

## THE IMAGE OF CHILDHOOD IN THE WORKS OF C. DICKENS

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***Abstract:*** *The article focuses on C. Dickens' ideas about the representation of children's characters in his works.*

***Key words:*** *children's image, imagination, children, concept of image.*

Scholars of English literature claim that none of the English writers enjoyed such fame during his lifetime as Charles Dickens. Recognition came to Dickens after the first story and did not leave until the last days, although the writer himself, his views and work changed. The secret of his popularity among his contemporaries is that Dickens acutely felt the changes in the life of England, was the spokesman for the hopes and aspirations of thousands of people. After the death of the writer, his works began to succumb to sharp criticism, and only in the 20th century did the significance of Dickens' work become fully apparent. The first Russian translator of Dickens, I. Vvedensky, acquainted the author with the reaction to his works of the public in general and such a representative of it as Dostoevsky, in particular. Dickens was so touched that in difficult moments he said with gloomy irony: "It's time to pack your bags and go to Russia, they will understand me better there than in my own country!". And what, the state of society described by Dickens in his novel is somewhat reminiscent of our modern society, what England was able to get away from - from drunkenness, crime and the indifference of officials - is reflected in our life today. The idea of the novel already came from himself, because it is natural that here Dickens was able to present to the reader pictures of his crippled childhood.

True, it cannot be said that his childhood was as terrible and cruel as his little hero, Oliver Twist, had. As the son of a man who was sitting for debts and the grandson of an embezzler, Charles from an early age "had to enter into life" - as he himself said about himself. With the criminal world, his relationship was quite short. Prison and slums - Dickens knew this from the inside. True, he preferred not to talk about it directly, but his life experience ended up in the book by itself. Dickens believed that the attitude of society towards the child reflects the struggle between good and evil in him. Therefore, the theme of childhood is one of the main ones in his work. The novel "The Adventures of Oliver Twist" is the first "educational novel", a genre to which Dickens refers repeatedly. The structure of these works is similar: a child abandoned by his parents is persecuted by relatives who hunt for an inheritance and want to use the child's defenselessness; thanks to a strange combination of circumstances, the hero breaks out of the shackles of poverty, receives an inheritance, and with it recognition in society. At the beginning of creativity, and this was reflected in Oliver Twist, Dickens believes that a material reward, prosperity, is a goal worth going for, which makes a person happy. The evil in Oliver Twist is twofold: it is the social evil expressed in the "workhouses" where destitute children are kept; but Dickens portrays an evil that neither the writer nor the reader can explain, it is personified in a specific hero who sets himself the goal of destroying Oliver. The image of Oliver is ideal, his character does not change throughout the novel, he is not influenced by circumstances, even being among rogues. Dickens knew how to evoke feelings, but what are these feelings? As for me, if the first pages and about a dozen of the first chapters can cause a smile in some places, then for some reason I don't feel like laughing at the end of the book. But not because the writer describes very ugly or vile pictures (although this is true), but because, as it seems to me, the very style of the book is changing, there is a strong impression that a completely different person undertook to finish the novel. The whole novel, in my opinion, is a mixture of beautiful sentimental scenes, terrible vile passages at first and

some kind of detective story, and with a rather compressed, dynamic plot at the end, as if the author was already tired of writing. Probably, the writer's workload of Dickens, during his work on the book, affected. In the book, both sentimental scenes and very unpleasant painful passages are interspersed with humor. Though it's hard to call it humor. The phrase "laughter through tears" is more suitable here, but even then, at certain moments, some jokes become not only not funny, but sometimes not at all appropriate. Take, for example, the episode at the very beginning of the novel about the undertaker, or the death scene of the "witch" who robbed Oliver's mother. Dickens' humor is the ability to smile in difficult times. Some scenes are so contrasting that their combinations evoke a lot of emotions. Take, for example, Oliver's speech and pleading in the outlaws' den. It's really incomprehensible. The whole book seems dirty, soiled. This impression is reinforced by the description of London, as it seems to be an eternally dirty, vile, dank and damp city, with its slums, quarters for the poor, eternally bad weather and, of course, the inhabitants, with their appearance and attitude towards each other, are the best fit for the description of this city. . In general, most likely, this is the era, the time when hunger and poverty were more common than an exception to the rule. The era of contrast, purity and dirt, lofty speeches and dirty curses, gluttony and terrible hunger, the slavish obedience of some and the idiotic narcissism of others, finally, the emergence of high love for Harry and Rose and the emergence of an incomprehensible feeling that arose in Nancy for the bandit Seik. An appeal to the images of children, which, on the one hand, are considered textbooks in the works of Charles Dickens, and on the other hand, are an obligatory component of the Christmas story genre. The holiday of Christmas is one of the most revered in the Christian world. On the one hand, it is a religious holiday associated with the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem. Therefore, there are a lot of symbols, images, and the ideas of the holiday embodied in these symbols, which correlate primarily with the gospel texts and the spiritual sphere of human life. On the other hand, the days of the celebration of Christmas (in Rus' they were also called

Yuletide) have long been surrounded by a mystical, mysterious halo. It was believed that the most incredible, fantastic events could happen these days. There is another side of the Christmas holiday - secular, associated with the tradition of family celebrations, the idea of uniting relatives and friends on these cold December days, the universal idea of compassion and love. On Christmas eve, the whole family usually gathers at home, near the hearth, past mistakes and grievances are forgiven. A similar semantic ambiguity in the perception of Christmas is reflected in the works of Charles Dickens. The religious meaning and gospel images of Christmas in the works of Dickens give way to everyday life, "poeticization of reality." Often, in understanding Christmas, the writer follows the old English traditions. And, as G.K. Chesterton writes in his book, "the ideal of family comfort belongs to the English, it belongs to Christmas, moreover, it belongs to Dickens." Christmas stories by Charles Dickens, who is rightfully considered the founder of this genre in Western European literature, gave impetus to the emergence and development of the Christmas story in Russia.

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