

## The interpretation of anti-utopia genre in foreign and native literary studies

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**Abstract.** The author tries to interpret the genre specificity of anti-utopia in its modern transformation, to reveal the problematics of specificity of the anti-utopia literary genre. This genre proved its urgent character at different stages of literary process, its ideologic-aesthetic role has especially increased in recent times. Having a wide experience of traditions, anti-utopia is notable for active innovations and a search for new genre varieties and artistic principles. In the process of study of this topic, the author comes to conclusion that the anti-utopia of the beginning of XXI century presents a complex artistic phenomenon, revealing not only traditional for this genre topics, but also a wide spectrum of other humanitarian problems, urgent for modern reality. It is conditioned by the dynamic character of anti-utopian discourse in the context of modern cultures: widening of spreading area in the beginning, bloom in the second half and genre transformation in the end of the XX century. This material provides an opportunity to make the ideas about modern existence of anti-utopia more profound.

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### Introduction

Active formation of the anti-utopia genre was caused by the number of circumstances of both scientific-technical, social and fictional-literary character. Undoubtedly, fast paces of technological progress had a definite impact on this process, however, the political reasons were more significant; they manifested themselves in approaching of the utopian project and life, and finally, in its coming true. Besides, one should not forget that the anti-utopian elements resided in literature for a long period, the genre of anti-utopia did not appear suddenly.

The urgent character of investigation is conditioned by the increased interest to modern literary process and the necessity, escalated in the literary studies, to investigate the anti-utopia, actively developing in the last decades.

It is difficult to subject the recent literary process to any structuring and generalization due to the number of objective reasons, both social and internal, psychological.

A modern culture is an epoch of eclectics, full blend of styles, trends, subcultures and semiotic systems. That is why, sometimes it is difficult and even impossible to separate realism from postmodernism, naive-everyday philosophy from conceptually reasonable and individually understood reality, anti-utopian moods of young authors from the peculiar attempt, overcoming general nihilism and depression, to come to qualitatively new level of perception of the world and yourself in it.

Anti-utopian novels always caused and still cause the wide readers' resonance, they have become an object for focused attention on the part of different

investigators - from philosophers and politologists to the representatives of propaganda departments of security services.

It is possible to distinguish several interconnected directions in the studies of anti-utopia genres by foreign literary theorists. In the period from 1950 to 1960, there appeared the works by J. Woodcock "Negative Utopias" [1], N. Braun "The Life against the Death" [2], L. Mumford "The History of Utopia" [3], Walsch "From Utopia to Nightmare" [4], M. Hillegas "Future as a Nightmare" [5]. It shall be noted that the authors treat utopia and anti-utopia in social-culturological aspect, i.e. mostly as not a literary genre, but as a some direction of social thought, associated with sociology and philosophy. Thus, for instance, Ch. Walsch studies the phenomenon of utopia/anti-utopia in the context of irrational philosophy, namely, the psychoanalytic theory of Z. Freud, concentrating attention on the opposition "rational-biological". Following Z. Freud, the investigator makes the conclusion about the double role of civilization: on the one hand, it restricts the self-destructing instincts in a person, on the other hand, it inculcates the disgust to everything natural (to nature, to your own body), restricting the whole unique essence of a person to a definite set of functions, finally, resulting in mass neurosis.

A doubtless merit of Ch. Walsch is a fact that based on the analysis of wide panorama of utopian and anti-utopian works of the turn of the century, he systematizes their main themes and motives, and reveals the moments of divergence of utopias and anti-utopias in plot plan.

M. Hillegas considers the genre of anti-utopia in direct successive connection with the

creative work of G. Wells, stating, that Wells's pessimistic views were reflected in anti-utopia: his rejection of technics, unbelief in material progress. Essentially, M. Hillegas proclaims the replication of anti-utopia, concluding, that all central and secondary problems and images of anti-utopian works were used by G. Wells to any extent. Not lessening the services of English fantast, it shall be noted that this viewpoint seems to be too much categorical.

The majority of scientists agree that the genre transformations take place in the anti-utopia of 60-80 of the XX century. The following features of anti-utopia of this period are named: the shortening of distance between the fiction world of the text and modernity, specification of space in anti-utopia, timeless character, actualization of route motive. The anti-utopia of the XX century takes up with other genres, involving different elements - from magic fairy-tale to the scenarios of computer games.

The critics distinguish the motives of "the Judgment day", catastrophe, Apocalypse; alarm motives are distinguished by N.Leyderman [6] and M. Lipovetsky [7], memory motives are distinguished by O. Bogdanova [8] and A. Kisel [9], the book motives - by S. Fedotova [10] and T.K. Chernaya [11], suffer and pain motives - by L. Brandler [12], J. Garret [13], dream motives - by J. Woodcock [14] and others.

The changes, occurring with this genre, testify about greater archaic style of anti-utopia.

Prediction remains the genre-forming principle of anti-utopia. However, if previously the artistic prediction of writers dealt more with the structure of social system, then, now the authors are interested in not only social predictions, but in mental ones: what is happening and what will happen with the person; what changes occur in his inner world under the influence of new violence, what is the fate of spiritual values, culture at present and in future etc. That is why the traditional conflict of the anti-utopia - the confrontation of a person and a system - is transferred in modern works, first of all, to the spiritual-psychological sphere. The fight of freedom and violence is concentrated in the soul of the main anti-utopian hero; the writers connect their artistic predictions with the results of this fight.

More space closeness and constraint in the works of modern writers, as compared to the anti-utopias of the previous years, shall be noted. The space of modern anti-utopia is penetrated with danger, death; it is deprived of the light and bears the physical and spiritual threat for a person. The hero practically has nowhere to go, that is why the compositional technique of travel, traditional for anti-utopia, is transformed into the hero's escape from the persecution of new violence, departure to another

world ("robinsonade", a strive for hiding in underworld) or purposeless wandering in labyrinth, from which there is no exit. However, many authors see a way out of the closed space of anti-utopia: it is a way out to the sphere of spirit, sphere of culture, national values, and universal ideals. In modern anti-utopia, the category of time is changed. The clock in anti-utopias either stops or counts the last moments before and after death.

The changes, happened in life, in social consciousness and art, also influenced on the evolution of the anti-utopian hero. The hero of the modern anti-utopia is placed to the epicenter of not only state, but also world crisis, cataclysms and contradictions. It bears social, political and existential problems. For the first time the person in anti-utopia is shown as an object for manipulation by political technologies and mass media. The personality in modern anti-utopia turns out to be in complex political and informational field, where it is difficult to make a moral choice. A check of "human nature" does not always become a victory of human origin. The authors state terrible processes of spiritual degradation, which happen in human inner world. The writers worry about human moral state, which becomes the main criterion to evaluate the social structure and its perspectives.

Main part. As is known, a classic sample of early philosophical utopia is a treatise "The State" by Platon, written in 360 B.C. There, the author, comparing different types of modeled samples of state structures, suggests the socium model, as he thinks, the most suitable for a person, his spiritual and physical improvement. Platon's imagination drew a vivid machine, where each screw felt like a part of the High Order. He saw a world, separated from the chaos by the wall, well-proportioned and controllable by high forces. Thus, the Platon's city appeared - the archetype of utopia for all the time. Let us add that the philosophical composition by Platon mainly conditioned the genre-forming typological principles of literary utopia. It is the inviolability of the ideal, static character of the chronotopous, typical character of images, rhetorical character of the depicted, which is not "animated" by the form of dialogue, happening, as a rule, between the author and the one, who comes to know new worlds and realias. Let us note that the utopia, on the whole, neglects the personal factor. Furthermore, any anti-utopian structure of the society is perceived by the utopians as a chaos, which shall be harmonized by means of radical breaking of all structures.

The prerequisites, accepted by the utopists, are the canonic to determine genre specificity. Noting the variety of genre samples a famous sociologist

E.Ya. Batalov classified them in the following way [15, p. 58].:

1) the person is kind in nature, there is a reason for his disadvantages - unfavorable living conditions;

2) the person is plastic and can be easily changed in varied realities;

3) there is no irremovable contradiction between the benefit of socium and benefit of individuum;

4) a person is a rational creature, able to become more and more rational, that is why it is possible to eliminate the absurdity of social order and establish the rational order;

5) There are limited capacities in future, subject to all-round prediction;

6) in present life, it is necessary to tend to provide a person with happiness on earth;

7) people cannot be fed up with happiness;

8) it is possible to find the fair rulers or to teach people, elected as rulers, to be fair;

9) the utopia does not threaten the individuum's freedom, as the true freedom is implemented within its boundaries.

The majority of utopian works are created in this aspect, starting from the composition of Thomas Moore, who is considered to be the father of new literary genre.

Artistic merits of such compositions are doubtful, as a rule, as the whole plot is no more than the illustration for quite illusive idea or the combination of ideas, which are demonstrated rather straightforwardly and declaratively, although at the same time attractively for the reader. A typical feature of this new society is the absence of any private property, resulting in prosperity of the state. The English political ballads, propagations and compositions of the medieval thinker Thomas Münzer, "Praise of Stupidity" by Erasmus of Rotterdam were penetrated with such ideas.

At the turn of XIX-XX centuries, there appears a strict division into scientific-fantastic and sociocultural utopias inside the genre itself, what is explained by the development of science and engineering, change of views on the person and his nature as a result of achievements of science and progressive development of social ideas. There appear the new definitions of genre, comprehending the entity; the boundaries are checked.

However, the development of genre happens gradually, in parallel with progressive advance of civilization. Active process of accumulation of anti-utopian world outlook positions is typical of the end of XIX century. "It would be short-sighted not to see, - wrote Batalov E.Ya, - that the change happened in the life of humanity, after which the changes, that

would happen during a century, now happen during a decade" [16, p.95].

A great breakthrough in science and technology provides a man with new instruments to understand the reasons of his existence and place in the world, changes the view on occurring and human nature.

The modern anti-utopia gets new traits, conditioned by external and inner factors.

The urgent phenomena of the end of XX century - beginning of the XXI century were reflected in modern anti-utopia: the decay process of the Soviet system, the creation of new states in Post-Soviet space, social tension in the society, political and economic crises, the threat of nuclear war etc. The writers pay great attention to problems of not only social-historical, but also philosophical order: freedom and violence, a man and a state, the search for the ways of spiritual opposition to new violence, getting rid of totalitarian consciousness. That is why, with whole urgency and specificity, the modern anti-utopia is not limited by the frameworks of only our time, but gets a wide timeless meaning and generalized character.

The analysis of "anti-utopian" discourse of the first half of XX century found a way out of anti-utopian motives beyond the initial kind of literary. In the prose of this time, the anti-utopia exists either on the periphery of "great" literature, or "dissolving" in Soviet Utopia of socialistic realism, loses its own genre material. Anti-utopian discourse in these years is translated in poetry.

With the change literature kind, the modality of anti-utopia also changes. Overtones of social critics give place to maximally tragic accords of subjective experience of reality. The poets experience anti-utopia not in the form of fantastic models, but as modernity, as a terrible social "fairy-tale", which came true.

In the second half of the XX century, the anti-utopia is an "instrument" of analysis of the country's past and present in the context of urgent problems of modernity. At that, the space of anti-utopia, synthesizing artistic and conceptual orientations of the utopia, fantastic fiction, parody, social satire, allows not only reveling the social contradictions of reality, but also predicting the future.

By the beginning of the XXI century, the social plan of anti-utopian work becomes mixed. The man in anti-utopia of the new century confronts exclusively the chaos of the present and threatening uncertainty of the future. The interest of the authors shifts to the study of state systems, which formed in the last decades. However, appealing to the historical past, to the experience of Russian history stays an

important feature of modern works. From the viewpoint of mistakes of the past, the writers evaluate the present and forecast the future.

Conclusion. In modern anti-utopias, there are the hero types, familiar to the Russian literature: the travelers-groppers after truth, philosophers, creators, intellectuals, bureaucrats. Alongside with that, new heroes came to the works of the last years: marginal heroes, "mutants", politicians, "placeholders", children etc. The expansion of hero typology in anti-utopia at the turn of the centuries provided the writers with the opportunity to present thoroughly the problems of the modern man, his moral-philosophical search.

The development of anti-utopia in literature continues. This genre proved its urgent character at different stages of literary process, its ideologic-aesthetic role has especially increased in recent times. Having a wide experience of traditions, the anti-utopia is notable for active innovations, search for new genre varieties and artistic principles.

By the beginning of the XXI century, literature feels the crisis of its existence, finds out the multiplicity of ways of dead-end development, breaks down and encapsulates; the polemic almost becomes meaningless and comes to minimum - literature becomes more differentiated in club, elite saloon or union and gets the general reader at the same time. Literary phenomena become the subject of single use and closed interpretations. Nationwide criteria are in doubts. There is a struggle between the canonic and non-canonic approach to literature: de-hierarchization, egalitarianism and relativism win. Literary imperialism is replaced by the literary democracy, annihilating the notion of marginality.

All abovementioned results in paradoxical modification of literature traditional position and functioning - with significant extension of its aesthetic possibilities, its social leverage simultaneously decreases.

Summary. Thus, the anti-utopia of the beginning of XXI century presents a complex artistic phenomenon, revealing not only themes, traditional for this genre, but also a wide spectrum of other humanitarian problems, relevant for modern Russian reality. It is conditioned by the dynamic character of the anti-utopian discourse in the context of modern cultures: widening of spreading area in the beginning, bloom in the second half and genre transformation in the end of the century.

The modern authors - anti-utopists turned out to be subject to the historical phenomenon, each to their own extent, determined by us as a syndrome

of big age; the consequence of this fact is their desire to idealize the ideologic-political heritage of the XX century and to find the ways to solve the urgent problems of the beginning of the XXI century.

It is possible to distinguish clearly three mental types of heroes in the anti-utopian discourse of the modern culture at the material of novels-anti-utopias (a man of the outgoing century, a man of the transition period and a man of the new times), different by the relation to historical reality, social and world outlook orientations and the way these orientations are represented in the artistic space of the novel-anti-utopia.

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