

THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL STUDIES

Group essay contest

**“Unity in Diversity: Russia and the English-Speaking
World.**

Time for Equal Opportunities”

Исследовательская работа (эссе)

**“Мир иллюзий Самуила Маршака и Льюиса
Кэрролла”**

Research work (essay)

“World of illusions: Samuel Marshak and Lewis Carroll”

Written by:



Гуськова Ангелина

Guskova Angelina



Зимин Павел

Zimin Pavel



Андронов Богдан

Andronov Bogdan

Руководитель: Мигдаль Ирина Юрьевна

Supervisor: Migdal Irina Yurievna

2021

Theses

- Reading as satisfying the human need for escapism.
- The origin of the concept of “escapism”.
- The researchers’ views on escapism.
- The dependence of an escapist’s degree of immersion on the unreality of a story.
- The role of a fairy tale for those who want to escape from reality.
- Lewis Carroll and Samuel Marshak as the creators of a wonderful world of illusions.
- The significance of Lewis Carroll’s personal traits for the understanding of young and adult readers.
- The absurdity in the works by Lewis Carroll as freedom for the imagination of an escapist.
- Lewis Carroll’s parodies as a search for the joyful in the boring.
- The appreciation of Lewis Carroll’s works in modern times and the forecast for its nearest future.
- The role of Samuel Marshak's mentors in the development of the humanist writer.
- Atypical and bizzare fairy-tale images in Samuel Marshak’s works.
- The manifestation of Marshak's skill in translating the works by Carroll
- The significance of Samuel Marshak’s works for modern escapists and its possible destiny.
- Lewis Carroll and Samuel Marshak, equal in importance and close in spirit.

World of illusions: Samuel Marshak and Lewis Carroll

Escapism is the basis of the human need for reading

When a person opens a book and starts reading, they forget about the responsibilities they have to fulfill, the issues they have to discuss, and the problems they have to solve day in and day out. There is no doubt that every individual sometimes wants to escape from the monotonous duties and demands of everyday life. Reading fiction is one of the most effective and popular forms of escapism.

Originally the concept of “escapism” appeared in the United States of America and was first recorded in the *Webster’s New International Dictionary* in 1939. According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, escapism is “an activity, a form of entertainment, etc. that helps you avoid and forget unpleasant or boring things”. The phenomenon was studied by many psychologists, sociologists, writers and other figures of science and art. For instance, Sigmund Freud considered escapist fantasy to be necessary to a certain extent for human life.

The more wonderful the story the author narrates, the more it takes its readers away from the world of routine and monotony into the world of illusions. Amazing adventures, miracles, magical objects and bizarre characters are attributes of various types of fiction, but are most closely associated with fairy tales. Reading about princes and princesses, kings and queens of fictional countries, courageous knights and frightful dragons, hardworking dwarves and harmful goblins, people envision bright images that can temporarily replace reality.

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien claimed escapism to be “one of the main functions of fairy-stories”, and opposed those who regarded it with contempt.

Clive Staples Lewis shared the point of view of his friend and colleague, and believed that moderate escapism helped people to refresh and develop their imagination. Both writers are famous for their cycles of fantasy works which have been capturing the imagination of children and adults for many decades, and the fairy tales of their predecessors are not inferior in brightness and fascination.

One of such predecessors is Lewis Carroll (Appendix 1). His books have delighted many generations of readers around the world for about one hundred and seventy years. However, Russian people could not enjoy the world of illusions of the famous British writer if the translators were not so talented, professionally competent and responsible. Many of Carroll's works were translated from English into Russian by Samuel Yakovlevich Marshak who was also famous for his original books the significance of which could not be overestimated (Appendix 2). Why is the world of illusions of Samuel Marshak and Lewis Carroll so close to the hearts of both children and adults? What exactly are the elements that make their books so appealing to those who want to escape from reality? What destiny will the new generations of escapists prepare for the works of Samuel Marshak and Lewis Carroll in the nearest future?

Lewis Carroll

(01/27/1832 – 01/14/1898)

Lewis Carroll was the pseudonym of the writer, mathematician, Anglican deacon and photographer Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, the son of an Anglican cleric, born in the village of Daresbury, Cheshire (Appendix 3).

The writer had developed empathy and a sensitive soul which enabled him to understand children so well, as if he himself was a little boy. Communicating with children, including Alice Liddell, the daughter of the Dean of Christ Church and a possible prototype of the main character of the novels *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice*

Found There, Lewis Carroll realized that the lack of clear rules of a fictional world contributed most to the immersion of children in a fairy-tale atmosphere (Appendix 4). The unpredictability of a fairy tale gave little listeners and readers an opportunity to enjoy the sweet anticipation of new plot twists and invent some details themselves. Adults liked exciting and obviously unrealistic stories as much as children because they allowed them not only to escape from boring reality, but also to return to their carefree childhood. So, Lewis Carroll filled his works with absurd events and ridiculous characters, opening up his bizarre world of illusions to readers of different ages.

The special charm of some of Carroll's absurd poems was given by the fact that they were based on the highly moral poetry of that time. For instance, the poem *You Are Old, Father William* was a witty parody of the work *The Old Man's Comforts and How He Gained Them* by Robert Southey. Lewis Carroll reproduced the dialogue between Father William and the young man, masterfully replacing moralizing with descriptions of irrational and illogical actions, such as standing on the head or balancing an eel on the tip of the nose. At the same time, Carroll's poem was not a snide mockery of Southey's creation. Mr. Dodgson merely wanted to amuse readers with an unusual perspective on the dull and serious things that were so tedious in everyday life.

Lewis Carroll's works continue to amuse readers nowadays. In 2006, the novel *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was included into the list of twelve *Icons of English culture*. The popular video games *Alice's Tea Cup of Madness* (2010) and *Alice: Madness Returns* (2011) are based on the books by the great English writer. The movie *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) directed by Tim Burton became the fifth highest-grossing film of all time during its theatrical run (Appendix 5). These facts eloquently indicate that Lewis Carroll's works will not be consigned to oblivion by modern escapists in the nearest future.

Samuel Marshak

(11/03/1887 – 07/04/1964)

When Yakov Mironovich Marshak, a foreman at the Voronezh soap-making plant, and his wife Evgenia Borisovna Gitelson had a son, they could hardly even imagine what a huge contribution he would make to literature. While studying at the gymnasium, the boy showed poetic talent which attracted the attention of the philanthropist and scholar David Goratsiyevich Günzburg who introduced the aspiring poet to Vladimir Vasilievich Stasov, a famous Russian critic. Stasov, as well as such important figures of Russian culture as Maxim Gorky and Feodor Chaliapin, provided Samuel Yakovlevich with the necessary financial support without which the young man would not be able to continue his education and improve his health (Appendix 6). Marshak adopted mercy, compassion and kindness from his mentors and patrons, and retained these qualities for the rest of his life. The hungry and terrible years of three bloody wars and three revolutions could not make the great writer give up his love for people and sincere faith in humanity.

The experience of working in children's cultural institutions gave Samuel Yakovlevich an opportunity to find the key to the hearts of children and adults who wanted to escape from reality and return to childhood for a while (Appendix 7). Marshak often used vivid and non-trivial images in his fairy tales. For example, in the play-tale *Twelve Months* the author made personalized months the main magical creatures among which April played the most important role in the plot.

The ability to combine extraordinary images and amazing events, along with an excellent knowledge of the English language and culture obtained while studying in the UK, allowed Samuel Yakovlevich to translate the works of English authors, including Lewis Carroll, with precision and fidelity to the original (Appendix 8). Undoubtedly, Marshak, like any other translator, could not translate literary texts verbatim due to the objective differences between

English and Russian. For instance, while working on Carroll's *The Lobster Quadrille*, Samuel Yakovlevich had to change even the title of the poem, translating it as *Морская кадрили* (*The Sea Quadrille*), so that it would be more euphonious for Russian-speaking readers. However, Marshak kept the rhythm of the poem and – most importantly – conveyed its perky mood, colourful characters and an obviously impossible situation. In other words, the translator carefully approached all the elements that allowed escapists to immerse themselves in the world of illusions. It is safe to say that Marshak was one of the authors of this amazing world along with Lewis Carroll.

Nowadays, Samuel Yakovlevich's books are published by Raduga, AST, Planeta Detstva and many other publishing houses. Hundreds of thousands of copies are published every year. The translations by Marshak are the most recognizable among Russian-speaking readers who are happy to immerse themselves in the world of miracles and fairy tales. Consequently, it can be concluded that the works by Samuel Yakovlevich Marshak will live in the hearts of modern escapists just like Lewis Carroll's books, and will not be forgotten in the nearest future.

Conclusion

The need for escapism determines the need for fiction. The desire to hide from the problems of the real world for a while has encouraged, encourages and will encourage people to read books, especially fairy tales.

Children like Lewis Carroll because he opened for them his world of absurdity, wonderful events and characters where their imagination is not limited by anything. Adults are grateful to the great English writer for an opportunity to feel like little boys and girls again and again.

Marshak also opens the doors for children and adults to the unexplored realms of living fantasy, allowing people to enjoy escapism. The skill shown

translating Carroll's works makes Samuel Yakovlevich a co-author of the British writer in creating amazing images and adventures.

The world of illusions created by Lewis Carroll and Samuel Marshak is appreciated by modern generations and will remain a haven for escapists in the nearest future.

Appendix

Appendix 1



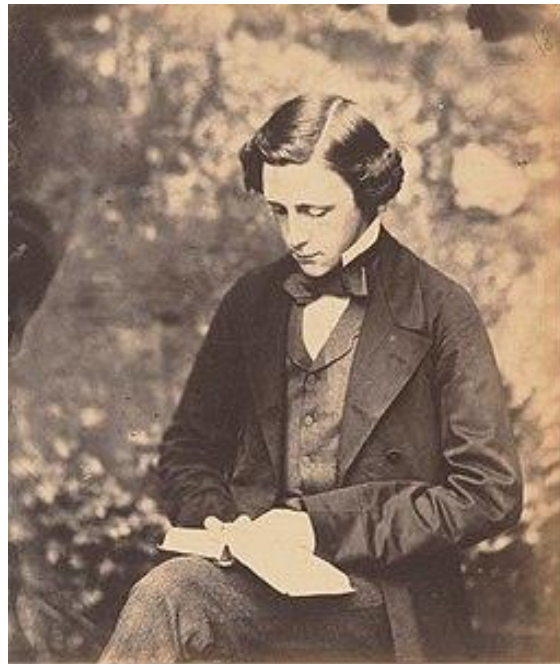
Lewis Carroll

Appendix 2



Samuel Yakovlevich Marshak

Appendix 3



Lewis Carroll (Charles Lutwidge Dodgson) in youth, 1856

Appendix 4



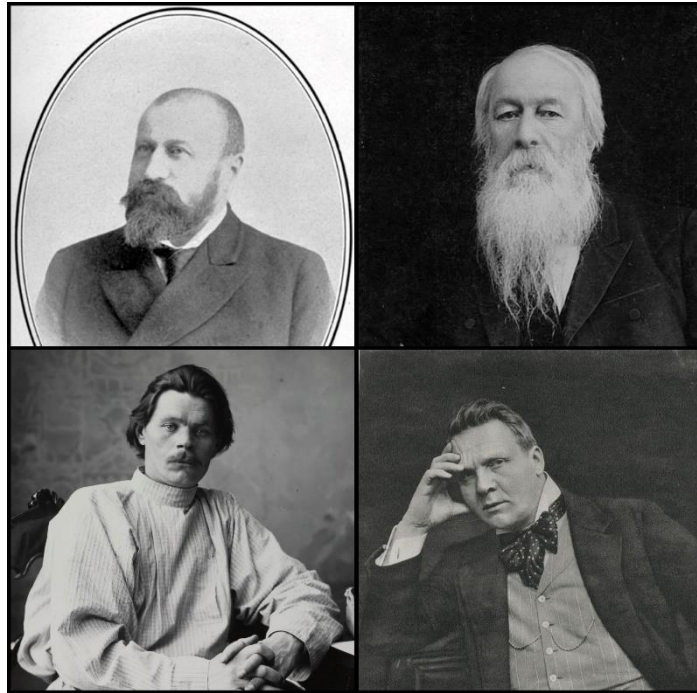
Alice Liddell, a possible prototype of the protagonist of Lewis Carroll's novels *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*, and *What Alice Found There*, 1860

Appendix 5



The poster for the film *Alice in Wonderland*, 2010

Appendix 6

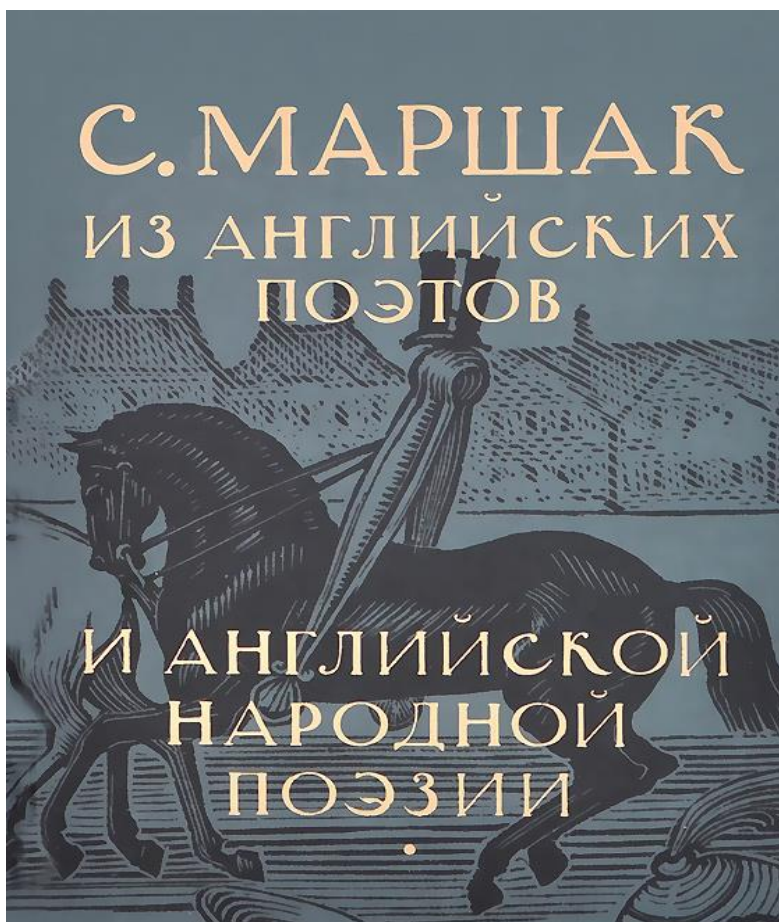


David Goratsiyevich Günzburg, Vladimir Vasilievich Stasov, Maxim Gorky, Feodor Ivanovich Chaliapin, the mentors and patrons of Samuel Marshak in his youth

Appendix 7



Samuel Marshak among pioneers



The collection of English poetry translated by Samuel Marshak

References

1. Motron C. Lewis Carroll : A Biography. - Vintage Books, 1996. - 577p.
2. The Great Illustrated Encyclopaedia. In 32 volumes. Vol. 15. KUM - LIT - M.: AST: Astril; 2010. - 501, [3] p.: ill. pp. 84 – 85
3. The Great Illustrated Encyclopaedia. In 32 volumes. Vol. 17. MAR - MIS - M.: AST: Astril; 2010. - 501, [3] p.: ill. pp. 59 – 60
4. <http://www.bookre.org/reader?file=290998>
5. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alice_Liddell
6. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alice_in_Wonderland_\(2010_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alice_in_Wonderland_(2010_film))
7. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Escapism>
8. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewis_Carroll
9. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuil_Marshak

10. https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Old_Man%27s_Comforts_and_How_He_Gained_Them
11. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/You_Are_Old,_Father_William
12. <https://fantlab.ru/work775472>
13. http://www.mymusicbase.ru/PPL/pp151/Lrc_5108.htm
14. <https://papaland.ru/library/lyrics/54.html>
15. <https://proza.ru/2015/06/22/219>
16. <https://ria.ru/20060109/42904549.html>
17. https://thelib.ru/books/marshak_samuil/perevodi_iz_angliyskih_i_shotlandskih_poetov-read-22.html
18. <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com>