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Рейхсфюрер Джон Смит: трансформация «американской мечты» в альтернативно-историческом телесериале «Человек в высоком замке»

Аннотация

Одной из удач телесериала «Человек в высоком замке» (2015–2019), созданного по мотивам одноименного романа Филипа К. Дика (1962), автор статьи считает образ Джона Смита, отсутствующий в первоисточнике. Путь антигероя от капитана капитулировавшей Армии США до рейхсфюрера Североамериканского рейха соответствует культу успешности, присущему американскому обществу, но означает предательство идеалов свободы и демократии. Судьба Смита в альтернативном мире, где союзники проиграли Вторую мировую войну, а США оккупированы странами «оси» – Германией и Японией, показывает зависимость обычного человека от обстоятельств, пропаганды и манипуляций с массовым сознанием, когда есть оправдывающая его поступки идеология, поддержанная обществом и государством. Индивидуализм и приверженность семейным ценностям определяют выбор Смита в пользу завоевателей: он действует по принципу «не можешь победить – возглавь» и демонстрирует чудеса силы воли, интеллекта и живучести, однако по мере продвижения по карьерной лестнице теряет самых близких людей, ради спасения которых и стал коллаборантом.

Вслед за другими авторами альтернативной истории, изображающими победу стран «оси», создатели сериала во главе с Фрэнком Спотницем проверяют тезис «У нас это невозможно», испытывая методом от противного американское (и не только) общество на иммунитет к тоталитарной идеологии. Они не заходят так далеко как, например, Эрик Норден в романе «Окончательное решение», изобразивший почти полную диффузию нацизма и американского образа жизни, но семья Смитов-нацистов во многом соответствуют истеблишменту США 1960-х годов. Тот факт, что показанный в сериале двойник Смита из якобы нашей реальности – идеальный американский гражданин и настоящий мужчина: герой-ветеран Второй мировой войны, успешный коммивояжер, образцовый семьянин, гуманист и борец за социальную справедливость, – можно трактовать как объяснение основных мотивов поступков Смита: он, в любой реальности, – человек Системы, ее послушный исполнитель, который соответствует целям и нормам общества, в котором существует. Его жизненный путь позволяет увидеть изначальную противоречивость и расщепленность компонентов «американской мечты»: материализма и идеализма, индивидуализма и общенациональных интересов, успешности и способов ее достижения.

Однако, ключевой вопрос о природе зла (нацизм навязан американцам немцами извне или в самом американском обществе есть предпосылки для развития антигуманных доктрин) решается в сериале скорее в пользу первого подхода. В отличие от романа Дика, где колониальный статус бывших США является привычной данностью, коллаборационизм – нормой, а сопротивление оккупантам – редкостью, в сериале, оправдывая ожидания массового зрителя, показана ожесточенная борьба между поработоченными американцами и оккупантами как на Западе страны, так и на Востоке.

Таким образом, авторы сериала деконструируют официальную историю США, чтобы указать на потенциально слабые места своего государства и возродить веру в его особую миссию.

Ключевые слова: американская литература, альтернативная история, антиутопия, научная фантастика, телесериал, национальная культурная мифология, «американская мечта», нацизм, Вторая мировая война.

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Reichsführer John Smith: The Transformation of the American Dream in the Alternate History TV Series *The Man in the High Castle*

The backside of the pride of US citizens for their country, the bulwark of democracy and “paradise on earth”, is the fear of losing their American Dream, i.e. the world’s best society with equal opportunities. This fear becomes a conscious or subconscious impetus to create many dystopian, post-apocalyptic, and alternate history books and movies. All these works are traditionally considered within the genre of science fiction (SF), becoming a kind of thought experiment (“what if”).

In the context of rethinking the national cultural mythology and ideology of the United States, the researchers pay special attention to alternative history of the US important periods. Two “pain points” are their focus here: the Civil War of 1861–1865 and World War II. In the second case, the authors dare to experiment with the defeat of the Allies by the Axis powers (the Nazi bloc), or show the cooperation of the American government with Hitler.

The Man in the High Castle Amazon TV Series (2015–2019) by Frank Spotnitz (b. 1960) is loosely based on Philip Kindred Dick’s novel of the same name (1962). This novel is considered a classic of alternate history of WWII. The events in the book take place in 1962, 15 years after the Allies surrendered to the Axis powers. The country has been divided into the United States in the east belonging to Nazi Germany, and the Pacific States in the west ruled by Imperial Japan. The southern Confederate States is a quasi-independent state with a puppet government; the Rocky Mountains and much of the Midwest are a neutral zone because they are of no economic interest to the victors.

Focusing on the Pacific coast controlled by the Japanese (highly humane compared to the Germans), Dick shows a long-occupied, colonial country where the Americans are second-class people who are only allowed to serve their new masters, and the US national culture is reduced to a souvenir business that is in demand among the occupiers. The writer seems to reflect the situation with American Indians in his country.

However, in the television adaptation of Dick’s novel, which is a free extension and continuation of each plot line of the book, there is a fierce struggle between the enslaved Americans and the occupiers in both the west and the east. Here, the Americans capitulate only after a nuclear strike on Washington. The Germans try to eliminate the American past, the American Dream, but they cannot get away with that: the national humiliation of the United States reaches its peak when the Nazis ruin the Statue of Liberty, but in response, the Resistance attempts to kill Himmler, who succeeded Hitler as leader, and so on. The TV series successfully uses the universe built by Dick, tickling the nerves of viewers by showing swastikas on the streets of New York (now it is the regional capital of the Greater Nazi Reich), but reassuring them that a free America does not give up, and therefore victory is possible.

In the TV series, among the main characters are the Smith family: Rufus Sewell as John Smith, Reichsmarschall and later Reichsführer of North America (actually, the main Nazi of the United States), Chelah Horsdal as his wife Helen, and their children (son Thomas, daughters Amy and Jennifer). All of them are absent in Dick’s novel, but the introduction of these characters, in my opinion, is the success of the series and helps its authors raise the painful topic of collaboration with the Nazis and even the full acceptance of their inhumane ideas by ordinary Americans (moreover, any people). Smith’s character shows the dependence of the common person on circumstances, propaganda, and manipulation of the mass consciousness, especially when there is an ideology justifying their

actions, supported by society and the state. A former Captain of the US Army, Smith makes a difficult choice after the surrender of his country to save himself and his family (Helen and baby Thomas) from starvation and repression. John agrees to work for the Nazis, then he betrays his best friend, a Jew, later Smith brutally investigates the Resistance, learns to survive under the Nazis, and participates in their power intrigues. Like a true predator (cunning, strong, and tenacious), Smith becomes part of the inhumane System, but throughout the series the audience feels that John's soul does not yet fully belong to this regime. For example, he remembers and loves his deceased disabled brother Edmund ("subhuman", in terms of Nazis). Smith breaks the laws to save Thomas, who has the same diagnosis as Edmund, and suffers greatly when his fanatical and honest son himself agrees to euthanasia, although in public John is forced to play the role of a father who is proud of his son's actions.

In our reality, shown in the fourth season of the TV series, John Smith also exists: here he is also a former US military man, but later John becomes a successful salesman, a decent citizen, a true gentleman, and an ideal family man. Traveling to our world, Smith sees what he could be like in a country without the Nazis. At the end of the series, before committing suicide, Reichsführer Smith says that he has become the worst copy of himself of all possible, but his last actions show that he can only get out of the game, but not stop the System, which he has been building for many years. Returning to the American Dream, we cannot avoid making the conclusion: on the one hand, Smith as a Nazi is a successful person, a great family man, almost Superman. He survived, reached the pinnacle of power and financial well-being, even learned to defend some independence of his homeland from Berlin, i.e., his life path fits perfectly into the materialistic aspect of the American dream. On the other hand, John Smith betrayed the American dream in terms of the ideals of democracy and freedom. The end of his life coincides with the beginning of the end of Nazi America.

Thus, following other authors of alternate history, depicting the victory of the Axis powers, the creators of the series are proving the thesis "It can't happen here" by contradiction, testing American (and not only) society for immunity to totalitarian ideology. They do not go as far as, for example, Eric Norden in *The Ultimate Solution* (1973), who depicts an almost complete diffusion of Nazism and the American way of life, but the Nazi Smith family is largely in line with the 1960s US establishment. The fate of Smith as a Nazi in an alternative world shows that Nazism or fascism are possible everywhere, especially when violence and mass consciousness manipulation are used. Individualism and adherence to family values determine Smith's choice in favor of the invaders: he follows the principle "if you can't beat them, lead them" and demonstrates miracles of willpower, intelligence and vitality, but as he moves up the career ladder, he loses the closest people, for whose sake he became a collaborator. The fact that Smith's copy from our reality is an ideal American citizen and a real man can be interpreted as an explanation of the main motives of the anti-hero's actions. Smith, in any reality, is a person of the System, its obedient performer who corresponds to the goals and norms of society in which he exists. Probably, Smith's last name, that is the most common in the United States, emphasizes his average nature. His life path reveals the initial contradiction and splitting of the components of the American Dream: materialism and idealism, individualism and national interests, success and ways to achieve it.

Nevertheless, the key issue about the nature of evil (whether Nazism was imposed on Americans by the Germans from the outside, or whether in the American or any other society itself there are prerequisites for the development of inhumane doctrines) is considered in the series in favor of the first approach. Unlike Dick's novel, where the colonial status of the former United States is a familiar reality, collaboration is the norm, and resistance to the invaders is rare, the series, meeting the expectations of the mass audience, shows a fierce struggle between enslaved Americans and occupiers both in the West and in the East of the country.

In this way, the authors of the series deconstruct the official history of the USA in order to point out the potential weaknesses of their state and restore faith in its special mission.

Key words: American literature, alternate/ alternative history, dystopia, science fiction, television series, national cultural mythology, American Dream, Nazism, WWII.

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