

Title: Will the New Soviet Man Still Be Human? Post-Humans in the Strugatskiis' Works
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One phenomenon of post-WWII Soviet science fiction is a sober, rational exploration of the utopian imaginings of the early Soviet period. This paper will examine a branch of this trend by focusing on the problem of the New Soviet Man in two novellas by Boris and Arkadii Strugatskii: *Gadkie lebedi* [1967] and *Volny gasiat veter* [1984]. Each work portrays the emergence of a post-human offshoot. In each case, these post-humans are intellectually superior to the “ordinary” humans, and even possess what might be called super-human abilities.

The concept of the post-human in Soviet science fiction cannot avoid dialogue with the myth of the New Soviet Man, the idea that the citizen of the new Soviet state would be fundamentally different and *better* than the average human. The Strugatskiis challenge the utopian faith in this myth by posing the implicit question: will the putative New Soviet Man have *any* investment whatever in the “Old Soviet Man”? In the Strugatskiis' portrayal, the post-humans leave the old humanity behind, as predicted by the narrator of Platonov's *Vprok* [1931], to “perish in the escheated country of the past.” In addition to considering the New Soviet Man's relationship with his evolutionary predecessor, it is key to consider the extent to which the Strugatskiis' post-human can be regarded as still human. This paper will argue that post-humans in the Strugatskiis' works have shed their essential humanity, and have devolved in a very fundamental sense.

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