

Literature and Culture Industry in *Monster High* by Lisi Harrison

In the contemporary world the literature for children is going through a very difficult period. With each year less and less children have the wish to read books devoting all their free time to playing computer game and watching TV. But even if a child has a positive attitude to books it is quite difficult for her/him and for the parents to find their way in the market of the books for children. This fact is well known to those who earn money in this industry. As a result children become a target for market manipulations. They are only the consumers who should be persuaded to buy a particular product – a book. Unfortunately the quality of this product is quite often not very high.

One the easiest ways to sell this product is to connect it with animation. The series of books *Monster High* by an American writer Lisi Harrison is a part of a Mattel Inc. expensive strategy to create a new toy craze from scratch, with the movies and TV shows coming on its heels—an abrupt departure from usual procedure.

In fact, the *Monster High* toys are the least of it. The company was aiming for an entertainment juggernaut, with books, movies, clothing, and anything else it could think of, in addition to the dolls. Mattel, the world's largest toy company, is feeling Disney envy, experts say. Mattel's usual approach was to roll out a new line of dolls based on other companies' entertainment successes, such as the "High School Musical" movies or the parade of Disney princesses. The company was playing catch-up, and doing it the hardest way possible by not using an existing book or movies character, as Disney usually does.

The first book of the *Monster High* book series was released simultaneously with the dolls. The *Monster High* characters are the offspring of movie stalwarts like Dracula and Werewolf who attend *Monster High*. (Frankie Stein is the sweet, klutzy new monster on the block, for example, and Draculaura is a parental disappointment because she is blood-shunning vegan). The series consists of 4 books: *Monster High* (2010), *The Ghoul Next Door*, *Where There's a Wolf, There's a Way* (2011) та *Back*

and Deader Than Ever (2012). All books of the series are connected with each other through the plot and the characters.

The narrative strategies used within the series are quite interesting. In the first book there are two main characters: an ordinary girl Melody Carver and an extraordinary monster Frankie Stein. Though the story is narrated in the 3d person its focus is constantly shifting from Frankie's point of view to Melody's and vice versa. In the 2nd book the reader gets Cleo de Nile's point of view, in the 3d one – Clawdeen Wolf's and in the last book – Draculaura's . Moreover, none of the books has got the 13th chapter. Each of them was published separately on special occasion. The events in all 13th chapters are narrated from the point of view of Gulia Yelps.

There are several central themes in the book. The leading one is the theme of an outsider which is typical of literature for young adults. The second one is the relations between teenagers and their parents. In fact, the families of the monsters are used as models of the standard types of families existing in the American society.

The books of the series obviously belong to mass literature. There are many trivial plot turns and stereotypical images in the books. Moreover, the books are full of allusions to pop culture (mainly comparisons), the descriptions of popular magazines for teenagers and fashion magazines. A lot of attention is given to the description of clothes and accessories with exact mentioning of their trade mark. The girls in the book have very few topics to discuss – mostly fashion and boys. The way they entertain is also quite banal – these young ladies attend the mall and go to SPA saloons.

But in spite this the Monster High books have some really interesting features. First of all, the play with the names of the characters is extremely fascinating. These names can be divided into two groups: the names of the girls-monsters and the names of human characters. One more interesting feature is total irony which soaked the whole text on many levels. The last important peculiarity of the series is the play on the linguistic level: the text is full of paradoxes, zeugmas, pans and striking metaphors.