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**«Фантастические романы, предсказывающие будущее: российские и
зарубежные авторы»**

“Fantasy novels that try to predict the future: Russian and foreign authors”



Выполнила: Барклянская Таисия Александровна

Ученица 11 И класса

Руководитель: Девяткина Ксения Сергеевна

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What will happen in the future? This is one of the most important questions of mankind. That's why unsurprisingly the majority of writers dream and write about this time to come. The idea of the future is what the authors question themselves about and further make a story about their anticipations. Each narration is different from others. Still, the overall question is whether his ideas are just a fantasy or the shade of inevitable future casting the sky of reality. One more issue emerges: what if one's idea of the future and the future itself are almost the same?

One of the most readable writers of all time is Stephen King, who has created many breathtaking plots connected with the events that are only about to happen. As a comparison to his strange and even morose forthcoming world of, I will take the most popular series of Kir Bulychev's books about Alisa Selezneva, a girl from the future. My choice of these authors is not random as I've read their creations many times.

Well, obviously, these two authors are very different, but we are interested in their views on the future. While King sees the future as something terrifying, Kir Bulychev tries to view destiny as an opportunity. For example, the latter uses some extraordinary ways to connect future and present. Such as teleportation, which makes the reader experience an immediate wow-effect. Surely, the idea of applying time-machine or teleportation is not brand-new. Nonetheless, the fact that Bulychev's book was published in 1984 in the USSR, speaks for itself. Considering that-time-reality of the country, it seems more natural for American writers of that period to create something similar. (By the way, the movies in the USA traditionally promote the wonder of teleportation to another time period ("Back to the Future", for example), still for a long time in Russia it has been more typical only to read about such an opportunity). However, King prefers a totally different approach. He uses monsters from the future and shadowy threats endangering one's survival. King, who sees the future as a dark place, wrote: "No one knows what is going on in the gap that

separates you as you were from you as you are now. No one can make a map that is a part of hell where longing and loneliness live. There are no such maps and will never be. You just return from the other side.” and “Man may have been created in the image and likeness of God, but human society is created in the image of His opponent and is always trying to return home” (Stephen King (1978)).

They say that any book resembles its creator... Stephen King's mysterious vibe gives the shivers of inexplicable fatality, something terrifying but at the same time uncommon and enticing. Reading his narrations throws you into an unstoppable loop of fear, curiosity, - a mixture of emotions, carrying you away from this reality into an entirely different world. Meanwhile Bulychev produces the unlike impression, associated with the sunshine, those precious moments of childhood, when the surrounding world was open and friendly, amicable and inviting.

Let's return to the “Guest from the Future”. According to the plot of the book, Alisa leaves the future to protect people from some “space pirates”. Besides, there exists one more Soviet story about a boy called “Electronic”, written by Yevgeny Serafimovich Veltistov. In this book the main character is also trying to protect humanity from evil. So, the concept of saving the planet, setting global and noble aims was rather typical then. No monsters, just villains, who want to ruin all the best in our world. The Soviet writer uses cybernetics and artificial intelligence as the means of saving the world's balance. King does almost the same, but instead of the good he sees the evil. The reader spots out the opposition of the soulful love to humanity versus evil, improving the world versus resting it. Bulychev and Veltistov believe that all hand-made innovations can become the universal remedy or the source of protection. King's view is dissimilar. According to him, the future is dangerous because of the uncertainty. He sees the future as a dark hole that will take all of us together with cybernetic

innovations. Moreover, these novelties may themselves cause both uncertainty and chaos.

Most probably, the writer's mindset (defined by background, personal experience and a set of other reasons) defines this choice. From the young age Stephen was subjected to the set of horrific experiences. One of them is his friend's death (the boy was struck and killed by a train), though King himself has no memory of the event, but his family told him that after leaving home to play with the boy, King returned speechless and seemingly shocked.

Instead of King's childhood, who was left by his father and raised only by his mother, Bulychev had a whole family, mother and stepfather, not experiencing on a large scale any distressing situations that affected him anyhow. Even the face of the second seems much kinder than King's and nothing dreary can be noticed in his disposition. Only twinkling aspiration. One of the moments from the book that shows Bulychev's belief in the best is the following: "When Kolya got closer, he discovered that some of the trees, apparently the most delicate, were shrouded in thin transparent plastic, while others were circulated by warm air that rose from gratings hidden in the young grass. Near the path stood a strange tree - like burdock, or rather sorrel, magnified a thousand times. A bunch of green bananas hung between the leaves. And on the ground next to the tree sat a monkey and peeled a plucked banana" (Kir Bulychev (1978, p. 4)). Seems not as scary as King's interpretation of the future, does it?

Needless to say, we may see similar opinions on the same topic while reading the other narrations of these writers. For example, "All three buses have just arrived. Passengers exited and others entered. Some rose from the ground, probably from the metro, others flew up on wings and folded them, approaching the door, others got out of the bubbles, and the empty bubbles themselves flew away, giving way to new ones" (Kir Bulychev (1978, p. 5)) - this is how

Bulychev described future, at the same time King wrote “I hope for the best, prepare for the worst, and nothing but that...” (Stephen King (1982)).

My point is that humanity should care about each single person and each upcoming moment. Being cautious and reasonable, reflecting and thoughtful, responsible, in the end, is the only way to foresee a safe future. I suppose that almost everyone is afraid of uncertainty that might be waiting us in the future, that’s why many writers make stories horrifying, some of them are trying to control their inner fear by putting a hero who will save everyone, meanwhile others do not make such decisions and put their characters in the arms of the unknown fate.

To sum up, it should be noticed that no one knows for sure what our future will be like. It is always up to the author which key concept to choose: hope, misery, neglect or total approval...There are endless varieties of the future. I will end with King’s words: “Time is a keyhole, Tim thought, looking up at the stars. Yes, it probably is. Sometimes we bend down and look into this well. And the wind that we feel on our face - the wind blowing through the keyhole - is the breath of the living universe” (Stephen King (2012)). We can’t say what the future will look like. I believe that that is the best about the idea of it. You can dream about whatever you want and it will be the only truth for you. No matter who you are and where you are from, your chances to get the future you desire are equally high just as are perspectives of all those humans surrounding you. We are the same part of our current reality, united by it. Still, we are all diverse in the uniqueness of our choices, especially when it concerns our destiny.

Appendixes



Pic.1. Stephen Edwin King (1947-...). “King has effectively been translating America’s private, communal, and cultural fears and serving them up to us on grisly platters for half a century.” The same goes for the idea of the future, whose uncertainty makes it too vague to look optimistic and soothing. REDRUM. If a word can become a palindrome, why can't the future? Though, it may turn into EPOH as well...



Pic.2. Kir Bulychev (Igor Vsevolodovich Mozheiko) (1934-2003). His motto was “Still ahead!”. Adoring Arkady and Boris Strugatsky, Bulychev believed them to be the best representatives of the science fiction genre, and following their example, tried to convey the most topical society issues. He wrote his books for all-ages-audience, filling the narrations with his own sense of this world, bright and sparkling at any moment.

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