

ГБОУ Школа 1786

Командный конкурс эссе

**“Unity in Diversity: Russia and the English-Speaking World.
Time for Equal Opportunities”**

Исследовательская работа (эссе)

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

«Fantasy novels that try to predict the future: Russian and foreign authors »

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SCIENCE FICTION (“**SCI FI**”) is a genre of imaginative fiction literature, which uses science, technology and inventions to talk about the future. The main difference between sci fi and every other literature genre is that it is based on fantastic fiction and speculation in the exact, natural and human sciences, relying on different theories and facts. This genre is not only interesting for its fascinating worlds and ideas, but also attracts its philosophical nature, as the first place of the plot is always a reflection on man and society, where the main character is an evolving, developing human. Sci-fi stories use the truths of science to suggest consequences of technological innovations, to try to predict the future and to explore possible scenarios of different events. The popularity of this genre is strongly related to technological progress and scientific developments, which have been growing day by day for the past 150 years. Science fiction has also become a huge genre because of its connection to reality: it is interesting to see how distinct authors reveal different concepts and draw the very "threads" to reality in their works. Some of these are written in the **HARD SCI FI GENRE**- still fictional work- but are mostly authored by scientists with an emphasis on strict facts and natural science. Others are written in **SOFT SCI FI**- work, focused on social studies and human behavior. Such works of different subgenres are very intriguing to compare and contrast with each other, when authors have various, diametrically opposed perspectives on life, different origins and society warehouses. The most vivid example is the confrontation of our fellow-countrymen authors, who lived in communism, against Western authors, who adhered to the ideas of capitalism. Even though authors were still being translated, and literature was flowing from one country or culture to another, the realities, in which authors of opposing systems lived, clearly had more influence on their works than the ideas of their counterparts. Good examples of such works are "Do Electric Sheep Dream of Androids?" by Philip K. Dick and “The Inhabited Island” by the Strugatsky brothers.

Philipp Kindred Dick is an American author, who gained fame for his works in the science fiction genre. In his writings, the lines between illusion and reality are blurred, technologies invade human minds and human identity dims. Dick's themes are alternate histories, parallel universes, virtual realities, fake objects, mental illness and drugs. He was seen as a visionary of the postmodern and an iconic figure of the sixties. Philip K. Dick suffered from mental disorders and was diagnosed with schizophrenia. This illness explains the writer's strong dependence on illegal psychoactive substances, to which people often resorted while struggling with anxiety and depressive disorders. During his lifetime, Philipp wrote about forty novels and more than a hundred short stories, but one of his most known novels is «Do androids dream of electric sheep?», which was written in 1968. This is one of the classic works of fiction that explores the ethical problems of creating androids - artificial humans. At the core of this novel is a reflection on empathy as the distinctive capacity of all living collective beings. The novel is set after the final world war, which destroyed almost all life on Earth: the air was dusty, the cities were full of

abandoned houses and the government encouraged people to immigrate to Mars and even gave free android slaves to those who agreed to leave the Earth. Radioactive dust hung over the Earth, destroyed most of the animals and plants and harmed people's health- all life and society was slowly dying. As a result, endangered animals became worth their weight in gold, and social status began to be determined not by your wealth and capital, but by the pet you could afford. If you had no money, you could buy a cheap robotic animal, indistinguishable from the original. Actually, almost everything has been replaced by technology: the protagonist often wondered if someone he knew or even himself was an android. The boundary between the real and the invented faded, and the only reminder of something alive were the animals. People kept them in order to remain human; it was empathy- the ability to empathize with other living beings, that distinguished humans from androids. When keeping a pet, a person shows care and love for it, the pet makes the owner feel something- it makes the owner feel alive. But as it is destined to happen, animals die, and owners lose their cherished and loved ones. After the death of their favorites, loneliness and grief wear the owners out. Not wanting to experience this terrible condition again, people buy robotic animals, not alive ones. Rick Deckard, the protagonist of this sci fi, was one such owner. He used to have the real sheep, but it died, and Rick's financial situation worsened, so he bought an exact electric replica of the sheep he had. It was running, eating grass and making noises in the same way as if it was alive. But Deckard couldn't get it out of his head that the electric goat was still an electric goat. He understood it would never compare to the alive one, so he bought a real goat, sold androids and got solid money for them. Several lives of soulless machines for one goat, but even that one died. Once again, Rick Deckard was back to that wild feeling of losing his own pet, the loneliness that destroys the very human soul. Philipp Dick raised several themes with this work

1. Technology is no substitute for the alive: no matter at what point in time, people will still need a soul with something real.

:- "You androids," Rick remarked, "aren't too eager to bail each other out of trouble.

- "Even if we were", Garland bristled, " our other advantages more than outweigh the lack of your one and only ability, that of empathy.

2. The capacity for empathy is based on a group instinct. So creatures that live alone (like predators) don't need empathy, but instead would starve to death, if they thought about the fact that their prey is alive and wants to live too.

:"All because compassion blurs the line between hunter and prey, between victory and defeat."

3. Philip Dick reflects on mentally normal people and people with mental disorders. The writer wonders why people shun and disdain humanoid robots, the mentally ill and anyone else who differs in any way from most normal people. Why don't people show empathy to them? John Isidore, who belonged to the category of the underdogs and those, who are treated with special contempt, is a very good example.

:"I can't show that I'm an imbecile, or he won't talk to me, it always happens, I just don't know why."

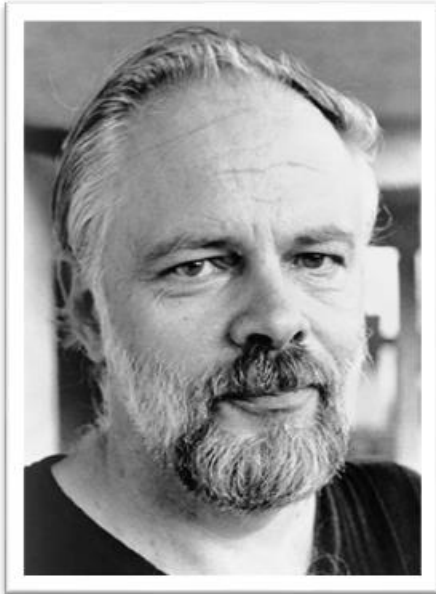
Arkady and Boris Strugatsky- the most famous Russian science-fiction writers which became famous throughout the world in the sixties. The “social fiction” books by the Strugatsky brothers shaped the worldview of more than one generation of citizens, first of the USSR and then of Russia. They have written more than 30 works together, but one of their best-known works is still “The Inhabited Island”. This work tells the story of how a young earthling, exploring the depths of space, crashed on an unfamiliar planet and tried to save the locals from dictatorial rule. What we really see is not the future on some distant planet, but what is happening here and now:

Similarities with the reality of the USSR:

1. The country is filled with TV towers and there is constant brainwashing on all TV channels of the zombie part of the population.
2. The country has corruption, the luxury of the elite, and criminality among the masses.
3. The economic crisis, as a consequence of the disgusting management of the country.
4. The non zombie part of the population is declared as scum.
5. From the incessant lies from TV, the freaks have the wrong reaction, which they pour out into society for one reason or another.
6. The government itself is made up of freaks who do not believe a word of the lies they have concocted and rigidly arrange "headaches and unbearable suffering" in the form of imprisonment of freaks and raids on freak rallies, both police and black activists (with and without lapels).

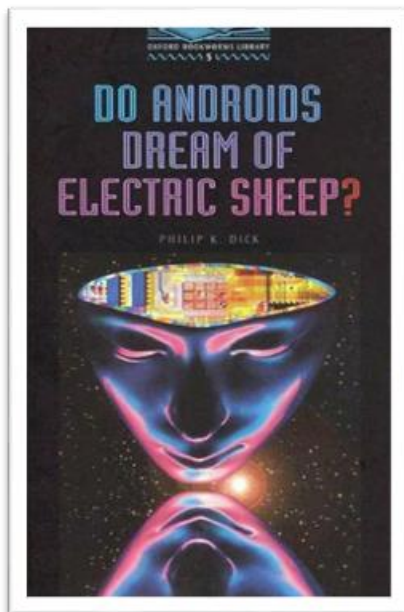
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Филип Киндред Дик

Philip Kindred Dick



*Обложка книги Филипа Дика
"Мечтают Ли Андроиды Об
Электроовцах?"*

*Cover of Philip Dick's book "Do
Androids Dream of Electric
Sheep?"*



*Постер фильма "Бегущий По
Лезвию" 1982*

*"Blade Runner" movie poster
1982*



*Ист-Ривер и Манхэттен,
смог в Нью-Йорке в 1966
году(послужил прототипом
города)*

*East River and Manhattan,
smog in New York in 1966
(served as the city's prototype)*



*Братья Аркадий и Борис
Стругацкие
Brothers Arkady and Boris
Strugatsky*



*Аркадий и Борис Стругацкие
Обитаемый остров обложка*

*Arkady and Boris Strugatsky
Inhabited Island cover*

