergence of the national context of the works are analyzed.

The scientific novelty of the research is consists in the fact of comparative study of the works by S. Townsend, J. Irving, R. Seisenbayev, features of the three national writers approaches' to the theme of childhood, the specifics of their worldview and the author's concept of personality are revealed. Sociocultural dominants are identified the specifics of the childhood image in English, American and Kazakh literature.

The theoretical significance of the work lies in the fact that the understanding of the core and signs of the concept of childhood is expanding, the specificity of children's consciousness, the nature and characteristics of the child's interaction with the surrounding world and the adult world are revealed. The use of a comparative approach to the study of novels by English, American and Kazakh writers allows us to identify features of the image of childhood and the image of the child in Western (English and American) and Russian literature of the second half of the 20th century.

The results of the research can be used as a further study of problem and its development in literary studies.

The practical significance of the study is due to the ability to apply the results in courses of lectures on the history of Kazakh and foreign literature, literary theory, in the development of teaching materials on conceptology and special courses.

The scientific hypothesis of the research is as follows: the concept of childhood in the analyzed works is verbalized in accordance with the national language picture of the three peoples world based on national traditions of upbringing.

Findings for the defense:

1) The main carrier of the concept of childhood is a child, and the images of children (adolescents) in all three novels differ significantly, due to the influence of the national education system, cultural, historical, socio-economic, psychological and pedagogical factors.

2) Western literature of the second half of the 20th century focuses on the study of the consciousness characteristics and mechanisms of the child's subconscious; Kazakh literature studies the analysis of moral and spiritual values that shape the personality of a child, their reflection in the behavior of children and their attitude to the phenomena of reality;

3) in the novels by S. Townsend, J. Irving and R. Seisenbayev the concept of childhood is realized, the core of which is represented by the lexemes *childhood* and *children*, and the signs get different incarnation;

4) means of artistic expression serve to convey the position of the author and his assessment of the events described in the works and that allows to focus on the semantics of the concept;

5) in the works of representatives of the three national literatures, the concept of childhood is realized, based not only on the general principles of attitude towards the child, characteristic of fiction in general, but also on the basis of national specificity and the genre of the work;

6) an important role in understanding the concept is played by its specificity, individualization, modal - evaluative nature, which includes concepts, ideas, feelings, emotions, and artistic associative manifestations.

Approbation of the research:

According to the results of the dissertation research, 8 articles were published, 4 publications recommended by CCESS of MES of the RK, 2 in materials of international conferences, 1 in materials of a foreign international conference, 1 in the database indexed by Scopus.

The structure of the dissertation research is determined by its purpose and objectives: the dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion and a list of references.

The first chapter - "Scientific - theoretical basis for the study of the concept of "Childhood" reveals the main approaches to the study of the concept in modern humanities and in world fiction.

The second chapter examines the implementation of the concept of childhood in the novel by S. Townsend, J. Irving and R. Seisenbaev.

The third chapter examines the influence of the genre of the work and the national system of education of a particular people on the specificity of the interpretation of the concept of childhood in the analyzed novels.

The total amount of research is 144 pages; the list of references includes 169 titles.