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THE COMPARATIVE ASPECT OF FOLKLORE STUDIES

*Навчально-методичний посібник
для здобувачів другого (магістерського) рівня вищої освіти
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ВСТУП

Навчально-методичний посібник призначений для здобувачів вищої освіти другого (магістерського) рівня вищої освіти спеціальності В 11 «Філологія». Згідно з освітньою програмою «Англійська мова, німецька мова (переклад включно)» та відповідним навчальним планом, дисципліна викладається на другому курсі магістратури (3 семестр).

Навчальна дисципліна «The Comparative Aspect of Folklore Studies» («Зіставний аспект фольклорних студій») спрямована на формування у здобувачів вищої освіти системного уявлення про теоретичні засади та методологію порівняльної фольклористики. Курс передбачає ознайомлення з основними школами та напрямками компаративних досліджень, аналіз жанрового різноманіття фольклору різних народів, вивчення спільних мотивів, сюжетів, образів і символічних структур у контексті світової культурної спадщини.

Метою навчально-методичного посібника є забезпечення здобувачів необхідними теоретичними знаннями та практичними інструментами для здійснення порівняльного аналізу фольклорних явищ. Посібник покликаний сприяти розвитку навичок критичного мислення, міжкультурної комунікації, самостійної науково-дослідної роботи та застосування сучасних методів аналізу усної народної творчості.

Структура посібника охоплює основні теми курсу: теоретичні засади порівняльної фольклористики, історію становлення компаративного методу, дослідження міфів, легенд, казок, епічних творів, обрядової поезії та інших жанрів фольклору в міжкультурному вимірі. Значну увагу приділено питанням культурної взаємодії, процесам запозичення та адаптації фольклорних елементів, а також сучасним тенденціям розвитку фольклорних традицій.

Посібник містить навчально-методичні матеріали, практичні завдання, питання для самоконтролю та перелік використаної літератури. Комплекс вправ спрямований на розвиток у здобувачів вищої освіти навичок порівняльного аналізу фольклорних текстів, виявлення спільних мотивів і культурних відмінностей, інтерпретації фольклорних символів, формування міжкультурної обізнаності, а також удосконалення критичного мислення та дослідницьких компетентностей.

Організація освітнього процесу в межах навчально-методичного посібника здійснюється переважно в аудиторній формі з використанням практичних методів навчання, які спрямовані на виконання вправ, тестів, участь у дискусіях, обмін думками. Важливою є можливість інтеграції електронного навчання та застосування дистанційних освітніх технологій для розширення доступу до

матеріалів і формування цифрових компетентностей. Здобувачі опановують методи когнітивно-лінгвістичного та культурологічного аналізу для виявлення міжкультурних паралелей й відмінностей, а також для вивчення функціонування фольклорних елементів у сучасному літературному та медійному дискурсі.

LECTURE 1.

Folklore as an Object of Comparative Research: Theoretical Approaches, Methods, and Schools

Introduction

Comparative folklore studies constitute one of the most important branches of folklore scholarship. The comparative approach seeks to identify similarities and differences among folklore traditions across cultures, regions, linguistic groups, and historical periods. By examining narratives, myths, legends, songs, rituals, customs, and other forms of traditional expressive culture, scholars aim to understand both the universal features of human creativity and the unique characteristics of particular communities.

Folklore is especially suitable for comparative research because it reflects shared human experiences while simultaneously preserving local cultural identities. Comparative analysis allows researchers to investigate cultural contacts, historical migrations, diffusion of traditions, independent development of similar motifs, and the social functions of folklore in different societies.

This lecture explores the main theoretical approaches, methods, and schools that have shaped comparative folklore studies from the nineteenth century to the present day.

The Concept of Comparative Folklore Studies

Comparative folklore studies involve the systematic examination of folklore materials from different cultural contexts in order to identify patterns, relationships, and variations. The field addresses several fundamental questions:

- Why do similar stories appear in geographically distant cultures?
- How do folklore traditions spread across regions?
- What elements of folklore are culturally specific, and which are universal?
- How do historical, social, and environmental factors influence folklore development?

Comparative research seeks not only to describe similarities but also to explain them through historical, cultural, psychological, structural, or functional interpretations.

The comparative method emerged alongside the development of folklore studies as an academic discipline in the nineteenth century. Early scholars often focused on reconstructing the origins of myths and narratives. Contemporary researchers employ

a broader range of interdisciplinary approaches, integrating anthropology, linguistics, literary studies, cultural studies, history, and digital humanities [1].

Historical Development of Comparative Folklore Studies.

Early Comparative Scholarship

The origins of comparative folklore can be traced to the intellectual climate of the nineteenth century, when scholars sought to classify cultural phenomena according to evolutionary and historical principles.

One of the earliest influences was comparative philology, which demonstrated relationships among Indo-European languages. Scholars assumed that similar methods could reveal connections among myths and folklore traditions.

Comparative studies were also stimulated by colonial expansion, exploration, and the collection of ethnographic materials from different parts of the world. Researchers gained access to a vast body of narratives and customs, enabling cross-cultural comparison on an unprecedented scale.

Institutionalisation of Folklore Studies

By the late nineteenth century, folklore societies, journals, and academic institutions had emerged throughout Europe and North America. Comparative research became a central methodological principle, encouraging scholars to collect, classify, and analyze folklore systematically.

The development of international archives and motif indexes further strengthened comparative scholarship by providing tools for identifying recurring narrative patterns across cultures.

Major Theoretical Approaches.

The Mythological School

The mythological school was among the earliest approaches to comparative folklore.

Its representatives argued that folklore preserved ancient mythological beliefs inherited from earlier stages of cultural development. They often sought common Indo-European origins for myths and folktales.

The mythological approach emphasized:

- Reconstruction of ancient belief systems;
- Comparative analysis of mythological symbols;
- Linguistic evidence as a tool for interpreting folklore.

Although many of its conclusions have been criticized for excessive speculation, the mythological school established the importance of cross-cultural comparison and historical reconstruction [1].

The Evolutionary Approach

Evolutionary scholars viewed folklore as evidence of earlier stages of human cultural development.

According to this perspective:

- Societies progress through similar developmental stages;
- Folklore preserves remnants of earlier cultural forms;
- Similar folklore traditions may emerge because societies experience comparable historical processes.

The evolutionary approach significantly influenced anthropology and folklore studies during the late nineteenth century. However, later scholars criticized its ethnocentric assumptions and linear view of cultural development.

The Historical-Geographical Method

The historical-geographical method became one of the most influential approaches in comparative folklore.

Its primary objectives were:

- To trace the geographical distribution of folklore texts;
- To reconstruct earlier forms of narratives;
- To identify centers of origin and routes of diffusion.

Researchers collected numerous variants of a tale from different regions and compared them systematically. By examining similarities and differences, they attempted to reconstruct an archetype or original version.

This method contributed significantly to the development of folklore archives and classification systems.

Diffusionism

Diffusionist scholars argued that cultural elements spread from one society to another through contact, migration, trade, conquest, and communication.

According to diffusionism:

- Similar folklore motifs often result from cultural transmission;
- Cultural exchange plays a central role in folklore development;
- Historical connections among communities explain many similarities.

Diffusionist theories encouraged scholars to investigate intercultural interactions and transnational folklore networks.

Structuralism

Structuralism transformed comparative folklore studies during the twentieth century.

Structuralists argued that folklore reflects underlying cognitive structures shared by human beings. Rather than focusing primarily on origins or diffusion, they examined relationships among narrative elements.

Key assumptions include:

- Folklore possesses deep structural patterns;
- Narratives can be analyzed as systems of oppositions and transformations;
- Universal mental processes shape folklore forms.

Structural analysis has been particularly influential in the study of myths and folktales [1].

Functionalism

Functionalist scholars focus on the social functions of folklore. From this perspective, folklore serves various purposes:

- Maintaining social cohesion;
- Transmitting cultural values;
- Reinforcing collective identity;
- Providing mechanisms for conflict resolution;
- Explaining social norms and behavior.

Comparative functionalism examines how similar folklore genres perform different functions in different societies.

Performance Theory

Performance theory emerged in the late twentieth century as a reaction against purely text-centered approaches.

According to performance scholars:

- Folklore exists not only as a text but also as an event;
- Context, audience, and performer are essential components of meaning;
- Comparative research should examine actual performances rather than isolated texts.

This approach expanded comparative studies beyond narrative content to include communicative practices and social interaction.

Contemporary Interdisciplinary Approaches

Current comparative folklore studies incorporate perspectives from:

- Cultural studies;
- Gender studies;
- Postcolonial theory;
- Memory studies;
- Digital humanities;
- Cognitive science;
- Media studies.

These approaches emphasize cultural diversity, multiple interpretations, and the dynamic nature of folklore in contemporary societies [1].

Major Schools of Comparative Folklore Research ***The Finnish School***

The Finnish School developed the historical-geographical method into a sophisticated research tradition.

Its major characteristics include:

- Extensive collection of folklore variants;
- Precise documentation of sources;
- Mapping geographical distribution;
- Reconstruction of narrative history.

The Finnish School contributed significantly to international folklore classification systems and comparative methodology.

The American Historical School

American folklorists adapted comparative methods to the multicultural context of North America.

Their research emphasized:

- Cultural contacts;
- Folklore transmission;
- Ethnic traditions;
- Regional diversity.

The American tradition also contributed to performance theory and ethnographic approaches.

Structuralist Schools

Structuralist folklore scholarship developed in several countries and focused on identifying universal narrative structures.

Researchers examined:

- Narrative functions;
- Symbolic oppositions;
- Mythological systems;
- Cultural classification mechanisms.

Structuralist approaches expanded comparative research beyond historical reconstruction [4].

Anthropological Schools

Anthropological folklorists study folklore as part of broader cultural systems.

Their comparative work often investigates:

- Ritual practices;
- Social organization;
- Worldviews;
- Cultural symbolism.

Anthropological approaches emphasize fieldwork and ethnographic observation.

Contemporary International Schools

Modern comparative folklore studies are increasingly international and interdisciplinary.

Current research networks focus on:

- Globalization and folklore;
- Digital folklore;
- Migration and transnational traditions;
- Cultural heritage;
- Identity formation;
- Online communities and vernacular creativity.

These schools move beyond national frameworks and examine folklore in global contexts.

Methods of Comparative Folklore Research

Comparative Analysis

The fundamental method involves systematic comparison of folklore materials from different traditions.

Researchers examine:

- Themes;
- Motifs;
- Characters;
- Narrative structures;
- Symbols;
- Performance practices.

Typological Method

The typological method identifies recurring patterns that emerge independently in different cultures.

This approach seeks to explain similarities through:

- Shared human experiences;
- Similar social conditions;
- Common cognitive processes.

Historical Reconstruction

Historical reconstruction attempts to trace the development of folklore traditions over time. Researchers analyze:

- Earlier textual evidence;
- Historical records;
- Linguistic features;
- Cultural contacts.

Motif and Tale-Type Analysis

Motif analysis focuses on recurring narrative elements.

Tale-type analysis classifies stories according to their overall narrative structures.

These methods facilitate large-scale international comparison and remain important tools in folklore research.

Ethnographic Fieldwork

Fieldwork enables scholars to study folklore within its living social context.

Methods include:

- Participant observation;
- Interviews;
- Audio and video recording;
- Community-based research.

Ethnographic methods provide insights into contemporary folklore practices [4].

Digital Methods

Recent developments have introduced digital tools for comparative folklore research. These include:

- Digital archives;
- Geographic information systems (GIS);
- Corpus analysis;
- Network analysis;
- Computational text analysis.

Digital methods allow researchers to analyze large collections of folklore materials across multiple regions and languages.

Challenges and Ethical Considerations

Comparative folklore research faces several challenges:

Methodological Challenges

- Overemphasis on similarities while neglecting differences;
- Problems of translation and interpretation;
- Limited historical evidence;
- Incomplete documentation.

Ethical Challenges

Researchers must respect:

- Cultural ownership;
- Community rights;
- Indigenous knowledge systems;
- Intellectual property concerns.

Modern scholarship increasingly promotes collaborative and community-centered approaches to research [3].

Conclusion

Comparative folklore studies remain a vital field for understanding cultural diversity and human creativity. Throughout its history, the discipline has developed a wide range of theoretical approaches, from mythological and evolutionary theories to structuralism, functionalism, performance theory, and contemporary interdisciplinary perspectives.

Major schools such as the Finnish School, anthropological traditions, and structuralist approaches have provided valuable methods for analyzing folklore across cultural boundaries. Modern comparative folklore research combines historical, ethnographic, and digital methodologies to explore the complex processes through which traditions emerge, spread, transform, and acquire meaning.

In an increasingly interconnected world, comparative folklore studies contribute not only to academic knowledge but also to intercultural understanding, cultural preservation, and the appreciation of humanity's shared and diverse cultural heritage.

Lecture 1 Bibliography

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Questions for Checking General Understanding of Lecture 1

General Understanding

1. What is the primary goal of comparative folklore studies?
2. Why is folklore considered particularly suitable for comparative research?
3. What main questions do comparative folklorists seek to answer?
4. How did nineteenth-century comparative philology influence folklore studies?
5. What role did folklore societies and archives play in the development of comparative research?

Theoretical Approaches

1. What are the main assumptions of the mythological school?
2. How does the evolutionary approach explain similarities among folklore traditions?
3. What is the central objective of the historical-geographical method?
4. How does diffusionism interpret the spread of folklore motifs?
5. What distinguishes structuralism from historical approaches?
6. According to functionalism, what social purposes does folklore serve?
7. Why is performance theory considered a shift from text-centered research?
8. What interdisciplinary perspectives influence contemporary folklore studies?

Schools of Comparative Folklore

1. What are the defining characteristics of the Finnish School?
2. How did the American Historical School adapt comparative methods?
3. What issues are commonly studied by anthropological folklorists?
4. How do contemporary international schools differ from earlier national traditions?

Research Methods

1. What elements are typically compared in comparative folklore analysis?
2. What is the difference between the typological method and diffusionist explanations?
3. What is motif analysis?
4. Why is ethnographic fieldwork important for folklore research?
5. How have digital technologies transformed comparative folklore studies?

Critical Reflection

1. What are the main methodological challenges in comparative folklore research?
2. Why are ethical considerations important in contemporary folklore scholarship?
3. Which theoretical approach discussed in the lecture do you consider most useful for studying folklore today, and why?

Discussion Questions

1. Can similar folklore traditions emerge independently in different cultures? Provide examples.
2. Should comparative researchers focus more on similarities or differences among cultures?
3. How has globalization influenced the study of folklore?
4. What advantages and limitations do digital methods have in folklore research?
5. How can comparative folklore studies contribute to intercultural understanding in the modern world?

LECTURE 2.

Genre System of Folklore: Fairy Tale, Myth, Legend, Ballad, Proverbs and Sayings in English-Speaking and Ukrainian Traditions.

Introduction

Folklore is one of the most significant forms of cultural heritage. It encompasses traditional narratives, songs, customs, beliefs, rituals, and verbal expressions that are transmitted from generation to generation, primarily through oral tradition. Folklore reflects the worldview, values, historical experience, and collective memory of a people. It serves not only as entertainment but also as a means of education, socialization, and cultural preservation.

The study of folklore has become an important field within literary studies, anthropology, cultural studies, and linguistics. Among the many aspects of folklore, the genre system occupies a central position because it allows researchers to classify and compare various forms of folk creativity. This lecture examines the major folklore genres (fairy tales, myths, legends, ballads, proverbs, and sayings) in English-speaking and Ukrainian traditions and explores their similarities, differences, and cultural significance.

Folklore and the Concept of Genre

A genre is a category of artistic expression characterized by specific themes, structures, functions, and stylistic features. In folklore studies, genres are distinguished according to their content, form, social function, and method of transmission.

The classification of folklore genres is important because it helps scholars understand how different societies interpret reality, transmit knowledge, and preserve cultural values. Although folklore genres vary across cultures, many exhibit universal features that reveal common aspects of human experience.

The principal folklore genres examined in this lecture include:

- Fairy tales
- Myths
- Legends
- Ballads
- Proverbs
- Sayings.

Each of these genres fulfills particular cultural and communicative functions [1].

Fairy Tales

Definition and Characteristics

A fairy tale is a fictional narrative involving magical elements, supernatural beings, extraordinary events, and symbolic characters. Fairy tales usually follow a clear narrative structure in which a protagonist encounters challenges, receives assistance, overcomes obstacles, and achieves a successful resolution.

Common characteristics include:

- Magical transformations
- Supernatural helpers
- Talking animals
- Symbolic journeys
- Moral lessons
- The triumph of good over evil.

Fairy Tales in the English-Speaking Tradition

English-speaking folklore preserves a rich tradition of fairy tales. Some of the best-known examples include:

- Jack and the Beanstalk
- Tom Thumb
- Goldilocks and the Three Bears
- The Three Little Pigs.

These stories frequently emphasize individual initiative, cleverness, bravery, and social advancement. The protagonists often succeed through intelligence and perseverance rather than physical strength alone. For example, in Jack and the Beanstalk, Jack's courage and willingness to take risks ultimately lead to success. Such narratives reflect cultural appreciation for resourcefulness and self-reliance [3].

Fairy Tales in the Ukrainian Tradition

Ukrainian folklore contains numerous fairy tales featuring heroic characters and magical adventures. Notable examples include:

- Kotyhoroshko
- Ivasyk-Telesyk
- Kyrylo Kozhumiaka
- The Flying Ship.

These tales frequently emphasize collective values, family loyalty, respect for elders, and the defense of the homeland. Heroes often represent ideals of courage, justice, and service to the community.

Nature plays a significant role in Ukrainian fairy tales, where forests, rivers, animals, and supernatural creatures frequently interact with human characters [4].

Comparative Perspective

Both English and Ukrainian fairy tales feature magical events, archetypal heroes, and moral lessons. However, English tales often stress individual achievement, while Ukrainian narratives tend to emphasize communal responsibility and social solidarity.

Despite these differences, both traditions portray the victory of good over evil and promote ethical behavior.

Myths Definition and Functions

A myth is a sacred narrative that explains the origins of the world, humanity, natural phenomena, cultural institutions, or religious beliefs. Myths are deeply

connected to the worldview of a society and often serve as foundational narratives.

Myths perform several important functions:

- Explaining natural phenomena
- Providing religious and moral guidance
- Establishing social norms
- Preserving collective memory.

Mythological Traditions in the English-Speaking World

English mythology developed through the interaction of Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Christian traditions. Although England does not possess a unified mythological system comparable to ancient Greece, many mythological elements survive in folklore and literature.

Important figures include:

- King Arthur
- Merlin
- Morgan le Fay
- Various Celtic supernatural beings.

The Arthurian cycle occupies a unique position between myth and legend. It explores themes of kingship, heroism, loyalty, and the struggle between order and chaos [1].

Ukrainian Mythology

Ukrainian mythology originates primarily from pre-Christian Slavic beliefs. Many mythological figures remained present in folklore after the Christianization of Kyivan Rus.

Major mythological characters include:

- Perun, the god of thunder
- Veles, the god of the underworld and cattle
- Mokosh, the goddess of fertility
- Domovyk, the household spirit
- Mavka, a forest spirit
- Rusalka, a water spirit.

These figures demonstrate a close relationship between human life and the natural world [5].

Comparative Analysis

Both English and Ukrainian mythologies preserve traces of ancient pagan beliefs. However, Ukrainian mythology retains stronger connections to agricultural life

and seasonal cycles, whereas English mythology reflects a broader mixture of Celtic, Germanic, and Christian influences.

Legends

Definition

A legend is a traditional narrative associated with historical persons, events, or places. Although legends may contain supernatural elements, they are generally perceived as having some basis in historical reality.

English Legends

Some famous English legends include:

- King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table
- Robin Hood
- The Green Man
- The Lambton Worm.

These stories often address justice, leadership, courage, and social responsibility. Robin Hood, for example, represents resistance to injustice and defense of the poor against corrupt authority [2].

Ukrainian Legends

Ukrainian legends frequently preserve memories of historical events and national heroes. Examples include:

- The founding of Kyiv by Kyi, Shchek, Khoryv, and Lybid
- Legends about the Zaporizhian Cossacks
- Stories connected with historical battles
- Local legends associated with sacred places.

These narratives reinforce national identity and historical continuity [5].

Comparative Analysis

Many proverbs in both traditions communicate universal values such as honesty, hard work, friendship, and perseverance. Differences arise mainly from local cultural experiences, historical circumstances, and linguistic imagery.

Cultural Significance of Folklore Genres

Each folklore genre performs distinct social and cultural functions.

Fairy tales:

- Educate through symbolic narratives
- Promote moral values
- Encourage imagination.

Myths:

- Explain the world
- Support religious and cultural beliefs
- Establish collective identity.

Legends:

- Preserve historical memory
- Celebrate heroes
- Connect communities with their past.

Ballads:

- Preserve stories through music
- Express emotions
- Strengthen cultural traditions.

Proverbs and sayings:

- Transmit practical wisdom
- Regulate social behavior
- Reinforce community values.

Together, these genres create a comprehensive system through which societies preserve and transmit knowledge [1].

Conclusion

The genre system of folklore reflects both the diversity and the unity of human cultural experience. Fairy tales, myths, legends, ballads, proverbs, and sayings occupy central positions in both English-speaking and Ukrainian traditions. Although these traditions differ in historical background and cultural emphasis, they share many common themes, including heroism, morality, justice, wisdom, and the relationship between humanity and the supernatural.

Comparative analysis demonstrates that folklore functions as a powerful repository of cultural memory and identity. Through folklore genres, societies preserve their values, interpret their histories, and transmit their collective experiences to future generations. Consequently, the study of folklore remains an essential component of literary, cultural, and anthropological scholarship.

Lecture 2 Bibliography

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Questions for Checking General Understanding of Lecture 2

1. What is folklore, and why is it considered an important part of cultural heritage?
2. What are the main folklore genres discussed in the lecture?
3. What are the characteristic features of a fairy tale, and how do English and Ukrainian fairy tales differ in their focus?
4. What is a myth, and what functions do myths perform in traditional societies?
5. Name two important figures from English mythology and two figures from Ukrainian mythology.
6. How does a legend differ from a myth and a fairy tale?
7. What historical and cultural themes are commonly reflected in Ukrainian legends?
8. What are the main characteristics of a ballad, and what themes are most common in English and Ukrainian ballad traditions?
9. What is the difference between a proverb and a saying? Provide one example of each from the lecture.
10. Why is the comparative study of folklore important for understanding both universal human values and national cultural identities?

LECTURE 3.

Epic and Heroic Narratives: A Comparative Analysis of Heroic Images in European and Slavic Folklore

Introduction

Epic narratives occupy a central position in the cultural memory of many societies. They preserve collective values, historical experiences, mythological worldviews, and ideals of heroism. Across Europe and the Slavic world, epic traditions developed distinctive yet interconnected representations of heroes who embody the aspirations, fears, and ethical principles of their communities. These heroes serve not merely as protagonists of entertaining stories but as symbolic figures through whom societies articulate concepts of courage, justice, loyalty, identity, and resistance.

This lecture explores the comparative dimensions of heroic imagery in European and Slavic folklore, focusing on the functions of epic narratives, the characteristics of

heroes, their relationship with society and the supernatural, and the cultural meanings embedded in their actions [9].

The Concept of Epic Narrative

An epic narrative is a lengthy poetic or prose account that recounts heroic deeds, legendary events, or foundational moments in a culture's history. Traditionally transmitted orally before being recorded in written form, epics combine historical memory, mythology, and artistic imagination.

Key characteristics of epic narratives include:

- Heroic protagonists with exceptional abilities
- A connection between individual destiny and collective welfare
- Encounters with supernatural forces
- Moral and ethical instruction
- Preservation of cultural memory
- Formulaic language and oral performance techniques.

Epic traditions emerged throughout Europe, producing works such as:

- The Iliad
- The Odyssey
- Beowulf
- The Song of Roland
- The Nibelungenlied.

Within Slavic traditions, epic narratives include:

- Ukrainian dumas
- Serbian heroic songs
- Polish legendary narratives
- Russian byliny
- South Slavic epic cycles.

These traditions share common Indo-European roots while reflecting unique historical and cultural developments [8].

The Hero as a Cultural Ideal

The epic hero represents an idealized human figure whose qualities are admired by society. However, heroism varies according to cultural context.

Generally, epic heroes possess:

- Extraordinary physical strength
- Exceptional courage

- Loyalty to community or ruler
- Commitment to honor
- Willingness to sacrifice personal interests
- Ability to confront chaos and restore order.

The hero often functions as a mediator between the ordinary world and the supernatural realm. Through heroic actions, social values become visible and memorable [1].

Heroic Images in Classical European Epic

The Greek Hero

Ancient Greek epic established many foundational patterns of heroism.

Achilles

Achilles exemplifies martial excellence and individual glory. His heroic identity is based upon:

- Physical perfection
- Military prowess
- Pursuit of eternal fame
- Tension between personal honor and communal responsibility.

The Greek hero seeks immortality through remembrance rather than physical survival.

Odysseus

Odysseus represents a different heroic model. His defining qualities include:

- Intelligence
- Adaptability
- Strategic thinking
- Endurance.

Unlike Achilles, Odysseus survives through wisdom rather than brute force.

These contrasting figures reveal two major European heroic archetypes: the warrior and the wise adventurer [3].

Germanic and Northern European Heroes

Germanic traditions emphasize fate, loyalty, and tragic heroism.

Beowulf

Beowulf demonstrates:

- Physical strength
- Protection of society
- Readiness to confront monsters
- Acceptance of mortality.

His battles symbolize the struggle between civilization and chaos.

Siegfried

Siegfried combines human heroism with mythological elements. He acquires supernatural powers but ultimately remains vulnerable to betrayal and fate.

The Germanic hero often faces inevitable destruction, highlighting the importance of courage in the face of mortality [5].

Medieval Christian Heroes

The spread of Christianity transformed heroic ideals.

Roland

Roland embodies:

- Religious devotion
- Loyalty to sovereign authority
- Self-sacrifice
- Defense of faith.

Heroism becomes associated not only with personal honor but also with spiritual commitment.

The medieval European hero serves both earthly and divine orders [1].

Heroic Images in Slavic Folklore

Slavic heroic traditions developed within a different historical environment characterized by frontier warfare, foreign invasions, and strong communal structures. Unlike many Western European heroes, Slavic heroes frequently emphasize collective welfare over individual glory.

Heroes of East Slavic Byliny

The East Slavic bylina tradition presents heroic warriors known as bogatyrs.

Ilya Muromets

Ilya Muromets is among the most famous Slavic heroes. His narrative includes:

- Miraculous healing
- Extraordinary strength
- Protection of homeland
- Service to the people.

Unlike Achilles, whose reputation is central to his identity, Ilya's actions primarily benefit the community.

Dobrynya Nikitich

Dobrynya Nikitich combines:

- Military skill
- Diplomacy

- Wisdom.

His encounters with dragons and supernatural beings connect heroic action to mythological symbolism.

Ukrainian Cossack Heroes

Ukrainian folklore emphasizes freedom, resistance, and communal solidarity. The heroes of Ukrainian dumas often appear as:

- Defenders of the homeland
- Warriors against foreign oppression
- Protectors of Christian communities
- Embodiments of Cossack virtues.

Unlike aristocratic knights, Cossack heroes frequently emerge from common social backgrounds, reflecting ideals of social mobility and collective identity.

Their heroism is closely linked to historical struggles and national memory.

South Slavic Heroes

Serbian epic poetry provides some of the most developed heroic traditions in Europe.

Marko Kraljević

Marko Kraljević possesses:

- Superhuman strength
- Deep connection to ordinary people
- Moral complexity
- Resistance to injustice.

Unlike idealized medieval knights, Marko often displays human weaknesses, making him a relatable cultural hero.

South Slavic epics frequently emphasize resistance against foreign domination and preservation of communal identity [7].

Comparative Analysis of European and Slavic Heroes

Individualism versus Collectivism

One of the most significant distinctions concerns the relationship between hero and society.

European Tradition

Many Western European heroes seek:

- Personal glory
- Individual achievement
- Lasting reputation.

Examples include Achilles and Siegfried.

Slavic Tradition

Slavic heroes typically prioritize:

- Community welfare
- Defense of homeland
- Social responsibility.

Figures such as Ilya Muromets and Cossack heroes derive legitimacy from service rather than fame.

Relationship with Authority

European heroes often serve kings, noble houses, or divine authority. Examples are:

- Roland and Charlemagne
- Arthurian knights and the royal court.

Slavic heroes may cooperate with rulers but frequently represent the broader community rather than political institutions.

This distinction reflects differing historical experiences and social structures.

Supernatural Elements

Both traditions incorporate mythological motifs.

European heroes encounter:

- Gods
- Dragons
- Giants
- Magical weapons.

Slavic heroes confront:

- Dragons
- Demonic beings
- Shape-shifters
- Mythological monsters.

However, Slavic folklore often presents supernatural threats as dangers to the entire community, reinforcing collective values.

Attitudes Toward Fate

European epics frequently emphasize inevitable destiny. Examples include:

- Achilles' foretold death
- Beowulf's final battle
- Siegfried's tragic downfall.

Slavic heroes are less constrained by predetermined fate and more closely associated with perseverance, resilience, and practical action [2].

Functions of Heroic Narratives

Epic heroes fulfill several cultural functions.

Historical Function

They preserve collective memory and historical experience.

Educational Function

They transmit social norms and ethical values.

Political Function

They strengthen communal and national identities.

Psychological Function

They provide symbolic models for overcoming adversity.

Religious Function

They express relationships between humanity, morality, and the sacred.

Through these functions, epic narratives remain influential even in modern societies.

The Legacy of Epic Heroes in Contemporary Culture

Epic heroic archetypes continue to shape literature, cinema, and popular culture. Modern heroes often inherit characteristics from traditional epics:

- Extraordinary abilities
- Moral responsibility
- Conflict between personal desires and social obligations
- Journeys of transformation.

Contemporary fantasy literature, superhero narratives, historical novels, and national mythologies all draw upon epic traditions developed over centuries.

The persistence of these patterns demonstrates the enduring relevance of heroic storytelling [8].

Conclusion

European and Slavic epic traditions reveal both shared cultural foundations and distinctive approaches to heroism. European heroes frequently pursue individual glory, personal honor, and confrontation with fate, whereas Slavic heroes emphasize communal responsibility, defense of the homeland, and service to society. Despite these differences, both traditions portray heroes as mediators between ordinary human existence and larger moral, historical, and mythological realities.

The comparative study of heroic narratives demonstrates how folklore functions as a repository of collective values and cultural memory. By examining epic heroes across traditions, we gain deeper insight into the ways societies define courage, identity, justice, and the ideal human being.

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Questions for Checking General Understanding of Lecture 3

1. What are the main characteristics of an epic narrative, and what cultural functions does it perform within a society?
2. How does the concept of the hero in epic literature reflect the values and ideals of the community that created the narrative?
3. What are the key differences between the heroic models represented by Achilles and Odysseus in ancient Greek epic tradition?
4. How do Germanic epic heroes such as Beowulf and Siegfried demonstrate the themes of fate and mortality?
5. In what ways did the spread of Christianity influence the image of the hero in medieval European epic literature?
6. What qualities distinguish Slavic epic heroes such as Ilya Muromets and Dobrynya Nikitich from many Western European heroes?
7. How are Ukrainian Cossack heroes portrayed in folklore, and what historical and social values do they represent?
8. What role does Marko Kraljević play in South Slavic epic tradition, and why is he considered a culturally significant hero?
9. Compare the concepts of individualism and collectivism in European and Slavic heroic traditions. How do these differences shape the actions and motivations of heroes?
10. Why do epic heroes and heroic narratives remain relevant in contemporary literature, film, and popular culture? Provide examples of traditional heroic traits that continue to influence modern storytelling.

Discussion-Oriented Bonus Question

To what extent do you think modern superheroes and fantasy protagonists continue the traditions of epic heroes from European and Slavic folklore? Support your answer with examples.

LECTURE 4.

Folklore Symbols and Archetypes: Universal and National-Specific Features

Introduction

Folklore is one of the oldest forms of cultural expression, preserving collective memory, values, beliefs, and worldviews through myths, legends, fairy tales, songs, rituals, and proverbs. Two fundamental elements of folklore are symbols and archetypes, which function as carriers of cultural meaning and vehicles for transmitting social experience across generations.

While many symbols and archetypes appear across different cultures and reveal universal aspects of human experience, others reflect the unique historical, geographical, religious, and cultural circumstances of particular nations.

Understanding the interaction between universal and national-specific features in folklore enables scholars to explore both the shared foundations of humanity and the diversity of cultural identities.

The Concept of Symbol in Folklore

A symbol is an object, image, action, or phenomenon that represents meanings beyond its literal sense. Unlike a sign, which generally has a direct and fixed meaning, a symbol possesses multiple layers of interpretation and often evokes emotional, spiritual, and cultural associations.

In folklore, symbols serve several functions:

- preserving collective memory
- expressing moral and ethical values
- explaining natural and supernatural phenomena
- connecting individuals with cultural traditions
- communicating complex ideas through imagery.

Folklore symbols are deeply embedded in oral traditions and often emerge from long-term interactions between communities and their environments.

Characteristics of Folklore Symbols are:

- Polysemy – multiple meanings coexist within a single symbol
- Collective recognition – symbols are understood by members of a cultural community
- Historical continuity – symbols may persist for centuries
- Emotional resonance – symbols evoke strong psychological responses

- Cultural adaptability – symbolic meanings evolve while retaining core associations [1].

The Concept of Archetype

The term archetype gained prominence through the work of Carl Gustav Jung. According to Jung, archetypes are universal patterns, images, and motifs rooted in the collective unconscious of humanity.

Archetypes manifest themselves in myths, dreams, literature, religion, and folklore. They provide structural models through which human beings interpret their experiences.

Major Archetypes in Folklore

The Hero

The Hero archetype represents courage, transformation, and the struggle against adversity. Heroes embark on journeys, face trials, defeat monsters, and restore order. Examples include:

- King Arthur in British folklore
- Ilya Muromets in Slavic tradition
- Cú Chulainn in Irish mythology.

The Wise Old Man

This archetype embodies knowledge, guidance, and spiritual authority. Such figures assist heroes in understanding their missions and overcoming challenges.

Examples include magicians, shamans, elders, and prophetic figures.

The Great Mother

The Mother archetype symbolizes fertility, protection, nourishment, and the cycle of life.

In folklore, this archetype often appears as:

- earth goddesses
- protective maternal spirits
- female guardians of nature.

The Trickster

The Trickster challenges established norms through deception, humor, and cleverness. This figure often exposes weaknesses in social structures. Examples include:

- Anansi
- Loki
- various fox figures in European folktales.

The Shadow

The Shadow represents hidden fears, destructive impulses, and the darker side of human nature. Monsters, demons, and antagonists frequently embody this archetype [2].

Universal Folklore Symbols

Certain symbols recur across cultures despite geographical and historical separation. Their widespread appearance suggests common human experiences and psychological patterns.

Water

Water is among the most universal symbols. Common meanings include:

- life and fertility
- purification
- transformation
- rebirth.

In myths worldwide, water often serves as the boundary between worlds or the source of creation.

Tree

The tree frequently symbolizes:

- life
- growth
- cosmic order
- connection between heaven, earth, and the underworld.

The concept of the World Tree appears in numerous traditions.

Sun

The sun generally symbolizes:

- life
- divine power
- truth
- renewal
- victory over darkness.

Solar imagery is common in agricultural societies that depend on seasonal cycles.

Fire

Fire may symbolize:

- creation
- purification
- destruction
- divine presence
- human civilization.

Its dual nature reflects both constructive and destructive forces.

Journey or Road

The road symbolizes:

- personal development
- destiny
- transition
- the search for knowledge.

Many folktales are structured around journeys that transform protagonists [1].

Universal Archetypal Narratives

Folklore frequently organizes stories around recurring narrative patterns.

The Hero's Journey

The Hero's Journey follows a sequence of departure, initiation, trial, transformation, and return. This narrative structure appears in myths and folktales worldwide.

Death and Rebirth

Many traditions feature stories in which a figure symbolically or literally dies and returns, reflecting seasonal cycles and human experiences of transformation.

The Quest

The quest involves searching for a sacred object, knowledge, treasure, or spiritual truth. It represents humanity's pursuit of meaning and fulfillment.

Chaos and Order

Many myths describe the struggle between forces of chaos and forces of order. Such narratives help societies explain the origins and maintenance of social stability.

National-Specific Features of Folklore Symbols

Although universal patterns exist, folklore symbols acquire distinctive meanings within particular cultural contexts.

National-specific symbolism emerges from:

- geography
- historical experience
- religion
- economic life
- collective memory
- political development [2].

Ukrainian Folklore Symbols

Kalyna (Guelder Rose)

The guelder rose occupies a central place in Ukrainian folklore. Symbolic meanings include:

- national identity

- beauty
- family continuity
- sacrifice
- homeland.

It frequently appears in folk songs, legends, and ritual traditions.

Willow Tree

The willow symbolizes:

- resilience
- connection to native land
- spiritual protection
- renewal.

Stork

The stork often represents:

- family prosperity
- fertility
- domestic harmony
- good fortune.

Embroidery (Vyshyvanka)

Traditional embroidery functions as a symbolic system conveying:

- ancestral memory
- protection
- regional identity
- cultural continuity.

Wheat

As an agricultural symbol, wheat represents:

- abundance
- prosperity
- life
- collective labour [4].

Celtic Folklore Symbols

In Celtic traditions, symbols often emphasize:

- sacred landscapes
- natural cycles
- magical transformation.

Examples include:

- the oak tree as strength and wisdom

- the salmon as knowledge
- the spiral as eternity and renewal.

Japanese Folklore Symbols

Japanese folklore reflects strong connections to nature and seasonal awareness. Important symbols include:

- cherry blossoms (impermanence and beauty)
- cranes (longevity and happiness)
- mountains (spiritual elevation).

Native American Folklore Symbols

Many Indigenous North American traditions emphasize relationships between humans, animals, and the natural world. Common symbols include:

- eagle (spiritual vision)
- buffalo (survival and abundance)
- coyote (trickster wisdom) [1].

Archetypes and National Identity

Archetypes are universal in structure but culturally specific in expression. For example, the Hero archetype appears worldwide, yet each culture creates heroes reflecting its own values:

- warrior heroes in societies shaped by military traditions
- agricultural heroes in farming communities
- spiritual heroes in religious cultures.

Similarly, the Mother archetype may appear as:

- an earth goddess
- a national mother figure
- a protective ancestral spirit.

Thus, archetypes provide a universal framework, while local cultures supply particular meanings and narratives.

Folklore Symbols in Contemporary Culture

Folklore symbols and archetypes continue to influence modern society through:

- literature
- cinema
- visual arts

- advertising
- political discourse
- digital media.

Contemporary authors and filmmakers frequently reinterpret traditional archetypes to address modern concerns. Examples include:

- heroic narratives in fantasy literature
- trickster figures in popular culture
- symbolic representations of national identity in contemporary art.

Globalization encourages cultural exchange while also increasing interest in preserving national folklore traditions as markers of identity.

Comparative Analysis: Universal vs. National-Specific Elements

<i>Universal Features</i>	<i>National-Specific Features</i>
Rooted in common human experience	Rooted in local history and culture
Appear across multiple cultures	Unique to particular communities
Reflect psychological patterns	Reflect cultural values and traditions
Include archetypes such as Hero, Mother, Trickster	Include culturally distinctive heroes and symbols
Promote intercultural understanding	Strengthen cultural identity

The relationship between these dimensions is complementary rather than contradictory. Universal archetypes provide shared foundations, while national-specific symbols enrich cultural diversity [2].

Conclusion

Folklore symbols and archetypes constitute essential mechanisms through which societies preserve and communicate cultural knowledge. Universal symbols and archetypes reveal common aspects of human psychology and experience, while national-specific manifestations reflect the diversity of historical, social, and cultural development.

The study of folklore symbolism demonstrates that cultures are simultaneously unique and interconnected. By examining both universal and national-specific features,

scholars gain deeper insights into the ways communities construct meaning, preserve identity, and interpret the human condition.

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4. Natalie Kononenko. *Ukrainian Epic and Historical Song: Folklore in Context*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019.

Questions for Checking General Understanding of Lecture 4

1. What is a folklore symbol, and how does it differ from a sign?
2. What are the main functions of symbols in folklore traditions?
3. How did Carl Jung define archetypes, and where do they manifest themselves?
4. What are the key characteristics of the Hero archetype in folklore narratives?
5. Why are water, the tree, and the sun considered universal folklore symbols?
6. What is meant by the concept of the Hero's Journey, and why is it important in folklore studies?
7. Which factors contribute to the formation of national-specific folklore symbols?
8. What symbolic meanings are associated with the guelder rose (kalyna) in Ukrainian folklore?
9. How do universal archetypes become culturally specific in different national traditions?
10. Why are folklore symbols and archetypes still relevant in contemporary culture and media?

Optional Discussion Question

Do you think globalization helps preserve folklore traditions or threatens their uniqueness? Give reasons and examples to support your opinion.

LECTURE 5.

Folklore and National Identity. Functions of Oral Folk Creativity in Culture and Language

Introduction

Folklore represents one of the oldest and most stable forms of cultural expression within human societies. It includes oral traditions such as myths, legends, fairy tales, songs, proverbs, riddles, rituals, and other forms of collective verbal art. Folklore is not only an aesthetic phenomenon but also a social and cultural mechanism through which communities preserve memory, values, and identity.

In the context of national identity, folklore plays a crucial role as a symbolic system that reflects historical experience, moral norms, worldview, and linguistic uniqueness of a people. It functions as a bridge between generations, ensuring continuity of cultural tradition.

Folklore as a Component of National Identity

National identity refers to a sense of belonging to a cultural and historical community that shares language, traditions, values, and collective memory. Folklore contributes to this identity in several fundamental ways:

Preservation of collective memory

Oral traditions transmit historical events, social experiences, and archetypal narratives that form a shared understanding of the past.

Cultural self-identification

Folklore distinguishes one ethnic or national group from another through unique symbols, motifs, and narrative structures.

Value system transmission

Folk tales and songs encode moral principles such as justice, courage, hospitality, respect for elders, and community solidarity.

Formation of linguistic identity

Folklore enriches language through metaphors, idioms, and stable expressions that reflect national worldview [1].

Main Functions of Oral Folk Creativity

Oral folk creativity performs multiple interconnected functions in culture and language:

Cognitive function

Folklore serves as a way of understanding the world. Through myths and legends, early societies explained natural phenomena, human origins, and moral order.

Educational (didactic) function

Folk narratives often contain explicit or implicit moral lessons. Fairy tales, for example, teach ethical behavior, social norms, and consequences of actions.

Cultural-preservative function

Oral traditions preserve cultural codes, rituals, and historical knowledge that might otherwise be lost in written form.

Communicative function

Folklore acts as a medium of communication within communities, strengthening social bonds and collective identity.

Aesthetic function

Folk art demonstrates artistic creativity through rhythm, repetition, symbolism, and metaphor, contributing to the development of aesthetic perception.

Linguistic function

Folklore is a major source of linguistic development. It preserves archaic forms of language and enriches vocabulary, phraseology, and stylistic diversity [5].

Folklore and Language Development

Language and folklore are deeply interconnected. Oral folk creativity often represents the earliest stage of literary language development. Through repetition, oral transmission, and variation, folklore helps stabilize linguistic norms while simultaneously allowing creative flexibility.

Key linguistic contributions of folklore include:

- Formation of idiomatic expressions and proverbs
- Preservation of dialectal features
- Development of poetic structures (rhythm, rhyme, parallelism)
- Enrichment of metaphorical thinking.

Thus, folklore functions as both a conservator and innovator of language [2].

Folklore in the Modern Cultural Context

Despite modernization and digital transformation, folklore remains relevant in contemporary culture. It continues to exist in adapted forms such as:

- National festivals and rituals
- Literature and cinema inspired by folk motifs
- Educational programs and cultural heritage projects
- Digital storytelling and online folklore archives.

Modern reinterpretations of folklore contribute to strengthening national identity in a globalized world [5].

Conclusion

Folklore is a fundamental element of cultural heritage and national identity. It performs multiple functions (cognitive, educational, communicative, aesthetic, and linguistic) ensuring the continuity of cultural memory and language development.

In the context of national identity formation, oral folk creativity acts as a powerful integrative force that unites individuals into a cultural community. Its preservation and study are essential for maintaining cultural diversity and linguistic richness in the modern world.

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Comprehension Questions for Lecture 5

1. What is folklore, and why is it considered both an aesthetic and a socio-cultural phenomenon?
2. How does folklore contribute to the formation and preservation of national identity?
3. In what ways does oral folk creativity transmit collective historical memory?
4. What role does folklore play in shaping a community's value system and moral norms?
5. How does folklore function as a means of cultural self-identification among different ethnic or national groups?
6. What are the main cognitive functions of folklore in traditional societies?
7. How does the didactic (educational) function of folklore manifest in genres such as fairy tales or legends?
8. In what ways does folklore contribute to the development and enrichment of language?
9. Why can folklore be described as both a conservative and innovative force in linguistic development?
10. How is folklore adapted and transformed in the modern cultural and digital context?

LECTURE 6.

Musical-Poetic Genres: Folk Song in the English-Speaking and Ukrainian Traditions

Introduction

Folk song represents one of the oldest and most significant forms of verbal and musical creativity in human culture. As a genre that combines poetry and music, folk song serves not only as artistic expression but also as a repository of collective memory, cultural identity, social values, and historical experience. Throughout centuries, folk songs have preserved linguistic features, emotional patterns, social norms, and cultural traditions that often remain absent from official historical records.

The study of folk songs within comparative cultural and literary contexts allows scholars to identify both universal and culture-specific features of oral traditions. This lecture examines the characteristics of folk songs in English-speaking and Ukrainian traditions, highlighting their origins, functions, thematic diversity, poetic structure, musical features, and cultural significance.

Folk Song as a Musical-Poetic Genre

Definition and Characteristics

A folk song is a traditional song transmitted primarily through oral tradition rather than written documentation. It usually emerges within a community and evolves through collective performance over generations.

The main characteristics of folk songs include:

- Oral transmission
- Collective authorship
- Variability of texts and melodies
- Close connection with everyday life
- Integration of music and poetry
- Cultural and historical significance.

Unlike literary poetry, folk songs often lack a single identifiable author. Instead, they represent the collective creativity of a community.

Functions of Folk Songs

Folk songs perform multiple social and cultural functions:

Educational Function

Songs transmit traditional knowledge, moral values, and social norms.

Historical Function

Many songs preserve information about historical events, wars, migrations, and social changes.

Ritual Function

Songs accompany important life-cycle events and seasonal celebrations.

Entertainment Function

Folk songs provide recreation and communal enjoyment.

Emotional Function

Songs express personal feelings, collective experiences, and emotional responses to life circumstances [2].

Origins and Development of Folk Songs

Folk songs originated in pre-literate societies where oral communication served as the primary means of preserving cultural knowledge.

The development of folk-song traditions was influenced by:

- Geographic conditions
- Historical experiences
- Religious beliefs
- Economic activities
- Social structures.

Although English-speaking and Ukrainian traditions developed in different historical contexts, both demonstrate the universal human need to express emotions and preserve cultural memory through song.

Folk Song in the English-Speaking Tradition

Historical Background

English folk songs emerged during the medieval period and continued developing throughout the Early Modern era.

The English-speaking folk tradition includes:

- English ballads
- Scottish folk songs
- Irish folk songs
- Welsh traditional songs
- North American folk traditions.

Many English folk songs survived through oral transmission until collectors began documenting them during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Important collectors include:

- Francis James Child
- Cecil Sharp
- Lucy Broadwood
- Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Their work helped preserve numerous traditional songs that might otherwise have disappeared [7].

Major Genres of English Folk Songs

Ballads

The ballad is perhaps the most distinctive genre of English folk poetry. Characteristics include:

- Narrative structure
- Dialogue
- Repetition

- Dramatic action
- Simple language.

Examples include:

- «Barbara Allen»
- «Sir Patrick Spens»
- «The Wife of Usher's Well»
- «Tam Lin».

Ballads often tell stories of love, tragedy, betrayal, supernatural encounters, or heroic deeds.

Work Songs

Work songs accompanied labour activities such as:

- Farming
- Fishing
- Sailing
- Mining.

These songs helped coordinate physical effort and strengthen group solidarity.

Love Songs

Love songs explore themes such as:

- Courtship
- Separation
- Longing
- Marriage.

Nature imagery frequently appears in these compositions.

Sea Shanties

Sea shanties are maritime work songs used by sailors. Their rhythmic structure coordinated collective labor aboard ships.

Lullabies

Lullabies represent one of the oldest forms of folk song and serve both practical and emotional purposes [7].

Folk Song in the Ukrainian Tradition

Historical Background

Ukrainian folk songs constitute one of the richest song traditions in Europe. Their origins extend deep into pre-Christian Slavic culture and later absorbed influences from Christianity, historical events, and regional customs.

Researchers often regard Ukrainian folk-song culture as a central component of national identity.

The tradition includes thousands of documented songs covering virtually all aspects of social and cultural life.

Major Genres of Ukrainian Folk Songs

Ritual Songs

Ritual songs accompany seasonal and family ceremonies. Examples include:

- Calendar-Ritual Songs
- Koliadky (Christmas carols)
- Shchedrivky (New Year songs)
- Vesnianky (spring songs)
- Kupalo songs.

These songs often combine Christian and pre-Christian elements.

Wedding Songs

Wedding songs accompany various stages of marriage ceremonies. They express:

- Joy
- Anxiety
- Family relationships
- Social expectations.

Historical Songs

Historical songs commemorate:

- Cossack history
- Military conflicts
- National struggles.

Many songs celebrate the exploits of Cossack heroes and reflect collective historical memory.

Dumy

The duma is a unique Ukrainian epic song genre. Characteristics include:

- Recitative style
- Narrative content
- Historical themes
- Performance by kobzars or bandurists.

Dumy preserve important aspects of Ukrainian historical consciousness.

Lyric Songs

Lyric songs express personal emotions and experiences. Common themes include:

- Love
- Family life
- Separation
- Loneliness
- Nature.

Chumak Songs

These songs reflect the experiences of Chumaks, traders who transported goods across Ukraine. Themes include:

- Travel
- Hardship
- Family separation
- Economic life [4].

Comparative Analysis of English and Ukrainian Folk Songs

Similarities

Oral Transmission

Both traditions relied primarily on oral communication before systematic collection efforts.

Collective Creativity

Songs evolved through communal participation rather than individual authorship.

Close Connection with Everyday Life

Both traditions reflect:

- Work
- Family relationships
- Love
- Historical events.

Symbolic Use of Nature

Nature imagery occupies a central place in both traditions. Examples include:

- Birds
- Rivers
- Trees
- Flowers
- Seasons.

Nature often functions as a metaphor for human emotions.

Differences

Historical Orientation

Ukrainian folk songs place greater emphasis on national history and collective struggle.

English folk songs often focus on individual stories and local events.

Ritual Richness

The Ukrainian tradition preserves a particularly extensive system of ritual songs associated with annual and family ceremonies.

Epic Tradition

The Ukrainian *duma* has no direct equivalent in English folk-song culture.

Maritime Influence

Sea shanties occupy a significant position within English folk traditions due to Britain's maritime history.

Comparable genres are less prominent in Ukrainian folklore [5].

Poetic Features of Folk Songs

Repetition

Repetition enhances memorization and musicality. Examples include:

- Refrains
- Repeated lines
- Formulaic expressions.

Parallelism

Parallel structures are especially common in Ukrainian songs. Natural phenomena are frequently paralleled with human experiences.

Symbolism

Common symbols include:

<i>English Tradition</i>	<i>Ukrainian Tradition</i>
Rose (love);	Kalyna (national identity and beauty);
Nightingale (beauty and song);	Willow (sadness);
Sea (danger and freedom).	Nightingale (love and poetic inspiration).

Imagery

Vivid imagery strengthens emotional expression and creates memorable artistic effects.

Musical Characteristics

Although textual analysis often dominates literary studies, folk songs are inseparable from their musical dimension. Common musical features include:

- Simple melodic structures
- Repetition
- Strong rhythmic organization

- Adaptability to group performance.

Ukrainian folk songs often demonstrate remarkable melodic richness and polyphonic traditions.

English folk songs frequently emphasize narrative clarity and melodic simplicity.

Cultural Significance of Folk Songs Today

Despite modernization and globalization, folk songs remain important cultural resources. Contemporary functions include:

- Preservation of cultural heritage
- National identity formation
- Academic research
- Artistic inspiration
- Intercultural dialogue.

Many contemporary musicians incorporate traditional songs into modern musical genres, contributing to the revival and reinterpretation of folk traditions.

Organizations, archives, museums, and universities continue documenting and studying folk-song heritage worldwide [3].

Conclusion

Folk songs occupy a unique position at the intersection of music, poetry, history, and cultural memory. Both English-speaking and Ukrainian traditions reveal the profound role of oral creativity in shaping collective identities and preserving historical experience.

While sharing universal characteristics such as oral transmission, communal authorship, and emotional expressiveness, the two traditions also demonstrate distinctive cultural features. English folk songs are particularly known for their ballad tradition and maritime heritage, whereas Ukrainian folk songs are distinguished by their ritual diversity, historical themes, and epic genres such as the *duma*.

Comparative study of these traditions contributes to a deeper understanding of cultural diversity and the enduring importance of folk creativity in human society.

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Comprehension Questions for Lecture 6

1. What is a folk song, and what are its main characteristics as a musical-poetic genre?
2. What social and cultural functions do folk songs perform in traditional communities?
3. How were folk songs preserved and transmitted before they were documented in written form?
4. What are the major genres of folk songs in the English-speaking tradition, and what distinguishes the ballad from other genres?
5. Who were some of the most important collectors of English folk songs, and why was their work significant?
6. What are the principal genres of Ukrainian folk songs, and what role do ritual songs play in Ukrainian culture?
7. What is a *duma*, and why is it considered a unique genre within the Ukrainian folk-song tradition?
8. What similarities can be identified between English-speaking and Ukrainian folk-song traditions?
9. What are the main differences between English-speaking and Ukrainian folk songs in terms of themes, historical orientation, and cultural functions?
10. Why do folk songs remain important in contemporary society, and how do they contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage and national identity?

LECTURE 7.

Folklore in the Contemporary Cultural Space: Interpretation in Literature, Media, and Popular Culture

Introduction

Folklore has long been recognized as one of the most important forms of cultural heritage, reflecting the values, beliefs, historical memory, and collective identity of communities. Traditionally associated with oral narratives, songs, rituals, customs, legends, myths, and folk art, folklore was transmitted from generation to generation through direct interpersonal communication. However, the development of modern technologies, globalization, mass media, and digital communication has transformed both the forms and functions of folklore.

In contemporary cultural space, folklore is no longer confined to rural communities or oral traditions. Instead, it actively participates in literature, cinema, television, advertising, social media, video games, and other forms of popular culture. Folklore becomes a source of artistic inspiration, cultural representation, commercial production, and identity formation. This lecture examines the mechanisms of folklore adaptation and reinterpretation in contemporary literature, media, and mass culture, highlighting both opportunities and challenges associated with these processes.

The Concept of Folklore in Contemporary Culture

Traditional Understanding of Folklore

The term folklore was introduced by the British scholar William J. Thoms in 1846 to denote the traditional knowledge, customs, stories, and beliefs of the people (folk). Classical folklore studies focused primarily on:

- myths and legends
- fairy tales
- epic narratives
- folk songs
- rituals and ceremonies
- proverbs and riddles
- traditional crafts and material culture.

Traditionally, folklore was characterized by:

- oral transmission
- collective authorship
- variability
- anonymity
- close connection with everyday life [1].

Folklore in the Context of Modernity

The twentieth and twenty-first centuries have expanded the understanding of folklore. Scholars now recognize that folklore continues to exist and evolve in modern societies through:

- urban legends
- internet folklore
- memes
- fan communities
- digital storytelling

- contemporary rituals and celebrations.

As a result, folklore is viewed not merely as a relic of the past but as a living and dynamic cultural phenomenon that adapts to changing social conditions.

Folklore and Literature: Modern Reinterpretations

Folklore as a Literary Source

Throughout literary history, writers have drawn inspiration from folklore. In contemporary literature, folklore often serves as:

- a source of plots and motifs
- a framework for world-building
- a means of exploring cultural identity
- a tool for social and political commentary.

Modern authors frequently reinterpret traditional stories to address contemporary issues such as gender, ethnicity, colonialism, migration, and environmental concerns [4].

Rewriting Fairy Tales

One of the most widespread literary practices is the rewriting of fairy tales. Traditional fairy tales are often transformed through:

- alternative perspectives
- psychological depth
- feminist interpretations
- postmodern irony
- intercultural adaptations.

Examples include:

- Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*
- Neil Gaiman's reinterpretations of myths and fairy tales
- Margaret Atwood's engagement with mythological themes.

These works demonstrate how folklore remains relevant by providing frameworks through which contemporary concerns can be expressed.

Mythological Narratives in Contemporary Fiction

Modern fantasy literature frequently incorporates folklore and mythology. Examples include:

- *American Gods*
- *Circe*

- The Song of Achilles.

Such works blend traditional mythological structures with modern narrative techniques, allowing ancient stories to resonate with contemporary readers [7].

Folklore in Cinema and Television

Adaptation of Folk Narratives

Film and television have become powerful vehicles for folklore transmission. Folklore appears in visual media through:

- direct adaptations of folk tales
- mythological fantasy films
- supernatural narratives
- historical dramas
- animated productions.

Visual storytelling allows folklore to reach global audiences and acquire new meanings.

Folklore in Animated Films

Animation has played a crucial role in popularizing folklore among younger audiences. Many animated films are based on folk narratives:

- Frozen
- Moana
- Brave.

Although these productions often modify original traditions, they contribute to public awareness of folklore and mythology [5].

Folk Horror and Contemporary Cinema

A significant trend in contemporary cinema is the emergence of folk horror. Characteristics include:

- rural settings
- ancient rituals
- supernatural beliefs
- tensions between tradition and modernity.

Notable examples include:

- The Wicker Man
- Midsommar.

These films explore cultural anxieties through folkloric symbols and traditions.

Folklore in Digital Media

Digital Transformation of Folklore

The internet has created new forms of folklore production and circulation. Digital folklore includes:

- memes
- viral stories
- creepypasta narratives
- social media traditions
- online legends.

Unlike traditional folklore, digital folklore spreads rapidly across geographical and cultural boundaries.

Internet Memes as Contemporary Folklore

Many scholars regard memes as a modern form of folklore because they exhibit:

- collective creation
- variation
- repetition
- social commentary.

Memes function as tools of communication, humor, political expression, and community formation. Their rapid adaptation mirrors the traditional variability of oral folklore.

Creepypasta and Digital Legends

Digital platforms have generated new forms of storytelling. Creepypasta stories often resemble traditional legends because they:

- circulate anonymously
- evolve through retelling
- address contemporary fears
- blur boundaries between fact and fiction.

Examples include narratives surrounding:

- Slender Man
- various haunted websites and digital myths.

These phenomena demonstrate how folklore continues to emerge in technologically advanced societies [5].

Folklore in Video Games

Interactive Storytelling and Folklore

Video games represent one of the most innovative spaces for folklore adaptation. Developers use folklore to create:

- immersive worlds
- compelling narratives
- recognizable archetypes
- culturally meaningful experiences.

Mythological and Folkloric Themes

Examples include:

- God of War;
- The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt;
- Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice.

These games reinterpret Norse, Slavic, Celtic, and other mythological traditions through interactive narratives.

Cultural Preservation Through Gaming

Video games can contribute to cultural preservation by:

- introducing players to traditional narratives
- revitalizing endangered folklore
- promoting intercultural understanding
- encouraging interest in cultural heritage.

At the same time, commercialization may simplify or distort traditional meanings [5].

Folklore in Popular Culture and Consumer Society

Commercialization of Folklore

In contemporary society, folklore often becomes a commercial resource. Folkloric symbols appear in:

- tourism
- fashion
- advertising
- branding
- entertainment industries.

Cultural elements that once held ritual significance may be transformed into marketable products.

Cultural Identity and Heritage Branding

Many nations utilize folklore to promote cultural identity. Folklore contributes to:

- national branding
- cultural diplomacy
- heritage tourism
- regional development.

Examples include the use of traditional costumes, folk festivals, and legendary figures in marketing campaigns.

Ethical Challenges

The commercialization of folklore raises several concerns:

- cultural appropriation
- loss of authenticity
- simplification of traditions
- unequal economic benefits.

These issues have become increasingly important in global discussions about cultural heritage management [7].

Folklore, Identity, and Cultural Memory

Folklore as a Tool of Identity Formation

Folklore remains a powerful means of constructing individual and collective identities. It helps communities:

- preserve historical memory
- maintain cultural continuity
- strengthen social cohesion
- negotiate cultural change.

Folklore in Multicultural Societies

In multicultural contexts, folklore serves as a medium for intercultural dialogue. Folkloric traditions can:

- facilitate cultural exchange
- promote mutual understanding
- support minority cultural expression
- preserve linguistic diversity.

Folklore and Globalization

Globalization creates both opportunities and challenges for folklore.

Positive effects include:

- wider dissemination
- international recognition
- digital preservation.

Potential risks include:

- homogenization
- commercialization
- cultural displacement.

The future of folklore depends on balancing innovation with respect for traditional cultural contexts [6].

Conclusion

Folklore remains a vital component of contemporary culture despite profound social and technological transformations. Rather than disappearing, folklore adapts to new environments and media. In literature, folklore provides narrative structures and symbolic frameworks for addressing modern concerns. In cinema and television, it reaches global audiences through visual storytelling. In digital media, folklore evolves into memes, internet legends, and participatory cultural practices. Video games create interactive experiences based on traditional myths and narratives, while popular culture continually reinterprets folklore for commercial and ideological purposes.

The study of folklore in contemporary cultural space demonstrates that tradition and modernity are not opposing forces. Instead, they interact dynamically, producing new forms of cultural expression that preserve connections with the past while responding to the demands of the present. Understanding these processes is essential for appreciating the role of folklore in shaping cultural identities, collective memory, and creative innovation in the twenty-first century.

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Questions for General Comprehension of Lecture 7

1. How has the understanding of folklore changed from its traditional definition to its contemporary interpretation?
2. What are the main characteristics of traditional folklore, and how do they differ from modern forms of folklore?
3. Why is folklore considered a living and dynamic cultural phenomenon in the twenty-first century?
4. In what ways do contemporary writers use folklore and mythological narratives in literature?
5. How do modern adaptations of fairy tales differ from their traditional versions?
6. What role do cinema and television play in the preservation and transformation of folklore?
7. Why do scholars often describe internet memes and digital legends as forms of contemporary folklore?
8. How do video games contribute to the reinterpretation and preservation of folklore and mythology?
9. What are the advantages and potential risks of the commercialization of folklore in popular culture and consumer society?
10. How does folklore contribute to the formation of cultural identity and the preservation of collective memory in contemporary societies?

SEMINARS

SEMINAR 1.

Folklore as an Object of Comparative Research: Theoretical Approaches, Methods, and Schools

Assignment 1. Concept Check Quiz.

Choose the correct answer for each question.

1. What is the primary purpose of comparative folklore studies?
 - a) To preserve folklore in museums only
 - b) To compare folklore traditions and explain similarities and differences among them
 - c) To translate folklore texts into modern languages
 - d) To classify folklore according to literary genres only.

2. Which school developed the historical-geographical method?
 - a) Structuralist School
 - b) Anthropological School
 - c) Finnish School
 - d) Functionalist School.

3. According to diffusionism, similar folklore motifs appear because of:
 - a) Random coincidence
 - b) Cultural transmission and contact
 - c) Biological inheritance
 - d) Climate conditions only.

4. Which approach focuses on the social functions of folklore?
 - a) Structuralism
 - b) Mythological School
 - c) Functionalism
 - d) Diffusionism.

5. Performance theory emphasizes:
 - a) Reconstruction of original texts
 - b) Linguistic analysis only
 - c) Folklore as a social event involving performers and audiences
 - d) Classification of motifs.

6. Which modern methodology allows scholars to analyze large digital folklore collections?
 - a) Comparative philology
 - b) Digital humanities
 - c) Evolutionism
 - d) Mythological reconstruction.

Assignment 2. Comparative Analysis Table.

Complete the table by comparing the theoretical approaches discussed in the lecture.

Approach	Mythological School	Historical-Geographical Method	Structuralism	Functionalism	Performance Theory
Main Research Focus					
Key Question					
Strengths					
Limitations					

Requirements:

1. Fill in all columns.
2. Use complete academic sentences or concise academic phrases.
3. Include at least one strength and one limitation for each approach.
4. Length: 250–350 words.

Assignment 3. Case Study Analysis.

Read the case and answer the questions.

Case: Stories about a heroic dragon-slayer can be found in many cultures, including European, Middle Eastern, and Asian traditions. In each version, a hero defeats a dangerous creature and restores order to society.

Questions:

1. How would a diffusionist scholar explain the presence of this narrative in different cultures?
2. How would a structuralist scholar interpret the story?
3. How would a functionalist scholar analyze the social role of the narrative?
4. Which explanation do you find most convincing? Justify your answer.
5. Can multiple approaches be combined in the analysis of the same folklore text? Why or why not?

Requirements

1. Use concepts from the lecture.
2. Support your answers with theoretical arguments.
3. Demonstrate understanding of at least three theoretical approaches.
4. Length: 400–500 words.

Assignment 4. Reflective Mini-Essay.

Topic: «The Relevance of Comparative Folklore Studies in the Twenty-First Century».

Guiding Questions:

1. Why is comparative folklore research still important today?
2. How does globalization influence folklore traditions?
3. What role do digital technologies play in folklore preservation and research?
4. Can comparative folklore studies contribute to intercultural dialogue and understanding?
5. What challenges do researchers face when comparing traditions from different cultures?

Requirements:

1. Present a clear thesis statement.
2. Refer to at least three concepts discussed in the lecture.
3. Include your own critical reflections.
4. Use formal academic English.
5. Length: 200–250 words.

Optional Advanced Task (for Honors).

Research Exercise:

1. Choose one folktale, legend, myth, or ritual tradition that exists in at least two different cultures.
2. Compare the versions using one of the approaches discussed in the lecture (historical-geographical, structuralist, functionalist, performance-based, etc.).

Requirements

1. Describe the folklore material.
2. Explain why the chosen theoretical approach is appropriate.
3. Identify similarities and differences.
4. Draw conclusions regarding cultural transmission, adaptation, or universality.
5. Length: 1,000–1,500 words.

SEMINAR 2.

Genre System of Folklore: Fairy Tale, Myth, Legend, Ballad, Proverbs and Sayings in English-Speaking and Ukrainian Traditions.

Assignment 1. Multiple-Choice Questions.

Choose the correct answer.

1. Which folklore genre primarily explains the origins of the world and natural phenomena?
 - a) Fairy tale
 - b) Ballad
 - c) Myth
 - d) Proverb.

2. Which of the following is a characteristic feature of a ballad?
- a) Scientific explanation
 - b) Narrative song
 - c) Historical document
 - d) Religious ritual.
3. Which character belongs to Ukrainian mythology?
- a) Merlin
 - b) Robin Hood
 - c) Mavka
 - d) King Arthur.
4. What is the main function of proverbs?
- a) Entertainment only
 - b) Recording historical events
 - c) Expressing folk wisdom and moral lessons
 - d) Explaining natural phenomena.
5. Which of the following is an example of an English fairy tale?
- a) Kotyhoroshko
 - b) Ivasyk-Telesyk
 - c) Jack and the Beanstalk
 - d) Kyrylo Kozhumiaka.

Assignment 2. Matching Exercise

Match the folklore genre with its definition.

Genre

- 1. Fairy Tale
- 2. Myth
- 3. Legend
- 4. Ballad
- 5. Proverb

Definition

- A. A traditional narrative associated with historical persons or events
- B. A short expression of folk wisdom
- C. A fictional story involving magic and supernatural elements
- D. A sacred story explaining origins or natural phenomena
- E. A narrative song telling a story

Assignment 3. Comparative Analysis

Complete the table by identifying similarities and differences between English-speaking and Ukrainian folklore traditions.

Folklore Genre	<i>English-Speaking Tradition</i>	<i>Ukrainian Tradition</i>
Fairy Tale		
Myth		
Legend		
Ballad		

Write at least two characteristic features for each tradition.

Assignment 4. Short Essay / Discussion Task.

Write a short essay (200–250 words) on one of the following topics:

1. Compare the role of heroes in English and Ukrainian fairy tales.
2. Explain how myths reflect the worldview of a society.
3. Discuss the importance of legends in preserving national identity.
4. Analyze the similarities and differences between English and Ukrainian ballads.

SEMINAR 3.

Epic and Heroic Narratives: A Comparative Analysis of Heroic Images in European and Slavic Folklore»

Assignment 1. Multiple-Choice Questions.

Choose the correct answer.

1. Which characteristic is typical of an epic hero?
 - a) Ordinary abilities and everyday concerns
 - b) Exceptional abilities and service to a larger cause
 - c) Complete rejection of social values
 - d) Lack of moral responsibility.
2. Which Greek hero is primarily associated with intelligence and strategic thinking?
 - a) Achilles
 - b) Beowulf
 - c) Odysseus
 - d) Roland.
3. Which value is most strongly emphasized in Slavic heroic traditions?
 - a) Individual fame
 - b) Personal wealth

- c) Community welfare
- d) Political power.

4. Which hero is a central figure in the East Slavic bylina tradition?

- a) Siegfried
- b) Roland
- c) Ilya Muromets
- d) Odysseus.

5. Medieval Christian heroes are often characterized by:

- a) Religious devotion and loyalty
- b) Rejection of authority
- c) Pursuit of personal pleasure
- d) Isolation from society.

Assignment 2. Matching Exercise.

Match the hero with the correct description.

Hero:

- 1. Achilles
- 2. Odysseus
- 3. Roland
- 4. Ilya Muromets

Description:

- A. Defender of Christian faith and loyal knight
- B. East Slavic hero known for strength and protection of the homeland
- C. Greek hero famous for intelligence and cunning
- D. Greek warrior seeking eternal glory

Assignment 3. Short-Answer Questions.

Provide brief answers (2–4 sentences).

- 1. What is the difference between individualistic and collectivistic models of heroism?
- 2. Why are supernatural elements important in epic narratives?
- 3. How does Beowulf represent the struggle between civilization and chaos?
- 4. What historical values are reflected in Ukrainian Cossack heroic narratives?
- 5. Why do epic heroes remain relevant in modern culture?

Assignment 4. Comparative Analysis Essay.

Writing Assignment (250–350 words)

Topic: «Compare a European epic hero and a Slavic epic hero discussed in the lecture».

Analyze their motivations, relationship with society, and the values they represent.

Explain what these differences reveal about the cultures that produced them.

Suggested Hero Pairs:

- Achilles and Ilya Muromets
- Odysseus and Marko Kraljević
- Roland and a Ukrainian Cossack hero
- Beowulf and Dobrynya Nikitich.

Optional Creative Task

Imagine that Achilles and Ilya Muromets meet and discuss what it means to be a true hero. Write a dialogue (200–300 words) in which both heroes explain their values and goals. Use information from the lecture to support their arguments.

SEMINAR 4.

Folklore Symbols and Archetypes: **Universal and National-Specific Features**

Assignment 1. Multiple-Choice Test.

Choose the correct answer.

1. A folklore symbol is:
 - a) a mathematical formula
 - b) an image or object that carries meanings beyond its literal sense
 - c) a historical document
 - d) a grammatical structure.
2. According to Jung, archetypes originate from:
 - a) individual memory
 - b) political ideology
 - c) the collective unconscious
 - d) economic systems.
3. Which archetype typically represents wisdom and guidance?
 - a) The Trickster
 - b) The Shadow
 - c) The Hero
 - d) The Wise Old Man.
4. Which of the following is considered a universal folklore symbol?
 - a) Kalyna
 - b) Vyshyvanka
 - c) Water
 - d) Stork.
5. In Ukrainian folklore, wheat primarily symbolizes:
 - a) warfare
 - b) prosperity and abundance

- c) mystery
- d) isolation.

Assignment 2. Matching Exercise.

Match the symbol or archetype (A–H) with its meaning (1–8).

Archetypes:

- A. Water
- B. Hero
- C. Kalyna
- D. Great Mother
- E. Tree
- F. Trickster
- G. Wise Old Man
- H. Sun

Meanings:

- 1. National identity and homeland
- 2. Fertility, protection, nurturing
- 3. Transformation and purification
- 4. Wisdom and guidance
- 5. Courage and overcoming challenges
- 6. Connection between different worlds
- 7. Challenges social norms through cleverness
- 8. Life, renewal, and divine power.

Assignment 3. Short-Answer Questions.

Answer each question in 3–5 sentences.

Explain the difference between universal and national-specific folklore symbols.

- 1. Why do scholars consider the Hero archetype universal?

Describe the symbolic significance of kalyna in Ukrainian folklore.

- 2. How does the Trickster archetype function in folklore narratives?

Give two examples of folklore symbols from cultures other than your own and explain their meanings.

Assignment 4. Analytical and Creative Assignment.

Option A: Comparative Analysis

Write a short essay (250–300 words) comparing:

- one universal folklore symbol (e.g., water, fire, tree, sun);
- one national-specific folklore symbol from any culture.

In your analysis, discuss:

- symbolic meanings;
- cultural context;
- similarities and differences;
- the role of each symbol in preserving cultural identity.

Option B: Folklore Symbol Presentation

Prepare a 5-minute presentation on a folklore symbol or archetype from your national culture. Include:

- historical background;
- symbolic meanings;
- examples from folklore (songs, tales, legends, rituals);
- comparison with a similar symbol or archetype in another culture.

SEMINAR 5.

Folklore and National Identity. Functions of Oral Folk Creativity in Culture and Language

Assignment 1. Define folklore and list its main forms.

Name at least five functions of oral folk creativity mentioned in the lecture.
What is meant by “national identity” in the context of folklore?

List three ways in which folklore preserves collective memory.

Assignment 2. Explain how folklore contributes to the formation of moral values in society.

Analyze the relationship between language and folklore development.
Why is folklore considered a bridge between generations?
How does folklore differentiate one national culture from another?

Assignment 3. Compare the cognitive and didactic functions of folklore.

Discuss similarities and differences between folklore as a cultural phenomenon and written literature.
In what ways can folklore be both a conservative and an innovative cultural force?
Compare traditional oral folklore with its modern digital forms.

Assignment 4. Collect and analyze three proverbs from your native language and explain their cultural meaning.

Prepare a short presentation on how folklore is used in modern media (films, music, games).
Conduct a mini-research: identify one folk tale and analyze its moral and symbolic structure.
Create a short folk-style narrative (story, legend, or parable) reflecting a modern social issue.

SEMINAR 6.
Musical-Poetic Genres: Folk Song
in the English-Speaking and Ukrainian Traditions

Assignment 1. Multiple-Choice Questions.

Choose the correct answer.

1. Which of the following is NOT a characteristic of folk songs?
 - a) Oral transmission
 - b) Collective authorship
 - c) Fixed and unchangeable text
 - d) Cultural significance.

2. Which genre is most closely associated with the English folk-song tradition?
 - a) Duma
 - b) Ballad
 - c) Vesnianka
 - d) Koliadka.

3. What is the primary function of sea shanties?
 - a) Religious worship
 - b) Storytelling for children
 - c) Coordinating sailors' work
 - d) Wedding ceremonies.

4. Which genre is unique to the Ukrainian folk-song tradition?
 - a) Ballad
 - b) Lullaby
 - c) Duma
 - d) Love song.

5. What symbol is commonly associated with Ukrainian folk songs?
 - a) Oak
 - b) Kalyna
 - c) Heather
 - d) Thistle.

Assignment 2. Matching Exercise.

Match the genre with its description.

<i>Genre</i>	<i>Description</i>
1. Ballad	a. Maritime work song
2. Sea Shanty	b. Epic historical song performed by kobzars
3. Duma	c. Narrative folk song telling a story

4. Wedding Song	d. Accompanies marriage ceremonies
5. Lullaby	e. Song used to soothe children

Assignment 3. True or False.

Decide whether the statements are True (T) or False (F).

1. Folk songs usually have a known individual author. _____
2. Both English and Ukrainian folk songs were traditionally transmitted orally. _____
3. Sea shanties developed in agricultural communities. _____
4. Ukrainian folk songs contain a rich variety of ritual songs. _____
5. Nature symbolism is common in both English and Ukrainian folk-song traditions. _____
6. Dumy mainly focus on historical and heroic themes. _____
7. English folk songs never deal with historical events. _____
8. Folk songs continue to influence modern music. _____

Assignment 4. Discussion and Comparative Analysis.

Answer the following questions in 100–150 words each.

Compare the functions of folk songs in English-speaking and Ukrainian cultures.

What similarities can you identify?

Why is the ballad considered one of the most important genres of English folk poetry?

Explain the cultural significance of ritual songs in the Ukrainian folk tradition.

Discuss the role of nature imagery and symbolism in folk songs. Provide examples from both traditions.

In your opinion, why is it important to preserve folk-song traditions in the modern world?

SEMINAR 7.

Folklore in the Contemporary Cultural Space: Interpretation in Literature, Media, and Popular Culture

Assignment 1. Short-Answer Questions.

Provide brief answers (3–5 sentences each).

Define folklore and explain how its understanding has expanded in contemporary culture.

What is digital folklore? Give two examples.

Explain the role of folklore in contemporary literature.

How are myths and legends adapted in modern media?

What ethical issues may arise from the commercialization of folklore?

Assignment 2. Analytical Task.

Choose one traditional folktale, myth, or legend and compare it with a contemporary adaptation found in literature, film, television, or a video game.

Your analysis (500–700 words) should address:

- the main features of the original folkloric narrative;
- the changes introduced in the contemporary version;
- the reasons for these changes;
- the cultural or social messages conveyed by the adaptation;
- whether the adaptation preserves or transforms the original meaning.

Assignment 3. Discussion and Critical Thinking Task.

Discuss the following statement:

«Digital media do not destroy folklore; they create new forms of folklore».

During the discussion, consider:

- internet memes as folklore;
- online legends and creepypasta stories;
- social media traditions and challenges;
- similarities and differences between oral and digital folklore;
- the impact of technology on cultural heritage.

After the discussion, prepare a short group summary (200–300 words) presenting the main arguments and conclusions.

Assignment 4. Creative Project.

«Folklore in Contemporary Media»

Create a modern adaptation of a traditional folkloric element (fairy tale, myth, legend, folk hero, ritual, or supernatural creature).

Choose one of the following formats:

- a social media campaign;
- a short video script;
- a podcast concept;
- a graphic novel outline;
- a video game concept;
- a digital storytelling project.

Your project should include:

- A title.
- A brief description of the original folkloric source.
- An explanation of how it is adapted for a contemporary audience.
- The target audience.
- The main cultural message or value communicated by the project.

Length: 1–2 pages or a 5-minute presentation.

SEMINAR 8.
Linguistic Peculiarities of Folklore
Texts in a Comparative Perspective

Plan

1. Theoretical Foundations of Folklore Linguistics.
2. Linguistic Features of Folklore Texts.
3. Stylistic and Cultural Specificity of Folklore Language.
4. Comparative Perspective on Ukrainian and English Folklore Texts.

Assignment 1. Discussion Questions

Discuss the following questions:

1. What are the main linguistic features of folklore texts?
2. How does folklore reflect the culture and traditions of a particular community?
3. What similarities and differences can be found between Ukrainian and English folklore texts?
4. Why are repetition, symbolism, and formulaic expressions common in folklore?
5. How does oral transmission influence the language of folklore texts?

Assignment 2. Comparative Analysis Task

Read two folklore texts (one Ukrainian and one English) and compare them according to the following criteria:

Criteria	Ukrainian Folklore Text	English Folklore Text
Vocabulary		
Repetition		
Stylistic Devices		
Cultural References		
Moral Message		

Write a short paragraph (150–200 words) summarizing the similarities and differences.

Assignment 3. Vocabulary Exercise.

Match the terms with their definitions.

Term	Definition
1. Folklore	a. A phrase that is repeated in traditional texts
2. Symbolism	b. Traditional stories, songs, and customs of a culture
3. Repetition	c. The use of symbols to represent ideas
4. Oral tradition	d. Language passed from generation to generation by word of mouth
5. Formulaic expression	e. Repeated words, phrases, or structures for emphasis

Assignment 4. Creative Writing Task

Create your own short folklore text (150–200 words).

Requirements:

- Include at least three linguistic features typical of folklore texts (e.g., repetition, epithets, symbolism, formulaic expressions).
- Reflect a cultural tradition or moral lesson.
- Use simple and expressive language characteristic of oral storytelling.

Example opening:

Once upon a time, in a village surrounded by green hills, there lived a wise old woman who knew the language of birds...

Навчальне видання

ПЕЛІВАН Оксана Костянтинівна

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