

МОВОЗНАВСТВО. ЛІТЕРАТУРОЗНАВСТВО

UDC 82.9

DOI https://doi.org/10.24919/2308-4863/48-1-19

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN CHILDREN'S DRAMA

In the 1970s and 1990s, certain scientific works on children's literature in many countries, including the United States, explored almost scientific and theoretical aspects of children's literature, and certain stages of children's prose were studied. Systematic study of the genre of children's drama, the description of children's characters in the works, the factor of artistic conflict, the understanding of national values in the work of art and other such components have not been sufficiently studied in the field of literature. From this point of view, the study of the specifics, problems and existing literary-historical stages of children's plays is in fact one of the most relevant and important issues in terms of revealing the real state of literary-theoretical thought of the time. In different genres of literature, the reflection of the reality of life differs in certain respects. Epics tell epic stories about any event or person that happens in life. In lyrical poetry, a person's inner world, feelings and thoughts are reflected poetically. As a rule, in lyrics a person's feelings and emotions are presented through music or description. In drama, the topic is brought up mainly against the background of struggle, conflict and contradictory issues in society. First of all, the history of children's drama in America dates back to the 19th century. With the exception of folk dramas known to literature since ancient times, in the nineteenth century, this genre in children's literature was formed mainly from a mixture of works written by amateurs as well as professionals. There is a need for performances that children can play, and there is a need to develop this genre because there are no performances that suit their interests. In the nineteenth century, the first plays in American children's literature, distinguished and loved by their characteristics, were usually made at home by amateurs. Later, theater specialists were selected for their significant contribution to the development of this genre. New themes in American children's literature, based on a combination of new forms of realism, modernity, and unreal events typical of the historical period, played an important role in expanding the boundaries of children's plays in the 1970s and 1990s.

Key words: repertoire, a theatrical scene, playwright, protagonist.

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РОЗВИТОК АМЕРИКАНСЬКОЇ ДИТЯЧОЇ ДРАМИ

У 1970–1990-х роках в окремих наукових працях з дитячої літератури багатьох країн, у тому числі в США, досліджувалися майже науково-теоретичні аспекти дитячої літератури, досліджувалися окремі етапи дитячої прози. Системне вивчення жанру дитячої драми, опису дитячих персонажів у творах, фактора художнього конфлікту, розуміння національних цінностей у художньому творі та інших подібних складових недостатньо досліджено в галузі літератури. З цієї точки зору вивчення специфіки, проблематики та існуючих літературно-історичних етапів дитячих п'єс є фактично одним із найбільш актуальних і важливих питань з точки зору розкриття реального стану тогочасної літературно-теоретичної думки. У різних жанрах літератури відображення життєвої дійсності в певних аспектах різниться. Епос розповідає епічні історії про будь-яку подію чи людину, що трапляється в житті. У ліричній поезії поетично відображено внутрішній світ людини, почуття, думки. Як правило, у ліриці почуття та емоції людини представлені через музику чи опис. У драматургії тема піднімається переважно на тлі боротьби, конфліктів і суперечливих проблем у суспільстві. Перш за все, історія дитячої драми в Америці сягає 19 століття. За винятком народних драм, відомих літературі з давніх часів, у XIX столітті цей жанр у дитячій літературі сформувався переважно із змішання творів, написаних як аматорами, так і професіоналами. Потрібні вистави, в яких діти можуть грати, і потрібно розвивати цей жанр, тому що немає вистав, які б відповідали їхнім інтересам. У XIX столітті перші п'єси в американській дитячій

літературі, які відрізнялися і улюблені своїми характеристиками, зазвичай ставилися вдома аматорами. Пізніше було відібрано театральних фахівців за вагомих внесок у розвиток цього жанру. Велику роль у розширенні меж дитячої п'єси 70–90-х років відіграли нові теми американської дитячої літератури, засновані на поєднанні нових форм реалізму, сучасності та нереальних подій, характерних для історичного періоду.

Ключові слова: репертуар, театральна сцена, драматург, герой.

Statement of the problem

During the forty years from 1880 to 1920, professional theater staged children's plays for the first time, and the experience gained gave impetus to the creation of children's theater as a legitimate and popular form of theater. This activity, in turn, influenced the creation and development of small children's games, which were later performed in American theaters. The main part of the early repertoire – plays written for classrooms and playgrounds – is based on the text of famous stories, which turned into amazing, sentimental melodramas. Plays written during this period were considered a new stage in the development of drama. However, the economic issues of the limited repertoire forced professional directors to leave the field. Thus ended the first stage in the development of dramatic literature for children, which lasted until 1920. For the first time in America, Frances H. Burnett's "The Little Princess" was staged. The play was first performed in theaters in 1903 (French, 1911). The masterful adaptation of the popular children's book has increased the melodramatic aspects of the story and the sentimentality of the situation. Sarah Kruya's tears did not go unnoticed, and in the end, good triumphed over evil. Played in an optimistic spirit, it had a positive effect on children's psychology and worldview. In American children's literature, Charlotte B. Chorpenning "The Emperor's New Clothes" was first staged in 1931 (French, 1932). This play by Charlotte can be considered one of the first children's games. The game is based on a fairy tale. Chorpenning introduced additional symbols to make it clear that there is "good" and "bad" in the conflict, and the main idea of the work is the victory of good over evil.

Research analysis

Some of the plays staged in the early 19th and early 20th centuries were re-staged. Roger Bedard wrote: "American children's drama, which lived in a period of sluggishness until 1928, ended with children's plays by Charlotte B. Chorpenning (1873-1955). Including more than 40 fairy tales in his repertoire, Charlotte B. Chorpen's plays for children were approached with interest and sensitivity. Under his leadership, American children's drama experienced a renaissance until 1945. A number of writers have also tried their hand at this field (Bedard, 1983: 35-36).

The development of American children's drama in the second period marked a turning point in the qualitative and quantitative variability of the repertoire. Until the 1950s, children's drama was dramatized in the style of "well-crafted play" and complicated by spiritual fairy tale plays. This, in turn, opened up new opportunities for children's theater to improve and mature professional directors. From the 1950s to the 1970s, professional children's theater companies were established in major cities throughout the United States, as well as mobile children's theater troupes operating in small communities. During this period, the subject of the dramas referred to historical figures, historical events, comic sketches and documentaries. Vaudeville (comic performances accompanied by music), which added a new color to the genre of drama, received a license for the theater. The repertoire of children's dramatic literature underwent significant changes until the late 1960s. The new team of playwrights turned to original stories, numerous characters, modern themes, as well as individual tools and methods that embody a simpler and more artistic expression of the dramatic form. References to the topic of traditional fairy tales were higher. However, since the 1960s, new plays have been staged, such as theft or domestic problems, as well as the impact of divorce on children.

Recently, the number of dramatic works written for children in America has increased dramatically. The repertoire includes several hundred published works for children, including traditionally accepted themes, original plays, operas, musical comedies, and improvisations.

Purpose of the article

The main purpose of the article is to analyze the stages of development of modern American children's drama, to discuss the changes in dramaturgical works and to review the works of modern playwrights Suzan Zeder and Kathryn Schultz Miller.

Presenting main material

Suzan Zeder, known for her work in the drama genre for children, has won a number of awards. She was nominated for "the Charlotte Chorpenning" award by the American Theater Association in 1978, "the Children's Theater Foundation's Best Playwright" award in 1980. She was named "Best Playwright" by the Southwest Theater Association in 1988 for his works "Doors" (1986) and "Mother

Hicks" (1987). She also won various awards in 1990 and 2000.

In general, her works are intended for professionals in almost all America states and internationally, as well as for university and community theaters. She is one of the innovators. Suzan Zeder is a recipient of the "United States Theater and Education Alliance's Distinguished Play" award and the six-time "Campton Bell Lifetime Achievement" award. She is a Fellow of the American College of Theater Fellows and the Academy of Honored Teachers at the University of Texas at Texas. Zeder was the former head of the Performing Arts Department at the University of Texas at Austin. She currently lives and works in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The play "Step on a Crack", written by the playwright in 1974, is considered to be the first important work in her work. The writer began her career with "Step on a Crack" and later became known as the author of numerous plays in the drama genre included "Wiley and the Hairy Man" (1978), "The Mis-Uses of Enchantment: Another Look at Bettelheim", 1981, "Ozma of Oz: A Tale of Time", "I've Heard Some of them Before" in 1984, "The Play Called Noah's Flood", "Doors" in 1985, "Mother Hicks" in 1986, "In a Room Somewhere", "Igniting Young Talent" in 1989, "The Road to Ware", "Wish in One Hand and Spit in the Other". In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Suzan Zeder wrote "The Journey of the Yellow Boat", "The Death and Life of Sherlock Holmes", and "The Taste of Sunrise" has become one of the most beloved and performed plays of modern times.

Susan Zeder explained the reason for writing in the drama genre as follows:

"I write because my thoughts can be forgotten, I can't convey them to people. However, the words and scenes I write can be spread and engraved in people's memory. The characters I create in this genre move and breathe on stage. And the audience understands better what I mean by the influence of magic. These works, which create an image in real time and in real space and become an impossible, possible and meaningful metaphor at any moment, have the power of living, interacting in real space. These plays are usually performed on stage several times, and each time an audience of minors watches these scenes with new interest" (Treanor, 2015). Indeed, among the genres of literature, the drama genre has a greater impact on the form of expression. Children better understand what they see and hear and remember it for a long time.

On the other hand, in one of his interviews, he made the following judgment about his work:

"When I first started writing for young audiences, the themes of popular fairy tales were widespread, and writers and directors paid more attention to such tales. There were very few new stories, original works or modern games. The first work I wrote for children and family audiences was really a match. However, most of my career has been focused on modern games that reflect the lives of young heroes who deal with very important issues in life: divorce, death of a parent, stepmother, and so on. It has been a great honor for me to have works depicting the dignity and depth of a child in a place where their lives have changed forever" (Lowry, 2012).

The playwright's story "Willie and the Hairy Man", written in 1978, was one of the author's favorite works. The story takes place on the banks of the Tombigby River, in the swamps around Alabama and Mississippi, and has become a legend passed down from generation to generation. Different versions of the story were written by Donell Van de Woot, Jack Stokes and Molly Gareth Bang. Suzan Zeder breathed new life into her story. It completely changed the ending of the story, adding a number of new shades and moments to the worldview of the protagonist. The story uses a choir to describe the swamp, and this innovation attracted the attention of young audiences during the performance.

The main characters in the work are Willie, Willie's mother and a sharp, hairy man. Willie is a young boy, his main fear is a swampy and hairy man. Because he thinks that his father was killed by a hairy man, it is clear from the content of the work that his father was indeed killed by a hairy witch. Willie's dog is described as his best friend, and it is shown that Willie would not go anywhere without him. Because he knew that a furry man was afraid of a dog. His mother considers herself a very clever witch, and in her opinion, there is no stronger female witch in the South. The hairy man, on the other hand, thinks he is better and thinks that he is the smartest man. At the end of the play, Willie is described as conquering evil, defeating a hairy man, and rescuing his mother and dog. The play ends with Willie falling asleep, unafraid of the darkness of the night.

Suzan Zeder is a very productive writer, but also different from other playwrights. The innovations in content, form and style she brought to the children's drama genre and stage culture made her one of the leading modern theater artists. In the depths of her works there is a firmness of the human spirit, compassion for children's problems, determination to stand up again after many struggles, confidence in his personal strength to achieve them (Manna, 1989: 142-147).

According to Susan Zeder, writing a good work is a good performance in itself. The playwright thinks that the idea that the writer wants to express is completed when the work must have a strong and interesting story, attractive characters, interesting words and expressions of the language, and costumes, scenery and a theatrical scene that enhances the effect of the appearance. She goes on to say that whatever the subject, it should be kneaded with a sense of humor. In order to get a good audience, it is necessary to enter the "Children's World" of the audience. The hero is often presented as a child, but this is not always the case. For young audiences, theater is a really big game, like a banquet table that can be enjoyed by people of all ages (Lowry, 2012).

Many years ago, when I graduated from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Charlie Helfert, who taught theater to young people, asked me why I had adapted "Willie and the Hairy Man" to a Louisiana folk tale. At that time, seeing such a question addressed to me, I considered myself a real playwright for the first time. The subject of the story touched my heart, because I really did not know the feelings of children. While working on the image of Willie, I came across a great story written about a terrible young character who faced fear. This is a story about a young boy who goes in search of courage and strength to overcome a really scary Hairy Man. I wrote a play that I imagined, where it was not so difficult to observe the pathos, fluency and rhythm of the language, which is as easy as human breathing. Next year, "Willie and the Hairy Man" will be 40 years old. It was still the most produced game, and one of the few works in the field that was translated into Korean. In addition, the work has been staged in a number of countries around the world. With this work, I can say that I have found myself in art" (Lowry, 2012).

In fact, with this work, Zeder created a modern tale of her time. Her work appeals to the young audience to be fearless, instills in them a sense of self-confidence and a sense of coming to overcome any difficulties (Belnap, 2001:24).

Research on child theater sources and psychology shows that the process of identification and modeling is a living and powerful force. As a leading player in a play, the character is also important in the theater, especially for children's audiences. Researcher, playwright, long-time actor and artist Sam Smiley (1931–2018) said, "The protagonist's problem, more than any other character, is that the whole main structure of the play is embodied in him. has been staged many times and has been highly praised by the audience each time".

The writer, who is known for his productive work and creativity in modern times, spoke about theatrical

culture for modern children in America in an essay he sent to us in April 2018. He is currently the President of the American Children's Theater Foundation. In his essay, he notes that the theater has come a long way in the last 60 years. Many grants have been awarded for the development of youth theater culture, and the grants are awarded to the best actor, the best children's drama writer or the best children's theater stage designer. The purpose of these grants and awards is to create interest and love for young people in theatrical culture, to encourage young writers and actors to be more responsible in their work.

In American literature, children's drama continues to develop today. Kathryn Schultz Miller, who writes in the genre of children's drama, is the author of "A Thousand Cranes". Performed in a number of children's theaters in America, the play caused a real sensation in a good way. The playwright, who has been writing plays for children since 1976, is now known as the author of more than 70 works. Many of her works have received various awards. Catherine Miller and her husband, Barry Miller, founded the famous "ArtReach Touring Theater" for children and youth in Ohio. The plays written by the playwright were staged for the first time on this theater stage. Kathryn Schultz Miller's works were later performed in a number of theaters around the world and are still available on websites. As a result, the number of theatergoers shown today at the Kathryn Miller Theater is more than 15,000 in 124 countries.

Kathryn Miller's wrote "Son of the Island", "Amelia Earhart", "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow", "A Thousand Cranes". There are a number of other popular plays, such as "Haunted Houses" and "You Don't See Me and Blue Horses". In 1985, she was awarded the "Post Corbett" for Best Playwright in America. "A Thousand Cranes", published by "Dramaturg" publishing house in 1990, is considered a new beginning for the writer's recognition in this field.

While watching a documentary about the events in Hiroshima, the writer accepted his husband offer to write a play about it, and decided to write the play after getting acquainted with the culture of Asian peoples and the story of Sadako. The play "A Thousand Cranes" was a great success. Based on the real-life story of a twelve-year-old girl named Sadako Sasaki, many writers have addressed the subject. However, this theme was a great success in the play with a play written by Kathryn Miller.

The work begins with the rehearsals of a young girl named Sadako Sasaki's coach and close friend Kenji. The events take place on the eve of an important athletic competition, which Sadako also

joined. However, a sudden illness prevented him from realizing this dream. In 1945, ten years ago, during an atomic explosion in Hiroshima, Japan, Sadako contracted leukemia as a result of radiation exposure to a small child. While in the hospital, his close friend Kenji reminds him of a thousand cranes, an ancient Japanese story. The story goes that if a sick person creates a crane butterfly out of a thousand pieces of paper, he will get rid of the vortex of the disease. The sick girl believes in this and begins to make a thousand cranes, but she is not old enough to make a thousand cranes, and Sadako died in 1955. After her death, Sadako continues to meet her grandmother's spirit from the spirit world and her grandmother introduces her to other victims of the terrible war. Sadako tries hard to go back and finish making the cranes, but it is not possible, and at the end of the work it is shown that his friend Kenji made a thousand cranes for him. This is a symbol of a strong bond of friendship between children. Every year on August 6, the anniversary of the Hiroshima massacre, hundreds of people visit Sadako's grave and make a paper crane.

In fact, crane sketches are known in many countries around the world as a symbol of peace and justice. Even after the end of World War II, crane statues were erected and turned into monuments as a symbol of peace. The main purpose of the author's writing on this topic is to establish peace in the world and to instill these ideas in children from an early age. According to the author, in the light of Sadako's message of peace in "A Thousand Cranes", the current events seem more meaningful and thought-provoking. Along with adults, this idea makes children think more. In the work, the innocent victims of wars are shown to be children, and by reflecting their impact on their future lives, the writer describes other aspects of world events and brings them to people's attention.

Today, playwright Kathryn Miller continues her work, writing plays on topics of interest to children. Her most recent works are "The Nutcracker Prince and Kid Frankenstein", "The Legend of Mulan", and "The Jungle Book". Her works have also won the sympathy of readers. Performances of these works are watched with interest by young spectators. American children's drama, as in many countries, is in a period of stagnation due to the rapid development of information and technology, although they have lost many viewers. In this way, they can gather a larger

audience and earn a living. In addition to commercial purposes, the writer has the privilege of sharing his work with a wider audience.

Conclusions

Although the work of Suzan Zeder and Kathryn Miller differs in some respects, it is possible to see similarities in the ideas of both writers in the works they want to convey to children. For example, Kathryn Miller's protagonist Sadiko has the strong will of the protagonists of Suzan Zeder's works, the strength of the human spirit, the determination to rise again after a struggle, Sadiko tries to achieve what he wants through a thousand sufferings to get them. Another feature that unites the two writers is the theatrical document. They prefer to share their books with the audience on stage. However, Kathryn Miller started her career for commercial purposes, but today she is a playwright who has made her mark in this field. When Suzan Zeder started her career, she did not think that one day she would achieve such a success in the field of theater. Additionally, her works provide deep concern and care for the audience, and each of the assumptions, especially social issues, the images involved in the process of life embody the author's innovative service. In the soul of her works, arouses a sense of personal confidence in the strength of the human spirit, compassion for human problems with its symbols, courage and ability after a great struggle. In Suzan Zeder's works, the main problems, the simple convenience of people moving away from each other, the value of honest communication, and the value of honest communication are brought to the fore.

In the formation and development of the drama genre in American children's literature, new themes based on the commonality of new forms of realism and modernity, which are characteristic of the historical period, played an important role in expanding the boundaries of children's plays in the 70s and 90s. The main ideas that the writer wants to convey to people are clearly reflected. His views are based on the cessation of peace and war, their impact on the future lives of children, and the impact of this impact on the transformation of the human family as a whole and even the destruction of the universe. According to playwrights, instilling these ideas in children from an early age is a more important step to change the world.

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