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QUALITATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENCE FICTION IN THE USA

АҚШ ИЛМИЙ-ФАНАСТИК АДАБИЁТИНИНГ ЮКСАК ТАРАҚҚИЁТИ

КАЧЕСТВЕННОЕ РАЗВИТИЕ НАУЧНО-ФАНАСТИЧЕСКОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ В США

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Аннотация

Мақола АҚШда илмий-фантастик каби адабий жанр (тур)нинг шаклланиши муаммосига бағишланган. Тарихий ва тематик нуқтаи назардан XX аср илмий-фантастик соҳада катта ўзгаришлар юз берган давр сифатида қаратилади. Ушбу тадқиқотда қўлланган ижтимоий-тарихий ва компаратив адабиётшунослик усуллари шуни кўрсатдики, XX асрнинг иккинчи яримида Америка имлий-фантастик адабиётида глобал ўзгаришлар содир этилди. Бу ўзгаришлар биринчи навбатдан жанр сифатига таъсир қилди ва айнан АҚШда биринчи бўлиб бу жанр расмий мақомга эга бўлди, кўпчилик адабиётшунослар ва ёзувчилар томонидан тан олинди.

Таянч сўзлар: илмий фантастика, АҚШ, ижтимоий илмий-фантастика, утопия, дистопия, ўчоқ, жанр.

Аннотация

Статья посвящена вопросу появления такого литературного жанра (или вида) как научная фантастика, в США. Историко-тематический обзор направлен в основном на период XX века, так как именно тогда произошли наиболее яркие изменения в области научно-фантастической литературы. Социально-исторический метод, а также метод сравнительного литературоведения, использованные в данном исследовании, помогли выяснить, что развитие американской научно-фантастической литературы претерпело глобальные изменения во второй половине XX века. Эти изменения в первую очередь повлияли на качество жанра, который именно в США впервые получил официальный статус и был признан литературоведами и писателями самостоятельным.

Ключевые слова: научная фантастика, США, социальная научная фантастика, утопия, антиутопия, очаг, жанр.

Introduction

In the literary process of the 2nd half of the 20th century SF of the USA takes a special place: this genre was especially popular among authors and readers. The SF novels and novels written by American authors in the first postwar decades had a noticeable impact on the culture of the 20th century. It is not an accident that one of the Russian famous researchers A.Britikov believes that “when we think about SF, we should talk not so much about the literary genre as about a special type of thinking” [5]. At the same time, of course, there is a solid reason to talk about the genre, which on its native soil was called "SF" (translated into Russian - “научная беллетристика” - does not quite coincide with the term adopted in Russian literary criticism – “научная фантастика”) [6]. The moment of the genre birth was being established for a long time. Obviously, the first works appeared

in the United States around the end of the 10s – early 20s years of the 20th century. However, you can trace the origin of SF from a much earlier time. The immediate founding fathers of the genre were Europeans: Jules Verne, a French writer who praised the magic of scientific creativity and the incredible possibilities of a person seeking to actively comprehend the world, as well as Herbert Wells, an English writer who, in many ways joining the ideas of Verne, at the same time sought to comprehend social and philosophical problems, so that his works were called social or even philosophical SF. We can trace the genesis of the genre starting from the famous novel about Frankenstein by English woman writer Mary Shelley written in 1818, and from short stories and essays of American writer Edgar Allan Poe, and so on, until the myth of Daedalus and Icarus.

Methodology

The following methods were used in this research: socio-historical and comparative-literary methods. It means that the primary attention of the research is paid to the analysis of historical development of the genre of SF in the UAS and, then, to the comparative analysis of different periods in the development of the genre in order to understand what kind of changes it was underwent on certain points of the history. Methods used in the research helped to reveal that the origin tree of SF was at one time carefully studied in the United States (articles, anthologies, schemes of Sam Moskovitz, for example), and in Russia (books by Yuriy Kagarlitsky, Vladimir Gakov and other authors). Nevertheless, the first wave of SF in the United States, admittedly, begins in the late 10s of the 20th century, and date of birth is considered to be the first issue of "Amazing Stories", a specialized magazine appeared in 1926. The name of its publisher, Hugo Gernsback still remains revered, it is no coincidence that it is one of the most prestigious literary prize in the field of SF took the name "Hugo".

Literature Review

The rapid flourishing of the genre exactly in the USA and exactly in that period was due to the following reasons. First, it is a new, hitherto unprecedented pace of scientific progress. The changes associated with this circumstance were so great that the human consciousness was forced to somehow adapt to the new realities. According to a successful expression of one of the Russian authors, "SF becomes a means of emotional connection to the scientific context of the era." [7] If an ordinary person, not being a scientist, could already understand how this or that innovation works, he, prepared by specific images of SF, was able to at least admit the very possibility of such an idea. The second reason was the official closure of the frontier. Frontier - a special term for the mobile border that existed in the USA between the developed, civilized lands and wild, not yet occupied by Europeans arrived on the shores of America. The frontier became a sociocultural phenomenon belonging to the USA and that took place in no other country in the world. It was associated with the concept of the American dream, i.e. the dream of equal opportunities for every person, regardless of his class or the availability of capital. It was the frontier that predetermined the agrarian component of the American utopian ideal, as it offered new lands for everyone who wanted to own them. After many years in works of SF, the Americans trapped on a new planet, first of all tried to cultivate them. The closure of the official frontier forced the Americans to look for a new border – in space. "Space frontier" is a characteristic concept of many collections of SF short stories. The specificity of fantastic imagery, which distinguishes SF of 20s-30s is the creation of fantastic image with the help of scientific guesswork. A "miracle" that violates the laws of determinism is replaced by a "miracle" that reveals unknown laws of nature. The new system of fantastic imagery required "evidential argumentation"

(the term of H.Wells) of the depicted fantastic phenomenon. The strengthening of the cognitive element leads to the predominance of the recreating trend over the re-creating, which is the realism of SF, noted by many critics. There is a need to test the images of scientific knowledge, the artistic value of the works of this period is often determined by the originality of the scientific hypothesis. Thus, the new system of fantastic images is getting closer to the cognitive process so that it occupies an intermediate position between science and art. This determines its isolation from the main literary process. A qualitative change in the genre of SF literary tradition refers to the late 40s – early 50s. E.Malzberg generally believes that modern SF begins in 1937, with the "rise of the star" of J.Campbell, a publisher and writer of "apocalyptic novels." To the same group he ranks "Tomorrow and Today" by G.Kuttner, "Midnight" by Ch.Davis, "Thunder and Roses" by T.Stardgeon, as well as "post-apocalyptic reflections": "Metamorphoses" by E.Russell and "Fury" by G.Kuttner. [2] R.Canary refers qualitative change in SF to the end of World War II. However, among the first novels of this kind, he names "The Last and First People" by Olaf Stapledon (1930). These and subsequent works by P.Anderson and R.Bradbury, I.Asimov and V.Van Vogt, C.Simak and many others join the wider stream of intellectual prose.

Discussion

Philosophy as the dominant structure becomes a genre feature of the new SF. In this genre, clearly outlined thematic novelty, allowing to rethink both the eternal themes of philosophy and modern problems of mankind. To the period of the 50s-60s the definitions proposed by the SF writers themselves became usual. D.Wallhaim considers SF as "literature of ideas". I.Asimov proposes to use the term "social SF" and calls it "experiment on paper". In Russia I.Efremov writes about Anglo-American fiction as "the literature of logical considerations." An essential feature of the form of both old and new types of SF works is the explainability of a fantastic phenomenon described in them, on the basis of scientific knowledge. This is pointed out by later researchers: "SF is a literature in which a fantastic event is described rationally" [1], or "SF deals with what can happen in the universe that science describes" [4]. Setting the reliability leads to a fundamental isolation of SF from the general fantasy literary tradition. The principal rejection of artistic convention leads to the fact that the figurative plastic as it exfoliates from the central idea of the work even in the works of the largest masters. According to the laws of the genre, SF departs from the organic inclusion of philosophical thought in the artistic fabric of the work. But philosophy is the self-consciousness of culture, its ideological and methodological core. Art is a "figurative code" of the content of culture. Thus, SF, by its very nature, turns out to be a global phenomenon, but to some extent loses its artistic aesthetic nature. The concept appears in it in a conditionally-naked form, as if out of an image. Not taking its place and literary character, the hero, who in traditional literature was the "sun of the system" of a work. Authors of SF of the first wave motivate the fantastic phenomenon from the point of view of natural sciences, submit to logic of scientific research. The degree of conditionality increases when SF structure-forming center works make a philosophical idea. But even then the work only more or less successfully illustrates this idea. Even assuming the idea of a certain imagination arising in a SF work, it is legitimate to talk only about the possibility of allegorical reading of the text, where in a scientifically-motivated image are embodied certain speculative constructions. So, in I.Asimov's novel "The End of Eternity" (1953) the philosophical idea of possibility to change the course of history, influencing an accident, is illustrated. Perceiving the novel as an allegory, the reader together with the author reflects on the degree of responsibility of the individual for the historical fate of mankind. In the 40s, I.Asimov creates the novel "Foundation", which marked the beginning of the cycle, which also included "Foundation and Empire" and "Second Foundation". Fame as a writer did not prevent I.Asimov from doing science. He has lectured at Columbia and Harvard universities, received a

doctorate from Columbia, and 14 honorary academic titles at various universities. At the same time, he did not stop writing, created dozens of works, of which the classic of the genre was the novel "The End of Eternity".

Postwar SF USA entered the history of world literature of the 20th century, largely due to those works, which describes the potential deleterious effects of the development of certain social trends. The attraction of the authors of these works to the philosophical modeling of life, characteristic of the works of utopian series, and at the same time revealing the pathos, the denial of the possibility of building a perfect society in the near and distant future, allowed us to call these works "dystopias" ("dystopias"). American writers, striving for an adequate embodiment of the crisis of historical hope, use all the possibilities of this genre in their works. A number of American dystopias of the middle of the century, united by the idea of pessimistic interpretation of progress, draw a society that is "undesirable" as opposed to "desirable", utopian. These are the "Merchants of Space" S.Kornbluth and F.Paul, "Mechanical Piano (Utopia 14)" by K.Vonnegut, "Ticket to Tranai" R.Sheckley, "451° Fahrenheit" by R.Bradbury and many other works. Anti-war, anti-technocratic, anti-totalitarian utopias were also created during that period. The danger of a nuclear disaster, which became apparent after August 1945, predetermined the promotion of the "anti-nuclear" utopia to the fore. The central idea is the idea of a new apocalypse. In the works of L. del Rey, T.Sturgeon, W.Miller Junior and other authors hundreds of historical and hypothetical wars are depicted. Paul Brynes, a professor of Washington University, in his book "Nuclear Holocaust" (1987) cites a bibliography of English-language SF on the given subject, which includes 800 titles.

Anti-atomic themes naturally intertwined with the anti-technicist utopia, as the mass consciousness is in the development of science and technology then saw the cause of the atomic threat. However, gradually in all kinds of dystopias revealed the fundamental theme of oppression, enslavement of the human person in the highly industrialized world and in the totalitarian state. The domination of the Machine in K.Vonnegut's "Utopia 14" and the dictatorship of the State in Goodman's futurological scenario "How 1984 Came to America" (1978) – sources of suppression of the individual, and, consequently, the inevitable coming disaster. Dystopia is a genre "exploding, ironically reinterpreting value orientations of the genre of utopia" [3]. Anti-totalitarian utopia reinterprets the critical function of utopia – regulation. Utopia, which seeks to describe the ideal society as a system, regulates each individual component of the overall ideal structure – from architecture to human behavior. Characteristic in this regard is the book of sociologist and historian L.Mamford titled as "Myth of the Machine". With the help of a hypothetical reconstruction of the ancient cities of Egypt and Mesopotamia, he presents the ancient Egyptian organization as a huge living machine. It describes a giant social pyramid. In modern world, in his view, emerged much more a powerful equivalent of this machines. L.Mamford calls its component parts labor, military, etc. In general, if we include here both political and bureaucratic components, the whole organization is called "mega-machine". With the help of the state mega-machine persons are combined into mechanical groups that can be controlled by manipulating them. Extremely wide regulation of life is achieved.

The development of the dystopian genre turned SF face to the individual human destiny. Utopia told about the fate of society as a whole. According to the laws of the genre, the creators of utopias devoted their work to the organization of the ideal state. Such a strong state could only be extremely regulated, and therefore indifferent to the individual.

Of particular interest is the comparison of SF works with those written in the genre, called "fantasy". The process of formation of the genre was quite different in English and American literature. If in England this genre was primarily associated with the name of Tolkien, then in America at the same time there is a number of works, clearly correlated with SF and just as clearly different from it. The first works of this kind gave grounds for the interpretation of fantasy as a parody in

relation to the SF genre. A parody of the beginning really turned out to be quite important. If in SF the typical is installation for authenticity, for the fantasy it is installation for fantastic, even fairy, image. K.Wolfe, one of the most authoritative researchers in the field, argues that "fantasy is a literary narrative about the events, the impossibility of which are clear for the readers, but they, anyway, believe those events; "impossible" is the most frequently cited characteristic of this subgenre." [4]

Thus, SF is a story about a "miracle" correlated with the laws of reality. The author here seeks to "prove" the real possibility of what he depicts. Fantasy deals with the fact that there is a world without causation, a deterministic, and in any case there is no need to believe in what is happening. This is a fairy-tale narrative, with many premises, associated with the carnival gaming tradition. Studies of fantasy both in the USA and in Russia in 70s-80s years are mostly form the theoretical base that is relevant today when referring to works of SF. Treatment is necessary because the fantasy genre is probably one of the most popular modern literary stream. In fantasy two art spaces are clearly distinguished: real and fantastic. The real is not necessarily present in the text of the work, for example, U.Le Guin introduces the reader to the fantasy world at once, but the real space is always implied. A high degree of conditionality implies the presence in the text of a "portal", the entrance through which is the connection between the "first" and "second" worlds. The introduction of the concept of "portal" is necessary in the study of the poetics of fantasy. In Russian tradition there is the term "barrier." So, Vladimir Propp, a researcher of Russian folklore, writes: "the composition of a fairy tale is determined by the presence of two kingdoms. In the Russian fairy tale Baba Yaga is the guardian of the border, the entrance to another world passes through her hut." [8] The two worlds in the tale are emphasized by an indication of the barrier. On one side – the real world of the reader, on the other – fairy reality, a world where "anything can happen". One of the best in the field of fairy fiction was an American writer U.Le Guin.

At the turn of 40s-50s years Alfred Van Vogt and G.Kuttner, Clifford Simak and Robert Shackley, Robert Silverberg and Philip K. Dick, D.Knight and R.Lafferty, W.Tann and James Gunn in some of his works refer to the form that explodes classic canons of SF. Fantasy elements of these and many other authors use fabulous form as a source of ironic paradox. The creation of the "second world", where there is no need to "explain" miracles, but you can trust the unrestrained game of fantasy (recall that "fantasy" means not only fantastic, but also a game of fantasy), testifies to the most interesting opportunities open to writers. Fantasy is born as a parody, ironic rethinking of SF. Ironic paradoxes of SF have an ancient cultural tradition. It is associated with such a philosophical and aesthetic category as laughter. Laughter is the highest and adequate to the human being way of assessing evil, exceeding the possibilities of any other pragmatically more "significant emotions" ready to become action, the reason for the regularity of the appearance of the value antithesis that periodically arises in art. The sustainable couple: tragedy, Comedy, novel of passions – the picaresque novel, an epic-satire – illustrate this point. SF "seriously" shows the vices of modernity, fantasy assess evil, moving away from him. The introduction of fantasy in the cultural tradition of the humorous relation to the world is possible not just because of fantasy explode the traditional form of scientific fantastici learned already mass culture, but also because they have second thoughts, "turn", alter the culture at all. The concept of carnival and laugh culture, elaborated by M.Bakhtin, applicable in the study of genre specific of fantasy. The logic of the carnival "world on the contrary" provides liberation from the real, everyday time, reunification with the "big", historical time. [5] The reader along with the author comes into a special "familiar" relationship with the world. The destruction of the distance between man and the world provides a sense of the inexhaustibility of human possibilities. Experimenting SF, as a sign of creativity is inherently connected with the philosophical universalism.

A prominent place among the authors whose works are often on the border between SF and fantasy is taken by Ray Bradbury, an American author born in 1920. In 1936 a poem by R.Bradbury

"In Memory of Villa Rogers" appeared, it was his first publication. In the difficult for the history of the USA 30s-40s the concept of "American dream" (one of the fundamentally important concepts for the American national consciousness, disintegrated system of moral values) was harshly criticized. Ideals needed to be revived and renewed. From this point of view, the work of R.BrADBury was a unique phenomenon in the context of post-war fiction of the United States, prone to a tragic perception of the world. In fact, R.BrADBury pays tribute to this tragedy. He creates a number of dystopian works. In his novel "Fahrenheit 451", he describes a sick society. In an extremely saturated world with the most advanced technology, people have lost all their best qualities. Most importantly – they have become indifferent to each other, they are indifferent to the simple pleasures of life: they do not notice any charm of walking in the morning on deserted streets, nor the charm of the summer rain, nor the miracle of human communication. The author of one of the most popular "canonical" dystopias "Fahrenheit 451" also created no less popular cycle of novels entitled as "Martian Chronicles". In this cycle R.BrADBury gives a positive model of human existence. The small volume of each work embodies the fragments of this hostel, forming a complete utopian picture in the context of the entire work of the writer. R.BrADBury does not call for the restructuring of the state. His author's attention is focused on the sphere of the inner world of the individual. Central to R.BrADBury's utopia is the house model. The author considers the house as a Hearth, the most ancient way to unite people. In this sense, Home is the key to peace and prosperity. The eternal recurrence of domestic situations, everyday domestic work provides a sense of stability in a dangerous world. The family is a community capable of protecting a person. A similar function is performed by the utopian space of a provincial American town – a community of families (Houses). Such towns are on Earth, as in the story about wine from dandelions, such towns are being built on Mars, as in "Martian Chronicles". The House, abounding with all the objects of modern home appliances designed for comfort, paradoxically can become deadly, as in the novel "Veld". The only kind of human activity associated with the freedom of the individual, R.BrADBury believes is creativity. In his utopia, work is perceived as a game and creative process, it combines the cult of manual labor and the activities of the mind.

Conclusion

The works of American SF writers of 40s-60s years of the 20th century are loved by the readers all over the world. Huge editions of novels and short stories, dozens of specialized magazines (such as "Extrapolation", launched in the USA in the 50s), numerous academic researches (even teaching SF at schools) testified that the American authors were involved in creating the type of literature appropriate to its time. At the same time, a whole SF industry is developing, translating talented discoveries into clichés and endlessly stamping them not only in a form of a book, but in a form of a movie too.

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