

## **THE POST-APOCALYPTIC NOVEL AS A PART OF MODERN LITERATURE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The article is devoted to the post-apocalyptic genre, which became one of the leading areas of science fiction in the 20th century. The author comes to the conclusion that, despite some blurring of genre boundaries, there are grounds to speak of post-apocalypticism as a special genre-thematic group of works with a stable community of artistic features, and as an actual generative model in modern fiction and cinema.*

**Keywords:** *science fiction, post-apocalyptic novel, novel, global catastrophe, literary inter-author series, mass culture, modern culture.*

### **АННОТАЦИЯ**

*Статья посвящена жанру постапокалипсиса, ставшему одним из ведущих направлений научной фантастики XX века. Автор приходит к выводу, что, несмотря на некоторое стирание жанровых границ, есть основания говорить о постапокалиптике как об особой жанрово-тематической группе произведений с устойчивой общностью художественных признаков и как о актуальной генеративной модели в современной художественной литературе и кино.*

**Ключевые слова:** *научная фантастика, постапокалиптический роман, роман, глобальная катастрофа, литературный межавторский сериал, массовая культура, современная культура.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Fiction is one of the most extensive concepts of domestic and foreign literary criticism. This concept includes not only a certain type of imagery, but also visual and expressive means, types of literature. At the same time, fiction is the leading theme of such works. L.I. Timofeev points out in the literary dictionary that fiction is "a world of bizarre ideas and images born of imagination based on previously learned facts of real life." [1]

E.M. Neelov analyzes fiction as a literary genre. The scientist writes that the human image and the image of reality in fiction appear depending on the fairy-tale and magical principles of narration. Such a narrative model is similar to that

presented in science fiction works, this is primarily due to the fact that in the works of science fiction, as in a fairy tale, the opposition of man-nature dominates [2]. T.V. Tymoshenko states that fiction reflects socio-cultural dynamics.[3]

L.A. Chekhov points out that fantastic works cannot be determined by the presence of a certain attribute, since works in the genre of fiction are based on certain criteria: themes, structures, the role of the image of fiction, etc. The fantastic image in the work should be based on elements of modern culture and epoch, as well as on elements of modern reality. In order to determine the characteristic features of fantastic works, it is necessary to take into account the time of the appearance of the work, the function and role of the fantastic element in the work, to what extent the reader participates in interaction with the fantastic. The concept of fiction can be considered relative [4].

M.S. Galina wrote that fiction is an elite genre of mass literature.[5] As noted earlier, the main elements of science fiction are new discoveries, inventions, facts unknown to science, osmosis research and time travel. The action of science fiction most often refers to the future – both the nearest (from 5 to 10 years) and more distant (several centuries).

## **DISCUSSION AND RESULTS**

In the journal *Science and Invention*, science fiction writer H. Gernsback used the term "science fiction" in 1923, and later this term was fixed in the English language in the form of "science fiction" (or Sci-Fi). In 1926, the same writer defined the term "scientific literature": "This is a kind of fiction that was written by J. Verne, G. Wells, E.A. Poe, these are charming, exciting romantic stories, mixed up with scientific data and prophetic foresight."

Initially, apocalypticism meant the direction in the late Biblical and post-biblical religious thought of Judaism, which was expressed in arguments and prophecies about the fate of the world. At the present stage, the genre of apocalypticism includes an artistic understanding of scientific and social trends that can be realized in the near future and will bring humanity to the brink of survival.

Within the framework of modern literature, apocalypticism is a transgenre that develops in several arts at once, and primarily in fiction and cinema. Post-apocalypse is an equally popular genre. The appearance of this direction was natural. This is dictated by the natural desire of writers to comprehend not only the causes of global catastrophes, but also their consequences. Post-apocalyptic literature becomes a kind of completion of the tradition of dystopia and dystopia, since within the framework of

the post-apocalypse, a society that has reached the point of no return is demonstrated, not only socially, but also in all other respects. An important factor is the genre limitations of apocalyptic, which are overcome within the framework of post-apocalypticism: the nature of the main conflict and the possibility of revealing the psychology of the heroes is less determined by the thematic setting.

The term "post-apocalyptic" was first used in 1978 by the American critic Alan Frank in the magazine "Sci-Fi Now" in relation to fantasy genres. Then it became firmly rooted in colloquial speech and entered the scientific language at the turn of the 1990s-2000s. In modern culture, the post-apocalyptic plot is used quite widely: in fiction, computer games, cinema, comics, etc. The defining genre-forming features are:

- specific themes (works that describe what will happen to humanity after the end of the world);

- a special structure of the conflict (the internal contradictions of civilization and human character are objectified externally – in the irreconcilable confrontation of the few survivors and the anti-world hostile to them);

- a special linear-cumulative structure of the plot, which is related to post-apocalyptic works with computer games and folklore texts, when the narrative is the so-called "passage" of the hero through various locations inhabited by monsters, as well as various traps, and each location has a certain complexity, which increases as the plot develops.

A certain blurring of the genre boundaries of apocalypticism and post-apocalypticism makes it possible to talk about them as genre-themed groups, and not as genres in the proper sense of the word. Post-apocalyptic, therefore, is a narrative model and a set of works of art built on the basis of this model, which describe the situation after the onset of a global catastrophe (most often of a man-made nature), as a result of which the natural environment and society experience radical changes, so the remaining survivors are plunged into a radical "anti-world", which unexpectedly, instantly transforms.

Post-apocalyptic can be considered an artistic study of a person and society who finds himself in a situation of global catastrophe. Post-apocalyptic plots, in turn, are built according to a certain scheme:

- 1) life before the disaster is presented by the author quite fluently, usually in the form of fragmentary memories of survivors;

2) the description of the disaster that happened, often unexpected, is also presented succinctly, or not presented at all. However, the disaster is perceived by the heroes not as a "punishment", but as an emergency situation;

3) "micromodeling" is the most important structural part of post-apocalyptic works. It consists in the detailed, even "scientific" accuracy of the descriptions of the two antagonistic plans of the new reality: a) a similar characteristic of the way of life, mores and customs of the survivors, ways of adapting to the new (aggressive) environment, up to the indication of names, features of the use of medicines, weapons, etc.; the study of various "social deformations", which existed before the apocalypse, but were activated by the catastrophe; b) descriptions of the "new nature" that was formed on the ruins of the former world, including the behavior and physiology of monsters that appeared in the new world. Both descriptive planes correlate according to a contrasting plan: the monstrosity and phantasmagoria of the new reality, which has become familiar, emphasizes the monstrosity and phantasmagoria of everyday life: the world of monsters turns out to be a "crooked" reflection of the civilization that gave birth to it. The "new Reality" thus turns out to be divided into several loci, each of which is evaluated by the author and the characters in terms of its compliance with the norm;

4) "world modeling" unfolds through a certain plot scheme (linear-cumulative); the two most common models are the "new threat" that needs to be eliminated and the "new need" that needs to be implemented. It is the world-modeling component that is the leading one in the post-apocalyptic novel.

Post-apocalyptic works use a large number of techniques of science fiction, but at the same time it is on the verge of science fiction and paranientific. Taking into account that one of the most important tasks of science fiction is the objectification (and popularization) in the artistic form of a scientific picture of the world, and post-apocalyptic does not fulfill this task.

The works of post-apocalypticism thus reflect the following fundamental problems of society:

- the problem of scientific and technological progress and its consequences;
- the problem of responsibility in the global plan;
- the problem of morality and its preservation;
- the problem of alienation of a person in society;
- the problem of the collapse of the ideals of humanism;
- the problem of the crisis of capitalist and liberal views and many others.

In such works, there are several reasons for the development of the apocalypse and post-apocalypse, each of which assumes its own development and its own actions: a zombie apocalypse, an environmental catastrophe, an alien invasion, a religious Apocalypse (Exodus), an empty earth (Wasteland), a fantastic rebirth of the world. These reasons direct the plot in different directions, place accents (in books about the zombie apocalypse, the central problem is the problem of Another, Alien, as well as the problem of fighting this Other. This motif is similar to the motif of fighting an alien invasion).

The third version of the apocalypse is "underground". Here the basis is a literary inter-author series based on the novel by D. Glukhovsky "Metro 2033). The Taiwan conflict led to a global nuclear war, as a result of which almost the entire surface of the Earth was exposed to radioactive contamination. People who were able to escape went underground to establish life in the subway lines and catacombs. In the metro (in St. Petersburg and Moscow), stations-states were formed, many of which united into unions and communities. The surface of the Earth is completely populated by mutants (blockade runners, librarians, etc.), who are extremely dangerous. In some cities and villages, as we learn from some parts of the series, human settlements have been preserved: the city of Polar Dawns in the north, near the Kola NPP, a village in the Far East, a city organized by submariners.

By analogy, a series of books by Jean Dupreau "The City of Amber" is given.

The fourth version of the apocalypse is "illusory". Here, as the main example, the film trilogy of brothers (sisters) is given Wachowski "Matrix". People from the Matrix world, thanks to the self-sacrifice of the Chosen Neo, were able to conclude a truce with the machines, according to which those who want to leave the "virtual" will be able to do it unhindered. By analogy with this film series, the films "Terminator", the TV series "Battlestar Galactica", the story of Lino Aldani "Onirofilm" are given.

The fifth version of the post-apocalypse is called "P" as a gift." Here is an example of John Ringo's cycle "The Posleen Wars", where the Earth is represented in our days. In 2001, aliens from the Daryl race, the leaders of the Galactic Federation, came into contact with the US president. The Darelts warned the earthlings about the coming invasion of the merciless posleen – predatory centauroids aimed at the total destruction of all other intelligent races. The series of D. Jerrold's works "The War against Chtorr" and R. Emmerich's film "Independence Day" are given as analogues.

The sixth version of the apocalyptic plot is "ecological". An example is John Christopher's novel "The Death of Grass". In China, the Chang-li virus was created



for military purposes, which as a result of the disaster broke free and destroyed rice crops, which led to the death of 200 million Chinese from hunger. Soon the virus mutated and became deadly for all crops. The analogue of this work is the film "Judge Dredd", as well as real-life events - the earthquake in Haiti and its consequences.

The seventh version of the apocalypse and post-apocalypse in popular culture is "cosmic". An example here is the novel "Lucifer's Hammer" by Larry Niven and Jerry Purnell. The earth falls into the tail of a giant comet and is bombarded by a large number of different meteorites. Despite the abundance of cruel and terrible events, the desperate situation in which our planet found itself, this world is surprisingly optimistic. The inhabitants of the Silver Valley are not just defeating a gang of cannibal fanatics, preserving the fragments of a lost culture. Analogs: John Christopher's novel "The Year of the Comet", the films "Armageddon" and "Collision with the Abyss".

The eighth and final plot is "local". Here, as an example, the "Five-Zone" from the literary interauthor series "Death Zone" is given. In 2051, five powerful explosions occurred almost simultaneously in the post-Soviet space, which led to a chain reaction of man-made disasters, tectonic activity of the Earth's crust. As a result, several abnormal areas appeared. Pyatizonye is a catastrophe that has not yet got out of control of mankind. The analog is the work of the Strugatsky brothers "Picnic on the side of the road", a game and a series of books by S.T.A.L.K.E.R. In real life – the zone around the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, formed due to a man-made disaster.

But in fact, there are many more variants of the apocalypse and post-apocalypse in popular culture than it is possible to describe in the work.

## **CONCLUSION**

We note that the post-apocalyptic novel, despite its short history, has already managed to turn into an independent artistic phenomenon, easily delimited from related phenomena. Preserving the genetic connection with science fiction and actively using the artistic arsenal developed by it, the post-apocalyptic novel turns back to the archaic type of thinking, in new ones. man-made scenery playing out the plots of the oldest myths about the creation and destruction of the world.

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