



## SUBCULTURE'S CREATIVITY AS AN IDENTITY FORMATION MECHANISM

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*Received 19 July 2016; accepted 05 September 2016*

This article is about the present day value transformation of Western European civilization, happening through production of alternative models of identification in different subcultures. Subcultural creativity is reviewed as an important differentiating factor of the previous ideological integrity, turning into some contradicting parts. We made an emphasis on black metal subculture, which actively sets itself in opposition to the dominant culture. The main ideological sources of black metal subculture are *The Satanic Bible* by Anton LaVey and neo-paganism. The analysis reveals that neo-paganism is a more important identification factor of the rebels coming out against the dominant culture, than their commitment to LaVey's ideas, which align quite well with the goals and aims of the late capitalist society. In black metal subculture neo-paganism sometimes combines with extreme right-wing ideologies, transferring anti-Christian nihilism, adolescent misanthropy, and aesthetical radicalism into political aspect.

Keywords: black metal, creativity, identity, neo-paganism, satanism, subculture.

### Introduction

Creative capital of musical subcultures is based not only on music as such, but also includes lifestyle, clothing fashion and, of course, a certain set of ideas. The portion and importance of “ideological” component in the creative capital vary considerably in different genres and subcultures, but this component determines the subcultural identity to a large extent.<sup>1</sup>

Identity is the resulting effect of various social and cultural boundaries which define, on the one hand, the unity of the group and, on the other hand, its significant difference from other groups. The modern era is characterized by fragmentation of

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<sup>1</sup> In this case we understand *creative capital* as the resources that provide impact on people's values and behavior, contributing to some innovative changes. This concept can be interpreted in a different way: for example, in management studies creative capital can be understood as “arsenal of creative thinkers whose ideas can be turned into valuable products and services” (Florida, Goodnight 2005: 124).

the socio-cultural field, with co-existence of plural ideological discourses, when even at first glance marginal subcultures can have a significant influence on the formation of cultural identity.

The problem of formation of subcultures is one of actual problems in modern cultural studies and sociology. Thus, the great interest is caused by the phenomena, expressing opposition to fundamental sociocultural norms and attitudes. These sub-cultural phenomena (especially in their ideological and artistic manifestation) can be designated as “counterculture”. There are various definitions of this term, however we will use it in common meaning of “cultural currents within the dominant life-style, sharply contrasting with it and presenting a challenge to the dominant culture” (Levikova 2004: 145–146). Theodore Roszak, the author of the “counterculture” term, used it in a more specific sense – to identify youth movements of 1960s connected with ideas of hippie, psychedelic and sexual revolution, and so on.

The characteristic feature of any countercultural movement, considered as a separate subculture, is radicalism – aesthetic, ethical, political, etc. This radicalism means search for “absolutely different”, for such experience that would be radically different from the usual order of life, basically opposing the habitual order of life. Counterculture is a special world, it does not fit into an ordered and homogeneous society: Georges Bataille called such worlds “heterogeneous reality”, meaning their basic heterogeneity in relation to ordinary ways dominated by reason, profit, and calculation (1970).

To paraphrase Karl Marx's eleventh thesis on Ludwig Feuerbach, we can say that rock musicians' creativity often was focused not on the explanation of the world (or at least capturing it in the images), but on changing it. Some claim to innovation can be found even where the story is barely about the teenager's right to go to a party (*Beastie Boys* song “(You Gotta) Fight For Your Right (To Party!)”, 1986) or the right to listen loud music and to behave in unusual way (let us remember the well-known ironic video of 1980s “We're Not Gonna Take It” by *Twisted Sister*). However, sometimes rock culture did claim to achieve some more serious purposes: it is enough to recall the musical creativity of the hippie counterculture era in the late 1960s or politically-oriented rock of different historical periods. In other words, the ideas that are refracted in songs, stage shows, disk covers artwork and manners can be considered in the first place as a key creative product of the musical subcultures.

A typical example is a specific subculture that has developed around the youth's ardor of such musical style as black metal, especially in its classic Norwegian version. It is one of the most ideologically affected subcultures in the world of musical underground. Analyzing the creative products of this subculture (and primarily its ideas expressed in art form), we can elicit the formation of value complexes separating individual subcultures from the dominant culture and expressing situation of crisis of the West system of liberal values. These subcultures make new sociocultural boundaries, which infringe the entirety of the unitized society. It is notable that this denial of the Enlightenment values happens through turning to some archaistic models of worldview and social life organization on the basis of religion and myths (or quasi-religious and quasi-mythological mind-sets). The negation of the modern set is a product of the modern era itself, but exactly in this phenomenon we can observe a transformation of

the modern era attitudes, such as the returning to some more particular identity models, taking into doubt all kinds of universality (up to the basic principle of universal human rights), negation of the lead role of economic motives in people's lives, intensification of religion factor's role, etc.

This article is a theoretical draft which can help to outline further specific studies.

### Satanist creative style for those reevaluating all values

The existence of a special black metal subculture (BMS) is quite credible empirical fact: firstly, in the world there is a huge number of bands, performing music of this style and practicing the relevant principles (Russia is not an exception), and secondly, there is a lot of fans of this musical style, it is definitely quite popular. This is evident through the analysis of music magazines and websites dedicated to heavy music, for example, *Dark City*, *Music Journal* (Russian language edition published in Belarus), *Necronomicon*, and others. Of course, this subculture cannot pretend to be a mainstream – on the contrary, it is completely closed and isolated: it does not attract too large number of young people; it includes quite unusual ideas and behavior models; even its own (alternative) industry develops within it (record and music distribution, edition of “fanzines” – amateur magazines and so on). Thus, the BMS adherents usually do not make significant real groups. The interaction between members of the subculture is often performed in the virtual space (communication via the Internet or postal correspondence). However, despite such dissipation, BMS is a developed cultural phenomenon having counter-cultural character and well-established ideological basis. It should be noted that black metal, emerged in the early 1990s in Norway, is one of the most ideological of musical styles, probably comparable with politicized *American Hardcore* of eighties or right radical stream of punk rock, called *Oi!*. This is what causes our interest in this style, generated the subculture. As already mentioned, the history of BMS had its roots in the beginning of the 1990s, when Norwegian young people, many of whom were still teenagers, began to play an aggressive, raw kind of music, full of misanthropy and protest against society<sup>2</sup>. The main enemy for the new iconoclasts was Christianity, considered as a social and cultural foundation of the Western civilization, and so there is nothing strange in the fact that “black metal” (as well as the associated subculture) soon got the stigma of “satanic” style.

The counterculture (in all senses) always seeks to get beyond, and in this aspiration makes the crush-test of the established norms of morality, religion, and law<sup>3</sup>. No wonder that for many non-conformists of the past and present the ideal rebel against

<sup>2</sup> This assertion may seem controversial because the origins of black metal as a musical stream is often found in the creation of heavy metal bands of the 1980s (*Venom*, *Bathory*), in the activities of the French underground association *Les Légions Noires* (early 1990s), etc. Also we can find the usage of the occult lyrics and satanic image in even earlier period (American band *Coven*, the British band *Black Sabbath*, etc.). However we are viewing the modern period of black metal as an extreme music current, and it is connected mainly with the development of the Norwegian black metal scene.

<sup>3</sup> Interesting ideas about the transgressive nature of the extreme metal scene are contained in the book *Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge* by Keith Kahn-Harris, in particular see chapter 2 (Kahn Harris 2007: 27–50).

anything and everything is embodied in the image of Satan, whose name in translation from Hebrew, actually, means “the opponent (in court, in dispute, in war); the person that is contradicting”. Consideration of the reasons of the Satan’s prominent role in the European culture could distract us from the subject, so we would rather just note his presence in amount of different types of texts and numerous art works.

Satan, perceived as the first rebel in the world, becomes a positive character and gets the same features as Prometheus, who fought against gods. At the same time his character is still ambivalent for his domain is to do evil. But if the Lord of the Evil still has something good, should not we raise a question about the traditional understanding of the Good? Is it possible that the Good is actually something bad and we should forget the Good and choose the Evil? In trying to answer those and similar questions most of the modern subcultures (countercultures, including BMS) took their shape. But it should not be regarded as if the enumerated subcultures, shaped around certain values and types of activity, are looking for a suitable ideological base only afterwards. More likely, those values (practical, aesthetic, and others) grow up in chaos of many ideological influences, and finally the chaos comes to order and forms into some kind of a subcultural Credo, or the basic ideological text. However the tendency to “demonize” black metal is reflected in the book *Lords of Chaos: The Bloody Rise of the Satanic Metal Underground* by Michael Moynihan and Didrik Söderlind (Moynihan, Söderlind 1998) estimated by many representatives of BMS as a falsification undertaken by journalists, eager for sensations.

Anti-Christian and pagan motifs, as well as grotesque misanthropy inherent in this subculture, are the way for the youth to fix their break with the values of European Christian culture, with the ideas of social tolerance, and to identify the boundary between “their own” and “foreign”. Sometimes it is difficult to separate the elements of the scandalous stage image and shocking shows from the true views of the performers of this musical style, but many of them quite clearly proclaim themselves as ideological fighters against the values of the modern liberal civilization. “Satanic” focus of BMS, on the one hand, is a generally recognized fact, and on the other hand, is constantly taken under doubt. The essence of the disagreement is that the original Norwegian black metal was a “satanic” style only in the sense of completely denying Christianity and its values. However, many of the Norwegian musicians ignored the “satanism” à la LaVey, author of the notorious *Satanic Bible*, first published in 1967 (LaVey 1976). For example, one of the leading figures of the Norwegian black metal scene, Varg Vikernes (now living in France) writes:

“I never read ‘The Satanic Bible’ or any other books of LaVey. I and all the others on the Norwegian Black Metal scene in 1991 and 1992 despised Crowley and LaVey and all that they stood for! We do not even need to read their books to understand that this is a waste of time [...]. I am offended by the fact that musical critics mention such an American clown as Lavey [...] as one of those people who affected something I ever did or spoke!” (2004).

However, Satanism of LaVey became popular as a part of BMS, while it gained popularity being distributed on the territory of the Scandinavian and continental Europe countries (Sweden, Germany, France, Greece, Ukraine, and others). In this

case the quote of the Greek black metal band *Varathron* participant is quite telling: “‘The Satanic Bible’ influenced me the most. This book has formed my view on life, me as a person and a songwriter” (Varathron 2002: 62). Among the members of Norwegian black metal bands we can find people (like Ihsahn from *Emperor*) who were also influenced by *The Satanic Bible* (Moynihan, Söderlind 1998: 198). So what is this provocative doctrine of LaVey, the founder of the Church of Satan?

Satanism of LaVey is a typical creation of the modernity era. His *The Satanic Bible* is based on the most primitive version of humanist ideas. Mentioning “humanism” we mean that specific ideology, taking origins from the Renaissance, which put a Human on the top, with his earthly wishes and secular interests.<sup>4</sup> We can say that this form of satanism is a typical result of the process which Max Weber called *die Entzauberung der Welt* (“disenchantment of the world”). It is extremely clear from the well-known nine satanic commandments and the aphorisms from “The Book of Satan” (part of *The Satanic Bible*). Here we can see a tendency to draw the line between traditional values of Christianity and modern age values considering human earthly existence only:

“As I stand before the festering and varnished facades of your haughtiest moral dogmas, I write thereon in letters of blazing scorn: Lo and behold; all this is fraud! [...] There is nothing inherently sacred about moral codes. Like the wooden idols of long ago, they are the work of human hands, and what man has made, man can destroy!” (LaVey 1967).

Exactly in this glorification of Human with his natural passions LaVey sees the meaning of his teaching:

“There is nothing wrong with dogma, providing it is not based on ideas and actions which go completely against human nature. [...] Satanism is the only religion known to man that accepts man as he is, and promotes the rationale of turning a bad thing into a good thing rather than bending over backwards to eliminate the bad thing” (1967).

In fact, LaVey just says the following: all that Christianity calls the Evil takes origins from the human nature and therefore should be regarded as the Good. What is the point in being hypocrite, using Christian words as a cover, while all the people (no matter, cardinals or businessmen) act in a completely different way? In fact, they are all Satanists; they just need to admit it to themselves. It can be even asserted that satanism of LaVey can be called a religion in a very relative way, for, as many researchers noted, the doctrine does not imply faith in transcendental, orienting humans to worship themselves, and the character of Satan is just a symbol (see about it Harvey 2009: 29). Some researches, using the term of Paul Heelas, consider LaVey’s satanism as one of the so called “self-religions”.

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<sup>4</sup> Outstanding French traditionalist René Guénon wrote about the main idea of the modern European “humanism”: “[...] owing to its desire to reduce everything to the measure of man as an end in himself, modern civilization has sunk stage by stage until it has reached the level of the lowest elements in man and aims at little more than satisfying the needs inherent in the material side of his nature, an aim that is in any case quite illusory since it constantly creates more artificial needs than it can satisfy” (Guénon 2001: 17).

Lithuanian scholar Milda Ališauskienė draws attention to the typology of satanism, proposed by Italian researcher Massimo Introvigne; she writes:

“according to the doctrines of the satanic groups Introvigne offers to categorize these groups as propagating either rational or occult Satanism. Rational Satanism refers to Anton Szandor LaVey and the doctrine of his Church of Satan, where Satan is believed to be a metaphor, not a real being. On the contrary, the occult satanic groups believe that Satan is a real being that might be invited into their rituals and asked for endowments and services” (Alisauskiene 2009: 121).

Occult Satanism (or devil worship) exists in BMS too, but its ritual elements are mainly considered by musicians only as a rich source for their shocking shows. However, exactly those ritual shocking elements may provoke young fans into asocial or even criminal activities seen by them as a way to “hail Satan” (although their knowledge in Satanism may in fact be really slight). Such activities are: cemetery vandalism, abuse of corpses, and even killing animals and people (for example, the murder of 4 teenagers by the group of other teenagers considering themselves as Satanists that happened in the Yaroslavl Region (Russia) in 2008).

In *The Satanic Bible* we find a real apology of hedonism, but this hedonism is prudent, it has a limit. On the one hand, LaVey writes: “Satanism encourages its followers to indulge in their natural desires” (LaVey 1967), but on the other hand he talks about new taboos and bounds, defining “The Eleven Satanic Rules of the Earth” which include, for example, such maxims as “Do not make sexual advances unless you are given the mating signal”, “Do not harm little children”, “Do not kill non-human animals unless you are attacked or for your food” and etc. (LaVey 1967).

For LaVey, Satan is a universal image of the free spirit, something people should strive to identify with. Vince Crowley, the band *Acheron* musician, who has no relation to the BMS, but is a long-time member of the Church of Satan, tells on his understanding of LaVey's satanism: “Satanism is a worship of the self [...]. Satanists use some images from their mythology [from Christians' mythology. – A. S.] as prototypes, but that is all” (Acheron 2004: 67). Of course, this aspect of the satanic doctrine attracted many members of the BMS, however mundane materialism of LaVeyan “religion of the flesh” also repelled many of them. It is interesting that LaVeyan doctrine was so on absorbed by the mass, mainstream culture. However, the trend of commercialization of satanism was originally founded by LaVey himself, who was view in the establishment of the Church of Satan as a some kind of a pop project with significant financial capacity.

One could even say that demonstrative LaVey non-conformity was not true, because his Satanism was generally quite consistent with the core values of the consumer society. That evident consumerism and ineradicable farcical flavor of LaVey a doctrine led to rejection of his ideas by the most consistent and uncompromising of the BMS members.

In the peculiar article titled “Above Satanism (First Steps to Hypersatanism)”, its author writing under pseudonym of Para Bellum, notes:

“LaVeyan Satanism's denial of paths lying through any(physical and moral) hard ship sin favor of primitive satisfaction of carnal desires, negation of the surrounding

material world's otherness (and even active communication with it via monetary relations created by the same material world) – it all makes us wonder whether the term 'non-conformism' is really applicable to the Church of Satan" (Para Bellum 2002: 7).

In our opinion, it is possible to say that LaVey's Satanism became, as a result, a convenient quasi-rebellious cover for a mass product under the black-metal brand which gradually turned into a market brand, an element of "culture for young". Vikernes very precisely captured the essence of these changes:

"The new bands made Black Metal become *a part* of the modern world, rather than revolt against it, like they should have done. [...] I don't appreciate what it has turned into; just another unimaginative 'sex, drugs, and rock'n'roll' subculture in and a part of the modern world. It has become part of the 'bread and circus' of the oppressors" (2004).

Despite those transformations, BMS in its countercultural capacity was preserved and continues to function, due to the fact that a number of BMS representatives see their spiritual foundation in neo-paganism (in its different variations). Of course, the phenomenon of neo-paganism has also been generated by the contemporary culture, but it is falling out of the context of its basic values, being located on the periphery and from there influencing the central zones of the cultural system.

### Neo-paganism as a subcultural ideology and its creative expression

The ideology of the Norwegian black metal is harbored by refusal of utilitarian spirit of the consumer society and interest in pre-Christian roots of the European civilization. So, the neo-paganism treated the very essence of Christianity as being harmful for not only condemning sexual activity and denying flesh (as according to LaVey).

Christianity averted the pagan people from their primordial ancestral belief connecting the person with natural forces of the universe, but now claims to be called the "spiritual source" of European culture.

Modern society is regarded by BMS as a direct product of Christian values; the secularization of modern society does not negate the relationship with Christianity, which still continues to maintain its ideological domination. Hence there is the requirement to resist its influence and strive to reconstruction and comprehensive development of the lost pagan heritage. We can assume that such appeal to the pagan beliefs and practices compensates some incompleteness and deficiency of life experienced by individuals in the era of late capitalism. Pagan images bring back keenness of perception of the world, and their archetypal nature possibly allows people to "rebuild" themselves.

It should be noted that modern neo-paganism is a complex social and cultural phenomenon having many aspects, and in this article we do not intend to make its complete analysis. We are interested in the basic set of neo-pagan ideology, which, first of all, implies some value transformation. About it wrote one of the leaders of the French *Nouvelle Droite*, Alain de Benoist, in his famous book *On Being a Pagan*:

"It is not about accumulating knowledge about the beliefs of different areas of the pre-Christian Europe [...] it is how to find in those beliefs some reflection or transfer

of a certain number of values that belong to us and are directly related to us as heirs of our culture” (Benoist 2004: 22).

Then Benoist explains that the point of neo-paganism is not in construction of Apollo altars or revival of the Odin cult, but in the return of the fundamentally different value system and spirituality other than the Judeo-Christian monotheism spirituality.

Benoist's book is based on identifying the essential differences between pagan polytheism and monotheism of the Abrahamic religions. In Benoist's opinion, those differences are caused by different understanding of the relationship between God and man, the Sacred and natural: paganism elevates this world as sacred, while the Judeo-Christian monotheism with its idea of the sanctity strives to escape from this world. This fundamental ideological difference determines all other aspects: the understanding of people's purposes in the world, their attitude to nature, their role in society, the meaning of politics, etc.

The ideas of the *Nouvelle Droite* let us detect that basic understanding of paganism, which is mainly used in less sophisticated reasoning of black metal pagans. However, the distinctive feature of the neo-pagan paradigm is not the desire to recreate the lost world of heroic ancestors, known from “Edda” and skaldic drapes, but rather the orientation to those value structures that existed in the traditional society. At the same time neo-pagans are not going to give up knowledge and technological achievements of modernity, however contradictory it may sound.

Tamir Bar-On, commenting on *Manifesto for a European Renaissance* by Benoist and Charles Champetier, notes:

“De Benoist and Champetier similarly seek the return of a European myth of ‘common origins’ in this period between the modern and post-modern. They desire the restoration of a hierarchical, elitist, pagan, aristocratic, and roots-based Indo-European civilization, buried by the avalanche of the Judeo-Christian tradition and the loss of meaning associated with modernity. The anomie and nihilism of the modern world will be ‘exorcised’ by a return to pagan, ‘premodern’ values without a complete return to the Europe before the emergence of modernity” (Bar-On 2012: 345).

Vikernes in a similar way writes that paganism should be considered as an ideology rather than as a religion:

“We need a modern scientific worldview resting on a foundation made up of the Pagan values and ideals; loyalty, wisdom, courage, love, discipline, honesty, intelligence, beauty, responsibility, health and strength. It might be romantic, beautiful, charming and even fascinating to practise Paganism like our forefathers did, but it is utterly reactionary and meaningless” (Vikernes 2006).

This interest in paganism is typical not only for BMS, but also for many other modern youth subcultures. However, it is BMS that made up a very nihilistic program, announcing Christianity to be its immediate enemy. This ideological rigidity and aggressiveness characterize BMS as a counterculture. Therefore the evolution of BMS to right-wing radical ideology seems quite natural. For example, in addition to recording music albums for his “Burzum”, publishes books on the Norse mythology, in which the archaic ways the North German peoples are presented as true benchmarks for modern Europeans.

In this regard, we should pay attention to such an important element of this particular subcultural discourse as a concept of the North. The North is not only a geographical or cultural concept, it is rather a multivalent creative image transmitting some mythological and religious message. Here we may notice some similarity in the views of the “Nordic pagans” of nowadays and integral traditionalism representatives, in particular, Julius Evola. For Evola the North is a concept referring to the sphere of traditional sacredness and expressing the idea of the Fixed Pole, the Sacred Tradition Axis, the idea of preserving traditional values and world attitudes. (References to the books of Evola can well be found in the texts of Vikernes.) It is also essential that the idea of “The Sacred North” represents a fundamental political myth that goes back to the ariosophic doctrines of the XIX–XX centuries (see Sysoeva 2011). This ideologeme reflects an echo image of Ultima Thule, the legendary island in the North of Europe, of which even ancient authors wrote about, and which has become one of the most important symbols of the German mystic ariosophy (particularly, in the works of Herman Wirth). Vikernes says:

“To me it is obvious that all the Europeans had a common culture and religion in the past, and I hope that more and more of you begin to share this view with me. This will be important after the soon-to-come (i.e. in the coming years) collapse of the Judeo-Christian civilization, when we (or rather those of us who survive) are to rebuild Europe and reconstruct our common Pagan heritage, for use as our new European culture, world view and religion. We must make sure that we unite as a race, in a European tribal confederacy, and for all future stop all slaughter of racial brethren” (2012).

It has already been mentioned about the commitment of some black metal scene figures to the far-right ideology, which is a quite logical consequence of the general spirit of their opposition to the modern liberal values, anti-Christian attitude, and interest in pagan traditions. Eventually, now we even have a special term “National Socialist black metal” (NSBM), referring to a peculiar variation of black metal musical style, with lyrics, ideology, and image focused on the neo-Nazi ideas. It should be noted that the amount of this trend’s representatives in the total number of black metal bands is relatively small. But in different countries there are a few pro-National Socialist bands, regarding each other as comrades in the common task of confrontation to modern civilization. There are some authoritative NSBM-bands in Poland (*Graveland* and related projects), Greece (*Der Stürmer*, which CD-covers and booklets are full of swastikas and images of Adolf Hitler), Germany (*Absurd*), Russia (*Temnozor*, *M8L8TH*, *BlazeBirth Hall* association bands, etc.), Ukraine (*Nokturnal Mortum*, *Dub Buk*) and in many other countries of Europe and America<sup>5</sup>. According to Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke:

“black metal music with its transgressive attacks on Christianity, tolerance and democracy is proving an attractive front for fascist and Nazi propaganda among the young. Cacophonous crescendos and pagan lyrics serve to make white power and

<sup>5</sup> But, according to Benjamin Hedge Olson’s notion, “Eastern Europe has one of the most vibrant, fanatic and racist black metal scenes in the world. [...] Russia and Ukraine have seen an explosion of fascist, racist and ultra-nationalist activity since the fall of the Soviet Union, with metal, and more recently black metal, playing an important role in the now thriving far-right movement” (2011: 145).

blood mythos seem chic. But the bands and concerts are only the public face of this nihilistic assault on civilized values. Still more secret initiations are on offer to an alienated youth. Behind the violent bands and their frenzied fans lurks an international network of small extremist groups devoted to Nazi satanism, Nordic cosmology, magic and occultism" (2002: 213).

It would be totally wrong to equate BMS as a whole with one of its elements – NSBM, but there is a tendency for some black metal figures to go beyond the purely creative activity – into spheres of ideology and politics. Denial of show business and modern pop culture by means of that same culture is a very remarkable point. We shall give two examples.

Thus, the participants of the Greek band *Der Stürmer*, which is very famous in NSBM-underground, mentioned in one interview that they are active participants of the far-right political party Golden Dawn. Also these musicians made known their connection to *The Pagan Front*, the international community of musicians, label owners, and other activists of NS movement. When asked about their attitude towards Christianity, a member of the group said:

"I totally oppose everything sprang from the Jewish roots, even though it's something converted to the *NS-Weltanschauung* like positive Christianity. Why should one adhere to the Jewish corpse of Christianity and not turn directly to the Aryan creed of our ancestors? We must get over with Christianity, even though this will be painful to most Europeans. There's no place for Judeo-Christian dogmas to our Europe!" (Der Stürmer 2010).

On the Russian NSBM-scene there is a widely known band from the city of Tver called *M8L8TH* (this stands for "Hammer of Hitler"). In one of their interviews from 2013 the members of the band confessed their affinity for the Third Reich, chanted the praises of "the knighthood of SS", and stated their participation in the "ideological brotherhood" of *Wotan Jugend* (GrindDawn 2013). Mentioned organization, according to some media reports, is currently maintaining relations with radical Ukrainian nationalists, and it testifies the fact of internationalization of subculture professing the idea of "brotherhood of white peoples".

So, the criticism of modernity within BMS sometimes leads to the fact that the critics find themselves in captivity of obsolete and discredited historical forms. For example, the surge of nationalist ideology in the modern Ukraine, in our opinion, correlates with the prevalence of neo-Nazi ideas in the respective subcultures in that country. The lyrics of the most popular Ukrainian NSBM bands are really suitable for the atmosphere of torchlight processions of Euromaidan's radical supporters; but those songs were recorded and released a decade or more ago. Anti-Christianity and anti-Semitism, pagan symbols, references to the "Aryan-Slavic blood" and appeals to clear their land from the racially alien elements – all those are features of the lyrics of bands like *Nokturnal Mortum*,<sup>6</sup> *Dub Buk* and others:

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<sup>6</sup> *Nokturnal Mortum* is one of the most famous Ukrainian metal bands, at present touring actively home and abroad. Thus, in 2015 they performed at festivals *Ragnard Rock* (France), *Zobens un Lemess Open Air* (Latvia), *Hell Fast Attack* (Czech Republic) and others. Their lyrics evolved from the satanic and anti-Christian themes to neo-paganism and far-right ideas.

“The flame will clearly illuminate to us the essence of lying Christian dogs.

Nobody will ever put a collar on the Slavs!

Ognebog (Firegod), burn!”

(From the *Dub Buk* song “Smoke Is His Banner, Fire Is His Steed”, original lyrics in Russian)

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“Open up your eyes, Sacred Country,

Powerful Nation, Fatherland of Ours!

Jew, get out of Russia and Ukraine!

If you don’t go, we will chase you out!”

(From the *Dub Buk* song “Glory to Ukraine!”, original lyrics in Ukrainian)

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“Pure heart, full of Arian blood,

Let it start beating, and the hero ancestors will rise.

[...]

Rise up the sword, a path to the Sun

It’s either death, or victory.

These two paths are in front of us,

The White Race is the most important matter.

Glory to the Heroes!”

(From the *Nokturnal Mortum* song “Glory to the Heroes!”, original lyrics in Ukrainian)

Of course, being Neo-pagan does not make necessary someone a neo-Nazi. However, it is evident that while denying the modern liberal civilization, radicals from BMS find their forerunners not only among the New Rights and the traditionalists, but also among the ideologists of National Socialism, because this ideology historically has been one of the most radical attempts to reject the legacy of the Enlightenment.

## Conclusions

It is obvious that some images given by the Norse mythology (for example, the image of the Sacred North) are a powerful identification mechanism, which defines the new identification contours in the minds of today’s youth, setting off the world of tradition against the modern world. One cannot fail to note the important role of the media in the functioning of this subculture. Of course, only few people are beginning to realize the value gap in practice, but existence of neo-pagan communities, as well as religious communities following archaic beliefs of the Nordic peoples, shows the seriousness of the impact of such an ideology on the postmodern man.

We also note that the process of reformatting of social and cultural borders transcends national cultures. The followers of these ideas can be found in Norway, Russia, Germany, Ukraine, and so on. Thus, BMS generates some new value space, in which the most important factor of identification is relation to the archaic heritage of Europe, not ethnicity or social class.

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## SUBKULTŪROS KŪRYBIŠKUMAS KAIP TAPATUMO FORMAVIMOSI MECHANIZMAS

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Santrauka

Šis straipsnis skirtas nūdienei Vakarų Europos civilizacijos vertybių transformacijai, vykstančiai randantis skirtingų subkultūrų alternatyviesiems identifikacijos modeliams. Subkultūrinis kūrybiškumas suprantamas kaip svarbus ankstesniojo ideologinio integralumo diferenciacijos veiksnys, lemiantis tam tikrus prieštaravimus. Mes akcentuojame juodojo metalo subkultūrą, ypač pabrėžiančią jos sudaromą opoziciją dominuojančiai kultūrai. Pagrindiniai ideologiniai juodojo metalo subkultūros šaltiniai – tai Antono LaVey’aus *Šėtono biblija* ir neopagonybė. Analize atskleidžiama, kad neopagonybė yra daug svarbesnis maištininkų identifikavimosi, nusikreipiant prieš dominuojančią kultūrą, veiksnys nei LaVey’aus idėjų, gana gerai pritampanti prie vėlyvosios kapitalistinės visuomenės tikslų ir siekinių, propagavimas. Juodojo metalo subkultūroje neopagonybė tam tikrais atvejais sudaro dermę su kraštutinėmis dešiniojos pakraipos ideologijomis, peržengiančiomis antikrikščioniškąjį nihilizmą, paauklišką mizantropiją ir estetinį radikalizmą, bei įgauna politinį aspektą.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: juodasis metalas, kūrybiškumas, tapatumas, neopagonybė, satanizmas, subkultūra.