

Analysis of the Typology of Mythologems and Features of Modern Myth-making

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Abstract

In the modern world, myth-making plays a key role in creating cultural identity and national consciousness, which is directly related to the cultural heritage, historical memory and traditions of the people. The purpose of the study is to consider the types of mythological images and motifs and their role in modern mythology. The following methods were used in the study: hypothetical and deductive, structural, and comparative. The results have determined that modern myth-making is characterised by the following types of mythologems: cosmogony, primitive chaos (*In illo tempore*); world axis (*Axis-mundi*); Chaoskampf; eschatology; another

earth/world *Orbis Alius*), posthumous existence; katabasis and anabasis; hero. Such a variety of images and motifs of oral folk art reflects the values, beliefs and worldview of the people, as well as their social, ideological, environmental, political, and spiritual relations. In Ukrainian folk art, as in any nation's folklore, these serve as a key to understanding history, traditions, identity, and values. Modern myth-making both continues classical mythological themes and incorporates a wider range of references and alterations in its imagery and motifs. Practical significance lies in the use of information by researchers and specialists in the field of cultural studies and mythology.

Keywords: Narrative, Image, Character, Cultural Identity, Ideology.

Introduction

Folklore and mythology combine all human spiritual wealth, such as thought, creativity, culture, and history, into a single system of traditions and beliefs. The process of emergence and development of modern mythological narratives is an inheritance of ancient mythological themes, images, motifs, and plots. V. Kravchenko (2016) and A. Oleinik (2019) consider typical differences between Ukrainian mythical plots and images, which play an important role in the formation of cultural and national values. However, the authors do not discuss the typologies of mythologems in the modern cultural space of the country.

In the modern world, mythologems play an important role in creating new narrative models that can reflect the current values, ideas, and challenges that people face in the 21st century. They trace ancient mythological archetypal patterns that originally carry cultural and folk traditions (Xidakis, 2022). By constructing time and space in the narrative, modern mythological texts creatively combine illusory and real aspects, demonstrating the fusion of the two structures. In turn, mythologems can not only awaken common emotions, but also transform and use the corresponding motif in modern society. They have a general meaning and reflect the basic principles of human nature and culture, and can also give depth and meaning to stories. Such images and motifs are important for cultural heritage and understanding of human nature. They help understand what principles and values underlie modern mythology. S. Karpenko (2020) and O. Ivanovska (2012) investigate semantic and pragmatic elements of folklore images. But the researchers do not fully reveal the main mythologems of the modern cultural space.

Globalisation and integration are changing the values of a modernised society. Today, mythological texts are created to reflect new social and political realities, and convey certain ideas that are becoming important for the world's population as a whole (Mykhailovych, 2022; Limaj et al., 2023). Modern myths are made up of elements from different cultures that mix and intertwine, creating new unique stories. These stories have many plots that are closely related to human nature, emphasising deep and complex emotions, rather than just stopping at a popular and simple description of events (Roper, 2022). Ukrainian mythology has become the foundation of a unique way of thinking through personalised stories that provide an inexhaustible source of inspiration and a strong vital sensitivity to the work of subsequent generations. Ukrainian culture

and literature, in particular, are examined through the prism of archetypes by Z.O. Yankovska and L.V. Sorochuk (2020) and Ž. Jankovska et al. (2020), however, the researchers focus only on the “wise elder” and “Earth” archetypes. T. Vlasevych (2022) considers archaic archetypes, images, and symbols of Ukrainian culture. However, the researcher does not reflect specific mythologems in the framework of Ukrainian folklore and mythology.

The purpose of the study is to analyse the types of mythologems used in the process of modern myth-making.

Materials and Methods

The theoretical and methodological basis of the research consists of the following methods: hypothetical and deductive, structural, and comparative. The hypothetical and deductive method at the stage of considering the main mythologems allowed characterising the vision of the myth-making structure in the modern framework of society, culture, and traditions. It helped to form generalised hypotheses about the historical and national consciousness of the Ukrainian people, based on the interrelationships that are the basis of myth-making. Its elements have led to the identification of relevant processes and properties of modern motives that consider the current social, political, spiritual, and ideological problems of humanity. This method allowed summarising the plots and images of Ukrainian folk art, which best demonstrate the general principles and moral values of society, considering the symbolic aspects of the main characters. It helped to form specific characteristics of Ukrainian mythological narratives in various interpretations, while providing an overview of the abilities and beliefs that depict the modern culture of myth-making. The hypothetical and deductive method has contributed to the identification of relevant ancient symbols that are interpreted and adapted to the modern system in order to fully reproduce significant values and ethical norms that reveal the vision and ideas of the people.

The structural method at the stage of forming the features of mythologems allowed understanding and deepening the concepts underlying motives, highlighting the plots of life and death, nature, magic, divine, fantastic, as well as good and evil. It helped to emphasise the existing contrast of mythological images that represent a variety of ecological, ideological, political, and social elements that cover the causal sequence in the process of myth-making. Its elements established cultural and national mechanisms of narratives, the nature of which is represented in modern Ukrainian mythology by numerous internal and external environments that are constantly changing under the influence of modernity. This method characterised the ritual phenomena of characters and heroes that determine the latest possibilities of myth-making and the plots of fairy tales according to the type of mythologem. It helped to emphasise the symbols of modern Ukrainian culture, which are part of ancient mythology and act as the main images of national identity and consciousness, taking into account their adaptation to the present.

The comparative method at the stage of forming hypotheses about the motives of mythologems allowed emphasising the main features concerning the process of myth formation within the framework of plot and figurative lines that form a single creative and cultural heritage. It generalised narrative indicators that express ancestral ideas about human nature and the world, considering the mystical and secular forces represented in modern superpowers. Its elements allowed determining the fundamental and symbolic principles of using mythologems depicting the worldview and ideology of modern people through ancient beliefs and rituals. The comparative method characterised the structure of modern myth-making, where characters and heroes symbolise certain norms and values of society through the prism of folk art. It helped establish the laws of the existence of myth through the prism of cultural and historical heritage, which is supplemented by characters from video games, cartoons, comics, TV series and films that broadcast the current globalisation processes of modern society.

Results

Folk narratives are part of the national memory, so they form an interesting substrate of the historical and cultural background in its various manifestations, including myths that convey certain customs, beliefs, knowledge and features of communities that explain life situations in the context of natural and social references. Modern Ukrainian mythology differs from traditional mythology in its combination of new images. It is rich in various subjects that are consistent with the ideas of the ancestors about the world and human nature. Traditionally, the mechanism of myth-making identifies many types of mythologems, each of which has its own characteristics and meaning (Table 1).

Table 1. Types of mythologems characteristic of Ukrainian folk culture

Type of mythologems	Examples from classical Ukrainian folklore	Examples from modern mythological texts
Cosmogony (Primordial chaos <i>In illo tempore</i>)	Carols and legends about the creation of the world	Stories and motivators about the war, the creation of a new Ukraine after the victory, and the restoration of land after the flooding of the Kakhovka reservoir.
The world axis (<i>Axis-mundi</i>)	The image is a symbol of the world tree in embroidery, in rituals, in folk riddles, songs, fairy tales “Ivasyk-Telesyk”, “Tree to the Sky”; a pillar in the fairy tale “Magic Egg”; a high	Narratives, memes, and motivators about the monumental sculpture “Mother Ukraine”

	mountain in the fairy tale “Silky Land”	
Chaoskampf	Tales of victory over monsters: “Kotyhoroshko”, “About Suchenko the Hero”, “Ivan the Wind”, “Three Brothers and the Doghead”, “About the Hero Ivan Sukhobroddenko and Nastasya the Beautiful”, “Bilokorovyi”, “Ruzhiy”, “The Tale of Luhay”, “Mamariga the Cossack”	Narratives about Putin and Mordor
Eschatology	Legend “Former giants and subsequent tiny people”; educational poem “And the stars will fall from the high sky”	Narratives about computer stops due to the change of millennia, about the “chicken flu”, “COVID-19”, the tragedy in Oleshki; legends about the nuclear bomb, memes, jokes on the topic “orgy on Shchekavystsia mountain”
Another Earth / World (<i>Orbis Alius</i>). Posthumous existence.	Rite “Grandma’s porridge”, folk ballad “Oh, whose rye is this, whose slope is this?”, lamentations, carols, fairy tales, legends, proverbs about Vyriy	Modern beliefs in reincarnation, “into an unknown dimension or world”, Paradise, Hell, Vyriy; narratives, memes about “Heavenly Army”
Katabasis / Anabasis	Fairy tales “Oh”, “Haihai”, “Ohvai”, “About the King Who Sat Underground”, “About Hrysha and the Serpent”, “The Secret of the Glass Mountain”, “About a Woman Made into a Duck”	Narratives, legends, and motivators about Ghost of Kyiv, about the incredible rescue of the military and civilians

<p>Hero</p>	<p>Legends, tales about the Cossack Mamay, folk paintings with plots “Cossack bandurist”, “Cossack-zaporozhets”, “Cossack Mamay”; legends and tales about otaman Ivan Sirko “Koshovyi Sirko”, “The Power of Sirko’s Hand”, “How Sirko Died”</p>	<p>Narratives, stories, memes, motivators about the heroes of the Russian-Ukrainian war, General Valerii Zaluzhnyi</p>
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Source: compiled by the authors.

Having evolved over at least several thousand years, folk art is known to have become a condensation of the life of the people who created it, absorbing the spirit of the epochs, features of ethnography, customs, ethnopsychology, and to a greater extent, worldview ideas and aspirations. In all scientific conclusions about folklore and folk art in general, the main idea remains the indisputable truth: “its fantasy is based on primitive mythological thinking” (Dunaevska, 2009). Like virtually all other peoples of the world, Ukrainians demonstrate a high level of existence of vernacular religion (religious life in all its manifestations, which in one way or another reflects faith in higher powers and which is practiced individually, both by people who believe and those who do not believe. Such a religion combines the meanings of both Christian and archaic mythological beliefs and ideas specific to the spiritual life and cultural traditions of many peoples, which at the level of mythologems is reflected in folk (and author’s) art from antiquity to the present (Primiano, 1995).

One of the most common mythologies in the world is cosmogonic – the creation of the world from primitive chaos (*In illo tempore*), which often appears in the form of primal waters (for example, in the Babylonian myth “Enuma Elish”, the Heliopolitan myth of the creation of the world by the god Atum-Ra, the Japanese myth of the deeds of Izanami and Izanagi) Similar mythological meanings can be traced in Ukrainian folklore. In particular, the cosmogonic plot is represented by an ancient Ukrainian Christmas carol: “Before the world began, there was no heaven and no earth, / The sea was blue, / And in the midst of the sea was a green sycamore tree, / Three doves were at the sycamore tree, / Three doves were advising, / Advising how to create the world.” / “We will go to the bottom of the sea, / We will get fine sand. / We will sow the fine sand, / It will become black earth. / We will get a golden stone, / We will sow a golden stone, / It will become a clear sky, / Clear sky, bright sunshine, / Bright sunshine, clear moon, / Clear moon, clear star, / Clear star, little stars.

The mythologem of creating a world out of primordial chaos-water also contains a legend, five variants of which were recorded by G. Bulashev (1992). Behind her, God, when there was no heaven or Earth, but only the endless sea, orders Satanael to dive to the bottom of the sea and pull out the sand from which God creates the universe. Since myth always translates the ideological dogmas of the creator people, and one of the main functions of the myth is

ideological, in modern folk art, the meaning of cosmogonic mythologems is acquired by narratives about the expected creation of a new Ukraine after the victory in the Russian-Ukrainian war of the 21st century, and the waters of the Kakhovka reservoir destroyed by the Russians appear as the personification of chaos, in particular, in stories and motivators about the restoration of the Earth after flooding.

Extremely common in Ukrainian culture is the mythologem of the axis of the world (*Axis-mundi*), which connects heaven and Earth. This mythologem is present in the cultures of almost all peoples of the Earth and is realised through images-symbols of the World Tree, mountain, pillar (for example, the Yggdrasil tree in German-Norse mythology, Mount Olympus in Greek). Most often in Ukrainian culture, it is transmitted through the image – a symbol of the World Tree, which can be seen in embroidery, rituals, folk riddles, songs, fairy tales. Thus, in riddles, the image of the World Tree symbolises time (“Oak-Oak long-lived, on it twelve branches, on each branch four nests, and in each nest seven eggs, and each has a name” (year-months-weeks – days)); ideas about life and death (“there is a tree, on the tree – flowers, under the flowers – a cauldron, above the flowers – an eagle, – plucks flowers, throws in the cauldron, there are no fewer flowers, no more flowers in the cauldron”). In the fairy tale “Ivasyk-Telesyk”, the hero escapes from a Serpent (in other versions – a Witch) by climbing a tall tree, where he is picked up by a Gosling on his wings. In the fairy tale “Tree to the Sky”, a giant tree that grows in the King’s Garden combines two worlds. At its top, a Serpent lives in the palace, it kidnaps the princess and is defeated by poor Ivan the pig farmer. In the fairy tale “Magic Egg”, the mythologem of the world axis is implemented through the symbol of the pillar in which the Serpent’s daughter is imprisoned, which helps the hero complete the most difficult tasks of the Serpent mother and use magic to defeat her and save the world. In the fairy tale “Silky State”, the symbol of the axis of the world is a high mountain on which the hero-royal son Volodymyr defeats a magical army and a Doghead to save the world. In today’s Ukraine, the mythological significance of the world axis is being given to the monumental sculpture Mother Ukraine, located on the high right bank of the Dnipro River in Kyiv, whose image as one of the symbols of the fight against the invaders and the future victory is featured on numerous memes and motivators on the Ukrainian segment of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram. Military personnel and volunteers come to the monument as a powerful magical talisman. One of the authors of the study recorded the words of a volunteer who lives in the city of Avdiivka, Donetsk Oblast, and actively helps the Ukrainian army: “I came to Kyiv to see her. This is something incredible! I was so looking forward to seeing her! I know that if I can touch her and bow to her, I will survive this war. And I did it! I am happy!” (Olena E., 39 years old, volunteer, vocational education; recorded by Olesya Naumovska on 19.11.2019 in Kyiv).

Typical of both world culture and the Ukrainian folklore tradition is the mythologem of Chaoskampf – the struggle of a deity or cultural hero with a monster that embodies chaos. Often such monsters in myths and legends are the dragon or serpent (for example, the struggle of the thunder god Baal with the monsters Lotan and Tannin in Canaan mythology; the victory of the rain, thunder and lightning god Indra over Vritra in Hindu mythology; the victory of the thunder

god Zeus over the hundred-headed dragon serpent Typhon in Greek mythology). The mythologem of Chaoskampf is plot-forming in many Ukrainian folk tales, in the centre of which is the hero's victory over a one- three-nine- twelve-headed serpent ("Kotyhoroshko", "About Suchenko the Hero", "Ivan the Wind"). Since humanity tends to anthropomorphise artistic images in folklore in the course of historical development, in fairy tales that the authors consider to be later in time, the image of the snake/monster is gradually anthropomorphised, so the antagonist of the hero is a half-man, half-dog called the Doghead ("he is huge, has the human body, but a dog's head. An eye on his forehead burns like a cinder" (the fairy tale "Three Brothers and the Doghead")); White Polan – a collective image of the highest military caste of the Polan tribe, whose palace is located "in the tenth kingdom", i.e., in another world ("He himself is white, the field is white, the hounds are white, the horses are white – everything is white" (the fairy tale "About the Hero Ivan Sukhobrozdenco and Nastasya the Beautiful")), Elbowbeard – an evil, very strong long-bearded dwarf (the fairy tales "Bilokorovyi", "Ruzhiy") or the eldest among the devils, whose power is located on the twelfth mountain in the golden hole ("The Tale of Luhai"). With the development of social relations, in some fairy tales, the image of the hero's magical antagonist is replaced by the king, who in the fairy tale plot performs the same functions as the personification of chaos – serpents (the tale "Mamaryga the Cossack"). In modern Ukrainian narratives, the image of Putin is mythologised, acquiring the meaning of a monster, a demonic creature that rules Mordor, and the victory over which will symbolise the victory of good over evil.

Humanity's fear of catastrophes has given rise and continues to give rise to eschatological mythologems, that is, mythological plots and motives about the end of the world. Often in world mythology, these mythologems are realised through stories about the Great Flood that are present in the culture of the vast majority of ancient civilisations (for example, the Sumerian myth of Ziusudra, the Welsh legend of Athan, the Philippine myth of Bagan and Wigan). The motifs of the Great Flood in Ukrainian folk legends are often combined with images of giants as the forerunners of humanity. According to these legends, the death of the giants is explained by their audacity: "Perhaps those giants would have been there even before this time, but when there was a great flood, they did not want to get into the ship, but said: "No matter what kind of flood there is, it will be up to our waists." And because of that, they were drowned" (legend "Former giants and subsequent tiny people"). Eschatological mythologems can also be implemented through stories about the world fire, the destruction of previous generations, the death of gods. In ancient Norse mythology, the end of the world comes through Ragnarok – the last battle of the gods with the forces of evil, monsters and giants called Jotuns, as well as between humans and the dead. In Ukraine, it was believed that when the world was dying, the whole earth would burn and the water would boil, and the sky would roll into a ball and fall to the ground. For example, in an ancient Ukrainian instructive poem from Podillia, the end of the world is described as follows: "And the stars will fall from the high sky, / The sea and deep wells will catch fire, / And the winds will break – and they will be very violent, / And the mountains will be demolished, which will be equal" (Rakhno, 2014). At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, there were

eschatological mythologems in Ukrainian narratives associated with fears of stopping computers due to the change of millennia, and at the beginning of the 21st century also with various diseases (“chicken flu”, “COVID-19”) that can cause the death of humanity. Today, on the one hand, the tragedy in Oleshky has acquired the mythological significance of the Great Flood, which led to numerous posts on social networks describing the horrors of flooding. On the other hand, the psychological resistance of Ukrainians against the fear of a nuclear bomb, which is constantly threatened by Russians, has produced a large number of jokes and memes united by the theme of how to spend the last moments of life. The most popular of these was a humorous meme calling for people to gather on Mount Shchekavytsia in Kyiv and have an orgy there, which began with a tweet by Natalia Piskova in 2022: “I won’t tell you a long story about how I found out about this, but there is a community in Kyiv with a chat room in Telegram that plans to gather on Shchekavytsia and have an orgy in the event of a nuclear explosion. So, keep this in mind, in case some of you have an unfulfilled sexual fantasy.” This tweet became extremely popular in various social networks, and jokes on the topic of Shchekavytsia reached the national level.

There is no doubt that there is not a single nation or tribe in the world that does not have a belief in the afterlife, a certain deity and a posthumous life. Beliefs in posthumous existence have led to the emergence of various myths, fairy tales, legends, and mythological narratives, which refer to certain loci of the other world, which can be conditionally labelled as the “kingdom of the dead”. These loci are not on Earth, but somewhere in another world / worlds (if there are several such loci in a particular culture – for example, Helmut, Valhalla and Folkwang in German-Norse mythology, Pitrioka and Rasatala in ancient Indian mythology, Ilhuicatl tonatiuh, Chichihuacuauhco, Tlalocan and Mictlan in the ancient beliefs of the Nahuas, Aztecs and other Mesoamerican Indians (the Maya, who were influenced by the Aztec culture, had similar ideas with some modifications)) and form mythologies of another earth/world (*Orbis Alius*) or posthumous existence in another hypostasis (e.g., metempsychosis). In the Ukrainian mythological tradition, the idea of the posthumous world is quite complex.

Archaeological artefacts, including the forms of burials, and folklore confirm the complex connection of ideas about death and the world of the dead: in different historical periods, Ukrainians also believed in reincarnation, which is confirmed by the forms of burials of twisted bodies in the form of an embryo or the motives for the rebirth of heroes in fairy tales (for example, in the fairy tale “Oh”: “Here Oh burned it for the third time, and sprayed the coal with living water again — and from that lazy boy became such an agile and beautiful cossack that one can neither think nor remember, except to tell in a fairy tale!”); and in the transfer of the soul to heaven, and the ashes to the ground, which stimulated its fertility, which is confirmed by cremation and burying the ashes in a jug, as well as various rites of the family ritual cycle (for example, “Grandma’s porridge” as an element of folk family rites of christening); and in metempsychoses that reflect the motives of magical transformations in fairy tales, ballads (for example, in the folk ballad “Oh, whose rye is this, whose slope is this”: “The mother saw off her son to become a soldier, / The young daughter-in-law to reap rye in the field. / She reaped,

reaped, reaped – she did not finish / And by sunrise she became a popular...”). The most “enduring” idea of the world of the dead in the folk tradition, which has not been supplanted to this day by either Christian dogma or the Soviet state policy of militant atheism, is the mythology of Vyriy, a “mythical sunny country where birds and snakes spend the winter and people live after death”, a “magical land beyond the sea” endowed with connotations of goodness, serenity, peacefulness, joy, and happiness (Zavadska et al, 2002).

The location of Vyriy is not specified and is difficult to determine, which, as M. Mayerchuk (2011) notes, repeatedly emphasised by Ukrainian researchers of different eras (“The signs of Vyriy (its location, description) do not coincide unambiguously with any binary descriptors – top or bottom, near or far, someone else’s or your own, alive or dead, dry or wet. On the contrary, scientists, independently of each other, point out their different order, unsystematic nature, that they cannot be reduced to anything in common”) – sky, forest, underground, underwater, in the east, at the end of the earth – the most frequent of these loci is “sky”, which is confirmed by numerous multi-genre folklore texts – lamentations, carols, fairy tales, legends (for example, the saying “In the seventh heaven with happiness”).

Investigating the current state of Ukrainians’ ideas about posthumous existence, in 2020, one of the authors, Olesya Naumovska, conducted a survey on the Google Form platform, which was attended by 396 people of different ages. The survey provided for the possibility of anonymous participation. To the question: “Do you believe in continuing to exist after death?”- 84.8% of respondents (336 people) answered in the affirmative, and only 15.2% (60 people) completely denied the possibility of posthumous existence. According to the results of positive perception of the continuation of life after death, votes were distributed in the following proportion: “the path of reincarnation” – 28.3% (112 responses); “in Heaven or Hell” – 25.3% (100 responses); “somewhere in the Vyriy” – 16.4% (65 responses). In addition, by answering in the affirmative, respondents had the opportunity to give an arbitrary answer about the place / form of posthumous existence, which was chosen by 14.8% (58 responses). Arbitrary answers were distributed equivalently (in descending order of gradation) between “the path of reincarnation”, “in an unknown dimension or world”, “in Heaven or Hell”, “in Vyriy” and in the philosophical sense of prolonging a person’s life in their affairs, community memory, children.

In general, the survey showed that modern ideas about posthumous existence has undergone only partial modification in comparison with the ideas of the ancestors relayed by folklore texts. The dominance of ideas about reincarnation is explained not only by the continuity of ancient pre-Christian ideas and archetypal thinking, but also by the influence of various religious and philosophical doctrines, in particular, popular trends of Hinduism, Buddhism, New Age movements. Heaven or Hell as posthumous loci in modern ideas, of course, is explained by the over-thousand-year rule of Christianity on the territory of Ukraine. At the same time, the survey showed the extreme relevance of ideas about Vyriy as a “place of life after death”, which highly confirms the archetypal myth-thinking in the modern picture of the world of Ukrainians. The intensification of military operations on the territory of Ukraine, associated with the full-scale offensive of Russia, significantly increased the number of soldiers killed at the front, which, in

turn, influenced the formation of the mythologem “Heavenly army”, which spreads both in oral speech, and in the media, social networks.

The original desire of humanity to overcome death and prolong life was formed by the mythologems of katabasis and anabasis. In ancient times, the term “katabasis” literally meant the transition to the underworld, where people went after death. In modern interpretation, the mythologem of katabasis is often interpreted as a return from the symbolic otherworld, knowledge of the truth, rebirth, and a new perception of the world (Garland, 2001). Examples of the katabasis mythologem are found in mythological texts (myths, fairy tales, legends) of many peoples of the world (for example, the Assyro-Babylonian myth about the journey of the goddess of passion and fertility Ishtar to her sister – mistress of the other world Ereshkigal; in Greek mythology – the twelfth feat of Hercules, which consisted in descending to the kingdom of Hades and bringing from there the Guardian of the other world the terrible dog Cerberus, the journey underground of the singer Orpheus to his wife Eurydice; the Japanese myth of Izanaga’s descent to the land of the dead Yomi, from where he tries to take his wife Izanami, and after an unsuccessful attempt returns to the world of the living and gives birth to the rest of the main gods of Shinto).

The fairy tale as one of the most archaic folklore genres, preserving reflections of mythological thinking, provides rich empirical material for the study of the katabasis in Ukrainian folklore. In the fairy tales “Oh”, “Haihai”, “Ohvai”, the hero descends underground, where he learns magic from the underground lord, and upon his return meets his future wife as a reward for “magic science” in the underworld; in the fairy tales “About the King Who Sat Underground”, “About Hrysha and the Serpent”, the heroes marry after descending underground, where they defeat the antagonist (serpent, man-eater). It is noteworthy that after passing a symbolic death, not only the status of heroes’ changes, but also often the appearance – they become much more beautiful than before (Naumovska, 2017b).

In addition to descending to the underworld and returning from there, the death and resurrection of the mythical hero in the texts is also implemented by the Anabasis mythologem – a journey to the upper world. Examples of such a mythologem are the Georgian (Svan) myth of Amirani and Pirimze; the myth of the Tingians (one of the peoples of the Philippines) “Wife of the Sun”; the mythological plot “How the Great Hawk Appeared” in the folklore of the Papuans of Kivai (one of the peoples of New Guinea. In Ukrainian folklore, in addition to the above-mentioned fairy tales “Ivasyk-Telesyk”, “Tree to the Sky”, “Silky Land”, the mythologem of anabasis can be traced in the fairy tales “The Secret of the Glass Mountain”, where three brothers on top of the glass mountain defeat three multi-headed snakes, free three royal daughters and eventually marry them; various versions of the fairy tale “About a Woman Made into a Duck”, in which the young wife of the prince is turned into a duck (in some versions – a goose), which flies up a tree, howls a nest and gives birth to a son who helps to break the spell and return the mother to her human form (Naumovska, 2017a). In the modern myth-making of Ukrainians, the mythologem of anabasis can be traced in the sacralisation of the collective image of pilots who defended the airspace of Kyiv in February-April 2022 and received the name “Ghost of Kyiv”. The

mythologem of katabasis is found in stories about the rescue of both military and civilian heroes (for example, a story about a boy from the Chernihiv Oblast, who, together with two brothers, was taken by the Russians to be shot in the forest, where he was forced to dig a hole, and who eventually survived and got out of the hole from under the bodies of his shot brothers).

In the culture of different eras and peoples, a significant place is occupied by myths and mythological narratives about heroes who save the world, humanity, their country, and are the embodiment of the ideal in the axiological scale of the creator people (Demchuk, 2023). The hero in mythology is a symbol of strength, courage, and faith in one's abilities (for example, Perseus, Hercules, Achilles, Aeneas and others in Greek mythology; Marduk – in Babylonian myth; celestial archer Hou-I in Chinese mythology). The hero's mythologem has become a special structure of mass consciousness, giving the development of such values as honesty, courage, loyalty, justice, humanity and becoming an example for other people who strive to achieve their dreams and goals (Kostyuk, 2013). One of the most famous traditional images of Ukrainian Heroes is the cossack, who has become the personification of heroism and reflects the spiritual strength of the Ukrainian people, freedom, and his homeland. This is the Cossack Mamai, who, according to legend, is able to overcome any obstacles and defeat enemies (Pelepeychenko et al., 2021). An extremely popular hero in folklore is the otaman Sirko, who was born with wolf teeth, had the ability to turn into a wolf and did not receive a single defeat in battles (legends "Koshovyi Sirko", "The Power of Sirko's Hand", "How Sirko Died"). According to cossack legends, even after Sirko's death, the cossacks took his hand from the grave and went into battle with it as a magic amulet.

The mythologem of heroes plays an important role in modern Ukrainian myth-making. This concept embodies strong moral and ethical values that help form a positive image of the Ukrainian people and contribute to the development of national consciousness. Also relevant in modern Ukrainian culture is the mythologem of the hero-defender, who embodies the desire to protect his country and his relatives and friends from evil and dangers. It is a symbol of unshakable will and struggle for justice and preservation of national traditions. His actions cannot be stretched out in time, he must make a decision almost instantly and at the same time demonstrate it immediately (Dokash, 2009). In addition, the motives and images of the heroes are constantly updated, mythologised, and made into legends by real historical figures – Ukrainian soldiers who defended Ukraine in the Russian-Ukrainian war of the 21st century (the most popular of them in the contemporary socio-cultural space is General Zaluzhnyi), as well as characters from Ukrainian comics, TV series, video games, cartoons and films. They reflect modern Ukrainian culture and society within an international framework, and reproduce relevant social processes, political ideologies, and views.

Thus, modern mythology is a phenomenon that, while maintaining the constant semantic core of ancient myths, develops due to the latest cultural and social mechanisms that characterise certain views and spiritual ideologies. Unlike ancient myths that were associated with religious and ceremonial traditions, modern narratives can have a wider range of motifs and themes. Myth-making plays an important role in cultural dialogue and mutual understanding between

peoples and nations. Myths and legends become the basis for creating shared values and traditions that contribute to the preservation and strengthening of cultural heritage. Ancient motifs are intertwined with today's social problems and challenges that society faces, embracing the characters of movies, video games, and TV shows, not just traditional characters. It was determined that various mythologems not only provide an opportunity to preserve and transmit Ukrainian values, but also inspire new ideas and actions. Myths and legends help create knowledge about how the world works, about feelings and emotions. Mythologems are common to different cultures and mythological systems. Their symbolic meaning has deep folk roots, which can be important for understanding rituals and traditions. An important feature of modern myth-making is their ability to transform and adapt due to the latest conditions of society. The mythologem can change over time and adapt to different cultural contexts.

Discussion

Myths, as an important cultural heritage that emerged in the early days of human existence, were passed down from generation to generation, especially in oral folk tales. They not only express the long historical and cultural memory of a country or nation, but also carry relevant traditions that form the national spirit. Countless myths of various ethnic groups well reflect popular trends in the process of human civilisation. J. Mohigul (2022) suggests that as one of the most important carriers for expressing and reflecting the consciousness of cultural identity, modern mythology is numerous, rich in content and diverse in form. In terms of types, it includes myths about the origin of the gods, the creation of humans, animals and plants, countries and nations, disasters and wars. Varieties of myths are not isolated, on the contrary, each idea can be integrated into the historical facts of solidarity, mutual assistance, cultural exchange and joint struggle between regions and nationalities, expressing the historical and spiritual picture of social development (Jeong et al., 2023). In particular, the living environment and cultural ecology not only form a large number of mythological narratives with the same theme and similar content, but also consciously integrate ethnic cultures into mythological narratives. As a specific cultural phenomenon, modern myth-making is influenced by various factors passed down from generation to generation. When comparing the data, it is noted that the features and trends of creating modern mythological narratives are inextricably linked with cultural and spiritual aspects that form the basis of motives and images.

According to J.G. Frazer (2004), ancient culture has contributed to the high adaptability of mythology to modern folk existence, forming numerous channels and dimensions to reflect life and express emotions. Based on this premise, the hero may have certain from his surroundings. When all the characters are at the limit of their strength, it is then that a move or descent into hell is necessary, forcing the character to rethink themselves and their mission. In the process of heroic configuration, the symbolic death reflected by katabasis enhances the process of

transforming the overall character of the character into a heroic one. In addition, the entrance to the underworld symbolises heroic purification, its peak and reaching full maturity, since it is the dominant of two worlds – the surface aboveground and the underground. Thus, the heroic motive of displacement serves to reorient a person lost due to their human state of doubt. The hero's doubt, however, is softened by this encounter with himself, expressed through katabasis or anabasis. The function of progression to hell has become a motif that goes beyond its articulating purpose in the plot, but offers a second level of progression – the evolution of a character who, in a way, returns the lost hope to the human condition. Thus, mythological discourse has a diverse catalogue of elements that go beyond the simple literary clichés that reach the historical centre. The findings of the researcher coincide with the conclusions obtained in this paper, describing the significant influence of ancient mythology, which identifies modern motives and worldviews of fairy-tale discourses.

According to E.B. Tylor (1889), the myth of any nation goes through a long process of formation from the beginning of its birth. Generations of ancestors struggled to achieve their dreams, but they did not abandon the myth, but considered it a kind of cultural belief and a force to move forward. The identification and belief of representatives of different nationalities has created a certain kinship, which is a cultural representation of the group's sense of belonging and pride and contributes to the strengthening of internal cohesion. The modern system of myth-making constructs and accumulates traditional cultural symbols of the nation. As a classic creation of traditional structure, mythology has made an outstanding contribution to human civilisation and national culture by creating a series of consensual symbols. They not only become the main motives for the various creations of subsequent generations, but also form a common will and a high degree of identity. In general, the rich narratives of myths have formed a great national spirit with patriotism at its core, which is one of the most important forms of expressing cultural identity and confidence. In cultural reproduction and positioning of identity, mythological narratives reflect the views of the creator people on life, values and worldviews that correspond to the development of time. The mythological and philosophical connection is expressed as the key to the expression of mythologems, which can be clearly traced in the concepts of guilt and fall, purification and ascension, death and liberation (Kulumzhanov et al., 2021). Accordingly, the analysis of hypotheses emphasises that modern mechanisms of myth-making depend on many cultural, national, traditional, and spiritual aspects that are intertwined in mythological typology and symbolism.

J. Campbell et al. (1991) emphasise that through a mysterious puzzle based on the interplay of different episodes, which are fragments of the existence of divine beings, the lives, difficulties, sufferings, exploits and glorious deaths of heroes, emotions and actions reflect a panoramic vision of another reality embodied in myths. Myths are understood here as traditional stories that proclaim “the unforgettable and paradigmatic action of exceptional characters, gods, and heroes in a prestigious and distant time.” They are also tools of mediation between the world of deities and the world of people, as the only communication mechanisms of polysemic and variable reality. It is these symbolic and metaphorical connections that express a certain vision of the

world, reinterpreted with the help of many examples of modern mythology. In turn, the logos, which is a differentiated way of explaining the world, moves through allegorism to achieve modern trends with the inclusion and reinterpretation of figurative figures. In short, the motifs of mythology mosaic expand the historical canvas and form the context, linking the past and present. To the above is added the knowledge and diversity of perception associated with the natural, social and ideological environment, which is an integral part of human development. All of them form an interconnected, dialogic, socio-communicative and reproductive world of traditions, through which key aspects of identity can be traced. Therefore, oral traditions, legends, and myths are an expression of a culture created from two dimensions: chronological perspective and circumstances of empirical experience (Kim and Chung, 2023). Research data emphasise that the symbolism of motifs is formed on the basis of metaphorical and allegorical tools that often interpret the divine and real worlds.

Thus, myth is an integral part of human culture and has its own characteristics, which are determined by social and cultural contexts. Cultural and social features of myth-making reflect the specifics of the people, their history and worldview. The analysis of existing mythologems emphasises their versatility, taking into account the new social, cultural, environmental and spiritual problems that modern man faces. Ukrainian myth-making is an important component of the cultural heritage of the people, which reflects their history, traditions and worldview. The modern world brings new cultural aspects to this process, which can shape plots and images in different ways. Various mythologems are associated with the history and knowledge of national self-determination, which tries to preserve traditions and restore the historical memory of identity. Ukrainian mythology is a means of self-identification and cross-cultural interaction. Modern myth-making tries to preserve interest in cultural heritage, increase the level of awareness and preservation of culture. It was also determined that modern mythological concepts can reflect social, political, ideological problems and conflicts that affect the opinions and beliefs of the people. The narratives of mythology reflect ideas about nature, man and the world, as well as form the worldview of the people. One of the most important aspects of mythology is its symbolic nature. Each element of a myth can have its own meaningful understanding, reflecting different aspects of life and culture.

Conclusions

As a result of the study, it was determined that modern aspects of myth-making are characterised by a variety of narratives, an important component of which is historical and cultural affiliation. The typology of mythologems of modern Ukrainian mythology includes: cosmogony, primitive chaos (*In illo tempore*); the world axis (*Axis-mundi*); Chaokampf; eschatology; Another land / world (*Orbis Alius*), posthumous existence; katabasis and anabasis; hero. Modern myths are a reflection of traditions and rituals, as well as the religious beliefs of society. They help to preserve and pass on the cultural heritage from generation to generation, shaping the worldview

and identity of the people. Today, mythology can use its own unique language to rediscover and interpret the motifs that become guides to the human spirit. The deep structure of images awakens the emergence of modern myths that embody the problems and questions of a society adapted to the global world. The main cultural and historical aspects of Ukrainian myth-making are reproduced in the plots, while expressing ethnic characteristics and tendencies towards struggle, freedom, and national identity. Therefore, the latest narratives reflect the consciousness of the nation and symbolic signs of seeing the world through a variety of content and context.

The study revealed that mythologems in modern myth-making embody a rich cultural, historical, social, and spiritual role, form symbolic concepts of society's values and preserve national traditions. An extensive selection of plots and characters allows mythology to constantly adapt and update to the modern system, while reproducing moral and ethical rules, social relations, and political and religious ideologies. This allows supplementing the system of events and heroes that border between ancient rituals and traditions and today's difficulties. Thus, the content of myths, regardless of whether they are stories about gods or heroes, natural or social phenomena, is a reflection of the social life of the people, as well as a kind of thinking and understanding of the relevant events at a certain stage of national development. Myth-making elements make up a vast and vibrant treasury of human society and culture, describing the concepts of time, space, life and death, good and evil, nature, magical power, and the universe. Accordingly, after analysing the types of mythologems and the specifics of modern myth-making, it can be concluded that the purpose of the study has been achieved. However, further investigation of the prerequisites for the formation of modern mythological narratives is necessary, considering the latest technologies and indicators of national consciousness and ideology.

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