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Retro-Utopia Temptation of Archangel Mikhail Groys By Vadim Mesyats

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Abstract

This article discusses the retro-utopian novel *Temptation of Archangel Mikhail Groys* by Vadim Mesyats. The novel explores an alternative scenario of overcoming the bleak present and entering the future by going back to a past represented by the medieval Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The novel is set in Belarus in 2013. Belarus is shown as the last stronghold of socialism, as the country that has managed to preserve both its recent and more distant past, as the 'paradise regained', whose boundaries remain transparent for Russia and for the European Union. Belarus is a multi-confessional and (historically) multi-ethnic country, allowing it to uphold the 'common cause' of uniting brother nations and initiating their spiritual transformation. Apart from the obvious allusion to N. Fyodorov's philosophy, the novel also contains multiple reminiscences to the works of V. Soloviev, Gorky's *The Confession*, contemporary neo-paganism and discussions of contemporary historians about the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as the second centre for consolidating Russian lands.

Keywords: neo-mythologism, neo-paganism, modern Russian prose, alternative history, Soviet nostalgia

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1. Introduction

The novel of Vadim Mesyats was published in Issues 2 and 3 of the journal *Ural* in 2015 under the title *The Legion of Archangel Mikhail Groys*. In 2018, the book was published by the Moscow publishing house E. Alexis Berelovich has managed to pin down the concept of the novel in the title of his article *Forward to the Bright Pas*” [1]. Berelovich points out the growing mass nostalgia for the Soviet past and makes a conclusion that the present is seen by many as a remainder of the vanishing past [1]. The 'future in the past' concept is also discussed by A. Fokin, another contributor to the collection of articles *Pathways of Russia: Future as Culture* [2]. Much earlier, in 1989, Alexey Levinson observed that in our history two contradictory approaches to the past alternate and at times even co-exist – that of casting the past aside and of mastering and accepting it [3. Discussing the results of sociological surveys, B. Dubin observed that a considerable part of Russian people were oriented towards the past:

> Contemporary Russia might well be called a country without future – without any prospects that could be more or less clearly articulated by the elites and accepted by the main social groups. After the twentieth-century utopias came to an end (...), the prevailing attitudes are those of self-defense, social conservationism, and symbolical compensation – images of 'enemies', ideas of the 'special way', nostalgia for the imagined imperial past and so on [4].

A. M. Lobin explains the popularity of the genre of anti-utopia the following way: "Disappointment with the results of the socio-economic transformations at the turn of the twenty-first century made anti-utopia an extremely popular genre of contemporary literature" [5].

2. Materials and Methods

In this article, we are going to discuss one of such tactics used for modelling the future through returning to the past found in the novel by V.Mesyats *Temptation of Archangel Mikhail Groys*. We also considered his essay *The Piano Concerto No. 2 of Rachmaninoff as a national idea*. Our conceptual framework is based on the systemic and structural approach to text analysis that focuses on the plot and system of characters as elements of the 'internal world' of the text (a similar approach was described by D. S. Likhachev, Y. M. Lotman, M. M. Girshman, N. L. Leiderman, and Jerzy Faryno). We also applied methods of discourse analysis (M. M. Bakhtin, Paul Ricœur, V. I. Tyupa, I. V. Silantiev, and Y. V. Shatin) and mythopoetics (A. F. Losev, E. M. Meletinsky, and V. N. Toporov). To clarify the author's intent, we need to look at the historical, literary and cultural context, which, to a certain extent, corresponds to the trend of 'new sociologism' in literary studies (this trend was started by Frederic Jameson, Edward Said, Jan Assmann, and is continued in the works of many contemporary researchers, including L. Gudkov, B. Dubin, M. Lipovetsky, and A. Levinson). We also used the discussion of modern historians about the role of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as a possible centre for the union of Russian lands. In our analysis we relied on the studies of modern neo-paganism by B. Falikov and V. Schnirelman.

3. Results

Contemporary Belarus is shown in the novel as an 'earthly paradise' and a 'sanctuary of socialism'. On a deeper level, however, the novel focuses on the reconstruction of the remote past, in particular the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as a home land uniting the

Lithuanians, Belarussians, and Russians. The author's philosophy is described as 'global *pochvennichestvo* (return to the soil)', which is genetically consubstantial with modern neo-paganism and stems from the ideas of Vladimir Soloviev and Nikolay Fyodorov. At the same time the novel is characterized by pervasive postmodernist 'playfulness', and the author's position is essentially trickster-like and largely remains ambivalent.

4. Discussion

Reviewers find it hard to clearly define the genre of V. Mesyats's novel: they use such terms as 'Menippean satire' [3], mystical thriller and magic detective [6]. The writer himself said that what he was writing was something "Fantastic. Mystical. Marquez or Pavic, only based on Belorussian and Lithuanian material" [7].

The main character of the novel, businessman Sergey, leaves Moscow for Belarus. There is all the more reason for him to do so as his wife comes from Naroch. Sergey uses his wife's surname to procure himself a local passport: "he is attracted by the visa-free entry to Russia and his prior absence in this country, both legally and physically" [8]. Boris Dubin pointed out the special attitude of the Russians towards Belarus: after the collapse of the USSR, the Russians felt surrounded by stranger nations, which is why "Belarus is seen more and more often by the Russian public as the only and inevitable partner" [4]. He also emphasizes that the majority of Russians do not consider Belarus to be a separate country [4].

In the novel, Belarus is depicted as a sanctuary of the Soviet past:

> The time here is standing still (...) To come here means to return to the recent imperial past. The empire is gone and it won't come back but what is forever gone still lingers here. And we have also remained here – those who unconsciously took care of this country. [We] prevented the total breakup (...). It's good that this sanctuary of old traditions and manners was right next door. Visa-free entry. Unified economic zone. Zone. That's it" [8].

One of the episodes is set in Chernobyl zone (at night a convoy of twenty-four luxury Chaika cars passes in complete silence [8]) and the narrator, who serves as a courier for a secret employer, like Stalker, travels to various corners of Belarus. Interchapters denoted by the word 'Kunstkammer' tell about different wonders, freakish, grotesque and disturbing, violations of the laws of nature and common sense. Thus, Belarus is shown as an anomalous zone, where an unprecedented experiment was carried out, and also as a Soviet 'zone'.

What prevails, however, is another understanding of Belarus – as a paradise on earth. The text highlights the gentle beauty of Belarussian nature and the exceptional sincerity of Belarussian people. At the very beginning of the novel, a song that Sergey heard on the radio in his car gets stuck in his memory: “In Belarus the God lives” [8]. The evidence to support this maxim appears multiple times in the text as the character keeps coming across churches and intending crosses on his way. In the chapter *Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained* there is a character Lev Vasilyevich Mashits, a utility worker, described with a bit of humour, who breaks out in a passionate soliloquy about the great achievement of President Lukashenko, who has managed to realize his ambition to turn the republic into an earthly paradise.

> All the fourteen republics of our Union betrayed the socialist cause and let themselves be lured into the honey trap… [They] disgraced themselves. They destroyed their industrial production, free education and health care. [They] undid the feat of their fathers. [They] forgot about Berlin. About space exploration (…) We, the Belarussians. Therefore, in our country, people from all parts of our immense Motherland started to be resurrected. Builders of Communism. Elusive avengers… [8].

It is evident to Sergey that his resurrected friends, who died in the 1990s and 2000s, are not heroes but rather a lost generation, a “decaying and meaningless element” [8]. They are not, however, the only ones – among the other resurrected there are Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn, who are now leading an idyllic life in Belarus [8]. The narrator says, this time without any apparent irony: “Who said that paradise means abundance and affluence? Perhaps paradise is justice, which is the only possible national idea? Paradise is a dream about the past (…) Belarus is a return to the happy socialist past, to mother’s cradle” [8].

The narrator has escaped the traumatic experience of his Russian life. In one of the short chapters he goes online to find out about the history of ‘mafia wars’ of the 1990s. Sergey is happy that he has managed to gain a peaceful life with his wife and children in the tranquil and serene Belarussian land.

However, when his close friends from the past, long dead (the novel is set in what could be 2013), start to turn up, one by one, it becomes apparent that Sergey himself is also living a kind of ‘afterlife’. At the end of the novel Sergey is killed in a helicopter crash and only the soft wing of archangel Mikhail, his friend from the past, Mishka Groys, carries him to safety and softly puts him on the ground. Mishka then helps Sergey to escape to the Lithuanian border, where Sergey’s lover Lola (who also died

in the previous life) is waiting for him. Thus, the novel ends with the narrator finding himself, a new motherland and a new family. It should be noted that the author uses the figure of the narrator to draw parallels with Tarkovsky's *Solyaris*.

We are not trying to identify the author's point of view with that of the narrator, although the narrative does contain a number of auto-biographical details since V. Mesyats used to live in Belarus. The author seems to intentionally reproduce widely spread ideas and discourses in the style of folk history.

For example, a disagreeable character Shablyka preaches anti-semitism when he is celebrating the Independence Day with his neighbours. Shablyka's son Maxim, a model policeman, maintains public order, protecting it from the 'fifth column' – all sorts of 'fake makers', 'emo', 'opposition' and 'freaks':

> Fake makers. Have nothing to offer. They jeer. And we teach them a lesson. Treat them right. Many of them go back to normal. Those who don't – welcome to Okrestino, Volodarsky. Or to Novinki. Or even better – valise, railway, Europe. We do not need any of those fagots [8].

It is Maxim, at his father's instigation, who shoots at Sergey's car at night, believing him to be a *moskal* and an occupant. Maxim Shablyka supports the communist regime: the generation of "*stilyagi*, beatniks, and parasites", ready to sell their Motherland for a pair of jeans or a foreign music record, have now become "heroes of the day, gained power. Dabblers, shitty artists, lumpens, fagots". Maxim is convinced, however, that sooner or later all these people will appear before the trial of the 'brigade' calling itself 'Prague Winter': "After the Prague Spring comes the Prague Winter!" [8]. This brigade allegedly has the lists of those who put up resistance to the Soviet Army in Hungary and Czechoslovakia [8]. Vindication awaits everybody who renounced communism.

Matyushonok (yet another disagreeable character) is reading a guerrilla leaflet he found in his mailbox. The leaflet contains propaganda against the newcomers labelled as 'fascist occupants'. Sergey's father-in-law, on the contrary, advocates the idea of Slavic brotherhood:

> The idea of the union of Slavic peoples was close to his heart. The ways of revisionists were, in his view, nothing else than parochial separatism and betrayal. After Russia got weak, the Belarussians turned to Poland. Rewrote their history to the benefit of Europe. That's not the right way to do it [8].

During the tour of the *Belovezhskaya Pushcha* (Bialowieza Forest), a woman sitting next to Sergey on the bus tells him that she does not like the ancient Jatvingians at

all (filthy, wore animal skins, dishevelled) and that she is much more keen on Emperor Nicholas II: “looked like a gentleman, had good manners, wore a well-fitted dark blue suit” [8]. She also feels grateful to Stalin that he let them have a half of the *Pushcha*.

An old man whom Sergey is giving a lift in his car during a rain storm says that he worked as a body guard and he blames himself for not shooting Yeltsin, Shushkevich and Kravchuk when they were signing the treaty. He says bitterly: “I could have saved the state. Now the fascist plan ‘Ost’ has succeeded: the state is dismembered. Subjugated to the will of the foreign invader” [8].

According to Lev Gudkov, the post-Soviet collective consciousness is characterized by the “traumatic understanding of the collapse of the USSR as a historical disaster and ill-fated combination of circumstances” [9]. Neither the general public nor the elite seemed to be fully aware of the fact that the demise of the USSR was caused by internal rather than external circumstances: “Even today these events are usually explained by the treason, mistakes made by Gorbachev and Yeltsin, evil machinations of the Western countries” [9].

In the novel, Misha Groys mumbles that if we had capitulated in 1941, we would now be drinking Bavarian beer and thus repeats word for word his own monologue of 1990 [8]. In a retort to his friends’ sarcastic comments he says:

> Nothing is as exasperating and disgusting as a brainless scum sitting in front of an American computer, using an American web-site programmed by Americans, wearing American-style stuff, who hasn’t seen anything in life except for American movies, and writing in lousy Russian: “America is a shithole by default”… [8].

He also says that Belarus is the last dictatorship of Europe, a bloody regime. These are all, as Sergey puts it, ‘Atlantises of former complexes’.

What is the most surprising is that none of the speeches and none of the discourses appears to be particularly off-putting to the main character: he may disagree with others’ points of view but their conviction and passion appeal to him. On the Independence Day he hears Lukashenko’s speech on the radio (it is quoted with all the traditional clichés and slogans) and observes:

> I was glad that I heard this inspiring speech, I felt deeply how difficult the situation in the country is and through this feeling I pledged allegiance to it. I haven’t heard speeches of Che Guevara, Trotsky or Hitler. I have never thought I could be susceptible to the impact of propaganda. Now I’ve found

> out that I am. When man's words have logic and passion, one cannot but hear them [8].

The list of names Sergey gives may sound a bit sarcastic but there is no denying the fact that the speech of Maxim the policeman stirs something in Sergey's soul.

B. Dubin pointed out the symbolical significance of a 'place', 'territory', 'our past' and 'history' in the process of constructing the post-Soviet collective identity [4].

It is, therefore, for a good reason that the novel contains so many toponyms and that the Lake Narach and other places of Belarus are described with so much topographic precision. Together with his resurrected friends, Sergey visits cemeteries (Belarussian, Lithuanian, Jewish, and Tatar), carries back and forth strange meteorite stones with mysterious hieroglyphs inscribed on them. He feels that he is now involved in accomplishing some mystical mission. Fyodor Telyak, a strange employer of Sergey and his friends, introduces himself as a confectioner, competitor of Ukrainian Petr Otroshenko. In reality Fyodor is a hypnotist and clairvoyant possessing secret knowledge: he is the mastermind behind the 'common cause'.

The 'common cause', in accordance with N. Fyodorov's ideas, means resurrecting the dead, who are supposed to put together a phrase out of fragments of a huge meteorite which crashed on the territory of Belarus. This phrase will allegedly unleash the "world word" written in the "language of silence" [8]. Interestingly, the inscriptions were made in all kinds of ancient languages, belonging to those ethnic groups who used to inhabit these lands long ago: Zhmud, Semigola, Litvins, Jatvingians and so on. Gravestones, intending crosses, church decorations, Ivan Kupala Day – all these things retain the traces of the ancient beliefs and customs. The language of the novel includes not only the Russian speech and the Belarussian *mova* (standard language and slang) but also bits and pieces of ancient languages. The mission gradually becomes clear: the company has to revive the ancient Duchy of Lithuania.

During their first trip to the cemetery, Mishka Groys says: "A change of place for the Slavs is the most atrocious sin, betrayal of the motherland" [8]. The first cemetery they visit has graves of different representatives of the same family – the Telyaks: "this spot of land (...) belonged to one family, one blood, one spirit" [8]. It should be noted that among others, there is a grave of Joseph Vissarionovich Telyak. It is about blood and family line that Fyodor Telyak will be talking on the phone with his mysterious interlocutor from Latvia or Lithuania.

Radonitsa, the day for commemorating the dead, is a state holiday in Belarus. This holiday brings the characters back to their origins. The rites have pagan origin: "...the

tradition to visit graves, bringing food and water, came to Eurasia from Lithuania. Telyak also believed in trees, boulders, fire and water – without exaltation or drama" [8]. The Eternal Grandmother confesses to witch hazel shrubs – she looks like a solitary old woman, personifying the ancient soul of Belarus [8]. In the town of Kamenets, Sergey's attention is attracted by the tower Belaya Vezha. The narrative also includes a legend about the founder of the city the Duke of Volhynia in the thirteenth century and some historical facts: "the city tower was beset by the pagan Jatvingians, crusaders, Tatars, Moskals, Lachys, Swedes (...) This city was once run by the legendary Jogaila, Vitovt and the Radziwiłł family" [8]. While visiting the local museum, Sergey laments his own ignorance: "...I had no idea what was the nationality of all those Mindovgs, Gedemines, and Jaunutises" [8].

At the end of the novel, Sergey, sitting in the cemetery on the bank of the Narach, is thinking about the warriors of Batu Khan who settled in this area:

> When, squeezed between the Horde and the Order, my fellow countrymen moved from Muscovite principalities to Lithuania.... After destroying Prussia, the Teutonic Knights set about conquering Zhemaitija, Aukshtaitija, Black Rus, Polotskian lands. From Palestine, the crusaders turned their sights to pagan Lithuania (...) The thirteenth century proved to be the turning point. The union between the two Russian states was made possible only by the union between Alexander Nevsky and Mindovg. Both thought that the Germans were more dangerous than the nomads. The attempt failed... [8].

Now, with the help of the resurrected dead, through the will of mysterious powers, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania is to be restored and the 'world word' is to be formed from the megalith stones located in the specific points of this land. This is the mission of Sergey and his friends, one of whom, Mishka Groys, is the incarnation of Archangel Michael. The plot of the novel realizes a famous Ecclesiastical maxim about the time to scatter stones and the time to gather them together.

The past meant to be restored in the novel is not the Soviet past, but a much more ancient past. Historians are still discussing the question about the actual role that the Grand Duchy of Lithuania played as the second (along with the Grand Duchy of Vladimir) centre for uniting Russian lands until the pact with Poland was signed in 1569, which put an end to these plans. G. M. Levitsky believes that the question which is "purely historical turns into a political and this impedes reaching understanding and establishing good neighbourly relations between the Belarussians, Lithuanians, Poles, Ukrainians and Russians" [10]. Apparently, for V. Mesyats the fact of peaceful co-existence of

various ethnic groups and religions within the Grand Duchy of Lithuania is of prime importance. As Levitsky puts it, "on the vast expanses of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Lithuanians and Russians, the Tatars and Jews, Poles and migrant Prussians lived together peacefully". [10]

Vadim Mesyats describes his position as 'global *pochvennichestvo'* (return to the soil), which is characterized by friendly, open attitude to other nations rather than by a negative identity based on the rejection of the Other [7]. His utopia is centred around the reconstruction of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, a home land for different ethnic and religious groups – Orthodox, Catholics, and pagans, who live together as children of the one land. One of the recurring motifs in the narrative is the transparency of the borders for local residents. This utopia to a great extent draws from the ideas of V. S. Soloviev, who wrote of Russia as the messianic agent (Mesyats believes that "Russia's mission (...) is oriented towards the whole of the mankind and is supranational" [7]. A. Blok in his introduction to the poem *Retribution* wrote that Poland, the outskirts of the Russian Empire and the periphery of Europe, is destined to play a 'messianic role' [11]. At the end of the novel, Sergey flees to Lithuania, where he is expected by Lola and their future daughter: "What language will she speak? Enochian? Lithuanian? Russian? Of course, Russian. What other language could that be" [8].

In the novel Russians are presented as an imperial nation, but not in the political sense of the word, but from the spiritual point of view – the "empire of spirituality": "...we are not talking of despotism but of the universality of consciousness". Mesyats has launched a meta-project *Russian Gulliver* (editorial as well as artistic), which is aimed at 'russification' of Russian poetry by helping it gets rid of everything that is superficial, sterile and illusive (post-modernist). The essence of the national idea, according to Mesyats, is best expressed through the 'rolling piano passages of Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev and Tchaikovsky'. It should be noted that, according to Berelovich, the Stalinist cultural turn, which created a cult of Pushkin and Tolstoy in literature, Tchaikovsky in music, and Repin in painting, meant reorientation of society from the bright future to the great past [1].

The author's position in this respect is ambivalent: he is aware of the fact that the cult of 'blood and family line' inevitably leads to nationalism, which explains the frequent mentions of Joseph Stalin in the novel and the appearance of the resurrected fascists.

Mikhail Groys – a cynical and impudent 'Westernizer' – is by no means similar to his biblical prototype. In the end, however, he starts shooting at hordes of wild boars, trying to trample and tear to pieces the people who were engaged in the spiritual building of the new paradise on earth. The final episode is filled with grotesque details: Catholics

and Orthodox are fleeing from the wild boars to the pedestal of the grim monument to the Soviet Liberator Soldier, and the Eternal Flame glows bright against the forces of darkness. The boars have come from the Belovezhskaya Pushcha, they serve the interests of the Western treason aimed at dismembering the strong Russian state.

As the reader finds out at the end of the novel, the 'common cause' means that people dressed in white come from all over the world to the Narach, the biggest lake in Belarus, to drink water and to get the last *menhir*.

> They were coming from different parts of the country, travelling along the roads and off roads. They were glowing. Women were wearing white dresses and shawls, men, white suits and panamas, children, white panties and vests. People were heading towards Narach Lake, they approached the lake, knelt down on the ground and drank the water. They were drinking water from cupped hands or simply plunging their faces in the water like beasts (...). Splendid unity [8].

The description of this spiritual impulse resembles the scene of the religious procession from Gorky's story *The Confession*: when people, through the sheer force of their collective will, cured the sick girl. Gorky's God-building might well have inspired the idea of constructing the ideal future through reviving the past in the novel. Unlike *The Confession*, however, where the serious and even elevated intonation prevails, in Mesyats's novel there is a considerable degree of irony as the narrative alludes to the popular old song about the Belovezhskaya Pushcha of the Soviet band 'Pesniary' and the song *Drink the Sea* by the rock band 'Agatha Christie'. The chorus of the latter travesties the words from Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* about the sky sparkling with diamonds and at the same time echoes one of the speech habits of Mishka Groys, who likes to repeat the phrase "Lah-lah-lah, happy baby" for no fathomable reason [8]. The same way as one cannot drink the "sea of blood", it is also impossible to gather all the stones or to restore the "world word". Mesyats himself in his essay *The Piano Concerto No. 2 of Rachmaninoff as a national idea* writes about the "synthetic" thinking: "Synthetic thinking means that there are several kinds of logic instead of one and that one can choose a logic that differs from the opponent's algorithm" [7].

Not only does synthetic thinking reflect the longing for global synthesis in the early twentieth century modernism, but it also seems to be a defining feature of the present-day mass consciousness. As A. Levinson puts it,

> on top of losing the 'father of the peoples', people also lost their confidence in the paternalist protection of the state (...) and they started feeling forlorn and

> abandoned. In such a situation, their attempts to find symbolical protectors in the past and adversaries (at least some certainty!) in the present. The repertoire of the past in this case is formed irrationally and extensively – the more the better. Therefore, the same descendants can make do with both pagan and 'Christian' origins... [12].

In the final episode, while Sergey is sitting in the Tatar cemetery and watching people drinking water from the Narach, a giant grass snake (*žemoit*) or, to be more exact, Basilisk, protector of the Lithuanians, living at the bottom of the lake, crawls to him and puts its head on Sergey's lap. Sergey himself does not take a part in the 'common cause' – he is on his way to Lithuania. "The beginning of life in the North-Western oecumene of Europe was lying on my lap" [8]. Sergey is talking to Basilisk or Vasiliy the Wise Cat. Self-irony becomes obvious in this episode: Sergey has lost his family, his motherland and apparently died himself in the helicopter crush during the battle with the wild boars. In ancient Russian legends about Basilisk, the giant serpent is considered to be able to cause death at a single glance [13]. Therefore, it is not by chance that 'Vasiliy' does not look Sergey in the eye.

The escape to Lithuania, protection of Basilisk, abundance of mystical events and resurrection – all these things show that the world of the novel is riddled with allusions to neo-paganism. Viktor Schnirelman defines neo-paganism as the "national religion artificially created by urban intelligentsia out of the fragments of ancient local beliefs and rites in order to restore the 'national spirituality" [14]. It should be noted here that God-building was a similarly artificial construction created in 1907–1908 as an attempt to adapt the Marxist theory to folk religious beliefs. Neo-paganism acts as a way of self-identification and can be used to develop a new ideology. Neo-paganism is quite popular in Belarus [15].

Boris Falikov points out the connection between neo-paganism and the environmental movement by analysing the dynamics of these phenomena in the twentieth century. He believes that in the 1960s neo-paganism had an anti-statist and anti-technologist character. In the late 1990s, however, environmentalism has "turned from a revolutionary weapon into a relief valve (...) In mass culture it becomes one of the ways of civilized relaxation which allows people to take a break from playing the same tiring social role". [16] Further Falikov emphasizes that neo-paganism "meets nationalism and cosmopolitism, statism and anarchism, totalitarian ideologies and their enemies, elitism and mass culture – the list goes on (...)". According to V. Schnirelman, Russian neo-paganism is dominated by ethno-nationalist and statist sentiments [16].

It is hard to say to what extent the ideas of the narrator in V. Mesyats's novel reflect the author's own position. We can suppose that Mesyats reproduces all the key current discourses although his narrator does not fully support any of them. Sergey is an explorer searching for his own way, his final goal still unclear even to himself.

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