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The Novel *Туманность Андромеды* by Ivan Yefremov in the Historical and Literary Context

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Introduction

The article primarily aims to consider the science fiction utopia novel *Туманность Андромеды* [1957] by Ivan Yefremov as an ideological manifesto of the future communist mankind. The main focus of the research lies in investigating the historical circumstances and literary trends that influenced the piece of fiction, as well as in viewing linguistic and translation issues related to occasional terms.

For the case study, the already mentioned literary work *Туманность Андромеды* in its 1958 edition, along with its translation into English [*Andromeda: A Space-Age Tale* 1959], was selected. Currently, a total of 50 occasional terms constitute the material of the chapter dedicated to the linguistic and translation aspects. The methodological framework is based on the descriptive and analytical methods complemented by the contrastive method.

2. Historical context

The science fiction utopia novel *Туманность Андромеды* was written by Ivan Yefremov between September 1955 and September 1956. During this period, the author had to combine his literary activity with scientific investigation, as he was employed in the Paleontological Institute in Moscow. For any individual, it seems extremely difficult to simultaneously devote one's efforts to several aspects of human activities.

Nevertheless, in the scientist's schedule, there were also periods of vacation. We may observe this on the basis of the places where the novelist continued writing his book [Efremov 1988, 365]. Besides his hard and fruitful work in Moscow, Ivan Yefremov also made visits to Koktebel and Mozzhinka, frequent destinations for numerous Soviet scientists. Koktebel is a famous Crimean resort visited by the art historian Alexander Gabrichevsky, the physicist Boris Rauschenbach and the engineer Sergey Korolev. In its turn, such researchers as the physicist Lev Landau, the biologist Konstantin Skryabin, the pathologist Alexey Speransky and others had their cottage houses in Mozzhinka, Moscow Oblast.

The novel *Туманность Андромеды* allowed the scientist to confidently establish himself as a fiction writer. However, it was not his first literary work. Different pieces of fiction, including short stories, the novel *На краю Ойкумены* and the story *Звёздные корабли*, constitute the author's initial contribution to the Soviet science fiction. Despite the fact that these works were well-written, literary recognition was still awaiting the researcher.

Туманность Андромеды was firstly published in the magazine *Техника – молодёжи* in 1957. Due to its volume, the novel was divided into parts adjustable for magazine issues. The first book edition was made by the publishing house *Молодая гвардия* in 1958.

Since that time, there have been multiple editions in different countries and periods. For instance, the work was translated into English, Spanish, German, French, Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese, Turkish, etc. The first translations appeared shortly after the source book edition. In Moscow, *Andromeda: A Space-Age Tale* [1959, into English by George Hanna], *La Nébuleuse d'Andromède* [1960, into French by Harald Lusternik], *La Nebulosa de Andrómeda* [1960, into Spanish by Angel Herraiz] were published [Laboratoriâ Fantastiki, Institut perevoda].

The first target text in German [*Das Mädchen aus dem All*, literally translated as *The Spacegirl*] was edited in Berlin [GDR] in 1958 by Dieter Pommerenke and Heinz Lorenz after thorough censorship [Fritzsche 2006, 110]. In the 21st century, the novel remains quite popular for translators. This may be proved by the following editions: *The Andromeda Nebula* [New York, 2008, by Martha Kitchen, chapters 1–2], *A Nebulosa de Andrômeda* [São Paulo, 2014, from Hugo Novotny's translation by Ana Facundes], *La Nebulosa de Andrómeda* [Buenos Aires, 2015, by Hugo Novotny] [Laboratoriã Fantastiki, Institut perevoda].

The piece of fiction serves as a platform to demonstrate the novelist's view on the future communist well-being as well as on obstacles to it. The Fission Age in the literary work can be easily correlated with the real-life middle of the 20th century, when the capitalist and socialist states struggled against each other. As we may remember, mankind had already witnessed both testing and usage of the nuclear weapon. This, along with the progressing confrontation in the course of the Cold War, created a prospect of more serious disasters and even the destruction of life on the planet. Ivan Yefremov also anticipated future nuclear escalations. The writer saw the fundamental reason of the nuclear conflict in "the struggle between old [capitalist] and new [socialist] ideas" [Yefremov 1959, 60].

In spite of the implicit concern formulated by the novelist regarding the situation, he believed in the successful establishment of a harmonious communist society. The scientist considered the atomic danger as only one factor in a range of unfavourable circumstances to be surpassed. In addition, he understood that such a challenge was superficial. The reasons for the situation were rooted in the essence of social relations. According to Ivan Yefremov, the forming of every individual's social consciousness is indispensable for economic changes, which, in their turn, become crucial to reorganise the world [*ibid.*, 61–62].

Analysing the novel, we should also keep in mind the set of political and social conditions in the USSR at that time, informally labelled as the Khrushchev Thaw. Obtaining power, Nikita Khrushchev started introducing noticeable changes in different fields of the Soviet life. The principal features of the period were, *inter alia*, the atmosphere of liberalisation, the easing of censorship and the release of numerous political prisoners. Soviet writers received broader opportunities for their creative activity and expressing their

ideas. Although the reforms had rather strict limits, they allowed people to acquire a new impetus in work and everyday life. The society could get acquainted with a certain scope of opinions and information previously subjected to censorship.

Meanwhile, it is necessary to claim that the new leader held the reforms to strengthen his power as well. Referring to William Taubman, Anne Applebaum [2006] mentions that Nikita Khrushchev himself took part in the mass arrests during the Stalinist rule. Therefore, the leader's speech in the 20th Congress of the CPSU may be perceived as a successful attempt to defeat his political opponents who were also involved in repressive measures. Besides, from that time, any critique could be labelled as resistance to liberalisation. This meant that people still had to be careful in expressing their opinions.

Whatever the shifts were, communism remained the ultimate goal of the Soviet ideological paradigm still operating on a socialist basis. To succeed in achieving the overall well-being, communists suggest to increase the role of scientific and technical progress. This phenomenon received a broad prospect in science fiction. Literary works could propose a more attractive vision of success in science and technology than the current situation afforded.

Communist ideologists tried to present their doctrine as the most favourable one for the scientific and technical advances. Soviet science fiction had to promote the current and prospective state of science in the USSR. More than that, due to the contacts between nations around the world, not only domestic audience but also foreign one with its capitalist and socialist segments could get familiar with popular literary works from the USSR. This became possible because of the weakening of travel restrictions for Soviet citizens. In the 1950s, the first international trips from the USSR were allowed. Later on, the ultimate fall of the Iron Curtain further intensified the literary exchange.

The opening of borders already meant a lot for the Soviet scientists and artists. To a certain extent, it could be compared with space travels in Ivan Yefremov's novel. The fiction characters already transformed the Earth and visited other galaxies while Soviet people gradually discovered neighbouring countries for themselves.

Evidently, the expected Soviet scientific and technical breakthrough would not happen completely and very soon. However, the events after

publishing the novel *Туманность Андромеды* partially confirmed the aspirations expressed in the Soviet science fiction. The launch of the first artificial satellite took place in the same year when the publication of the literary work started. The writer himself did not expect an intensive movement of artificial satellites around the Earth before the finish of the first publication [Efremov 1958, 3].

This victory was not the ultimate triumph of the USSR science. Yuri Gagarin's flight served as a peak of Soviet space industry and it contributed to the upcoming pieces of science fiction. The event, along with the previous successes, intensified the already huge social interest in science and technologies and strengthened the social position of popular science fiction novelists.

In its turn, the increased attention to scientific and technical education in the USSR ensured the development of a more critical thinking by those obtaining it. Further on, these well-educated persons could easily observe the similarities and differences between reality and its vision proposed by the authorities. Moreover, Soviet intellectuals continued to be versatile and to have a great scope of interests. This helped them to get acquainted with new ideas and to develop a broader perspective.

Ethnic issues are represented in the novel as well. In *Туманность Андромеды*, the readers may trace the ethnic and racial origin of the representatives of the future society [Sergeev 2017, 140]. This means that the characters of the novel are still aware of their ancestors' background. As an example, Darr Veter was descended from "the Russian people", which finds its reflection in his name and surname [Yefremov 1959, 52, 154].

At the same time, if one considers the list of the mentioned ethnicities, solely two of them represent the former USSR countries: Russians and Circassians. More than that, the latter are referred to only once in the context of Erg Noor's "Circassian face" with a hooked nose [*ibid.*, 21]. On the one hand, the writer's wish to name specific peoples is understandable. His aim does not consist in mentioning as many ethnicities as possible. For obvious reasons, Ivan Yefremov refers to his own ethnicity and to other peoples greatly influencing mankind's development (Chinese, Indians, Greeks, Japanese, etc.).

Nonetheless, certain cases deserve special attention. In one of the episodes, the artist Cart Sann expresses his wish to paint a woman similar to

the ancient ones from the “Russian, Scandinavian or English” people [*ibid.*, 212]. Here, the adjectives *Russian* and *English* would refer to the appropriate modern ethnicities if there were not *Scandinavian*. The use of the latter means that the novelist predicted the merge of Norwegians, Swedes, Danes and Icelanders into a single people in the course of time.

In such a context, the assimilation of Belarussians, Estonians, Kazakhs, Latvians, Ukrainians and other ethnicities living in the Soviet Union is also assumable in Ivan Yefremov’s social model. More than that, this correlates well with the concept of a single “Soviet people” introduced by Nikolay Bukharin and further developed in the USSR [Brandenberger 2022, 182]. In essence, communists perceived ethnical background as an obstacle for uniting people rather than as an important identity component. Although the writer prevents certain ethnical identities from the complete oblivion, their role considerably decreases in his fiction world.

Consequently, the work by Ivan Efremov reflects the historical conditions and social expectations of the 1950s. It was written mainly in line with Nikita Khrushchev’s policy but it also contained implicit worries as for the use of nuclear energy. In the novel, one notices space exploration efforts and dreams that were supported by the real-life achievements. Communist ideology is depicted as the only way to ensure mankind’s progress. The proposed model of communism embodies the Soviet society’s hope for successful liberalisation. At the same time, the author’s adherence to the trend of unification is predictable. Assimilation was accepted by the Soviet ideologists and it is preserved in the modern globalised world.

3. Linguistic and translation issues

In this chapter, occasional terms in the novel and nuances of their translation will be concerned. One may judge the state of science in real life and in fiction works on the basis of terms. The abundance of the terms used and created in the Soviet science fiction was supposed to demonstrate the leading role of the communist regime in scientific and technical progress. In this context, created (occasional) terms deserve a special focus. They denoted objects and phenomena that did not yet really exist. Such terms

stimulated the reader's imagination and allowed to expect great scientific and technical advances. For the reader, the lexical units of concern served as the indicator of high capacity anticipated from communism.

Ivan Yefremov introduced a significant number of occasional terms (*sporamin*, *anameson*, *bomb beacon*, *silicolloid*, *silicoborum*, *chromocatoptric colours*, etc.) into popular science and science fiction vocabulary. Certain examples of the terms created by the author still outpace the current state of science. This testifies the writer's talent and breadth of imagination. The following table includes the selected occasional units with their definitions from English translation.

Table 1. Selected examples of occasional units and their definitions

anameson	Atomic fuel in which the meson bonds of the nucleus have been disrupted; it has an exhaust velocity equal to the speed of light.
sporamin	A drug to maintain the organism active over long periods without sleep.
bomb beacons	Automatic radio robots transmitting signals powerful enough to penetrate the atmosphere of a planet. They were dropped from the spaceships for the reconnaissance purposes.
K-particles	Particles formed inside the atomic nucleus from fragments of the circular meson cloud.
isograves	Lines of equal intensity in a gravitational field.
silicolloid	Made of silicon, a transparent material produced from fibrous silicon-organic compounds.
independent year	A terrestrial year that is independent of the speed of the spaceship.
corus	The unit of radiation.
dependent clock	A clock showing spaceship time.
optimal radiant	The optimal radius of the orbit of the spaceship around a planet and outside its atmosphere; the radius that gives ship a constant, unchanging orbit; it depends on the volume and the mass of the planet.
silicoborum	An amalgam of boron carbide and silicon to produce an extremely hard, transparent material.

chromocatic colours	Artist's colours with a strong reflection of light from the inner layers.
bipolar mathematics	Mathematics based on dialectic logic, with opposite analyses and solutions.
repagular calculus	A calculus in bipolar mathematics that deals with moments of transition (repagulum) from one state or condition to another and from one mathematical sign to another.
tiratron	An electronic instrument (electron lamp) to stimulate and maintain the nervous processes in the human organism, in particular the beating of the heart.

Sources: *Туманность Андромеды*, *Andromeda: A Space-Age Tale*.

At the same time, some terms by Ivan Yefremov seem rather cumbersome. Added to that, their origin may be derived from lexical units in other languages. For example, the term *электронная машина-мозг* is rendered in the English translation of the novel as an *electronic brain*. The concept of the latter had already been mentioned in the English-speaking countries in 1940–1945 [Collins Dictionary]. In Russian, its optimal version would be *электронный мозг* or *машина-мозг*. It is already clear that the concept denotes an electronic devise.

On the other hand, the word combination *электронная машина-мозг* sounds more impressive for the 20th century reader of the novel than the phrase *электронный мозг*. Even more, the term selected by the author is sufficiently exact. Nowadays, the concept of the electronic brain may refer not only to computers as independent units or parts of different devices. This concept may also designate an artificial brain created to complement or even to substitute a natural one. Still, the lexical unit used for the technical notion should possess high certainty. In this regard, Ivan Yefremov's choice can be positively assessed.

Ivan Yefremov could have used the Latin-based term *компьютер* but American and British scientists and fiction writers had already selected the analogical term in English. Therefore, their Soviet counterparts had to stick to another lexical unit. The use of the term created by the rivals would symbolise a minor ideological defeat in the Cold War. Consequently, harsh competition between the USA and the USSR was manifested at the linguistic level as well.

Having international contacts, Ivan Yefremov possibly encountered the concept of the electronic brain. Any translation in English could lead the reader to an assumption that the version *электронный мозг* is inspired from the mentioned concept. The implicitly set task of demonstrating a great capacity of communism in fiction influenced the writer's decision to expand the suggested term. The ideological context plays a crucial role in the choice made by the author.

Thus, at the linguistic level, the piece of fiction is characterised by numerous and impressive occasional terms. Their objective was to demonstrate the advances and the potential of a communist society in science and technology. No terms could be explicitly borrowed from English as it would raise doubts on the advantageous position of communism in relation to capitalism. Writing the novel, Ivan Yefremov managed to create a large number of terms that successfully met the aforementioned aims.

4. Literary context

The novel *Туманность Андромеды* is a classic example of a utopia literary work. The concept of the utopia is closely interrelated with the communist ideology as both notions deal with the vision of a perfect society. Furthermore, Michel Heller describes the work *Manifesto of the Communist Party* by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels as a “utopian program” [Heller 1984, 105].

The novel describes the mankind of the future united for maintaining the previous achievements and for meeting new prospects. The Fission Age, the last stage of the Era of Disunity, is followed by the Eras of the World Unity and the Common Labour. The names of the latter two periods explicitly refer to the ideal of a monolithic society reflected in a motto “Working men of all countries, unite!” [Marx, Engels 1848, 34]. Meanwhile, closely considering the names of certain ages (the Age of Common Tongue, the Age of Simplification, the Age of Realignment), one may notice their correspondence to the current trend of globalisation.

The view on the further social development expressed in Ivan Yefremov's novel is opposed to the dystopian works by prominent American and British authors. Aldous Huxley [*Brave New World*], George Orwell

[*Animal Farm*, 1984] and Ray Bradbury [*451 Fahrenheit*] presented quite a pessimistic vision of the future reality. The listed works were written between 1931 and 1953. All of them refer to the social crisis of the future mankind in different conditions: hedonistic consumption society divided by castes [*Brave New World*], animalism [socialism/communism] resulting in creating even a worse version of human [capitalist] society [*Animal Farm*], constant wars between Oceania, Eurasia and Eastasia [1984], prohibition and burning of books [*451 Fahrenheit*].

On the contrary, Ivan Yefremov was confident about the victory of common sense and progress. Although the hierarchy partially remains in the society [Kremenchutskyi 2024], it has no traits of dictatorship. Bodies like the Astronautical and Economic Council make final decisions based on professionalism, experience and ethics. Leaders are completely responsible for their actions and acknowledge their failures. Instead of satisfaction, the majority of Ivan Yefremov's characters are ready to pass through different trials and even sacrifice their lives for the sake of science.

In *Туманность Андромеды*, communist ideology is viewed as a tool for perfecting a human without limiting to daily items and entertainments [Efremov 1958, 66]. Instead of wars, the efforts were aimed at improving everyday life and science [*ibid.*, 50]. There are no states, social classes or boundaries in the world of the novel [Sergeev 2017, 141]. Books are not destroyed but preserved as valuable historical evidence.

Ivan Yefremov's literary works are characterised by extremely elaborated details [Agapitova 2017, 8]. This feature helps to create realistic images, which intensifies the impressiveness of the depicted events and makes readers believe in the inevitability of the presented future. In the novel of concern, these feelings are strengthened by the author's scientific background. As a researcher, Ivan Yefremov could provide reality-based descriptions supporting his utopian vision of the future. Besides, the novelist wanted to view the future "from the inside" [Efremov 1961], which ensured the illusion of truthfulness [Agapitova 2017, 20].

The narrative structure of the fiction work also corresponds to the utopian criteria. In spite of difficulties experienced by the characters, the forthcoming prosperity is definite and extending. All the climaxes end up in positive resolutions. This allows fiction humanity to confidently set new objectives. In retrospections, the times before the Era of World Unity are

referred to as a contradictory and harsh period that is never supposed to return. The author resorts to the retrospections in order to better highlight the new eras [Efremov 1961].

Most characters of the novel reflect the writer's idealistic perspective as well. Both men and women are physically and mentally strong, intelligent, confident, persistent. In any circumstances, they strive for a better life primarily for mankind. Their positive traits are getting refined in the course of the surpassing difficult situations. Due to continuous scientific advances, the humanity of the future easily copes with different diseases and gets in contact with other space civilisations.

Therefore, the novel *Туманность Андромеды* perfectly describes the mankind's utopian future. Ivan Yefremov's fiction world is strictly opposed to the preceding pessimistic works by Aldous Huxley, George Orwell and Ray Bradbury. The style, narrative structure and characters of the novel affirm the belief in a positive scenario. In the ideological context, this was crucial for the Soviet regime as people could better devote themselves to building communism.

5. Conclusion

The novel *Туманность Андромеды* by Ivan Yefremov serves as an ideological manifesto of a communist utopia. Such a function of the literary work is reflected through the historical, linguistic and literary aspects. In terms of historical conditions, the piece of fiction was greatly influenced by relative liberalisation and allowed to anticipate the USSR's victories in space industry. Such events as the launch of the first artificial satellite and Yuri Gagarin's flight strengthened the optimistic sentiment. Still, the literary work implicitly expressed the concern as for nuclear issues and tolerance for ethnic assimilation. The novel demonstrates communism as the only possible way to guarantee a prosperous and safe future.

From the linguistic perspective, occasional terms by Ivan Yefremov testify a strong belief in the progress of the future communist society. The terms in the novel were supposed to prove the advantages of communism in comparison to capitalism. As a utopian novel, *Туманность Андромеды* is completely different from the dystopian works by American and British

writers. The literary work affirms faith in humanity's comprehensive development. Its positive scenario is reinforced by the author's style and narrative techniques. The evolution of characters also contributes to the readers' aspirations.

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POWIEŚĆ *MGLAWICA ANDROMEDY* IWANA JEFRIEMOWA W KONTEKŚCIE HISTORYCZNYM I LITERACKIM

STRESZCZENIE

Słowa kluczowe: Iwan Jefriemow, fantastyka naukowa, utopia, komunizm, terminy

Mgławica Andromedy jest utopijną powieścią science fiction autorstwa Iwana Jefriemowa, opublikowaną po raz pierwszy w 1957 roku. Dzieło to jest ideowym manifestem pomyślnej komunistycznej przyszłości, doskonale oddaje nastrój epoki, w której powstało. Względna liberalizacja i postęp przemysłu kosmicznego wywarły znaczący wpływ na ducha powieści. Przedstawia ona komunizm jako jedyną możliwość zbudowania pożądanego społeczeństwa. Jednocześnie porusza kwestię energii jądrowej. Powieść zawiera dużą liczbę okazjonalizmów, które mają odzwierciedlać obecne osiągnięcia i ogromny potencjał komunizmu. W przeciwieństwie do słynnych dystopii amerykańskich i brytyjskich pisarzy utwór Iwana Jefriemowa wyraża wiarę w postęp i zwycięstwo zdrowego rozsądku. Styl, struktura narracji i postacie są całkowicie zgodne z utopijną wizją przyszłości.