

Stylistic devices for teenager character sketch creation in the *Guilty Stars* novel

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Abstract

This article examines the analysis of the novel *The Guilty Stars* in the context of the literary genre young adult literature presented in the graduate student work via the theoretical and linguistic analysis of the specified novel. Raising the themes of love, friendship, family as the important aspects of a teenager's life, the author shows the self-irony of adolescents over their own tragic fate. In conclusion, the most used literary trails are the metaphor and artistic comparison, along with them the author skillfully includes vulgarisms, Americanisms and colloquial expressions in the dialogues of adolescents.

Keywords: Young Adult Literature, Stylistic Techniques.

Dispositivos estilísticos para la creación de bocetos de personajes adolescentes En la novela Las Estrellas Culpables

Resumen

Este artículo examina el análisis de la novela *Las Estrellas Culpables* en el contexto del género literario de la literatura de jóvenes adultos presentada en el trabajo de los estudiantes graduados a través del análisis teórico y lingüístico de la novela especificada. Al plantear los temas del amor, la amistad y la familia como aspectos importantes de la vida de un adolescente, el autor muestra la propia ironía de los adolescentes sobre su trágico destino. En conclusión, los rastros literarios más utilizados son la metáfora y la comparación artística; junto con ellos el autor incluye hábilmente vulgarismos, americanismos y expresiones coloquiales en los diálogos de los adolescentes.

Palabras clave: literatura juvenil, técnicas estilísticas.

1. Introduction

Reading, to a skeptic surprise, remains a popular activity among adolescents, both in the United States and around the world. Knowing that teenagers love to read about people of their own age (or about those who are a few years older than them) it becomes clear why reading is so popular among high school students and the amazing abundance of good books in the genre of young adult literature is also explained by this. Reading plays a certain role in the development of memory. At present, the literary genre of young adult literature is one of the well-known trends in the West, which is alien to Russian readers because of the misunderstanding of the term young adult, which is translated literally as a young adult (Tveit, 2009).

Previously, the age range of this genre ranged from 12 to 18 years, but since the mid-90s, the upper index of the term young adult has been pushed beyond the traditional age limit of 18 years, and now it includes 25-year-old readers. This is partly due to the fact that the goal of the publishers is to expand their market by publishing books for the age group of 15-25 years old, which is called MTV demographic (the music channel in America, the largest audience of which is young people from 12 to 34 years old).

2. Methods

The study undertook the theoretical linguistic analysis. They used the methods of comparison. They analyzed the theoretical sources in which the works of the literary genre are considered. They used the analysis of the semantic field and the semantic constructions in the form of phrases, turns and metaphors, which represent the text content of the works.

3. Results and discussion

Currently, the publishing world is rich with the books written in the young adult literature genre. A good example is the novel *The Guilty Stars* (Eng. *The fault in our stars*), written by Green (2014) and published in 2012. He is a talented writer, whose novels have gained the cult status among the youth, spoke in detail about his commitment to the themes of a teenager growing up in the interview for the magazine *New Yorker*: I love the intensity teenagers bring not just for first love but also to the first time you are grappling with grief, at least as a sovereign being — the first time you are taking on why people suffer and whether there is meaning in life, and whether meaning is constructed or derived. Teen-agers feel that what you conclude about those questions is going to matter. And they are dead right. It matters for adults, too, but we have almost taken too much power away from ourselves. We do not acknowledge on a daily basis how much it matters (Belentsov et al., 2016).

This novel has attracted the attention of the broad masses of people even before the film adaptation of the same name, and is kept in the lists of the best books for teenagers, without changing its position at the moment. Khovanskaya et al. (2017) and Talbot (2014) dedicated their works to the study of the novel *The Guilty Stars* role written by (Green, 2014). It is known that the novel *The Guilty Stars* is considered as a tragic novel about love, friendship and betrayal of the teenagers doomed to death. The protagonists of the novel are sixteen-year-old Hazel Grace Lancaster and seventeen-year-old Augustus Waters. The name of the novel (*The fault in our stars*) echoes with the metaphor star-crossed love, which was used by the author in Hazel's speech, as a

declaration of love for Augustus, and is the quotation from the Shakespeare's play Julius Caesar. This trick is made by the author to hint readers that their love is one of those tragic Shakespearean stories. The novel is narrated on behalf of Hazel in the format of a conversational style, including the inner monologues of the heroine and her friendly dialogues with peers and parents, creating the sense of the reader's participation in the actions along with the heroes of the novel (Mefodeva et al., 2016; 2017).

So, from the beginning of the novel narrative, the author introduces us to the main character, her favorite activities and attitudes. The author uses metaphorical expressions and epithets to depict a teenager who is doomed to be dependent on the disease, and who lives not with his life: An Imperial Affliction was my book, in the way my body was my body and my thoughts were my thoughts. Do not tell me you are one of those people who become their disease. From the first pages of the novel, we learn that the main character experiences depression, expecting her fate at any time: Depression is a side effect of dying. As a teenager, Hazel prefers passive pastime to meet new people and chatting with friends. Make friends! Her mother wishes, who is concerned about her daughter's condition. Hazel's favorite activity is reading the book *Regal Grief* (Engl. *Imperial Affliction*) by Peter Van Hooton, non-existent in the real world. This book is given in this novel for the purpose, because the main character Anna is also sick with cancer. And the second favorite Hazel's activity is to watch the America's Next Top Model program: Please just let me watch America's Next Top Model. It is an activity. The author skillfully uses both metaphors and artistic comparisons in the novel to reveal the inner state of adolescents. For example, in one of his internal monologues, Hazel calls herself a professional sick person. This metaphoric expression describes her tired state of fighting cancer. Also, the author finds another allegorical expression for adolescent cancer patients like cancer survivors (Abulkhanova, 2015).

Green (2014) tries to portray teenagers as confident and having control over the situation, for example, the author resorts to an artistic comparison to describe Isaak. One of the main characters, Gus Waters, is portrayed by the author as a positive young man with an active lifestyle: Oh I am grand, and the metaphorical expression about a cigarette, voiced by Gus, personifies his desire to be the creator of his life without bending before the disease: You put the killing thing right between your teeth, but you do not give it the power to do its killing. Like, cancer is in the growth business, right? The taking-people-over business. But surely you have not let it succeed prematurely. However, in the depths of his soul, teenage heroes are full of fears and doubts about the future, the proof of this idea is the use of the metaphor I am a roller coaster that only goes up and the artistic comparison method like the proverbial blind man in Gus speech: I fear oblivion, I fear it like the proverbial blind man who is afraid of the dark. But in contrast to this thought, the heroes of Green (2014) are not deprived of empathy, the author portrays them as sincere, feeling someone else's pain: I did not want to care about it, but I did a little. He probably cared about my oxygen.

I wanted to make my parents happy. There is only one thing in this world shittier than biting it from cancer when you sixteen, and that is having a kid who bites from cancer. I want to minimize the number of deaths I am responsible for, I said. Also, the metaphor I am the grenade and the artistic comparison a like a grenade indicate the heroine's concern about the possible infliction of mental pain to parents: I am like. Like. I am like a grenade, Mom. I am a grenade and at some point, I am going to blow up and I would like to minimize the casualties, okay?

I am a grenade, I said again. I just want to stay away from people and read books and think and be with you guys because there is nothing I can do about hurting you; you are too invested, so

just please let me do that, okay? I am not depressed. I do not need to get out more. And I cannot be a regular teenager, because I am a grenade.

There are many examples of the author's use of metaphors and artistic comparisons in the novel for a colorful depiction of American teenager character or lifestyle. For example, Gus Waters sees in Hazel the similarity with the actress Natalie Portman in her youth, during 2000-ies: You are like a millennial Natalie Portman. Like V for Vendetta Natalie Portman. Hazel and I are going to watch V for Vendetta so she can see her filmic doppelgänger. The heroine calls herself Victorian Lady, which speaks, firstly, of her modesty, similar to that era, secondly, about her good education, because not every teenager can vary historical concept so easily. Hazel describes herself as univalent Hazel, declaring that she is the only child in the family (Zelichenok, 2014).

Along with the description of the adolescent characteristics burdened with a serious illness, the author creates an image of Hazel's school friend who lives a full and healthy life: Kaitlyn had the kind of packed social life that needs to be scheduled down to the minute. Green (2014) had the goal to create an image of adolescents with their own interests and tastes, thus, the secondary character, Caitlin copied the British style of behavior, being the resident of America: Darling, she said, vaguely British. How are you? People did not find the accent odd or off-putting. Kaitlyn just happened to be an extremely sophisticated twenty-five-year-old British socialite stuck inside a sixteen-year-old body in Indianapolis. Everyone accepted it. The author uses the professional chess metaphor to describe vividly the love of shopping by Hazel's school girlfriend:

..Kaitlyn snake her way through the aisles, shopping with the kind of intensity and focus that one usually associates with professional chess (Cart, 2001).

Due to the fact that the novel *Guilty Stars* was written by an American writer and aimed at the audience of American teenagers, it includes many Americanisms, slang and colloquial expressions: Take pot (slang: smoke marijuana), to paw at (slang: touch), dude (slang: guy), curfew (Amer. the time, after which a child is not allowed to stay outdoors (negotiated by parents)), con man (Amer. swindler), flip-flops (Amer. sandals), Debbie Downer (slang. Kink), gotta (got to), gonna (going to), kinda (kind of), enchiladas (Amer. A pancake with spicy meat stuffing), freaking (Amer. out of order):

- a) ..Do not send me to Support Group. Buy me a fake ID so I can go to clubs, drink vodka, and take the pot.
- b) His hand reached for her boob over her shirt and pawed at it.
- c) They are both married to very fancy lawyer dudes.
- d) ..Gus's curfew was also ten.
- e) Anna thinks this guy might be a con man and possibly not even Dutch.
- f) I ended up just picking out some flip-flops so that I could have something to buy.
- g) You are such a Debbie Downer, his mom said.
- h) I got to outlast four of these bastards.
- i) I am going to try to get me some eye cancer just so I can make this guy's acquaintance.
- j) I am kind of tired.
- k) They were making enchiladas in the kitchen.
- l) I like freaking encouragements.

The author included vulgarisms and interjections as a deliberate stylistic element in the speech of characters to impart a certain domestic identity, since adolescents have an emotional expression of their feelings and the use of course and swear words to express their emotions:

- a) Mom: Television is a passivity.
Me: Ugh, Mom, please.

- b) Mom: You are going to Support Group
Me: UGGGGGGGGGGGGG.
- c) It is not fair, I said. It is just so goddamned unfair.
- d) It is just bullshit, the whole thing, I said.
- e) Read me something, he said as the goddamned ambulance roared right past us.
- f) I had not been to Memorial since visiting Isaac. It did not have any of the cloyingly bright primary color-painted walls or the framed paintings of dogs driving cars that one found at Children's, but the absolute sterility of the place made me nostalgic for the happy-kid bullshit at Children's.
- g) One of the less bullshit conventions of the cancer kid genre is the Last Good Day convention, wherein the victim of cancer finds herself with some unexpected hours when it seems like the inexorable decline has suddenly plateaued, when the pain is for a moment bearable.
- h) It is hard as hell to hold on to your dignity when the risen sun is too bright in your losing eyes, and that is what I was thinking about as we hunted for bad guys through the ruins of a city that did not exist.

Green (2014) focuses the attention on Hazel's love of poetry and reading, tirelessly, including the topic of books in teenage conversations, complementing the image of the heroine as an intelligent and well-read:

- a) What do you read? Everything. From, like, hideous romance to pretentious fiction to poetry. Whatever.
- b) But of course, there is always a hamartia, Hazel says to his friend Gus, using the notion of hamartia from Aristotle's Poetics, which means the tragic flaw of the protagonist tragedy.
- c) All I ask in exchange is that you read this brilliant and haunting novelization of my favourite video game, this phrase indicates that the book is a business card for heroes that contains information about the inner world of each hero and, accordingly, the exchange of favorite books is the connecting link of their further friendship. Did that boy give it to you? By it, do you mean herpes? You are too much, Mom said. I mean the book Hazel. I mean the book.
- d) In Hazel's phrase, who attends college my class was American Literature, the author illustrates the heroine's daily life filled with the constant presence of literature.
- e) Mom drove me directly from school to the bookstore attached to the mall, where I purchased both Midnight Dawns and Requiem for Mayhem, the first two sequels to The Price of Dawn

4. Conclusions

The most used literary tropes are metaphor and artistic comparison in the novel The Guilty Stars for the colorful image of American teenagers. Along with them the author skillfully includes vulgarisms, Americanisms and colloquial expressions in the dialogues of adolescents.

5. Summary

Raising the themes of love, friendship, family as the important aspects of a teenager's life, the author shows the self-irony of adolescents concerning their own tragic fate. According to A.A. Zelichyonok, the ability to speak with adolescents honestly and firmly, without discounts for age and excessive optimism inherent in some teenagers is the characteristic feature of Green's (2014) creative style, which determines his popularity in the reading environment.

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