

Title: Returning to Orbit: Shifting Temporalities in Soviet Science Fiction
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Abstract:

Upon its publication in 1957, Ivan Yefremov's *Andromeda Nebula* (Туманность Андромеды) was celebrated as the revival of the utopian science fiction novel that had lain dormant since the advent of socialist realism some twenty years earlier. Yet Yefremov's novel, I argue, bears the imprint of socialist realism in its treatment of the relationship between the present and the future.

To explore the temporal imagination of *Andromeda Nebula*, I will begin by providing an overview of the far-future utopian science fiction novels of the 1920s. While differing in political content, many of these texts took Alexander Bogdanov's *Red Star* (Красная звезда) as their model. In these far-future tales, characters of the present must confront a future society utterly different from their own. Thus, these authors emphasize the distance between the past and the present. To borrow a term from Susan Buck-Morss, they depicted "revolutionary time."

Socialist realism dictated an end to such far future stories in favor of those that focused on the near future. Drawing on the theories of Boris Groys and Evgeny Dobrenko, I argue that the socialist realist production novel is temporally incompatible with the utopian science fiction novel of the 1920s, since socialist realism locks time in the near future.

With these two temporal paradigms in mind, one can see the extent to which *Andromeda Nebula*, despite its far future setting, more closely resembles the static socialist realist novels rather than the dynamic 1920s novels of "revolutionary time." This allows us to both reassess how we read *Andromeda Nebula* itself and rethink the imaginative possibilities of the Thaw-era Soviet science fiction novel.