

Mediation about the utopian genre

“Literary utopians – from paradise to nightmare science fiction” (“Literarische Utopien – Vom Paradies zur alptraumartigen Science Fiction”) is a German article by Marten Hahn from 21.02.19 published at deutschlandfunkkultur.de covers the beginning, development and current state of utopian literature.

The genre evolved from the philosophical dialog “Utopia” written by Thomas Morus 500 years ago. There he described a perfect society with equality and free education in the island state Utopia. Until the end of the 19th century mostly utopian stories were written, when crises like the crises of imperialism hit European states. Then dystopian texts dominated that are representations of negative societies like the classics “beautiful new world” (“Schöne neue Welt”) and “1984”.

Further in time the genre was used for social experiments and later on in the 1970s and 1980s they focused on technological solution which now are called science fiction. Today authors concentrate on scientific achievements in the near future because the technology evolves so fast. Mathew Beaumont a literature scientist from university College London who’s specialised in utopian literature has the opinion that utopian and dystopian literature are strongly connected and said that only utopian texts doesn’t exist. In addition, he criticises the missing of more political utopian literature nowadays but also sees how important it is to bring attention to world-wide companies like google and Facebook which try to take more control in our lives.

At the end of the article the author describes Microsofts PR-coup in which they let famous science-fiction writer have a look in their laboratories and the outcoming short stories vary between nightmare and Utopia.