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ABSTRACT

of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**AMERICAN REALITY
IN THE CREATIVITY OF KURT VONNEGUT**

Specialty: 5718.01 – World Literature (Literature of the USA)

Field of science: Philology

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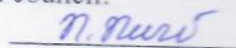
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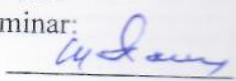
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GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

The actuality of the theme and its background. As in all spheres of public life of our country, there is a great need for integration into world culture in the field of literature and culture. For this reason, the study of Western literature, as well as the literature of other nations, can play an exceptional role in determining the relationship between literature and the direction of development.

The development of the modern world creates a need for interaction and cooperation between different peoples, and therefore the development of cultural and literary ties doesn't lose its relevance as one of the most actual issues of today.

The development of literary and cultural ties between nations creates conditions for the acceleration and coexistence of intercultural relations. From this point of view, the benefit and rapprochement of the peoples of the world with each other's literary achievements has become one of the most actual and important problems of our time.

The study of the processes taking place in the world literature in recent years, the collection and research of accurate information of its latest achievements is one of the urgent problems in Azerbaijani literary criticism. From this point of view, the study of American reality in the work of Kurt Vonnegut (1922-2007), a leading figure in new trends in American literature, who influenced and brought the prose of the twentieth century to a new level, provides an opportunity to evaluate it from a new perspective on the level of today's literary criticism.

K. Vonnegut's creativity is a unique phenomenon in terms of embodying the artistic reflection of American reality. This is due to the fact that the problems raised in the works of K. Vonnegut, which began in the middle of the last century, are still relevant. In addition, the artistic world of his works can be a description of events that can happen anywhere in the world. The writer, who speaks of the gap between man's existential desires and reality, raises questions about who man is, what he wants, and what he will achieve, and seeks solutions.

The problems raised by the author in his works, which began in his early career and lasted until the end of his life, are the American reality, its power to influence on society and man, and the search for ways out of the crisis brought by this reality. For this reason, Vonnegut's creativity does not lose its importance in terms of studying individual and universal problems.

One of the factors determining the relevance and importance of the research is that he is presented as a writer who speaks about the lack of dialogue in human relations and raises the issue of identity. It is also important not to overlook the assessment of Jerome Klinkowitz, who studied Vonnegut's creativity, as "Vonnegut calls us to pay attention to the diseases of society. His satire calls us not to despair, but to faith and optimism. The writer focuses on the idea that we can change the world for the better by uniting our will and strength"¹.

The actuality of the dissertation is one of the factors determining the relevance of K. Vonnegut's works to the new problems of the globalizing world. In the modern world, the loss of man's faith in moral values and humanism made the writer think and worry. For this reason, he voiced in his works of art and journalism that humanity is facing great disasters, and accused the thinker of inaction and indifference.

K. Vonnegut was concerned about the situation in modern America, his claim to rule the world, and the role he played in the lives of himself and other peoples, and he repeatedly voiced this in his interviews. The disappearance of the eternal desire of the average American to live and exist in the grip of social, political, and economic problems, on the other hand, the incredible immorality and worthlessness brought about by science and technology, the spiritual crisis in general, the alienation of people and the consequent loss of communication, the abandonment of moral values crossed the red line in K. Vonnegut's creativity.

Such problems raised in the writer's creativity haven't lost their relevance in our time, and for this reason it is important to study it again.

¹ Klinkowitz J. Vonnegut in America. Delacorte Press. 1977, -205p.

Various issues of K. Vonnegut's creativity have been researched; textbooks, monographs and articles have been published in Great Britain, the USA, Canada and Russia at different times. Although J. Klinkowitz², D. Morse³, L. R. Broer⁴, K. Lehmann-Haupt⁵, M. Leeds⁶, E. Nye⁷, P. Reed⁸, W. Taylor⁹, S. Farrell¹⁰, H.W. Hall¹¹, W.R. Allen¹² and other researchers analyzed and commented on K. Vonnegut's literary heritage, the writer's work did not become a separate object of study in Azerbaijani literary criticism.

It is unfortunate that, despite the presence of G. Guliyev's "Leading currents in XX century American literary criticism", "Postmodernism and fiction"¹³, Y. Abdullayeva's "Modernism in XX century literature", "Postmodernism in Fiction"¹⁴, G. Rustamov's "The Fate of the Future"¹⁵ on the problems of modern

² Klinkowitz J. Vonnegut in America. Delacorte Press. 1977, -205p.

³ Morse D. The Novels of Kurt Vonnegut: Imagining Being an American. Praeger. 2003, -232p.

⁴ Broer L.R. Sanity plea: schizophrenia in the novels of Kurt Vonnegut. University Alabama Press. 1994. -264p.

⁵ Lehmann-Haupt C. "Breakfast of Champions, Or Goodbye Blue Monday"//. The New York Times. 3May, 1973.

⁶ Leeds M. The Vonnegut Encyclopedia: An Authorized Compendium. Greenwood. 1994.-712p.

⁷ Nye E.A. "Telling the Stories that Can't Be Told: Translating War in Hemingway, Vonnegut and O'Brien". Undergraduate Honors Theses. 2016.

⁸ Reed P.J. Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. N.Y.: Thomas Y.Crowell Company. 1972. -222p.

⁹ Taylor W. The Kings of Infinite Space and The Sirens of Titan. <http://www.vonnegutreview.com/2013/06/the-sirens-of-titan.html>

¹⁰ Farrell S. Critical Companion to Kurt Vonnegut. A Literary Reference to His Life and Work. Facts on File. New York. 2008. -537p.

¹¹ Hall H.W. Science Fiction and Fantasy Reference Index, 1992-1995. Libraries Unlimited, Inc. Englewood. Colorado. 1997. -289p.

¹² Allen W. Understanding Kurt Vonnegut. University of South Carolina Press, 2009, -192p.

¹³ Guliyev G. Leading trends in XX century American literary criticism. Baku: Çashioğhlu. 2011. 207 p.; Postmodernism and fiction // The Silk Road. Baku: Çashioğhlu. 2010. № 02, 99-105p.

¹⁴ Abdullayeva Y. Modernism in XX century literature. Baku: Mutarjim, 2005. -107p.; Postmodernism in fiction. Baku: Mutarjim, 2007. -191s.

¹⁵ Gismat. The fate of the future. Baku: Mutarjim, 2016. -334 p.

American literature in Azerbaijani literary criticism, no separate work on K. Vonnegut's creativity has been published.

The object and subject of the research work. The object of research is the literary-aesthetic approaches, artistic trends and their peculiarities in American literature, which play a leading role in the world literary and artistic thought of the XX century and determine the development of "black humor" in the history of humanitarian thought. The subject of the research work is the subject of American reality in the works of Kurt Vonnegut, one of the most important representatives of modern American and Western literature.

The purpose and objectives of the research work. The main purpose of the dissertation is to make scientific and theoretical generalizations based on Kurt Vonnegut's creativity, known in American literature for his works in the genre of "black humor", to identify sources of ideas, literary and artistic features of American reality in the author's works.

In this regard, the following objectives were put forward in the dissertation.

- To conduct a scientific analysis of the works written on the American reality in modern American literature and to study the historical conditions of the transition of the problem to the leading position;

- To determine the features of the reflection of American reality in literary and artistic thought and to determine its literary and critical bases;

- To evaluate the American reality as a narrative structure of K. Vonnegut's novels;

- To present "black humor" and parody methods in K. Vonnegut's novels as a description of reality;

- To study and analyze the novel "Slaughterhouse-Five, or, The Children's Crusade" in the context of contradictions of memory and objective reality;

- To study the novel "The Sirens of Titan" as a reflection of the absurd reality.

Methods of the research work. The scientific-theoretical ideas existing in literary criticism are widely used in the dissertation.

The analysis of the problem was carried out mainly on the basis of historical-comparative, biographical and analytical methods. In the research work, referring to the methods of analysis of modern literary criticism, the author's concept was put forward in the author's creativity.

The main provisions for the defense:

– The topic of American reality in modern American literature creates the need to study in the historical, social and cultural context in the frame of the problems of literary criticism;

– The artistic reflections of American reality in K. Vonnegut's creativity form the leading line of his works;

– “Black humor” and parody methods determine the artistic and aesthetic origin of K. Vonnegut's creativity, the main idea-content and problems;

– K. Vonnegut in his novel “Slaughterhouse-Five, or, The Children's Crusade” touches on important and actual problems of the time in the context of contradictions of memory and objective reality;

– In the novel “The Sirens of Titan” K. Vonnegut introduces a new author's concept, describing the absurd reality.

Scientific novelty of the research work. Kurt Vonnegut's creativity has been studied in detail in Western literature, and research papers, monographs and textbooks have been written on his creativity. However, not only systematic scientific research works on K. Vonnegut, but also monographic research works are not found in Azerbaijani literary criticism. For this reason, the analysis and research of K. Vonnegut's creativity allows us to comprehensively explain his writer's position in Azerbaijani literary criticism and literary thought.

The study of the problem of artistic reflection of American reality with new methodological principles, which is the leading line of K. Vonnegut's creativity, can be assessed as a scientific novelty of the dissertation.

On the other hand, the study of K. Vonnegut's use of “black humor” and parody methods as a narrative tool in the description of American reality, the study of the description of absurd reality in the author's works as the author's concept is a new approach in our literary criticism. These issues, which were raised for the first time in

the dissertation and found a theoretical solution, can be considered a scientific novelty of the research.

Theoretical and practical significance of the research work.

The results of the research can be used in the subjects “World Literature”, “American Literature”, “Literature of Foreign Countries”, “American Studies” taught at the Faculty of Philology. The research can also be used as a tool in the study of courses and lectures on American literature, as well as in preparation for seminars.

A number of scientific results and conclusions of the dissertation can play a role in the study of similar topics in Azerbaijani literature, as well as in the formation of correct and comprehensive ideas about the problem.

Approbation and application. The main provisions of the research work were reflected in reports at the International and Republic conferences as well as published in scientific journals and magazines, printed within the Republic and abroad.

Name of the organization where the dissertation is performed. The work was performed at the Department of Literature of Foreign Countries, Azerbaijan University of Languages.

The structure of the research work. The dissertation consists of an Introduction, three chapters, the result and the list of literature used. Introduction – 6 pages, 9252 characters, Chapter I – 35 pages, 66071 characters, Chapter II – 33 pages, 61988 characters, Chapter III – 36 pages, 69191 characters, the result – 4 pages, 6156 characters, and the total volume of the thesis consists of is 213971 characters except the list of literature used.

BASIC CONTENTS OF THE RESEARCH WORK

The actuality of the theme is substantiated in the *Introduction* of the thesis, the object and subject of the research, aims and objectives are identified, scientific novelty of the research, methodology, theoretical and practical significance, main provisions raised for defense, approbation and structure of the research work are postulated in the introduction.

The first chapter of the dissertation, presented under the name *“On the genesis of the subject of American reality in modern American literature”*, consists of two subchapters. The first subchapter entitled *“The Subject of American Reality in American Literature and Its Literary-Critical Foundations”*, examines the subject of American reality in modern American literature in detail, analyzes works on the subject, and explores its place and position in literary criticism.

Warner Berthoff, an American researcher, describes the description of modern American reality in a familiar and local dialect, which reflects the yeast of reality, as “the creation of a special direct atmosphere”¹⁶. For this reason, a number of writers, who consider the depiction of reality to be the main priority in their creativity, prefer different writing methods, while others consider the aesthetic principles of realism to be correct, while others choose modernist interpretation as the ideal form. Since the middle of the last century, postmodernism has emerged in American literature as the most realistic candidate for the description of reality, and the representatives of the Beat Generation, the Black Humor School, and many authors who have embraced the aesthetics of postmodernism can be added to this list. In “The Urgent West”, the chapter of the work “Tradition and Dream” Allen Walter writes about an American novel of the last century, the main feature of which was to depict the real face of life¹⁷. In this regard, the researcher notes the social, political, and social problems raised in the American novel as an important condition affecting human life, and names writers who try to show all strata of society, starting from ordinary American families, artists depicting American reality. Jane Benardete, an American literary critic, writes in “American Realism” that the opposite of reality is a true and accurate description of life¹⁸.

¹⁶ Berthoff W. *The Ferment of Realism: American Literature 1884–1919*. Publisher: Cambridge University Press. 1981. -p.349.

¹⁷ Allen W. *Tradition and Dream. The English and American Novel from the Twenties to Our Time*. Harmondsworth: Penguin books. 1986.-p.19.

¹⁸ Benardete J. *American realism*. 1972. - p.47.

The novels of John Steinbeck, a prominent figure of XX century realist literature and a Nobel laureate in literature, have played an exceptional role in depicting American reality. Literary critics are also right to say that it is rare for a writer to “describe American reality as naturally”¹⁹ as he is^{20;21}. J. Steinbeck’s novel “Of Mice and Men” tells the tragic lives of two workers during the Great Depression in California. The work deals with the human tragedy, which ends with the replacement of human existential desires, such as dreams and fantasies, with feelings of guilt and suffering. On the one hand, the writer describes the fate of the working people who were expelled from their lands and in need of ordinary food; on the other hand, he describes the tragedy of humanity, which wants to get more economic benefits.

John Updike, a realist writer, is one of his contemporaries who uses sharp satire to portray the true face of the American way of life. His novel “Rabbit, Run”, which reflects the American reality, is about an ordinary American who disappears in the artificial barriers created by society. Ordinary American Harry Angstrom, nicknamed “Rabbit”, reveals the true face of American reality as a “little” man. Harry Angstrom’s personal life is stuck in a whirlwind of numerous life events, and the result of these events is that his dreams and hopes don’t come true. The writer laughs at the human tragedy of an ordinary American who faces with the image of “Rabbit” in reality and can never overcome it, and also emphasizes that this tragedy stems from reality.

“The Notes of a Native Son”, a collection of essays by James Baldwin, a prominent figure in modern American literature, is evaluated as a work that reveals the true nature of American society and the consequences of racial, religious, and class discrimination. “If Beale Street Could Talk” is a tragedy about Americans as a whole, as a family tragedy that can’t overcome the artificial barriers created by society. Judicial arbitrariness, racial and class

¹⁹ Peter L. John Steinbeck: Nature and Myth. New York: Crowell, 1978. -p. 87.

²⁰ Benson J. The true adventures of John Steinbeck, writer: a biography. Viking Press. 1984. 248p.

²¹ Peter L. John Steinbeck: Nature and Myth. New York: Crowell, 1978. -87 p

discrimination against blacks in the country are described in all its ugliness²². J. Baldwin's works, written in a deep psychologism, a confessional style, differed from those of contemporary writers in terms of social problems.

The writer voices the problem of man and society in the language of an unnamed hero, and thus presents it as the outlook on life of any American. The work has been evaluated in American literary criticism as "touching on forbidden topics"²³.

One of the writers who has a special place in modern American literature is Norman Mailer. In "The Naked and the Dead", the author describes the arbitrariness and chaos of the American military in all its nakedness, and thus manages to portray the military as a model of American society. According to the author, the people in the military units gathered from all regions and social classes of the country are the real face of America. The clash of American dreams with reality is one of the main problems of N. Mailer's novels. It is no coincidence that the protagonist of the author's "An American Dream" embodies American ideals at different stages. But at the end, he realizes that he is helpless in the face of big finances, and realizes that American democracy can't stand up to the elite. American illusions, a symbol of freedom and happiness, disappear from the hero's life.

Lawrence R. Samuel, in "The American Way of Life: A Cultural History", seeks to shed light on important aspects of the American way of life, outlines key ideas in American culture, and shows that "the American way of life is based on American mythology or serves the national epic"²⁴. He writes: "the system-supported consumer lifestyle is America's ideological foundation, and it applies to everything"²⁵.

²² Brown S.L. What James Baldwin's Writing Tells Us About Today//Gawker Review of books. 04/09/2015 <http://review.gawker.com/what-james-baldwins-if-beale-street-could-talk-tells-us-1696489449>

Lewis R. Ellison's Essays // The New York Review

²³ Lewis R. Ellison's Essays // The New York Review. January 28, 1965. <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1965/01/28/ellisons-essays/>

²⁴ Samuel L.R. The American Way of Life: A Cultural History. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. 2017.-p37.

²⁵ There again, -p.39.

In “The American Novel and Its Tradition”, Richard Chase, an American researcher, writes that our literature conveys reality accurately and in detail, and this is often reflected in reasonable samples in a well-thought-out plot. The real difficulties of the characters are more pronounced in the form of confrontation between social classes. And in this type of novel, the events are not in a poetic description, but rather in a comic and satirical tone, showing the reality through sarcasm and ridicule, and, as a rule, tending to psychologism²⁶.

Being the writers presenting new topics in modern American literature Jeffrey Eugenides’s “The Virgin Suicides” and Jonathan Safran Foer’s “Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close” are already attracting attention as works that reflect American reality from a new perspective.

In her book “Reality Bites”, Dana Cloud studies American politics as a true member of American reality and concludes that social policy and rhetoric determine the political course of America. Emphasizing that rhetoric is part of America’s political and cultural course, the researcher argues that “rhetoric and affirmation of reality” go hand in hand, and writes that rhetoric suppresses and eliminates fact-checking, and therefore deep-rooted problems are overlooked²⁷.

Jonathan Franzen’s novels are among the most beautiful works of American reality. In his first novel, “The Corrections”, the image of external prosperity is more clearly expressed in the depiction of America in the 1990s. The author’s other novel, “Freedom”, reflects the realization of the personal freedoms of modern Americans and their struggle for it. The socio-political and economic realities of Franzen’s novel are the American realities that the writer seeks to convey to the reader.

In the research work entitled “The Reign of Wonder: Naivety and Reality in American Literature”, Tony Tanner writes that in American literature, the attitude to reality and experience is more expressed in admiration for naivety, but analysis and judgment must

²⁶ Chase R. The American Novel and Its Tradition. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957. -p.37.

²⁷ Cloud D.L. Reality Bites. 2018. -p.106.

come to the fore. The researcher sees the reason for this in the peculiarity of American literature. Based on this important point, he analyzes the work of a number of writers and notes that the concept of reality is assimilated in their works. But he also emphasizes that there is a special American style behind this complex approach²⁸.

Starting from the middle of the last century and describing the American society in all its reality, J. Steinbeck, N. Mailer, J. Baldwin, C. Didion, R. Ellison, J. Hershey, J. Updike, their predecessors M. Twain, C. London, T. Dreiser, E. Sinclair, and F. Fitzgerald continue the path, reviving new problems from the new American order in the scope of the period.

The second chapter of the research work, called “*Features of the Reflection of American Reality in Literary and Artistic Thought*”, states that the subject of American reality occupies a special place in American literary and artistic thought. In the 1960s, Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and William Burroughs, the leading figures in American literary and cultural life, described social and political discontent as the credo of life and more acutely and naturally described the problems of individual and social conflict²⁹.

In his novel “On the Road”, Jack Kerouac shows that Americans’ obsession with comfort and materialism have led to a crisis as a society. The moral crisis caused by the non-realization of dreams and desires forced the youth of that time to look for alternatives to the accepted way of life. The road trips in the work are also presented as the only way to escape from reality.

William Burroughs’ novel “Naked Lunch” is considered to be one of the leading works of Beat Generation³⁰. Analyzing the work, Oliver Harris concludes that “a naked dinner is a frozen moment, a second. In this case, everyone understands that any is at the end of fork”³¹. Such a metaphorical explanation of the work can be

²⁸ Tanner T. *The Reign of Wonder: Naivety and Reality in American Literature*. Cambridge University Press. 1977. -p. 127.

²⁹ Morgan B. *I Celebrate Myself: The Somewhat Private Life of Allen Ginsberg*. Penguin, 2006. -35p.

³⁰ Murthy T. S. *Wising up marks: the modern William Burroughs*. University of California Press, 1997. -p.9.

³¹ Harris Oliver C. G., MacFadyen I. *Naked lunch*. SIU Press, 2009. -p. 4.

explained by W. Burroughs' worldview. The author called America a "nightmare" and said that those who lead its domestic and foreign policies are incredibly "stupid and malicious"³².

At present, in the American literary process, new genres of documentary fiction are talked; the interaction of fiction and documentary works is discussed. In American literature, the documentary genre has a special place, and from the day of its existence to the present day, they have tried to describe the documentary evidence in an artistic way. As a result, a national American synthesis of documentary and fictional literature was created.

The creativities of Truman Capote, Tom Wolfe, Hunter Stockton Thompson are considered in modern American literature as the most appropriate way to describe the reality of a documentary literary work³³. Truman Capote's novel "In Cold Blood" has been praised by literary critics as a great work of prose written in the field of new journalism³⁴. De Bellis writes in "Visions and revisions: Truman Capote's "In Cold Blood"³⁵ that "In Cold Blood", Truman Capote draws his thoughts against the background of socio-aesthetic values and thus presents them as the author's coded thoughts."³⁶

According to Tom Wolfe, one of the authors of the documentary novel, the writer must be unequivocally the "secretary of the time" in times of upheaval and revolutionary change³⁷.

Among Tom Wolfe's documentary fiction there are such novels as "Radical Chick and Mau-Mauning the Flak Catchers" exploring the contradictions between blacks and whites, "The

³² Burroughs W.S.: Interview <https://sensitiveskinmagazine.com/-william-s-burroughs-interview/> ; Burroughs W.S. The Art of Fiction No. 36 Interviewed by Conrad Knickerbocker <https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/4424/the-art-of-fiction-no-36-william-s-burroughs>

³³ Garson H. Truman Capote. Ungar Publishing. 1980. -p.21.

³⁴ Hollowell J. Fact and Fiction. The New Journalism and Non-fiction Novel. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1977. -p.18.

³⁵ De Bellis J. Visions and revisions: Truman Capote's "In Cold Blood" // Journal of modern literature. 1979. Vol. 7. № 3. -519-536p

³⁶ There again, -p.521.

³⁷ Weber R. The Literature of Fact: Literary Nonfiction in American Writing. Ohio: Ohio University Press. 1980. -p.25.

Bonfire of the Vanities” describing the American-Soviet space race during the “cold war”, “A Man in Full” speaking about the lies and deceptions that exist in American politics. In these works, the writer wrote an artistic reflection of the reality prevailing in America on the basis of documentary facts, paved the way for the formation of a new genre of documentary fiction.

Joseph Heller’s “Something Happened” reflects the modern American outlook on life, his worries, and his dubious expectations for the future in all its nakedness. As programmed life goes on, the average American suddenly realizes that he is incomplete, that he has not gained a position in life, and that he is insecure and afraid of the future. In the world, “something happened” and it is impossible to remain without a position. The desire to reveal the essence of the changes taking place in society and the individual doesn’t leave him.

The “black humor” that exists in modern American literature is a form of sarcasm and ridicule, ranging from existential problems to social, political, economic, and domestic problems, as one way of reflecting the absurd reality. Writers writing in the style of “black humor” used as much as possible the opportunities of literary creativity as an adequate way to interpret the reality around them. It was also a way for the author to reveal the truth, along with his attitude to his time. The concept of “black humor” covers a certain set of ideological-thematic and rhetorical-poetic constructions. In American criticism, a certain worldview and consensus have been strengthened behind this concept, and therefore the term “black humor” is considered as a set of certain ideological attitudes. First of all, we can add to this the active creative attitude towards the idea of the absurdity of the world order. The main problem of the writers of “black humor” was to describe the absurd reality of the absurd world.

In the works of John Barth, a prominent figure in XX century American postmodernist literature, “black humor” is reflected in the sharpest depiction of American realities, irony and grotesque satire³⁸. The protagonist of the author’s novel “The Heating Opera” is a character who is tired of life, the reality that surrounds him, and

³⁸ Clavier B. John Barth and Postmodernism: Spatiality, Travel, Montage. Peter Lang, 2007. -p.55.

therefore raises the question of whether to live and suffer or commit suicide. Desperation and helplessness lead him to inactivity, to the idea that life is meaningless. Jacob Horner, the protagonist of Barth's other novel "The End of the Road", is experiencing a crisis of identity, wanting to take a position in life, but every new desire results in despair.

American "black humor" is reflected in Thomas Pynchon's novel "The Gravity's Rainbow" and is considered by literary critics as the brightest sample³⁹. Incredible events take place on the testing ground created by the American management system for new technologies, and the protagonists of the work are looking for ways out of the labyrinths they fall into. Every character who falls victim to unnecessary and meaningless new technologies implemented on the testing ground realizes that he is a victim of an eternally absurd reality. In his novel, Pynchon puts forward the idea that Americans are the victims of "testing grounds" and warns of possible future disasters.

Along with J. Barth, T. Pynchon, J. Heller, Kurt Vonnegut has a special place among the writers who wrote in the style of "black humor". During his lifetime, his work was studied in several areas, his works were analyzed, and numerous monographs and scientific research works were written. All research works investigating the writer's creativity have resulted in his use of "black humor". K. Vonnegut's novel "Cat's Cradle" doesn't say anything new at first glance, it is about an episode related to everyday human life, but at the same time it reminds us that life and death, good and evil are always interchangeable announcing that it will continue forever. Billy Pilgrim, the protagonist of "Slaughterhouse-Five, or The Children's Crusade", is a fictional character of hundreds of people who have seen the true face of war. With the help of "black humor", the writer describes the tragedy of a man who lived after the war and couldn't find a place for himself in the society in which he lived, "broken" from his family and the world around him. "Breakfast for

³⁹ Madsen D.L. American Exceptionalism. Univ. Press of Mississippi. 1998. 186p.; McDowell E. "Publishing: Pulitzer Controversies" // The New York Times. May 11, 1984.

Champions, or Goodbye, Blue Monday” is one of the works written in the style of “black humor”.

The second chapter of the dissertation, entitled “*American Reality as a Narrative Structure of Kurt Vonnegut’s Novels*”, consists of two subchapters. The first subchapter is “*Black humor as a stylistic-thematic reception of Kurt Vonnegut’s novels*”.

One of the types of humor that exists in American literature is “black humor.” This is sometimes called a “black comedy”. Works written in the style of “black” (sometimes “dark” humor) usually have special methods and tools to reveal comic events. In other words, “black humor” takes a special place in these events and in this way not only causes laughter, but also has an ideological and aesthetic nature. The idea of the absurdity of the world order permeates society, people and way of life. For this reason, the literary world of the writer, who uses “black humor”, revives in an absurd world⁴⁰. In the literature, the American version of “black humor” is interpreted as a vital therapy against the growing bureaucracy in public relations and the threat of continued nuclear war⁴¹.

In K. Vonnegut’s creativity, “black humor” usually acts as an object of laughter, which depicts the real reality of art. Vonnegut, like his predecessors, saw the world as chaos. For this reason, his works reflect the aimlessness and futility of human existence. The reason why man is worthless is the society that surrounds him and its unwritten rules. K. Vonnegut expressed the confrontation of the world and man with burlesque, grotesque, mockery, slapstick, parody and “black humor”. In K. Vonnegut’s creativity, “black humor” touches on such problems as death, national identity, human relations, religion and politics, military and gender discrimination, social life and so on. In all cases, the writer mocks and laughs at the seemingly great problems that arise in the confrontation between

⁴⁰ Madsen D.L. *American Exceptionalism*. Univ. Press of Mississippi. 1998; McDowell E. "Publishing: Pulitzer Controversies" // *The New York Times*. May 11, 1984.

⁴¹ *Comic Relief: Humor in Contemporary American Literature*. Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1999. -p.4-5.

society and man. He considers all the problems that harm people and threaten their existence as serious and urges them to think about it.

K. Vonnegut's personality was also influenced by his German descent and the early break-up of his family. The writer suffered from loneliness and felt alienated from the country he deeply loved. It is no coincidence that he called his latest book "A Man without a Country". The writer, who personally experienced the consequences of the retail of American citizens, sees it as a problem of the state, seeing all the troubles in the cruelty, caress and cruelty born of racial discrimination. He attributes this to the low level of existing culture, which is directly related to the prevailing politics in America.

Despite the American government's attempts to cultivate a "false patriotism" in the country, the writer criticized the subject with sarcasm and ridicule of "black humor". In such works, K. Vonnegut speaks more about the horrors and baseless atrocities of the US military than about the shortcomings of the American military system. It is true that at the time of the publication of "Slaughterhouse-Five, or The Children's Crusade", American society was not entirely ready for such an approach and description. In particular, it has not been easy for a writer to write about a subject as sensitive as American "patriotism". But later, the story of Billy Pilgrim became a topic that every young American was familiar with and laughed at.

K. Vonnegut's novel "Mother Night" also indirectly approaches the theme of war, but the author doesn't directly reveal the war in this work. Although the war sounds like a battle in a trench, in the novel "Mother Night" the war is presented as closed cabinets under the influence of great powers and the events that took place there. The collection "Fates Worse than Death" clearly shows that the writer's participation in the war shows that he forgot about the tragic events, but he is even more disappointed that people don't draw conclusions from it. He isn't accustomed to the fact that war is an integral part of modern life, and the massacres in Indo-China and the incursion of American troops into Iraq are frustrating. In his collection of essays, "A Man without a Country", he writes that no war brings happiness to the people of a defeated or victorious country.

The author claims that only a limited number of Black humor is a form of storytelling. With the help of this form, K. Vonnegut also describes the American reality, the moral crisis experienced by Americans. However, it should be noted that the “black humor” in the work of K. Vonnegut is associated not only with the expression of the crisis, but also with the active search for ways out of it. For this reason, K. Vonnegut turned to comic means of expression, writing “black humor” in the style of sarcasm and irony.

In the second subchapter of the dissertation, entitled *“Kurt Vonnegut’s novels as a parody of reality”*, the real problems arising from the conflict between society and people, human relations raised in the novels of the writer are studied in the context of parody and irony. Although K. Vonnegut’s first novel, “Player Piano”, was written in the utopian genre, it is a parody of modern society. The real problems brought by utopia affect people, including all spheres of society. The writer speaks of this very reality and speaks of the incredible ugliness that grips mankind.

The events of the novel take place in the near future, and the reader sees what mechanical machines are capable while entering human life. Literary critics who wrote about the merits of the novel called it “satirical, ironic”^{42;43}, and it should be noted that this is the most accurate assessment of the work. Indeed, the writer makes a satirical parody of society, hinting that Americans will face realities. Adding human problems to the problem area of science fiction and utopia, the writer talks about the suffering of an individual living in “an ideal society”. The writer describes the peculiarities of American society with a special author’s irony, and thus manages to show the realities of a divided society.

The lives of such people are controlled by machines, and everyone knows for sure that machines are “the smartest” and the most ideal knowledge. Everyone living in this society knows that going beyond the system will result in death. That’s why they “live”, “create” and “exist” by the machine life allocated to them.

⁴² Leeds M. The Vonnegut Encyclopedia: An Authorized Compendium. Greenwood. 1994.-712p.

⁴³ Reed P.J. Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. N.Y.: Thomas Y. Crowell Company. 1972. -222p.

In “Cat’s Cradle”, the author talks about what scientific progress is capable of, and about the tragic end of the invention of a soulless scientist who has lost his human qualities.

The writer talks about the disasters that a scientist can cause without thinking, and warns of the tragedies that await people. After World War II, people realized that reality was unjust and absurd. The deep spiritual crisis is unprecedented in the history of humanitarian thought, and this problem is one of the questions on the minds of writers of the time, such as K. Vonnegut.

An important feature that makes K. Vonnegut’s creativity interesting is that he describes the most tragic and terrible events with the help of humor. The writer leaves the complex and impassable moments of human life with a laugh, as if he is playing with life itself. The use of grotesque, satire and humor, which are types of laughter, also justifies the deep philosophical content in his works. Bitter laughter and ridicule indicate that human expectations are empty and meaningless.

Individualism doesn’t mean a close and trusting relationship in the family. This leads to a sharp conflict between the already tense relations between the older and younger generations. The author describes the parody of this problem in the novel “Slapstick”. American researcher Donald Morse believes that K. Vonnegut is one of the writers who depicts the life of America and Americans in the sharpest satirical colors. However, it is necessary to believe in man in spite of the evil deeds committed by those people who caused human tragedies. According to D. Morse, in the novel “Slapstick” the writer puts forward the idea that the uniqueness of life and the humanity in man can be believed until the end⁴⁴. The plan described in the work actually reflects the distribution of social security numbers in developed societies, and the author mocks this policy, exposing the extensive family plan that exists in America and is created by the government with the help of “black humor”. According to the author, family models growing up with the idea of artificial reproduction can never be a social support for people. However, Dr. Wilbur realizes

⁴⁴ Morse D. The Novels of Kurt Vonnegut: Imagining Being an American. Praeger. 2003. -p. 105.

this as a state plan, presenting it in his election campaign as building social welfare. In his book “Sanity plea: schizophrenia in the novels of Kurt Vonnegut”, American researcher Lawrence R. Broer writes that although the author describes the American way of life with fictional and unimaginable events in “Slapstick” at first glance these are real, and we encounter such events at every moment of life⁴⁵.

The third chapter of the dissertation is entitled “*The artistic reflection of American reality in the work of Kurt Vonnegut*” and consists of two subchapters. The first subchapter of the dissertation “*The novel “Slaughterhouse Five or the Children’s Crusade” in the context of the contradictions between memory and objective reality*” clarifies the horrors of war and its meaninglessness. With grotesque and hyperbole, the writer warns of human disasters hidden in human existence. K. Vonnegut has repeatedly stated that people don’t understand the reality of humankind, and said that the desires of the human race to promote war will have a frightening end. That is why the work makes you think, urges you not to forget that terrible time of history. On the other hand, the writer tries to show that people are stuck in the vortex of their destiny and can’t find a way out. The protagonist Billy Pilgrim also reconciled with his fate, but he found a way out of the situation hidden in his memory. Billy Pilgrim’s memory is the only way to escape from reality, and he doesn’t want to return to real life with all his might. Billy Pilgrim looks stupid at first glance, the reader perceives him as an anti-hero who plays the role of a soldier. Behind his stupidity, the writer speaks about the stupidity, emptiness and meaninglessness of the war itself. Billy Pilgrim’s stupidity is a reflection of the people who fought in the war and then sacrificed their lives for meaningless and foolish deeds. The author’s sarcasm also shows that Billy Pilgrim’s “games” of war embody death and disaster. In all the pages of the work, which are described as serious events, the author’s notion “such are the things ...”⁴⁶ is a sign of the meaninglessness of the war.

⁴⁵ Broer L.K. Sanity plea: schizophrenia in the novels of Kurt Vonnegut. University Alabama Press. 1994. -p.259.

⁴⁶ Vonnegut K. Slaughterhouse-Five. Random House Publishing Group. 1999. - p.23.

But at the same time, it is the bitter reality of the impossibility of escaping it. The inevitability of war and the inevitability of death terrify the reader. Children who present themselves as soldiers are just “pedestrians” of the games of life; they are a real depiction of the absurd as beings who cannot escape from reality, who can’t control their own lives. The description of life after death and bombing is the real face of reality. The work can also be considered as the author’s approach to American realities through the eyes of sarcasm. The writer tries to expose the reality prevailing in America with all his irony, and apparently, he can achieve it.

The novel doesn’t reflect the full revival of the war as an artistic depiction of the bombing of Dresden by British and American troops in the last days of the war. The novel is about ordinary people’s lives, about the “little” people who lived through the disasters of war and couldn’t get rid of its pain. In the image of the “little” man, the writer shows the most painful of human disasters and points out that no one is insured against it.

Analyzing the work, Fatma Diwany considers this idea as an important condition and writes that when Billy Pilgrim hides from the traumas of life, world wars and other events continue in their reality, because everything is in the world of historical reality⁴⁷. Vonnegut exposes all the horrors of war and laughs at the false heroism of the people who committed the war. The name of the protagonist also sounds like an allegory. Although the name Pilgrim is understood as a pilgrim, it is understood as an absurd reality that reflects the meaninglessness of life’s troubles. According to the writer, a person who doesn’t know what will happen during this pilgrimage is a visual indicator of an absurd reality. In other words, as Jean Shi points out, “it is a human tragedy between reality and fiction”⁴⁸. As an absurd character, Billy Pilgrim embodies a man

⁴⁷ Diwany F.K. So it goes: A postmodernist reading of Kurt Vonnegut's Slaughterhouse Five// International Journal of English and Literature. Vol. 5(4), 2014. -p.83.

⁴⁸ Shi J. On the Postmodern Narrative Techniques in Slaughterhouse-Five. //Theory and Practice in Language Studies, Vol. 9, No. 5, May 2019. -p.554.

whose life has no meaning and no freedom of will. His thoughts on the war indicate severe psychological trauma.

Helpless and defenseless, Billy Pilgrim creates an unreal world for himself and hides there because of the realities of life. The bombings he witnessed in Dresden make him unaware of what is happening around him. He can't see the real face of events, he loses his "I", and he loses touch with the world and people. He doesn't accept reality; it is hidden in his memory. But his memory contradicts the objective reality, and therefore isn't normally accepted by everyone. Billy's memory is confused in the past and in the future, and sometimes these times go hand in hand. Therefore, neither the beginning nor the end of the events is known. All that is known is that the real events are awakened in his memory, and his pain has not yet subsided. That is why Billy Pilgrim's memory seems to be a tormenting reality. Billy's life doesn't follow the laws of ordinary human life. For him, the present can suddenly return to the past or pass to the time he invented. Billy's memory has lost its reality, so sometimes he travels to a distant planet, and sometimes he goes back to the past. But in all cases, Billy runs away from reality, hiding in the power of his imagination. That is why; as the years go by, the horrors of war appear in his imagination in real and virtual form. For Billy, the memory is real, and real life is imagination: "In his imagination, the ruins of Dresden were depicted vertically in the form of an orange cross, and all the survivors went through this forced passage and came out of the other"⁴⁹.

Memory is both a salvation and a protection mechanism for Billy Pilgrim. By the means of it, he can escape from reality and hide. Memory is his fortress, a place where no one can enter, a small world. Through memory, he can transcend reality, and for that reason he sees his death and resurrection many times, and even the time of his death: "I, Billy Pilgrim, died, and I will always die on February 13, 1976 ... If you object, if you know death is a terrible thing, then you have not understood a word I have said. As Billy finishes all his speeches, he finishes his lecture: "Good-bye, good-bye!"⁵⁰.

⁴⁹ Vonnegut K. *Slaughterhouse-Five*. Random House Publishing Group. 1999. -p.89.

⁵⁰ There again, - p.287.

The second subchapter of Chapter III, entitled "*The unity of fiction and reality in the novel 'The Sirens of Titan' as an absurd reality*" analyzes the novel "The Sirens of Titan", published in 1959 and awarded the Hugo Prize as the novel of the year at the same time. The book tells the story of the author's journey among several planets over a period of time, and the life and "lifelessness" that reigns between these planets. The struggle between the real world and the imaginary world is seen by the author as a possible reflection of reality. Therefore, if the real world is the world that man desires and imagines, the imaginary world comes to life in the form of human nightmares.

The fictional world comes to life in all its absurdity, and in this way can be interpreted as a warning of the calamities that await mankind. The inhabitants of the planet Traftamadore are robots. They live by applying the laws of ideal mechanical society and can travel to and from other planets.

The real and fictional worlds are interconnected, and as a result of this connection, the protagonist of the work can lead to Mars. The events take place on Titan, the satellite of Saturn. This is the place chosen by the hero to live. It is on Titan that he wants to stay away from the wars he is planning. But his dreams don't come true. American researcher Peter G. Jones notes that in "The Sirens of Titan" the writer puts forward the idea that nothing can be changed in the world. It can only be replaced by wars, which he considers meaningless, because humanity is already infected with evil. That is why Vonnegut bears the sorrow of human folly and the futility of human existence. This encourages him not to accept things too seriously"⁵¹.

In "The Vonnegut Statement", co-authored by Jerome Klinkowitz and John Somer, we read that although "The Sirens of Titan" uses the themes and motives, characters and types of heroes that we always encounter, but in fact it speaks of more important and topical issues. This is the reality that prevails in the current American

⁵¹ Jones P.G. War and the Novelist. Appraising the American War Novel. Columbia-London. 1976. -p.248.

system⁵². As a continuation of the above-mentioned ideas, it can be said that the writer takes a really simple topic and works on more complex issues. Dozens of tragedies lie behind the events that people encounter in their daily lives and sometimes don't take seriously.

The writer uses possible artistic tricks to reflect reality. From the moment Malachi, one of the protagonists of this work, falls into the "net" set up by Rumford in search of profit, to the last moment, which begins with life situations and ends with his death, which reflects the distance to his friendship with the robot Salo. But each of the descriptions is aimed at the author's criticism of the American political system. In this regard, we can argue that Rumford and the ideology he created are part of the world in which the writer lives. The difference is that this world is the artistic world of the work, and therefore the reader understands it as the author's fantasy and imagination. The truth is in what the writer wants to convey. That is why the artistic world created by the writer is a caricature of the real world, its ugly image.

The author talks about the reality of the loss of moral and ethical values, the disappearance of human qualities in the conditions of Rumfords in American society.

Rumford uses the power given to him by reality, and longs to be the God in the space of his life. His dreams look ridiculous and unworthy when they are realized by robots and people who have lost their memory. The fact that he is deprived of human feelings as a robot, and the fact that the robot Salo treats his human friend Malachi as a human, once again shows the bitter irony of the writer. The secret he has been hiding for years is meaningless, and in general it has no value. Realizing this bitter reality, the robot Salo dismantles himself. As if he protests in this way.

Based on the research of the critic P.Reed on K.Vonnegut, it can be noted that in his work the writer speaks about the fact that the world is full of mashines and their participation in any life situation. It could be Salo, which is designed to perform certain functions, or a quasi-machine that controls the antennas on its head to perform the

⁵² The Vonnegut Statement. eds. Jerome Klinkowitz and John Somer. New York: Dell. 1973. -p.31.

purpose of others on Mars. Metaphorical machines that control religious ideas also belong to this category. In all cases, the writer presents the real face of the world as an absurd reality, thereby inviting the reader to think.

The results of the research work are summarized in the “Results”.

The main content and scientific provisions of the dissertation are reflected in the following articles and theses of the author:

1. Description of modern America in the literary heritage of Kurt Vonnegut // BSU “Actual problems of studying the humanities” magazine №1, 2018, pp.127-129
2. Kurt Vonnegut as a representative of postmodernism // Journal of Foreign Languages in Azerbaijan №3 (44), 2019, pp.34-38
3. Genre specifics of Kurt Vonnegut’s work Journal of Foreign Languages in Azerbaijan №4 (45), 2019, pp.102-105
4. Black humor in the work of Kurt Vonnegut “Slaughterhouse -five” // BSU "Actual problems of studying the humanities" magazine №1,2019, p.197-199
5. Idea-content features of Kurt Vonnegut's work “Cat's cradle” // BSU “Language and Literature” magazine №2 (112), 2019, p.77-79
6. The theme of man and war in the literary heritage of Kurt Vonnegut // AUAC “Human development. Dedicated to the 96th anniversary of national leader Heydar Aliyev. II International Conference on “Integration into the World”, 2019, pp.186-190
7. The concept of black humor in literature (based on the literary heritage of Kurt Vonnegut) // ASUCA I Republican Scientific-Practical Conference on “Digital innovative-cultural services in the innovative management system” dedicated to the 97th anniversary of national leader Heydar Aliyev, 2020, p. .132-134
8. Literary analysis of the works of Kurt Vonnegut // «KHABARSHY» journal Vestnik KazNU, №2, 2020,
9. The journalistic features of the work of Kurt Vonnegut // Labyrinths of reality. Collection of scientific works based on materials of the “VII International scientific and practical conference”. Issue 2/7., 2020, Page 31-35

10. Aesthetic program of Kurt Vonnegut's "Breakfast for Champions" // V International scientific-practical conference "Modern science and technology innovations" dedicated to the 110th anniversary of Rasul Rza, Switzerland, 2020, pp.82-85
11. The reflection of man and society through black humor // VII International scientific-practical conference dedicated to the 185th anniversary of Seyid Azim Shirvani, Kars, 2020, pp.32-36
12. The role of Vonnegut in modern USA prose // VIII International Scientific-Practical Conference "The role of personality in history" dedicated to the 135th anniversary of Uzeyir Hajibeyov, Turkey, 2020, p. 82-85
13. Description of science fiction elements in the work "Sirens of Titan" // IX International Scientific Symposium dedicated to the 550th anniversary of Habibi, Macedonia, 2020, pp.93-96
14. "Peculiarities of the science fiction genre in literature" // Grigol Robakidze University, 2021, Georgia
15. "Motive of war in the works of Kurt Vonnegut" // IV Republican scientific-practical conference of young researchers, Azerbaijan University, 2021
16. Grotesque consciousness in fiction of the late XX-early XXI centuries // "Science and education: preserving the past, creating the future" XIII International Symposium, 2021, Kars

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