

UDC 821.161.2.09-312.9

DOI <https://doi.org/10.52726/as.humanities/2026.1.3>

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UKRAINIAN FANTASTIC PARADIGM: TRANSFORMATION OF WORLDVIEW CODES AND STRATEGIES FOR OVERCOMING POSTCOLONIAL DEFORMATIONS OF THE BOOK MARKET

This article examines the evolution of the contemporary Ukrainian fantastic paradigm as a significant component of national sociocultural discourse from 2000 to 2025. The study posits that the mythological worldview basis of a fantastic work functions as the primary determinant of its national affiliation. A distinction is drawn between the technological imperial myth, which operates within an imperial paradigm and is often manifested in postmodern or comic forms, and the natural national myth, which constitutes the foundation of an anti-imperial identity. Through a comprehensive analysis of the Ukrainian book market, the research identifies a systemic pattern of postcolonial marginalization and publishing discrimination. Statistical data encompassing nearly 200 publishing houses demonstrates that only 14% have shown sustained interest in the development of original Ukrainian speculative fiction, while a significant portion of the market remained dependent on Russian translations and inherited worldview codes until 2022. The study also examines the trajectories of more than 600 authors, classified into distinct chronological waves: prior to 2004, 2005–2009, 2010–2013, and the post-2014 period. Particular attention is devoted to the transformation of authorial strategies following key historical ruptures—the Orange Revolution, the Revolution of Dignity, and the full-scale Russian invasion of 2022. The findings reveal a decisive shift from postmodern stylistic mimicry toward a national worldview matrix characterized by psychological complexity, ethical depth, and the active actualization of mythopoetic structures. The article concludes that the contemporary Ukrainian fantastic paradigm has emerged as a powerful instrument of cultural decolonization, capable of overcoming ideological determinism and establishing a distinct literary space that reflects the resilience and identity of Ukrainian society.

Key words: Ukrainian fantastic paradigm; national identity; anti-imperial discourse; mythopoetics; postcolonial literature; cultural decolonization; Ukrainian book market.

Introduction. Modern Ukrainian speculative fiction has long developed in a diffuse and discontinuous manner due not to the creative incapacity of authors but to systemic postcolonial deformations of the book market. In this article, the fantastic paradigm is treated as a culturally grounded configuration of speculative fiction. The core of this problem lies in the prolonged dominance of Russian ideological and economic influence, which marginalized the Ukrainian-language fantastic paradigm by rendering it culturally invisible or forcing authors to reproduce alien worldview codes.

At present, there is an urgent need for scholarly reflection on how transformations of the Ukrainian book market—from the post-1991 period to the challenges posed by the full-scale invasion of 2022—correlate with shifts in the worldview matrices of speculative texts, including the transition

from borrowed imperial technological myths to an authentic national mythopoetic framework. This necessitates an analysis of the causes of the literary process's intermittency, whereby significant portions of genre production remain unactualized due to structural publishing discrimination, resulting in a persistent rupture between authors and society.

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. The theoretical foundations for studying speculative fiction as a metagenre and as a means of overcoming ideological pressure are established in the works of O. Stuzhuk and O. Zarytskyi, while issues of genre evolution and publishing inertia at the turn of the twenty-first century are comprehensively analyzed by S. Khorob. Of particular importance are the studies of T. Lytvynenko, who conceptualizes national identity through “ethno-thinking” and mythopoetic codes, as well as the research of N. Savytska, which offers

a comparative perspective on Ukrainian and Russian literary contexts.

The impact of speculative fiction on the audience is examined by N. Deviatko and L. Ovdychuk. At the same time, the problem of market discrimination and the condition of a “choice without a choice” confronting Ukrainian authors is most explicitly articulated by V. Poiznyk, who characterizes speculative fiction as an unrealized “locomotive” of contemporary domestic prose.

The aim of the study is to analyze the formation of the modern Ukrainian fantastic paradigm in the context of book market transformations (1991–2025) and to identify the mechanisms of transition from colonial worldview models to nation-centered mythopoetics.

To achieve this aim, the following objectives are formulated:

1. To outline the main stages of development of the Ukrainian book market and assess their influence on the genre dynamics of speculative fiction;
2. To identify the ideological and economic factors underlying discrimination against Ukrainian-language speculative fiction in the post-colonial period;
3. To analyze the role of national mythology and “ethno-thinking” as instruments in shaping an anti-imperial identity in literary texts;
4. To systematize the activities of Ukrainian publishing houses and trace the evolution of authorial strategies within the fantastic paradigm.

The object of the study is modern Ukrainian fantastic literature of the late twentieth and first quarter of the twenty-first century in its relation to historical, cultural, and publishing processes.

The subject of the study is the transformation of worldview codes, genre dynamics, and strategies for overcoming postcolonial deformations within the Ukrainian fantastic paradigm at different stages of book market development.

Methods and Methodology of the Research. The research employs an interdisciplinary methodological framework that integrates the following methods:

- Historical-genetic – to trace the stages of Ukrainian book market development and the evolution of speculative fiction from 1991 to the present;
- Statistical – to analyze quantitative indicators of publishing activity and systematize data on authors’ creative output;

- Typological – to classify fantastic works by genre subtypes (fantasy, dystopia, mystical prose) and historical periods;

- Hermeneutic – to interpret worldview codes, mythopoetic structures, and national myths in literary texts;

- Postcolonial analysis – to identify ideological deformations and mechanisms of liberation from imperial influence;

- Systems approach – to examine speculative fiction as a holistic cultural paradigm within the “author–publisher–reader” system.

Presentation of the Main Research Material. Since the restoration of independence, the Ukrainian book market has undergone several major transformations that have directly affected both authors’ creative activity and their ability to establish sustained communication with the reading audience. As a result, a significant number of works reached their readership long after their initial creation.

This temporal gap complicates the study of contemporary Ukrainian genre literature by disrupting linear literary-historical analysis; at the same time, it enables an examination of how literary works function when encountered within a different historical and cultural context, and why such texts may exert a stronger influence on an audience already socially and ideologically prepared for their reception.

The primary problem of the contemporary Ukrainian book market lies in the fact that the literary process remained significantly distorted for nearly three decades. As is characteristic of post-colonial societies, national cultural development after the collapse of the totalitarian system continued to be tightly connected to the former imperial information and cultural space of the Soviet Union.

As a result, modern Ukrainian literature experienced a prolonged period of stagnation lasting more than a decade, caused not only by economic instability but also by sustained ideological pressure from the Russian information and cultural sphere—a phenomenon documented across all humanitarian fields in Ukraine during this period.

The situation improved slightly after the 2004 Orange Revolution, when processes of Ukrainization intensified and worldview shifts became evident in contemporary music, film dubbing, and the translation of foreign literature.

In domestic literature, however, development remained confined to a limited range of genres—primarily children’s literature for readers under twelve, the historical paradigm, and certain subgenres of realistic prose, most often represented by shorter narrative forms.

A qualitatively new stage emerged after the 2013–2014 Revolution of Dignity, extending beyond cinema and music and leading to greater genre diversification in Ukrainian literature. Nevertheless, this diversity remained significantly narrower than in literary systems that had not undergone recent totalitarian restrictions. The most dynamic growth occurred between 2014 and 2019, after which its intensity declined due to political instability, economic factors, and the global pandemic.

The historical events of 2022 and the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war have activated a new wave of development in Ukrainian culture, with the potential to fundamentally transform the humanitarian sphere as a whole. At the present stage, genre literature demonstrates a growing psychological depth alongside intensified differentiation and expansion of subgenres—a tendency that is especially pronounced within the fantastic paradigm.

At the same time, Ukrainian speculative fiction has historically experienced some of the most severe forms of publishing discrimination. Prolonged ideological pressure and the systematic denial of domestic fantastic literature resulted in a paradoxical situation in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries: an almost entirely Ukrainian-language fantastic paradigm was represented predominantly through translations, while works by Ukrainian authors were frequently published abroad and only later re-entered the Ukrainian cultural space, either in translation or in foreign-language originals.

Until 2014, authors working in science fiction or fantasy were largely unable to establish themselves within Ukrainian literature unless their works had been published abroad or they had previously gained recognition within the realistic paradigm. For an extended period, Ukrainian publishing houses showed minimal interest in domestic speculative fiction, regardless of stylistic approach, thematic focus, or subgenre affiliation. Consequently, the publication of most fantastic works was contingent on accidental or exceptional circumstances rather than on systematic market demand.

At the same time, a substantial body of speculative fiction written over the past twenty-five years remained unpublished, often even in minimal print runs (with the first decade after independence marked by only sporadic production). These works can therefore be regarded as largely excluded from both the literary process and broader social reception.

This structural impossibility of domestic self-realization compelled Ukrainian speculative fiction authors to seek publication abroad and in any available language, as opportunities within Ukraine were virtually absent. Scholars examining the period prior to 2014 consistently note that both the quantity and genre diversity of fantastic works by Ukrainian-language authors were critically insufficient to form a sustainable national paradigm; most texts functioned as isolated authorial phenomena rather than as elements of a continuous literary process.

According to the encyclopedic reference book *Fantasy suchasnoi Ukrainy (Speculative Fiction Authors of Modern Ukraine)*, published in Russian in 2007 and itself symptomatic of the period, only 15% of authors at that time wrote—or, more precisely, were published—in Ukrainian [Speculative Fiction Authors of Modern Ukraine]. V. Poiznyk succinctly defines this situation as a “choice without a choice”: “Ukrainian authors face a dilemma—either to create in Ukrainian without clear prospects of publication, or to write in Russian” [Poiznyk : 5].

These circumstances accurately reflect the literary realities of the period. Writing “for the drawer” in Ukrainian functioned simultaneously as an act of artistic and ethical commitment and as a mechanism that deprived authors—particularly those with a clearly articulated Ukrainian national identity—of years of potential influence on the reading audience. The situation may therefore be defined as a “choice without a choice,” since under conditions of an underdeveloped and structurally constrained book market any available strategy ultimately produced negative consequences for the author, the literary process, and Ukrainian society as a whole.

Although the Russian publishing market systematically hindered the development of Ukrainian mass literature, it was paradoxically within its structural confines that the foundations of modern Ukrainian speculative fiction began to take shape.

In several cases, this process unfolded through internal communication within the speculative fiction authorial community, where a group of young Ukrainian writers gradually became aware of their worldview divergence from authors reproducing imperial ideological narratives.

Over time, this differentiation manifested not only in literary texts but also in the public stances and cultural actions of these authors. Consequently, the Russian-language publishing space functioned simultaneously as a zone of constraint and as an unintended catalyst for the formation of a distinct Ukrainian speculative identity. Even at this stage, a clear distinction was observable between the works of Ukrainian authors—regardless of language—and those of Russian writers operating within the same genre fields. Scholars of contemporary literature note that the texts of so-called “Ukrainian Russian-language authors” are characterized by an original style marked by deep psychologism, active myth-making, and sustained engagement with folklore traditions.

In addressing the problem of determining the national affiliation of contemporary literary production, T. Lytvynenko proposes a productive solution based on the principle of ethno-thinking. She argues that national identity in literature is manifested not only through language choice, but also through mythology, symbolism, and cultural traditions embedded in the text: “Today, such a national identity of literature is determined by the principle of ethno-thinking, reflected not only in the national language, but also in the mythology, symbolism, and traditions present in the texts” [Lytvynenko : 357].

Accordingly, T. Lytvynenko advocates decoding literary texts through a mythological prism, since worldview myth constitutes one of the key factors in the formation of national culture and collective psychology. Myth, she notes, contains “a holistic system of understanding the world, creating the world, and conceptualizing national existence, embedded at the subconscious level” [Lytvynenko : 357]. Within this framework, national mythology is understood as a dynamic continuum formed from archaic times to the present, encompassing ancient Slavic mythology, Ukrainian demonology of the Christian era, and specific mythological formations of modern culture, including diffuse

religious, ideological, cultural, and political mental clusters [Lytvynenko : 358].

Thus, at the worldview level, national mythology and the corresponding national identity may be articulated not only through the direct use of folklore motifs or the linguistic affiliation of the original text. A comparable situation can be observed in the nineteenth century, when state language censorship was systematically imposed on literary production.

By the late twentieth century, however, these mechanisms were replaced by publishing and economic forms of censorship, which deliberately disrupted communicative ties between authors working in popular genres and the mass readership. In the absence of such continuity, mass literature is structurally incapable of consolidating its position within the cultural space or functioning as a socially influential narrative.

Such large-scale efforts to restrict the development of Ukrainian speculative fiction and to bind it to the imperial cultural space can be explained by a renewed awareness of the threat that the fantastic paradigm poses to totalitarian ideology. As O. Leonenko, one of the earliest researchers of contemporary Ukrainian fantasy, observes: “The world of artistic speculative fiction liberates the author’s characters from the rigid determinism of feelings, thoughts, and actions; it creates the possibility of resisting the perception of the human being as a mere cog in a mechanism deaf to individual needs. Immersion in the fantastic makes it possible to articulate allusions to the surrounding reality and offers tools for its reconstructive transformation, since it functions as an ‘Aesopian language’ through which far more can be said than by means inherent in realistic literature” [cited in Zarytskyi : 7].

Accordingly, at the present historical stage, the national affiliation of a fantastic work is determined primarily by its mythological worldview foundation. If a text is grounded in a technological imperial myth—whether in an explicitly ideological form or in a playful postmodern variant, often realized through a comic mode—it continues to function within the imperial paradigm. Ukrainian-language works based on such a worldview also exist; however, their analysis lies beyond the scope of the present study.

Conversely, when a work is grounded in a natural national myth, its function shifts

regardless of formal or linguistic attributes. In such cases, the text operates as a vehicle for the formation of an anti-imperial identity, while its transformative potential depends on the depth and diversity of mythological manifestations within the narrative. From this perspective, the most productive principle for classifying works written or first published by Ukrainian authors in languages other than Ukrainian lies in the analysis of their underlying mythological worldview rather than in linguistic form.

As S. Khorob observes, even today Ukrainian speculative fiction continues to suffer from a lack of sustained interest from domestic publishers [Khorob : 14]. In publishing practice, works by Russian authors in Ukrainian translation were frequently included in the same series as texts by Ukrainian authors—a strategy characteristic of publishing houses such as Zelenyi Pes (Hamazyn, Dzherela-M), Ranok, Teza, Fabula, and Folio. This resulted in a significant worldview distortion within the reading audience, which increasingly lost the ability to distinguish between Ukrainian and Russian texts despite their fundamentally different cultural and ideological foundations.

Among the authors analyzed by S. Khorob, a distinct group is represented by the works of N. Shcherba, who writes in the genre of adolescent fantasy. This case demonstrates that Ukrainian publishing houses showed no systematic interest in such texts until they had gained recognition outside Ukraine [Khorob : 119].

Shcherba began work on the six-volume cycle *Chasodii* (Time-Wizards) in 2004; however, the series remained unpublished in Ukraine for a prolonged period. Its first editions appeared in Russian between 2011 and 2014 after the author won a major literary competition held by a Russian publisher. Ukrainian-language editions were released only in 2014–2015, once the historical and political context permitted, with the final volumes appearing almost simultaneously in several languages.

In addition to N. Shcherba, a number of other Ukrainian authors working within fantastic genres were first published in the Russian-language cultural and publishing space or received professional recognition from publishing institutions of the Russian Federation. These include Oleh and Valentyn Avramenko, Volodymyr Arenev,

Serhii Badei, Andriy Valentynov, Ilona Volynska and Kyrylo Kashcheiev, Maryna and Serhii Diachenko, Tymur Lytovchenko, Lada Luzina, Henry Lion Oldie, Volodymyr Rafeienko, among others. Their subsequent entry into the Ukrainian-language literary space was largely conditioned by broader historical and political shifts.

One of the systemic consequences of this publishing trajectory is the fragmentation of multi-volume narratives: series are often published incompletely or dispersed across different publishing houses. This practice reflects a structural problem of the domestic book market, in which long, psychologically and narratively complex works—regardless of target age group—have a significantly lower chance of being received as a coherent artistic whole than standalone volumes.

Teenage literature.

Volodymyr Arenev, *Porokh iz drakonovykh kistok* (Powder from Dragon Bones; unfinished cycle); Halyna Bendza-Kotsovskya, *Elza ta druzi u vohnianomu koli* (Elsa and Friends in the Ring of Fire; first volume); Nika Inina, *Khranhely* (Guardian Angels; unfinished cycle); Tetiana Kapustina, *Epokha charodiiv. Spadkoiemnytsia Lehendy* (The Age of Wizards: Heiress of the Legend; first volume); Oksana Kirtoh, *Povelytelka Khaosu. Knyha persha. Mohutnist stykhii. Vohon* (Mistress of Chaos. Book One. Power of the Elements: Fire; first volume); Dara Korniy, *Petrus Khymorodnyk* (Petrus the Sorcerer; first volume); Olena Lan, *Burdebach* (first volume); Valeriy Puzik, *“Delfi” i charivnyky* (“Delphi” and the Wizards; unfinished cycle); Oleksa Rosych, *Dzhovani Trapatoni* (Giovanni Trapattoni; first volume); Oleksa Rosych, *Otto, Prynts Lvivskyyi* (Otto, Prince of Lviv; first volume); Orshulia Faryniak, *Aikho* (unfinished cycle), etc.

Adult literature.

Mykola Bakuma, *Zoloty mah. Knyha 1. Zerno* (The Golden Mage. Book One: The Seed; first volume); Iren Vitush, *Sar-Maty. Zmova ery Vodoliia* (Sar-Maty: Conspiracy of the Age of Aquarius; first volume); Bohdan Hryniuk, *Krehen. Dusha voina. Tom 1. Knyha 1* (Krehen: Soul of a Warrior. Volume One, Book One; first volume); Marianna Malyna, *Fioletovi dity* (Purple Children; unfinished cycle); Taras Mykitchak, *Dolyna yedynoi dorohy* (Valley of the Only Road; first volume), etc.

A separate group is formed by integral multi-volume narratives published by more than one publishing house, including Natalia Deviatko's trilogy *Skarby Prymarnykh ostroviv* (Treasures of the Illusive Islands) and Maryna Muliar's tetralogy *Hra* (The Game). Notably, all works discussed above belong to the fantasy genre, which structurally requires extended narrative volume to articulate complex psychological and worldview configurations.

At first glance, the number of Ukrainian publishing houses that have shown interest in domestic fantastic literature over the past twenty-five years appears substantial—nearly 200 publishers of various forms of ownership. However, quantitative analysis reveals a different picture: 64% of these publishers have released fewer than three original fantastic titles (excluding reprints), while another 22% have published no more than ten. Only 14% of Ukrainian publishing houses demonstrate a sustained and systematic engagement with the development of national speculative fiction. Even within this limited group, publishing strategies remain constrained, and traces of ideological influence persist.

Fact – active in the speculative fiction market since 2000; one of the most influential promoters of postmodern speculative fiction in Ukraine. The publishing house ceased operations in 2010.

Kalvariia – active since 2000; one of the country's key promoters of postmodernism across multiple literary genres. Interest in fantastic literature gradually declined, and publishing activity in this field effectively ended in 2018.

Zelenyi Pes (also operating under the names *Hamazyn* and *Dzherela-M*) – active since 2001; published author-centered series, thematic anthologies, and standalone works. Market positioning and cover design frequently failed to correspond to genre or thematic content. The publishing house systematically included translations from Russian within the same series as works by Ukrainian authors. To date, *Zelenyi Pes* has released the largest number of works by Ukrainian authors across nearly all subgenres of speculative fiction.

Klub Simeinoho Dozvilla – active since 2002; until 2012, engagement with speculative fiction was irregular and limited to one or two titles per year. The most intensive publication

of adult-oriented fantastic literature occurred between 2013 and 2019. The pool of authors remained narrow, and editorial policy was characterized by frequent recruitment of writers from competing publishers. In 2021, the publishing house fully discontinued the publication of fantastic works by Ukrainian authors.

Piramida – active since 2003; characterized by unsystematic publication of adult-oriented fantastic works, predominantly shaped by postmodern aesthetics. In 2022, the publishing house temporarily suspended its interest in speculative fiction.

Ranok – active since 2004; at the initial stage, introduced both translated and original works marked by significant psychological and worldview deformations into the cultural space. After 2007, a prolonged hiatus occurred in publishing domestic speculative fiction. Interest was renewed in 2014, accompanied by a partial revision of editorial policy. At present, the publishing house predominantly works with authors who had already gained recognition in earlier periods.

Teza – active since 2004; specialized primarily in teenage fantasy produced by a narrow circle of authors. Publishing strategy relied heavily on translations from Russian, issued within the same series as original Ukrainian works. Despite intensive marketing efforts, the publishing house effectively ceased operations in 2018.

A-BA-BA-HA-LA-MA-HA – active since 2006; publishes a limited selection of authors. In the teenage segment, priority is given to adventure-oriented fantasy, while the adult segment focuses on works shaped by postmodern stylistic strategies.

Nash Chas – active from 2006 to 2016; during this period, published works by only two authors, which precluded the formation of a stable speculative fiction segment or a coherent genre strategy.

Nora-Druk – active since 2006; consistently prioritizes postmodern speculative fiction and mystical prose. Genre diversity within the fantastic paradigm remains limited throughout its publishing activity.

Vydavnytstvo Staroho Leva – active since 2006; the highest concentration of fantastic publications occurred between 2013 and 2019. In the teenage segment, the publishing house prioritizes adventure fantasy, while the comparatively limited

adult segment is oriented toward works employing postmodern stylistic strategies.

Folio – active since 2006; publishes both standalone works and author-centered cycles. In adult literature, preference is largely given to postmodern stylistics. Until 2022, the catalogue included a significant number of translations from Russian. Teenage fantasy and science fiction appear sporadically and without the formation of stable genre- or theme-based series.

Hrani-T – active from 2007 to 2012; developed several multi-author series primarily aimed at children and teenage audiences. Many of the published works were marked by pronounced worldview and psychological deformations. The publishing house subsequently ceased operations.

Tverdynia – active since 2007; engaged in unsystematic publication of standalone works and author-specific cycles, mainly for an adult audience. The catalogue includes an unfinished teenage fantasy cycle. The publishing house ceased operations in 2018.

Navchalna Knyha – Bohdan – active since 2009; publishing activity was irregular and for a long time lacked clear audience differentiation, resulting in the mixing of works intended for teenage and adult readers. Most titles were issued as standalone volumes, while author-specific series frequently remained incomplete. Since 2022, the publishing house has demonstrated a noticeable increase in interest in speculative fiction by Ukrainian authors.

Apriori – active since 2011; has published works by various authors without forming stable series or a coherent genre strategy within speculative fiction.

Ukrainskyi Priorityeti – active since 2012; engaged in unsystematic publication of individual titles for an adult audience. With the onset of the full-scale invasion, the publishing house completely ceased its engagement with speculative fiction.

Tempora – active since 2012; publishes standalone works and author-specific cycles in an unsystematic manner, primarily for adult readers, with a pronounced focus on science fiction and dystopian narratives.

Shkola – active since 2014; notable for publishing three fantasy cycles by Natalia Shcherba. Until the full-scale invasion, the publishing house

also released translations of Russian authors in Ukrainian.

Sammit-Knyha – active since 2015; has published works by various authors. The frequent limitation of projects to first volumes indicates a lack of sustained interest in the long-term development and promotion of speculative fiction series.

Mandrivets – active since 2015; has published works by various authors. Like many publishers of this period, its catalogue contains multiple initiated cycles that were not continued.

KM-Books – active since 2015; published both standalone works and author-specific cycles, primarily for an adult audience. Since 2021, the publishing house has effectively withdrawn from speculative fiction.

Vivat – active since 2015; demonstrates a consistent and systematic interest in both teenage and adult fantasy. The publishing strategy prioritizes romantic, historical, dark, and postmodern subgenres and is supported by a stable pool of authors whose works receive sustained promotion.

ASSA – active since 2018; shows a clear preference for teenage fantasy and the development of author-specific series.

TUT – active since 2018; publishes both standalone works and author-specific cycles for children and adult audiences, without a strict genre segmentation.

Dim Khymer – active from 2019; specialized in postmodern fantasy, science fiction, and dark fantasy; ceased active operations in 2022.

Kondor – active since 2019; publishes predominantly standalone volumes, without organizing authors into series or developing a coherent genre or branding strategy.

Lira-K – active since 2019; publishes both standalone works and author-specific cycles, primarily for adult readers. While its publishing policy remains inconsistent in terms of market positioning and series design, a more focused interest in speculative fiction has become evident since 2022.

Over the past twenty-five years, the most sustained engagement with the fantastic paradigm has been demonstrated by a limited group of Ukrainian publishing houses, including **A-BA-BA-HA-LA-MA-HA**, **Vydavnytstvo Staroho Leva**, **Vivat**,

Zelenyi Pes (together with its earlier imprints *Hamazyn* and *Dzherela-M*), **Klub Simeinoho Dozwillia**, **Lira-K**, **Navchalna Knyha – Bohdan**, **Piramida**, **Ranok**, **Tverdynia**, **Teza**, **Tempora**, and **Folio**.

The total number of published fantastic books—including mystical prose, postmodern speculative fiction, and works for young audiences—produced between 2000 and 2025 does not exceed 1,500 original titles. This figure includes novels, novellas, and authorial short-story collections that became visible in the information and cultural space through distribution in major bookstore chains and inclusion in public and academic libraries.

The number of speculative fiction authors (or writers who have worked with fantastic material at least episodically) for the same period remains below 600. Of these, 60% have only one published fantastic work, while approximately 25% have two to three titles, often forming a trilogy or the beginning of an unfinished cycle. A further 8,5% have four to five published books, usually organized into plot-unified cycles. Only 6,5% of authors have five or more fantastic works published in Ukrainian; nevertheless, this group accounts for approximately 23% of all original domestic fantastic titles that achieved cultural visibility over the twenty-five-year period.

Analysis of Ukrainian book market dynamics in relation to fantastic genres reveals several stable tendencies shaped by the broader cultural context, prevailing genre priorities, and the career stage at which authors attained recognition—most clearly observable among writers with more than five published works.

Publications prior to 2004:

- Valeriy Shevchuk (1939–2025) – mystical and mythological prose;
- Vasyl Kozhelyanko (1957–2008) – postmodern speculative fiction;
- Lesya Voronyina (born 1955) – teenage postmodern speculative fiction;
- Anatoliy Ptitsyn (born 1955) – teenage postmodern speculative fiction;
- Maryna Hrymych (born 1961) – postmodern speculative fiction and mystical prose;
- Henry Lion Oldie (pseudonym of Dmytro Gromov and Oleh Ladyzhensky, both born 1963) – science fiction and fantasy; primary language: Russian;

- Oleh Hovda (born 1964) – fantasy; marked dependence on Russian cultural models, including in Ukrainian-language texts;

- Volodymyr Yeshkilev (born 1965) – postmodern speculative fiction;

- Dmytro Bilyi (born 1967) – fantasy and teenage fantasy with a pronounced national component;

- Maryna Diachenko (born 1968) and Serhii Diachenko (1945–2022) – fantasy; primary language: Russian;

- Andriy Kokotyukha (born 1970) – mystical prose (as creative experimentation);

- Volodymyr Arenev (born 1978) – fantasy and teenage fantasy of both postmodern and non-postmodern types;

- Maryna Sokoyan (born 1979) – postmodern fantasy.

Common traits.

Most authors of this period adopt postmodern aesthetics as a dominant creative strategy, both in adult and teenage literature. A significant number began their literary careers within the Russian cultural and publishing space or demonstrate a sustained dependence on its worldview models.

Publications 2005–2009:

- Volodymyr Rutkivskyi (1937–2021) – teenage fantasy; the author gained particular prominence during this period, although many of his works were written earlier.

- Oleksandr Esaulov (1952–2023) – teenage fantasy and teenage science fiction.

- Oleksiy Katsai (1954–2021) – science fiction and teenage science fiction.

- Nina Voskresenska (born 1960) – teenage fantasy and teenage science fiction.

- Radiy Radutnyi (born 1969) – science fiction.

- Natalia Tysovska (born 1973) – mystical prose and postmodern speculative fiction.

- Sashko Dermanskyi (born 1976) – teenage fantasy, fairytale fantasy.

Common Traits:

This period develops under the indirect yet structurally significant influence of the Orange Revolution, which acts as a catalyst for national self-awareness and the reorientation of cultural priorities. The dominance of postmodern aesthetic strategies among newly visible authors declines, while literary production increasingly focuses on the teenage paradigm and children's literature. Emphasis shifts toward narrative clarity, ethical

modeling, and audience-oriented storytelling, as fantastic literature prioritizes educational and worldview functions over experimental postmodern techniques in favor of plot-driven and value-centered narratives.

Publications 2010–2013:

- Kostiantyn Kohtiants (1956–2020) – postmodern fantasy;
- Kostiantyn Matviienko (born 1965) – science fiction and fantasy; characterized by a strong political component and a noticeable dependence on Russian worldview codes;
- Roman Rositskyi (born 1965) – science fiction, teenage fantasy, fairytale fantasy;
- Dara Korniy (born 1970) – fantasy and teenage fantasy grounded in Ukrainian folklore and mythology;
- Oleksandr Havrosh (born 1971) – teenage postmodern fantasy;
- Natalia Deviatko (born 1983) – ethical fantasy, teenage fantasy, magical realism;
- Yuliia Cherninka (born 1983) – postmodern fantasy; teenage fantasy of a non-postmodern type;
- Max Kidruk (born 1984) – science fiction, initially as a creative experiment, later as a primary genre.

Common Traits:

A defining feature of this period is that most works published between 2010 and 2013 were written after the Orange Revolution, resulting in a delayed yet structurally significant shift in worldview orientations. The number of authors entering the Ukrainian literary space through the Russian cultural and publishing field declines markedly, although residual elements of inherited worldview dependence persist. The genre palette expands, with adult and teenage fantastic paradigms developing in parallel. Most texts are written originally in Ukrainian rather than as authorial self-translations typical of earlier stages, while the literary field is further diversified by authors whose formative experiences occurred outside the Soviet cultural environment, contributing to the reconfiguration of genre priorities and narrative strategies.

Publications after 2014:

- Maria Chumarna (born 1952) – teenage philosophical speculative fiction;
- Vladyslav Ivchenko (born 1976) – mystical prose and fantasy;

– Yaroslava Matichyn (birth year unknown) – romantic historical fantasy;

– Pavlo Dyma (born 1980) – fantasy; primarily publications of earlier written works;

– Natalia Shcherba (born 1981) – teenage fantasy; primary language: Russian; the publication of her works in Ukrainian becomes a significant event in the national cultural space;

– Oleksiy Dekan (born 1983) – postmodern fantasy and science fiction;

– Nazariy Vivcharyk (born 1985) – mystical prose and fantasy;

– Natalia Dovhopol (born 1987) – fantasy and teenage fantasy with a historical foundation;

– Natalia Matolynec (born 1990) – fantasy and teenage fantasy characterized by complex psychological structures.

Common Traits.

This period develops in direct correlation with the Revolution of Dignity and the Russo-Ukrainian War, which function as decisive socio-historical catalysts for national self-awareness. Fantastic literature increasingly responds to the ethical challenges of the time, with war experience—both direct and mediated—becoming a structurally significant component of narrative construction. A deliberate choice between a national worldview matrix and a postmodern one becomes evident, as an increasing number of authors consciously gravitate toward national mythological frameworks while rejecting imperial and post-imperial models. Psychological complexity, ethical depth, and genre diversification intensify, accompanied by a growing internal realism of fantastic worlds. Although teenage and adult fantastic paradigms develop in parallel, authors who enter the literary field after 2014 tend to work primarily within the adult paradigm, while rigid age differentiation weakens: many texts remain accessible to younger readers due to their focus on ethical conflict, psychological maturation, and worldview formation. This stage is marked by the near-complete absence of dependence on the Russian cultural space and its narrative stereotypes.

The subsequent period begins in 2022, triggered by the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, and exerts a powerful influence on both the literary process and the socio-psychological transformations of Ukrainian society. At present, this stage is marked by the emergence

of shared tendencies rather than by clearly fixed structural features, largely due to the methodological difficulty of distinguishing works written after 2022 from those created earlier but published during this time. Nevertheless, the tendencies identified in the preceding periods—based on the analysis of authors with five or more published works within the fantastic paradigm—are already observable in the practices of less established writers and debutants, indicating the formation of a common developmental vector in contemporary Ukrainian speculative fiction.

Conclusions. The research demonstrates that the contemporary Ukrainian fantastic paradigm has evolved from postcolonial marginalization and systemic publishing discrimination toward the formation of an original literary space in which the transformation of worldview codes functions as a key marker of national identity. Changes in

the book market following the pivotal events of 2004, 2014, and 2022 catalyzed a shift from borrowed imperial technological myths to nationally grounded mythocentrism, enabling authors to overcome ideological determinism and achieve greater psychological depth and genre diversity.

Despite the persistence of structural market limitations—such as unfinished cycles and insufficient institutional support—Ukrainian speculative fiction today operates as an effective instrument for the formation of anti-imperial identity and the activation of national mythopoetic matrices within contemporary sociocultural discourse.

Prospects for further research include the analysis of the poetics of specific fantastic subgenres and a comparative examination of neomythological structures in the works of the new generation of authors whose creative activity has intensified since 2022.

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**УКРАЇНЬСЬКА ФАНТАСТИЧНА ПАРАДИГМА: ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЯ
СВІТОГЛЯДНИХ КОДІВ ТА СТРАТЕГІЇ ПОДОЛАННЯ ПОСТКОЛОНІАЛЬНИХ
ДЕФОРМАЦІЙ КНИЖКОВОГО РИНКУ**

У статті досліджено еволюцію сучасної української фантастичної парадигми як вагомого складника національного соціокультурного дискурсу періоду 2000–2025 років. Автор обґрунтовує тезу, що саме міфологічна світоглядна основа фантастичного твору є визначальним чинником його національної приналежності. У роботі розмежовано «технологічний імперський міф», що працює в межах імперської парадигми (часто у постмодерному чи комічному форматах), та «природний національний міф», який стає фундаментом для формування антиімперської ідентичності. Шляхом комплексного аналізу українського книжкового ринку виявлено системні закономірності постколоніальної маргіналізації та видавничої дискримінації. Статистичні дані щодо діяльності майже 200 видавництв свідчать, що лише 14% із них виявляють сталий інтерес до розвитку оригінальної української фантастики, тоді як значна частина ринку до 2022 року залишалася залежною від російських перекладів та світоглядних кодів. У статті проаналізовано творчий шлях понад 600 авторів, розподілених за хронологічними хвилями: до 2004 р., 2005–2009 рр., 2010–2013 рр. та період після 2014 року. Особливу увагу приділено трансформації авторських стратегій під впливом доленосних історичних подій: Помаранчевої революції, Революції Гідності та повномасштабного вторгнення РФ 2022 року. Результати дослідження вказують на рішучий зсув від постмодерної стилістичної мімікрії до національної світоглядної матриці, що характеризується психологічною складністю, етичною глибиною та актуалізацією міфопоетичних структур. Зроблено висновок, що сучасна українська фантастика постає потужним інструментом культурної деколонізації, здатним долати ідеологічну детермінованість і вибудувувати унікальний літературний простір, що ретранслює стійкість та ідентичність українського народу.

Ключові слова: українська фантастична парадигма, національна ідентичність, антиімперський дискурс, міфопоетична матриця, постколоніальна література, культурна деколонізація; український книжковий ринок.

Дата першого надходження статті до видання: 21.02.2026

Дата прийняття статті до друку після рецензування: 24.03.2026

Дата публікації (оприлюднення) статті: 13.05.2026