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### Criticism of Mass Culture by K.I. Chukovsky as an Anthropological Problem

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#### Abstract

**Introduction.** In connection with the current agenda of the widespread imposition by the West of anti-values and anti-culture, children are in a special risk zone. For many years, and today with particular force, the latent formation of children's deviant spirituality has been carried out through publishing. In order to identify this trend, the task is to refer to the experience of the leader of Russian literature studies K.I. Chukovsky. This reference showed quite specifically that the origins of growing destructiveness, negatively affecting the spiritual and moral education and development of children and youth, are located at the beginning of the 20th century. Over time, they only intensified.

**Materials and Methods.** Axiological and systemic approaches, historical method, methods of moral theology and formal logic are applied. The main material base was the work of K.I. Chukovsky "Nat Pinkerton and modern literature" (1908), the works of domestic and foreign philosophers as well as modern studies of literature studies. Particular attention was paid to the study of the research done by the famous Russian teacher V.I. Soroka-Rosinsky.

**Results.** It has been revealed that the man's rejection of their spiritual principles (the process of secularization) leads to the degradation of the man themselves, to the well-known "everything is allowed" (F.M. Dostoevsky). K.I. Chukovsky was able to see the signs of this all-permissive threat ("signs of illness, but not illness"), in particular, in the issue of upbringing and development of children. He tried to demonstrate it on the example of the figure of the detective "Nat Pinkerton", popular among children and young people at that time.

**Discussion and Conclusion.** K.I. Chukovsky was one of the first to see the prerequisites for the formation of children's deviant spirituality at the beginning of the last century as a consequence of a systemic anthropological crisis. His hypotheses are confirmed by further studies, in particular, done by V.I. Soroka-Rosinsky and other scientists.

**Keywords:** mass culture, hottentot, K.I. Chukovsky, natpinkerton, personality crisis, secularization process, ethical indifferentism, spirituality inside out, revolt of masses

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Оригинальное теоретическое исследование

### Критика массовой культуры К.И. Чуковским как антропологическая проблема

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#### Аннотация

**Введение.** В связи с текущей повесткой повсеместного навязывания Западом антиценностей и антикультуры в особой зоне риска находятся дети. Уже многие годы, а сегодня с особой силой, осуществляется латентное формирование детской девиантной духовности посредством издательской деятельности. С целью выявления этой тенденции ставится задача обратиться к опыту лидера отечественного литературоведения К.И. Чуковскому. Дан-

ное обращение показало вполне конкретно, что истоки нарастающей деструктивизации, негативно влияющей на духовно-нравственное воспитание и развитие детей и молодежи, находятся именно там, в начале XX в. А со временем они лишь усиливались.

**Материалы и методы.** Применяются аксиологический и системный подходы; исторический метод, методы нравственного богословия и формальной логики. Основной материальной базой послужила работа К.И. Чуковского «Нат Пинкертон и современная литература» (1908), труды отечественных и зарубежных философов, а также современные исследования по литературоведению. Особое внимание было уделено изучению проведенного исследования известным российским педагогом В.И. Сорокой-Росинским.

**Результаты исследования.** Выявлено, что отказ человека от своих духовных начал (процесс секуляризации) приводит к деградации самого человека, к известному «все позволено» (Ф.М. Достоевский). К.И. Чуковский смог увидеть признаки этой всепозволяющей надвигающейся угрозы («признаки болезни, но не болезнь»), в частности, в вопросе воспитания и развития детей. Это он и попытался продемонстрировать на примере популярной в то время среди детей и молодежи фигуры сыщика «Ната Пинкертона».

**Обсуждение и заключение.** К.И. Чуковскому одному из первых удалось увидеть предпосылки формирования детской девиантной духовности в начале прошлого века как следствие системного антропологического кризиса. Его гипотезы подтверждаются дальнейшими исследованиями, в частности, проведенными В.И. Сорокой-Росинским и другими учеными.

**Ключевые слова:** массовая культура, готтентот, К.И. Чуковский, натпинкертоновщина, кризис личности, процесс секуляризации, этический индифферентизм, духовность наизнанку, восстание масс

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**Introduction.** Not many people know that at the origins of criticism of mass culture in general and comics, in particular, there is a domestic writer and literary critic K.I. Chukovsky. He devoted a number of works to this issue and wrote several articles on the psychological-pedagogical and moral-ethical analysis of the content of mass literature. K.I. Chukovsky's contribution to the piggy bank of domestic research makes it possible to rethink the historical experience of publishing, to look at its underside from a new point of view. The philosophical approach to the writer's work allows us to identify some hidden destructive mechanisms in the children's publishing industry that negatively affect the spiritual and moral education and development of children and youth, replace concepts, attitudes and values traditional for Christian culture, neutralize norms (for example, of institution of the family), form a man of "mass" type.

The purpose of the work is to highlight some of the historical aspects of the formation of children's deviant spirituality through publishing, to identify this problem as an anthropological one, to which methods of waging mental war against children are applied in order to deform the personality.

**Materials and Methods.** Axiological and systemic approaches are applied in the study; historical method, methods of moral theology and formal logic are used. These methods allow us to objectively approach the study of the hypothesis that the origins of the modern problem of the formation of children's deviant spirituality should be sought at the beginning of the 20th century. It also allows us to see spiritual and moral in sociocultural reality and draw appropriate conclusions. The main material basis for writing the article was the work of K.I. Chukovsky: "Nat Pinkerton and Modern Literature" (1908), the works of domestic and foreign philosophers as well as modern studies of literature studies.

**Results.** The article written by K.I. Chukovsky in 1908, "Nat Pinkerton and Modern Literature", anticipated the emergence of the problem of massification of the man and society, that very problem that the most prominent representatives of scientific socio-philosophical, cultural and anthropological thought will talk about throughout the 20th century: O. Spengler "The Decline of Europe" (1918–1922); José Ortega y Gasset "The Revolt of the Masses" (1930); Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno "Dialectic of Enlightenment" (1947); Herbert Marcuse, "One-Dimensional Man" (1964); Jean Baudrillard "Society of Consumption" (1970); E. Fromm "Healthy Society" (1955), "To Have or To Be?" (1976), etc.

This work of K.I. Chukovsky is a lens that refracts cardinal spiritual and moral changes in all spheres of human existence: literature, art, philosophy, religion, everyday life. It was focused on the search for the upstream cause of all kinds of transformations of that time which made it possible for the writer to try on the cloak of a philosopher and fix the catastrophic position of the man in space, i.e. to see the anthropological dimension of problematic events. Due to this lens, it also becomes possible to trace the logic of the subsequent criticism by the writer of the comic book industry as the leading direction of mass literature. In fact, years later, the writer will criticize not the comic book genre itself, but a certain type of comic book that negatively affects the individual which is based on the mercantile interests of corporations, trusts and the state. The subject of research of K.I. Chukovsky in this work is cinema and detective genre (detective stories).

The writer calls cinema a special type of literature and theatrics. Analyzing several cinematic films ("Mother-in-Laws' Races", "Love in a Bakery", "Adventures with a Player's Top Hat") and the detective genre represented by the newly minted American detective Nat Pinkerton, the scientist was able to see a systemic problem in the upcoming trend of the

human spirit impoverishment. K.I. Chukovsky saw the spiritual wildness of a man, the primitivization of spiritual life, moral degradation. He saw what in the end can be called a cardiogram of the era.

Confirmation of this idea is the words of the author himself: “I took «Cinema» and «Pinkerton» only as symptoms, as evidence that the kingdom of the Hottentots has come” [1, p. 61]. Even if K.I. Chukovsky took a modern theater or any other sociocultural direction instead of cinema, then by his own admission “everything would say about the same thing” [1, p. 61]. Thus, the researcher writes about the general spiritual and moral decline and moral decay of a person.

Thus, the man primitivizing in all directions at the beginning of the 20th century will be called by K.I. Chukovsky a caveman and will receive the nickname “Hottentot”. The writer borrowed the meaning of this concept from A. Herzen; the latter called “underdevelopment of the masses” Hottentot. K.I. Chukovsky will indicate the external signs of a hottentot man. They seemed unimaginable at that time. But in our present, these signs fully reflect the spiritual trauma and impoverishment that K.I. Chukovsky managed to discern a hundred years before our time. By the way, K.I. Chukovsky is close to F.M. Dostoevsky, he can also be called in a sense a prophet: “You look at the screen and are amazed: *why aren't these people sitting next to you tattooed? Why don't they have scalps behind their belts and rings in their noses?* They sit decorously, like ordinary people, and *there is not a single multi-colored feather in their hair!* Where did so many cavemen suddenly come from at the corner of Kolomenskaya and Razezzhey?... Surprisingly, “the pace of public life has accelerated”, and maybe four years later... *we will successfully engage in cannibalism, and, if not for ourselves, then we will pass iron rings through the noses of our children*” [1, p. 27].

Thus, the prophecy of K.I. Chukovsky came true. Many in modern society are tattooed, painted in different colors and, of course, walk with iron rings in their noses. The theme of cannibalism (anthropophagy), which they are constantly trying to promote using a technology called the “Overton Window”, that is the technology of introducing into the human consciousness what seems to be completely impossible to introduce, since it is something abnormal, this topic can no longer surprise anyone. Just as one cannot surprise with the anti-human anti-values promoted by the West, aimed at destroying the personality, the institution of the family and everything normal. All these signs of cavemen are the evidence of spiritual impoverishment and moral degradation of the same consumer society, which K.I. Chukovsky spoke about a century ago.

The arrival of the personality of the “hooligan Nat Pinkerton” to replace the “bourgeois Sherlock Holmes” is not accidental, as the critic will say, and “all our cultural values suffered the same fate”. K.I. Chukovsky calls the change of detectives to be evolution, and even more, “a symbol of our common evolution”, although it is completely clear that he means degradation. Any artistic, moral, philosophical idea that appeared at that time in that society, in the blink of an eye, sought to “be vulgarized, dehumanized, become impossibly dirty, fall in price like a prostitute” [1, p. 51]. Everything was overthrown.

Any representative of culture and any of their work could quickly turn “into something babbling, street-boorish, almost four-legged” [1, p. 51]. It's all the fault of the cathedral creativity of the millionth hottentot which erases and vulgarizes everything in its path: “Don't you see that floodgates have opened, dams have burst. These millions of hottentots poured from all sides, from above, from below on the whole culture, the religion, the intelligentsia, the people, the cities, the villages, on books, magazines, youth, family, art and they will pour until they flood, until they cover everything with themselves, and there is not such an ark to get on and swim through the waves. We are all drowned, all up to one” [1, p. 36].

The process described by K.I. Chukovsky will be considered in detail much later by José Ortega y Gasset in his book “The Revolt of the Masses”. But the appearance of “this solid hottentot”, according to the writer, “was foreseen in the Russian literature a long time ago and its approaching was looked at with horror” [1, p. 36].

The tragedy of spiritual impoverishment and the “insane speed” with which everything was vulgarized led our thinker to the following rather serious thesis, as if drawing a spiritual abyss into which humanity fell at the beginning of the 20th century: “I think: come now again to the earth, Jesus, – you would look at what our newspapers would do in two or three days from the Sermon on the Mount. In two or three days! To vulgarize the Gospel, humanity needed nineteen centuries, but now it is done in two or three days” [1, p. 51].

It is not surprising that the year of publication of a large article by K.I. Chukovsky “Nat Pinkerton and modern literature” coincides with the publication of the work of V.P. Svetsitsky “Antichrist” (1908). The story of V.P. Svetsitsky in its content, as it were, embodies the thoughts of K.I. Chukovsky in the text. Although, of course, we are talking primarily about an amazing synchronous and intuitive vision of fluctuations of the spiritually dead era, which doomed to terrible trials.

K.I. Chukovsky considered that the maximum avoiding of the man their essence, or rather, the man's loss of their essence and rolling into an animal state, was fully revealed in a series of American detective stories about Nat Pinkerton: ... “Nat Pinkerton is already zoology, because this is already the end of our human being...” [1, p. 50]. After that, this “zoology” will become the main content of the comic book industry and Superman will replace Pinkerton.

K.I. Chukovsky, praising Sherlock Holmes and overthrowing Nat Pinkerton, will show a huge difference between them. If the first detective can be attributed to high art, then the last to the social bottom, which is a symbol of a person's **spiritual ill health**. The unprecedented universal fame of cinema and the detective story devastatingly pushed all classical literature and high art into the shadows, to the periphery of cultural life, and according to K.I. Chukovsky, “for the first

time in a hundred years, young people found themselves without «ideas» and «programs». “In this cultural desert, which was born by the «solid hottentot”, Nat Pinkerton becomes a favorite reading and character.

What benefit can be brought to children and adolescents by a character who commits actions far from morality, who has “a fist instead of a soul, a fist instead of a head, a fist instead of a heart, and only the action of this fist is required of him, fist in all forms and manifestations. Pinkerton shoots, cuts people like cabbage without any pity and if you calculate how many people he destroyed in only ten books of his «adventures», you get the population of a good provincial city...”.

It’s no wonder that a series of stories about this detective was criticized and banned not only in Russia, but also in Germany: “German educators were adamant about the negative impact of detective stories on teenage readers and saw a direct connection between reading this genre and committing crimes... German educators directly appealed to publishers, bookstores and libraries to stop the spread of detective stories among young readers...” [2].

They were also banned in Switzerland, seeing what negative impact the detective stories had on children: “When Meumann studied children’s ideals, that among Swiss children of fourteen years of age, more than half admitted that their life ideal is to become rich, get money and generally live without working and using all the benefits” [3]. Such aspirations can be called only spiritual degradation. This was well understood by the literary critic K.I. Chukovsky.

Thus, tough criticism of Pinkerton and cinema by K.I. Chukovsky will eventually allow him to draw a conclusion in which, we believe, the writer pointed out the anthropological problem underlying the deep transformations that took place at the beginning of the 20th century all over the world and especially in Russia: “Of course, neither cinema nor Pinkerton are the causes of evil, they are the same as fever or vomiting: signs of illness, but not illness. If I «lash out» at them as if they were to blame for everything, it is because for me they are symbols of all this huge and complex phenomenon” [1, p. 61].

***Natpinkerton criticism as a mirror of the personality crisis and secularization process.*** The consequences of the spiritual crisis of the individual are embodied most vividly in the crisis of the culture of the 20th century. The mirror of the events that took place reflected the ethical and religious degradation of the man as a spiritual being. Thus, the Orthodox theologian S. Rose sees the man of the 20th century “inside out” (1982) [4], and the French philosopher R. Guenon calls the spirituality of society “inside out” (1945) [5].

In 1934, the Russian philosopher N.A. Berdyaev, many years after the comments on Pinkerton by K.I. Chukovsky, in his work, will express a point of view regarding the anthropological crisis similar to the writer: “The shock of the human image is strongly felt in everything, the decomposition of that human personality that was forged in Christianity and the forging of which was the task of European culture”. [6, p. 214]. In 1955, the German philosopher E. Fromm, assessing the scale of the personality crisis in the 20th century, will make a final diagnosis to the man in his work “Healthy Society”: “In the 19th century, the problem was that God was dead; in the 20th century, the problem is that the man is dead” [7, p. 563].

Another French philosopher M. Foucault in 1966 will also define “The Death of God”, the famous manifesto of F. Nietzsche, as a synonym for “death of the man”: ... “through philological criticism, through biologism of a special kind, Nietzsche reached the point where the man and god belong to each other, where the death of God is synonymous with the disappearance of the man and where the upcoming coming of the superman means, first of all, the inevitability of human death” [8, p. 362].

M. Fuko will focus on the deep connection between the death of God and the death of the man several times in his work: ... “there is a connection between the death of God and the end of man: is it not the last person who announces that he killed God, thereby placing their language, their thought and their laughter in the space where God is no longer there, and acting as the one who killed God, gaining in their existence free determination to this murder?” Further: “Nietzsche’s thought announces not only the death of God, but also (as a result of this death and in deep connection with it) the death of his killer” [8, pp. 402–403].

It is in the death of God that the death of the man is fulfilled, the announced end of the Absolute kills the man themselves. In fact, the man is self-destroying. The disease, which K.I. Chukovsky spoke about, is precisely this consequence of the man’s escape from God, the process of secularization. Self-destroying is carried out through an attempt to “kill God”. We are not talking about a certain metaphorical language for the sake of a witty remark, but about the spiritual death of the man. God’s killer, the man, is a suicider. However, it is impossible to kill God. But it is very possible to kill God in oneself, to try to “uproot” the image of God from oneself, from the human personality. This is spiritual death. It was very clearly demonstrated by F.M. Dostoevsky in his “Demons” using examples of Verkhovensky, Stavrogin, Kirillov.

No wonder that K.I. Chukovsky recalls “Demons” by F.M. Dostoevsky, only in such a way as to demonstrate how much more in arithmetic progression the man has become demoralized since that time by the time the article was written (1870–1872 and 1908): “If Dostoevsky, when he wrote «Demons», if he could foresee even for a second what would happen in forty years, he would crown his demons with roses, he would sing the praises of them and pray in front of them. Since those demons are nothing in comparison with the present ones” [1, p. 36]. But it was precisely these “current” demons, nihilists who were creating revolutions, that Dostoevsky the prophet saw. At that time, they were “in masks”. There were not so many of them, since the anti-spiritual infection had not yet spread so much among Russian people (Dostoevsky’s “Dream of a Funny Man”). But this did not prevent F.M. Dostoevsky to foresee upcoming disasters thanks to his spiritual intuition. K.I. Chukovsky was “lucky” to see all the same demons but without masks.



The dismissive attitude towards the sacred could not but lead to such a moment, “when God will finally be outside the man, and the man will be a fragment, already not affected by the divine presence” [9, p. 110]. As M. Heidegger will say about this, comprehending the fateful phrase of F. Nietzsche, and V. Martynov will repeat after him: “It is this moment that Nietzsche felt and defined as «the death of God»” [9, p. 110].

Nietzsche’s words “God is dead” do not at all neutralize the fact of the existence of the religious life of millions of believers. They mean “only that everything connected with faith has ceased to have a formative effect on the world, that everything connected with faith turned out to be in some kind of «settlements and caves» that are not visible and unknown to the world, that everything connected with faith is «removed» from the world, although it seems to exist in it” [9, p. 110].

It’s about the sacred. The hottentot despises the sacred. According to José Ortega y Gasset: “The mass man considers themselves perfect... only they exist, and get used not to consult with anybody’s wishes, and most importantly not to consider anybody better than themselves... ordinary souls, not deceived about their own ordinariness, fearlessly assert their right to it and impose it on everyone and everywhere... The mass overthrows unlike, remarkable and the best...” [10, pp. 57, 68, 11–12]. The Spanish researcher will call such an absurd state of the man a mass indignation, hermeticism and blockage of the soul and consciousness [10, p. 68]. Consequently, such “life without the sacred becomes humiliation and vulgarity”, since the sacred is the main thing in life. The mass man in their own life is most concerned about their own well-being [10, p. 58].

V. Martynov considers that it was the presence of God that could no longer be experienced by the man [9, p. 110]. It can be assumed that the man has lost a prayer connection with God, since the inner man was in a state of «metaphysical collapse» (metropolitan A. Surozhsky). K.I. Chukovsky will also pay attention to it. He will say that in the 19th century every now and then thousands of people were infected with “one (certainly, certainly one!) idea... and for the sake of this one idea, they were ready to go through fire and water, ready to accept the wreath of thorns either for their populism or for their Marxism, then for nihilism, but they don’t want to know anything else at that time, they don’t look at anything else, and everyone as one man prays according to their own, according to a sectarian prayer book” [1, p. 54]. You can decipher the writer’s thought as follows: we are talking about the creation of various idols and their elevation to the rank of God, which is a direct violation of the second commandment of the Decalogue.

The philosopher I. Ilyin described the experience of godforsakenness: “This is earthly without the Divine; external without internal; visibility without an entity; a shell devoid of the main; empty life, lifeless corpse, whited sepulchre; vanity, ash, vulgarity...” [11]. In such a “metaphysical collapse” there is undoubtedly the man who has not come to God or is running away from Him: “The fanatic Oneness of God has passed, and the Russian intelligentsia has passed to a pleasant plurality of gods” after the hottentot penetrated it [1, p. 55].

The existence “outside God” or “outside the Master” represents the path of the “dilapidated” or “external” man who obeys only fleshliness. (The image of Stavrogin emerges, who, despite his visit to the elder and formal confession, could not touch the sacred, since he was spiritually dead). An abnormal, distorted lifestyle as an example to follow with fierce force will begin to fill the detective genre and cinema at the beginning of the last century, and after it all the mass literature and culture.

No wonder that K.I. Chukovsky in his article mentions Nietzscheanism and other Western trends (Hegelianism, Darwinism, Marxism), which, like cinema, became incredibly close to the Russian man (infected them): “For the Russian all-man, citizen of the world, cinema has become the same native, almost national phenomenon as Hegelianism, Darwinism, Marxism, Nietzscheanism”. [1, p. 28]. No wonder that K.I. Chukovsky also mentions Zarathustra, the protagonist of the work of F. Nietzsche “Thus spoke Zarathustra”. It is in this work that the main concepts of F. Nietzsche’s philosophy are outlined: “the death of God” (antitheism), superman, the will to power, the cyclical nature of any development.

Zarathustra in the article by K.I. Chukovsky will also become Hottentot Pinkerton. “Multi-million hottentot” gives their sentence to the one who sentenced God: “God is dead” (it couldn’t be much worse!).

– Ah! You are Nietzscheans here! – says Hottentot further. – And I, and I, and I will also be a Nietzschean! – He buys a phonograph and turns it on:

– I want to be daring; I want to be bold.

Then he will go and rape a gymnasium girl. At every step, in every feuilleton, after each glass he will grunt and say:

– Thus spoke Zarathustra!

You see that in two or three years everything is over! Zarathustra also became Pinkerton” [1, p. 52].

In short, K.I. Chukovsky speaks in his article “Nat Pinkerton and Modern Literature” about a finely felt anthropological problem that caused a lot of psychic pain in the writer himself. The writer recorded not one crisis but that demonic funnel of crises into which all of humanity was sucked (upcoming revolutions, world wars...).

This is a whole series of different crises, the process of cultural and anthropological crises as a result of secularization. Years later, I. Ilyin will summarize, defining this process as a crisis of “not a whole spirit, a split man”. The goal and result of overcoming this crisis is the spiritual revival of the man “as whole, integral, healed, commanded by the Gospel” [12, p. 326].

A few decades later, working in the Soviet Union, and well knowing modern trends in the field of literary criticism and cinematography, K.I. Chukovsky will critically analyze American comic book magazines and Disney cartoons. The critic will say that they have an even more destructive effect on the child’s consciousness and soul than Nat Pinkerton.

He will also say that Pinkerton will be replaced by something much more dangerous – “a superman”, the hero of comics “Superman”. As K.I. Chukovsky will say in his work “The Corruption of American Children”: “The word «superman», as you know, comes to us from Nietzsche, the ideological inspirer of the German fascists...”.

**Natpinkerton literature as a spiritual and moral threat.** Two years later, after the first questions were raised about the destructive content of detective literature by K.I. Chukovsky, the domestic teacher V.I. Soroka-Rosinsky will try to answer them in his work “Nat Pinkerton and Children’s Literature”, showing the detrimental effect of such content of stories on the moral sense of the child.

You can confidently join the conclusions of the teacher and reinforce the critical thoughts of K.I. Chukovsky. Thus, these stories:

1. Pose a danger to the development of a child’s artistic taste: “After two years of passion for detective stories, Lermontov, Pushkin and other classical writers may, perhaps, seem boring and incomprehensible to such a student” [3];

2. Pose a danger to the development of the student’s moral sense: ... “With the liveliness of children’s imagination, the fantastic world in which the schoolchildren live reading the detective literature, the world of thieves, robbers, criminals, prostitutes, Arsenov Lupenov, Lord Lister, etc., it can be assumed that this world can very badly affect the impressionable, soft, like wax, soul of the child. It is bad that the schoolchildren get used to all these dirty personalities, are not shocked by their criminal properties...” [3];

3. Pose a danger to the child’s behavior, since children tend to imitate: ... “The children are fond of their struggle, begin to sympathize with them, tremble for their fate, vividly share all their interests, together with them come up with ways to steal and get rid of danger, and finally breathe freely when the thief succeeds in the plans...” [3];

4. Pose a danger because they can lead to ethical indifferentism: ... “Will those seeds that were so richly perceived in childhood remain in the soul, will this ethical indifferentism give results later, in adulthood...” [3]. The desire to help others with age may be forgotten, and the strength to resist theft in the years of temptation may not be found;

5. In the middle school period, “Natpinkerton literature becomes even more dangerous, as it captures the student at the most unfavorable moment for the further course of their development” [3].

Trying to understand why Natpinkerton literature attracts children so much, V.I. Soroka-Rosinsky conducted a survey among his students and used the research of other scientists who also tried to find out the grounds for the preference of detective literature to classical works. The main points we highlighted are the following:

1. In one of the surveys, “the answers of the students do not show the grounds on which Christian morality, morality of compassion, lowliness of mind, patience and love for the weak and unhappy are based”. Students admired “strength, intelligence, courage, cunning and other ethically indifferent qualities”. The conclusion of this survey was as follows: “Perhaps children unconsciously recognize the principles to which modern philosophy came in the person of Nietzsche with his admiration for a strong, active personality, even if immoral from a Christian point of view” [3];

2. An additional conclusion to the survey will be one that confirms the demand among schoolchildren for such a “brave, active personality”, energetic as Nathaniel Pinkerton, which gives the right to think about the consequence of the success of Natpinkerton literature. Children’s literature of that time did not meet this demand at all, since “Mamin-Sibiriyak, Barantsevich, Lukashevich in their works talk about pity, compassion, invariably bringing out weak, downtrodden, lonely and unhappy people” [3].

**Discussion and Conclusion.** K.I. Chukovsky managed to identify the process of secularization as a “complex phenomenon”, which was the reason for the onset of spiritual decline, which led to numerous crises. The literary critic said this much earlier than many other world-famous researchers. More than that K.I. Chukovsky was able to show the dialectical relationship between the spiritually degrading (low-moral) man and what this man produced. Anti-spiritual poems, films, books, paintings, philosophical ideas, as a result of immoral creativity, infected others with this anti-spirituality and led to greater general degradation.

It was K.I. Chukovsky who was one of the first to see how the anti-religious, immoral spirit penetrated into the detective stories and caused the formation of children’s deviant spirituality at the beginning of the last century, which was confirmed by studies conducted by V.I. Soroka-Rosinsky and other scientists.

Appeal to the legacy of K.I. Chukovsky helps us to understand how mass culture can influence the formation of personality, what destructive mechanisms it carries in itself. Therefore, and vice versa, we get the opportunity to trace how the man with their spirituality or quasi-spirituality forms a culture, a mass culture, in particular. That is, this is a natural dialectical process. It is important to respond in time to growing modified threats in this context, to develop protective spiritual and moral mechanisms and to form children and youth’s critical thinking.

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