

REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

On the rights of the manuscript

ABSTRACT

of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**THE PROBLEM OF SHORT STORY IN CONTEMPORARY
AMERICAN LITERATURE
(Based on the Short Stories of Ray Bradbury and Stephen King)**

Speciality: 5718.01 – World Literature (English Literature)

Field of science: Philology

Applicant: **Ilaha Adil Majidova**

Baku – 2024

The work was performed at the Department of Literature of Foreign Countries of Azerbaijan University of Languages.

Scientific supervisor: Doctor of Philological Sciences, Professor
Aynur Zakir Sabitova

Official opponents: Doctor of Philological Sciences, Professor
Naila Mammadhuseyn Sadigova

Doctor of Philosophy in Philology
Arif Alim Asadov

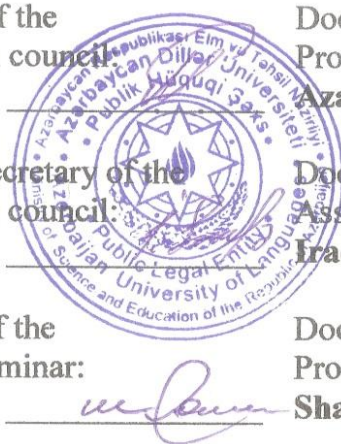
Doctor of Philosophy in Philology
Mansura Tiflis Aghayeva

Dissertation council ED 2.12 of Supreme Attestation Commission under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan operating at Azerbaijan University of Languages.

Chairman of the
Dissertation council: Doctor of Philological Sciences,
Professor
Azad Yahya Mammadov

Scientific secretary of the
Dissertation council: Doctor of Philosophy in Philology,
Associate Professor
Irada Nadir Sardarova

Chairman of the
scientific seminar: Doctor of Philological Sciences,
Professor
Shahin Hamid Khalilli



GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Urgency of the theme and the degree of research. After gaining our independence, the tendency to integrate into Europe, the attempts to become a part of the globalized world by protecting our national and moral values, and the application of the development strategy of developed countries have necessitated the improvement of the science and education system. As a result of a successful foreign policy, our republic, which has successfully benefited from the innovative ideas and concepts of the West, has expanded its relations in the field of culture and art, and has accelerated the evolutionary process in science and education. Common ideas in science, education, and culture, emphasizing the necessity of the European integration process at the state level make it necessary to conduct a broader aspect of the study and promotion of European culture. On this basis, without a doubt, the study of American culture, especially literature, which has had an incomparable influence on the formation of European thought, is relevant in contributing to the development of science and education.

Since our literature has been unjustifiably isolated from the world literary process for a long time, the study of Western literary trends in Azerbaijani literary studies is considered an important step. From this point of view, the study of the Western literary environment and American literature in our national literary studies is of great importance in understanding the worldview of the West and applying new literary trends in our literature.

Literature, which adequately reflects the processes taking place in the world with the smallest details, and is considered a kind of alternative to the existing world, plays an important role in determining not only the content and ideas of literary works but also the mental consciousness of Europe. The analysis of the contemporary American paradigm, the study of American thought and values in the technocratic era, and the observation of trends in the literary world determine the relevance of the presented research.

Taking into account that the main part of form and content modifications in modern world literature took place within the

framework of Western literature, we can say that the emergence and formation of the story genre, which is considered one of the actual genres in American literature, is based on the established traditions of Europe. Although the study of modern short story samples, which reflect the American mentality, specific American thinking distinguished by its distinctiveness and mosaic, proves the development of American literature in the context of Western literature, the role of American literary studies and literary criticism in determining the characteristic features and principles of the story genre is undeniable. In this sense, one cannot disagree with Professor Henry Canby's statement, "*If you need a special writing technique to write a small piece of prose, E.A.Poe has already discovered it.*"¹ Tracing the evolutionary history of the story genre in modern American literature allows us to say that the theoretical and structural principles of the genre are based on the XIX century. In this regard, the study of the factors determining the emergence and evolution of the modern American "short story" based on the traditions of Edgar Allan Poe, Washington Irving, Nathaniel Hawthorne, analysis of the views of scholars such as Charles May, Valerie Shaw, Brander Matthews, identification of parallels in short story samples in the world and American literature are considered to be one of the other factors determining the relevance of the research work.

The study of the short story problem in modern American literature based on the literary examples of Ray Bradbury and Stephen King, whose works differ in genre and subject, the evaluation of reality from different perspectives, the description of phantasmagorical imaginations within the science fiction genre, a vision of the future world model against the background of anti-utopian elements, the confusion of irrationality with rationality, analysis of the psycho-emotional state of man in the technocratic era, revealing the dark sides of the inner world of man in the context of the horror fiction, psychoanalytic analysis of the problems of children and adolescents in American society reveal the relevance of the study.

¹ Canby, H.S. The short story in English: [Electronic resource] / H.S.Canby. – New York: Henry Holt and Company, – 1909. – 407 p. URL: <https://archive.org/details/shortstoryineng00canbgoog/page/n226>

Another important factor determining the relevance of the presented research is that the research conducted within the dissertation allows to study modern American literature in general and its specifics. Thus, although there are many studies in Azerbaijani literary criticism devoted to the study of different spectra of the works of prominent figures of American literature of the XX century and earlier, there is no extensive research targeting the analysis of the story genre from the theoretical aspect, as well as the development dynamics of the genre, the manifestation of the subject area in the works of Ray Bradbury and Stephen King in modern American literature. However, when we examine the degree of development of the structural units of the research in world and Azerbaijani literature separately, we find valuable research examples. Per the paragraphs of our research work, there are works by H.A.Khalilova², R.A.Omarov³, N.M.Sadigova⁴, D.Samadova⁵, and other researchers in Azerbaijan literary studies. It is also possible to find interesting research works in this field both in the post-Soviet countries and Western literary studies. There are numerous dissertations, monographs, and limited studies aimed at analyzing the works of Ray Bradbury⁶, and Stephen King⁷, from various aspects,

² Xəlilova, H.Ə. Rey Bredberinin fantastik əsərlərində humanizm ideyaları // – Bakı: Elm və təhsil, Filologiya məsələləri, – 2017. № 3, – s. 44-49.

³ Ömərov, R.A. XX əsr ABŞ və Azərbaycan ədəbiyyatında elmi-fantastik janr (Aytek Əzimov və Emin Mahmudovun yaradıcılığı əsasında): / filologiya üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru dis. avtoreferatı. / – Bakı, 2003. – 22 s.

⁴ Sadıqova, N.M. Müasir Amerika elmi-fantastikası: Metod və janr problemi: filologiya üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru dis. / – Bakı, 1987. – 154 s.

⁵ Səmədova, D. Elmi fantastik ədəbiyyatın tədqiqi tarixinə bir nəzər // – Bakı: Elm və təhsil, Filologiya məsələləri, – 2017. № 1, – s.267-272.

⁶ Johnson, W.L. Ray Bradbury / W.L.Johnson – N.Y.: Ungar, cop. – 1980. –173 p.; Sullivan, A.T. Ray Bradbury and Fantasy // English Journal, Chicago,– 1972. Vol 61, № 9, – p.1309-1314

⁷ Шафиева, У.Н. Единство фантастики и реальности в творчестве Стивена Кинга: [Электронный ресурс] / автореферат дисс.канд.филол.наук / – Баку, 2003. – 26 с. URL: <https://cheloveknauka.com/v/492235/a/#?page=26>; Hoppenstand, G. The Gothic world of Stephen King: landscape of nightmares / GHoppenstand, R.Browne, G.Dumm. – Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, – 1987. – 143 p.

which examine the theoretical problems of the American “short story” and the fiction genre in Russian⁸, and English-language⁹, literary studies. Taking into account the existence of few studies on this subject in our country, we can say that the systematic analysis of the evolution of the story genre in modern American literature and the monitoring of the modification of the genre in the works of R. Bradbury and S.King determine the important relevance of the research work for our literary studies.

The object and subject of the research. The object of the research is the evolutionary dynamics and theoretical principles of the “short story” in modern American literature, and the subject is the works of Ray Bradbury and Stephen King, who are considered prominent representatives of the “short story” in American literature.

Aims and objectives of the research. The main goal of the research is to examine the theme and problem of the stories of Ray Bradbury and Stephen King, prominent figures of contemporary American literature, in the context of the formation of the story genre and to form an idea about the recent periods of American literature. To achieve the mentioned goal, it is necessary to realize the following tasks:

- Determining the initial theoretical and conceptual basis of the American “short story”;

- Tracing the evolution of the story genre in American literature in the person of W.Irving, E.Poe, Sh.Anderson, E.Hemingway, and other prose writers and revealing the formation features;

- Defining the parallels of American “short story” in world literature;

⁸ Кагарлицкий, Ю.И. Что такое фантастика? / Ю.И.Кагарлицкий. – М., – 1974. – 348 с.; Пальцев, Н. Страшные сказки Стивена Кинга: фантазии и реальность. Послесловие. / С.Кинг. Мертвая зона. – М., – 1987. – с. 410-428.

⁹ Baldeshwiler, E. The Lyric Short Story: The Sketch of a History / E.Baldeshwiler. – Athens, Ohio University, – 1976. – p. 202-213; Gordimer, N. The Flash of Fireflies: The New Short Story Theories / N.Gordimer. – Athens: Ohio University Press, – 1994. – p. 263-267.

- Studying the manifestation of the genre in the “short story” of E.Poe, J.O’Brien, E.Burroughs, R.Heinlein, I.Asimov by examining the history and characteristics of the fantasy genre;

- Exploring the unity of reality and fiction in Ray Bradbury's stories;

- Analyzing the psycho-emotional state of the images created by Ray Bradbury;

- The study of the “fictitious” reality in Ray Bradbury’s short story samples in the context of the anti-utopian genre;

- Analyzing the problem of mixing fiction and reality in Stephen King’s stories;

- Identifying the factors that characterize the horror fiction in Stephen King’s short story samples;

- Determining the uniqueness of children and teenagers in Stephen King’s stories.

The research methods. Historical-comparative and analytical methods were used during the research. As the structure of the research is based on the interpretation of the theme and problematics of the American writers R.Bradbury’s and S.King’s short story samples, a deductive method reflecting the transition from general to specific was used. In addition, following the tasks set during the research, methods such as analysis, description, and comparative analysis were used, and the scientific conclusions and considerations of various research scientists in their current studies were addressed.

The main provisions for defense:

- Along with scholars such as V.Shaw, B.Mathews and others, the role of writers such as W.Irving, N.Hawthorne, E.Poe, etc. is undeniable in the formation of the theoretical principles of the “short story”;

- As the formation of American literature began later than in other European countries, the stage of formation of American “short story” coincides with the XIX century. Thus, the beginning of “short story” in American literature is determined by the creativity of Washington Irving;

- Since the genesis of Americans is a combination of different peoples, it is possible to find conceptual parallels with world

literature in American literature, especially in short story samples;

–In the short stories of American fantasy writers, themes such as the feeling of alienation felt by the individual in a futuristic or different environment, as well as the identity problem directed at the search for identity in the techno-world prevail;

–Ray Bradbury has stated his position on issues such as existence, the dream of immortality, the fear of the future, targeting many aspects of the conflict between man and the world in the technocratic era;

–Since Ray Bradbury's stories are distinguished not only by their phantasmagoric features but also by their humanistic conception, it is possible to describe the writer as a writer of light or romantic science fiction;

–Ray Bradbury, who paints a portrait of the future based on current trends, acts as a technophobe with his anti-utopian stories, and creates the impression of a partner of technology that does not harm humans;

–Although Stephen King uses fantastical elements in most of his short stories, many of his stories in the fiction genre are classified as fantasy, since it is difficult to explain the world model described in many of the stories written by the writer in fiction genre from a scientific point of view, and some of the characters in these works are described as mystical beings unrelated to reality;

–Stephen King's "horror" stories make a man come to terms with his emotions, collide with his primitive fantasies, and find his "I";

–Z.Freud's concept of "unconsciousness", K.Jung's theory of "archetypes" pave the way for identifying the psychological problems of children and adolescent characters created in Stephen King's stories.

Scientific novelty of the research. The main factor determining the scientific novelty of the research work is related to the systematic examination of the works of R. Bradbury and S. King, representatives of contemporary American literature, on the same level – in the context of the formation and development of the "short story" in American literature. It is also possible to evaluate the

scientific novelty of the research from these aspects: firstly, the systematic study of the short story problem in contemporary American literature; secondly, revealing the uniqueness of the stories of Ray Bradbury and Stephen King, who have not yet been subjected to investigation through the prisms applied in national literary studies. In the research, for the first time in our philological opinion, the theoretical considerations regarding the American “short story” are studied, the period and circumstances of the creation of the story genre in America are reviewed, and the interpretations of the genre in the works of R.Braddury and S.King are examined. The analysis of R.Braddury’s and S.King’s works based on the ideological principles of the contemporary American short story can be considered the main indicator of the scientific novelty of the research since it can allow a more complete interpretation of the processes existing in the modern literary and artistic environment.

Theoretical and practical significance of research work.

The dissertation can contribute to identifying several developmental regularities of modern Azerbaijani literature in the example of the trends inherent in American literature and the contemporary orientation of the story genre in our literature. At the same time, with several scientific and theoretical conclusions, the research provides quite interesting analysis material for the next generation of research aimed at evaluating various aspects of the development of modern American literature.

As for the practical importance of the dissertation, the scientific results, analysis, and generalizations obtained from the research work can be used in the teaching of basic and elective subjects such as “American Literature”, “Story Genre in Modern American Literature”, “Fiction Genre in American Literature”, as well as related subjects taught at the master’s level.

Approbation and application. The ideas and considerations expressed in the research are reflected in the scientific press, theses of scientific-practical and international conferences. 10 articles and 6 theses on the dissertation were published in various journals. 1 article and 1 thesis were published abroad.

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

The total volume of the dissertation with a sign including a separate volume of the structural units of the dissertation. The dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, and a list of used literature. The introduction consists of 7 pages, 12049 signs, Chapter I consists of 47 pages, 92645 signs, Chapter II consists of 37 pages, 73276 signs, Chapter III consists of 41 pages, 80350 signs, the conclusion consists of 4 pages, 6797 signs, excluding the list of used literature, is 265117 signs.

BASIC CONTENTS OF THE RESEARCH

In the **Introduction**, the relevance of the topic is substantiated, the object and subject of the research aims and objectives are determined, the scientific novelty, methodology, the theoretical and practical significance of the research are defined, and information about the provisions for defense, the approbation and structure of the research work are presented.

The first chapter of the dissertation, entitled **“Emergence and Formation of “Short Story” in Twentieth-Century American Literature”**, consists of four paragraphs. In the first paragraph, entitled ***“Theoretical Approach to Short Story in American Literature”***, the genesis of the concept of “short story” was studied, the opinions of researchers who investigated the form and content of short story samples in different periods are reviewed.

Like other American cultural impulses, the modern story was born out of a demand shaped by curiosity and pleasure. The novella’s historical experience from the Renaissance period, existing genre laws, aesthetic criteria and literary-philosophical principles specific to Western culture as a whole were characteristic of American literature, as well as short story samples.

A common definition of the story genre is based on the same opinions of Sherwood Anderson and Edward Joseph O’Brien, author

of “The Best American Short Stories”: *“A story is a short piece of prose that is not too long”*¹⁰. The advantage of this definition is that there is almost no story that doesn’t fit this idea. On the other hand, this reasoning is unable to fully express the essence of the story genre. E.A.Poe's definition of “short story” is considered more appropriate in terms of revealing the conceptualism of the concept: *“A respected artist must adapt his ideas to his life experiences; but it must be carefully thought out and worked out with absolute perfection and simple effect; he (the artist) then digests the events and combines them in a form suitable to his creative genius to fulfill his main purpose”*¹¹.

According to Suzanne Ferguson, a theoretical scientist, *“as the understanding of the story is a more complex process compared to the novel, the reader’s reception is more required in reading”*¹².

Elchin Afandiyev, one of the master writers of Azerbaijani prose, in his article on the story genre, evaluates the attitude towards the genre in the modern era and notes that *“Today, there is a lot of talk about the analytical nature of the novella, the synthetic essence of the novel, and the story is evaluated as a drop reflecting life. However, in our opinion, this is not the case, and we consider such a classification itself flawed from the point of view of scientific methodology...”*¹³

Until the 70s of the XX century, the story genre lost a little of its brilliance in the 19th century, but in the new era, literary examples consisting of one and two pages called “flash fiction” and “sudden fiction” began to appear. As writers use premeditated evocation and

¹⁰ Foley, M. The Best American Short Stories: 1952 / M.Foley. – Boston, – 1952. – 314 p.

¹¹ Poe, E.A. Essays and Reviews: Theory of Poetry / Reviews of British and Continental Authors / Reviews of American Authors and American Literature / Magazines and Criticism / The Literary & Social Scene / Articles and Marginalia / E.A.Poe. – New York: Library of America, – 1984. – 1544 p.

¹² Ferguson, C.S. Defining the Short Story. Impressionism and Form: in The New Short Stories Theories / C.S.Ferguson. – Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, – 1994. – p. 218-230.

¹³ https://rc32.ucoz.ru/publ/f_ndiyev_elcin_yaradiciligi_hekay_janri_i_mkanlarim_z_v_iddiamiz_m_qal/1-1-0-554

language possibilities, a “short story” is sometimes likened to a poetic example written in prose¹⁴, In general, although the opponents of the genre characterize the emergence of the short story genre as the collapse of traditionalism, the weakening of reading skills, its supporters defend the idea that the demand for these prose samples is increasing in the postmodern era, where fragmentation and minimalism are relevant.

In the second paragraph of the first chapter entitled “*The Evolution of the American Short Story*”, the emergence and development periods of the narrative genre in American literature were reviewed, starting from W.Irving, N.Hawthorne, and E.Poe, the theme and problematic of short story samples of writers such as M.Twain, J.London, Th.Dreiser, Sh.Anderson, O.Henry, R.Coover, T.O’Brien, and others in the “short story” field have been investigated.

Just as the role of W.Irving and H.Melville in the formation of the American story is undeniable, the role of Poe and Hawthorne in increasing the pace of development of the genre is great. The beginning of the “short story” in American literature was determined by Irving’s creativity. Irving was an innovator of a new school that arose from the demand to use local materials based on original sources¹⁵.

No matter how close the writing style of N.Hawthorne and E.Poe, with its surreal and absurd imagination, E.A.Poe was more concerned with aesthetics, N.Hawthorne was adherent to entertaining stories. N.Hawthorne’s main contribution to the short story was to evoke internal contradictions and different psychological states. E.A.Poe was not satisfied with continuing the experience started by W.Irving, N.Hawthorne, and others in the “short story”, and also defined the basic elements and principles of the structure of the genre

¹⁴ VanSpanckeren, K. Outline of American Literature: [Electronic resource] / – United States Department of State, – 2010, – 177 p. URL: https://www.academia.edu/28839364/Kathryn_VanSpanckeren_Outline_of_American_Literature_2011_

¹⁵ Pattee, F.L. Development of American short story / F.L.Pattee. – U.S.A.: Harper and Brothers Publishers, – 1923. – 408 p.

of Gothic, horror and detective novella, reflecting the characteristics of the romantic era.

Bret Harte, later known as a story master, noted in his article "The Rise of the Short Story" that *"Although E.Poe, N.Hawthorne, and H.Longfellow created excellent stories, none of them adequately reflect the geography of America. The secret of the American story is defined by reflecting the American way of life and not departing from the fetishism of traditionalism"*¹⁶.

The beginning of a new direction in American literature at the end of the XIX century and the beginning of the XX century laid the groundwork for the development of critical realism. The stories of M.Twain, J.London, O.Henry, and T.Dreiser were focused on the critical exposure of the daily life of capitalist America due to their unique idea structure.

The issue of the artist's place in society was in the spotlight in Sherwood Anderson's stories. In his story "Blackfoot's Masterpiece"¹⁷ the tragic fate of a talented artist in society is mentioned.

Since the second half of the XX century, new tendencies began to develop in American literature, the writers of that time tried to show the opposite effects of the "robotization" and "mechanization" of modern man by describing the complex processes occurring in the world. In particular, as America's claim to world leadership led to increased interest in technology in the country, this process was also reflected in literature.

In the paragraph titled ***"Parallels of American "Short Story" in World Literature"*** within the framework of the short story genre, the similarities of ideas and styles between American literature and the literature of other nations were investigated.

While some critics have called O.Henry a successor to Maupassant in concluding his stories unexpectedly, others claim that the two writers have different styles, despite the parallels in their

¹⁶ Smith, C. A. The American short story / C.A.Smith. – Boston and London: Ginn and Company Publishers, – 1912. – 50 p.

¹⁷ Sherwood, A. The Sherwood Anderson reader / A.Sherwood. – Houghton Mifflin Co., – 1947. – 850 p.

work. Thus, O. Henry's "The Gift of the Magi" and G. Maupassant's "The Necklace" are similar in terms of style and idea. Apart from the technique of completing the plot with an unexpected ending, which was laid by G. Maupassant and continued by O. Henry, the other thing that connects the writers is that they describe the life of a middle-class person according to the time they lived in.

O. Henry's famous story "The Last Leaf" is similar in subject matter to the literary example of the famous Russian writer I. Turgenev's "My Trees". Although the ideas of the stories differ from each other, in his story "My Trees", I. Turgenev, like O. Henry, equates human life with the leaves of a tree, creating harmony and an artistic palette.

The stories of Kate Chopin, who is considered one of the feminist writers in twentieth-century American literature, are similar in a certain sense to the stories of G. Maupassant. The intersection of K. Chopin's and G. Maupassant's creativity is manifested between the stories "The Story of an Hour", "A Pair of Silk Stockings" and the work "The Necklace". By creating the image of a woman trying to restore self-confidence in society, G. Maupassant, like K. Chopin, tried to express the inner voice of women of his time uniquely. In addition, the problem of a woman in the stories of K. Chopin can be compared with the stories "Sparrows" and "Accident" by Afag Masud.

In general, since the problem of literature is "man", human themes are repeated regardless of time and place, and from the analysis point of view of contemporary literature, this is not considered plagiarism at all. The inspiration of O. Henry from G. Maupassant or Henry James from I. Turgenev not only led to the enrichment of the writers' literary techniques but also did not overshadow the appearance of their individual qualities. With this, we conclude that American literature integrates into world literature, embraces new literary trends, and American "short story" which is a part of world literature, contains new literary trends. The comparisons also prove that American literature, despite its late formation, is not behind at all and follows new literary trends, and adapts to the times.

In the last paragraph of Chapter I, *“The Manifestation of the Fiction Genre in the American “Short Story”*, the genesis and evolution of the fiction genre were investigated, as well as the short story samples of the American fantasy writers were analyzed.

According to Darko Suvin, the main turning point of the science fiction style coincides with the XIX century, when futuristic possibilities began to spread¹⁸. This process, which continued in the XX century, attracted the attention of many writers and I. Asimov, R. Heinlein, R. Bradbury, S. King, etc. have managed to make futuristic predictions based on the prisms of their dream worlds in their works.

“Symzonia”, published under the pseudonym Adam Seaborn, but believed to have been written by a sailor named Nathaniel Ames, is considered by some researchers to be the starting point of American science fiction. Based on the “Hollow Earth” theory, the work suggests that the exploration of a hollow world represents a new direction for scientific research in the modern era.

E. Poe, who gained worldwide fame with his poetry rich in fantastic elements and horror stories, connected fiction with reality by stating *“The human soul cannot dream of anything that is not in reality”*¹⁹. Looking retrospectively at American literature, it becomes clear that the age-old characteristics of the fiction genre are fully reflected in the works of E. Poe. In the short story sample “The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion” the writer, who turns to apocalyptic science fiction, sets the events of his other story “Mellonta Tauta” in 2848. It involves a journey across the Atlantic Ocean by air balloon to satirically comment on the United States of a thousand years earlier.

R. Heinlein, one of the representatives of the “golden age” of

¹⁸ Roberts, A. The History of Science Fiction: [Electronic resource] / – Great Britain: Palgrave Macmillan, – 2006. – 387 p. URL: <http://pcenglish.weebly.com/uploads/4/9/0/9/4909164/the-history-of-science-fiction.pdf>

¹⁹ Poe, E.A. Essays and Reviews: Theory of Poetry / Reviews of British and Continental Authors / Reviews of American Authors and American Literature / Magazines and Criticism / The Literary & Social Scene / Articles and Marginalia / E.A. Poe. – New York: Library of America, – 1984. – 1544 p.

the science fiction genre, raised the issues of individual self-confidence, freedom, man's obligations to society, the future model of man, and the motives of returning to the past.

In the stories of I. Asimov, made invaluable contributions to the science fiction genre in American literature, about advanced technology, artificial intelligence, and futuristic parameters, the main motif is the ethical and moral consequences of robotics and artificial intelligence. I. Asimov explores the concept of advanced technology affecting society in more transformative ways.

T. Chiang, Ph. Dick, K. Vonnegut, and E. Gibson should certainly be mentioned among the writers who created gems of science fiction style in American "short story". The short stories of writers who investigate the impact of advanced technology on humanity and make assumptions about future technologies and their impact are dominated by topics such as the identity problem of individuals in the search for identity in futuristic and alien environments.

Chapter II, entitled **"The Specifics of Ray Bradbury's "Short Story"**, consists of three paragraphs. In the first paragraph, ***"Synthetic Unity of Reality and Fiction in Ray Bradbury's Stories"***, the author's attitude to reality and hyperreality, the problem of man and technology in the technocratic era is interpreted within the science fiction genre.

Using the science fiction genre, R. Bradbury, who can predict the future of the current situation in America and the Earth as a whole with his intellectual certainty and strong descriptive skills, said, *"The history of mankind begins with dreams. And science fiction is a union of science and dreams. There is no miracle in works based on a purely scientific approach. It is necessary to make young people believe in miracles"*²⁰.

The famous American scholar W. L. Johnson, who studied the writer's literary heritage, defines his creative direction as follows: *"R. Bradbury is a writer who puts his dreams on paper with a special skill. The fact that the battle between good and evil occurs in small-*

²⁰ Mirzəzadə, T.N. Bədii ədəbiyyatda elmi fantastika janrı (dərs vəsaiti) / T.N. Mirzəzadə. – Bakı: Mütərcim, – 2023. – 136 s.

town America and on Mars is a testament to his magical dreams' longevity."²¹

Based on this opinion, it can be noted that the literary and artistic examples of R.BrADBury are of great importance among the works written in the *Soft Science Fiction* genre in modern American literature. The writer discovered new worlds and put forward considerations about the future life and dreams of a man in the anthologies of stories "The Martian Chronicles", "The Illustrated Man", "The Golden Apples of the Sun", "A Medicine for Melancholy".

The writer tries to present the fantastic world he created realistically by showing many literary figures as the main character in the story "The Exiles". The author, who finds the idea of famous figures like E.A.Poe, Ch.Dickens, Ch.Baudelaire to be exiled from the Earth to the future terrifying, "settles" them on an inaccessible planet to prevent this event. When the new inquisitors of the space age want to invade their planet, R. Bradbury changes the plot in a different direction, includes the characters of the writers' works in the story, and thus E. Poe's "raven" acts as an active devotee of spirituality in the fight against ignorance and fanaticism.

A phantasmagoric mixture of truth and fiction, the theme of the galaxy, and futuristic possibilities about the future are the main themes of the writer's short story samples such as "The Long Rain", "The Rocket", "A Sound of Thunder", "Dark They Were, and Golden-Eyed", "Wilderness". New laws of nature, amazing technical inventions, travel to different planets are the main fantastic elements used by R.BrADBury. The heroes of the author's works are not typical generalized characters, each of them are abstracted images of fantastic ideas.

In the second paragraph entitled "***Analysis of Psycho-emotional Problems of Images in Ray Bradbury's Short Stories***", the images of R.BrADBury, whose work is directly based on the philosophy of humanism, are analyzed from a psychological point of view.

The author tried to reveal the psychological nuances of human

²¹ Johnson, W.L. Ray Bradbury / W.L.Johnson – N.Y.: Ungar, cop. – 1980. –173 p.

existence, to find an answer to his spiritual search, to reveal the inner world of the personality surrounded by contrasts in the stories “The Last Night of the World”, “The Town Where No One Got Off”, “Tete-a-Tete”.

Although the character in the author’s story “The Last Night” tells his wife about his dream and says that it is only one night before the end of the world, his wife does not care, but then, when she realizes that the same dream has been seen by other people, she has to believe it.

Z.Freud, an Austrian scientist and the founder of the theory of psychoanalysis writes in his book “The Interpretation of Dreams”: “A dream is a distorted, veiled realization of repressed desires... *Dreaming, first of all, is a continuation of the waking state*”²². Since the events of the story happened during the Cold War, the Korean War, everyone thinks that either the war or the hydrogen weapon will cause their death, and they consider it unfair to them. On the other hand, characters living in a world full of disasters have a desire for a peaceful death in their subconscious, and the fact that everyone has the same dream coincides with Z.Freud’s reasoning.

Based on the writer’s social commentary on the value of space, the father and mother are happy to send their son to space in the story “The End of the Beginning” because space will give their children a long and happy life. Even though the writer predicts a hopeful “journey” that may take place in the future, he actually touches on existential problems.

The problematic in R.Bradbury’s stories “The Town Where No One Got Off”, “Punishment Without Crime”, “Tete-a-Tete”, etc. is based on the intensity of his empathic perception along with his strong creative potential. The author’s concept of humanism is based on a man’s call to spiritual wealth, freedom, and the claim to be necessarily happy.

In the third paragraph entitled “*Analysis of the Fictitious Reality in Ray Bradbury’s Stories in the Context of the Anti-Utopian Genre*”, the theoretical principles of the anti-utopian genre

²² Freyd, Z. Yuxuların yozumu / Z.Freyd. – Bakı: Qanun, – 2014. – 580 s.

were analyzed and the anti-utopian elements in R. Bradbury's short story samples were interpreted.

Utopia, which is formed as a fantastic model of reality, and anti-utopia, which is both a logical reflection and a continuation of utopia, is one of the forms of human perception of the world. The main difference between these concepts, one derived from the other, is that in utopia, the real world and the ideal world are opposed to each other. In anti-utopia, the non-ideal world emerges as a result of certain tendencies within the real world.

R. Bradbury was also concerned about topics such as the helplessness of man in the face of science and technology, totalitarian rule, the degradation of modern civilization, the replacement of the Earth destroyed by environmental disasters with other planets, the fear of death, and the desire to live, which many writers addressed in the modern era. In the story "The Smile" dedicated to the ignorance humanity will face the anti-utopian world in the future, the writer talks about the contemporary attitude towards the portrait of "Mona Lisa". In 2061, people try to have fun by tearing up books and smashing cars in what they call the holiday of science. Their next pastime is the desire to destroy the portrait of "Mona Lisa". A boy named Tom freezes in front of the portrait's wonder, he can't touch it because the woman's smile fascinates him. When the portrait is torn apart, he does not allow anyone to tear the piece containing the woman's smile. R. Bradbury, who valued the attitude towards the portrait of "Mona Lisa" as an attitude towards culture and art, tried to show hope for a happy future with the image of Tom in the era when people ignored art.

Researcher I. Rodnyanskaya notes, *"According to R. Bradbury, the horrors of civilized ignorance don't arise from the emergence of a dictatorial regime but rather evolve as a result of "harmless" measures taken to preserve the peace of people striving for comfort and prosperity"*²³. R. Bradbury believes that the death of moral

²³ Валериевна, Н.М. Художественный мир Рэя Бредбери: традиции и новаторство: [Электронный ресурс] / автореферат дисс. канд. филол. наук / – Нижний Новгород, 2006. – 24 с. URL: <http://www.dissercat.com/content/khudozhestvennyi-mir-reya-bredberi-traditsii-i-novatorstvo>

culture is programmed by the devices of modern civilization.

In R. Bradbury's stories such as "The Pedestrian", "The Fox and the Forest", and others, the conflict between "man and technology" is directly reflected. Researcher P. Molitvin argues that *"technology interests the writer to an incomparably lesser extent"*²⁴. Throughout his work, R. Bradbury proposes the concept of the cyclical development of civilization in various forms, clearly demonstrating that during the "massification" phase, a return to natural and cultural origins is inevitable for humanity to reach its highest point. The "mass" period, which the writer avoids describing, precedes the beginning of a newly ordered and harmonious era with anti-utopian ideas.

Chapter III is titled **"The Works of Stephen King as an Embodiment of the Dynamics of Contemporary American 'Short Story'"**, consists of three paragraphs. In the first paragraph, titled ***"The Interweaving of Fiction and Reality in Stephen King's Stories"***, the writer's short story samples are analyzed against the backdrop of fantasy and mysticism.

A review of the problems in Stephen King's work reveals that the author didn't limit himself to a single literary direction, he tended to write in the genres of fiction, science fiction, horror, and detective. The writer almost explained his ideological-aesthetic position through the literary examples he wrote and the interviews he gave: *"I don't write in the surreal and fantastic genre, but I use surreal and fantastical elements when exploring the fundamentals of people and society"*²⁵.

The writer turned to the science fiction genre only in two of his large-scale works ("The Tommyknockers" and "It") while in many of his short stories, he used elements of the genre.

The author's work "The End of the Whole Mess" is rich in phantasmagoric elements and attracts attention with its anti-utopian theme. Bobby, who learned to read and write at the age of two, is

²⁴ [https://www.biography.com/people/ray-bradbury-9223240\](https://www.biography.com/people/ray-bradbury-9223240)

²⁵ Magistrale, T. A Dark Night's Dreaming: Contemporary American Horror Fiction / T. Magistrale. – Columbia: South Carolina University Press, – 1995. – 138 p.

portrayed as an extraordinary child interested in conducting sociological scientific research from an early age. According to his analysis, the cause of human tension and stress is water. Bobby, taking his research more seriously, develops a chemical solution that can save people from the feeling of anger and devises a plan to pour it into an erupting volcano, hoping that the explosion will liberate people from aggression. Bobby effectively realizes his wish, but afterward, the chemical substance causes serious health problems in people, and thus, the utopian world he tried to create is replaced by a contemporary anti-utopia.

Fantastic motifs also form the main theme of S. King's stories such as "I Am the Doorway", "The Cursed Expedition", and "Beachworld". When applying the opinion of the Russian scholar A.Y. Levin that *"Since the majority of fantastic characters and ideas are associated with analogs of modern reality on deeper levels, they possess the ability to create and convey socially significant content..."*²⁶ to S. King's work, it becomes clear that this is precisely why the writer's position in contemporary American literature is unshakable.

In the second paragraph titled ***"Horror Fiction as a Defining Element of Stephen King's Stories"***, the essence of horror literature is explained, and Stephen King's stories in the horror genre are analyzed.

Horror fiction, which is a means of ordering the chaotic reality of rationality and irrationality, hides the wild, animal nature of man under the cover of civilization. Although the aggression that he always tries to cover up, the excessive desire for freedom, and the feeling of influencing others follow a man step by step, a man reveals his true nature only when he is faced with situations that disturb and irritate him. Researcher Douglas Winter argues that *"the horror fiction genre has explicit cathartic values that help us understand ourselves and our existential situations. Its main element is the collision between everyday life and the mysterious, irrational,*

²⁶ Левин, А.Е. Англо-американская фантастика как социокультурный феномен // Вопросы философии, – 1976. № 3, – с. 146.

hidden, and supernatural world”²⁷.

The author’s works in horror fiction, known by the pseudonym “King of Horrors”, allow us to think about the rich ideological content of his creativity. Stephen King, said *“People who read horror stories are crazy; But if you’re not a little bit crazy, you can’t keep up with life in the last decade of the XX century”*²⁸, portrays the events that he considers terrible in everyday life in most of his works, and thus he attempts to adequately demonstrate the connection of fear with human life.

The writer believes that *“the charm of horror fiction lies in the fact that the fear depicted in the works has infected our souls as if it were a rehearsal of our death for centuries”*²⁹. By sketching the dark sides of man, the author confronts him with his “authentic” reality, creating a clash between myself and the “true” self. At this time, the inconsistency in the construction of myself and the “true” self is revealed, and the axiom that S. King wants to emphasize “everyone’s life is made up of shattered dreams”³⁰ is confirmed. He sees horror fiction as a metaphor that exposes the failures and mistakes in people’s lives.

S.King’s detailed descriptions of horror fiction appear directly in his stories such as “Autopsy Room Four”, “The Death of Jack Hamilton”, “In the Deathroom”, “The Little Sisters of Eluria”. With these short story samples of mystical style, the writer also creates artistic collisions according to the paradigm of horror fiction.

In the third paragraph titled ***“Child and Adolescent Characters in Stephen King’s Short Story Samples,”*** the psychoanalysis of the child and adolescent characters in the author’s works is presented.

S.King attempts to illuminate the fears and problems of

²⁷ Winter, D.E. Stephen King: The Art of Darkness / D.E.Winter. – New York: Dutton, – 1984. – 252 p.

²⁸ Magistrale, T. A Dark Night’s Dreaming: Contemporary American Horror Fiction / T.Magistrale. – Columbia: South Carolina University Press, – 1995. – 138 p.

²⁹ Кинг, С. Пляска смерти / С.Кинг. Перевод: Олег Колесников. – М., – 2002. – 416 с.

³⁰ Bloom, H. Stephen King (Modern Critical Views Series) / H.Bloom. – Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, – 1998. – 256p.

children in modern post-industrial society in his works. In the short story “The Raft” from the collection “Skeleton Crew”, the author analyzes the characters’ lives through motifs aligned with Sigmund Freud’s studies on child regression and repression. Four college students, wanting to enjoy the last day of summer and mark their transition into adolescence, decide to go swimming in a lake and board a raft. After distancing themselves from the shore, unexpected events unfold as a creature resembling an oil slick appears in the water. The mystical entity catches the children’s attention, putting them in a hypnotic state, and mysteriously kills everyone on the raft.

In both Freud’s and Jung’s studies, water is depicted as a symbol of the unconscious. The raft, representing the “children’s refuge” (i.e., their childhood), is surrounded by irrational unconsciousness, and the creature living in the water symbolizes the irrational forces and concepts of childhood.

According to L.Badley, *Stephen King’s purpose in addressing child characters is to “awaken the “inner child” in readers of various ages”*. *Using child characters, S. King explains his desire to help the reader grow, and in his view, finding the inner child is one of the ways to grow*³¹.

Drawing from this idea, it can be noted that the analysis of the stories “The Raft”, “The Library Policeman”, “The Monkey”, and “Everything’s Eventual”, underscores how Stephen King mystically reflects the issues of modern American society and Western civilization in general. The author purposefully uses the child image as a painful symbol of wholeness, the manifestation of consciousness and unconsciousness, the assumption of rebirth and death, stability between experience and innocence, weakness and strength, and transition to adulthood.

The scientific provisions in the **Conclusion** of the dissertation are summarized as follows:

– Although the “short story” gained academic value in English literature in the late XIX and early XX centuries, it was possible to determine the modern form of the story as a result of the fundamental

³¹ Badley, L. Writing Horror and the Body. The Fiction of Stephen King. Clive Barker, and Anne Rice / L.Badley. – Westport, – 1996. – 200 p.

influence of the historical experience of the novella genre based on the Renaissance period on American literature. The American “short story”, originally defined by the work of W. Irving, reached its peak with the work of E.A.Poe, who not only became a master of the short story genre but also established his theory. Researchers such as T.Wolff, H.Canby, B.Matthews, V.Shaw also gave impetus to the process of formation of the genre, put forward theoretical considerations on certain rules such as the completeness of meaning in the genre, the conciseness of the plot, the symmetry of the structure.

– Although the formation of American literature, which has not been monotonous at any stage of its evolutionary path, began after the War of Independence, its establishment as an independent factor directly coincides with the Romantic period. The fact that American literature, which is always at the center of social and political processes, has never possessed a static nature is due to the frequent changes in the rhythm of life in the country and the adaptation of the dynamics of artistic creativity to this process. From the second half of the XX century, with the impetus of modernization and technical progress, new trends began to develop in American literature, thereby the ideological and content features of emerging short story samples were defined.

– The analysis of the short story problem in modern American literature within the framework of the story genre provides grounds to state the presence of parallels, quotations, and allusions in terms of ideas and content with world literature. The analysis of short story samples by G.Maupassant and O.Henry, K.Chopin and A.Masud, I.Turgenev, and H.James can be characterized as the influence of these authors on each other to one degree or another, and this confirms the idea that American literature continues trends consistent with world literature.

– Analyzing the fiction genre within the framework of the American “short story”, it becomes clear that the authors who write in the fiction genre create chaotic worlds and alternative realities in their works, creating a basis for broad social interpretations, focus mainly on the human factor, struggling with personal dilemmas and

moral choices against the backdrop of a futuristic or speculative environment.

– The study of Ray Bradbury's short story samples in the context of the science fiction genre within the context of the science fiction genre provides grounds to state that the successful and unique presentation of the "escape from reality" principle, which runs as a common thread through all of his works, is based on the author's deep imagination and visionary abilities. The intertwining of reality with hyperreality, the merging of the present situation with futuristic forecasts, and the simple and captivating presentation of the problem of time and distance between Mars and Earth characterize R. Bradbury's stories as a brilliant example of the science fiction genre.

– Mental problems such as fear of death and eternal loneliness, personality disorder, the psycho-emotional explosion of aggression that cannot be hidden, instinct for destruction are analyzed from different aspects in Ray Bradbury's stories "The Last Night of the World", "Tete-a-Tete", "The Town Where No One Got Off", "The Fog Horn". Since the author's concept of humanism is based on the spiritual richness of man, in each of his works he keeps the existence of man above his creativity, repeatedly emphasizing that man does not shrink in the background of technical progress, but stands above all everything due to the power of his intellect.

– Based on the analysis of the "fictional" reality in R. Bradbury's stories in the context of the anti-utopian genre, we can say that the author's anti-utopian and frightening world model in the stories "The Smile", "The Pedestrian", "The Fox and the Forest", "Forever and the Earth" introduces the writer as a technophobe, however in the stories "I Sing the Body Electric!" and "Rust", the writer provides a detailed depiction of the positive impact of technology on people's lives.

– Stephen King, one of the new generation of writers who does not have an unequivocal approach to the dynamic and changing impulses of modern American literature, tries to convey the realities of society to the reader in a unique mystical and "horrifying" form. With his stories "The End of the Whole Mess", "Trucks", etc. he reflects on the problem of man and technology in the modern world

against the background of the intertwining of the real and the unreal

–The analysis of his stories within the framework of horror fiction provides grounds to state that Stephen King, with great creative insight, describes nuances including existential loneliness, hostility with the surrounding world, unavoidable diseases of physiological, psychological, both individual and epidemic nature, and the fear of apocalypse, etc. which are essential for understanding the socio-cultural essence of the “horror fiction”.

–“Horror fiction”, the main purpose of which is to reinforce the norm by showing what horrors befall people who break the traditional norm, is based on the tradition of anti-utopia, as it examines not only political problems but also the deformities occurring in modern society. From this point of view S.King demonstrates the problems of the individual and society together through both psychoanalysis and the tradition of horror literature by using child and adolescent characters in his stories “Everything’s Eventual”, “The Library Policeman” and others.

In conclusion, we can say that the literary and artistic works of R.Bradbury and S.King, the object of our analysis, present the contemporary American character, combining moral-spiritual, cultural, historical, philosophical, and psycho-social features in a synthetic unity. Moreover, the unique writing style of each artist, the themes they address, their approach to events, their characters, and the distinctiveness in plot and composition structure can be considered the main criteria of the greatness of their creative personality. While R. Bradbury’s literary language is as poetic and lyrical as his predictive plots resonate with real life, with events in his stories taking place in fantastic or futuristic worlds, S.King’s whose writing style is simple and close to colloquial language, the events in his works usually take place in modern or historical settings, often in small towns. Unlike R.Bradbury, who focuses on existential questions and the impact of societal changes on individuals, S. King delves into supernatural fears and sheds light on the dark sides of human nature. Furthermore, R.Bradbury’s stories, which often lack traditional plot arcs, are sometimes based on non-linear or episodic structures that explore interconnected themes with

thematic variations. In contrast, S. King's short stories usually resemble a more traditional story structure with linear plots, characterized by escalating conflict and tension. There are usually multiple perspectives and subplots converging towards a central climax in his works. Thus, we can say that despite creating invaluable examples in the novel genre, R. Bradbury and S. King, who have left their mark on American literature with their short stories, manage to combine two seemingly contradictory tendencies in their stories: on one hand, they continue and develop the established traditions and creative principles inherited from their predecessors, on the other hand, they radically transform the already settled traditional artistic-aesthetic categories, through fantastic, mystical, and anti-utopian elements, they enrich the poetics of the literary text with new images and methods, offering a new and different perspective on American reality and global issues in the technocratic era.

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

1. Rey Bredberinin hekayələrində psixoloji motivlər // – Bakı: AMEA, M.Füzuli adına Əlyazmalar İnstitutu, Filologiya məsələləri, – 2017. №13, – s.345-350.
2. Rey Bredberinin kiçik həcmli nəsrində futuristik proqnozlar // – Bakı: BSU, Humanitar elmlərin öyrənilməsinin aktual problemləri, – 2018. № 1, – s.118-121.
3. Bədii ədəbiyyatda elmi fantastika janrının təzahür formaları // – Bakı: Azərbaycanda xarici dillər, – 2018. № 3, – s.132-135.
4. Posttexnokratik erada insan və texnikanın toqquşması (Rey Bredberinin əsərləri əsasında) // Doktorant və gənc tədqiqatçıların XXII Respublika elmi konfransının materialları. – Bakı: ADPU, – 22-23 noyabr, – 2018, II cild, – s.248- 250.
5. İctimai-siyasi problemlər kodeksində Amerika ədəbiyyatının təşəkkül mərhələsi // – Bakı: BSU, Humanitar elmlərin öyrənilməsinin aktual problemləri, – 2019. № 4, – s.129-132.
6. Stiven Kinqin yaradıcılığında insan və “dəhşətli” dünya konsepsiyası // Ümummilli lider H.Əliyevin anadan olmasının 96-cı ildönümünə həsr edilmiş “İnsan inkişafı. Dünyaya

- inteqrasiya” mövzusunda II beynəlxalq elmi konfransın materialları. – Bakı: AZMİU, – 2019, – s.218- 221.
7. The figure of the child in Stephen King’s prose // – Россия: Филологические науки. Вопросы теории и практики, – 2019. № 12, – p.104-107.
 8. Ədəbi-bədii fikirdə utopiyadan antiutopiyaya keçid // – Bakı: ADU, Dil və ədəbiyyat, – 2020. № 2, – s.75-80.
 9. Antiutopiya janrı Rey Bredberinin yaradıcılıq tendensiylərindən biri kimi // – Bakı: AEM, Elmi iş, – 2020. № 12, – s.87-90.
 10. Сравнительный анализ современной малой прозы в мировой и Американской литературе // Labyrinths of Reality. Collection of scientific works (based on materials of the VII International scientific and practical conference). – Ukraine: – February 14-15, – 2020, Issue 2 (7), – p. 46-50.
 11. Stiven Kinqin ədəbi irsinin konseptual şərhı // – Bakı: AEM, Elmi iş, – 2021. № 1, – s.159-161.
 12. S.Kinqin kiçik nəsr nümunələrində gerçəklik və mistikanın toqquşması // – Bakı: BSU, Humanitar elmlərin öyrənilməsinin aktual problemləri, – 2021. № 1, – s.139-142.
 13. Qorxu janrının genezisi və spesifikasi // The X international scientific symposium dedicated to the 880th anniversary of Nizami Ganjavi, “Science and education: yesterday, today, tomorrow”, – Stockholm: Sweden, – January 23, – 2021, – p.100-103.
 14. Stiven Kinqin yaradıcılığında uşaqlıq konsepsiyası // Humanitar və ictimai elmlərin əsasları mövzusunda III Respublika konfransının materialları, – Bakı: AEM, – 30 aprel, – 2021, – s.78-80.
 15. Stiven Kinqin hekayələrində qorxu janrının təzahürü // – Bakı: BSU, Humanitar elmlərin öyrənilməsinin aktual problemləri, – 2021. № 2, – s.111-113.
 16. ABŞ “kiçik nəsr”inin nəzəri-ideoloji əsasları // The XXXVI International Scientific Symposium “Multidisciplinary Studies of the Turkish World” dedicated to the 125th anniversary of the famous Turkologist Amin Abid Gultekin. – Türkiyə, Eskişehir: – March 25, – 2023, – s.74-76.

The defense will be held on 19 September 2024 at 12.00 at the meeting of the Dissertation council ED 2.12 of Supreme Attestation Commission under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan operating at Azerbaijan University of Languages.

Address: AZ 1014, Baku, Rashid Behbudov Street, 134.

Dissertation is accessible at the Azerbaijan University of Languages Library.

Electronic version of the abstract is available on the official website of the Azerbaijan University of Languages.

Abstract was sent to the required addresses on 21 June 2024.

Jhy

Signed for print: 21.06.2024

Paper format: 60x84 1/16

Volume: 41 178 characters

Number of hard copies: 20