

Inna Kriachko, Vladyslav Hannushchenko, Oleksiy Mishutochkin, Olena Mukha

Poltava V.G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University

THE REFLECTION OF UKRAINIAN BELIEFS AND VALUES IN FOLKLORE

Ukrainian fairy tales arose in ancient times and reflect the ideas of the Ukrainian people about the world, work, family and social relations, as well as dreams and ideals, which were determined primarily by the long struggle of Ukrainians for a free and happy life.

The Ukrainian people suffered for a very long time from their own and foreign masters. Until the 20th century, the territories of Ukraine had been divided between different empires, which brought a lot of suffering to Ukrainians. The Ukrainian people have been fighting for their independence and freedom for a long time. Therefore, in Ukrainian fairy tales, many images of heroes who engage in a duel with dark forces have been created. Such tales are called heroic. They teach us to be strong and courageous, not to retreat from evil beings and to win despite difficult circumstances.

In the modern period, our struggle for freedom continues. Currently, Ukraine is fighting against the aggression of the Russian Federation, defending its right to life and freedom. Therefore, the heroes of Ukrainian fairy tales strengthen our spirit and fortitude in this struggle.

In general, the Ukrainian people are very peace-loving, they love their land and love to work. Work on the land or in the city has been the main occupation of Ukrainian people since ancient times. But when the native state is threatened by danger, hardworking Ukrainian people join the battle with the enemies.

Mykyta Kozhumiaka

Ukrainian folk fairytales are full of wisdom and vivid samples of human bravery and altruism. The story about Mykyta Kozhumiaka is one of many Ukrainian folklore examples that represent the strong attitude and cold mind of the true warrior, who defends his land and people not because of someone's ambitions or financial profit, but for freedom and peace.

This East Slavic folk hero (also "bogatyry") is a character from a legend, whose oldest prototype can be found in the Laurentian Chronicle.

A bogatyry is a stock character in medieval East Slavic legends, akin to a Western European knight-errant. Bogatyry appear mainly in Rus' epic poems "bylinas." Historically, they were created during the reign of Volodymyr the Great (Grand Prince of Kyiv 980-1015) as part of his elite guards ("druzhina"), similar to Knights of the Round Table. Traditionally bogatyry are described as fighters of immense strength and courage, rarely using magic while fighting enemies in order to maintain the "loosely based on historical fact" aspect of bylinas.

The fairytale of Mykyta Kozhumiaka tells that a dragon Zmiy Gorynych used to attack the lands of Rus and take beautiful girls as prisoners. Once he even kidnaps the daughter of the Kievan prince. To find out the dragon's weakness, the girl pretends to fall in love with

TRADITIONS AND CHANGES

him. Gorynych reveals to her that there was only one person that could defeat him: a tanner from Kyiv named Mykyta. The princess sends a letter by pigeon to her father, to the prince. Afterward, the prince goes to the tanner's house to ask for help. It takes a while for him to coax the bogatyr into fighting, and even though Mykyta refuses the wealth and power offered by the prince. That's why the prince decides to gather hundreds of orphans, who lost their families because of the dragon's terror, in front of Mykyta's house, and they beg the bogatyr to save them from Gorynych's attacks. It touches bogatyr's heart so deeply that he agrees to fight.

Then Mykyta goes to Gorynych's lair, and, after a long fight, the frightened dragon offers Mykyta to become allies and rule the world together. Mykyta demands that they plow the border of their halves of the world. For this purpose, he uses the dragon instead of a plowing horse. After they plowed the furrow across the whole world, Mykyta demands that they plow further to divide the sea as well. The foolish Gorynych obeys bogatyr and drowns in the sea.

The idea of the fairytale is to show that fame and respect can only be obtained by those who show their strength and wisdom while accomplishing their mission. Nowadays the actual meaning is not lost; likewise, the fairytale teaches how important it is to follow the right purpose for the sake of life and prosperity.

Kotyhoroshko

Kotyhoroshko is a Ukrainian folk tale about a boy who was extremely clever, strong and noble. The boy was born after a woman who was washing clothes in the river saw a pea rolling along the path and ate it. She gave birth to a boy who was named Kotyhoroshko. The name Kotyhoroshko is related to peas, a legume crop, because "*Komu*" means "the one who is rolling" and "*Топox*" means "Pea" in Ukrainian. Peas were considered a symbol of life-giving force in agricultural societies: yield, fertility of livestock and prosperity.

There are several versions of this tale, but in this presentation I will take one of the most common and longest versions of the story. In my opinion, this fairy tale can be divided into four parts, for a better understanding of the plot of the story and its moral.

The first part of the tale tells about the appearance of Kotyhoroshko and his family that live in the village. It consists of father, mother, six sons and one daughter. The names of all the characters remain unknown except for the daughter, whose name was Olenka. This family works in the fields and earns food and living in this way.

By the way, this aspect of the tale presents ancient Ukrainian customs and traditions, because Ukrainians have been working in the fields and tilling the land since ancient times. Undoubtedly, such a tradition developed due to the extremely fertile Ukrainian land and the hard work of the Ukrainians themselves.

Before the birth of Kotyhoroshko, an accident happened, which caused his sister and six brothers to disappear. They got into the lair of an evil snake while they were working in the field.

It is interesting that in this tale, as in many other Ukrainian folk tales, the main thief is the snake, which is a three-headed, gigantic creature, very similar to a dragon.

When Kotyhoroshko grows up, he decides to go and free his brothers and sister from the captivity of an evil snake, he asks the local blacksmith to forge him a huge mace and his

TRADITIONS AND CHANGES

mother to bake him bread for the journey.

This aspect of the tale also represents Ukrainian strength, dignity and determination in the fight for family, freedom and land. After all, even realizing that the snake is a terrible and gigantic creature that can be much stronger than him, Kotyhoroshko goes to free his brothers and sister. This fact is clearly confirmed by the events taking place in modern Ukraine. Since the very beginning of Russia's war and full-scale invasion of Ukraine, our people have been desperately fighting the invaders for their freedom. Ukrainians do not want to compromise with thieves who came to their land to kill, destroy and steal.

Bread is also a very important aspect of Ukrainian culture, because traditionally, Ukrainians welcome their guests with bread and salt, which is an ancient Ukrainian custom. For Ukrainians, bread is a symbol of nobility of intentions and friendship, and therefore hospitality. This symbol combines the basis of life – bread, thanks to which everything is born and lives, and the essence of life – salt, thanks to which everything remains itself. So, to meet with bread and salt means to respect a person for who he is, and to respect him as he is.

After that, he goes to the lair of the evil snake, where he successfully defeats it and frees his brothers and sister Olenka from captivity. After going home, the brothers, intoxicated by being in the snake's den, do not accept him into their family, so Kotyhoroshko leaves home in search of a better fate.

The second part of the tale tells us about the acquaintance of the main character with three men who also have extraordinary power. He meets Vernyhora, who can bend mountains, Vernydub, who can bend stout oaks, and Krutyvus, who diverts water to cross rivers. Assembled as a team, they go on their way. When it gets dark, they enter a forest house and decide to spend the night.

In the next few days, three of them went hunting, and one stayed in the hut to cook food. Every day, a small but powerful old man comes to the hut, demanding to step over the threshold. Vernyhora, Vernydub and Krutyvus treat the old man disrespectfully, so he eats all the food they had cooked and leaves. The guards do not admit this, telling the others that they fell asleep and did not have time to prepare food. On the fourth day, Kotyhoroshko himself stays in the hut. He lets the old man in, but the man tries to deceive him in the same way. Kotyhoroshko pinches his beard in an oak tree. But old man uproots the oak tree and runs away.

At this moment, the great and sincere hospitality of Ukrainians is also represented, because unlike other men, Kotyhoroshko is kind to the new guest, who then sneakily tries to harm the hero.

In the third part of the tale, Kotyhoroshko, together with his new friends, follows the footsteps of that old man, which leads to a pit. Vernyhora, Vernydub and Krutyvus are afraid to go down. They knit ropes and Kotyhoroshko gets into the pit. At the bottom there is a palace and a princess, who dissuades Kotyhoroshko from fighting with the old man. Kotyhoroshko still fights him, wins the fight and takes away the treasures with the princess. His comrades pull out three bags of jewels and the princess to the surface, and they decide to throw Kotyhoroshko down. He ties a stone instead of himself and when it is dropped, remains unharmed.

In the fourth part of the tale, the hero travels through the underworld, until clouds and rain come, and he decides to hide under a tree, and notices little birds that are drowning in their nest on the tree. Kotyhoroshko covers them with his shirt and protects them from the rain. A

TRADITIONS AND CHANGES

father bird arrives, thanks the hero for saving his children, and offers him help. Kotyhoroshko asks the bird to lift him to the upper world. In flight, the bird orders to take six pieces of meat and water to feed it. There is not enough meat, so Kotyhoroshko cuts off his calf and gives it to the bird. After arriving to the upper world father bird notices what Kotyhoroshko gave him as a food, the bird gives the calf back and brings living water. Sprinkled with water, the calf grows in place.

In the final part of this tale, after getting out of the underworld, Kotyhoroshko looks for Vernyhora, Vernydub and Krutyvus in the palace of the princess's father, who lied that they were the ones who saved her from the old and evil man in the underworld. He punishes his friends who betrayed him and marries the princess. The story ends.

In a nutshell, this fairy tale vividly demonstrates the indomitable spirit of the Ukrainian people and their sincerity. The main character, even after numerous betrayals and deceptions by other people, remains a kind and compassionate person. He is betrayed by his six brothers, after he saves them from a snake, his three new acquaintances also betray him after he gives them old man's treasures, and even after that, he helps the little birds, receiving sincere thanks from the papa bird. Thus, this fairy tale teaches children to be cautious and very careful with people, but at the same time to remain open and compassionate people. Also, this tale represents some ancient Ukrainian customs and traditions reflected in the first part of the tale.

At the end of my report, I want to note the similarity of this tale with the Japanese folk tale of Momotaro, about a boy who was born from a peach that floated down the river. He was also very strong and brave, and decided to go conquer the monster island with his sword. But on the way he meets three friends, a dog, a pheasant and a monkey who decide to help the boy in the battle with monsters. Arriving on the island, Momotaro and his friends defeat all the monsters and they beg him to spare them and take all their gold, to which he agrees and spares them.

In my opinion, this fairy tale is very similar in its plot to the fairy tale about Kotyhoroshko, the characters themselves are also not very different, because they are strong, brave, and most importantly, merciful. They know how to forgive even their worst enemies and help everyone who needs it.

How Olenka Became a Hard Worker

Ukraine is a country with a strong spirit, unique cultural traditions and nature. However, these are not the only fortunes: it is also a country of hardworking people. Taking into account the availability and quantity of fertile land, Ukraine has a long history of being among the leading producers of agricultural products in the world. Therefore, it is not surprising that in fairy tales much attention is paid to work on the fields.

Today we would like to draw your attention to the Ukrainian folk tale "How Olenka Became a Hard Worker." The plot of the fairy tale is that a girl from a working rural family with many children was very lazy, this upsets her father. However, there was a young man who wanted to marry Olenka for her personality. The young man believes that she can be caring and diligent. He promises his potential father-in-law that he will make her a working woman.

According to the Ukrainian tradition, the wife went to live in the husband's house with his whole family. Her father-in-law who is the head of the family has a habit of asking each

TRADITIONS AND CHANGES

family member before eating what he or she has done during the day. Of course, Olenka never works, so she does not get dinner at all on the first day.

The next morning she is hungry and thinks that she should do at least something, so she brings a bucket of water. For this, the strict father-in-law orders to give her a mug of water.

On the third day, Olenka again brings a bucket of water to the house and helps her mother-in-law make a dish called kulesha.

Kulesha is a Ukrainian dish made from corn flour. It is especially loved in the mountainous regions of Ukraine, the Carpathians.

When Olenka helps to cook kulesha, her father-in-law shares the dish with her. Later, Olenka begins to work alongside other family members. When Olenka's father visits her in her new family, he cannot believe how hardworking she is, and is very pleased with it. Like Olenka's husband, of course.

No one appreciates or tolerates lazy people. But, as the fairy tale teaches, these people just need the right approach and motivation. This approach to Olena is demonstrated by her father-in-law. The main idea of the fairy tale is that in order to receive any good (food, clothes, shoes or other things), one must work, and hard work is the only tool that helps people stay human and reach prosperity.

In addition to fairy tales, there are many proverbs about work in Ukraine. For example:

- The master's work is great.
- He who gets up early gets things done.
- Good for the blacksmith who forges with both hands!
- You can't build a house without an ax.
- If you want to eat kalachi, don't sit on the stove.

"The real treasure for people is the ability to work," Aesop rightly wrote. And if one works diligently, the result will not be long in coming. Because the sweetest of all fruits is the result of own work.

Everything beautiful and most necessary in the world is created by human labor. Work glorifies a person, makes their life better, more interesting, enriches them spiritually.

After Ukraine's victory in the war, a lot of work will need to be done, and Ukrainians understand this and are ready for it. In my opinion, it is hard work that will allow not only to revive what has been destroyed, but also to achieve a new standard of living which is closer to that of developed countries.

"Forest Song" by Lesia Ukrainka

I, in turn, want to tell about a literary fairy tale, which is presented by the work of Lesya Ukrainka, in particular in her drama "Forest Song." The poetess is a key figure in Ukrainian literature, because she is a person who inspires to overcome difficulties and obstacles on the path of life. Her poetry sets an example for Ukrainians to overcome difficult life trials, to work and not lose optimism. The writer suffered from a serious disease, bone tuberculosis, so any movement hurt her, but she still enjoyed life, was resilient and looked for reasons to be happy, to see beauty around her.

The fairy-tale drama "Forest Song" is particularly popular because it is based on folklore legends about Mavka, the child of the forest and its protector.

TRADITIONS AND CHANGES

Ukrainians have many legends about forest dwellers – souls who live in lakes, rivers, mountains and forests and communicate with people from time to time.

The plot is based on the legend that Mavka, the daughter of the forest, falls in love with the magical music played by the young man Lukash near the tree where she lives. Having fallen in love, she must make a decision to either give up love or her calling to protect the forest. Mavka decided to move to the village where her lover lives and become his wife. But when she chose love, it is not so easy for her to get used to the human way of life, to find a common language with the villagers, who are mostly focused on material well-being. She had to perform ordinary human work, which seemed cynical and unnatural to her. Having lost contact with the forest, with nature, Mavka began to lose her personality, her cheerfulness. Her beloved did not pay attention to her, he constantly had fun with friends and often forgot about her.

Mavka, who lives far from her forest, gradually loses her vitality. However, she did not give up, she wanted to stay with her beloved in spite of everything. But he cheated on Mavka and found another girl who is used to village life.

In the end, Mavka returned to the forest, and nature again gave her beauty and vitality. Only in harmony with nature does Mavka feel happy and free from greed, envy and evil.

This work by Lesya Ukrainka is full of picturesque descriptions of nature, it calls to appreciate its beauty and protect it, to live in harmony with nature. Also, “Forest Song” affirms the opinion that a person should remain himself, he should preserve his natural essence and moral values.

Each of these fairy tales reflects the eternal ideas of Ukrainians about nature, work, the Motherland and form the moral code of Ukrainians based on the principles of beauty, goodness and love. This is exactly what Ukrainians are fighting for and we believe that we will win!

References:

Bevzenko, Y. (2021) Київський Самсон, Київський богатир Кирило Кожум'яка/ Kyiv Hero Kozhumiaka. Shukai. Available at: https://yuliabevzenko.com/shukai/kyiv_hero_kozhumiaka (Accessed: April 3, 2023).

Brayilko, I. (2019) “ОБРАЗ КОТИГОРОШКА: ЛІТЕРАТУРНА Й АНІМАЦІЙНА ВЕРСІЇ,” Debut, 1(40), pp. 48–52.

Drachov, E. (2022) Mavka the Forest Song: Animated Feature Film mavka, MAVKA the forest song | animated feature film MAVKA. Anima Grad. Available at: <https://mavka.ua/en/> (Accessed: April 3, 2023).

Ji, J. (2020) Котигорошко, Dovidka.biz.ua. Dovidka.biz.ua. Available at: <https://dovidka.biz.ua/kotigoroshko-kazka/> (Accessed: October 3, 2022).

Oles, O. (2006) Mykyta Kozhumiaka, UkrLib. Printto.ua. Available at: <https://www.ukrlib.com.ua/books/printit.php?tid=9688> (Accessed: October 12, 2022).

Ukrainka, L. (2000) Forest Song, UkrLib. Printto.ua. Available at: <https://www.ukrlib.com.ua/books/printit.php?tid=508> (Accessed: October 3, 2022).