

UTOPIA IN MODERN RUSSIAN LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

Russian dystopia - works of Russian writers in the genre of dystopia, exploring the coexistence of man and society since the beginning of the 20th century with artistic methods and methods. Dystopia is a consequence of the internal development of the utopia genre.

Dystopias are characterized by dehumanization, a totalitarian system of government, environmental disasters and other phenomena associated with the decline of society. Dystopia as a genre is often used to draw attention to real problems in the environment, politics, economics, religion, technology, etc.

Keywords: people, nation, culture, mentality, internal factor, external factor.

Science fiction and fantasy have been part of mainstream Russian literature since the 19th century. Russian fantasy developed from the centuries-old traditions of Slavic mythology and folklore. Russian science fiction emerged in the mid-19th century and rose to its golden age during the Soviet era, both in cinema and literature, with writers like the Strugatsky brothers, Kir Bulychov, and Mikhail Bulgakov, among others. Soviet filmmakers, such as Andrei Tarkovsky, also produced many science fiction and fantasy films. With the fall of the Iron Curtain, modern Russia experienced a renaissance of fantasy. Outside modern Russian borders, there are a significant number of Russophone writers and filmmakers from Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan, who have made a notable contribution to the genres. In the Russian language, fantasy, science fiction, horror and all other related genres are considered a part of a larger umbrella term, фантастика (*fantastika*), roughly equivalent to "speculative fiction", and are less divided than in the West. The Russian term for science fiction is научная фантастика (*nauchnaya fantastika*), which can be literally translated as "scientific fantasy" or "scientific speculative fiction". Since there was very little adult-oriented fantasy fiction in Soviet times, Russians did not use a specific term for this genre until Perestroika. Although the Russian language has a literal translation for 'fantasy', фантазия (*fantaziya*), the word refers to a dream or imagination, not literary genre. Today, Russian publishers and literary critics use direct

English transcription, фэнтэзи (*fentezi*). Gothic and supernatural fiction are often referred to as мистика (*mistika*, Russian for mysticism). While science fiction did not emerge in Russia as a coherent genre until the early 20th century, many of its aspects, such as utopia or imaginary voyage, are found in earlier Russian works.

Fedor Dmitriev-Mamonov's anti-clerical *A Philosopher Nobleman. The Allegory* (Дворянин-философ. Аллегория, 1769) is considered prototypical to science fiction.^{[1][page needed]} It is a voltairean *conte philosophique* influenced by *Micromégas*.^[2]

Utopia was a major genre of early Russian speculative fiction. The first utopia in Russian was a short story by Alexander Sumarokov, "A Dream of Happy Society" (1759). Two early utopias in form of imaginary voyage are Vasily Levshin's *Newest Voyage* (1784, also the first Russian "flight" to the Moon) and Mikhail Shcherbatov's *Journey to the Land of Ophir*. Pseudo-historical heroic romances in classical settings (modeled on Fenelon's *Telemaque*) by Fyodor Emin, Mikhail Kheraskov, Pavel Lvov and Pyotr Zakharyin were also utopian. *Ancient Night of the Universe* (1807), an epic poem by Semyon Bobrov, is the first work of Russian Cosmism. Some of Faddei Bulgarin's tales are set in the future, others exploited themes of hollow earth and space flight, as did Osip Senkovsky's *Fantastic Voyages of Baron Brambeus*.

Authors of Gothic stories included Aleksandr Bestuzhev with his German *couleur locale*, Sergey Lyubetsky, Vladimir Olin, Alexey K. Tolstoy, Elizaveta Kologrivova and Mikhail Lermontov ("Stoss").

By the mid-19th century imaginary voyages to space had become popular chapbooks, such as *Voyage to the Sun and Planet Mercury and All the Visible and Invisible Worlds* (1832) by Dmitry Sigov, *Correspondence of a Moonman with an Earthman* (1842) by Pyotr Mashkov, *Voyage to the Moon in a Wonderful Machine* (1844) by Semyon Dyachkov and *Voyage in the Sun* (1846) by Demokrit Terpinovich. Popular literature used fantastic motifs like demons (Rafail Zotov's *Qin-Kiu-Tong*), invisibility (Ivan Shteven's *Magic Spectacles*) and shrinking men (Vasily Alferyev's *Picture*).

Hoffmann's fantastic tales influenced east European writers including Ukrainian writer Nikolay Gogol, Russian writers Antony Pogorelsky, Nikolay Melgunov, Vladimir Karlhof, Nikolai Polevoy, Aleksey Tomofeev, Konstantin Aksakov and Vasily Ushakov. Supernatural folk tales were stylized by Orest Somov, Vladimir Olin, Mikhail Zagoskin and Nikolay Bilevich. Vladimir Odoevsky, a romantic

writer influenced by Hoffmann, wrote on his vision of the future and scientific progress^[3] as well as many Gothic tales.

Alexander Veltman, along with his folk romances (*Koschei the Immortal*, 1833) and hoffmanesque satiric tales (*New Yemelya or, Metamorphoses*, 1845), in 1836 published *The forebears of Kalimeros: Alexander, son of Philip of Macedon*, the first Russian novel to feature time travel.^[4] In the book, the main character rides to ancient Greece on a hippogriff to meet Aristotle and Alexander the Great. In *Year 3448* (1833), a Heliiodoric love romance set in the future, a traveler visits an imaginary country Bosphorania and sees social and technological advances of the 35th century.

Kabirova A. A. identifies six main genre features inherent in dystopia[1]:

- The "genre essence" of dystopia was assigned to the novel form.
- "Pseudo-carnival" as a structural framework of anti-utopia, in which absolute fear is concentrated, which coexists on a par with reverence for the state. Important components of the pseudo-carnival are the masochism of the man of the masses and the sadism of totalitarianism.

- "quasi-nomination", which consists in the renaming of phenomena, people, objects as a manifestation of power, its claims to the functions belonging to the gods. An artificially created "newspeak", which is based on the maximum possible simplification of the language, becomes an example of the language of a totalitarian state.

B. A. Lanin identified the following signs of dystopia[3]:

- controversy with a utopian project;
- pseudocarnival reality;
- carnival ritualism, the rite of the clownish "wedding of the king";
- eccentricity of the dystopian protagonist;
- ritualization of life;
- the main axis of the conflict - between the individual and the social environment;
- allegorical;
- utopia and dystopia cannot be compared;
- dystopia tells about much more real and easier to guess things than science fiction;
- dystopia borrows countless transformations of time structures from science fiction;

- limited space of dystopia;
- fear - the inner atmosphere of dystopia.

The turn of the 19th-20th centuries is characterized by the fact that positive utopia gives way to negative utopia, predetermining the birth of dystopia. In the 20th century, dystopia takes shape as an independent literary genre, which has its own specific features: “pseudo-carnival”, “quasi-nomination”, “ritualization of life”, etc. The negative consequences of scientific and technological progress and the problems of dehumanization of the individual, as well as the exacerbated socio-political contradictions of the era, contributed to the tragic tones of dystopia.

The anti-utopian genre of the era of the first third of the 20th century in Russian literature is represented by the novel (“Seven Earthly Temptations” by V. Ya. Bryusov (1911), “We” by E. I. Zamyatin (1920)), the story (“Evening in 2217” by N. Fedorov (1906), “Leningrad” by M. Ya. Kozyrev (1925)), a story (“The Death of the Main City” by E. D. Zozulya (1918), “Side Branch” by S. D. Krzhizhanovsky (1929)), drama (“The City of Truth” by L. N. Lunts (1923-1924)), parables (“A Brief Tale of the Antichrist” by V. S. Solovyov (1899)) [4] [5]. The development of the genre was forcibly interrupted during the era of the domination of official socialist realism in the 1930s[6].

The novel “We” by E. I. Zamyatin, written in 1920, describes the mathematically perfect life of the United State, which was formed after the Bicentennial War. The state is fenced off by the Green Wall. Everything in it was geometrically correct, immaculately precise and crystal clear. The state is managed with the help of a totalitarian management model, which forms society as a single organism, in which everything operates according to the laws of the Table of Hours. All aspects of the life of numbers - residents of the United State are subject to state control. The protagonist is D-503, who keeps notes in the form of a diary. The novel shows such signs of dystopia as the rituality of life and the closed system of space, which function within the framework of a specific model of the totalitarian world. The pseudo-carnival is fully expressed in the novel by Yevgeny Zamyatin. Proceeding from the pseudo-carnival nature of the anti-utopia, the presence of carnival elements in the novel follows, such as the election of the Benefactor, the execution on the Day of Justice, the performance of state poets praising the One State. The main images of the novel are the Green Wall, the Integral and the Benefactor.

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