



## Spiritual and Cultural Significance of Religious Prose

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Published Online: 30 January 2023	The article systematizes the key criteria of religious prose as a directional system in modern Russian literature. The emphasis on the consideration of the concept-forming complex of problems "God-being-man" allows us to identify the specifics of the evolution of the spiritual and cultural consciousness of the "crisis" era of the twentieth century. An analysis of the range of issues related to the mystery of human existence correlates with the concepts of the best representatives of world culture, science, and literature.
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### INTRODUCTION

Determining the historical-literary and theoretical-analytical features of the development of the modern literary process is one of the most urgent tasks of modern literary criticism. In the context of identifying the logical patterns of constructing a system of aesthetic and ideological coordinates and the actual categorical apparatus of the poetics of modern literary trends and trends, it seems relevant to study such a striking in its spiritual and cultural significance in modern Russian literature and an ambiguous phenomenon in terms of artistic and directional organization as religious prose – quite complex both in terms of directional definition and theoretical-analytical interpretation. It is within the framework of the works of religious prose that the artistic and moral comprehension of the spiritual and aesthetic "models of God-seeking" is presented in modern Russian literature, actualizing not only in artistic consciousness, but also in modern cultural studies in general, and a new look at the concept-forming complex of problems "God-being-man", the analysis of which will reveal the specifics of the evolution of the spiritual and cultural consciousness of the "crisis" era of the twentieth century.

Starting from the second half of the 20th century, interest in religious issues intensified in society, at the same time, public religious consciousness was also revived, but in a completely new spiritual and ideological quality. The religious renaissance is a unique phenomenon, but not an isolated one. In the history of the development of human society, as a rule, it is preceded by a certain spiritual exhaustion of social consciousness, which inevitably accompanies the transition from one system of social relations to another, from one system to another. The religious revival of the second half-the end of the 20th

century was caused, first of all, by the collapse of old ideals based on an atheistic worldview, when religion was interpreted as an atavism, useless in the age of technical and cosmic progress. However, time proved the fallacy of such a statement, "after all, no society can see its future without developing and strengthening the spiritual potential, spiritual and moral values in the minds of people".

### THE MAIN PART

The spirituality of the people is a concept broad and deep in its content. It has deep, historical roots, expresses the peculiarities of the historical fate of certain peoples, their national character, mentality. Spirituality includes three main principles that determine the concept of spiritual and cultural development of both a person and society as a whole-cognitive, moral, aesthetic.

Religion is one of the components of the spirituality of any society, since it embodies that "moral principle, those enduring values that, over time, receive a constant increase".

Increasingly, today the question of the essence and purpose of man, his place in the cycle of life is heard.

Undoubtedly, the mystery of human existence belongs to the circle of questions over which the best representatives of world culture, science, and literature struggled. As for literature, it always "reflects the world of reality" (Likhachev), vividly reacting to everything that happens around, and of course, the problems of religious and philosophical understanding of life could not but be reflected in it. This is especially true for Russian literature, which was "born and created under the gospel proclaiming" "glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, goodwill to men".

Thus, all great Russian literature is inextricably linked with the traditions of Christian, Orthodox culture, built

around God—the Word, incarnated by His great love for man, redeemed him at the cost of the Calvary sacrifice, died for him on the cross and resurrected. An example of this is the biblical and gospel verses of Pushkin, Fet, Tyutchev, the works of Gogol, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and later Bunin, Pasternak, Akhmatova, Brodsky. Russian literature reflects those spiritual values that are fundamentally deeply Christian: conscientiousness, striving for the heavenly, non-acquisition of earthly goods, disinterested attitude towards one's neighbor, the ability to understand another, empathize with another. It “captures in word and image the religious experience of a Russian person: both light and dark, both saving and dangerous for the soul. The Experience of Faith and the Experience of Unbelief. And if you try to understand the reason for the defeat, the obvious inconsistency of many “creations” of the literature of the Soviet period, then it undoubtedly consists in a departure from the Russian classical tradition, in the destruction of faith itself, replacing it with penny atheism.

Today the situation has changed dramatically, literature has regained freedom, the ability to think and reflect, and not recreate reality in a stereotyped way. Freedom of choice entailed freedom of opinion, different interpretations of fundamental ideas based on subjective experience. A contemporary who tries to understand them simply begins to choke on a multitude of points of view, often contradicting each other. It is impossible to sort out this confusion of views and opinions without solid spiritual foundations, the return to which the new religious fiction proclaimed.

Thus, for the writers of new artistic prose, with a clearly expressed orientation of synthetic artistic and religious God-seeking, F. Svetov, V. Alfeeva, Z. Krakhmalnikova, O. Nikolaeva, G. Petrov, L. Borodin, A. Varlamov and others, characteristic, above all, is the desire to convey personal religious experience, one's own comprehension of God. They not only recite the idea of God, but they themselves are true believers. The main task, to which all their work is subordinated, is the acquisition of Christian axiology, “living moral principles based on specific religious values”.

For writers of this new level, the process of “theological modeling” in the system of their textual artistic worldview of ontological, literary-aesthetic and personal-existential constants of being into a single paradigm of spiritual and cultural ideas, correlated with the concept of “Religious Renaissance” of the twentieth century, becomes an artistic reality, culture and as a consequence of the individual and the world, through the “new religious consciousness”. This determines the attempt of a number of writers to oppose the idea of “dehumanization of art” by J. Ortega y Gasset, who expressed the “chaotic” state of the entire culture of the twentieth century, the idea of humanizing the world through spiritual and cultural revival through the

literature of the “new consciousness”. Thus, the polyfunctionality of the artistic Word of the writers of new religious prose is indicated, designed not only to fulfill the task of personal spiritual acquisition of God and the world, but also to outline the way to overcome the crisis of the “dehumanized” world, and thereby achieve the victory of Harmony over Chaos, which, starting with the Russian symbolists, began of the twentieth century, conceptualized the idea of a global spiritual and cultural revival of the world. In addition, the syncretic biblical model of the creation of the world through the divine word – “In the beginning was the word ...” – performs a text-forming function and allows you to organize a new aesthetic system of artistic world-modeling, significantly expanding the specifics of neo-mythologization of a literary text as one of the evolutionarily significant trends in the development of the literary process of the entire twentieth century and new “frontier” literature of the turn of the century. The conceptual world-forming role in the textual paradigm of the new religious prose is played by the idea of God-seeking, which organizes the religious concepts of faith, repentance, catharsis and rebirth, etc. into a single artistic system of individual author's spiritual and cultural ideas.

As in all literature in general, the basis of the works of writers of this trend “is ultimately based on the worldview, ideological position, and creative concept of the writer” (Korman 1971, – p. 199). However, this concept is revealed in accordance with Christian, Orthodox morality, and only on the basis of it. The main thing for them is the comprehension in the artistic form of the deep meaning of the Holy Scriptures, and it is inexhaustible, but the poetic persuasiveness exceeds the empirical understanding of a carnal person, who must be “born again” and spiritually see clearly for this. “Sacred history obliges that chastity remains chastity even under a free writer's pen, beauty – beauty, righteousness – righteousness, and baseness and vice – baseness and vice. Any attempts to pull out any fragment from the Holy Text and, placing it in a different context, use it for selfish purposes, stopping and adapting it to oneself, will always turn into slander or, as the Gospel says, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which will not be forgiven by a person neither in this age nor in the future (Mor 12:31, 32)”.

So, the problem of interpreting the Gospel in Christian culture can be carried out on the condition of a reverent and careful attitude towards it. This obliges to perceive the Holy Scripture in its entirety, otherwise “the interpreter consciously opposes himself to the Christian world”. Consequently, the main difficulty awaiting the writer who has chosen this path is the ratio of the artistic form, which implies a game, intrigue and the depth of spiritual confession, which requires purity and sincerity. This can be achieved only with a deep sincere faith in God.

Thus, speaking of new religious prose as a literary trend that is gaining strength, one should understand this as a specific expression of religious views, the development in

works of art of themes and ideas related to religious, in particular Orthodox, perception of the world. This is the reason for the peculiarities of such literature.

As you know, Russian literature in general is based on spiritual principles, but traditionally writers sought to reveal moral, psychological or philosophical categories. F. Svetov, O. Nikolaeva, L. Borodin and other representatives of this literary movement use spiritual elements to reveal narrowly religious issues, so all social problems are covered from the point of view of Orthodox morality. In works of this kind, both the theme and the idea are always religious. A religious idea can be presented from different angles, but, of course, it will always serve to reveal a religious theme. The subjective perception of the Divine Truth dictates the diverse reflection of the religious idea. It is Christian ideas that undergo various transformations in the works of modern fiction, expanding their semantic potential and acquiring “cultural connotations” [3, – p. 56]. This is largely achieved through the author’s interpretation of the main Christian concepts reflected in the artistic space of the text: faith, repentance, mercy, love, miracle and others that make up the conceptual paradigm of the religious idea as a whole. In this regard, consider the general theoretical understanding of the nature of the concept.

## CONCLUSION

The conceptualization by the end of the twentieth century of a new system of artistic and religious thinking, which organizes and develops the innovative paradigm of spiritual and cultural ideas in the context of modern Russian religious prose, indicated the need for a literary study of the dynamics and logic of the development of this literary phenomenon, as well as the study of the genesis and patterns of evolution of a new invariant of artistic religious consciousness at the turn of XX – XXI centuries. It is these tasks that determine the choice of topic and determine the relevance of the problem of this study.

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