

Technology and science of robert louis stevenson and hebert george wells essay

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



In the course of the Romantic Era, which originated in 1850 and lasted till 1920, many poets and writers stood against science and technology as a literature subject. They judged that it wasn't compatible with romantic love of nature, love of the common men or fascination with the supernatural and unexplainable. However, a few generations earlier, English poet, Alexander Pope was astonished by Newton's accomplishments and as an acknowledgement of the work "The Optiks" he wrote the famous epitaph: "Nature, and Nature's Laws lay hid in Night. God said, Let Newton be! and All was Light" (Pope). The transformation of the attitudes haven't occurred until 1930 when the twentieth century artists had either configured or just rejected the romantic mentality about technology and science. They discovered great interest and attraction towards this particular subject and began to create literature, which explores various possibilities with use of research and knowledge. Although the precursors of science fiction as Lucian's "True History in the 2nd century", "The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter in the 10th century", and Jules Verne's "A Journey to the Centre of the Earth" in the 19th century already introduced the science fantasies, new forms of science fiction appeared and spread within the society.

The genesis of new technologies as telegraph or electricity triggered new writers and influenced creation of the "literature of ideas". The circle of the most acclaimed writers who employed technology and science in their oeuvre included Herbert George Wells, Robert Louis Stevenson and Ray Bradbury. H. G. Wells is well known for contribution to scientific romances, comic novels and the novels of ideas. As a scientist, he had an extensive

knowledge in this matter. " Wells repeatedly employs evolution as motif in his scientific romances" (Towheed, 87).

In " The Time Machine" Wells portrays the future human race as deteriorating and declining. When the Time Traveler goes further into the future, the human race is extinct and the sun is cooling down. Wells suggested that the death of human race is possible.

He questioned the confidence in human excellence. He uses science and technology to create tools which he utilizes to send his messages of political ideas and social critique. Wells speaks through the Time Traveler to his audience " Take it as a lie - or a prophecy" (Higdon). " He is an artist, and he knows nothing about science; not even so much as I do, and Heaven knows I am very ignorant, (Towheed 87)" Fanny Stevenson remarked about her husband. Deep inside of his heart, Stevenson was a romantic. He did study towards his science degree against his wishes but to please his father. Although, much of his time, he spent studying French Literature, Scottish history, and the works of Darwin and Spencer. Stevenson developed deep fascination with duality of human nature and used this theme in " The Strange Case of Dr.

Jekyll and Mr. Hyde". He created Dr. Jekyll, whose temptation to experiment with science was stronger than associated risk.

" I hesitated long before I put this theory to the test of practice. I knew well that I risked death; for any drug that so potently controlled and shook the very fortress of identity, might, by the least scruple of an overdose or at the

least inopportunity in the moment of exhibition, utterly blot out that immaterial tabernacle which I looked to it to change. But the temptation of a discovery so singular and profound at last overcame the suggestions of alarm"(Stevenson 43-44). Stevenson claimed that humans are mixture of evil and good. According to Julia Reid, Stevenson's work reveals deep engagement in psychological and anthropological debates. He contraindicated that Charles Darwin's book "The origin of Species" by allowing Dr. Jekyll to turn the evolution backwards and revealing primitive background of a civilized human. Ray Bradbury won is reputation as science fiction writer; however, his greatest value is his position as a social and technology critic.

According to Kirk Russell, it is "Bradbury's preoccupation with the moral imagination rather than science and technology that distinguishes him from other writers of science fiction" (120). Bradbury never attended to college. He considers it an advantage that gave him a chance to preserve his own talent, which as he believed, would have been spoiled by influence of college education. His work contains themes of technology but in the negative aspect. He uses it to create a futuristic world where dreary and corrupting materialism, horrid modern life, mindless power, sexual obsession, fake intellectuality and dependence on technological devices take priority. Yet Bradbury plants a seed of hope in readers' minds that the demoralized world can be saved from destruction by correct application of science.

Kirk says that Bradbury "is interested not in the precise mechanism of rockets, but in the mentality and the morals of fallible human beings who

make and use rockets. He is a man of fable and parable”(121). He is not against technology. He simply believes that one must look around and back at the same time he looks forward. Wells, Stevenson and Bradbury had an unavoidable impact on the development of the modern science. Each of them represented different style and passed different messages. For Bradbury, the life has meaning here and now; it is in our every action.

He focuses on presence. He uses science and technology to create modern world where technology suppresses human feelings. Wells, in contrary, seeks happiness and answers in the future. He disagrees with Darwin and imagines world which doesn't evolve but sets backwards. Stevenson searches for questions in human nature while testing science.

He experiments with human mind and reveals our second nature. Interest among scholars, literary critics, and historian is significant in work of the three men. I believe their reputation will continue to rise and gain interest of the population of the young readers.