

THE REFLECTION OF THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE FORMATION OF THE ADOLESCENT PSYCHE IN THE WORKS OF KHUDOYBERDI TOKHTABOYEV AND CHRISTOPHER PAUL CURTIS

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ABSTRACT

In this article, it is revealed with examples how the complex social environment is reflected in children's psyche and how negatively it affects children in American and Uzbek children's literature. Through the analysis, it can be observed that there are some similarities and differences in style and in the depiction of the spirituality and social situation in American and Uzbek children's literature.

Keywords: child psyche, psychologism, wartime, Great Depression, racial inequality, prejudice.

INTRODUCTION

Literary critic Hotam Umurov, based on Askad Mukhtar's thoughts ("writing ... is lifestyle of a talented person") emphasizes that "the literary work should contain only life and the spiritual image of the person who is the creator of this life and the soul".¹ In the works of Khudoyberdi Tokhtaboev, the writer's emotional experiences are reflected in the children's world and appear in the image of protagonists.

Recognized as the "Uzbek apprentice of Janni Rodari", the writer perfectly described the tender hearts and pure spirits of children in his works. He was able to transfer what he felt, what he saw and what he experienced in his childhood to the characters of the novel. This makes them more alive and lifelike. Khudoyberdi Tokhtaboev, in his interview with the reporter of "Yoshlik" magazine, Gulnoz Mominova, told about his youth with anguish, saying that "The wartime children grew old fast at a young age. All the hardships of the war fell on the children's shoulders. They were separated from their parents prematurely and left hungry. They fought with each other for bread. The children of one family even took turns wearing the same galoshes to school. In those days, when fleas and lice were abounding, people set fire to the ground and threw their shirts into the fire". The same scenes are reflected in the life of Arifjon and his siblings in his work "Boy with Five Children". Safo Matjonov said that "when it comes to the works of the writer, it is not difficult to notice that the hardships he experienced in his childhood, the upbringing of his grandparents, his work as a teacher, and his columnist work in the editorial office of newspapers led the future writer to take a serious look at life."²

The American writer whose novels are as captivating as Khudoyberdi Tokhtaboev is Christopher Paul Curtis. As for the work of Curtis, he illuminates the lives of children and teenagers through the genre of historical fiction. In almost all of his works, he writes down what he saw and felt in his youth, therefore, the image of the social environment on the child's psyche is described in

¹ (H.Umurov, 2001)

² (S.Matjonov, 2020)

a very convincing and realistic way. Christopher Paul, in his conversation with the students at Northwestern Elementary School in Eaton Rapids, Michigan, USA, ³ states that all the characters he creates are part of his personality. He gives his heroes the qualities of the people he has seen in real life, reveals their psyche.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

A narrative review has been used in order to analyze psychological, didactic and pedagogic dimensions of two novels, highlighting the reflection of the social environment in the formation of the adolescent psyche in the works of Khudoyberdi Tokhtaboyev and Christopher Paul Curtis. I have searched on Google Scholar, BASE, CORE and Science.gov for original research papers, articles and books, published from 1950s to 2023, by using the following keywords: "children's literature", "adolescent psyche", "social environment", "Christopher Paul Curtis", "Khudoyberdi Tukhtaboev", "Uzbek children's literature", "American children's literature", "emotions", "child's development". I summarized the information on influence of social environment on children's psychology.

We outlined concepts of psychologism, presenting "character" (in its three dimensions of physical, emotional/mental, and social status) as the primary objective of all literary works and the optimum context for displaying psychology-related concerns. We also used citation tracking to find other papers on children's literature, psychologism, and narrative-based strategies (printed books and digital resources) as an effective operational tool for conveying psychologism contents in literary works to promote global development and wellbeing of adolescences. Lastly, We have offered brief descriptions of terminology used in children's literature on the social context and psychological applications.

RESULTS

It can be said that the role of the social environment is very important in the formation of the child's psyche, in revealing its image. The character of the child is more often manifested

- in the relationship with others - in dialogic speech, or
- in internal-monological speech.

While analyzing Khudoyberdi Tokhtaboyev's novel "Boy with Five Children" we can see both negative and positive effects of wartime complications on the psychology of children. In the novel "Sad Eyes" we witnessed the tragic fate of the children who grew up in abundance due to the misfortunes that befell the family. Although the nation and period are different, also in the works of Christopher Paul Curtis, the social tension and complicated times have a negative effect on the psyche of children. Among the representatives of the black nation who suffered from racial prejudice and inequality in the United States during the Great Depression, Bud also learned to lie under the influence of the social environment. It is described that his psyche was greatly affected by the explosion in the church. Kenny cannot bear to see innocent little girls suffer just because they are black; he cannot come to his senses for a long time as emotional discomfort and reaction are two ways that racial discrimination has an impact on development.⁴

³ (Dwight Blubaugh, Kristi Karns, Joe Latham, Amy Mestelle, Amanda Weston, 2003)

⁴ (Angel S. Dunbar, Esther M. Leerkes, Stephanie I. Coard, Andrew J. Supple, and Susan D., 2017)

If in the works of Khudoyberdi Tokhtaboyev, the complex social environment makes children steal, lie, chase after money, and even sacrifice themselves, in the novels of Christopher Paul Curtis it makes them liars, even crazy and sick. All the way through the both realistic literary works Children can encounter situations and feelings they do not have, visit places they cannot visit, and interact with people they do not know in their daily lives. Although they does not have a direct role as a tutor for children, it has an undeniable influence on sensing universal values such as empathy, love, and respect, as well as being hardworking and helpful, through its subject matter and messages.⁵

DISCUSSION

Human personality is formed and matured in society. Especially in children's psyche, the image of society is clearly reflected, as a child's heart is as clean and pure as white paper, whatever is written or drawn on it will be visible. Children do not know hypocrisy and secrecy. In Khudoiberdi Tokhtaboyev's novels "Boy with Five Children", "Sad Eyes", "The War of Wizards or the Land of Sweet Melons", "Riding the Yellow Giant", the issue of the influence of social and spiritual life in society on the psychology of teenagers is brought to the center of the works. Scientist of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Professor Abdugofur Rasulov, who closely studied Khudoyberdi Tokhtaboyev's work, said, "Khudoyberdi Tokhtaboyev's talent and skill as a writer is that he was able to reflect not only the undertones of the text, but also the image, spiritual life, color, and type of the text that shines in the reader's world. To reveal the artistic perception of this context-text is to think about the competence of the writer. Khudoyberdi Tokhtaboyev through his three novels (i.e. "Riding the Yellow Giant", "The War of Wizards or the Land of Sweet Melons", "Sad Eyes") describes the true essence of the word "Uzbek", convincingly reveals the artistic history of the social, spiritual and spiritual life in the second half of the 20th century. The writer could show that although the parents, Uzbeks, who mediate the birth of Akbar, Hashim and Zafar are generous, dreamy, proud, wedding lover, trusting, ignorant of the law, crowd-like, child-lover, they did not realize the instructions of upbringing children.

If we look at the writer's novel "Sad Eyes", it reveals the flaws of man and society with the perception of a child. At the beginning of the story, Zafar, who struggled to distinguish between white and black, halal and haram, good and Bud, matures until the end of his story due to the tragedies that befell his family. He realizes that speculation, which he once understood as "helpfulness", and bribery, which he considered as "knowing the business" are the evils of the ego. He even laughed at the money his classmate Ilhom's father earns by driving a bus, but at the end of the play he regrets why his father was not like Ilhom's father.

It will not be difficult to notice the presence of arrogance and conceit formed in the family environment in Zafar's psyche, the reason for this is that he grew up in abundance and was raised by his parents in the mindset that "Money makes the mare to go":

*"When we celebrate birthdays... One carries a book, another one carries a smelly perfume worth one sum and twenty pennies. As for me, I will make the biggest gift."*⁶

His mother, Jannatkhan's repeated emphasis, that *"...in modern times, people have stopped worshipping God. Everyone now worships either money or officials. Money is a god, an official is*

⁵ (A.Bayraktar, 2021)

⁶ (X.To'xtaboyev, Mungli ko'zlar, 2010)

a prophet. People are now waiting for God's help from money..."⁷ also increases the "power" of money in Zafar's mind. Only Akbar, the eldest, disabled child of the family, worries about the halal or haram of the wealth found, because his worldview is shaped by the teacher Ataullo, who is a complete stranger to the family. Although Akbar is physically disabled, he is mentally and spiritually healthy. This contrasts the social environment with the child's psyche. Although brothers are brought up in the same family but in two different environments, they love their parents equally, one scorns what their parents are doing, and the other is proud, that is, they look at the events happening around them with two different eyes. Zafar believes that his parents are right, he does not believe that they can make a mistake, and Akbar wants to take his parents out of the mire of sins and unknowingly becomes the cause of the downfall of the family. In fact, the tragedies that could happen one day even without Akbar's participation have a very strong effect on his psyche, a psychological tragedy arises in him, the boy burns himself. The tragic interpretation of child psychology is manifested in such a way. As to Zafar's psyche, psychological and dynamic changes are observed. Despite all the difficult circumstances, he is able to handle himself well and his thinking and upbringing changes in a positive direction, he learns a great lesson from life.

Analyzing this novel, Abdugofur Rasulov⁸ did not say it in vain that "the nation of writers are almost saints, people who can see the future." Through this work, Khudoyberdi Tokhtaboyev points out that both nurturing and beautiful treatment of the child's soul, and bringing it to decline are from the social environment. The author gave the following answer to the question of literature's role in the formation of a child's spirituality: "Regardless of what we teach a child, be it economics or profession, we should not forget spirituality. First of all, it is necessary to take care of the issue of spirituality.... If you form the economy without forming spirituality, either speculators, or greedy people, or people who get rich at someone else's expense will appear."⁹

"Boy with five children" is dedicated to the life of the Uzbek people during the Second World War. In the novel, the influence of this environment on the child's spirit and upbringing is depicted in the image of orphans. This book partially "revives" the writer's childhood memories and "transfers" the feelings of those moments to the characters of the work. "As clearly as the writer describes the pain and anguish of his soul, the psychology of the hero is as clear and realistic."¹⁰

The blows given by life, such as his father's mobilization to war, his mother's death, his brother Sultan's disappearance, his sister's serious illness, and the children falling into a correctional colony, test the spirit of the "boy with five children".

At first, Orifjon is confused by the troubles that run into him: "*...I stood rooted to the spot. I'm feeling very strange, I don't know whether I'm sad or happy, whether I should cry or laugh, if you believe me, I don't even know...*"¹¹.

⁷ (X.To'xtaboyev, Mungli ko'zlar, 2010)

⁸ (A.Rasulov, 2009)

⁹ (M.Tursunova, X.B.Tojiyeva, 2019)

¹⁰ (R.S.Tulabayeva, 2019)

¹¹ (X.To'xtaboyev, Besh bolali yigitcha, 2009)

"The image of the hero's psyche is expressed harmoniously with the author's psychology without giving specific explanations. The tragedy of orphanhood is personified before the eyes of the reader by a child whose "eyes seem to have fully open." Because these very moments remind of the words of the author: "I wrote crying over and over and remembering over and over again my orphanhood, because we were humiliated."¹²

As for the work of Christopher Paul Curtis, he illuminates the lives of children and teenagers through the genre of historical fiction. In almost all of his works, he writes down what he saw and felt in his youth, therefore, the image of the social environment on the child's psyche is described in a very convincing and realistic way. Christopher Paul, in his conversation with the students at Northwestern Elementary School in Eaton Rapids, Michigan, USA, ¹³states that all the characters he creates are part of his personality. He gives his heroes the qualities of the people he has seen in real life, reveals their psyche. America's favorite children's writer talks about how he has read and researched a lot while incorporating social and historical events into his works:

"Bud, Not Buddy, I had to do a lot more research. Originally it started out that I was going to do a book on the sit down strike at the factory I worked in, but I didn't know anything about it, so I had to watch a lot of movies from that era to try to listen to how people spoke. I read a lot of books that were written in the '30s to get some kind of an idea of the kind of language, to catch the language and achieve that. I listened to radio shows from the '30s. Just anything to try to expose myself to the '30s, to the kind of things that people would think. So, the older the book is, and the less knowledge you have about it, the more research you have to do if you want to make it realistic."¹⁴

In many works of Curtis, the psyche of a child is depicted in close connection with the social events of the time in which he lived. For example, "Buddy Not Bud" tells the story of the Great Depression of the 1930s, while "The Watsons Go to Birmingham" depicts the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.

Critics of the work of Christopher Paul Curtis praise his ability to write real and fantastic events, tragedy and humor in harmony. Indeed, in the works of Christopher Paul Curtis, he truly reflects the experiences of the social and political events around him from the perspective of a child and a teenager. Gwen A. Tarbox writing in St. James Guide to Children's Writers stated that: "By telling his tale through the eyes of Kenny Watson,. . . Curtis illustrates the way that momentous social events and political movements can impact the lives of even the youngest children. Moreover,. . . Curtis provides a detailed and poignant description of the inner life of an African-American family, but he uses a humorous style that is unique and geared to appeal to young adults as well as to children."¹⁵

Lannon, describing the novel "Watsons Go to Birmingham", considers Curtis' unique style and skills are that Curtis can integrate serious social events with humor, for example, describing an humorous family vignettes he easily makes transition to the racial conflict that threatens their lives, and he can assess the impact of these events on the mind of a child through the eyes

¹² (R.S.Tulabayeva, 2019)

¹³ (Dwight Blubaugh, Kristi Karns, Joe Latham, Amy Mestelle, Amanda Weston, 2003)

¹⁴ (Dwight Blubaugh, Kristi Karns, Joe Latham, Amy Mestelle, Amanda Weston, 2003)

¹⁵ (Curtis, Christopher Paul 1954(?)-)

of a child. The Watsons, who are in Flint at the beginning of the story, are not affected by racism or prejudice, but after they go to Birmingham, they realize that the situation in the South is completely different. Kenny and his siblings often heard about racial discrimination against blacks from Daniel and Wilona, but did not believe it until they went to Birmingham and saw it for themselves. Kenny is deeply affected by this terrible reality of life, and his views change after witnessing the church explosion. For the first time, he realizes how much hatred a trait outside of a person's personal control - the color of their skin - can arouse in the hearts of others.

"Bud, Not Buddy," which won Curtis a Newbery Medal and a Coretta Scott King Honor, tells the story of Bud, a ten-year-old black orphan living in Flint, Michigan. Although the main character of this work is not concerned with racism, Curtis allows the readers to take a look through the main character's eyes into the state of racial inequality and tension that was prevalent during the Great Depression. ¹⁶In the work, not only problems such as racism, treatment of orphans, poverty and homelessness, but their influence on the child's psyche is also revealed. Although Bud is still very young, the environment makes him determined, resourceful and strong-willed like an adult. The cold and humiliating attitude of the people in the families who want to take care of him, the sufferings he saw in other people's houses taught him "to lie through his teeth" when the opportunity arises, to think realistically and pessimistically about the events that would happen in life, he is also forced to "come to heel" and "harden" his heart. Growing up during the Great Depression, Bud must fight for his life and live in a world of racial prejudice and inequality. The image of Bud appears as a new interpretation of the "plucky orphan" of writers such as Horatio Alger and Charles Dickens. ¹⁷ Mary Thomas who writes in *Canadian Materials* notes that "This is historical fiction, but of history not too far removed from our own time. In some ways, this makes it more difficult to get inside Bud's skin, but the effort is worth it. We rejoice when he finally finds some folks of his own, discovers jazz, and appears to be on the verge of getting a life. Some books widen horizons; this one stretches them out to Prairie dimensions." The editor and reviewer of *Booklist* magazine – Michael Cart states that "will attract and delight countless readers with its genial good humor and generosity of spirit....Curtis turns his novel into a celebration of the human capacity for simple goodness." And Daria Donnelly, working in "Commonweal" magazine, evaluates that "has created a perfectly rendered character rather than a sociological fact". These definitions can be proof of how perfectly Bud's character and his psychology are described.

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