

HENRIETTE CEDERLÖF

STRANNOE ČADO XXOGO VEKA:
GENDER AS COSMIC MYSTERY IN ARKADY AND
BORIS STRUGATSKY'S *OTEL' U POGIBŠEGO AL' PINISTA*

«[T]he boundary between science fiction
and social reality is an optical illusion.»
Donna Haraway

Introducing cyborg to čado

Apparently, for us humans, the world we live in is never enough, nor is it ever enough simply to be human: We turn our reality into myth and people it with different mythical creatures, such as the androgyne, the cyborg, or even the dolphin.

In 1985, Donna Haraway published *A Manifesto for Cyborgs*, from which the quote above is taken. That science fiction should be a reflection of the world in which we live may at first seem like a strange idea, as it is usually considered to be stories about what (at least not yet) has not happened, and in most cases probably will not happen; «fiction» pure, rather than «science». However: all fiction comes from somewhere: the world we live in must always in some way be the ultimate source of inspiration for even the most fantastic tale. Our fiction cannot help but to describe our reality, if «reality» is the word, since we constantly create myths about this world, and populate

Abstract

The article consists of an attempt introducing two texts to each other: the Strugatsky brothers' 1969 novel *Otel' U pogibsego al'pinista* and Donna Haraway's influential essay «A Manifesto for Cyborgs». Following a discussion of three utopian identities, the androgyne, the cyborg and the dolphin, I analyze the representation of ambiguous gender in the text in order to place it within a particular context.

Henriette CEDERLÖF (henriette.cederlof@sh.se) is a Ph D student in Russian literature at Södertörn University in Sweden. She is currently working on her thesis on the representation of gender and identity in contemporary Russian speculative fiction.