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SCIENCE FICTION BY ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE: SOLVING WORLDWIDE ISSUES

Annotation

In the plot of this work, A. Conan Doyle applies the theory of ether, which fills the cosmic space, which is now popular. According to the theory, there are regions in the universe that are dangerous to humanity. In this article highlights of science fiction by Arthur Conan Doyle: solving worldwide issues.

Keywords: Science-fiction, space, the disaster, poison, landscape, universal destruction, scientific discovery, the fate of humanity.

НАУЧНАЯ ФАНТАСТИКА АРТУРА КОНАН ДОЙЛЯ: РЕШЕНИЕ МИРОВЫХ ПРОБЛЕМ

Аннотация

В сюжете этого произведения А. Конан Дойл применяет популярную сейчас теорию эфира, заполняющего космическое пространство. Согласно теории, во вселенной существуют регионы, опасные для человечества. В этой статье освещаются основные моменты научной фантастики Артура Конан Дойля: решение глобальных проблем.

Ключевые слова: Научная фантастика, космос, катастрофа, яд, ландшафт, всеобщее разрушение, научное открытие, судьба человечества.

ARTUR KONAN DOYL ILMYI FANTASTIKASI: DUNYO MUAMMOLARINI HAL QILISH

Annotatsiya

Ushbu asar syujetida A. Konan Doyl hozirda mashhur bo'lgan kosmik makonni to'ldiradigan efir nazariyasini qo'llaydi. Nazariyaga ko'ra, koinotda insoniyat uchun xavfli mintaqalar mavjud. Ushbu maqolada Artur Conan Doyle tomonidan ilgari surilgan ilmiy-fantastika: dunyo bo'ylab muammolarni hal qilish masalasi ko'rib chiqilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: Ilmiy-fantastika, kosmik, falokat, zahar, landshaft, universal halokat, ilmiy kashfiyot, insoniyat taqdiri.

Introduction. The main achievements of Arthur Conan Doyle as a science fiction writer are associated with the cycle of works about Professor Challenger. Together with detective stories about Sherlock Holmes, these works brought him well-deserved fame. The cycle includes two stories (or short novels) "The Lost World" (The Lost World, 1912) and "The Poison Belt" (The Poison Belt, 1913), stories "The Disintegration Machine" (The Disintegration Machine, 1927) and "When the earth screamed" (When the World Screamed, 1928). The story "In the Land of Mists" (The Land of Mists, 1926), whose main character is also Professor Challenger. The novel "The Poison" Belt became a kind of continuation of "The Lost World". A. Abramov believes that this story is "much less successful in science fiction" [1.p.481]. The fact is that A. Conan Doyle uses in the plot of the work the theory, popular at that time, about the ether filling outer space. In space, according to this theory, there are areas that are dangerous to mankind if the Earth is in one of them. Conan Doyle, of course, puts the formulation of this hypothesis into the mouth of Challenger, who was the only one who foresaw the disaster and was able to prepare for it. The scientist explains to his friends:

"We are all poisoned. Our planet has fallen into a poisonous etheric zone and is sinking deeper into it at a speed of many millions of miles per minute" [2.p.483].

This hypothesis has long been rejected by science, but Conan Doyle, who lived and wrote long before space exploration, cannot be blamed for his fascination with this theory. Moreover, in this work the hypothesis itself fades into the background, and philosophical arguments about humanity, the meaning of its existence, are put forward to the fore. Conan Doyle paints an impressive picture of a lifeless planet. "Not a single bird soared under the blue sky; the distant landscape was not animated in front of us by either people or animals. The sun, leaning towards sunset, continued to illuminate the country with a peaceful brilliance, but a deep silence of universal destruction reigned over everything, the victims of which were soon to fall for us" [2,p. 485].

The heroes of the story see the lifeless bodies of their contemporaries, lying where the catastrophe found them: men and women, old people and children, in cars and on the grass, lying and sitting. The apocalyptic picture is crowned with an eerie silence, which in Conan Doyle symbolizes the possible end of human existence: The dead silence caused an eerie feeling. She was so solemn, so tragic that the panting and hum of our car seemed to us an obscene violation of it, a profanation of this stately peace, spreading like a huge shroud over the ruins of humanity. This numb, cemetery silence, combined with clouds of smoke that rose here and there to the sky above the ashes, tempered, like an icy breath, our warm admiration for the beauty of nature"[2].

Main part. It is interesting that the writer explains many social conflicts by the action of the poison (ether). It is the poisoned air that causes street riots, uprisings and pogroms, and, as the story says, this happens differently for each nation.

In the description of the disaster, there is some illogicality and even a certain naivety. People who have returned to life do not really remember anything. "Minute dizziness" is the only thing they remember, as if there were no attacks of suffocation. Everyone just woke up, got up and went back to business. The "salvation" of an old woman who breathed oxygen from a cylinder, which she used because of her illness, seems unconvincing. How did she last for the whole night, if the main characters used several cylinders during this time? It seems that here we again meet with artistic convention. For the sake of narrative dynamics, the author doesn't really care about the logic of the facts being presented. The Poison Belt is not so much about a possible scientific discovery, the prediction of a catastrophe, but about the fate of humanity as a whole. Compared to The Lost World, this work has a clearly expressed philosophical character. The action in the story "The Poison Belt" develops in four stages:

1. Events before the disaster, preparing heroes for it.

2. Description of the coming cataclysm, impressions of the heroes of the story, its witnesses.
3. Awakening of humanity, which did not die, but only fell asleep and returns to its former life.
4. Conclusions that the heroes draw from the events that took place.

This plot scheme also determines the characteristics of the characters. All the heroes of the work, along with the rest of humanity, are involved in unusual circumstances. But, in contrast to *The Lost World*, it is not so much the adventures that are important here, but the reasoning of the characters about the meaning of being. All the heroes of the "Poisoned Belt" in the face of a universal cataclysm talk about the essence of man, the significance of civilization. These reflections show the heroes from a new angle. Images are evolving. The author adds new details to their characteristics.

First of all, this concerns Professor Challenger.

"In the Poison belt" the reader appears in many ways the same Challenger as in "The Lost World". Many of his features are already known from the first work. His harshness and rudeness in this story are even more pronounced. One of the characters describes him as follows: - Impossible person! exclaimed McArdle. "A newborn pigeon would seem to have cackled at its rudeness, and the most peaceful assembly of Quakers might rebel against it".

One of the main features of Challenger develops in the work - hatred of journalists. The narrator Malone, who has already become close to the professor during his trip to the dinosaurs, hears about the professor the opinion of his fellow craft and a compliment addressed to him: "Last week, he grabbed the collar and braces of young Alex Simpson from *The Courier* and dragged him a mile along the highway. You must have read about this in the police chronicle, right? Our young employees would, perhaps, prefer to interview an alligator who escaped from the menagerie. You are the only person capable of this; you are a longtime friend of this crocodile". And this story emphasizes his mental abilities, which are recognized even by his sworn enemies. One of them says: "Just look at the size of his hat! That hat covers a sixty-ounce brain - a powerful machine, I swear to God, working without a hitch and producing a great product. Show me the machine building and I will determine the dimensions of the machine. "

In "Poison Belt" Challenger appears all the same narcissistic personality. The reader will immediately recognize his appearance, to the description of which the author adds new details. The comparisons and epithets that Conan Doyle uses are short and vivid: Challenger does not initially suggest that someone may have developed logical abilities, like himself, and condescendingly admits, despite the "difference in talents", the ability to think in Malone, whom he calls "a young friend." Even the laws of nature give way to Challenger's conceit. When Summerlee reflects sadly that death is inevitable even for Challenger, the scientist protests: "No, Summerlee, I don't want to know anything about your laws, because at least I seem to myself to be too powerful a phenomenon to be threatened by purely physical decay into a handful of salts and three buckets of water" [4].

Without any hesitation, Challenger announces to his comrades about his plans to write an exceptionally brilliant book: "My mental capital, everything that I have read so far, my experiments and observations, my truly exceptional talent - all this should have been concentrated in this book. She would undoubtedly usher in a new era in science." One of the features of Challenger, already known to the reader from *The Lost World*, is his respect for friendship. It is in the ability to be friends that the narrator Malone sees justification for all the negative qualities of the professor when he recalls their joint adventures. In any case, Challenger is honest and straightforward. As in *The Lost World*, Challenger appears in *The Poisoned Belt* as a true man of science, an adherent of its principles. The professor perceives the catastrophe that has happened only as an opportunity for a unique scientific experiment and when asked to commit suicide in a hopeless situation, he indignantly objects that he does not want to shorten "such an amazing experience" even for a minute. Glorifying science, Challenger defines the type of real researcher, to which he refers, of course, himself: "A truly scientific mind," I say in the third person, so as not to seem boastful, "an ideal scientific mind should be able to invent a new abstract scientific theory even in that period of time, which is needed for its carrier to fall from a balloon to earth. Men of such a strong temper are needed to conquer nature and become pioneers of truth".

But the main difference between Challenger in *The Poison Belt* is that he is no longer a lone hermit. He is married, and the circumstances of his married life illuminate this person from the other side, complement his portrait. Being capable of self-irony, the professor wittily defines the contrast between himself and his wife, strikingly complementing each other: "If you imagine a gorilla next to a gazelle, then you can form an idea of this couple"[3].

Malone is amazed at their relationship. A fragile woman and a rude Challenger sincerely love each other, cannot exist without each other. Before their inevitable death, their feelings are shown in front of their friends. The startled Malone states: "Here, overshadowed by death, was revealed that Challenger who was hiding in the deepest depths of this personality, the man who managed to win and keep the love of his wife."

Saying goodbye to death, each of the spouses comically defines the purpose and meaning of their lived life: "- I thank heaven for the fact that I still have my home and my husband. My purpose in life is the same," Mrs. Challenger said [3].

"Me too," Challenger remarked. "There is as much scientific work as you want, and the catastrophe itself will put us to solve many extremely interesting problems. As the action progresses, Challenger becomes more and more philosophical. He is concerned not only with scientific discoveries, but with the whole experience of human development, the meaning of its existence. At the same time, the scientist acts as a humanist who highly values a person as such. When Summerlee expresses doubt that human existence is the highest goal of the development of nature, the scientist sharply objects: "Of course, my sir, for what other purpose?"

True, Challenger admits that the person may be "just a by-product, accidentally arising in this process." The professor has in mind the claims of man to call himself the highest creation of nature. Challenger views man as a part of the universe, closely related to all of its elements. Human ambition often leads to stupidity and violence. The professor urges you to really perceive your place in the world and to drop excessive claims: "The situation is exactly the same as if the foam on the surface of the ocean imagined that the ocean should only serve its creation and preservation, or if the mouse in the cathedral believed that the building was erected only for its habitation".

Humanity must learn a lesson and realise its dependence on the forces of nature. Through the lips of Challenger, Conan Doyle sarcastically compares people to bacilli, and God to a gardener who protects the world he created from them. The rest of the characters in the novel come to similar conclusions. The narrator Malone undergoes a kind of spiritual evolution. The adventurer, the adventurer, is reborn, not without the influence of Challenger, into a philosopher and thinker, in whose words the author argues. Malone first thinks about the end of the world approaching. Previously, these were empty words, but now,

when the globe has fallen into a band of poisonous ether, not yet knowing how everything will end, Malone sadly reflects: "End of the world! How often have we heard this word! That it can be transformed into reality, that it means not only a moment completely indefinite in time, but on the contrary - this time, our "today" - it was a destructive, desperate thought".

Malone is shocked by the disaster. Further existence for him loses all meaning and represents continuous torment: "Everything that we loved on earth was swallowed up by the great, unknown, immeasurable ocean, and we were left on this deserted island without companions and without any hope. A few more years, during which we had to, like jackals, wander around the graves of our contemporaries who departed, - and then a lonely, belated death awaited us. " The humorous element complements the basic sci-fi and philosophical content of *The Poison Belt*. It can be argued that in this work Arthur Conan Doyle managed to rise to a new ideological and artistic level.

Conclusion. It seems that Arthur Conan Doyle's contribution to science fiction literature has not yet been fully appreciated. As scientific thought and science fiction develop in the 21st century, the influence of Conan Doyle's work on science fiction writers will not only not diminish, but will undoubtedly increase.

The well-known literary critic M.Urnov precisely defines the significance of Arthur Conan Doyle as a writer: ". His place both in the reader's memory and in the history of English literature is definitely and original. It is noticeable for everyone" [8, p. 355].

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