

# Spiritual Crisis as a Sign of Time: the Projection of the Problem in the Fiction of the Slavic World

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*The article discusses the phenomenon of spiritual crisis as a typical attribute for each transitional era. Fiction is always sensitive to all the changes in the spiritual, ethical and philosophical components of society. Therefore, the appearance of certain motifs or plots in the works of Ukrainian and foreign modern writers, who are representing Slavic literature can serve as an indicator of the morality and spiritual health of society. Spirituality is often measured by the degree of religion. The spiritual crisis gives rise to readiness to return to sources and traditions, which for the vast majority of the European readers is Christianity.*

*The purpose of this article is to identify the most typical motifs in modern Slavic (Ukrainian, Polish and Russian) literature, which indicate an individual spiritual search at the turn of the ages.*

*Fiction has always been designed to influence the formation of human values. The appeal of modern writers to the problem of faith and faithlessness or belief in various non-Christian cults (esoteric, mystical, neopagan, etc. cults) in the modern world indicates that our civilization is experiencing a deep spiritual crisis and it is literature that can reflex the process of their exit.*

*In this way, the reader rethinks the problems that humanity is facing more and more often. This is loneliness, lack of close and deep connections between people, disbelief, which causes weakness and fear of tomorrow.*

*Thus, motifs and plots, primarily borrowed from Christian doctrine, are understood as an attempt to determine the path to mental equilibrium.*

*Keywords: spiritual crisis; secularization of literature; culture; post-postmodern; sacrum*

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## Introduction

Such expressions as “conflict of culture and civilization”, “crisis of consciousness”, “crisis of the arts”, “fin de siècle”, “breaking of tradition”, “philosophy of life” are very typical of aesthetics of the turn of the century. They, among other things, point to the spontaneously emerging international aspect of the phenomenon, which is clearly beyond the scope of each national literary history. Typological comparison of the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> centuries with the preceding century is not accidental and inevitable. The historical sensation of the centuries’ change imposes an imprint on the consciousness of the individual artist, and on the artistic consciousness as a whole, although the researchers quite rightly claim that the change of artistic systems can take place in the middle of the century or is determined by the change of generations.

The purpose of our study is to identify phenomena in the literary world, testifying of a crisis of artistic consciousness at the turn of the century, to identify mechanisms that reflect the crisis in the aesthetics of artistic creativity and the poetics of artistic work.

### I

Many modern phenomena, such as globalization or the development of communication technologies, have weakened the peculiar control function that tradition has always performed. A global axiological market has emerged, where various values and solutions are offered, they are often different from those that are passed on from generation to generation.

The period of transition to a particular level and state of a person, which marks the spiritual development of a person, could be called a spiritual crisis. The spiritual crisis has its own symptoms, which manifests themselves in the contradiction of the semantic system of consciousness, unwillingness to move in a given direction, to conform to certain stereotypes, etc.

Literature as a manifestation of cultural life, as well as the modern day, could be viewed as a kind of detector that clearly defines the problem areas of the modern world. Literature does not cease to be a mirror reflecting the worldviews and the spiritual life of generations of the present turn of the century. What spiritual life is reflected in this mirror? Is there room for Christian spirituality? Spirituality, in turn, is often directly related to the concepts of religiosity and categories of the sacred (sacrum), the high, the divine.

It is no secret that today the most readable literature is the so-called pop literature, replete with a variety of motifs, plots, characters, etc. The mass reader, therefore, is looking for gradually in such works some signs, guides, hints or direct indications of a way out of the crisis state of the soul.

At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the general idea of the destruction of the world, the decline of culture, which finds the most consistent expression in the culture of Germany (*Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Spengler*, and others) has appeared. It looks like many European writers of the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries refer to Catholicism (*Hermann Hesse, Thomas Mann*) in response to the famous *Nietzsche*’ statement that “God is dead”. In the same time, a new ideological and ethical structure is being formed on the territory of the future Soviet Union on the other side of the political barrier. It will be displayed in many spectra of life and will be projected into the world of fiction. *Ivan A. Il’in*, one of the leading philosophers, writer and publicist, a consistent critic of the communist Russian government, described this process in a public lecture, which he has given in Riga in 1935:

“And now, [...] — our time spread before us at once the greatest rise of bellicose godlessness and the strictest trial over the religiosity which was worn out by humanity during the past centuries and millennia. And if we embrace the whole process at once with a single expression, then a unique crisis of godlessness will unfold before us.” [II’in, 1935].

*John Paul 2*, speaking on June 2, 1980, at UNESCO headquarters, drew attention to the connection of culture with the experience of European national and Christian identity. The modern pace of life and the changes happening in the modern world, new truths in culture put a person in front of questions considering the preservation of this identity.

Some scholars complain about “a fuzzy description in the so-called post-modernity of a new spirituality, such as postmodernism, radical environmentalism, the New Age, or religiosity (*Tadeusz Buksiński, Mirosław Nowaczyk*). According to representatives of the new spirituality, the conflict of new values with traditional values that still prevail is a sign of the dominant culture’ crisis, which has found itself at the “turning point” from which the “new era” begins.

The New Age movement is of particular importance for modern philosophy and the new vision of the world. In the context of the postmodern philosophy promotion and the search for ways out in the happy future world of a new era, the Roman Catholic priest *Piotr Mrzygłód* was one of the first to respond in Poland to the appearance of this movement’s first manifestations. He was involved actively in the discussion of modern Polish philosophers and clergy on postmodernism as the newest philosophy. The magazine “PERSPECŹIVA Legnickie Studia Teologiczno-Historyczne” Rok 11 2012 nr 2 (21) contained his first publication in Poland, diagnosing the current state of Polish philosophical and theological thought and its relation to postmodern philosophy. He defined what is happening to the tradition and spirituality of the nation as a threat, emanating from the so-called “postmodern culture” and as a specific neognosis in the form of the New Age movement, which spreads very quickly.

The scientific discipline that has always paid attention to the dynamic changes that society undergoes is called sociology and religion is one of the most frequently analysed spheres. Studies in this area suggested that along with socio-economic development, the role of various beliefs, irrational thinking, etc. will decrease. The basis of this thinking consisted of the following prerequisites:

- 1) Technical progress is based on rationalistic thinking, therefore it can be concluded that progress in the spiritual sphere should also be based on rational and empirical facts; this, in turn, excludes the existence of God — at least in the traditional sense.
- 2) Religion is a kind of reference system; at present, science is taking on its role in explaining the world.
- 3) Religion is also an element of society’ consolidation, but at the same time, it is a false consciousness that is necessary for the functioning of the system and its inherent inequalities.

The French Revolution revealed the role of religion and at the same time indicated that the path to freedom includes not only the overthrow of absolutist power but also absolutist faith, which is contrary to the human desire for freedom. Consequently, all the sociology classics—from *Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Émile Durkheim, Karl Marx* and to *Max Weber*, believed that religion would play a lesser and lesser role along with the development of industrial society. Along with such phenomena as urbanization, bureaucratization, rationalization —

secularization also became something specific for the process of transition from an agricultural society to an organized and modern industrial society. *Pippa Norris* and *Ronald Inglehart* cite *Charles Wright Mills*, who described it as follows: once sacred covered the world — thoughts, religious rites and religion as an institution. After a period of Reformation and Renaissance, the world has undergone modernization, and as a result, the process of secularization weakened the dominance of this sacrament. Over time, the sacred will completely disappear, except, perhaps, the private sphere [Norris & Inglehart, 2005: 27].

The process of avoiding religion and returning to it at the end of the twentieth century is characteristic not only of the territories of the post-Soviet space, where the “crisis of godlessness” actually occurred. The Western world faced similar crises, and disappointment and departure from the traditional institution of faith were their results.

“In this situation, it is more legitimate to talk about the transition from church religion to extra-institutional religiosity, which is selective or non-individualized religiosity” [Kutylo, 2008: 129].

Modernity has destroyed traditional belief systems, but it does not deny faith itself. In today’s reality, it has a syncretic character, which manifests itself in a variety of combinations and value-meaning systems that individuals themselves create in a way independent of church institutions.

In the new conditions of postmodern society, a person is no longer self-determined, referring to traditions passed down from generation to generation. He or she has the opportunity to choose his/her own identity, including religious. Postmodern reality is heterogeneous and resembles a large market. Every person can choose an offer that suits him/her best among the many.

If the turn of 19<sup>th</sup> — 20<sup>th</sup> centuries philosophers and philologists view as a “cultural leap” (*Dmitry Likhachev*), a “categorical scrapping” (*Alexander V. Mikhailov*), an “explosion of culture” (*Yuri Lotman*), when there is a change of cultural eras,<sup>1</sup> then the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> centuries tend to be seen as a kind of completion of this cycle — the completion of the gestalt, so to say. Many researchers assume that the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> — beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> — is the transition from the classical type of culture to modernism, and the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> — the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century reveals a tendency to move away from postmodernism towards classical artistic systems (post-postmodernism).

In the most general sense, postmodern is called the “fourth great epoch in the history of Western humanity,” which follows the New Age (the Modernity era). If modernism is the “last, closing period of the New time”, then postmodernism is the “first period of postmodernity” [Epshteyn, 2005: 14-15]. Modern and postmodern theorists offer different paradigms of the correlation of cultural epochs, but all theories are united by the recognition of the transitivity of the century’ turn as a phenomenon of history, civilization and culture. We already live in a stereotypical, postmodern or reckless civilization dominated by nihilism, dark pessimism, and axiological emptiness, devaluation of truth, destructive relativism or multidimensionality of reality, which create or only associate with a postmodern culture supported in this spirit.

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<sup>1</sup> New European culture (and civilization), which emerged as a project in the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries and institutionally formed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, reaches a critical milestone, beyond which its socio-cultural quality varies significantly. In a certain sense, its transmutation occurs, that means its transition to a new state.

We are convinced that everything has already happened, and if so, nothing new will arise. All truths have ceased to matter, and the remaining values seem to be intersubjective. All criteria for perception are devalued, deconstructed, denominated and fully restored. The unlimited possibility of endless transformations, changes and rearrangements of previously created cultural works is the only thing left for us in this situation in culture.

However, modern literature, so biased in different ideologies and so multi-layered, is still full of content related to spirituality. On the one hand, we observe the work of writers who still believe in the old model of literature with its traditional forms of expressing religious lyricism or moralistic prose. On the other hand, creativity is developing dynamically, and it is weakly or completely unrelated to typical ideas about the sacrum, but at the same time, it exists in close connection with private and secular manifestations of spiritual life. These two trends will be discussed in more detail on the basis of fiction of the Slavic countries. The popularity of new religious movements is often explained by the “crisis of civilization”. Thus, these movements will be a response to the disintegration of both individuals and communities, and at the same time, they can contribute to such a breakdown, attacking the bonds of tradition. The existential emptiness, the crisis of traditional churches, the crisis of science and political ideologies create a feeling of confusion and anxiety. People living in the post-war world began to profess other values than they professed before World War II, a crisis of spiritual knowledge of the world arose. One of the main goals of Sovietization was the secularization and atheization of society. Pre-war values have disappeared, but new, highly rationalized (among other things, the cult of labour) have appeared. The younger generation lives with completely different values. In the newest literature, the sacrum sphere is associated with completely different values than it was some time ago. Nowadays, the fashion of the East and mysticism is returning to the culture, it can be observed in the works of such writers as *Marina Sokolyan* (Ukraine), *Olga Tokarchuk* (Poland), pagan cults, mythology and folk beliefs (*Lada Luzina*, *Marina Sokolyan*, *Henry Lion Oldie* — Ukraine; *Victor Pelevin* — Russia, *Jacek Piekara* — Poland), biblical motifs and Apocrypha (*Marina Sokolyan*, *Henry Lion Oldie* — Ukraine, *Vladimir Korotkevich* — Belarus; *Van Zaychik*, *Victor Pelevin*, *Vladimir Pautov* — Russia; *Henryk Panas*, *Adam Wiśniewski-Snerg* — Poland). However, today such practices become a kind of attempt to escape from the ubiquitous, annoying models of kitsch of pop culture, a way to find the way to sources and the possibility of spiritual cleansing, unlike hobbies and examples of such a fashion a hundred years ago.

Europe, especially Western, is considered a world leader in secular modernization. *Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart* took it as a model for their theory of secularization. However, a problem arises if Europe essentially determines the trend of secularism: there are signs that secularization has drowned in its own field.

If we consider this process on the example of the Illiad’ dyad sacrum-profanum, one can notice some characteristic phenomena.

The opposition between sacrum and profanum, that is important for thinking about literature and art, had an ideological counterpart in the division into religious and secular reality (secular as once due to a political system — mundane). This phenomenon became more expressive in the process of secularization and strengthening of secularism in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which became the subject of sociological research in Europe regarding churches and denominations, mainly Protestant. The term “secularization” is ambiguous. Next to it (to describe the phenomenon of religion’ rejection) there are such concepts as secularization, emancipation, de-Christianization, desacralization, abandoning the church, irreligiousness,

“frustration in the world”, demythologization, de-confessionalization [Mariański, 2006: 24-25]. The word “secularization” comes from the Latin word secularism (secular) and means as much as secularism.

The border shifted, expanding the secular sphere as a result of the appropriation of social sacral space certain elements. However, within the framework of postmodernism, especially in the later trend’ transformations, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a process that was called by the sociologists “returning sacrum” (*Danièle Hervieu-Légar’ term.*) occurs. Polish researchers cite Peter Berger’ thesis from the book *The desecularization of the World (1999)* that the belief in the fact that “we live in a secularized world is false. Today’s world, with some exceptions, [...] is more religious than ever before” [Adamczyk, 2007: 67].

## II

Therefore, now humanity lives at the time of secularization and rationalization of everyday life. However, everyone needs a spiritual experience that would satisfy the curiosity and thirst for knowledge of the world, would allow him to understand this world. Because not all phenomena can be explained by scientific research. Many aspects of reality are a mystery to people. The closeness of the sacred (which is understood differently) that is present in the world satisfies the curiosity of the unknown. Shifting the boundaries of the sacred into the everyday plane is a characteristic practice of modern literature, an attempt to assimilate certain truths, having “lived” with the heroes of such works some events that are not mentioned in the Bible, or they are not directly indicated there. The search for the meaning of life and eternal truths, thus, closes in the plane of rethinking and re-approximation of religious Christian heritage.

The phenomenon that is commonly called “secularization,” has an analogue in the postmodern category of post-secularity. The “return of the sacrum” occurs differently than the previous process of secularization. This is not a simple return, but the effect of the adaptation of sacred elements to secular space, profane space. Interesting changes have occurred in the last decade; many researchers point to post-secular trends in modern culture. Postsecularism is characterized by a new stage of development, which follows the classical and already completed stage of secularization; it should be added, using the aforementioned typology, that it takes place at the material, institutional and individual levels. In the category of cultural formation, the post-secular formation is distinguished precisely in this plane of secularization measurement. There are several trends within the post-secular paradigm. Secularization has proven to be a long, but not an absolute process; new and latent forms of religiosity appear in the world (the so-called phenomenon of crypto-religiousness or crypto-theology) [Iwanicki, 2012: 31-32]. Especially in the context of modern artworks, you can point to works that were placed in a secular convention at the same time have hidden religious codes. This is how the genre of neo-Apocrypha appears, combining a high literary tradition, genre features of popular literature and the Holy Writ.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, the process of returning and rethinking sacred truths and traditions takes place in space, which one of the modern Polish researchers (sociologist, theologian and literary critic) *Jacek Sieradzian*, defined by the term “Sacrofanum”. This term is a conglomerate of the words “sacrum” and “profanum”. As *Jacek Sieradzian* explains: “In the modern world, the boundary between sacrum and profanum is limited, and a person lives

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<sup>2</sup> “Herem” by *Marina Sokolyan*, “Agar, Agar!..” by *Holm Van Zaichik*, “Armageddon Happened Yesterday” by *Henry Lion Oldie*, “The sixth prefect of the Judaea” by *Vladimir Pautov*, “Christ Has Landed in Grodno” by *Vladimir Karatkievich*, “Gospel of Judas” by *Henryk Panas*, “According, to the Thief” by *Adam Wiśniewski-Snerg* and many other works.



in a sacrophane, where everything is (or can become) a sacral element” [Sieradzan, 2006: 13]. This approach allows us to interpret the biblical motifs read by modern writers anew, or their attempts to “reconstruct” some of the events omitted in the Holy Writ. Such a creative decision moves the eternal truths, often difficult for the perception of the narrow-minded consciousness of today’s man, to the plane of everyday problems.

The works that were mentioned above can be divided into two groups: the pictures of the world, which are more traditional in their model, where sacrum is understood through generally accepted Christian categories<sup>3</sup> and innovative, nihilistic and shocking in their readings and interpretations of people and events texts from Christian history. These are the so-called neapocryphs (works by *Marina Sokolyan*, *Adam Wiśniewski-Snerg*, *Henry Lion Oldie*, or *Holm Van Zaichik*). The first ones are focused on the artistic tradition implemented by *Michail Bulgakov* (“The Master and Margarita”), *Yuri Nagibin* (“Favorite Disciple”), *Nikos Kazantzakis* (“The Last Temptation of Christ”). The second ones represent the most vivid manifestation of the classics in the framework of pop literature, but, at the same time, they realize nontraditional (if not alternative) ideas of interpretations of biblical-evangelical subjects. Thus, sacrofanum is both an artistic space, and a peculiar technique of mastering the old tradition and its adaptation in the new world. Thus, the above-mentioned writers have extended plots borrowed from the Gospels and Apocrypha, artistically revised and adapted to the modern, urbanized and globalized world. The central figure often remains the figure of Jesus Christ, directly or indirectly present in these works. However, the peripheral heroes (Agar, the disciples of Christ and his entourage, Judas, etc.) speak in passing and serve to the promotion of the main idea in the newest picture of the world: a return in one form or another to faith and Christian values. However, on the way of thinking of the man’s spiritual principle in this context, the next problem of our time is the process of replacing traditional religious cults with forms of new religion and worldview. These are esoteric teachings and cyberspace, where man is often assigned solely the leading role. The writer and his characters ambitiously fit into the role of the demiurge, creating worlds in which the common man “from the past” is often lost.

Seemingly, in modern Western culture esotericism should disappear or be isolated. Indeed, today a technical civilization is developed in the West, which assumes a hierarchy of values completely different from a religious one and points to the ultimate goal of human life, limited only by the sublunar outlook. As a result, more and more people care about their healthy appearance and physical form more than about the state of their souls, and about the happiness that they identify with pleasure. Meanwhile, despite the expansion of science and technology, as well as due to these cultural changes, esotericism in modern Western culture fares well. It not only did not disappear but also significantly expanded and changed its forms, becoming its (culture) essential component. This happened because the technical civilization exaggerates the importance of the material sphere and does not pay enough attention to the spiritual needs of humanity. Therefore, modern human must find ways to satisfy them. Previously, a person usually found them in the Christian religion, but now the balance between Christianity and esotericism, which has been maintained for centuries, has been broken. The discrediting of the goals, values and norms of behaviour that the Christian religion has given to people today has led to the fact that various forms of esotericism penetrate almost all spheres of human life. Pablo Capanna outlines very figuratively this situation: “Western secularization was not and could not be the last stage: when the cycle

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<sup>3</sup> For example, sin and virtue, good and evil, etc.: the novels of *Henryk Panas*, *Vladimir Karatkievich*.

ends, the roots of the old paganism grow back, and magically connects with technology. After all, we live in an era when computers are used to create horoscopes, and astronauts wear amulets” [Ezoteryzm, 2013: 9].

We can also observe an extrapolation of this phenomenon in the literary space of Slavic literature. Thus, esotericism found a kind of reflection in fantastic literature, where magic and “secret” knowledge and practices of various kinds are central. Mystical, esoteric or, not less often appearing in modern literature, demonological motifs testify to the instability and inhomogeneity of the spiritual and religious space of modern civilization. Man looking for answers to eternal questions such as *Who are we? What are we?, Why are we here?* The eternal plot of the struggle between good and evil is transformed in hybrid literary genres, subgenres of fiction, where the basis is a modified fairy tale, fantasy, mythological fantasy, alternative history and many others. It is realized through the motives of folklore, mythology, traditional and non-traditional religious teachings of the East and West.

These works are diverse in their literary and philosophical parameters, for example, works that have already become a kind of classic. These are the novels of *Sergey Lukyanenko* — the series “Watch” (6 books), the cycle “Error Correction” (“Rough-Book”, “Neat-Book”), novels and novels by *Henry Lion Oldie* — “Stepchildren of the Eighth Commandment”, “The Messiah clears the disc”, “Frontier”, *Marina Sokolyan* — “The Reverse Side of the Demonologia”, “Balad for Curved Varga”, “Flinders”, *Lada Luzina* — the cycle *Kiev witches* (and many others). Infernal worlds are rapidly conquering the world of humanity, and a unified hero, who combines the features of Messiah, Superman, Knight and Everyman, rises to fight them. The process of mixing and transformation phenomena of the inner world, that are diverse in core and nature (Christian, pagan and mystical elements of worldview) in the minds, are united by a common principle — the search for spiritual resurrection and cleansing people, which is understood as the only possible condition for the moving to a new civilization stage.

No less important point that determines the specifics of the crisis transition and spiritual quest in modern society is the emergence of cyberspace as a new problem. The apparent influence of the Internet could be seen in the field of communication: speech, written expression, a way of expressing thoughts and feelings. It is worth paying special attention to the so-called forms of SMS-language or communication by e-mail and on Twitter. Cyberspace uses its own language, it is often a technical language, concise, and also hermetic. In a sense, it is a language devoid of the element humanitas. Mutual dependence leads to the fact that culture is expressed in language, and language creates culture, therefore language determines the method of values assimilation, influences the adoption of specific decisions and, consequently, the moral life. Often, the Internet is a place where language expression becomes an ethical issue.

A low-cultured, rude way of self-expression, verbal aggression, a language completely devoid of relevance to higher feelings pose a threat. The longer and more intensively this form of expression is used, the more this threat is. The systematic use of negative content and the constant use of primitive and reduced vocabulary have a destructive effect on the inner world of a person. As a result, frequent staying in an environment where the vulgar vocabulary, cynicism and obscenity is the norm causes the user’s moral regress (*Victor Pelevin’s* “Helmet of Terror”).

An even more serious problem is that the obvious ease, speed and universality of communication paradoxically have the opposite effect and make it difficult to establish deep interpersonal relationships and even make them disappear from the real world. The isolation of a person, the impossibility and often the inability to build real relationships in the real world with real partners are reflected in *Janusz Wiśniewski’s* sensational novel “Loneliness in the Net”



(“Samotność w sieci”). Denoting the disturbing vector of human development, the transfer of his/her life and experiences to the virtual world, the writer indirectly states the reason for this phenomenon. At least about one of the reasons, the loss of the spiritual connection between the closest people, which is a consequence of the development of industrial and technological society.

## Conclusions

The modern theme of “spiritual crisis” is built in the literature around the motives of “yesterday’s catastrophe” and “tomorrow’s overcoming”, indirectly stating the idea of the unfavourable spiritual life. As a result, as the analysis of the most diverse contemporary cultural practices shows, the recognition of crisis in the spiritual sphere in its own way “sanctifies” the multidirectional efforts of individual social groups and cultural and ethical movements aimed at breaking the “spiritual dead end” (to which, according to this logic, led the previous political period, globalization, etc.) Thus, the crisis of spiritual (artistic) consciousness, typical of the turn of the century, covers Western and Eastern Europe, the centre and periphery, all spheres of culture and humanitarian knowledge.

In artistic creativity, it expresses itself in a crisis of faith and disbelief at the level of themes and problems of works of Polish, Ukrainian and Russian writers, and in the mixing of genres and styles. The search for a way out of the crisis leads to the designation of various vectors for the further development of modern culture and literature, which, considering the distance travelled from the end of the nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth century, can be summarized in the form of three main directions: 1) return to the classical semantic paradigm (spirituality, realism, etc.) with elements of synthesized non-classical subjects and genre models; 2) further development of the post-postmodern era (self-reflection, essayization, etc.), in which it finds a place as a return to the barbarism and neo-paganism of past eras, as well as “sinking into the abyss” of the variety and diversity of modern spiritual practices and post-apocalyptic images. These paths are neither universal nor absolute, but they help to orient in the world of some artistic visions of a 21<sup>st</sup>-century person.

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