

UKRAINIAN FOLKLORE AS A SOURCE OF STUDYING THE NATIONAL CHARACTER

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Abstract: The present research is significant because it provides a scientific examination of how particular elements of Ukrainian folklore shape the national identity. It should be emphasized that the depths of folklore hold centuries-old accumulation of historical and cultural experiences that illustrate the details of a particular people's existence in various historical eras, as well as the influence of other ethnic and foreign cultural conceptions; interpenetration of cultures, acculturation, assimilation; it demonstrates technological development; it provides information on the attitude of different social groups within the ethnic group to each other, gender behavior; it reveals stereotypes, moral and ethical foundations of life; attitudes towards the government, political institutions, religious and ideological principles and guidelines. In addition, folklore heritage is a powerful source of influence on people's consolidation and cooperation in difficult life circumstances. This can be clearly demonstrated by the examples of rethinking and adapting folklore traditions to the current conditions caused by the Russian-Ukrainian war, especially after the full-scale invasion on February 24, 2022.

Keywords: folklore, fairy tale, folk saying, national character, post-folklore.

1 Introduction

It takes an entire lifetime to fully comprehend the nuances and quirks of a country via studying its diverse folklore sources. It should be emphasized that folklore is a dynamic, flexible phenomenon that reflects the slightest social-cultural changes in society. For more than 150 years of the existence of folklore studies as a science, a considerable body of scientific, popular science and journalistic literature on this issue has been accumulated. However, considering the processes related to the decolonization of the Ukrainian cultural space, the study of the influence of folklore on the Ukrainian character, its regional differences, and the search for unifying components in the depths of folklore heritage requires a careful and scrupulous approach to the search, systematization, scientific reflection, and comparative analysis in studying Ukrainian folklore, especially its influence on the formation of the national character. And vice versa – understanding which features and peculiarities of the national character have influenced the genre diversity, semantic and culture-oriented vectors of folklore, and the specifics of the reflection of folklore genres in different regions and time spaces.

When studying national character through the prism of folklore, it is crucial to identify specific folklore genres that will help solve this research goal. Taking into account the fact that folklore diversity does not allow us to cover all aspects of influences on the features of the Ukrainian character, it is advisable to focus on:

- fairy tales, which are perhaps the oldest genre of folk art, which reflect moral guidance, worldview, folk pedagogy, values and ideals;
- dumas (Ukrainian heroic epic) – folk explanation and interpretation of historical events, glorification and mourning of heroes, symbolism;
- proverbs and folk sayings – folk aphoristic expressions that capture the life experience of generations, a concentrated presentation of unwritten laws and rules.

Post-folklore should also be in the field of research attention. It is commonly believed that folklore is exclusively a reflection of peasant, traditional culture, or mythological, fairy tale or heroic stories of the historical past. At the same time, folklore practices of modern or postmodern urbanization in human history have usually remained outside the scope of scientific research and in-depth studies. Post-folklore studies are of a sporadic nature in Ukraine. This is connected, firstly, with a rather stereotypical perception of modern folklore practices; secondly, with the transience of information flows, especially in the virtual environment. The reasons mentioned above greatly complicate

the “field” work, its systematization and the formation of a methodological basis for studying.

The study of Ukrainian folklore's influence on various aspects of Ukrainian society in chronological and spatial terms is also based on a huge amount of collecting and research work done by the classics of Ukrainian science and culture: Bilyk, Voropai, Hrynchenko, Hrushevskyi, Drahomanov, Kobylanska, Kostomarov, Kotsiubynskyi, Lesia Ukrainka, Lukashevych, Maksymovych, Metlynskyi, Ohienko, Olena Pchilka, Potebnia, Rylskyi, Sreznevskyi, Sumtsov, Franko, Khodakovskiy, Shashkevych, Yavornytskyi and a number of other colleagues who make up the golden fund of Ukrainian folklore studies.

The purpose of the research is to analyze the effectiveness and challenges related to using information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the pedagogical process.

In order to achieve the purpose outlined, the following objectives should be accomplished:

1. Studying the existing explorations and theoretical works on the application of ICTs in education in order to determine the current state of knowledge in this field.
2. Collecting and analyzing quantitative data, using statistical methods to assess changes in students' performance and engagement after the implementation of ICTs.
3. Organizing interviews and focus groups with teachers and learners to gain a deeper understanding of their perceptions and experiences regarding the use of ICTs.
4. Identifying and analyzing barriers to the effective use of ICTs in the educational process.

2 Literature review

The formation of folklore studies as a science, the identification of its components and horizontal and vertical connections with related scientific disciplines, has a long and rich history.

Reviewing scientific achievements, studies, and methodological advancements requires taking into account the collective experience of scholars from various academic schools across many countries worldwide.

In particular, Dantes, a professor of anthropology and folklore, is rightfully considered “the father of American folklore studies”. The spectrum of his research interests is impressive. In addition to traditional folklore genres, he actively studied and insisted on the necessity of involving modern forms of folklore creativity in scientific circulation as reflecting the current social-cultural context and providing an understanding of the specifics of community formation in the context of urbanization and ever-growing migration flows. In addition to myths, legends, fairy tales, folk beliefs, holidays, riddles, and proverbs, he studied graffiti, velerisms, and aphorisms. The basic theses of his scientific concepts are as follows:

- folklore is flexible and plastic; it does not disappear in the whirlpool of time, but, having survived transformations, perturbations, periods of conservation, acquires a new sound and power;
- folklore is all-encompassing; its sphere of existence ranges from peoples who are at the stage of the primitive communal system to the political and financial elites of the modern world;
- it is traditionally believed that folklore is recorded and transmitted only in the oral tradition; however, this statement is not true: it can also be transmitted through writing (Dundes, 2005).

The works of Dorson R.M., Dan B.-A., Barker K.B., Povinelli D.J. are devoted to the theoretical and practical studies of mythology and folklore in historical retrospect, history and

methodology of folklore studies, analysis of significant folklore poetry in cultural history, and the use of folklore images in contemporary popular culture (Dorson, 1973; Dan, 1989; Barker and Povinelli, 2019). Various folklore images and meanings have become the subject of scientific attention by Magliocco (2018), Thompson (2018), Stashko (2014; 2016).

Furman A. studied the psycho-cultural features of the Ukrainian character in the pan-European context, focusing on the originality and identity of the Ukrainian nation (Furman, 2014). Miahkota I. considered the history of the formation of folklore studies as a science in Ukraine, focusing on the crystallization of the scientific and conceptual apparatus (Miahkota, 2011). Particular aspects of the specifics of the Ukrainian national character are reflected in the publications of Kuzmenko (2018), Liashuk (2016). In order to understand the influence of folklore sources on the Ukrainian character, one cannot ignore the achievements of the Ukrainian diaspora (Nahachevskyi, 2010; Maierchyk, 2010; Pavliuk, 2010; Lesiv, 2021). Studies by Lysiuk (2012), Lohvynenko (2016), Yaremko (2022) are devoted to post-folklore. An exclusive version of the origin of the image of Mamai in Ukrainian folk art, songwriting, proverbs and sayings is offered by Rakhno (2022).

The analysis of the folklore's influence on the formation of the Ukrainian character and its characteristic features is impossible without the involvement of the source base. In particular, within the framework of our academic paper, we have paid particular attention to the editions in which the compilers have carried out painstaking work on the search, systematization and classification of Ukrainian folk tales, folk sayings, proverbs, dumas as a unique song and poetry genre (Plaviuk, 1946; Dovzhenok et al., 2009; Ivanenko, 2020). The corpus of sources that were useful in writing the scientific article also includes the works of Hryhorii Skovoroda as the pioneer of studying folklore heritage through the prism of philosophical views and analysis of the specifics of national character (Skovoroda, 1994).

Even such a cursory review of scientific literature and sources makes it possible to conclude that there is a powerful layer of scientific researches aimed at studying folklore, its influence on the literary tradition, on the formation and development of artistic culture, education, science, production practices, and philosophical concepts. The influence of folklore heritage on the formation of the national character, in particular, stereotypes, norms of behavior, moral and ethical principles of society, is also included in this list.

3 Methods

The method of data integration enabled us to outline the features of the object under study – Ukrainian folklore – and to identify the subject of our research. The use of this method is also crucial for taking into account variations in views on folklore, its genres, types, usage, and influence on mentality and national character. The research data includes folklore characters such as Kotyhoroshko and Mamai, as well as collections of epic poems, proverbs, and sayings. To analyze the influence of folklore on the literary and scientific traditions of Ukraine, we reviewed the works of Hryhorii Skovoroda and the theoretical developments by scholars dedicated to the study of Ukrainian folklore heritage using the descriptive method. Additionally, data from the internet was utilized. The semantic content of 30 entries attributed to folkloric texts was studied. Folklore materials were incorporated using the historical-typological method, which involved collecting, classifying, and publishing materials from different periods, as done by folklorists.

We adhere to the idea of distinguishing between the concepts of “mentality” and “national character”, despite the fact that they have long been equated. In particular, the criteria of national character include: attitude to social status and the desire to obtain a particular place in society, ethnic and social stereotypes, symbolic expression, language and modality of the individual (that is, ways of perceiving the world and comprehending it). At the same time, mentality is more likely to characterize various mental and thinking processes (for instance, what games are

most popular among a particular people, what are the ways of leisure, entertainment, space arrangement, popular colors, folk crafts, song themes, perception of natural landscapes, etc.). The manifestations of mentality in the practical plane of mentality are characterized by folklore, mythology, religion, ideology, philosophy, science (Viznytsia, 2010, p. 15-17). The syncretism of contemporary folklore, its thematic content, variability of presentation, forms and methods of presentation, and target audience should be studied using the methods of induction, deduction, and historical and comparative analysis. The issue of time and space in folklore can be analyzed using the methods of comparative studies, the method of analyzing historical sources, documents, and materials. Taking into account the breadth of the research field of this matter, an interdisciplinary approach should be taken as a methodological basis. This will significantly broaden the horizons of research perspectives, involve the methods and methodology of other social sciences and humanities (anthropology, history, archeology, sociology, psychology), and provide a more comprehensive vision of folklore in society at different historical levels.

4 Results

4.1 Importance of folklore for today. Reinterpretation of folklore heritage in conditions of full-scale war

The authors of the publication had already been working on the study of Ukrainian folklore, its various forms, and its reflection of the national character; the functioning of folklore in a polyethnic and multicultural environment; moral and ethical norms in folkloric texts as reflections of the national character.

In particular, A. Pavlova investigated how family relationships, value norms, attitudes towards life and death, compassion, grief, and condemnation of murder are reflected in chronicle songs, citing examples such as “Oh, the geese were flying low, low, “W Pietnoczkach w ponegiwnok”, “Do you think, Dzhurdzheish, that your Vizhnitsya?”, “Oh, Hafiechka was walking around, just embroidering”, “And the young men of Pistyn caused trouble” (Pavlova, 2018).

In her analysis, Teleutsia examines the symbolism and metaphorical nature of folklore texts, using traditional wedding songs from the Podunavlje region as examples. She emphasizes the influence of the natural environment on the formation of the folk psyche, particularly through the active symbolic use of plant names to denote various qualities or phenomena, such as obedience being represented by grass and the transience of life being represented by flowers. The study used the example of the pumpkin (squash, gourd) to demonstrate its direct use in various stages of wedding rituals and the semantic significance of the word ‘pumpkin’ in traditional culture (Teleutsia, 2018).

Kopanytsia and Pavlova also examined the portrayal of moral and ethical values in Ukrainian lyrical-epic folklore. For instance, the ballad “Lebedyuga went to war with the lords” reflects on the responsibility for one's actions. The concept of moral responsibility is a recurring theme in lyrical-epic works throughout history. Folk creativity highlights the significance of understanding the impact of one's actions, both personally and in terms of societal judgement or approval (Kopanytsia & Pavlova, 2018).

Saltovska studied the poetics of Ukrainian folk riddles, the history of their scientific exploration, systematization, and interpretation of their semantic content, as well as the place and role of riddles in the system of folk artistic culture (Saltovska, 2008). Additionally, the research includes an analysis of folk proverbs from the period of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war. Saltovska and Saltovska collaborated on an article about the recorded slogans of national resistance found in virtual spaces. The researchers classify these slogans as folkloric texts. Due to the limitations of direct contact between researchers and respondents in war zones and areas under shelling, folklore material is collected from all available sources, primarily in virtual spaces. The investigation was based on the 30 most

common slogans in the virtual environment. One of the well-known slogans is “Russian warship, go to...!” which, despite being authored by Ukrainian border guard Roman Hrybov, has become a folk slogan transcending beyond the borders of Ukraine. If the previous slogan carries a contemptuous-ironic perception of the enemy, then another slogan - “Glory to Ukraine - Glory to the Heroes!” - refers to certain historical events and serves as a consolidating expression for resistance against Russian occupiers in today’s context (Saltovska & Saltovska, 2022, p. 68-69).

Firstly, folklore shapes national consciousness and a sense of patriotism, self-identification and self-representation. In support of this statement, let us consider historical dumas as a unique poetic genre of folk art associated with the Cossack period. The manner of performing dumas is similar to crying and lamenting; performers were usually kobzars, bandura players, and lyre players. The importance of dumas and their carriers was so crucial to national identity that it was reflected, in particular, in the attitude toward Taras Shevchenko as the nation’s indisputable moral and spiritual leader, who was called Kobzar. The most famous Ukrainian dumas include: “About the Cossack Holota”, “About Marusia Bohuslavka”, “About Samailo Kishka”, “About Ivan Bohun”. We can also trace the influence of folklore in contemporary Ukrainian culture, which is a reflection of current historical moments and is recorded in material and sacred manifestations (vyshyvanka is the code of the nation; vyshyvanka is the shield of the nation, etc.).

Secondly, it influences people’s values and beliefs. For instance, we can observe representations of distinctive individuals in folk tales that are social and heroic in nature, with Kotyhoroshko possibly being the most striking one. This is the archetypal prototype of the Ukrainian hero who, despite all the difficulties, betrayals and insults, overcomes a difficult path, defeats enemies and receives all the well-deserved rewards. The image captures the essence of the Ukrainian hero, who, although not having the most exceptional physical attributes, possesses extraordinary power, wisdom, endurance, perseverance, and victorious faith. All of these qualities are inherent in Ukrainian men and women – defenders against the Russian invasion. No wonder that even our enemies called our soldiers, the defenders of the Donetsk airport (DDA), “cyborgs” – human machines, because only they were able to withstand what they had to endure while defending the airport from September 2014 to the end of January 2015. Such an important role of folklore in shaping the national character was recognized by Hryhorii Skovoroda, who turned to folklore sources as a bottomless well of folk wisdom, pedagogy, ethics, and aesthetics, formed over time in various historical and cultural contexts.

Thirdly, by studying such short folklore forms as proverbs and sayings, we can trace their genesis over time, and, as a result, identify the characteristic features of recording events, phenomena and processes that are meaningful to the people, as well as significant traits of character and behavior of people recorded therein.

Fourthly, it is necessary to actively involve samples of post-folklore in scientific circulation as a source for the formation of national character in modern conditions, in specific historical circumstances.

Finally, in order to study the folklore influences on the national character, it is advisable to use such a genre of fiction as Ukrainian fantasy. They are ideologically based on Ukrainian mythology and its values.

The influence of folklore on national character persists. As an example that confirms this thesis, we can mention the contemporary carol “There in Bakhmut” by Oleg Vitvitskyi (Figure 1). The carol is dedicated to Oleg Yurchenko, a comrade-in-arms of Oleg Vitvitskyi, who died in the Russian-Ukrainian war. However, the text refers to the whole of Ukraine, including its cities and villages, particularly those that have become symbols of resistance to Russian occupiers, such as Bakhmut and Mariupol. The carol contains both biblical

allusions and references to contemporary Ukrainian soldiers and children affected by war, highlighting the connection to the historical past by mentioning the Lychakiv Cemetery.

There in Bakhmut, Where arrows are heard, Where so many flowers Have already fallen... Suddenly it became quiet And resounded: “Christ is born!” “Praise Him!” The Donetsk night, A trench candle, And to all enemies In defiance, Soldiers began To sing carols: “Christ is born!” “Praise Him!” Under Huliaipole, Kutia on the table, The sky there Bloomed with a star, The wind in the steppe Leads nativity scenes: “Christ is born!” “Praise Him!” In the city of Mariupol, A ray of hope Somewhere over the Sea of Azov Rose into the sky, There they await us, Quietly singing: “Christ is born!” “Praise Him!” Under the Lviv castle, In Lychakiv Cemetery, The army of knights Found peace... But we go to the Heroes With carols: “Christ is born!” “Praise Him!” In ancient Rome, Petryk from Crimea Together with the world Celebrates Christmas! Yulia from Luhansk, Nastya from Berdyansk: “Christ is born!” “Praise Him!” And in Ternopil, Little Olya Waits for her dad From the front. Folding her hands, Wiping away tears: “Christ is born!” “Praise Him!” Our family is - All of Ukraine, And the Armed Forces, And the Territorial Defense, Under God’s banner We march to victory! “Christ is born!” “Praise Him!”	Там во Бахмуті, Де стріли чути, Де стільки цвіту Вже полягло... Враз тихо стало І залунало: «Христос Родився!» «Славімо Його!» Донецька нічка, Окопна свічка, І ворогам всім Лютим на зло, Стали солдати Колядувати: «Христос Родився!» «Славімо Його!» Під Гуляйполем Кутя на столі, Звіздою небо Там зацвіло, Вітер у степу Водить вертепи: «Христос Родився!» «Славімо Його!» В місті Марії Промінь надії Десь над Азовом В небо звело, Там нас чекають, Тихо співають: «Христос Родився!» «Славімо Його!» Під замком львівським, На Личаківським, Лицарів військо Спокій знайшло... Ми ж до Героїв Із колядою: «Христос Родився!» «Славімо Його!» В древньому Римі Петрик із Криму Разом зі світом Славить Різдво! Юля з Луганська, Настя з Бердянська: «Христос Родився!» «Славімо Його!» А в Тернополі Маленька Оля З фронту чекає Татка свого. Ручки складає, Слізки витирає: «Христос Родився!» «Славімо Його!» Наша родина –Вся Україна, І Збройні сили, І ТрО, Під Божим стягом Йдем до звитяги! «Христос Родився!» «Славімо Його!»
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Source: (There in Bakhmut. Carol for the Armed Forces, 2022).

Another vivid example is the curse song “It will be for you, enemy, as the witch says” (lyrics by Lyudmila Horova, music by Angelina Katazhynska).

Sowing in thine eye,
Sowing in the night.
Thou shall get, my foe,
By the Witch's word.

Сію тобі в очі,
Сію проти ночі
Буде тобі, враже,
Так, як відьма скаже.

How many rye seeds
Went to holy soil,
Just as many times, foe,
Shall thou be destroyed.

Скільки в святу землю
Впало зерен жита
Стільки разів буде
Тебе, враже, вбито.

How many cries, foe,
Rooster gives at night,
That shall be the count, foe,
Of days until thou die.

Скільки, враже, півень
Вночі кукуріка
Стільки днів у тебе
Доживати віка.

Unto God - the God's,
Unto foe - the foe's.
Thou shall get, my foe,
By the Witch's word.

Богові — Боже
Ворогу — вороже
Буде тобі, враже,
Так, як відьма скаже.

How many steps, foe,
Make thou in Ukraine,
That many of thy clan folk
End in early graves. <...>

Скільки зробиш, враже,
Кроків по Україні
Стільки твого ляже
Роду в домовині. <...>

Source: (Angie Kreida - Vrazhe, 2022).

The lyrics of the song were first published on the internet on April 22, 2022. At first, they were just words, but later Angelina Katazhynska, who was hiding from rocket shelling in a cellar, composed music to accompany them. The song has become a folk anthem and a genuine curse against the Russian occupiers.

Although the works have their authors, they were immediately perceived as folk creations and have become part of contemporary Ukrainian culture.

4.2 Understanding folklore in the Ukrainian literary and scientific tradition

The phenomenon of folklore has not been unchanged over time. Its origins go back to ancient times, to the pre-written period of human history. Currently, a number of scientific schools and directions have emerged that study folklore in its various manifestations, formats, and influences on various spheres of life, as well as how time, space, and circumstances have affected and are influencing the formation, transformation, and existence of folklore. Therefore, it is worthwhile to concentrate research attention on the scientific and conceptual apparatus and features of folklore as an important factor in the formation and evolution of culture before analyzing the influence of Ukrainian folklore on the national character.

When one turns to the origins of the involvement of folklore in the book or scientific tradition of Ukrainian culture, the "palm tree" is attributed to Hryhorii Skovoroda. He was the first who began to creatively rethink folk tales, folk sayings and proverbs in his literary works, imparting them with his characteristic style and philosophical perfection. The core of the Baroque thinker's philosophy was the understanding of happiness. He strongly believes that human happiness is not based on the pursuit of some ambitious, vain things, but on the satisfaction of one's essential problems and needs, and on the understanding of one's purpose and capabilities. In support of his views, he refers to the folk wisdom "If you are not born, do not aspire to be a bookworm" (Skovoroda, 1994, p. 19). Such thoughts resonate with Shevchenko's "Cherry orchard near the house..." and "Should we not then cease, my friend". That is, both Skovoroda and Shevchenko, as two luminaries and pillars of the Ukrainian spirit, having absorbed the age-old wisdom of the people, giving it a new sound, left a spiritual heritage to their descendants based on the experience of generations.

"The Encyclopedia of the History of Ukraine", posted on the website of the Institute of History of Ukraine of the National

Academy of Sciences, contains three definitions of the term "folklore":

- 1) a set of verbal, verbal-musical, musical-choreographic, game and dramatic types of folk art;
- 2) the art of words, folk literature;
- 3) all types of folk art (Chebaniuk, 2018).

According to the viewpoint of Miahkota, the formation and development of folklore, its national flavor, are related to historical events, natural landscapes, lifestyle, religious and ideological beliefs, traditions, customs and rituals, and psychological traits (Miahkota, 2011, p. 96). It is quite reasonable to include various folklore practices in contemporary cultural processes as those that, firstly, contribute to the preservation and in some cases revival of national identity and originality; secondly, not only contemporary art forms are capable of conveying deep emotional experiences, but also spiritual worldviews nurtured over centuries or even millennia are able to reflect the impulses of the contemporary world (Velev, 2009, p. 86-87)

Folklore can be considered from different perspectives of social and humanitarian studies. The historian will find in folklore a folk vision of important events, facts, phenomena, and processes (historical thoughts, historical songs, folk paintings, proverbs and folk sayings with references to historical characters or events). For a culturologist, folklore heritage is a bottomless well of customs, traditions, rituals, and mental peculiarities. An anthropologist will be able to study corporeality and social structure. A religious scholar will learn about religious and worldview concepts. The teacher will be enriched by folk practices of training and education. A philologist will admire the beauty of words and style. The musician will be fascinated by the richness of calendar and ritual songs and the variety of musical instruments (Serdeha, 2016). This is by no means an exhaustive list, but it does illustrate the richness and diversity of folklore as a source for researching many facets of human history and its influence on the present and future.

Kulchytskyi at one time classified the characteristics of the national character of Ukraine. He distinguished two of the most pronounced types of vital values that have historically been formed among Ukrainians. The first one is characterized by care and concern (a kind of universal motherhood); respect for things, everything earthly (hostility); elegiac and idyllic perception of the world. The second type is a bundle of nerves, a zigzag of emotions and feelings, an affective perception of the world, which can be called the "Cossacks' ideal" (Kulchytskyi, 1949).

It is precisely this hospitality, earthiness and dreaminess that are reflected in Ukrainian folk tales, myths, and legends. Let's consider the myth about the origin of man from entirely "earthly" substances – God molded man from the earth and woman from dough or the cosmogonic myth of the World Tree and the creation of the world by birds (Hrushevskyi, 1994). Cardiocentrism, antheism, and executiveness (or intentionality) are believed to be characteristic features of the Ukrainian character. Cardiocentrism is characterized by the perception of the world through emotionality, intuition, feelings. That is, one should think with one's heart, not with a cold mind – this is what is meant when we talk about the Ukrainian soul, the soulfulness. Antheism is a kinship with the native land (Smorzhevskya, 2021, p. 254). The manifestation of antheism resonated with every Ukrainian on February 24, 2022. Perhaps never before in Ukraine's contemporary history has the sense of national identity, along with anguish and anxiety over its possible loss, been so clearly conveyed. Executiveness is the dominance of the "feminine" in the psyche, but it is not synonymous with femininity. This is exactly the kind of care and concern that has resulted in a powerful volunteer movement around the world. If we turn to folklore sources for examples, then primarily proverbs and sayings will be of great help here.

– We'll give our lives and destiny for the people and freedom;

- Where love for the motherland is a hero, no enemy force can resist;
- Although there is hell, here is paradise, where you were born, there you will die;
- From the heart to God is the straight road;
- The heart gives the message to the heart;
- The one who gives the heart will give the money;
- Feeling homesick in the sky and on the ground;
- If we leave our land behind, our children will curse us (Plaviuk, 1946).

The “Cossacks’ ideal” is vividly reflected in the images of the Cossack Mamai and the dumas. In particular, the Cossack Mamai is the ideal of a warrior – sage who, while sitting in the Buddha pose, is always ready to fulfill his direct duty to defend his native land and his fellow countrymen. This is evidenced by the horse standing at the ready and the weapon. The Cossack Mamai is a sacralized image of folk-art culture, along with Christian icons.

As early as 1892, Franko noted the true chivalrous spirit of Ukrainian dumas, which recorded the heroic ethos of our people and immortalized the Cossack glory (Ukrainian People’s Dumas, p. 7). For instance, the duma about the escape of three brothers from Azov formed the basis of Oles Sanin’s “Mamai”. In 2003, the film was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. Although the film did not win an award at that time, we believe that its value lies in the continuity of the tradition when archetypal, sacred pages of history and culture are shown to the world by means of cinema (contemporary culture).

The existence of Ukrainians at the intersection of two worlds – the West and the East – has also left its mark on the formation of the national character and the reflection of these processes in folklore sources. This specificity is pointed out by Shakhno Y., who describes Ukrainian individualism as a synthesis of orientalism, occidentalism, and even Americanism (Shakhno, 2020, p. 143). We can also note the regional specificity in the formation of folklore, which makes it possible to study the national character, taking into account other ethnic and cultural influences. For instance, the folklore of Zakarpattia is an extremely colorful “tangle” in which Ukrainian, Slovak, Hungarian, Romanian, and Polish “threads” are intertwined in an organic synthesis. A strong manifestation of mysticism is observed in the folklore of Zakarpattia’s citizens, which researchers attribute to a strong dependence on various natural phenomena. Images associated with the element of air (bosorkanya – a witch, povirulya – the daughter of the mountain wind, sharkan – a dragon) are prevalent in Zakarpattia folklore. We can trace the following human character traits in the folklore of Zakarpattia, namely: courage, developed imagination, ingenuity, especially in difficult situations, spiritual perception of the world, irrationality through religiosity, as well as conservatism in family relations, gender stereotypes, economic management, and the desire to organize the surrounding space (Tykhovska, 2021, p. 5-8). In fact, the outlined character traits are inherent in Ukrainians, regardless of their region of residence.

“There is no flower in the world more beautiful than a poppy;
there is no kinship dearer than that of a mother.
You can buy everything – except parents.
Vodka is not a maiden, and a stepmother is not a mother.
Our kin has no end.
You can go to your own family even through water.
If you want to make your daughter a lady, be strict with her.
A thorn bush will not bear pears.
He is my son, but he has his own mind.
Children cry, and their mother’s heart aches”

“Нема у світі цвіту цвітійшого над маківочки;
нема ж й роду ріднішого від матіночки.
Усе купиш – матері, батька не купиш.
Горілка не дівка, а мачуха не мати.
У нашого роду нема переводу.”

До свого роду хоч через воду.
Коли хочеш з доні молодиці, то держи в іжових
рукавицях.
Тернина грушок не родить.
Син мій, а розум у нього свій.
Дітки плачуть, а в матері серце болить” (Pazyak, 1993).

In folk tales, there are characters who, in our opinion, very accurately reflect in an allegorical form such features of the Ukrainian character as wit, a good sense of humor, the ability to find a way out of the most difficult situation, and not to be afraid of seemingly insurmountable obstacles and life trials: Divka – semylytka, Pan Kotskyi, Ivasyk Telesyk. Let us focus on the image of Kotyhoroshko. He has already become a part of contemporary culture as a legendary figure, appearing in folk children’s fairy tales about boy heroes as well as serving as the embodiment of a contemporary Ukrainian who, in the face of a terrible foe, never gives up and boldly pursues his objective. Such an allegorical vision is very important for moral support in the context of a full-scale war. We also remember that Kotyhoroshko defeated the Dragon with one well-aimed blow of his mace.

“Took his club [Kotyhoroshko – Author], put loaves of bread and biscuits in his bag, said goodbye to his parents, and went. He went along the furrow and entered the forest. He walked and walked through the forest. He came to a large courtyard. He entered the yard, then the house. But there was no snake, only his sister Olenka at home.
– Hello there, girl! – says Kotyhoroshko.
– Hello, birkie! Why did you come here? The snake will come and eat you.
– Maybe it won’t eat me anymore. And who are you?
– I was the only daughter of my father and mother, but the snake stole me, and my six brothers went to rescue me and died.
– Where are they? – Kotyhoroshko asks her.
– The snake threw them into the dungeon. And I don’t know if they are still alive or if nothing is left of them.
– So maybe I’ll rescue you, – says Kotyhoroshko.
– But how could you rescue me? Six couldn’t do it, and you’re alone! – says Olenka.
– We’ll see! – Kotyhoroshko replies.
And he sat by the window, waiting for the snake.
The snake flies in. And as soon as he enters the house, he says:
– Ugh, it smells of human spirit.
– Of course it does, – says Kotyhoroshko. – That’s why I came.
– What do you want, lad? Shall we fight or make peace?
– No making peace! Let’s fight!
– Let’s go to the iron threshing floor!
– Let’s go!
They arrived. The snake says:
– You hit first.
– No, – Kotyhoroshko replies, – you hit first.
The snake hit him so hard that it drove him into the threshing floor up to his ankles. Kotyhoroshko pulled out his leg, swung his club, hit the snake – and drove him into the iron stake up to his knees. The snake broke free, struck Kotyhoroshko again, and now drove him into the stake up to his knees. Kotyhoroshko struck a second time, and this time he drove the snake into the stake up to his waist. And then he struck a third time – and killed him.
Then he went into the deep dungeons, set free his brothers, and they were barely alive. He took brothers, his sister Olenka, all the gold and silver that was in the snake, and they went home” (Kotygoroshko, 2020).

In our opinion, within the framework of the present research, it is also significant to articulate the influence of folklore motifs, plots, and characters on the formation and development of such a genre of contemporary artistic culture as Ukrainian fantasy. After all, literature of this kind is gaining popularity in our country among people of all ages, social and property status. That is, one can talk about its universal readership demand. This

genre is distinguished by its usage of folklore figures and themes, as well as Ukrainian mythology. And such a creative approach attracts readers. Readers find Ukrainian fantasy appealing because of its rootedness in the country, which serves as the foundation for writers to create fantastical worlds, as well as its artistic and philosophical rethinking of folklore motifs and plots (such as Hero-Antihero, Good-Evil, Fate-Failure, Freedom-Freedom, etc.), action, and dynamic writing. They reflect many archetypal features of the Ukrainian character that are intuitively felt by modern Ukrainians. In particular, mysticism, mythological and magical perception of the world, immersion in the world of nature, poetry, expectation of a miracle and belief in the help of higher powers, allegory, ritualism, utopia – all of these are inherent in the Ukrainian character (Lohvinenko, 2016).

The United Nations General Conference on Education, Science and Culture, taking place on October 17-November 16, 1989 (Paris), stated that folklore is a part of the world heritage of mankind, a powerful means of rapprochement and mutual understanding of peoples, their cultural identity; the remarkable significance of folklore for the political, social, economic, and cultural life of mankind (Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore). We are in full solidarity with this understanding of folklore in the history of human culture and in the modern processes of human development.

5 Conclusions

Ukrainian folklore is a significant part of Ukraine's cultural heritage. It has played and continues to play an important role in shaping the national character. It records the culture, history, worldview and axiology of the people. Ukrainian folklore influences the national character of Ukrainians on several levels: it shapes national consciousness and patriotism; it is associated with values and beliefs; it is a form of moral support in the context of a full-scale war. It also serves as a source of ideas for contemporary culture, in particular, Ukrainian fantasy literature and post-folklore literary works.

Studying the folklore heritage of different periods, peoples, and cultures can help better understand the history of human civilization, its historical progress, and ups and downs. Taking into account the multidirectionality of folklore genres and their influence on various forms society and socium, it seems promising to focus research attention on specific folklore works and their interaction with other areas of cultural development, in different time periods.

Researchers have considered the topic under study in various aspects and from different methodological and academic perspectives. However, the influence of folklore on the formation of national character, especially through analogies and parallels with the current social-cultural situation in Ukraine, is currently new and poorly explored. Consequently, it requires constant monitoring, recording and systematization of the data obtained, their scientific and practical interpretation, and comparative analysis with similar phenomena in other cultures, peoples and states.

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