

The Universal Model of Being in the Ukrainian Lyro-Epic Folklore: From Immanent to Transcendent

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Abstract: The article analyses the dialectic of the immanent and transcendent in the works of the Ukrainian folklore lyro-epic literature. Often in a folklore work, the adjustment to comprehend a certain idea occurs through certain material forms, to pass through ordinary things that are important in specific circumstances, in a particular life, to timeless entities. At the same time, the folklore image itself in dumas, historical songs, songs-chronicles, ballads, etc. can be considered in the aspect of self-transcendence: the heroes of folklore works are presented in moments of spiritual and aesthetic experience; they give an essential moral assessment of what is happening and go through the stages of self-knowledge and self-affirmation, thus trying to overcome their own ontological imperfection. The article aims to delve into the intricacies of Ukrainian oral non-ceremonial poetry, specifically focusing on dumas, ballads, historical songs and chronicle songs, to understand the universal model of being that intertwines the immanent and transcendent realms. This exploration seeks to highlight the distinctive characteristics of spirituality within the artistic macrosphere of folklore. Analysing the works of non-ceremonial poetry, the authors note that the very essence of the transcendent, which at first seems to be something indistinct, fundamentally unknown, located outside the objective world, is identified only intuitively. The artistic macrosphere of the lyro-epic work is aimed at finding those reflexive facets that will help to comprehend the transcendent, and, in the future, the dialectic of the immanent and transcendent itself. It is emphasised that in some chronicle songs there is an attempt to comprehend the history of the region through magic, which is defined in real existence.

Keywords: non-ceremonial poetry, folklore consciousness, anthropological model, artistic macrosphere, lyro-epic works

INTRODUCTION

In Ukrainian non-ceremonial poetry, the artistic model of personality is identified through the ontological dimension of spirituality, being revealed through the multifaceted interaction of the incomprehensible cosmos and the mysterious essence of the individual himself. This constant relationship between the natural world and the individual world translates the trajectories of folklore consciousness from an immanent perception of being as a world of things, everyday activities, and ritual interaction to a transcendent understanding of the unity of these factors with spiritual factors (Koval 2021; Teleutsia et al. 2022). The recognition of culture itself as the basis of responsibility for the “other”, the development of one’s own individuality and society as a whole in the collective consciousness becomes the main factor in structuring the universal anthropological model, which is an important stage of personal and natural-cosmic evolution.

Folklore consciousness in the traditional lyro-epic literature is distinguished by various aspects of reality reproduction. Various figures and phenomena are identified according to the established idea of structuring a particular model. The essence of a particular subject or object and the purpose inherent in them become existentially integral. The desire to synthesise the features of man, nature and the cosmos allows us to perceive even abstract concepts as real

and important in the course of personal development (Ivanytskyi 2004). The artistic macrosphere of Ukrainian traditional non-ceremonial poetry is distinguished by the appearance of seemingly distant objects in time-spatial comprehension through a certain idea, a spiritual dimension, becoming an important constant of the very moment in which the recipient is located. Often in a folklore work, the adjustment to comprehend a certain idea occurs through appropriate material forms. It is important to move through ordinary things that are dominant in certain circumstances, in a particular life, to the entities of the timeless. At the same time, the folklore image itself in dumas, historical songs, chronicle songs, ballads, etc. can be considered in the aspect of self-transcendence: the heroes of folklore works are represented in moments of spiritual and aesthetic experience (Breslavets 2016; Guliyeva & Kopanitsa 2024). They provide an essential moral assessment of what is happening and go through the stages of self-knowledge and self-affirmation, thus trying to overcome their own ontological imperfection.

In the folklore consciousness, the model of an ideal personality, ideal relationships, and an ideal society appears in a special way. The transcendent in the lyre era is realised primarily in the folklore image, revealing itself through the dialectic of content and form (Miao et al. 2024). The immanent in oral traditional poetry becomes a reflection of significant experience, an acceptance or rejection of human imperfection as irrationality. As one of the forms of the irrational in Ukrainian lyro-epic genres, we can consider war, its demonic essence regarding the destruction of the life circle and vital interests. In many lyro-epic works, as in the folk epic – legends, fairy tales, narrations – the unknown, the mystical is conveyed through aspects of the objective world. This can be seen in the example of a number of works about giant ancestors. After all, through this “objectification” of the unknown, not only is the unknown world comprehended, but even the multiplicity of worlds (Serdyuk & Umanets & Slyusarenko 2002).

The analysis of samples of traditional non-ceremonial poetry gives grounds to speak about the reflection in the artistic macrosphere of a folklore work of a special model of being, which consists of several levels: the real objective world, that is, the empirical, or historically immanent, including the metaphysical, that is, the transcendent, eternal; and, finally, the invisible world, in which the earthly and heavenly, immanent and transcendent are combined into a single whole (Naumovska 2021).

The article aims to delve into the intricacies of Ukrainian oral non-ceremonial poetry, specifically focusing on dumas, ballads, historical songs and chronicle songs, to understand the universal model of being that intertwines the immanent and transcendent realms. This exploration seeks to highlight the distinctive characteristics of spirituality within the artistic macrosphere of folklore. The current state of research on this topic is rich and interdisciplinary, drawing on insights from folklorists, philosophers and linguists. These studies

provide a vital context for the article's objectives, contributing to a deeper comprehension of the interaction between the tangible and the intangible, the earthly and the divine, in Ukrainian lyro-epic literature.

CURRENT STATE OF PROBLEM DEVELOPMENT ON THE TOPIC

The 'transcendent' refers to that which goes beyond or exists outside the ordinary limits of physical experience or material existence. It encompasses the spiritual, metaphysical and eternal dimensions, often involving elements of the unknown or mystical, as seen in folklore works through symbolism and metaphorical riddles. The 'immanent', on the other hand, pertains to the physical, empirical, or historically tangible aspects of life. It includes the everyday, the ritualistic and the natural world, reflecting significant human experiences and cultural interactions. These concepts are not just isolated elements; instead, they interact dynamically in folklore, creating a rich tapestry of meaning and understanding. This interaction allows for the exploration of complex ideas such as faith, spirituality and the nature of existence, as they manifest in the artistic and symbolic representations found in traditional Ukrainian non-ceremonial poetry.

The problem of the relationship between immanent and transcendent is, in our opinion, interdisciplinary in nature, so the research involves the works of folklorists, philosophers, linguists, etc. In the work "The transcendental side of life. Aquatic demons in Polish folklore" researcher Urszula Lehr (2013) analyses the magical world of water demons, which appears as the transcendent essence of being. In folk beliefs, demons as supernatural beings were associated with the mythical world of various reservoirs. Such associations were based on the traditional, culturally determined, diverse symbolism of the element of water. In various beliefs, water has become the personification of a kind of primitive matter, including chaos, variability and instability. Water in different myths is distinguished by different semiotic content: it is a symbol of reincarnation, restoration of spiritual and physical strength, purification, baptism. In popular beliefs, water is the boundary between the existing and otherworldly worlds. Everything that emerged from water or had contact with it was attributed magical properties; it was considered supernatural. According to numerous beliefs, demons, monsters, gods and demigods lived in the water (Lehr 2013).

Ukrainian folklorist O. V. Naumovska (2021) in her doctoral dissertation "Mythological triad "Life → death → immortality" in folk prose" explores, among other problems, folklore images of Ukrainian folk fairy tales involved in the structuring of the mythological triad "Life → Death → Immortality". The author analyses the connection of traditional images of cuckoos, frogs, etc. with otherworldly loci. This is confirmed, for example, by the fairy-tale motifs of the three-time transformation of the heroine of the fairy tale "The Frog

Princess”: a frog (a representative of the “lower” chthonic world, which has sacred knowledge; according to the Christian faith, frogs are people who died during the Great Flood) → a woman (an earthly being) → a cuckoo (a bird, a representative of the “upper” world, associated with the country of the dead, flying to the faraway kingdom). Thus, the fairy tale presents an image that combines all three spheres of the universe of folk mythological representations: lower, middle and upper (Naumovska 2021).

ANALYSIS OF IMMANENT AND TRANSCENDENT PATTERNS IN THE LYRO-EPIC FOLKLORE

Immanent and transcendent patterns can be traced on the example of people’s thoughts, in particular “Dumas about Alexey Popovich and the storm on the Black Sea”. There are three special spheres of existence: the storm at sea as a physical, immanent world; confession before God as a spiritual, metaphysical force; and the majestic and incomprehensible essence of faith as a synthesis of the immanent and transcendent:

*Na litsiu khristiians'komu khresta ia ne skladav,
I ottsovs'koi-matchinoi molitvi ia ne spominav,
A ishche svoim dobrim konem probigav,
Trista dush malikh ditei konem pobivav.
To molodii zheni za vorota vibigali
I malikh ditok na ruki khvatali, I mene, Oleksiia Popovicha,
kliali-proklinali.
To ne est' mene Chorne more potopliae,
Est' mene ottsovs'ka i matchina molitva
Navsegda karae...
(Shalata 1983)*

[I didn’t put a Christian cross on my face,
And I didn’t remember my father’s prayer,
He also ran with his good horse,
Three hundred souls of small children were beaten by a horse.
Then the young women ran out of the gate
And small children were grabbed in their arms,
They cursed and damned me, Oleksiy Popovich.
It’s not the Black Sea that drowns me,
It’s my father’s and mother’s prayer
That forever punishes me...]

Prayer in the people’s *duma* appears as a kind of manifestation of the transcendent: being in the spiritual sphere of being, it affects the real, objective,

historical-immanent world. Thus, a certain ideologeme in folklore consciousness manifests itself in the process of interaction between the individual and the world; it is defined and realised as a living entity, acquiring various forms. The storm in the above *duma* about Alexey Popovich becomes a product of fear, and the hero of the folklore work seeks to ontologically justify exceptional events from the point of view of violating the relationship between a person and his self-transcendent spiritual essence:

*Koli b mene ottsovs'ka ta matchina molitva
Od smerti oboronila,
Na Chornomu moriu ne vtopila,
To budu ia do ottsia, do matushki,
Do rodu pribuvati
Mig bi ia starshogo brata za ridnogo ottsia pochitati
I bliz'kikh susid za ridnuiu bratiiu
V sebe vzhe i mati
(Dmytrenko et al. 2009).*

[If my father's and mother's prayers
Had shielded me from death,
Had not drowned me in the Black Sea,
Then I would return to my father, to my mother,
To my kin.
I could revere my elder brother as my own father,
And close neighbors as my own siblings,
I would even have a mother in myself.]

The “prayer” frame is detailed through the appearance of pictures of being. The great destructive power of the elements freezes before the almighty power of faith: “the evil-opposing wave” began to subside; the Cossacks were “surprised by a great miracle” of the greatness of prayer, which became transformative in living existence: “We did not even lose a single Cossack from the army” (Dmytrenko & Dovzhenok & Hrytsa 2009).

An important concept in the *duma* is the discourse- and genre-forming concept of “faith”, which reflects the spiritual sphere of a person, represented by the frames “repentance” and “prayer”. According to modern researchers, the folklore concept may differ from other discursive variants by the constancy of its content. Thanks to the accumulation of collective knowledge and the axiological constants of a certain ethnic group, it is the folklore concept that appears at the center of the national picture of the world (Ivanytskyi 2004).

The dialectic of the immanent and transcendent can be traced by the example of ballad texts. For example, in the folk ballad “Two brothers mowed the grass”, different spheres of life are represented. First, the physical or empirical

sphere: “the brothers mowed the grass”; “sister Ganichka carried the dinner”; “three gaydamaks met her”, “they gave her a horse to hold”, “they let the horses into an open field”, “she jumped into the blue sea”. Secondly, the metaphysical sphere in the scene of Anna’s magical transformation and fusion with the natural world:

*Bo ta voda – to Gannina sl’oza,
Gde tilo vpalo, tam iavir viris,
Gde lichko vpalo, tam kalinkov stalo.
De ochi vpali, tam ternom stali,
De kosi vpali, tam osokov stali*
(Dey and Yasenchuk 1987).

[For that water is Hanna’s tear,
Where the body fell, there a maple grew,
Where the face fell, there a viburnum stood.
Where the eyes fell, there they became thorns,
Where the braids fell, there reeds grew.]

The above lyro-epic text presents the folklore frame “abuse”, which is associated with the frames of “deception”, “murder” and similar themes. Despite the concise content of the ballad, this frame has a complex structure and consists of several subframes: the panorama of the event, the tragedy of the situation, and the metaphysical consequence of the actions taken. Each of them has its own semiotic and verbal embodiment. As with the people’s dumas, sensuality focuses on the cognitive process and contributes to the unfolding of events. Unknown subjects and objects become structurally delineated, motivated at the level of the translator and the recipient.

The dialectic of the immanent and transcendent is presented in the ballad text at the stage of consecutivity: true beauty does not perish, but it passes into other forms; it is eternal. Such statements can be confirmed by significant texts of lyro-epic chronicle songs, which present extraordinary events from the lives of individuals or the whole society. In the process of interaction between the translator and the recipient, it turns out that listeners who were aware of the event, or who were its witnesses or participants, actually perceive what they did as a paradox, since according to the established axiological model, it is unacceptable.

By presenting murder or unnatural death as a violation of harmony, the narrator tries to awaken the audience’s sensuality, to evoke sympathy for a person who has fallen into exceptional, often tragic circumstances. The whole complex of poetic means of the work is subordinated to a certain goal: to inform about a certain event, to influence the range of value imperatives, to warn against

recklessness, and so on. The concept of chronicle songs is identified through the synthesis of suggestive, visual and emotional factors (Pavlova 2017).

Considering the psychological function of non-ceremonial poetry, it is worth noting that a peculiar combination of ethical, rational and psychological aspects of its perception affects the development of personality, opens the way to awareness of true harmony. As we can see, in a folklore work, the knowledge of the transcendent essence of the world is possible with a systematic representation of the rational and irrational spheres of being (Koçer 2025).

This can be seen in the example of the lyro-epic work “Sister”. In the work, the subject, the physical world is presented at the beginning of the song in a rather fragmentary way: As a sister to a brother / From a foreign side / To distant cities / Wrote letters, / Sent bows (Kashyrina 1974), and the metaphysical world is more detailed, since it is presented as filled with an unprecedented force that can overcome space and time:

*Dobre, bratiku, uchini, –
Cherez visoki lisi iasnim sokolom perelini, –
Cherez veliki gorodi sizen’kim golubchikom pereleti,
Cherez bistri riki bilim lebedikom pereplivi*
(Kashyrina 1974).

[Alright, dear brother, do so, –
Fly through the high forests as a bright falcon, –
Fly over the great cities as a little grey dove,
Swim across the swift rivers as a white swan.]

The functional specificity of the lyro-epic literature is inextricably linked with the need for cultural creation and the desire to transform the world, to spiritualise it, trying to give it sensually positive features. In traditional lyro-epic works, we can observe manifestations of self-transcendence, which influenced the preservation of such samples in the memory of the people.

Analysing the works of non-ceremonial poetry, we can note that the very essence of the transcendent, which at first seems to be something indistinct, fundamentally unknown and located outside the objective world, is identified only intuitively. The artistic macrosphere of the lyro-epic work is aimed at finding those reflexive facets that will help to comprehend the transcendent and, in the future, the dialectic of the immanent and transcendent itself. In some chronicle songs, an attempt is made to comprehend the history of the region through the magical, which is defined in the subject being. The dialectic of the immanent and metaphysical can be traced in the example of the chronicle song “About the giant ancestors”:

*Iaki voni todi buli? Visokogo rostu.
Zhili sobi v Chornogorakh taki-tak, poprostu.
Iak buvalo zachinae kuleshu variti,
To iak zachne na vatertsy okropets' kipiti,
Todi lelet si zbirae v misto za mukoiu ...*
(Dey and Hrytsa 1972).

[How were they back then? Tall in stature.
They lived in the Black Mountains, just like that, plainly.
When they'd start to make porridge,
As soon as the water begins to boil,
Then the lady gathers and goes to town for flour...]

The mystical world of giants stands out from the real world. The step of this huge ancestor is “from Kostrycha to Sinitsa”, the next is “from Sinitsa to Bukovets”, “from Bukovets to Sokolovsky...mountains”, “from Sokolovsky to Pistinsky” (Dey & Hrytsa 1972).

The modern researcher of the Ukrainian traditional epic Olesya V. Naumovska (2021), analysing the folk ideas of anagenesis, gives descriptions of giants in folk legends: “Once there were such great people who used to walk through the forest as if on grass”; “a giant found somewhere our plowman with oxen, plow and driver” and “took everyone in the palm of his hand”, calling them “mice” (such ability, even in infancy, once again emphasises the gigantic size of that generation of people); “Here and now our generation has come, and there is no sign of the giants; only somewhere in the church, in Kyiv or in Lviv, there is a foot of the giant and such, they say, a big one, that it reaches to the bathhouse. Such were the people” (Naumovska 2021: 39). The author notes that the giants were even endowed with the gift of prophecy and warned about the further crushing of representatives of the human race.

Traditional carols, typically associated with the celebration of Christmas, are folk songs that have been passed down through generations, often reflecting the customs, history and spirit of the community (Kavun 2021). The sphere of the transcendent is also represented in a peculiar way in traditional carols, which were intended to describe the house, the yard of the owner, who was congratulated, because the farm was considered the most valuable in a person's life. These images are usually filled with idealisation, using the traditional system of poetic means, so-called formulas, and so on. The part of the grandeur of the house and yard was also joined by the part in which the owners were glorified. Researchers consider such components of the ritual song to be formal, highlighting important ways of creating the image of the owner, who is congratulated by carolers. This is the structuring of a formula of greatness based on a stable allegory in the outlined poetic system with its gradual

development. We are talking about a metaphorical riddle and its solution in a folklore text.

In the carol “Do you sleep, do you hear, pan-master”, the immanent is identified at the beginning of the work through the mention of the attacks of the Tatar Horde and the destruction of the economy: the Horde took your yard, / the Horde took it, the Tatars took it, / the Tatars took it, captured it (Shalata 1983). Elements of the transcendent appear in the final part of the work. The owner, who “caught up with the Horde and scattered it”, “turned his courtyard back” and built it better, as it was, with “three sides, and three Peria”. On the fourth Peria he built an amazing church:

*Tserkov zbuduvav z tr'oma vershechkij,
Z tr'oma vershechkij, z dvoma okontsia.
Edinim okontsem sonen'ko skhodit'
Drugim okontsem misiats' zakhodit',
Rais'kimi dvertsi gospodar khodit' ...
(Shalata 1983).*

[He built a church with three pinnacles,
With three pinnacles, with two windows.
Through one window the sun descends,
Through the other the moon sets,
By the heavenly doors, the master walks...]

Carols are distinguished by a peculiar representation of the transcendent world, which remains unknown in real life, but is clearly represented in the imagination. Modern folklore researcher Olena Ivanovska (2012) suggests analysing folklore as a specific semiotic apparatus that is designed to structure time, space and social interaction within a particular tradition. This approach views folklore not just as a collection of stories or songs but as a complex system of signs and symbols that serve to structure three key aspects of a culture: time, space and social interaction. By understanding folklore in this way, researchers can gain insight into how a particular tradition organizes and understands its world. In the context of traditional carols and their peculiar representation of the transcendent world, Ivanovska’s method becomes particularly relevant. Carols often contain elements that are not directly observable in the real world but have specific meanings and representations in the imagination of the culture from which they originate (Us 2023). This symbolic representation is a critical part of structuring the community’s understanding of the world, both seen and unseen.

Symbolism is also used in carols about the paradise tree, which, according to popular beliefs, has three tops. Among those tops there are – “syv sokolonko” – “homeowner”, “syva kunonka” – “housewife”, “syvi lastovlyata” – “their

children”. The description of the paradise tree, in our opinion, can be considered from the standpoint of dialectics between immanent and transcendent, although the sphere of the immanent is presented quite sporadically, and, in fact, can also manifest itself on the way to the transcendent, even in the analysed text, when “doliv luzhenki”, where “fast rivers” flow (Shalata 1983).

Folklore researchers emphasise that the intellectual component of experience is important in folklore. The very term “intellectual” is interpreted by philosophers as “denoting everything that is comprehended only by the mind and inaccessible to sensory knowledge”. This concept is contrasted with “sensitive” (sensory) (Shynkaruk 2002). In idealistic philosophy, interpreting “intelligible”, supernatural or supersensible objects and entities is meant. It is the intuitive perception of a complex multi-level cosmos that generates whole semiotic complexes for reproducing the unreal world, which cannot be outlined with the help of familiar concepts, presented on the example of objects and phenomena of everyday life. In the center of such descriptions is a folklore text that is perceived as a narrative or as a taxonomy, that is, a linguistic picture of the world, a code that appears through generations and through centuries. Texts themselves and methods of their verification through sign systems become basic in synchronous description (Kelmendi & Nimani 2024).

The dialectic of the immanent and transcendent can also be traced in the example of some songs about the national liberation struggle of Ukrainians, which present in detail the sphere of the immanent. In one of the songs, following in the footsteps of living facts, an episode of the struggle against the fascist invaders and the death of Gritsk Soyuz, originally from Milush, is presented. The concept of “war” is represented by several frames with expressive detail: “campaign” – “quiet, dead night”, “shooting” – “rapid-fire shots fired”, “death” – “a shout was heard”, “Herman laughed” – “killed fell to the ground” (Lavryshyn 1996). The detail of frames in such lyro-epic songs is not only informative, but also psychological, since it enhances the audience’s experience of this event and causes anxiety and sadness. The joy and cheerfulness of the young fighters described at the beginning is overshadowed by the harsh essence of the war. In the end, the use of the diminutive “molodenky” enhances the emotivity of the folklore work, identifying an essential assessment in the process of communicative interaction, even a certain point of view.

We can draw parallels with the reasoning of the outstanding scientist Maryana Lanovyk (2006) that the standpoint does not apply to a written, completed story, but to the events that underlie the work. History as such, according to the researcher, cannot exist until the narrative context is evaluated and viewed. After all, when creating a particular story, only the most important elements are selected from among a huge number of elements to reproduce this event (Lanovyk 2006). It is the moment of the death of a Ukrainian soldier for the sake of the liberation of his native land that becomes the main one in the view of a historical event. At the same time, the transcendent in the analysed song

“The sun has gone beyond the mountains” is identified only at the same time, but it gives an impetus to its future comprehension at the level of consecutivity:

*Zagynuv vin lish tilom, a dukh iogo iz nami,
I dali ide za voliu z do boiu z vorogami*
(Lavryshyn 1996).

[He perished only in body, but his spirit is with us,
And he continues to fight for freedom against enemies.]

The demon of war is not perceived as an abstraction, because he brings a person closer to death (Hrytsa 1996). And it is this approach to understanding the mystery of death that contributes to immersion in the spiritual depths of earthly existence. Let us agree with the philosopher’s constants that war can be considered as irrational, demonic in a person, as the fire that, having flared up, can destroy any vital interests. It is obvious that war can refute the entire rationalistic approach to history itself. The life of a particular person and entire generations, and the war itself, are irrationally incompatible.

CONCLUSIONS

The current research presents a comprehensive exploration of immanent and transcendent patterns within Ukrainian lyro-epic folklore. The analysis of various folk songs and ballads sheds light on how these patterns are intricately woven into the fabric of these narratives, revealing profound insights into the Ukrainian cultural and spiritual experience. The article systematically delves into the concept of immanent and transcendent patterns, emphasizing their significance in folklore. It demonstrates how these patterns manifest across different spheres of existence, with the physical and immanent world symbolized by events like storms at sea, confession before God representing the spiritual and metaphysical dimension, and the essence of faith serving as a synthesis of the immanent and transcendent.

One of the key takeaways from the analysis is the pivotal role of prayer as a bridge between the immanent and transcendent. Through prayer, individuals in these folk narratives seek to influence and justify events in the real, historical-immanent world, highlighting the dynamic interplay between the spiritual and physical realms. The dialectic of immanent and transcendent is vividly illustrated in the analysis of folk ballads, such as “Two Brothers Mowed the Grass” and “Sister”. These ballads depict different spheres of life and explore metaphysical transformations, providing a rich tapestry of themes and narratives within the lyro-epic folklore tradition. Furthermore, the article emphasizes the enduring nature of folklore concepts and their central role in shaping the national worldview. Folklore concepts serve as repositories of collective

knowledge and axiological constants within the Ukrainian cultural context, underlining their significance in understanding the world.

In summary, the article successfully develops a universal model of being in Ukrainian lyro-epic folklore, illuminating the intricate relationship between the immanent and transcendent. It highlights how these patterns are woven into the narratives, providing profound insights into the cultural and spiritual heritage of Ukraine.

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