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THE SCIENCE-FICTION NOVEL MOB-RA, A LOOK AT THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

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Abstract: In this article we look at science fiction as a genre in children's and youth literature. In doing so, we refer to the Macedonian science fiction literature for young people and the novel "Mob-ra" by the author Zorica Ruseska. The novel "Mob-Ra" was published in 1999 as an edition of "Mlad Borec", by the then exceptionally young author Zorica Ruseska. The novel is important not only because of the age of the author, but also because of the period in which it was published, when science fiction in Macedonia was still shyly making its way. The analysis of the novel should indicate whether and to what extent it relies on the already established and set theoretical-critical postulates on which science fiction is based, by separating the specific elements of the novel.

Keywords: science fiction, novel for young people, Zorica Ruseska.

A brief return to the theory of science fiction

There are many definitions that can be used to more closely define science fiction as a genre. Thus, Jadranka Vladova believes that science fiction literature usually includes prose works (novels and short stories) that describe invented and hyperbolized scientific discoveries that help humanity and its progress or threaten the human race with different types of dangers for his survival. The events described by a science fiction work may take place in the future, on our planet, but very often they describe other spaces, other planets that are traveled by non-existent means of transport, and which are inherent in the writers' imagination due to the progress of cosmonautics. (Скопје: Култура, 2001).

Dusica Lukic believes that the term science fiction for children and youth means the works created by the writer's literary talent and his emotional need to address his young reader (with a song, drama or film) about the world of Possible Reality, according to the 'differentia specifica' of science fiction. These are works that children can understand, that they can entertain, to tell them something serious, to joke a little, to fill the children's world with experiences, to contribute in building the child's personality, to develop their worldview, to

provide them with a literary experience and literary experience - which, otherwise, is expected from any artistically valuable literary work. (Novi Sad: Detinjstvo, 2001).

Jadranka Vladova talks about the attractiveness of this genre for children: "Science fiction, because of its adventurous aspect, is an unusually attractive genre for young readers. Modern children live in an age of heightened communication, in a time when the media is present in their daily lives, in a time when they are increasingly learning computer communication skills. That is why a book like this can spark the imagination and encourage them to think more deeply." (Скопје: Култура, 2001).

Jean-Baptiste Baronian believes that a crucial feature of science fiction is that it is not interested, however, in the world as it is, but in the world as it can be, as it should be, it seeks to show a state of our thought or our universe at some point in its history - at one possible moment, probable, sensible perhaps, but never current. (Скопје: Македонска книга, 1988).

Review of the novel "Mob-ra" by Zorica Ruseska

The novel "Mob-Ra" was published in 1999 as an edition of "Mlad Borec", by the then exceptionally young author Zorica Ruseska¹. The novel is important not only because of the age of the author, but also because of the period in which it was published, when science fiction in Macedonia was still shyly making its way. The novel "Mob-Ra" is an interesting story, in which events and times are intertwined in a very unusual way, after a dangerous pandemic appeared on the planet Telta, in one of the star systems, caused by an unknown virus that threatens to destroy the inhabitants of Telta. The Planetary Council decides to save the Telton civilization and selects some of its representatives whom it thinks are not infected and sends them on the stellar ship Mob-ra on a long and uncertain journey through space in order to find a new and suitable planet where will "resurrect" the Telton civilization.

They will find such a planet and direct "Mob-ra" to it, but when they get closer to the stellar system in which the planet called Earth is located, the commander of "Mob-ra" will discover that even among those so zealously chosen The crew, however, are some infected and they have nothing left but to sacrifice themselves in the name of science and to save the inhabitants of the Earth who then know by technique only a bow, arrow and stone ax. The Teltons will have time only to hide their ship in the underground on a mountain in Macedonia

¹ Zorica Ruseska was born on December 23, 1978 in Vevcani. At the time of writing this novel, she was a second year student at the Medical Faculty in Skopje. Today he lives and works in Skopje. He started his literary activity very early. Namely, she started the novel "The Secret of the Crystal Cave" when she was only ten years old. On August 10, 1997, her very successful science-fiction radio drama "The Secret of the Blue Cave" was broadcast on the Macedonian Radio Skopje.

and to carve in the cave an encrypted pictographic message with which the powerful Teltons spaceship can be found and activated. It will be possible, but only when the technical cognitive level of the Earthlings is such that they can understand and unravel the message. (Скопје: Млад борец, 1999).

The first two chapters of the novel are dedicated to prehistoric people called Maons and the author very skillfully takes us back to their daily existence in the tribal community. The life of the cave people and their appearance is very vividly described: "Most of the tribe lived in the big cave (...) The hunchbacked creatures, whose skin was dark and overgrown with hair, went to the forest not far from their habitat" (8). And later, in another place, with a very small difference, their appearance is described, at the moment when they return to their habitat after a successful hunt: "The last rays hit their slightly hunched overgrown dark skinned bodies and were refracted by the large grains of sweat that slowly flowed through the hairs" (9). In another place is indicated the stage at which the Earthlings are then, at the moment when the Teltons find the planet Earth as a suitable place to rebuild their civilization: "They still do not have a letter, but they probably have some tools" (18). Nowhere in these first two chapters is it stated that these prehistoric people have at least some form of speech. Only in one place, at the moment when they notice an unusual light, it is mentioned that the communication between them takes place with screams, although in the given case that communication as a result of shock is missing: "In the eyes of Maon there was a reflection of a strange, blue light, which flashed coming down from the sky, for an hour, the whole group of hunters was obsessed with something, and did not utter a single cry" (9). The next point on which prehistoric man and the alien differ is speech. "Prehistoric man expresses himself with gestures, with animal cries, and if he speaks at all, his voice is hoarse, and his speech is interrupted by muttering. In contrast, the alien possesses an instantly intelligible language - whether he knows our language perfectly, whether he uses a translation machine or uses telepathy - or, if his language is incomprehensible, it is often composed of shrill and modulated voices. The antenna or antennas with which it is often supplied demonstrate its ability for technically superior communication". (Ниш: Градина).

Jean Bruno Renard talks about the differences between a wild man and an alien. His claims can be fully applied to the consideration of the relationship between the alien and the prehistoric man. According to him, the alien and the prehistoric man, they appear as two extremes of evolution: one embodies the past, the origin, and the other the future, the end. These are the two frontier figures of man: the prehistoric man who represents the lower limit

and the alien who represents the upper limit. Furthermore, in the same text, the author gives us a parallel description of the wild (prehistoric) man and the humanoid alien. That description focuses on a few basic points: physical appearance, language, weapons, manner of movement, habitat. (Ниш: Градина).

The physical appearance of the wild (prehistoric) man reveals a clumsy, hairy creature, with dark hair and skin, mostly naked or imposed with animal skin. Opposite him, the alien is slender, dressed in a jumpsuit that is tight, smooth, or completely covered with a spacesuit; his skin is light and has no or very little hair; his head is often bald ... Prehistoric man is often microcephaly, while the alien is often macrocephaly, whether his skull is hypertrophic or his head is proportional to the body, but still larger than an adult human being. The face of the prehistoric man is characterized by two large, black eyes, a wide mouth, a flattened nose and prominent eyebrows. On the contrary, the alien's face is usually round and often has small or narrow eyes; sometimes there is a lack of nose or ears. The appearance of the Teltons is pointed out twice in the third chapter of the novel, where the usual image of the aliens is evident (green body color, pointed head, unusual openings on the head, etc.). The first case is when the Teltons discover the planet Earth and its suitability for their habitation: "The little creature with a dark green color rushed into the cockpit ... "(17), and the second case is the description of Lon Unai the moment he finds out that the deadly virus has spread among their crew, and the trait of the Teltons for external / manifestation in changing their feelings: "The two large openings on the front of Lon Unai's pointed green head began to change color from yellow to brown, which was a sign of fear" (17).

This science-fiction novel by Ruseska contains some other themes typical of this genre, which at the same time testify to the connection between science fiction and myth. Some of the most common topics in science fiction come from mythology. One of them is the one about the cyclical destruction and renewal of the Cosmos. "The conviction that not only yesterday, not only today, but even in the distant future the same situations arose, are repeated and will be repeated arising from man's unchanging attitude towards himself, his community and the universe around him - and this conviction underlies every fit in the mythical forms of feeling and interpretation of the world - speaks to the closeness of the authors of the works of science fiction to a conception of time that is present in the myth". (Скопје: Македонска книга, 1988). In this context, it should be noted that one of the most common topics is eschatological, ie. that of the apocalypse of the planet, and its revitalization and revival. "The various apocalypse and the resumption of the cycle of life on the devastated Earth, so many times elaborated in the

works of science fiction, are just one of the possible examples of understanding the cyclicality of time."

In this case, we are talking about the eschatological theme, which is contained in the fact that the survival of the Telton civilization is endangered not only by the deadly virus, but also by another civilization: "Is, neither how it works nor could they find a cure or a way to stop its spread. (...) The information said that scientists have managed to capture and decipher a message from a planet in the system of the star Taron. The message was short, and after deciphering it, they concluded that the inhabitants of that unknown planet from the Taron system would attack and destroy Telta, precisely with the help of a dangerous virus" (12). Henri Gougaud thinks that the themes of science fiction are in fact "rejuvenated myths" Furthermore, he connects the myths of ascent to the sky with cosmic flights. In the former lies the desire to reach the ultimate knowledge, and in the latter - the desire to explore intergalactic spaces. In those spacecraft, their passengers are often found asleep, in a state of anabiosis. They remain in this state until they reach the programmed planet, where they are to sow new life. It has been said before that cataclysms usually save one or more human couples who have to continue the civilization from which they come to a new, more suitable planet. Henri Gougaud relates this to Noah's ark which saves the chosen people and animals on his ark from the Flood: "... "The authors of science fiction work repeat it with the image of their spaceship wandering through space, a symbol of the necessity of transferring the offspring of life energy from one cycle of planetary existence to another." (Paris: Julliard, 1974). This new life should usually be preserved and sown by selected people who are distinguished by their beauty, but also intelligence. In the case of the novel Mob-ra, the evacuated Teltons were selected on the basis of the fact that none of them had any contact with other persons for two months, as long as it took for the first symptoms of the disease to appear. In fact, the hibernation that the Teltons undergo in the spaceship is a kind of sleep, albeit temporary (sleep-death), and then resuscitation by some future Earthlings: "Putting our bodies in liquid nitrogen and freezing them to temperature close to absolute zero, which will completely destroy the virus. Thus, our bodies will be able to survive in this state for millions of years, and someday, some future civilization may be able to bring them back to life or clone our DNA molecules" (18).

The penultimate, fourth chapter of the novel, takes us to the present day when the narrative is transformed into a kind of adventurous story. First, the author introduces us to the character of Anna, a young girl who works as an assistant at the Faculty of Archeology. Anna is an urban girl, coming from a small town, modest and honest. She has great respect for

Professor Petar, whose assistant she is, and that is why when her student reveals information about an unusual cave in her area, she wholeheartedly shares it with the mentor. Sudden heart disease will drive the professor away from the faculty, but he directs Anna to Ilin, a businessman and adventurer, and Prof. Mihail. Ana's first choice – Ilin, turns out to be wrong and dangerous, because Ilin is a dangerous adventurer who does not stop at anything, and even resorts to an assassination attempt to get to the gold of Alexander the Great, which he assumes is in the cave. It emits a beam of blue light at a specific time and clarifies the strange inscriptions on the rocks that are artificially carved. In the duel with Ana and trying to hide the traces of his crime, he will suffer in the cave. Anna will not be discouraged by the events, nor by the death of Professor Peter, but heads to Moscow where the second part of this adventurous story begins, but now interwoven with romantic elements. It is in Moscow, at the home of Professor Mihail, who is of Macedonian origin, that she met his son Alexander. It is no coincidence that the author introduced Alexander in the story and it is not accidental that he is an astronaut, because apart from the fact that love is born between them at first sight, when he comes to Macedonia and visits the unusual cave, thanks to his knowledge of astronautics, the mystery of the unusual cave is solved and the tragic fate of the Teltonians will be revealed: "These are the only ones who survived that catastrophe..., so they find refuge here on Earth and hide the ship underground ... But they are also infected, and for them there is no salvation ... (...) this is their last message, their last hope that, nevertheless, the memory of their planet will not fade ... This ship, perhaps, has no more place to fly in space. He is left on Earth and maybe his mission is right here, on this planet, because maybe he is in the same danger as the planet he comes from" (113-114).

This is how Zorica Ruseska's novel "Mob-ra" ends with the discovery (in the fifth, last chapter) that the Earthlings "were never alone, not even on their own planet, not in space" (115), which still once confirms the words of Jean-Bruno Renard, who points out that the wild (prehistoric) man was a "counter-model" because he embodies everything we do not want to be: close to animality, uncultured, naked, cannibal, brutal, unbridled, lazy, without faith and law, he further points out that unlike him, aliens are always imagined as being superior technologically and often physically. Sometimes they are both morally and socially superior to us humans. Sometimes, they come to study us as animals or to colonize us as "primitive". We expect a revelation from the alien about our human condition: it is assumed that the alien possesses secret knowledge of the origin or origin of man, a forgotten or still unknown wisdom, miraculous scientific knowledge. All the stories of those who were in "contact" represent the

aliens coming to warn people or, even better, to deliver a message of salvation to the dangers that threaten the Earth: nuclear war, pollution, crisis of values.

Finally, according to the last scene of the novel in which the Teltonians' concern for the future of the Earthlings is evident, in whose name they will sacrifice themselves, let us only recall Lyudmila Stojanova's statement about the connection and intertwining of science fiction and myth, that "It is typical for a myth to care about the collective destiny of a tribe - for example, to receive fire, or to establish a tribal community and its survival in the fight against the enemy. The social breadth of the problem, treated in science fiction always exceeds the fate of the individual and refers to humanity as a whole". (Београд: САНУ, 1989).

CONCLUSION

In the novel "Mob-ra" by Zorica Ruseska we have a typical science-fiction novel, which completely fits into the already established postulates of science fiction, which is strongly related to the myth in the part of self-sacrifice that aliens endure in the name of saving their, the Telton civilization, but also that of the Earthlings. In that context, the eschatological topic should be mentioned, which is one of the most common topics in science fiction, namely the topic of the cyclical destruction and birth of the world, ie the constant renewal of the cosmos.

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