

UDC 821.111-3:316.48"19"

THE PROBLEM OF POSITIVE CHARACTERS IN THE ANTIUTOPIES OF THE XX CENTURY

V. ZIAMTSOVA, V. SIANKOVA

Vitebsk State University named after P.M. Masherov, Belarus

Dystopian worldviews in literature have made a great contribution to the development of modern society. Innovative themes expose the social consequences of war, revolutions and reflect the complete anxiety of people for tomorrow. Besides, authors of dystopias, as a rule, explore society in terms of totalitarianism, anticipating the problems of a new class.

So, one of the most sensational works of the 20th century was Aldous Huxley's dystopian novel «Brave New World», in which the author saw problems, the shadows of which we observe after decades in our society. The main theme of the novel is to reflect the creation of an isolated society through the artificial insemination of ova.

At the end of the 20th century was born another novel by the Canadian writer Margaret Atwood «The Handmaid's Tale», which reviewed the features of the status of women in the new society and received true public recognition only after the release of several adaptations. The purpose of the study is to determine how the images of the main characters in the works of Aldous Huxley and Margaret Atwood reflect various problems of a dystopian society.

Materials and methods. The material for our research was the novels by Aldous Huxley «Brave New World» and Margaret Atwood «The Handmaid's Tale», which were analyzed using comparative historical and contextual methods.

Results and their discussion. For a start, we consider the dystopian «Brave New World», which caused different opinions from readers. The idea of writing dystopian novel appeared in 1931 during the interwar period when the British government encouraged the people with a dream of the development of science and technology, but Huxley resisted the imaginary optimism in the country. The main theme of the work is the future of European civilization. Huxley in his novel plays out the possible future, where there are all the charms for human happiness. However, in this society there are no traditional values, science and art, therefore it is so empty and inhuman. Huxley's "new" world is a world of stability that lasts during the new era of Ford (the founder of this era). The totalitarian society considered by Huxley is created in test tubes, people in it are deprived of emotions, feelings and concepts about family, friendship and religion, all express steady devotion to their state and its system. Society in the new world is divided into castes. In the process of education, the lower castes develop an aversion to books (if children interact with books, they are tortured with sirens and electricity) and objection for nature, instead, it was decided to instill a love of out-of-town sports.

The novel «The Handmaid's Tale» has, like all dystopias, a template construction scheme. Its action takes place in New England near future. The US government was overthrown and a totalitarian theocracy regime was established. In the "ideal" state the problem of low birth rates and the authorities struggle with it by selecting women. Those whose bodies are capable of reproduction become maids, whose goal is the birth of offspring for infertile women belonging to the upper class of society. Women with a lack of fertility are sent to camps, where they soon die when working with toxic waste. In the novel «The Handmaid's Tale», Atwood raises the problems of modern society - religious fundamentalism, feminism, the ideology of consumption and abuse of power. All these problems began to be actively discussed since the mid-80s of the XX century, which made the novel almost prophetic. «There is more than one kind of freedom, said Aunt Lydia. Freedom to and freedom from. In the days of anarchy, it was freedom to. Now you are being given freedom from. Don't underrate it» [1].

Any dystopia can be considered as the logical conclusion of utopias. Utopians often represent society as ordered, the system is perfect, and any removal from it leads to the worst. Dystopias are connected with real life; they show what comes out of utopian ideas if they are put into practice. Dystopias are always built on an acute conflict, have a dramatic, tense plot, and vivid characters of heroes. Heroes here often don't have distinctive qualities, they live as the canons of their state dictate and have no idea of living not according to the rules of their era. However, in the world of dystopias, where human uniqueness is prohibited, some characters feel individual among these masses.

Such a revolutionary hero in the novel «Brave New World» John the Savage, who lived away from civilized society among the Indians, but his mother once lived in a brave world, so John was different from other savages in his behaviour. Once he has a chance to get into a developed society, where the conflict of the individual with the outside world takes place. At first, John liked the new atmosphere, but society drives him into frames that are different from all John. The system kills any intention to think outside the box since childhood by getting rid of

Linguistics, Literature, Philology

books, justifying it with the fact that «you've got to choose between happiness and what people used to call high art» [2]. Mustafa Mond - an ideologist of a wonderful world, believes that for the sake of happiness and peace one can sacrifice individuality, science, art. But the main idea of the dystopian «Brave New World» lies in the opposite opinion. The savage brought up in another society, sees that in the "new" world, happiness is artificial. It does not occur in the process of thoughts and aspirations of man. It is achieved quickly by taking a gram of soma: «The world's stable now. People are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can't get... And if anything should go wrong, there's soma» [2]. This is an imitation of happiness, rather than a real, deep feeling. In this civilized world that appeared before John, man is only one of the gears in the general mechanism of consumption.

Among the positive characters, there is also Helmholtz and Bernard, they are “out of the test tube”, but “not like everyone else”, that's why Mustafa Mond refers them to the islands, where they will be among the most interesting people in the world. These are those characters in whom self-consciousness has developed to such a level that they have become unsuitable for life in our society. All those people who are not satisfied with faithfulness, who have their own, independent views on life are not suitable for the new world. But the writer does not describe their fate on the islands; at the defeat of John Aldous Huxley ended his novel, as if trying to say that the future of this world is hopeless.

These creatures, which brought out of the test tube, have lost their human nature. They forgot what it means to be human; now they just do not know it. The sense of feelings and spiritual development, which was once glorified by great writers, was lost. Now there is no spiritual life of a person, there is only his body shell, but even it is unnatural: it does not age and is not able to produce a species. Of course, the new era of Ford created comfortable conditions for the body, but, unfortunately, destroyed the soul. There are no emotions in this world, only voices of physical pleasure.

The death of John has a special meaning in the novel. Among all the events of the new world, one of John's main tasks is to preserve himself as a man, not an animal. Since suffering is one way of maintaining his humanity, perhaps his death is the final proof that he is a man because Huxley does not have gloom or sadness, everyone considers himself happy, but no one considers himself a person. His death can be seen from two sides: on the other hand, suicide is the ultimate suffering, and on the other hand, the goal of his suicide is liberation. It is obvious that John escaped from this world because he achieves freedom in this way. This scene conveys all dystopian motives, because John's chose is the easy path of liberation, and his death only made the members of a marvelous society laugh.

As for the works of Margaret Atwood, the author selects the main characters of her literary works women, whom the modern consumer society perceives as anonymized things, this is where the feminist views of the writer are manifested. The heroes of her novels are usually victims of the political and social structure of society. The main character from the novel “The Handmaid's Tale” is Offred. She is smart, insightful and genial. Like most women in Gilead, she is an ordinary woman in an extraordinary position, but one of those who tried to run away from the slavery of her time. The name of the handmaid consists of the preposition of and the name of the Commander: Offred = of + Fred. It is worth noting that according to the grammar norms of the English language, belonging to a person is transmitted using the possessive case (denoted by 's), the preposition of is used when it comes to inanimate objects (the door of the house - the door of the house). Thus, Margaret Atwood shows the role of the majority of women in the Gallic society, who fell into the class of maidservants, and indicates their place in the social hierarchy. Offred fell into a new society under pressure from the government, concerned about the low birth rate in the state. In her world, women are a product for the production of offspring for non-fertile women: “A common thing, Aunt Lydia said, is what I'm used to. Maybe now you don't think that this is usual, but over time, everything will change. It will become commonplace”[1]. For women, fertility meant becoming the property of other people, with each had to accept this as the norm and pray daily for the birth of a healthy child. But Offred's relationship with the Commander went beyond the usual relationship of a servant and commander. So, Fred invited her to his place to just talk on various topics. To some extent, the society of the commander became pleasant to Fredova. She went against the laws and rules of her civilization.

Control over the inhabitants of the Republic of Gilead is carried out not only with the help of the routine of life, but also thanks to the prohibitions introduced. Like Huxley, books were banned in society, because reading develops a person's mental abilities, and in a society of total control, an educated population becomes a threat. Since the main character, Fredova, received the special favor of the Commander, she had the brilliant opportunity to sometimes read books, which she compares with a forbidden oasis.

Offred is not a usual character, but she fights with lows of Gilead. Her attempt to escape failed, but she tried to get out of her humiliating position. Offred has feelings for the driver of his Commander Nick. Nick is an equivocal character, and Offred does not know if he is a party supporter or part of the resistance. The epilogue

suggests that he was indeed part of the resistance and helped Offred run away from the commander's house. Indeed, after she begins her affair with Nick, she seems to completely lose sight of the escape and suddenly feels that life in Gilead is almost tolerant. If she finally escapes, it is because of Nick, and not because of something that she does herself. Offred is basically a passive character, kind-hearted, but smug.

Both characters of these dystopias crave independence, voluntariness and freedom from the canons of their time. They go against the rules through their internal conflict and the rejection of society, but life in a programmed world is not their choice.

Conclusion. Thus, after analyzing two cult dystopian novels, we found out that good heroes protest against herd feelings. They can be described as "products" of their eras, fighting to preserve the uniqueness of their class. John and Offred advocate for the inner freedom of man, his development, since representatives of new civilizations exist only for the good of their state, renouncing values, concepts of honor and morality. Positive characters in dystopias create a contrast between a fictional world and reality.

REFERENCES

1. Atwood, M. The Handmaid's Tale. [Electronic resource] / M. Atwood. - Access mode: <http://flibusta.is/b/461078/read>. - Access date: 02/27/2020
2. Huxley, O. Oh brave new world. [Electronic resource] / O. Huxley. - Access mode: <http://flibusta.is/b/470368/read>. - Access date: 02/27/2020