

MARIA KWAPIEŃ

Łódź

THE ANTI-UTOPIA AS DISTINGUISHED FROM ITS COGNATE LITERARY GENRES IN MODERN BRITISH FICTION

The anti-utopia belongs to those types of literary works, which, like science-fiction and the thriller, enjoy a considerable popularity both among British writers and readers, but have not yet received an adequate interest by critics. This is due to the fact that anti-utopian novels and short stories do not rank as literature of the highest aesthetic value and that the rapid development of the modern anti-utopia is a comparatively recent phenomenon.

The main body of British (and American) criticism dealing with the genre, consists of various articles published in scholarly journals. Critical books are few and they seldom concentrate exclusively upon the anti-utopia; more often than not they discuss it together with other kinds of writings such as utopias and science-fiction¹.

Even less has been written about the genre in Poland: all one could mention here are some articles concentrating on the definition of the anti-utopia² and, as regards the development of the genre in English literature, several others dealing with individual novels. That it is so does not seem strange considering how rarely anti-utopias (and utopias) appear in the literature of our country.

The insufficiency of criticism and the fact that most of it is to be found abroad may impede research carried out by a Polish Anglicist interested in the anti-utopia. And yet, in view of its marked development in the 20th century and its importance

¹ Among the most important critical sources are *The Future as Nightmare: H.G. Wells and the Anti-Utopians*, by Mark R. Hillegas; *From Utopia to Nightmare*, by Chad Walsh; *Utopia and Its Enemies*, by G. Kateb, and also R. Gerber's *Utopian Fantasy: A Study of English Utopian Fiction Since the End of the Nineteenth Century*; J. O. Bailey's *Pilgrims Through Space and Time: Trends and Patterns in Scientific and Utopian Fiction*, and *Utopie und Anti-Utopie. Von der Struktur-analyse zur Strukturtypologie*, by Hubertus Schulte Herbrüggen.

² Cf., for example, W. Ostrowski, "Materiały do Słownika rodzajów literackich", "Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich", 1958, vol. 1, p. 192.

as an expression of tendencies existing in Western literature, the genre of anti-utopia deserves his full attention.

One of the fundamental problems, which demand solving before entering upon the analysis of English specimens of the genre, is the question of fixing its boundaries by means of a definition. The problems connected with the definition of the anti-utopia will be the subject of the present paper.

1. THE NAME OF THE ANTI-UTOPIA

In attempting to define the nature of the anti-utopia one encounters an additional difficulty which has its source in the variety of names given to the genre. The term "anti-utopia" came to be widely used round about the year 1950. Before that time British and American critics wrote about "satirical utopias"³, "utopistic satires"⁴, "false utopias"⁵ or, very often, "negative utopias". Among disparate literary works labelled by these terms were also anti-utopias (in the sense of the word to be defined in this paper) which were not yet distinguished as a separate group. Although the term "anti-utopia" is now generally accepted and has been established not only in the nomenclature of English criticism (cf. French *anti-utopie*, German *anti-Utopie* rather than *gegen-Utopie* and Polish *antyutopia*), a certain degree of arbitrariness still exists in the terminology. And thus, for instance Chad Walsh — the author of *From Utopia to Nightmare*⁶ published in 1962, uses *dystopia*, *anti-utopia*, and *inverted utopia* as synonyms denoting the same referent. In the same year George Knox wrote an article on "sour utopias" in which he suggests, after the example of Guernsey, the name *aiptotu* being the inversion of the word *utopia*⁷. Frank E. Manuel underlines the fact that all the above mentioned names are applied to the same genre when he writes of "satirical utopias, or what has been variously called *dystopia*, *anti-utopia*, or *contra-utopia*"⁸. The quotation adds *contra-utopia* to the list of names of the genre. Lewis Mumford lengthens it more when he mentions a *kakotopia* wondering "what qualities in human nature or what defects in its own constitution caused it [utopia] change, almost as soon as it had taken from, into its opposite: a negative utopia, a *dystopia* or *kakotopia*"⁹.

³ E.g. Fr. Th. Russell, *Touring Utopia*, New York, Lincoln Mac Veagh, Dial Press Inc., 1932.

⁴ E.g. J.O. Bailey, *Pilgrims Through Space and Time: Trends and Patterns in Scientific and Utopian Fiction*, New York, Argus Books Inc., 1947.

⁵ H. Ross, *Utopias Old and New*, London, Nicholson and Watson Ltd., 1938.

⁶ Ch. Walsh, *From Utopia to Nightmare*, London, Geoffrey Bles, 1962.

⁷ G. Knox, *Apocalypse and Sour Utopias*, "Western Humanities Review", 1962, vol. XVI, no. 1, pp. 11—22.

⁸ Fr. E. Manuel, *Toward a Psychological History of Utopia*, "Daedalus", 1965, vol. 94, no. 2, pp. 293—322.

⁹ L. Mumford, *Utopia, the City and the Machine*, "Daedalus", 1965, vol. 94, no. 2, pp. 271—292.

Of all these, *anti-utopia* seems to be the most appropriate name not only because the majority of critics prefer it, but also for the reason that the term suits exactly the essential characteristics of the genre as will be proved here. Accordingly, it is this term which will be used in the present paper.

2. COGNATE LITERARY GENRES: THE ANTI-UTOPIA AND SCIENCE-FICTION

The arbitrariness still existing in the nomenclature of the anti-utopia accompanies the confusion of critics as they try to classify literary works as anti-utopias. One cannot easily challenge T. F. Russell's "satirical utopias" which include a greater variety of novels and short stories than Ch. Walsh's "anti-utopias" do. This is true because it is difficult to prove that "satirical utopias" and "anti-utopias" or F. E. Manuel's "dystopia" and "contra-utopia" have the same meaning. Yet one is entitled to expect a certain conformity in methods of classification if various terms are used as synonyms. Such conformity does not exist, however, even when the name "anti-utopia" is used exclusively.

That diverse kinds of writings are classified as anti-utopias is due to similarities of important aspects of their compositions. And so, for instance, science-fiction has a great deal in common with the anti-utopia. Both are concerned with imaginary worlds, and frequently anti-utopian stories are based on scientific inventions (as is the case with E. M. Forster's *The Machine Stops*). Because of these common features pessimistic science-fiction works are often regarded as anti-utopias and anti-utopias are considered science-fiction. One of the critics who does not distinguish between these two genres is, for instance, J. Błoński who has written an article: *Koń trojański czyli o powieści przyszłościowej*¹⁰ in which he identifies science-fiction with the utopia and writes of the apocalyptic tone of science-fiction published in the mid-20th century. He does not mention the anti-utopia, but one can surmise that, according to his classification, its place is among the apocalyptic science-fiction stories. J. Błoński is not alone in his opinion when he maintains that science-fiction belongs to the utopia and this view has a bearing upon the incorrect identification of pessimistic science-fiction with the anti-utopia.

Neither does the presentation of a fantastic world constitute a sufficient characteristic of a utopia nor is it true that every pessimistic vision of an imaginary world is necessarily anti-utopian. It is a fact that some science-fiction stories may be included in the anti-utopia but, on the other hand, the vast majority of them do not belong to the genre. And so, for instance, popular stories of *robots* in revolt, or books such as J. Wyndham's *The Kraken Wakes* (1955): a novel which tells about a mysterious power threatening to destroy the human race — must be excluded from the

¹⁰ J. Błoński, *Koń trojański czyli o powieści przyszłościowej*, "Życie Literackie", 1961, no. 30, p. 3.

genre: for, as will be shown in this paper, the anti-utopia, as well as the utopia must concentrate upon the description of the organization of the society living in the fantastic world.

3. COGNATE LITERARY GENRES: THE ANTI-UTOPIA AND OTHER LITERARY WORKS

With regard to their themes both the utopia and the anti-utopia belong to the literary works dealing with the state¹¹. Literary works of this kind may describe imaginary or real states. They may present them as model societies to be imitated or as political systems to be avoided; utopias deal with the former, anti-utopias choose the latter as their subjects. It must be stressed, however, that not all presentations of undesirable social orders are anti-utopian. Since there exists a tendency to take a different view of this, it is necessary to examine here the whole group of works presenting unsatisfactory political systems and point out basic differences between the several types of the group.

One of the variety in the group consists of writings which may be represented by *The Time Machine* (1895) by H. G. Wells and *Ape and Essence* (1949) by A. Huxley. Huxley's book is a terrifying vision of a future world which, according to the author, may become reality if the present social and political evils are not abolished. Huxley describes the world after a total bacteriological war, people who regress to the primitive life and become cruel savages worshipping the devil. The total war which brings about the fall of civilization, cannot be prevented even by great scientists (in *Ape and Essence* they are symbolically led on leashes like dogs).

The Time Machine is also a tale of the future. It shows the degeneration of mankind divided into two classes: workers and parasites. In Wells's story the former become ratlike Morlocks who live under the ground working incessantly because they are obsessed by a compulsion to work and the latter are beautiful but weak and helpless Eloi.

Stories of the type represented by *The Time Machine* and *Ape and Essence* warn against what may happen unless the evil existing in today's civilization is eliminated; they are cautionary fables foretelling the future resulting from the unsatisfactory present.

Another variety of works dealing with the state consists of those like *Land Under England* (1935) by J. O'Neill and *Erewhon* (1872) by S. Butler. The subject of the *Land Under England* is a subterranean, well-organized nation of obedient citizens who behave like automata. Behind their hypnotic calm and discipline lies paralysing fear. The novel is a satire of Hitler's Germany.

¹¹ This group of literary works has not a general name. The term *Staatsroman* used in German criticism is not satisfactory since it comprises only novels and excludes other forms of literature (e.g. short story).

Erewhon contains a wealth of literary devices and techniques and it may be interpreted on several different levels, but more than anything else the book is a satire of Victorian England. Victorian vices are exaggerated and ridiculed in the picture of life in Erewhon — an imaginary country hidden in the mountains of New Zealand. Butler's novel and *Land Under England* by O'Neill are satirical presentations of the authors' contemporary societies.

Erewhon may be also grouped with works such as *Upsidonia* (1915) written by Archibald Marshall, who turns the world upside down not because he wishes to criticize it, but rather because his intention is to provide the reader with an amusing, intellectually paradoxical story; in *Upsidonia* (the way to which leads through a hole in the ground) the rich are despised and they consider their wealth a nuisance, the poor are respected and envied, offenders are punished by their compulsory consumption of a box of chocolates. A similar device is to be found in *Erewhon* where criminals are treated as diseased people and the sick are considered criminals. The same literary technique of reversion is used also by E. O'Duffy in *The Spacious Adventures of the Man in the Street* (1928) when he describes the inhabitants of a distant planet who regard eating as a disgusting activity in which only perverted people can take pleasure.

Elenchus Brown: the story of an Experimental Utopia compiled by a Student of Battersea Polytechnic (1929) by B. L. Bowhay has much in common with *Upsidonia Erewhon* and the novel by O'Duffy. Its hero, Elenchus Brown, makes the decision to found a utopian society on a small uninhabited island. In answer to his announcement to this effect three people declare their readiness to join him; an old woman-servant, a typist, and an eccentric Oxford Student. The state consisting of four citizens experiments with different social systems (such as socialism, anarchy, autocracy) but never achieves satisfactory results. The lack of knowledge of practical matters, as e.g. gardening, forces the four members of the utopia to abandon their attempt to create a perfect „society” and they soon join the rest of the imperfect world. The novel does not criticize an ideal state: its purpose is to tell an amusing story about unusual people. The author is interested in the people and not in the social systems they try to create. In spite of all appearances this novel is not an anti-utopia. Like *Upsidonia* and *The Spacious Adventures of the Man in the Street*, it describes an unusual society, which is not meant to be taken seriously by the reader and whose main purpose is to amuse him, not to criticize a blueprint of an ideal society.

Still another type of works about societies which must be disapproved of by the reader are those that resemble *The Last Generation* (1908) by J. E. Flecker. The author depicts in it the world in which there will be no posterity. Obeying the order of king Joshua Harris all women in *The Last Generation* become sterilized. Every subject of the king has a comfortable living assured, and no one need work for future generations (since there will not be any). People enjoy their new life at first, but very soon ennui sets in. General disappointment and unrest follow. Many people

commit suicide, the rest disintegrate morally soon resembling animals rather than human beings. In the end all die out. The cycle of history has ended: on the ruins of London there appear small fires built by — apes, from which new man will probably develop. The story told by Flecker contains a moral teaching (the value of work for future generations), but the reader gets the impression that the author is preoccupied primarily with blood freezing scenes, world catastrophies and other unusual events.

Stories like *The Last Generation* present a horrifying vision of the future primarily for the sake of sensationalism and excitement they may provide.

The last group of works to be described here embraces books such as A. Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), *Man's World* (1926) by Ch. Haldane and stories like *P. N. 40* by S. Fowler Wright. *Brave New World* deals with a society created on utopian principles. It should be a perfect society, but human misery is still present. In *Man's World* all "unnecessary" feelings have been eliminated and people are guided by reason. Motivated by rational principles they try to achieve general happiness for the community. What they succeed in attaining is material welfare, for the spiritual needs of man cannot be satisfied by their state. The short story by S. Fowler Wright attacks the plans of eugenicists who believe in improving society in all possible respects by scientific and compulsory selection of partners in marriage.

Both novels and the short story demonstrate how some plans to make a society perfect and happy may cause unhappiness when put into practice. The works criticize tendencies which are manifest in the utopian blueprints.

This survey of disparate literary works dealing with the negative state leads to the conclusion that it is the following characteristics which they have in common:

1. they present a society;
2. the society does not exist in reality;
3. the structure of the society is shown as unsatisfactory.

These features are essential in the anti-utopia and their presence in other types of literature makes some critics classify them as anti-utopian. But it is only the last subdivision (with *Man's World* and *Brave New World*) of the group which deserves the name since its important characteristic, not to be found in the other types, is an opposition to utopian ideals and it is this characteristic which will be accepted here as determining whether or not a literary work should be included in the genre of the anti-utopia.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE ANTI-UTOPIA — AN ATTEMPT AT DEFINITION

Critics analysing the anti-utopia seldom give its definition. They usually refer to a selected group of works as anti-utopias without justifying their classification by explaining its criteria. One can infer indirectly that those critics who include all

types of stories dealing with negative social systems in the genre accept as the principle of distinction the three characteristics mentioned above and that those who equate pessimistic science-fiction with the anti-utopia make the fact that it presents a negative picture of an imaginary world (not necessarily a society) a sufficient distinguishing feature of the genre. The anti-utopia of such description would be, indeed, "that loose genre [which] has always turned things upside down"¹².

One of the critics whose conception of the anti-utopia implies too broad boundaries of the genre is Chad Walsh who describes it thus:

An inverted utopia [...] is often a deliberate attack on the idea and possibility of utopia. But it does not have to be. It may equally well be an attack on certain tendencies in existing societies. Or it may be an exercise in pure imagination passing no judgement on either utopia or the real world, but merely showing a particular kind of nightmare embodied in a society of the author's creation¹³.

Walsh excluded from the genre works describing imaginary societies in such a way that "no attempt is made to present them as either desirable or undesirable; they are different for the sake of being different, fantasy for fantasy's sake"¹⁴. According to the above Walsh accepts the features which belong to all types of literature dealing with a negative state as the distinguishing qualities of the anti-utopia.

The very name of the anti-utopia (or contra-utopia) suggests that opposition to the utopia was taken into account when the coinage was made. The criticism of utopian dreams is a fundamental principle of *Brave New World* which has attracted the interest of critics to the genre and which has become the model of other anti-utopias. By its nature then, the anti-utopia is dependent on the character of the utopia and the definition of the utopia must determine the definition of the anti-utopia. In this paper the descriptions of the utopia given by H.S. Herbrüggen and W. Ostrowski are acknowledged as the most convincing. According to W. Ostrowski the literary utopia is a story of an ideal state existing in the imagination of the author¹⁵. This definition is in agreement with that suggested by H. S. Herbrüggen who holds that "eine Utopie ist das literarische Idealbild einer imaginären Staatsordnung"¹⁶. The two definitions eliminate from the genre of utopia all tales of earthly paradise, idylls that are not organized communities and prophetic stories promising a bright future. If this future is to become reality independent of the efforts of a society, "utopia [...] comes to pass not by an act of grace, but through human will and effort"¹⁷. And if writings of this kind are not utopias then their "negative photo-

¹² Knox, *op. cit.*

¹³ Walsh, *op. cit.*, pp. 26—27

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 27.

¹⁵ Cf. W. Ostrowski, the typescript of the doctoral dissertation *Angielskie utopie literackie od More'a do Swifta* (1949).

¹⁶ H. Schulte Herbrüggen, *Utopie und Anti-Utopie. Von der Strukturanalyse zur Strukturtypologie*, [in:] *Beiträge zur Englischer Philologie*, 1960, 43. Heft, p. 7.

¹⁷ Manuel, *op. cit.*

graphs" cannot, per force, be anti-utopias. Therefore a book like *Ape and Essence* which is a depressing vision of a future world containing no element of opposition to the "good intentions" of the utopia as defined by Herbrüggen and Ostrowski, is an example. The presence of "good intentions" in utopias and criticism of those intentions in anti-utopias is ascertained by George Kateb who believes that

The fact that a book is about what the future may be, or about a society with total *Gleichschaltung*, or about sinister uses to which machines can be put does not necessarily make that book anti-utopian. Good intentions must be taken for granted if "utopian" and hence "anti-utopian" are to have any meaning¹⁸.

Anti-utopias criticize those good intentions proving that the road to hell is paved with them; that the utopian perfectionist tendencies are either impossible to realize or that they may cause general unhappiness instead of expected social improvements.

The word "intentions" suggests something that exists only in plans and dreams and it serves to describe a characteristic of the utopia, as the creation of its author's imagination which is the target of anti-utopian criticism. Even if an anti-utopia attacks certain plans that have partly been realized it is not the reality, but the final result of the existing tendencies regarded by utopists as desirable that the anti-utopist concentrates upon¹⁹. If a book attacks a real state of things without transcending the factual world, it then loses its anti-utopian character.

In view of such conception of the anti-utopia, definitions like the one quoted below must also be regarded in this paper as too broad. According to this definition the anti-utopia is a

utopia satyryczna przedstawiająca ironiczny obraz społeczeństwa współczesnego autorowi w formie alegorii lub w innym przebraniu albo parodia utopii wyśmiewająca marzenia utopijne²⁰.

The definition given by S. Sierotwiński is essentially in accord with the above. The anti-utopia is called in it a „utopia o charakterze satyrycznym albo parodia utopii”. Sierotwiński maintains that it may be „krytycznym przedstawieniem społeczeństwa współczesnego i jego dążeń”²¹.

In correspondence with what has been said here of the anti-utopian opposition to utopian ideals²² one cannot but accept the two Polish definitions when they speak

¹⁸ G. Kateb, *Utopia and Its Enemies*, London, The Free Press of Glencoe, Collier-Macmillan Ltd., 1963, p. 235.

¹⁹ The fact that the anti-utopias criticize existing tendencies as being utopian distinguishes them from the stories of the future based on the observation of phenomena generally considered to be undesirable.

²⁰ Ostrowski, "Materiały do Słownika rodzajów literackich", p. 192.

²¹ S. Sierotwiński, *Słownik terminów literackich*, Wrocław, Ossolineum, 1966, p. 34.

²² Not infrequently anti-utopian authors themselves underline the fact that they are compelled to write by resentment against utopian blueprints. E. M. Forster, for example, confesses that his short story *The Machine Stops* was conceived as a "counterblast to one of the heavens of H.G. Wells".

of the genre as a parody of utopia, but one must reject those parts of the definitions which describe it as a satire of contemporary societies such as Butler's *Erewhon* or *Land under England* by O'Neill. It is unquestionable that *Erewhon* uses anti-utopian techniques and has a great deal in common with the genre, but the views held by the author of the present paper do not allow classification of it as an anti-utopia since its criticism is directed against a real society, not its conception or even tendencies to realize it. According to the views here expressed it is not possible to classify as anti-utopias amusing stories about a world *à rebours* (e.g. *Upsidonia*) which are meant to be "pure exercise in imagination" because they do not attack utopia. The support for the view that the boundaries of the genre should be narrowed is provided by Ph. Stevick who says:

The genre of anti-utopia is best defined as that class of works which is like its three undisputed exemplars: Huxley's *Brave New World*, Zamiatin's *We* and Orwell's *1984*. An anti-utopia, that is, must contain a certain degree of social reorganization; such a qualification rules out a cosmic horror story [...]. And it must contain a sense of continuity with the historical situation of the author's present time; such works as [...] *Erewhon* are, perhaps, properly called ostensible utopias: the satire is not directed at what man is becoming but at what man is [...]²³.

Stevick draws our attention to the fact that anti-utopias present more or less the same world which is described by utopias and that the difference lies in the attitude of their authors towards the imaginary societies:

[...] there is little in the subject matter that distinguishes Bellamy's *Looking Backward* from, say, *Brave New World* [...]. The difference lies, of course, in Bellamy's patent approval of what have become chain department stores and radio-sermons and Huxley's disapproval of soma and feelies²⁴.

The similarity of subject matters and differences of attitude are stressed by Ostrowski and Sierotwiński who call anti-utopia — a "parody of utopia". The intention of the anti-utopist presenting a utopian society in unfavourable light²⁵ is, as Orwell says, "to push the world in a certain direction, to alter other people's idea of the kind of society that they should strive after"²⁶.

In view of the foregoing one could assume that the genre is very limited and that there is little variety within it. This is not quite true however. Among anti-utopias are works which differ in their characters so much that even critics accepting the same definition of the genre may disagree over classification of such works in the

²³ Ph. Stevick, *The Limits of Anti-Utopia*, "Criticism", 1964, vol. VI, pp. 233—245.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ Not always does the reaction against utopian blueprints result in anti-utopia. It may happen that, in order to criticize an utopia, a writer creates another ideal society which, he believes, is much better than the one he attacks. This is the case with W. Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1891) written to express the author's disapproval of L. Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888). The novel by W. Morris is, in a sense, a contra-utopia.

²⁶ G. Orwell, *Why I Write*, quoted after: Schulte Herbrüggen, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

group of anti-utopias. Thus G. Kateb maintains that G. Orwell's *1984* does not belong to the genre while Herbrüggen chooses the novel as its typical example. The discrepancy in classification is due to the fact that in G. Kateb's opinion Orwell's *1984* does not contain criticism of "good intention". This seems a mistaken view for, though the criticism of "good intention" is of a different kind from that in most anti-utopias, it is present in the novel by Orwell. It is expressed not so much in the criticism of fallibility of utopian dogmas as their weakness which may cause the danger of abusing the noble ideals in order to deceive and tyrannize society. This quality of the novel provides the necessary anti-utopian characteristics and places *1984* among other works of the genre.

Another work which does not quite conform to the type is *Facial Justice* (1960) by L. P. Hartley. The book is a parable of envy, but the writer depicts its working in the organization of an utopian society attempting to abolish envy. Owing to this aspect of *Facial Justice* the book acquires anti-utopian features.

Works like *Facial Justice* and *1984* prove that anti-utopias can deal with different aspects of utopian tendencies.

As regards form, the anti-utopia may also achieve a great variety; an anti-utopia may be a novel, a short story, a play or a poem. Its favourite forms seem to be those of the novel (most of the modern British anti-utopias are novels) and the short story (*The Machine Stops* and *P.N. 40*) but apart from these there are works such as e.g. *The Triumph of Socialism and How it Succeeded* written by John D. Mayne in 1908. The book consists of a series of articles published by the press of the future. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has been adapted as a television play (B.B.C.) and it may provide an example of anti-utopian drama²⁷.

It follows from the survey presented in this paper that anti-utopias are distinguished as a genre not with regard to its form, but according to its content; its philosophy and theme. Discussing anti-utopias J. Howe touches upon the problem of division of literary works into genre. He writes:

Whether to distinguish literary genres or subgenres through purely formal characteristics or insist upon the crucial relevance to the subject, theme and intellectual content, is something of a problem for a theorist of criticism. It is all the more so in regard to fiction, which is less a genre than a menagerie of genres²⁸.

Modern genre theory allows for classification according to both form and idea²⁹. It has been accepted that utopias constitute a distinct genre — anti-utopias are

²⁷ The poem by W. A. Auden, *The Unknown Citizen*, is often referred to as anti-utopian. According to the views represented in this paper the poem cannot be included in the genre since it is a satire of technological civilization existing in the real world.

²⁸ I. Howe, *The Fiction of Anti-Utopia*, "The New Republic", 1962, 23 April, pp. 13—16.

²⁹ Cf. R. Wellek and A. Warren, *Theory of Literature*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books Ltd., 1966, p. 234: "Modern genre theory is, clearly, descriptive. It doesn't limit the number of possible kinds and doesn't present rules to authors [...]. Instead of emphasizing the distinction between kind and a kind, it is interested [...] in finding the common denominator of a kind, its shared literary devices and literary purpose".

a corresponding integral group of works. Anti-utopias are therefore often distinguished by critics as a separate genre. Among those critics are for example Ph. Stevick and G. Knox. It seems, then, that it is justified to speak of English anti-utopias, as in this paper, as a genre all the more so since practically all modern British utopias are prose fiction: novels and short stories.

The survey of works rightly and wrongly included in the genre of anti-utopia suggests, by implication, the determinants of the definition of the anti-utopias as accepted in this paper. Now it only remains to present the definition in a clear formulation. The definition in many respects may be associated with the views expressed by G. Kateb and Ph. Stevick in their description of the genre and especially those to be found in the definition proposed by Martin Schwonke who regards anti-utopias as

Schriften, die sich gegen Zielen und Tendenzen der naturwissenschaftlich-technischen Utopie wenden und die selbst in utopischer Form tun³⁰.

The analysis of anti-utopias and cognate literary genres presented in this paper leads to to the conclusion that:

An anti-utopia is a literary work presenting in a variety of forms a negative picture of a social system, which may be observed by the author in the tendencies existing in the development of real societies.

The following list of works selected in accordance with the above definition may serve as representatives of the genre in the modern stage of its development in modern British literature:

1. *Meccania, the Super-State* (1918) by Owen Gregory;
2. *Man's World* (1926) by Charlotte Haldane;
3. *The Green Machine* (1926) by F.H. Ridley;
4. *The Millennium* (1927) by J.G. Legge;
5. *The Machine Stops* (1928) by E.M. Forster;
6. *Concrete: A Story of Two Hundred Years Hence* (1930) by Aelfrida Tillyard;
7. *Brave New World* (1932) by Aldous Huxley;
8. *P.N. 40* (1932) by S. Fowler Wright;
9. *The Riddle of the Tower* (1944) by J.D. Beresford and Esme Wynne-Tyson;
10. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) by George Orwell;
11. *Love Among the Ruins* (1953) by Evelyn Waugh;
12. *Facial Justice* (1960) by L.P. Hartley.

The Anglicist who sets himself the task of carrying out research in the modern British anti-utopia is advised to concentrate on the works that are enumerated in the list and other writings of a similar nature.

³⁰ M. Schwonke, *Vom Staatsroman zur Science Fiction*, [in:] *Göttlinger Abhandlungen zur Soziologie*, Stuttgart 1951, quoted after Schulte Herbrüggen, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

ANTYUTOPIA NA TLE POKREWNYCH GATUNKÓW LITERACKICH WE WSPÓŁCZESNEJ LITERATURZE ANGIELSKIEJ

STRESZCZENIE

Antyutopia jest gatunkiem godnym zainteresowania nie tylko ze względu na właściwą jej formę, ale także dlatego, że daje ona wyraz nastrojom współcześnie panującym wśród humanistów. Angielska antyutopia w ostatnim etapie jej rozwoju to odzwierciedlenie załamania się optymistycznych ideałów i narastania lęku o dalszy rozwój cywilizacji.

Pomimo stosunkowo bujnego rozkwitu angielskiej antyutopii w XX wieku gatunek ten nie doczekał się jeszcze odpowiednio bogatej literatury krytycznej, istniejące zaś materiały dość często odznaczają się dowolnością w sposobie zakreślania granic gatunku, co rzutuje na całokształt wypowiedzi krytycznych. Z uwagi na tę sytuację szersze opracowanie gatunku wydaje się konieczne. Niniejszy artykuł zajmuje się zagadnieniem definicji antyutopii.

Jedną z zasadniczych trudności związanych z ustaleniem definicji jest fakt istnienia mnogości terminów stosowanych w określaniu gatunku antyutopii, a także utworów zbliżonych doń charakterem. Wśród tych terminów znajdują się: *satirical utopias*, *utopistic satires*, *false utopias*, *negative utopias*, *contra-utopia*, *dystopia* i *kakotopia*. Nazwa *antyutopia* (*anti-utopia*), która rozpowszechniła się około 1950 r., jest jednak obecnie najczęściej stosowana w nomenklaturze krytyki literackiej.

Z tego względu, a także dlatego, że nazwa ta najbardziej odpowiada charakterystyce gatunku uznanej tu za właściwą, w artykule niniejszym używa się terminu *antyutopia*.

Dalszą, podstawową trudnością w ustaleniu definicji jest fakt częstego utożsamiania antyutopii z utworami zbliżonymi do niej charakterem. Tak jest np. w wypadku pesymistycznych utworów *science-fiction*. Pomimo jednak szeregu podobieństw, zarówno formalnych jak i ideologicznych, antyutopię należy wyodrębnić jako niezależny gatunek z powodu istotnej różnicy między negatywnymi wizjami fantastycznego świata przedstawianego przez *science-fiction* a tymi, które odmalowuje antyutopia. Różnica polega na tym, że zainteresowanie autora antyutopii koncentruje się zawsze na zorganizowanym społeczeństwie, które może, ale nie musi, występować w *science-fiction*.

Także nie wszystkie utwory o negatywnym ustroju społecznym są antyutopiami. Duża część z nich to utwory przepowiadające niepożądany rozwój rzeczywistych tendencji i ostrzegające przed przyszłością. Utwory te, w odróżnieniu od antyutopii, nie traktują owych tendencji jako utopijnych. Przykładem tego rodzaju twórczości może tu być *The Time Machine* (1895) H.G. Wellsa i *Ape and Essence* (1949) A. Huxleya.

Antyutopie różnią się także od satyrycznych przedstawień istniejących społeczeństw ukazanych jako nie istniejące w rzeczywistości państwa. Z tego powodu nie można uznać powieści S. Butlera pt. *Erewhon* (1872) za antyutopię; powieść ta atakuje współczesne autorowi wiktoriańskie społeczeństwo, a nie zajmuje się krytyką utopijnego systemu.

Należy również wykluczyć z gatunku antyutopii utwory w rodzaju *The Last Generation* (1908) E. Fleckera, które odmalowują ponure wizje przyszłego świata skupiając się na osiągnięciu sensoryjnego charakteru silnie oddziaływającego na czytelnika, a także te utwory, które, jak *The Spacious Adventures of the Man in the Street* (1928) E. O'Duffy'ego, opisują świat na opak, dążąc do osiągnięcia efektów humorystycznych.

Wszystkie wymienione tu grupy utworów łączy to, że: a) traktują one o społeczeństwie; b) społeczeństwo to nie istnieje rzeczywiście; c) ma ono negatywny porządek. Żaden jednak z tych utworów nie zawiera krytyki utopijnych postulatów. Krytyka ta jest zasadniczą cechą wyróżniającą gatunek antyutopii. Wszelkie definicje gatunku, które nie uznają tego wyróżnienia, są nazbyt szerokie. Dostyc typową definicją tego typu jest ta, którą podaje Ch. Walsh. Walsh uważa, że antyutopia często „[...] atakuje idee i możliwość utopii. Ale nie musi tego czynić. Może równie dobrze atakować pewne tendencje istniejących społeczeństw. Albo może być ćwiczeniem czystej wyobraźni

nie zawierającym sądów ani o utopii, ani o rzeczywistym świecie, ale tylko pokazującym jakiś szczególny rodzaj koszmaru wcielony w społeczeństwo stworzone przez autora”.

Poparcia dla uznania zawężonych granic gatunku dostarczają prace G. Kateba i Ph. Stevicka, którzy za wzór antyutopii uznają *Brave New World* (1932) A. Huxleya.

Z zawartego w artykule przeglądu utworów wyłania się już definicja antyutopii. Pozostaje jeszcze podać jej ściśle sformułowanie. Brzmi więc ona: „Antyutopia to utwór literacki przedstawiający w dowolnej formie negatywny obraz utopijnego porządku społecznego, którego załączki autor może dostrzegać w tendencjach rozwoju rzeczywistej cywilizacji”.

Mimo dość wąskich granic antyutopia nie wyklucza więc różnorodności; do jej gatunku mogą wejść utwory dramatyczne, powieści, opowiadania i poematy. Różnorodność ta istnieje w obrębie tylko nawet powieści i nowel antyutopijnych, czego dowodem jest fakt, że niejednokrotnie krytycy uznający tę samą definicję antyutopii różnią się w sposobie klasyfikacji poszczególnych utworów.

Przyjęta w niniejszym artykule definicja decyduje o tym, że następujące utwory proponuje się tutaj jako przedmiot badań anglisty zajmującego się nowoczesną antyutopią angielską:

1. Owen Gregory, *Meccania, the Super-State* (1918);
2. Ch. Haldane, *Man's World* (1926);
3. F.H. Ridley, *The Green Machine* (1926);
4. J.G. Legge, *The Millennium* (1927);
5. E.M. Forster, *The Machine Stops* (1928);
6. Aelfrida Tillyard, *Concrete: A Story of Two Hundred Years Hence* (1930);
7. A. Huxley, *Brave New World* (1932);
8. S. Fowler Wright, *P.N.40* (1932);
9. J.D. Beresford i Esme Wynne-Tyson, *The Riddle of the Tower* (1944);
10. G. Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949);
11. E. Waugh, *Love Among the Ruins* (1953);
12. L.P. Hartley, *Facial Justice* (1960).

Maria Kwapien