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*The article focuses on children's toys and dolls as a reflection of human culture and society. The object under review is a role of a toy in educational process and in global cultural transformations. The article contains an observation of the function of a doll in modern culture and art as well as in humanistic research.*

*Key words: cultural system, history of dolls, dolls in culture, education, formation of personality, anthropomorphism, doll and man, childhood studies, humanistic research.*

*Статья фокусируется на рассмотрении детских игрушек и кукол как отражении человеческого общества и культуры. Рассматривается роль игрушки в воспитательном процессе и глобальных культурных изменениях. Статья содержит анализ функций куклы в современной культуре и искусстве, а также в контексте гуманитарного исследования.*

*Ключевые слова: система культуры, история кукол, куклы в культуре, воспитание, становление личности, антропоморфизм, кукла и человек, исследование детства, гуманитарное исследование.*

*Стаття фокусується на дослідженні дитячої іграшки та ляльки як відображенні людського суспільства та культури. Розглядається роль іграшки у виховному процесі та глобальних культурних змінах. Стаття містить аналіз функцій ляльки в сучасній культурі та мистецтві, а також у контексті гуманітарного дослідження.*

*Ключові терміни: система культури, історія ляльки, ляльки в культурі, виховання, формування особистості, антропоморфізм, лялька та людина, дослідження дитинства, гуманітарне дослідження.*

Every cultural artifact is, first of all, considered a product of human activity. But we shouldn't forget that it accumulates in itself actual cultural senses and provides the way to see the tendencies of the future progress of culture and society. A toy, and a doll in particular, is great and precious result of human creativity. It becomes a receptacle of human characters, values, fears, ideals and transmits the experience of different generations [2: 2 – 3]. The process of socialisation begins in the family ambience, where a child has a possibility to get used to the different social roles (first of all, the main roles of father and mother). During child's game the self-identification starts [5: 380]. But, at the same time, a new member of human society is formed, so that toys and games have important influence on the whole life of a person, his future activity and social behaviour.

The image of a doll in this case plays a key part in the educational process as well as the image of parents, because a doll is an anthropomorphic object animated by a child and perceived as a living creature. From the very beginning, the doll was a part of a sacral cult and was rarely used for educational purposes, and then it was an instrument of influence on people's consciousness. By the XVI-XVII centuries a doll becomes an indicator of prosperity and well-being. But when new cheap materials were synthesized, the mass production of toys began and the real toy industry was born. After that the doll was mostly used for educational purposes, and it still remains the centre of child's world.

The toys were mainly produced in Germany and France. The bourgeois families were able to acquire different toys and dolls for their children. The mass production and popularity of these products was the main reason for using them in adult political games. European countries' governments understood that toys helped to form the most important qualities of the future citizen at the beginning of their social life.

Technological innovations and toy soldiers were designed for boys to justify the war and form their patriotic position. The consequences of this process could be seen in the XX century, when the war was accepted as a normal way of international communication. At the same time the girls were obliged by adults to get ready to their future role of mother and wife. Their toys copied the everyday world by representing different situations of social interaction (for example, schools, different professions, household jobs and domestic ceremonies, tea-drinking). Mention should be made of the image of a doll, which was completely controlled by the State. A doll of the XIX and XX centuries represented a beautiful healthy child at the age of 5-6 years, because the main purpose was to embed an idea that the nation needs strong, healthy and well-educated descendants.

In this context we can mention the Soviet toys which had quite the same function. The process of production was easier and cheaper, but the ideological content was extremely strong. A doll looked like an ideal representative of working class. Milkmaid, teacher, engineer, Red Army soldier, pilot, cosmonaut – that were the most popular images. There was a special organisation in the USSR which had to approve an official document declaring all permitted types of toys for mass production.

The art of the late XX<sup>th</sup> century is known as a time of wide spreading of mass culture. In the doll art it became apparent after the appearance of Barbie doll, produced in enormous quantity [4]. It represented a so-called "American dream" and every girl during decades desired to be beautiful, wealthy, beloved and successful in any profession – she simply wanted to be

Barbie. A girl thought it only takes her desire to do it, but meeting with the difficulties of reality frustrated her dreams and led to psychological disorders.

The Barbie phenomenon is a glaring example of the idea that the artefact (in this case, doll) isn't only a result of cultural development, but an important factor determining the script of future social and cultural atmosphere. This doll referred to a basic feminine archetype, so it was easily accepted by consumers and that's why it had such a strong influence on people's mind. Nowadays, we can see an increasing interest to the doll art, but, at the same time, the best items move to the sphere of art, while the most low-grade dolls stay in the sphere of children's education because of their mass production. High-quality artistic dolls should be brought back to the children's world. Children should have a possibility to create dolls so that in the future they may become not only consumers, but creators with active life position. A child often becomes a copy of a doll (in case of children who try to look like their dolls), which forms child's world. A doll generates individual and social identities of a child. Dolls can't be replaced either by animals' figures or by electronic games, because they connect the world of children with that of adults. A doll assists the process of socialization, represents future social roles to a child, helps to understand his own position in the world (e.g., it enculturates a female child as a future mother) [1: 102]. On the other hand, by consuming ready-made toys, a child has no possibility to be a creator.

As we can see, the influence of toys on child's consciousness is conspicuous not only in particular case, but also in connection with the development of human society. A doll represents different versions of reality [3: 7 – 8]. There is no doubt that it helps us to penetrate into the consciousness of people of previous epochs and understand some tendencies of the development of modern human society. It should be mentioned that even if we take into consideration a doll as a part of children's world, we cannot agree that it is a simple toy or a statue; it is an anthropomorphic object, which has some outward and inward qualities of human being. The relationship between a man and a doll are not static but interactive. A doll is a specific symbol of a man, and its interpretation enables to provide a deep insight into human culture.

Considering children's toys and dolls as a significant element of cultural system, we are able to reveal the following functions of these artefacts: 1) self-consciousness of a person is formed in the childhood, especially in the context of a game, and a toy always remains an indispensable participant of this process; 2) a child has a strong necessity to interact with a toy, because it helps to understand the fact of his existence and to mark his presence in this world; 3) children's toys take part in global cultural changes and form the face of the new generation; an anthropomorphic doll helps to reveal the main characteristics of modern cultural situation and the position of a person in actual social interactions; 4) child industry made possible the appearance of a new type of art – the doll art, which became a new way of expressing people's creativeness; 5) the image of an anthropomorphic doll remains still controversial; it contains the opposition of alive/lifeless, natural/artificial, individuality/copying and that's why it gives birth to numerous artistic images in cinema, theatre, painting; 6) doll is a universal cultural artifact and a translator of the fundamental cultural senses; 7) it becomes an indicator of the main cultural problems, changes, transformations of human values and world outlook; 8) a doll contributes to the integration process of different spheres of human existence: mass and elite art, everyday life and sacral cult, amateur folk art and industrial production, technological innovations and entertainment, the world of a child and the world of an adult; 9) a doll exists in a form of a single material object and in a form of a linguistic metaphor (for example, comparing a weak-willed person and a marionette); 10) this artifact appears at the very beginning of human history but never disappears, remaining an important addition to human world, a reflection of society and it helps to make some conclusions about modern cultural development; 11) in general, a doll represents a human being with its outward and inward characteristics; the main mission of this cultural phenomenon is to provide an actual image of person, to give a possibility of self-reflection by looking at dolls as a human society in miniature; 12) it helps to understand humanity and to realize the achievements and faults of cultural development.

The great role of a toy and especially of a doll as crucial cultural artifacts is beyond any doubt. There is an evident imprint of cultural and social situation on their image. We can state with confidence that the analysis of these artifact makes possible further deep humanistic research of modern culture.

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