



2022年中国艺术传播国际高峰论坛  
暨中国数媒创艺与元宇宙发展专题研讨会

CHINESE ART COMMUNICATION INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT FORUM

# 论文集

主办单位：全国高等院校计算机基础教育研究会

中国电子影像行业协会

安徽财经大学

承办单位：安徽财经大学艺术学院

协办单位：中华传统艺术的当代传承研究课题组

2022/10/28-2022/10/30

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## ***A WOMEN IN THE UKRAINIAN NATIONAL MENTALITY: A HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ASPECT***

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***Formulation of the problem.*** *The study of the national mentality is an important stage on the way to defining and understanding the values, norms of behavior and even plans for the future of the entire nation. Mentality is a certain permanent characteristic of a people's culture, which bears the imprint of historical traditions and worldview. Mykola Kostomarov, Dmytro Chyzhevskyi, Yevhen Malaniuk, Volodymyr Yaniv called the extraordinary lyricism, emotionality, desire for freedom the main features of the Ukrainian national character and explained this feature by the strong connection of Ukrainians with the nature of their native land. So, Ukrainian cordocentrism (perception of reality "with the heart") has coexisted with atheism (an inseparable connection with the native land and dependence on it) for thousands of years [1, 2].*

*It is quite logical that one of the basic components of the mentality of Ukrainians is the archetype of Woman, which combines the universal images of the mother as a symbol of procreation and the land as a territory that must be sown, cultivated and protected. The role of women in the context of the nation's development was analyzed by such scientists as A. Kulchytskyi, B. Tsimbalisty, M. Kostomarov, and O. Potebnia. However, the psychology of the Ukrainian nation in terms of gender is currently an under-researched topic. Individual aspects of this issue were considered by such researchers as L. Smolyar, S. Pavlychko, T. Gundorova, O. Zabuzhko, O. Kis, L. Taran, O. Lutsenko. Determining the features of the female mentality is an important stage on the way of researching the Ukrainian mentality as a component of the historical and cultural space of the world.*

***The purpose*** *of the article is to trace the stages of the formation of the image of a Ukrainian woman and to determine the main features of the female national character in the context of the Ukrainian worldview and global development.*

***Presenting main material.*** *Although the national outlook of the people of Ukraine in terms of gender has not been thoroughly studied, the role of women in our national mentality has been paid attention to by scientists, in particular philosophers, and writers. The majority of outstanding thinkers and researchers of the Ukrainian national character agree that the "Ukrainian soul" compared to the mentality of other peoples is distinguished primarily by such matriarchal features as individualism, sentimentality, emotionality, subtle humor.*

*Due to the fact that the nature of ancient Ukraine made it possible to engage in agriculture (fertile land, sufficient water), the cult of fertility (and therefore of women-mothers) was embedded in the mentality of the people as a basic one. Ancient Ukrainians equated sowing the land with procreation, because the future and well-being of the entire community depended on the land and women.*

*Not only lyrical songs, ballads, fairy tales, but also the Cossack epic, where a woman is equal to a man, are permeated with a peculiar femininity and idealization of mother earth. We often observe the worship of her beauty, wisdom, strength, and sacrifice. The important role of women in the ancient society is also confirmed by the calendar and ritual creativity - freckles, braiding, dance of the young, fortune-telling, etc. It is interesting, for example, the fact that matchmaking could take place only if the girl took out the towels herself. Also, folk morality in ancient times allowed a girl to marry a boy herself. Apparently, the origins of such freedom come from free Scythia or reach the worldview of the Amazons.*

*So, we can say that respect for women affected the family system of Ukrainians or even shaped it. Ancient Ukrainian women had almost equal rights with men. However, "equality" should not be understood in the modern, so to speak, feminist sense, because traditions combined both respect for women on the side of men, her right to determine the family structure, and the right of a man to preside in the field of agriculture or military affairs (which has also been preserved in modern Ukraine).*

*It should also not be forgotten that the famous Amazons lived on the territory of the Black Sea and Azov steppes. So, two features of the Ukrainian character - connection with the native land and individualism - are historically and territorially based. All the direct ancestors of modern Ukrainians - Tryplians, Cimmerians, Taurians, Scythians, Sarmatians and actually Slavs - worshiped the Mother Goddess.*

*A peculiar tradition has developed to consider the pagan Berehynia as a mental reference point for Ukrainian women. But often this image is perceived somewhat incompletely - purely as a symbol of a housewife who prepares food and gives birth to children. In fact, the image of Berehynia covers much more features of the Ukrainian national character. The cult of mother earth and protector of the family affected the worldview of Ukrainians in the form of respect for a woman who has equal rights with a man, can choose a partner and often even a profession. The image of a woman in ancient times is not only procreation and home hearth, but also connection with nature and protection of personal space, if necessary.*

*Of course, Christianity made its corrections in the picture of marriage and family. After 988, the tradition of marriage law began to take shape, combining ancient folk and new church wedding rites. Since then, punishment for "stealing" a bride has been prescribed. But Christian marriage and "legality before God" took root slowly. The pagan rite in the form of dances and songs still existed for a long time as the only confirmation of the marriage of a couple.*

*It is interesting that in the days of Russia, marriages were concluded, as a rule, taking into account the wishes of the young (which was not the case, for example, in Lithuania and the Czech Republic). In addition, the right of a woman to marry at her own will or not to marry against her will was approved by the Statute of Yaroslav. Such laws did not apply to men. Also, certain property was kept by his wife, which made her quite independent.*

*Gradually, marriage is Christianized and acquires the meaning of sanctity, sinlessness, and at the same time censorship is introduced on extramarital relations between a man and a woman. The requirements for chastity and fidelity to a man become even stricter with the establishment of Christianity. At the same time, the traditions of evening parties and dawn parties, where young people practiced erotic and sexual games, continued to exist. As O. Kis notes, "girls were responsible for preserving their virginity" [3]. It is worth noting that the attitude of Ukrainian men towards women according to national morality remains respectful, and the woman continues to*

hold power in her hands, although she recognizes the authority of the man. I. Franko, comparing the structure of the Ukrainian and Russian families, noted that, unlike the "Great Russians", the Ukrainian man "does not do any important business without the advice of a woman, because very often a smart and brave woman knows how to impose her will on everything against Muzhikova" [4].

The arrival of Christianity somewhat changed the attitude towards motherhood, shifting the emphasis from "fertility" to "self-sacrifice". The biblical symbol of Mary as a suffering woman left a certain imprint on the image of a woman in the Ukrainian mentality. Therefore, a certain worldview binary is observed even today: on the one hand, the Ukrainian mentality preserves the image of a woman as equal to a man, on the other hand, suffering and patience are asserted as proper female attributes.

The layering of such a patriarchal and not entirely characteristic feature of the Ukrainian mentality in a certain way affected later folklore and was reflected in the works of Ukrainian writers and poets (themes of mother's self-sacrifice, the suffering of an abandoned girl-pokritka, etc.). The synthesis of the Christian and pagan worldview became one of the main features of the mentality of Ukrainians.

The written sources of the most studied of the ancient periods - the period of Kyivan Rus - confirm the important role of representatives of princely families in the social and political life of the country. The activities of Princesses Olga, Anna Vsevoludavna, Dobrodeia-Zoya, and the high level of education of Russian women are a sign of the self-sufficiency of Ukrainian women and the strengthening of the cult of the virgin. It is worth noting that such freedom was not approved by church ideology, but society, on the contrary, considered it a manifestation of strength and wisdom. In addition, the main role in the family often fell to the woman.

And taking into account the fact that Volodymyr Monomakh, instructing his sons, urged his wives to love, but not to give them power over themselves, such cases of "headship" of Ukrainian women were not isolated [5].

The cult of the *beregyina* woman was firmly entrenched in the worldview of Ukrainians so firmly that even in the Middle Ages, the fate of European women who were accused of witchcraft and burned at the stake passed over Ukraine. That is, the Ukrainian folk worldview did not accept or borrow a foreign idea about the sinfulness or secondary nature of women compared to men. The cult of the father also did not exist in Ukraine, and ancient folklore sources and archaeological findings confirm this.

It is interesting that bright Slavic mythology with its purely feminine images of monkeys, mermaids, Lada, Mokosha, Lela, Berehyna, without a doubt, also subconsciously affected the mentality of Ukrainians. So, there was simply no one to fear or burn witches in Ukraine. It cannot be said that witchcraft was not condemned in Ukraine, but the courts (of which very few are recorded) had a purely "bureaucratic" nature - a hearing took place, then the parties came to a certain agreement (for example, a small fine was imposed).

"Witchcraft" in Ukraine did not mean a deal with the devil, as it was in Europe, but was most often associated with crop damage, potions - that is, this historical phenomenon was also determined by a feature of the national mentality laid by agriculture and the cult of Mother Earth. L. Taran points out some duality of the image of the witch in the Ukrainian worldview: on the one hand, it can be an ugly old woman, on the other hand, an extremely beautiful young woman [6]. This is how paganism combines the destructive and life-giving forces of nature, hostile and

*favorable energy towards man in the popular consciousness.*

*One of the main stereotypes of the patriarchal system affirms the power of a man over a woman's body - this feature is also characteristic of Ukraine (ancient and modern). But at the same time, there is very often a shift in roles, when a woman takes power in a Ukrainian family or community, and therefore her emotionality and cordocentrism deform or even destroy patriarchal schemes.*

*Separately, it is worth dwelling on such a significant period as the Cossack era, which also left its mark on the Ukrainian mentality. It would seem that a more "masculine" historical period should not be sought, but even here the Ukrainian woman is not a powerless being. The position and role of women in the 16th and 17th centuries. in Ukraine were significantly different from Muscovy. In similar historical periods, Russian women's dependence on men actually turned them into beggars, who became dependent on their husband's family members or went to a monastery.*

*In Ukraine, at a time when men fought en masse, women could freely dispose of land or other property, participate in public life and even earn money (Sofia Czartoryska's printing house, Kyiv brotherhood and school of Halshka Gulevichivna, etc.). In addition, women were allowed to live near Sichi so that the man could visit his family. According to Cossack laws, Cossack crimes against women, such as "adultery" and "injury caused" were severely punished (and they could be sentenced to death even for the harm caused to Turkish female captives).*

*So, together with the protection of the native land, Cossack traditions proclaimed the respect and protection of women. The cult of the Mother of God, who, according to beliefs, covered soldiers from arrows and bullets with her veil is worthy of special attention. The system of spiritual values of the Zaporozhians includes such concepts as Ukraine-mother, saber-mother, Sich-mother. The archetypes of a woman-mother, native land and freedom in inseparable unity were established in the Ukrainian mentality during the time of the glorious Cossacks.*

*Roksolana (Anastasia Lisovska) is a vivid example of the embodiment of the features of the Ukrainian mentality, especially against the background of disenfranchised Turkish women. For her cheerful disposition and sharp tongue, Anastasia received a second name in the harem - Khurem, which means "she who laughs." An outstanding Ukrainian woman received foreign ambassadors, corresponded with great rulers, her image as an equal among equals hung between portraits of sultans. The girl, who was brought up in a Ukrainian family, absorbed the main features of the national character: traditional (emotionality, subtle humor, treating men as equals) and Christian (devotion to a lawful husband and faith).*

*An Ukrainian woman is, as a rule, an educated, independent person who knows her worth. These features are especially outlined in the situation where the mentalities of two different peoples meet. Thus, the Ukrainian Oksana from Lesya Ukrainka's poem "Boyarynia" is a complete contrast to the Russian woman. She brought with her to a foreign family and to a foreign land a purely Ukrainian worldview. The Ukrainian girl's subconscious opposition to the Russian environment allows us to single out contrasting pairs of worldviews that reveal the essence of the mentality of two different nations:*

- freedom - lawlessness;*
- equality for men - slave psychology;*
- participation in public life, free communication - limited to kitchen and bedroom;*
- humor, irony and sharp tongue - closedness and tragic perception of the world;*
- bright and quite open clothes - dark, closed and shapeless things [7].*



**Conclusions.** *Therefore, the mentality depends on the type of activity of a person and the territory in which he lives. The image of a Ukrainian woman is mentally closely connected with the cult of land and fertility. Ukrainian culture, as a synthesis of paganism and Christianity, absorbed the cult of the shore-mother from pagan beliefs and partially the suffering woman from Christianity. Due to a strong connection with nature and the idea of the supernatural as a force that can be negotiated with, Ukraine bypassed the "black", "witchy" Middle Ages. The Middle Ages and the Cossack era, despite some Christianization, preserved the cult of the mother as a protector and left women with almost equal rights with men.*

*Compared to European or Russian women, a Ukrainian woman mentally has much more freedom and space to move forward. But, of course, we cannot talk about complete gender equality in the historical and cultural context. Some patriarchal stereotypes and the philosophy of patience, although not globally, still limited the will of Ukrainian women and to some extent still limit it today. Despite the presence of these patriarchal echoes, the Ukrainian woman was never oppressed, and therefore the issue of gender inequality did not arise as an urgent issue in Ukraine. The fact that women were "almost equal" to men in Ukrainian culture testifies to the highly spiritual essence of the national mentality.*

*An in-depth study of the role of women in the history of Ukraine not only allows us to objectively reproduce the historical process, but also illustrates the ability of our society to modernize through the restoration of democratic national values and the rejection of conservative patriarchy, which is alien to the Ukrainian national character.*

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