Is the Fantastic Really Fantastic?

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1. INTRODUCTION

The notion of "the fantastic" is one of the most controversial issues discussed in literary and interdisciplinary studies. The notorious vagueness and elusiveness of the terms "the fantastic" and "fantasy," both of which can be understood at once in the narrow and the broad senses – either as a kind of fiction (a literary quality), a genre, or as an unreal (non-existent) phenomenon, a product of the imagination – results in numerous problems. Often, "the fantastic" is seen as the synonym for "fantasy." The latter, however, is sometimes defined as "a quality of astonishment" (Rabkin 1976: 41), as "an exciting or unusual experience" (*Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* 2002: 503), or as an activity of imagining the impossible. Reacting to these definitions, Darco Suvin (2000) claims that interpretations of "fantasy" as a mental faculty are irrelevant. He is adamant in discarding fantasy as a psychological phenomenon or as a quality of the human imagination in theorizing the fantastic.

Terminological chaos has been characteristic of the theory of the fantastic for centuries (cf. Sander 2011). The term "the fantastic" has indeed been applied to a great number of radically different works of fiction. Until recently (that is, before John Clute's 2007 introduction of the new notion, "fantastika"), "the fantastic" had been a blanket term in European and American theory for any fantastic imagery in fiction produced in any historical period. "Fantasy" and "the fantastic" are used interchangeably, as if they were synonyms (cf. Jackson 1981). Attempting to avoid confusion and misunderstanding, some critics choose an alternative term, for example "fantastic fiction," or "fantastic literature," that are, in turn, employed in an undifferentiated way to designate a supergenre, a genre, or a subgenre. I believe that the usage of "fantasy," since it is such a polysemantic

word, must be reconsidered in the studies of non-mimetic fiction. Perhaps, we should reserve the capitalized word "Fantasy" to function as a term, as a genre-name for Tolkien and post-Tolkien types of literature. For the same reason, I will also capitalize other genre-names in this paper.

The radically different understandings of the generic history, structure, and mode of fantastic texts result in different approaches to taxonomy. It seems an almost hopeless task to see clearly the use of the terms "the fantastic" or "fantasy," as well as that of much more inclusive ones: "fantastic genre" and "fantastic fiction." It is equally hard to decide which fantastic genre is more general and whether and why we should attest some sets of fantastic texts as forming genres or even supergenres and call other groups of more specific texts sub-genres. Most of the critics suggest that "fantasy" (used as a synonym of "the fantastic") is a genre (or generic area) since it is a part of a larger body of literature (cf. Mendlesohn 2008: xiii). But, there are also those who wittingly claim that "all fiction is, in a sense, science fiction" and that "fiction is a subcategory of science fiction rather than the other way around" (Freedman 2000: 16). Freedman argues that the qualities which are universally recognized in Science Fiction can be found in any work of literature. He provocatively concludes that "it may even begin to appear that ultimately nearly all fiction – perhaps even including realism itself – will be found to be science fiction" (ibid: 16). Some think that Science Fiction is a subgenre of Fantasy, while others claim that it is the other way around. Robert Scholes (1987) treats "fantasy" as literature depicting an internally coherent impossible world in which that tale is possible, whereas Katherine Hume (1984) sees it as a supergenre, synonymous to speculative fiction and including a variety of genres, like Science Fiction, etc. On her part, Cynthia Duncan (2010) uses the term "fantasy" to speak of the works of literature that deal with obviously invented worlds and supernatural beings. When Duncan speaks of "the fantastic," she associates it with fear or anxiety.

The situation is more complicated if either "the fantastic" or "fantasy" are applied to identify and research symbolic elements in modern and postmodern texts that draw special attention of the critics of the fantastic. John Clute, for example, specifies that these literary movements, standing aside from mimetic prose, use elements of "fantasy," but the worlds created by such writers do not invite the readers to co-inhabit the tale the way the authors of generic Fantasy do. For this reason, Clute insists that "to call Fantasy such 'enterprises of Modernism and Postmodernism'" is "to strip the term 'fantasy' of any specific meaning" (1997: 338). In accord with Clute, Darko Suvin claims that non-generic fantastical writings of Modernism and Postmodernism, as well as much

self-conscious "high lit" should not be considered within the framework of the fantastic (2000: 216).

There are those who claim that "a single, stable definition of all these concepts is not even desirable" (Percec 2014: VIII). Others argue that the only point of departure for fantastic genre theory can be the individual text itself (cf. Clayton 1987). One of the problems of defining the genres of numerous modern fantastic texts results from their predominant cross-genre nature. Especially challenging for critics like Scholes is the "oxymoronic monster named science fantasy" (Scholes 1987: 5). Yet, as he believes, the blending of Science Fiction and Fantasy was brought about by the presumable need to place "the fantastic" into the strictly positivistic paradigm of science. Such blending, though, endangers not only terminology – this is a minor concern. It also undermines the true meaning of the word "scientific" in the name of the genre. Thus, the magic in Science Fantasy is given a 'scientific' explanation. The fact that the supernatural can be rationalized, however, does not necessarily lead to attributing the tale to Science Fantasy. For example, lycanthropy in *The Twilight Saga* (2005-2008) is explained as a supernatural quality of becoming a werewolf which is passed on genetically. However, the critics never qualify Stephenie Meyer's saga as Science Fantasy, but, instead, many offer a misleading, or empty, genre-name such as "Young Adult Fiction" (cf. Martens 2010; Priest 2013). This fails to reveal the overall generic quality of *The Twilight Saga* which is a contemporary Fantasy whose fantastic elements are only partly rationalized. Glen Duncan's contemporary Gothic Horror novel, *The Last Werewolf* (2011), also rationalizes lycanthropy. Here the disease is represented as caused by a virus and passed on to next generations. However, the fundamental difference between the two stories of shapeshifting lies in the fact that lycanthropy in Meyer's text is reinforced by presumed Native American natural magic rather than by the imagery of a naturalistically explained disease as in Duncan's novel.

It is worth noting, that a new genre needs at least four conditions to start functioning as such: the appearance of the interpretative community (Fish 1980), the coinage of the genre name, the growing awareness of the reading audience of the genre's fundamental differences from the already existing forms, and finally, the critics' understanding of the disruption of historical continuity and of the transformation of genre conventions. As Zgorzelski puts it, "almost every variant is the potential beginning of a new genre; but it is realized as such only when historical continuity is broken by the functional opposition of the variant to its historical roots" (1979: 297). The appearance of a new genre can be seen as the result of "estrangement," as the aesthetic phenomenon of breaching and defamiliarizing the older conventions recognized as genre habituation (cf. Shklov-

sky (1955 [1917]). One such defamiliarization found in cross-genres is the firm placement of monsters in the modern day with its cars, bikes, schools, colleges, hospitals, and cell phones, as in *The Twilight Saga* or in Neil Gaiman's *American Gods* (2001) and *Anansi Boys* (2005). Another is a comparatively new quality of modern Fantasy whose alternative world is hidden within our own: the world of wizards coexists with—or is actually found within—the world of muggles in J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series.

Cross-genres of speculative literature may be truly entertaining. Yet, when we come across a pseudo-Science Fiction narration which the writer infests with wizards, we intuitively know that the implicit contract between the reader and the writer has been broken. When the two kinds of the fantastic blend, the cognitive dissonance is almost granted. One may even insist, as Darko Suvin (2000) does, that in such cases we get neither valid Science Fiction nor valid Fantasy.

However, hybrids do not make the task of genre definition any more difficult than early Science Fiction did. It took several decades of disputes to arrive at a universally accepted genre name in the 1930s and a more or less consistent definition of Science Fiction had not been established before the 1970s.

At this point in the debate it is feasible to pause and address two questions of fundamental importance: Do we really need the terminological limitations that we voluntarily imposed on ourselves? Why should we define the genres? As Cynthia Duncan remarks, "readers naturally expect critics to provide them with clear definitions that they can apply to the study of specific literary texts, but in the case of the fantastic, they are often left wanting" (Duncan 2010: 3). I believe that clear definitions are needed for the assessment of new writing by both the critics and the reading public. The latter would also, perhaps, be grateful if the former assisted them with very general formulas that would allow one 'to compare like with like' instead of comparing anything with everything – robots with goblins, UFOs with unidentified flying fairies. The regular and devoted reader of "fantastika" wishes to gain expertise, i.e. to be able to base his or her argument on examples. In a way, definitions do help. Despite the fact that they "form a parasitic sub-genre in themselves," as Patrick Parrinder poignantly observed (1980: 2), they offer important guidelines for both the critic who needs a clearly defined framework for the analysis and for the reader who aspires to tell a Science Fiction novel from a Fantasy or a Utopia one in order to evaluate the quality of similar texts. Besides being a truly entertaining and stimulating enterprise, the critical reading of fantastika makes a connoisseur, a Model Reader (in Umberto Eco's terminology); the process of decoding the meanings of a diverse repertoire of speculative fictions is hardly less thrilling than that of solving the "whodunit" problem in detective stories. Using Eco's argument made in *The*

Limits of Interpretation in which he employs Orwellian imagery, we might ask whether "the pleasures of the smart reading be reserved for the members of the Party; and the pleasures of the naïve reading reserved for the proletarians" (1994b [1990]: 98-99). As for critics, we do need established or reestablished terminology and definitions to be able to say certain things about the uncertain mode of narrating uncertain phenomena, to chart the literary fantastic territories or a single terrain by tracing specific fantasticality in order to see both singular and regular phenomena more clearly.

In the following I will (1) revise the basic terminology connected with the phenomenon of "the fantastic," and (2) discuss both the specific qualities and the degree of strangeness in major genres of fantastika with a special emphasis on the fantasticality in Utopia. This will allow me to answer two questions: a) Is the fantastic present in all genres? b) Does the presence of the fantastic in a text signify that the latter is a sample of a fantastic genre text?

2. APPROACHES TO THE FANTASTIC

When discussing a single text containing a "fantastic" element, we do not measure the degree of its fantasticality, such measurement being impossible. Instead, we can assess it pragmatically – whether intuitively or professionally – in relation to the general message, to the intended meaning as perceived in the writer-reader communication.[1] The readers and the critics recognize quite a variety of images as fantastic: Doppelgangers, monsters, time machines, cyborgs, wizards, demons, utopian, or dystopian societies. Are there any common features in the texts representing "the ghostly," "the grotesque," "the magical," "the futuristic," "the scientific," "the fairy," "the ideal," and "the nightmarish"? Is it appropriate that the works highlighting these phenomena are classified as belonging to the unified field of "fantastic fiction"? These questions bring us to the issue of "the fantastic" (fantasticality) proper.

When Roger Caillois (1965) discusses the fantastic in the first chapter, "Première Approche," of his *Au Coeur de Fantastique*, he makes the statement ex negativo by subtracting what is not fantastic from the story and the discourse. So, in his view, the remainder – the fantastic – is anything but the exact, i.e. real-

1 Farah Mendlesohn (2008: xv) believes that fantastic fiction is conditioned by genre expectations more than other areas of literature are. The early discussion of the necessity to balance the study of genre's internal construction *and* its function within the text-reader historical relationship is in Zgorzelski (1979).

istic, representation of objects and living beings. In his article "The Natural Fantastic" he qualifies the essence of the fantastic as the intrusion of "the unacceptable" into the trivial, established world, mundane reality: "The fantastic appears as the disruption of a natural order that is deemed impossible to disturb" (Caillois 2003 [1962]: 349). He emphasizes that "the Fantastic presumes a well-ordered universe ruled by the immutable laws of physics, astronomy, and chemistry" (ibid: 349). This means that the intrusion of the strange does not lead to the replacement of the naturalistic world by a totally different one where there is nothing but miracles. The established and acknowledged order of things, its regularity, is transformed by the irruption of the inadmissible.

Rosemary Jackson looks at the phenomenon of "the fantastic," or "fantasy" (she uses the terms interchangeably), from the opposite direction to that of Caillois, claiming that it expresses what is absent within a "dominant 'realistic' order" (Jackson 1981: 25). This is a completely different kind of negation. She underscores the elliptical nature of "the fantastic" that points toward subversion. However, the rich idea of subversion working especially well with the Gothic and Modernist texts, which is exemplified by Jackson's choice of texts for analysis, seems not to be so fruitful if applied to some other genres of fantastic literature, like Hard Science Fiction – "a form of imaginative literature that uses either established or carefully extrapolated science as its backbone" (Steel 1992: 1) – and High (Heroic) Fantasy. Ignoring all Science Fiction in her discussion of *the* fantastic, Jackson explains that "faery, or romance literature" does not reveal strong transgressive and subversive impulses, that it "move[s] away from the unsettling implications which are found at the center of the purely 'fantastic.' […] [It] defuse[s] potentially disturbing, anti-social drives and retreat[s] from any profound confrontation with existential dis-ease" (Jackson 1981: 9).

Jackson approaches **"**the fantastic" (or, "fantasy") as an imaginative mode allowing to subvert some forms of reality. She explains the function of "fantasy" as that of tracing "the unsaid and the unseen of culture: that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made absent" (Jackson 1981: 4). Following Jackson, Renate Lachmann (2002) speaks of "the fantastic" ("die Phantastik") as a mode of discourse on alterity, a narration that presents the impossible. I believe, in case we view "the fantastic" as a mode, we can include quite a few mimetic fictions (for example, the modern psychological novel) that contain fantastic elements, thus enriching the whole corpus of fantastic literature rather than limiting it to genre works. I doubt, however, that such an approach would make further discussion easier or more consistent.

"The fantastic" has been regularly characterized as the depiction of "the impossible" (cf. Irwin 1976; Rabkin 1976; Lachmann 2002). There is a notoriously

misleading definition of genres offered by Rod Sterling in his role of the narrator of *The Twilight Zone* in the opening scene of *The Fugitive* (1962): Fantasy is the impossible made probable and Science Fiction is the improbable made possible. It is quite easy to discard this formula, since the notion of the impossible is so spectacularly challenged by both modern science and scholarship. Sterling's series itself exposed that he felt free to cross the genre borders, and that he could easily manipulate with both – the impossible and the improbable – indiscriminately and interchangeably in a single episode. Yet, even though the above definition was universally understood as "wrong" by the classics of Science Fiction theory, it is surprisingly echoed in recent works (cf. Wolfe 2004: 222-223). Moreover, we read such paradoxical statements as the following one: "any sufficiently immersive fantasy is indistinguishable from science fiction" (Mendlesohn 2008: 62). Mendlesohn comes to this seemingly illogical conclusion by reasoning that:

> "The construction of the fully immersive fantasy requires the construction of concentric shells of belief that allow the reader to exist in a space outside the fictional world, but protected from the outer shell of 'unreality.' The most commonly recognized place to find this concentric construction is in science fiction […] In that genre […] the world must be logical and sealed." (ibid: 62)[2]

The notion of "belief" is a helpful tool in discussing "unreality." Indeed, no one can imagine a completely unreal (impossible) world having no connections with our recognizable world (cf. Fredericks 1978).[3] "The fantastic" distorts "the real" in different proportions for various thematic purposes and aesthetic goals as will be shown in the following discussion of fantastic genres. "Fantasy recombines and inverts the real, but does not escape it: it exists in a parasitical or symbiotic relation to the real. The fantastic cannot exist independently of that 'real' world" (Jackson 1981: 20). To sum up, it would be a gross simplification to claim that the presence of "the fantastic" (the impossible or the unreal) is the absence of mimesis.

Still, the notion of the (un)real is, no doubt, crucial for "the fantastic." It is worth noting here, as Wolfgang Iser (1993[1991]) and narratologists (cf. Eco

2 Mendlesohn considers China Miéville's *Perdido Street Station* (2000) a typical example of "immersive fantasy."

3 Monika Fludernik (2006) underlines that any narrative is a representation of a possible world.

1994a; Schmid 2010 [2005]) prove, that anything depicted in fiction is "fictive." Such a point of view makes Roger Caillois's ex negativo definition rather inefficient, however keen. If we accept the argument concerning the overall fictivity (or fictiveness) of literature, we can define "the fantastic" as "the superfictive," that is as literature exposing and emphasizing its basic fictitious nature. Indeed, if any piece of imaginative literature is a narration of a fictive story, characters, objects, etc., then the fantastic text is the one that manifests the highest degree of fictivity. Yet, such definition will hardly provide a solution to all the problems and misunderstandings that arise in theorizing the fantastic genres.

3. THE FANTASTIC IMAGERY AND FANTASTIC GENRES

Even a naïve reader can tell the difference between the narratives of robots and cyborgs, on the one hand, and those of ghosts and vampires, on the other. Even inexperienced readers would have no difficulty explaining in what sense *Pride and Prejudice* is different from *Frankenstein* and claim that the novel by Mary Shelley, in contrast to the one by Jane Austen, tells of fantastic discoveries (imparting life to non-living matter) and creatures (the Monster). The experienced (critical) reader would attribute *Frankenstein* either to the Gothic or to the early Science Fiction genre. Some may place it in the borderline genre combining Gothic Horror and Science Fiction. In fact, the publication of Shelley's novel in 1818 marked the appearance of this new genre (or sub-genre). That the generic differences are present in the collective perception is clear from publishing and fandom practice. Generic features are the ones that allow us to identify a fantastic text as Science Fiction, Fairy Tale, Fantasy or Gothic Horror, these being the time-honored terms for classification.[4]

A group of texts is taken to form a single genre if they share characteristics like themes (subject matter), narrative mode, and implied reading audience with a set of its expectations (cf. Stephens 1992). The discussion of the generic nature of fantastic literature is vital because it provides a major instrument of investigation and assessment. It is for this reason that genre taxonomy has been drawing the attention of many critics of speculative fiction including Tzvetan Todorov whose book on the topic became such a breakthrough. Yet, the very first, rather

4 Note that unlike the general readership, some critics (cf. Briggs 1977; Griffin/Moylan 2007; Williamson 2015) approach the genres from an evolutionary point of view, that is, they explore a genre's dynamic and diachronic nature. The issue of the evolution of genres, however, will not be discussed in the present paper.

misleading, sentence of Todorov's classic *Introduction à la Littérature Fantastique* illustrates the terminological chaos that still characterizes genre theory: "'The Fantastic' is a name given to a *kind* of literature, to a literary genre" (Todorov 1975 [1970]: 3, original emphasis). Does he equate "the kind" and "the genre"? In the following passages, he seems to be speaking of the fantastic as a supergenre in which he recognizes subgenres defined as "the uncanny" and "the marvelous," the names he adopted from Caillois. The taxonomy proposed by Todorov allowed critics to avoid previously straightforward and naive thematic classifications of fantastic literature. Still, the method suggested in *The Fantastic* turned out to be ineffective: since Todorov saw the "pure fantastic" as a borderline, an intermediary stage of hesitation between alternative explanations of the strange, i.e. between "étrange" and "merveilleux," he excluded an immense corpus of fantastic texts. Because of a very limited number of texts that Todorov chose for analysis, he was heavily criticized by Stanislaw Lem (1974) who discarded the structuralist's immanent single-axis scheme, which, he believed, could not embrace all kinds of fantasticality including Modern Fantasies and Science Fiction.

It is noteworthy that Todorov had to resort to a strictly thematic analysis in the chapters "Themes of the Self" and "Themes of the Other." Writing on "themes of the self," Todorov explored fantastic fiction dealing with metamorphoses, transgression, supernatural beings, and especially with "the transition from mind to matter" (Todorov 1975 [1970]: 114). "Themes of the other" in turn are related to sexuality, desire, sensual temptations, and to the demonic. A thematic approach, no doubt, is fruitful for the analysis of individual texts. However, the total, cumulative effect of these alternative (discursive or thematic) approaches is dubious since it produces hesitation: the critical reader has to choose between alternative – structural or hermeneutical – interpretations of the text. This can readily be tested by Todorov's treatment of Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* that seemingly resists the structural approach: neither of the Todorovian genres (the uncanny or the marvelous) is applicable. Besides, no matter how ingenious Todorov's classification is, neither encyclopedias nor the majority of the critics employ it while attributing the genres of individual fantastic texts, to say nothing of groups of texts. Generally, the standard genre-names, such as Gothic Horror or Fairy Tale, are used instead of "the uncanny," "the marvelous," and "the pure fantastic."

A more adequate term than Todorov's "the fantastic" seems to be "fantastika," first coined by John Clute in his address, "Fantastika in the World Storm," given in Prague in 2007 and later elaborated on in his 2011 study, *Pardon This*

Intrusion. The word "fantastika" is a borrowing from Slavic criticism.[5] Clute uses it as an umbrella term to describe "the literatures of the fantastic in the Western World" written approximately since the end of the 18th century "in a consciousness of their generic nature" (Clute 2017: 16). Clute suggests approaching fantastic genres as "centripetal domains for various *forms* of the fantastic" (ibid: 17). The replacement of "the fantastic" with "fantastika" really helps us avoid the vagueness of the former since it points towards different directions, to imaginative texts of every historic period – ancient mythology, folk tales, the Bible, medieval miracle stories, etc.

Apart from terminology, there is another fundamental problem, which is a lack of consensus among the theoreticians of fantastic fiction concerning chronology. We cannot discard the issue of chronology as insufficient since in many ways it is the history of the genre that shapes the framework for speaking about taxonomy. For instance, shall we consider Lucian's and Cyrano de Bergerac's tales of lunar voyages to be early examples of Science Fiction? Carl Freedman discusses the issue in his challenging book, *Critical Theory and Science Fiction*:

> "Dante offers plausible scientific speculation as to the geography of hell in relation to that of the earth. […] One might even argue that Dante and Milton, in the active interest they took in the scientific developments of their own times and places, are considerably more akin to Isaac Asimov and Arthur Clarke than to Wordsworth and T. S. Eliot. […] It is in this sense of creating rich, complex, but not ultimately fantastic alternative worlds that Dante and Milton can be said to write science fiction." (2000: 15-16)

Freedman, as is clear, further blurs our idea of chronology. To get out of this kind of theoretical maze, John Clute specifies a more or less exact date of the birth of "fantastika": around 1800. So did Caillois who spoke of approximately the same date when, as he claimed, the scientifically minded society emerged and "the fantastic" began to function pragmatically and generically.

Fantastika is not only a handy invention, it seems to be indispensable for our terminological arsenal, since it comprises all fantastic genres, not only the three previously identified in criticism – Fantasy, Science Fiction, and Gothic Horror –,

5 The word "fantastika" is an umbrella Russian and Polish (cf. Lem 1970) term for all generic fantastical fiction. Before John Clute, it was used by Birgit Menzel (2005) to speak of Russian Science Fiction and Fantasy. Larisa Fialkova drew my attention to this early usage of the word "fantastika" in European criticism when we were discussing Clute's neologism at "The Fantastic Now" conference in Münster in 2016.

but sub-genres or cross-genres, too. As Charul Palmer-Patel remarks in the first issue of *Fantastika Journal*:

> "There are places of overlap, of tangling and disorder. That is not to say that we should not differentiate and define genres within this Fantastika umbrella term […] There is a scholastic necessity in defining genres: we must do so in order to demarcate the boundaries of our research, in order to say that 'these texts are within my purview because of x reasons.'" (2017: 22)

Despite Clute's confession of his discontent about the established genre-names, being the contributor and the editor of Hugo award-winning encyclopedias on two major fantastic genres – Science Fiction and Fantasy –, he would not initiate any radical change of the terminology (1993; 1995; 1997).[6] Though not revising the taxonomy of genres, he underscores the difference between genre texts on the one hand, and those he calls "fantastical narratives" on the other.

Viewing "fantastika" as a complex of several genre "formula stories" (Cawelti 1976) does not prevent our reconsidering the genre boundaries, which would depend on a synchronic or diachronic approach. No matter how difficult, since they tend to shift, the study of such boundaries must be based on plot structure, the setting, and the functions of the dramatis personae.[7]

4. FANTASTIKA AND THE FANTASTIC

Does Clute's coinage of "fantastika" as a kind of non-mimetic and predominantly generic fiction resolve the terminological problems that are hampering our understanding of history, poetics, and pragmatics of the fantastic? The term "fantastika" is convenient for the designation of a specific kind of fiction written ap-

6 Clute and other editors of the new *Fantastika Journal* have solved the problem of synonymy in critical terminology by capitalizing genres as proper nouns to differentiate genre names, on the one hand, and emotion, impulse or effect (and mode), on the other. As has been stated in my Introduction, I follow their example.

7 The exemplary classic work that successfully discusses the connection of the plot structure to the functions of the dramatis personae is Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* (1968 [1928]). Another example is John Cawelti's (1976) successful analysis of more or less stable functions and plot structures that resulted in the very illuminating concept of genre formulas in popular fiction.

proximately after 1800 that is pragmatically and functionally different from mimetic prose. Still, I believe, the notion of "the fantastic" is equally indispensable, since it allows us to analyze the ways the writers construct the strange, the alien, the extreme (the excessive or the deficient), the abnormal, the destructive, and the unstable; in other words: anything that challenges the superficial and illusory stability of the world as perceived by a more or less sane individual or society.

The notion of "the fantastic" makes it possible to explore the marginal territories where the fantastic imagery penetrates "the real" as the latter is depicted in psychological, predominately mimetic, prose from 19th-century Romantic fiction on. By reconsidering "the fantastic" on new grounds we may as well pay tribute to Stanislaw Lem who coined two useful terms in 1971, later to be completely ignored by the critical community. Lem maintains that there are two kinds of literary fantasy (used synonymously with "the fantastic"):

> "'final' fantasy as in fairy tales and SF, and 'passing' fantasy as in Kafka. In an SF story the presence of intelligent dinosaurs does not usually signal the presence of hidden meaning. The dinosaurs are instead meant to be admired as we would admire a giraffe in a zoological garden; that is, they are intended not as parts of an expressive semantic system but only as parts of the empirical world. In 'The Metamorphosis,' on the other hand, it is not intended that we should accept the transformation of a human being into bug simply as a fantastic marvel but rather that we should pass on to the recognition that Kafka has with objects and their deformations depicted a socio-psychological situation." (Lem 1973: 28)

When Gregor Samsa transforms into a huge insect, his new monstrosity manifests his inner state in "allegorical tenor" (cf. Suvin 2000). This kind of monstrosity is not related to the fantastic "otherness" found in *Frankenstein* or R.L. Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886). The Kafkian beetle image is a "passing fantasy." Another example of an early modernist "passing fantasy" is the Doppelganger who features in Henry James's "The Jolly Corner" (1908), a tale of an immigrant's homecoming. The return of James's Spencer Brydon from Europe to his home in New York seems to set in motion a mental time machine. One day, while wandering around the labyrinth of the house, Brydon feels someone's ghostly presence and soon realizes that, in a sense, he is haunted by an "American version" of himself. His counterpart is not so much a ghost from the past as the visible embodiment of an alternative life in America that was not chosen by the protagonist. He is struggling with himself, or rather, with the part of himself that his mind has to exteriorize (cf. Zwinger 2008; Golovacheva 2013; Golovacheva 2017). This struggle represents a kind of mid-life crisis. Deciding not to wait for a collision, Brydon starts to pursue his

"other self" around the house. Finally, Brydon sees the image and rejects it as his double, refusing to have anything to do with him. It is noteworthy that Sigmund Freud speaks of such lack of recognition and rejection in his classic article "The Uncanny" ("Das Unheimliche," 1919). By way of example, Freud describes his own experience: seeing and not recognizing his own reflection in the compartment's mirror – he took his own reflection for a stranger who mistook the door. He felt that he "thoroughly disliked the appearance" (Freud 1955 [1919]: 247) of "the double." Symptomatically, writing this story, James sought after self-knowledge and self-diagnosis, defined an internal conflict (typical of so many transatlantic writers), and cathartically (art-therapeutically) resolved it by shifting the physical episode into the sphere of speculative reality. I believe that this image of the double in James's "The Jolly Corner" is an example of "the fantastic" outside of "fantastika." Indeed, this short story cannot be viewed as a generic text, since the Doppelganger here is a case of a "passing fantasy" signaling the presence of a metaphoric, expressive meaning. One can hardly admire Brydon's double as a "final" fantastic image. Rather, James depicts a peculiar socio-psychological situation.

The distortions and projections found in the realm of "the fantastic" – outside the genre paradigm – reveal its great cognitive potential. Apart from representing the break in the acknowledged order of life, "the fantastic" also depicts phantoms and phantasma, the subversive activity of the human mind; it uncovers the terrible understories of the troubled or alienated self, the strange *lacunae*. It opens the heart of darkness, as is the case in another of Henry James's notoriously labyrinthine tales, *The Turn of the Screw* (1898). Here, the governess's ambition to be the sole guardian of the children and to protect them from the influence of evil spirits may be interpreted either as courageous behavior or as a pathological manifestation of her neurosis. The ambiguous account of the events in the governess' diary allows for controversial views of her mental state – no more and no fewer than those "for" or "against" psychopathological interpretations of *Hamlet*. The governess's cognitive problems are partly based on her two parallel, yet antagonistic, interpretations of what is going on in Bly. No less puzzling are the ghosts – in case they do appear. The issue of the ends and means of Peter Quint and Miss Jessel, the apparitions**,** is mostly neglected in criticism. If the presumption that the children have secret affairs with the ghosts is true, we have to find an explanation for the fact of their appearance to the governess. Would their invisibility not have been the best protection for the dark affairs? Indeed, by taking such a wrong turn they created a serious obstacle to their secret communication with Miles and Flora. Or, perhaps, it was the right turn – in case the ghosts aimed at driving the governess mad. James's exquisite technique of

playing with "the fantastic" – the technique of "adumbration" – allowed him to balance controversial interpretations in order to prevent the reader from taking definitive conclusion.[8]

As the above examples show, "the fantastic," being the result of both fantasizing and discursive strategies, allows the writer to place the strange and the alien into the heart of the trivial in order to challenge the fundamental ontological stability of existence and interrogate the stability and integrity of the mind.

Despite the benefits that the use of both terms – "fantastika" and "the fantastic" – offer, the following questions remain unsolved thus far:

1. Is "the fantastic" present in any genre of fantastika?
2. Does the presence of "the fantastic" in the text signify that the latter is an example of fantastika?

Any kind of "the fantastic" (within or outside a fantastika genre) encourages the reader to reflect on an unknown reality that is open only to presentiment so far. The strange (*étrange*) initiates the process of cognition, of identifying, and explaining the origin and the intrinsic logic of an alternative world or a transformed reality. Are we able to recognize the genres of fantastika mostly because it is "the fantastic" that is different in each of them? I will address and attempt to answer these issues in the subsequent subchapters.

5. THE FANTASTIC IN GENRES: THEMES, MODES, AND TYPES OF COGNITION

As it has been noted in my Introduction, generic definitions are necessary for charting and demarcating the territories of "the fantastic" for research purposes. Let us begin with looking at what is perceived as qualities typically attributed to "the fantastic" in Gothic fiction. Undoubtedly, ghosts and monsters would be named among the primary constituents of the genre, apart from typically Gothic chronotopes, such as castles, convents, and haunted houses. Yet, apparently, monsters or specters as such do not alone predetermine the genre. For example, monsters in Science Fiction are represented to be a part of the natural order. As for ghosts, it is clear that the specter of Hamlet's father and the three witches do not place Shakespeare's tragedies *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* in the realm of Gothic

8 There are numerous critical works devoted to *The Turn of the Screw* (cf. Willen 1960; James/ Beidler 2011; Golovacheva 2014: 29-117).

horror. Neither does the devil who appears in the shape of Ivan Karamazov's double in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. Rather, the latter example proves Todorov's argument that "the fantastic dissolves into the general field of literature" (1975 [1970]: 46). In fact, ghosts, doubles, and monsters often feature in texts that are hardly associated with any genre of fantastika. In Gothic Horror, the radically strange, like ghostly entities, connect the "realistic," that is, predominately mimetically represented world, with the supernatural one. Ghosts, however, play a different role in *Harry Potter* because here they are depicted as regular inhabitants of the magical world. The role of the apparitions in Dickens's *Christmas Carol* differs radically from that of the supernatural visitors (or hallucinations) of James's governess in *The Turn of the Screw*, on the one hand, and from the role of Moaning Myrtle in the *Harry Potter* series, on the other. It is clear that such imagery is employed in various genres of fantastika, in Renaissance drama, as well as in 19th-century psychological novels. These few examples readily indicate that a thematic approach is hardly helpful in genre attribution.

As for monsters, it was Mary Shelley who sanctioned the migration of anthropomorphous monstrosity from the Gothic to Science Fiction and later to Fantasy (cf. Halberstam 1995). Since then, monsters have inhabited all genres – Science Fiction (*The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, 1885), Fantasy (*The Lord of the Rings*, 1949), and Gothic Horror (*Dracula*, 1897). In recent Fantasies, like *The Twilight Saga*, and in contemporary Gothic Horror, like *The Last Werewolf*, monstrosity signals the changing views on natural laws, anthropology, ethnicity, heredity, and transgression in identity and society. As we see, the thematic type of strangeness as such does not shape the genre.

Maybe it is the analysis of the narrative modes that could provide the instruments for the differentiation of fantastic genres? The radically different modes of the fantastic are persuasively discussed in Renate Lachmann's *Erzählte Phantastik* (*Discourses of the Fantastic*). They are: "the objective fantastic" ("das objektive Phantastische") and "the subjective fantastic" ("das subjektive Phantastische") (Lachmann 2002: 22). She argues that the first category, "the objective fantastic," is manifested in Science Fiction and Utopia, both signaling manipulation of man through science and technology, through either an institution (state or government), science (technology, medicine), or an alien power (ibid: 8). Lachmann reads Science Fiction and Utopia as depicting an active, often aggressive, intrusion. She finds the second mode revealed in Gothic Horror, which speaks of the "indescribability" ("Nichtbeschreibbarkeit") and "immeasurability" ("Nichtmetrifizierbarkeit") of man (ibid: 8). In such texts, the reader either

learns about or suspects the intrusion of ghosts, doppelgangers, or demons as the entities belonging to the supernatural world.

Unlike non-fantastic fiction, which Lachmann considers to be proto-anthropology, fantastic literature ("fantastika" in my terminology) crosses the borders of anthropological norms and can be discussed as meta- or anti-anthropology: "The man in fantastic discourse loses his/her human anthropology, he/she becomes either an agent or a patient of some alternative anthropology which turns him/her into a dreamer, a sleepwalker, a lunatic, or a monster" (ibid: 9).[9] However, I cannot agree with her that all "fantastika" would follow these principles. Insisting that "the fantastic" discards rationality, Lachmann ignores the fact that Science Fiction and Utopia place emphasis on rationality, logic, and positive cognizability, on the presence and "interaction of estrangement and cognition" (Suvin 1974: 255). In my view, the cognition of the marvelous (the strange, the inexplicable) in classic (hard and social) Science Fiction and in Utopia may even be followed by the state of "zero amazement" that results from the primarily logical assessment of how the counterfactual world is constructed.

Carl Freedman reconsiders and revises the notion of "cognition," insisting that we should speak of "cognition effect" rather than of cognition per se:

> "The crucial issue for generic discrimination is not only epistemological judgement external to the text itself on the rationality or the irrationality of the latter's imaginings, but rather […] the attitude *of the text itself* to the kind of estrangements being performed." (2000: 18, original emphasis).

Freedman compares J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and C.S. Lewis's *Cosmic Trilogy*; this is not a random choice since both texts convey similar Christian values. Unlike Tolkien's saga, which Freedman believes to display a "non-cognitive disjunction" from the mundane world, Lewis's trilogy depicts such fantastic images as planetary angels as possible within the authors' actual environment. So, in Freedman's view, *Out of the Silent Planet* produces a cognition effect: "If theology is a science (if, to put it bluntly, Christianity is true) then the powerful estrangements produced by Ransom's adventures on Mars are wholly cognitive" (ibid: 17). Yet, it seems to me that the concept of a "cognition effect" takes us into the realm of the boundless "fantastic" where no genres are

9 "Der *phantastische* Mensch scheint seine Anthropologie zu durchkreuzen oder gar zu leugnen – er wird Agent und Patient einer alternativen Anthropologie, in der er als Träumer, Halluzinierender, Wahnsinniger, Monster auftritt" (Lachmann 2002: 9, original emphasis).

identifiable. Indeed, if alchemy is a science then the estrangement (transmutation) in Arthur Machen's "The Spagyric Quest of Beroaldus Cosmopolita" (1923) is cognitive. So is all the magic in *Harry Potter*.

Coming back to Science Fiction for the purpose of improving its definition as the fiction of cognitive estrangement and *novum*, I suggest supplementing it with the notion of "cognitive stability." This addition may be helpful as a generic attribution. Indeed, unlike the non-cognitive genres of Fantasy and the Gothic (with the exception of the "Explained Gothic"[10]), which are not aimed at explaining the irrationalist estrangements, Science Fiction insists on the necessity to explain the *nova*, to give a clue about their origin, to clarify "how we got there from here" (Gunn 2010: 9). Our definition of Science Fiction should by all means underscore the presence of estrangement (consistent strangeness), that is critically and logically cognized, as a dominant feature. Otherwise, if we accept Freedman's idea, we would equate the cognitive effect of such images as cyborgs, on the one hand, with that of elves and werewolves, on the other. The

10 In early Gothic fiction, magic or the supernatural sometimes turns out to be an explainable, quasi-magical, or, "staged," pseudo-magic as it is in Ann Radcliff's or Clara Reeves's novels. Her reader eventually finds out that the magic is fake. This type of "the fantastic" is characteristic of "the uncanny" in Todorov's classification. In contrast, the supernatural in Horace Walpole and M.G. Lewis is "accepted," i.e., the reader is not assisted with cognizing (finding explanation of) the nature and the origin of the bizarre event or phenomenon. Instead, he/she is supposed to take these for granted. Such texts are qualified as "marvelous." I have to remark that the latter category appears to me to be most obscure since, according to Todorov, it encompasses both Fairy Tales and Science Fiction, whereas it is evident that the cognition in these two genres cannot be identical or even similar because sane (critical) thinking is supposed to be able to distinguish between fact (invented *novum*), on the one hand, and mythology, on the other. Indeed, does not explanation require rationality? If it does, how can we place Fairy Tale and Science Fiction in the same category (as subgenres)? Todorov does not speak of Fantasy. However, it is this genre that fits his definition of "the marvelous." It works especially well for "immersive fantasy," since, according to Mendlesohn, there "the implied reader, although dependent on the protagonist's absorption of sight and sounds, is not required to accept his or her narrative" (2008: 1). Compare with Todorov: "In the case of the marvelous, supernatural events provoke no particular reaction … in the implicit reader. It is not attitude towards the events described which characterize the marvelous, but the nature of these events" (1975 [1970]: 54).

horizon of critical evaluation of the genres of fantastika would be lost for us forever.

Freedman suggests defining Science Fiction as "a *recognizable* kind of fiction" (2000: 16). But again, the idea of recognizability can be applied to the imageries in the Gothic Horror, Fantasy, and Fairy Tale. "The fantastic" in Gothic Horror and in such weird tales as Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839) and "Ligeia" (1838) is recognizable but non-cognizable: the strange (the uncanny) almost never gets a rationalistic explanation. In the best Gothic or weird texts, the reader never ceases being puzzled. It is the persisting strangeness that accumulates the effect of horror or terror. Such oddity brings about astonishment that cannot be relieved by rationalistic cognition leading to catharsis and then, possibly, to the state of "zero amazement" (acceptance of the new reality). As for the strangeness found in non-generic, modern, and postmodern fiction, it is much less recognizable, and for this reason we should identify it as fantastic element, or "passing fantasy."

6. THE FANTASTIC IN UTOPIA

In order to address the second question poised in my Introduction – Is "the fantastic" present in any genre of fantastika? – I suggest discussing the genre of Utopia. Indeed, Utopia deserves special attention in my argument concerning fantasticality. Many scholars place Utopia either in the realm of Science Fiction or in its immediate vicinity (cf. Clute/Nicholls 1993). There seem to be good reasons to do so since the texts belonging to either genre depict alternative worlds in a cognitive continuum with our reality: the reader cognizes the *novum* there logically and critically. Still, the differentiation of Science Fiction and Utopia is a vastly disputed issue in the criticism of fantastika genres. The problem is rooted in literary history: Utopia is older than Science Fiction and the territory of Utopia is at once broader and narrower than that of Science Fiction. Indeed, any science-fictional story is a tale of "u-topia" and (or) "u-chronia" – of a non-existing space and time. Science Fiction pointed at and prepared the readers for the birth of the future world which had been previously envisioned in Utopias. Both Utopia and Science Fiction extrapolate the real and imaginary discoveries and inventions. Both genres are nourished by scientific revelations and discoveries. The genealogical closeness of Science Fiction and Utopia is based on the idea of extrapolation in these two genres. This belief still gets strong support (cf. Seed 2005; Parrinder 2000).

Among numerous definitions of Utopia, I prefer the one offered by Kenneth Roemer since it seems to be comprehensive and can be easily tested by examples of a variety of Utopian texts:

"My brief working definition of a literary utopia is: a fairly detailed narrative account of one or more imaginary communities, societies, or worlds. These fictional constructs represent radical, though identifiable, alternatives to the readers' cultures, and they invite iconoclastic and normative evaluations of those cultures." (1996: 393)

Curiously, Roemer does not speak of any fantasticality. The narrative accounts of imaginary community can be found in Science Fiction, in Fantasy, in mimetic fiction, or in non-fiction. So, the story is the only factor that distinguishes literary Utopia from non-literary texts featuring utopianism. Both types are based on some kind of extrapolation, but they can do without a radical *novum* (the impossible and principally unreal). Literary Utopia may or may not expose some strangeness which may be limited to minor exoticism. Consider in this respect Aldous Huxley's *Island*, in which the action is set in an imaginary South-Eastern territory. The oriental setting, though supplied with some exotic flora and fauna (e.g., talking birds – Mynahs), provides hardly more fantasticality than does a mundane rural area, a setting for the imaginary community depicted in another education Utopia, B. F. Skinner's *Walden Two* (1948). Both Utopias extrapolate certain science-based theories and methods. In principle, either educational approach – the one supported by Huxley and the other defended by Skinner – is possible.

In the "Introduction" to *Defined by a Hollow* (2010), Darko Suvin, despite his recent shift to political epistemology, views utopian fiction as a sociopolitical part of science fiction, as he did in earlier writings (cf. Suvin, 1979: 49). Sargent (1994), however, sees it the other way around: Science Fiction is a part (a subgenre) of Utopia.

More important seems to be Suvin's argument in support of utopia's dubious nature, we may say, of its "non-fantasticality":

"However, as soon as the blueprints and beliefs become localized and approach a narrative (as in much of the writing of utopian socialists), there is little delimitation provided by any definition of utopia I can think of. The usual escape clause is that utopia is *belles lettres,* or fiction, while Saint-Simon or Fourier are *lettres* or nonfiction. But that distinction […], is historically a fugitive one." (Suvin 2010: 40)

Post-modern critical thought has been entertaining the idea that literariness is a common feature of any discourse, that actually there are no special characteristics that distinguishes literature from other texts (cf. Eagleton 2008 [1983]; Miall/ Kuiken 1998). So, apart from the blurring of the boundaries between literary genres, another kind of blurring is now recognized – the one between literature and other narratives (cf. White 1987; Todorov 2007 [1973]). Even though the latter is in many ways a fruitful conception, we should not neglect the existence of the specific pragmatics of the literary objectivity, which differs from that of science or philosophy.

In many cases it is almost impossible to tell whether a utopian text is just a non-fictional product of utopian imagination (as is in the writings of Plato, Marx, etc.), or a literary Utopia. For example, Thomas More's *Utopia* and Tomasso Campanella's *The City of the Sun* have been discussed as non-literary works (cf. Chordas 2010). The problem of searching for the boundaries of Utopia is complicated not only by the fact that they are blurred – there is nothing specific in such transparency of borders which we already discussed in connection with the Gothic, Science Fiction, and Fantasy. The main difficulty arises from the fact that so many Utopias can be realized in the future or even in practice right now. Some actually are. Still we certainly should go on calling them Utopias. But can we also call them "fantastic"? Even if we place them in the realm of "fantastika," we will not be able to discard the fact that the fantastic is not to be found in them. (On the contrary, leafing through the recent issues of *Science* or *Nature* journal, we are certain to discover fantastic predictions and to find the marvelous in a significantly higher proportion.)[11]

To illustrate the stance concerning the non-fantasticality of Utopia, we may look closely at Aldous Huxley's works that reveal the artificiality of the rigid distinction between such disciplinary genres as scientific writing and fiction on the one hand, and Science Fiction and Utopia, on the other. There are numerous correspondences between Huxley's literary discourse and the discourse of con-

11 Such, for example, are the papers theorizing the "many interacting worlds" (MIW) hypothesis in quantum mechanics and cosmology. Even well-known quantum mechanical phenomena, like wave-particle duality, or EPR paradox, still seem to be inconceivable, although proven by numerous experiments. In neuroscience, it has been taken for granted that certain cognitive skills, like "theory of mind," are characteristic of humans alone. However, a group of scientists (Krupenye et al. 2016) have advanced a hypothesis that great apes are also able to understand that others' actions are driven not by reality but by beliefs about reality.

temporaneous science. Virtually every *novum* in his Utopias is a reflection of scientific theories or practices.

Huxley called his *Brave New World* (1931) and *Island* (1962) "negative" and "positive" utopias respectively (Huxley 2001 [1963]). I will begin with the novel from 1931. In many respects, *Brave New World* was a response to the historical situation and typical concerns of the late 1920s. The novel reveals the surprising fusion of both Soviet and American realities – Bolshevism and Fordism (cf. Meckier 2001; Golovacheva 2000; Golovacheva 2015). This Russo-American amalgamation shaped the unique imagery of *Brave New World,* which led a few critics to read it as a critical commentary, rather than a future story.

Writing *Brave New World*, Huxley played over a vast and controversial ground of concepts that were entertained in hard and soft sciences. The novel drew from numerous publications and concepts advanced at the time by eugenicists, geneticists, psychologists, physiologists, and demographers. The "borrowings" that allowed Huxley to create his blueprint of a very successful futuristic civilization included Fordism, Freudianism, Pavlovian and Watsonian Behaviorism, Neo-Malthusianism, eugenics, and ectogenesis (cf. Firchow 1984; Baker 1990; Golovacheva 2008). This puts *Brave New World* in the closest proximity to Hard Science Fiction, rather than Utopia. It may even be considered as "only a framework for introducing the scientific concept to the reader" (Parrinder 1980: 23).

Yet, the utopian nature is unfailingly dominant in Huxley's work. It is not by chance that Huxley borrowed Berdyaev's words about utopias found in *Un Nouveau Moyen Âge* (Berdyaev 1927 [1924]) to use in the epigraph to the novel:

"Les utopies apparaissent bien plus réalisables qu'on ne le croyait autrefois. Et nous nous trouvons actuellement devant une question bien autrement angoissante: comment éviter leur réalisation définitive? […] Les utopies sont réalisables. La vie marche vers les utopies. Et peut-être un siècle nouveau commence-t-il, un siècle où les intellectuels et la classe cultivée rêveront aux moyens d'éviter les utopies et de retourner à une société non utopique moins 'parfaite' et plus libre." (Huxley 1946[1931]): V)[12]

12 "Now, indeed, they [utopias] seem to be able to be brought about far more easily than we supposed, and we are actually faced by an agonizing problem of quite another kind: how can we prevent their final realization? … Utopias are more realizable …, and towards utopias we are moving. But it is possible that a new age is already beginning, in which cultured and intelligent people will dream of ways to avoid ideal states and to get back to a society that is less 'perfect' and more free" (Berdyaev 1933:187-188). Apparently, Huxley deliberately used the French version for the epigraph, leav-

As is clear from the above passage from Berdyaev and from the fact that Huxley chose these words to precede the novel, the author of *Brave New World* was conscious of the realizability of his blueprint.

Thirty years later, Huxley published his second utopian text where the action takes place in an exotic country. This second Utopia – "positive" by his own classification – is *Island*. This time, Huxley sends his protagonist to the East. The ideal country is placed on the island Pala, somewhere in the Indian Ocean not far from the Andaman Islands. Pala is populated by the descendants of Buddhist colonists who practiced Tantric religion. That *Island* offers a kind of mirror-image of *Brave New World* is well-known. It is curious that in *Island* the happy Palanese do not teach the protagonist, Will Farnaby, Yoga or Tantrism. They treat his neurosis and psychological trauma with the methods developed in the Western humanistic and existential psychotherapy which everyone on Pala, including the children, seem to be acquainted with. Besides, they employ the Ericksonean hypnosis to cure his anxiety disorder. The Palanese healers speak to Farnaby not as Yogins; rather, their speech and methods reveal their awareness of the concepts of Erich Fromm, Carl Rogers, and Abraham Maslow.

Huxley's infatuation with phenomenological psychology as well as with one of the schools of so-called humanistic psychotherapy is proven by the direct borrowings from Gestalt therapy books. In sum, *Island* differs greatly from contemporaneous works of fiction (including from other Utopias) since it deals with personal psychology, interpretations of the functions of the self, and the treatment of the latter's disorders rather than with interpersonal relations or social problems. Moreover, Huxley emphasizes his literary debt by pointing out that he borrowed some of his second wife's, Laura Archera Huxley, ideas for *Island*: "Some of her recipes (for example, those for the Transformation of Energy) have found their way, almost unmodified into my phantasy. Others have been changed and developed to suit the needs of my imaginary society and to fit into its culture" (Huxley 1963: XIII).

Island, unanimously perceived as Utopia, is filled with Gestalt therapy recommendations on training perceptual receptivity. Huxley apparently hoped to show what the basis for a genuinely realistic treatment of the mentally ill should be like. His positive Utopia focuses on the protagonist's obsessive neurosis, his mental history, and therapy. Thus, the author provides his readership with a completely new type of hybrid genre: The Utopian Psychotherapeutic Bildungs-

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ing out several lines. It is quite possible that by quoting the Russian philosopher in French he intended to underline the transnational significance of his (anti)Utopia, whose message could only be fully grasped by erudite readers.

roman (cf. Golovacheva 2007; Golovacheva 2008: 115-134). The islanders' prosperity is based on a highly developed self-understanding and advanced psycho-therapeutic techniques rather than on social equality or a balanced economy. It is remarkable that despite his general dislike of Behaviorism, Huxley employed some Skinnerian recipes in the novel as well.

The anti-industrial state of Pala was meant to be taken for a possible social construction and a way of life. The novel actually was perceived as instruction, becoming a cult book in the Western world. Huxley must have realized that he supplied the reader with a new and attractive Utopia, which held out the hope of achieving genuine harmony by means of authentic self-understanding and individual as well as group psychotherapy. It was probably the first time that psychology – or, more precisely, its concepts – found itself in the very center of the literary scene**.** *Island*, as opposed to *Brave New World*, does not contain *novum*, i.e. there is no "discontinuity" that could guarantee such an emotional response as awe or wonder. The alternative world depicted in *Island* – the only fictitious utopian world, perhaps, worth living in – looks achievable not only because it is based on very promising scientific and humanitarian ideas, as well as realizable projects, but because there is nothing "fantastic" in the narrative.

Both Huxley's Utopias, viewed as canonical and exemplary of the genre, show that Utopia is radically different from Gothic Horror, Fantasy, and even Science Fiction, so that I doubt that there are reasons to include it into the list of fantastika genres. Indeed, such a major element as "the fantastic," when present in Utopia, tightly interlocks with both "the real" and "the possible." Moreover, the writer of Utopia strives to construct an alternative reality that lacks fantastic features. It is not the writer's aim to reach the effect of amazement and awe. Rather, he/she aims at depicting a truly plausible reality, be it positive or negative. Utopia, thus, rejects the conventions of fantastic fiction. If we still decide to follow the established critical tradition of including Utopia in the catalogue of fantastika genres, we must specify that it is more than often than not completely devoid of "the fantastic."

7. CONCLUSION

I have attempted to illuminate several aspects of the critical theory of "the fantastic," some of which arise from an outright terminological chaos. As a basis for further research in this field and for the sake of clarity, I suggest replacing the terms "the fantastic" and "fantasy," still employed interchangeably to denote all varieties of speculative fiction, with the term "fantastika" introduced by John

Clute for all generic literature that is pragmatically and functionally different from mimetic prose. The term "fantastika," besides accentuating the generic nature of such fiction, helps us to avoid the vagueness of the concepts of "the fantastic" and "fantasy" since they point towards different directions, that is, to imaginative texts of every historic period. Unlike these terms, Clute's "fantastika" denotes the texts written in the Western and Slavic world after 1800.

However, the introduction of the new term alone cannot work as a magic wand that would solve other theoretical problems by waving over volumes of speculative fiction. Analyzing generic and non-generic fantastic fiction, I arrive at the conclusion that in order to speak of fantasticality in literature, it is useful to employ both terms – "fantastika" and "the fantastic" – parallelly, and in this way distinguish the historically established genres, on the one hand, and the specific quality and the intensity (or, the degree) of strangeness found in major fantastika genres, on the other. Besides, the term "the fantastic" allows us to explore the specifics of cognition of the strange, the alien, and the extreme in various fantastika genres.

I also hope to have shown that the mere presence of "the fantastic" should not mislead us to label a work of fiction as an instance of fantastika. A brief analysis of two of Henry James's non-fantastika texts has shown how "the fantastic" functions in the marginal territories where it penetrates "the real." Finally, by emphasizing the genre of Utopia, I have supported my argument by indicating that an inherently fantastika text may indeed lack fantastic qualities altogether.

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