

THE SYSTEM OF MORAL-ETHIC VALUES IN UKRAINIAN NON-RITUAL LYRIC-EPIC FOLKLORE: THE RESPONSIBILITY CATEGORY

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Summary

The article is devoted to the problem of responsibility in non-ritual lyric-epic folklore. The poetic macrosphere of lyric-epic folklore reflects the multifaceted spiritual universe of the Ukrainian ethnic group, mental peculiarities, features of the national character, historical aspects of social development, and various transformational processes. Forms of rational and irrational understanding of the world were revealed in the folklore text, which influenced the formation of a special sociocultural paradigm.

In traditional non-ritual poetry, the world itself, in all its inexhaustibility of interpretations, appears as the center of an axiological system, an unchanging value in man's understanding of all that exists. The broad information content present in the texts of traditional culture contributes to the realization of communicative efficiency, which helps to socialize and differentiate between essential and non-essential. The poetic system of the lyric-epic song represents the features of the structuring of a complex anthropological model. In the collective memory, exceptional events were imprinted, which reveal the actualization in the folk consciousness of precisely the moments of the destructive nature of an individual's irresponsibility for the consequences of his own actions.

The article highlights the concept of "attachment of responsibility": everyone must be responsible for their actions. Through the multifaceted artistic macrosphere of the song, a number of important interpretations of the essence of moral responsibility in the axiological sense are revealed. An irresponsible act causes a corresponding reaction on the part of individual individuals, merging into a general moral and ethical assessment by the entire community.

Thus, through the folklore image of the traditional lyric-epic song, the folklore idea of the uniqueness and uniqueness of human life, which is included in the living memory of other people, their experience and the spiritual world, is transmitted.

Key words: folklore consciousness, moral responsibility, artistic macrosphere, ballad, song-chronicle, image, artistic means.

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1. Introduction

The system of moral and ethical values in the Ukrainian non-ritual lyric-epic literature was formed as a result of the synthesis of significant information about the various facets of human existence, relations with other members of society, comprehension of the world – real and desirable, a constant desire to change everything around following the model established in the folk consciousness. The poetic system of folklore text reveals a complex hierarchical structure, which presents important things through comprehension of which an individual can overcome the boundaries of everyday life and hopelessness. Life begins to make particular sense. Moral and ethical values fill not only the physical world but also the spiritual one with true meaning.

The texts of lyric-epic folklore elucidate the moments when a person quits their comfort zone and interacts with the external space and demonstrate challenging vicissitudes of the life of an individual and a community. Works with inherent detailed elaboration, e.g., chronicle songs, demonstrate that moral and ethical values, despite different life circumstances, help a person to hold true to their attitudes, imperatives and ideals, expressing personal self-identity and inner uniqueness.

The issue of responsibility was studied by representatives of various branches of modern science: culture experts, philosophers, sociologists, folklorists, literary critics, namely, O. Vyshnevskyi, I. Vitkovska, I. Yevdokymova, V. Havryliuk, A. Pavlova, M. Protsenko, H. Razumtseva, T. Chepulchenko, O. Chikalo, and others.

In the dissertation of the Ukrainian scientist H.I. Razumtseva “Moral and ethical views of the Ukrainian people according to folklore sources: the axiological aspect”, it is emphasized that ethnic identification has become the primary form of individualization. Moreover, the foundation is not practical vitality but the spiritual kinship of representatives of the ethnic group, the experience of which is evident during moral activity. At the same time, the subjective need to show the interrelation between group members and belonging to the relevant community contributed to establishing a morality system. It is essential for the present study to identify folk morality as a type of imperative-value consciousness (*Razumtseva, 2004: 10–11*).

The purpose of the article is to analyze the essence and features of the category of moral responsibility using works of non-ritual lyric-epic folklore.

Methods. *The descriptive method* was applied to analyze the theoretical developments of scientists, the dominants of the axiological orientation of personality presented in the works of non-ritual folklore, and situations of a moral and ethical nature, i.e., manifestations of responsibility and irresponsibility.

The study also relied on the method of *comparative analysis* in the inter-genre analysis of ballads, chronicle songs, and oral narratives, in particular, about the manifestations of internal responsibility, which are interpreted following the representation of special existential events.

The involvement of a wide range of folklore materials collected and published by folklorists of different periods, which contain facts and cultural reflections on the historical progress of Ukrainianness, motivated the application of *the historical-typological method*. The approach assisted in systematizing facts available in the artistic macrosphere of a folklore work and their comprehension in the system of scientific modeling.

2. The issue of moral responsibility in the humanities discourse

In works dominated by artistic typification, the value phenomenon is rendered both at the individual and general levels. G.W.F. Hegel, following I. Kant, proposed considering forms of thinking in conjunction with categories of logic, emphasizing the presence in such forms of inherent category content. The triad of concept–judgment–conclusion is conceptualized by the German philosopher in the system of universal–partial–singular. The singular and the general are represented as the subject and predicate, and the forms of individual thinking become evident within the dialectics of cognitive and logical functions: “He (Hegel) develops the forms of thinking and logical categories not directly from nature, but from human history, primarily paying attention to forms of spiritual activity” (*Protsenko, 2011: 5*).

The poetic macrosphere of lyric-epic folklore reflects the multifaceted spiritual universe of Ukrainians, mental features, traits of a national character, historical aspects of the development of society, and various transformation processes. The folklore text comprises forms of rational and irrational comprehension of the world, which affect the formation of a specific sociocultural paradigm.

In traditional non-ritual poetry, the world itself, in all its inexhaustibility of interpretations, appears as a center of the axiological system, a uniform value in conceiving all things by a person. At the same time, it is not just the world – it is the world of good, friendship, love, honesty, mercy, justice, fidelity, prudence, peacefulness, etc. (*Vishnevsky, 2006: 128*). Broad informative nature peculiar to the texts of traditional culture contributes to the implementation of communicative efficiency, which helps to socialize and differentiate the essential and the insignificant.

It is worth noting that understanding the human-society dilemma in the Ukrainian ethnic group is directly associated with spiritual-applied and artistic factors, a set of logically motivated moral-aesthetic imperatives, and the system of images. Worldview, world perception, and world outlook convey aspirations and life meanings. At the same time, outlining life realities, it decodes the secret and helps overcome life troubles, improve the existential essence, and join the structuring of the value model.

The area of moral and ethical values is inextricably linked with the phenomenon of experience. From the standpoint of existential sociology, during the experience of crisis, consciousness crosses the boundaries of rational-abstract comprehension and, finally, singling out senses, accumulates in the existential moment of the experience of an individual being (*Pavlova, 2015: 43*). The critical and partly fatal situation focuses consciousness precisely on the perception of a particular human reality and eliminates abstract constants that cannot be involved in solving the current problem: “the highest level of authenticity can be considered the identification of a person’s consciousness with the immediate experience of own being, that is, existence” (*Melnikov, 2013: 59*).

One of the essential moral values associated with the experience phenomenon is responsibility, interpreted by modern ethics representatives as the reverse side of freedom, which is “inextricably linked with it and always accompanies it”, “the ability to predict the consequences of each action and the aspiration to prevent a potential negative course of events” (*Lozovyi, 2007: 110–111*). There are two types of responsibility: internal and external. Scientists regard internal one as the attribute of conscience as a moral category since it is the awareness of one’s act, understanding of the needs of other community members, respect for their personality, and activities following morality norms. In contrast to internal responsibility, external responsibility is the imposition of some sanctions of the corresponding society on a particular

human act. Under a responsible attitude, a person is aware of the consequences of their activities, and irresponsibility is about arbitrariness, the lack of an analytical approach to what has been done without caring about personal and other people's interests (*Lozovyi, 2007: 110–111*).

3. The modus of understanding moral responsibility in lyric-epic folklore

The poetic system of a lyric-epic song represents the peculiarities of structuring a complex anthropological model. Exceptional events, which determine actualization in the folk consciousness of the destructive moments of individual irresponsibility toward the consequences of one's actions, were imprinted in the collective memory. For example, in the ballad "Поїхав Лебедюга з панями на війну", ambivalent factors were the reasons for the brutal murder of the husband's wife and mother: blind trust in the mother's lie about the frivolity of the wife and the abrasive character of the young husband. At the same time, it is the dominance of subjectivity over objectivity. In addition, the concept of responsibility is presented in the folklore text through antinomies. In contrast to the irresponsibility of the husband, the responsibility of the wife toward the family and the household was rendered via artistic means: "«жона Катерина краща від злота», а поряд із тим, «слуги, кухарки поприбирувані», «вози ковані позаточувані»" (*Kachkan, 1981: 39–40*). And the surname of the folklore protagonist was used in a derogatory form – Лебедюга (Lebediuha). Irresponsibility led to tragedy through self-destruction:

Тоді вийшов Лебедюга, став си на гору,
Вдарив собов до землі до сирової:
– Земле моя сирова, взяла-с ми матінку, вітця,
Возьми мене молодого сироту-вдівця (*Kachkan, 1981: 39–40*).

A similar plot is evident in the ballad "Мала Дребенюшка два синочки рідні". However, the final part of the lyric-epic work shows that having killed his wife in anger, the protagonist – Drebenushko (Дребенюшко) – expresses compassion for his mother, resorting to forgiveness and preserving her life, but still commits suicide. The folklore text conveys the deep emotionality of the described event, demonstrating the protagonist's repentance about his recklessness and inability to change what he did: "так мні серце умліває за душков Катеринов" (*Kachkan, 1981: 39–40*).

The modus of understanding moral responsibility also appears in other genres of lyric-epic songs, in particular, chronicle songs. Using the lyrics of the song about Nykolaika Moroz, one can notice that responsibility is a complex phenomenon that manifests itself in the life of a person in a diversified way – even through fear in addition to other emotions. The whole conceptual sphere of the song comes down to the concepts of "good" and "evil", the verbal representation of which renders the essence of "responsibility" through the four realities of the work. The first reality is the arbitrary life of brothers – Sasinyuchko and Livantriuk, who received drinks from the blacksmith, not having the opportunity to pay for their order; the second reality is the provocation of a blacksmith to steal sheep from the valley; the third reality is the murder of a young shepherd Moroz by thieves; the fourth reality is the capture of murderers by gendarmery and their execution. The work has a poly-aspect manifestation of immorality closed by a general existential evaluation of an irresponsible act. The educational function of the folklore work is realized through the mode of understanding the behavior of characters – a warning about the consequences of irresponsibility:

Продавала Лівантрючка воли та й телиці,
Та не могла викупити синів з шибениці (*Spivanky, 1972: 305*).

It is about the concept of “attaching responsibility”, which applies to everyone: everyone should be responsible for their actions. The multifaceted artistic macrosphere of the song highlights a range of crucial interpretations of moral responsibility in the axiological sense. An irresponsible act triggers an appropriate reaction from individuals, merging into a general moral-ethical evaluation of the whole community. Many foreign researchers, involving P. Strawson, associate the relevant phenomenon’s manifestations with conditions for the appropriateness of individual reactions to a particular activity, and the appropriateness itself, in his opinion, does not require additional justification (*Strawson, 1993: 64*).

Each image of the above song is tragic in its way: Sasinyuchko and Livantriuk’s parents are in despair due to the execution of arbitrary sons, and the family of the murdered shepherd is in sorrow due to the death of the loved one. Consequently, the work ends with the lamentation of the wife about the deceased husband:

Та як пішла Морозиха та й полонинками:

– Устань, устань, Николайку, ходять кози самі (*Spivanky, 1972: 305*).

Therefore, there is a transmission of the folklore idea of the uniqueness and individuality of human life, which is in the living memory of other people, their experience and the spiritual world, through the folklore image of the newly created lyric-epic song. There is also a consolidation of the worldview position regarding death as a real destructive force and the antithesis of all things through the artistic representation of the folklore event. The ethical and psychological level of the folklore work is based on the consolidation of the imperative of human value, and “the individual experience becomes the property of the collective memory” (*Pavlova, 2019: 1231*).

The concepts of moral responsibility are also elucidated in love ballads. The experience of one’s existence presented in the lyric-epic song covers the essence of moral and ethical values, i.e., love and fidelity. The aesthetic is combined with the ethical component of the work. In one of the songs, the beauty of nature, the beauty of a young girl, contrasts with the horrification of the mother’s lie about the supposedly deceased Cossack and the horror of her daughter’s death. In this context, responsibility appears as an ambivalent phenomenon: on the one hand, the mother considers herself responsible for the happy future of her daughter and wants to save her from the wrong – in her opinion – choice, and on the other hand, she acts irresponsibly by resorting to lying violating moral and Christian imperatives: “Lying is sin” (*Epistle of the Apostle John, 5:17*) (*Bible, 1992: 1498*). As a result, an unconscious act becomes not only harmful to a loved person but also turns out to be harmful to oneself. The above shows how sometimes kindness and self-confidence evolve into a heavy burden for other people. The effect of “blind love” is depressing help. The mother’s help to her daughter is depressing and tragic in the ballad. At the same time, the young girl’s beloved demonstrates responsibility for her life, striving to save her. The poetic means of the song contribute to the semiotic distinction of antinomies of moral value. The image of the moon (*місяць*) in the folklore text can be considered symbolic since it acts not only as a means of visualization but also personifies the axiological triad of truth-love-loyalty. Simultaneously, against the glow of true love, a cruel reality appears – the premature death of a young person:

Ой світить місяць,

світить ясний,

І всю долину освітив,

По морю плавали два трупи,

А кінь по березі ходив (*Sokil, 2020: 103*).

In our opinion, considerations of the modern researcher T.O. Chepulchenko, who believes that moral responsibility is a combination of “external” commands of duty with internal impulses to fulfill it with conscience commands, are justifiable” (*Chepulchenko, 2010: 4*). Thus, the model of moral responsibility comprises categories of duty, conscience, and moral necessity. This concept is understood as the individual’s focus on a socially important essence relevant to moral value, understanding of the purpose and consequences of the act, a combination of goals, attitudes, means, and motives (*Chaika, 2008: 4*).

The entire artistic space-time continuum of the lyric-epic song accumulates a huge flow of spiritual energy, manifested through descriptions of life reality, and results in moral evaluation. Responsibility finds expression based on moral choice, where the subject, purpose, and circumstances matter. Internal attitudes combined with the causes and circumstances of the folklore event contribute to the formation of intent. Moreover, the whole complex is implemented in an exceptional situation instantly, with an understanding of the consequences for another person and without understanding the consequences for oneself. The very intention (to save the beloved) finds expression in one specific act; however, the poetic system of the song retransmits an essential axiom – the feeling of love drives the formation of a personal intention not only based on one manifestation but can also appear in further moral activity throughout life. The sacrificial death of the young man made the future disclosure of intentions impossible.

Cases of internal responsibility can also be found in other genres of folklore, in particular, in narratives about personal and social events from the life of Ukrainians. Modern folklorist O. Chikalo gives an example of a narrative provided by Nadiia Kurdydyk (maiden surname – Murafa) about her father – the head of Prosvita in Ivano-Frankivsk region, who sold a plot of his field, went to Lviv and purchased books to create a reading room (*Chikalo, 2020: 163*).

In the above narrative, the comprehension of moral responsibility is associated with the emotional state of individuals: the purchase of land is the result of hard work for peasants, so the act of the head of Prosvita can be perceived with surprise. At the same time, a sense of responsibility can be considered in the cause-effect system, and hence behavior depends on personal beliefs and spiritual aspirations.

In addition, the mode of understanding irresponsibility in lyric-epic songs is also analyzed through a cause-effect relation which lacks guilt and shame. In the famous song “Ой пити би горівочку” about a gendarme (шандар) from Deliatyn, there is an in-text interpretation of the act. The essence of the “irresponsibility” concept is presented at the level of antinomies in the characterization of the gendarme image – through the emotions of condemnation and surprise (“бо має коханку”; “апостол читає”; “люди ся проступили та стали у кутки”; “а він любку за ручечку, повів через сутки”; “ходімо... на торговицю”; “будемо попивати мід та й сливовицю”) (*Kachkan, 1981: 301*).

The background of love between the gendarme and a married woman remains outside the text of the lyric-epic song, and the existential essence of the individual is distinguished through the emotional space: the root cause of evil is inside the person. From the standpoint of existentialists, for example, S. Kierkegaard, responsibility is a conscious attitude to own actions despite the postulates of various institutions and social imperativeness. J.-P. Sartre emphasizes the complete subjectivity of the “responsibility” concept: every person determines their activity independently, and it depends neither on environmental conditions, heredity, or upbringing. Consequently, people are fully responsible for their actions (*Vitkovskaya, 2021: 80*).

Using the example of other characters of the work “Ой пити би горівочку”, one can notice such a peculiar moment as a crisis of responsibility. The husband of the unfaithful wife, whose name is omitted in the folklore text, finds himself in a critical situation and acts contrary

to his positive nature, defending his insulted “Ego”, dignity, honor, and resorts to the murder of an opponent. The ending of the work deepens the complex problem: after the murder of the lover, the woman does not show sadness about the fate of the married man and does not show a sense of guilt and repentance:

У покою піп Николу на смерть сповідає,
 А у другім єго жінка ручки си ломає.
 «Любі мої єгомосцю, щось маю казати:
 Ци мож мене із шандарем разом поховати?» –
 «Ой молода молодице, не мож то зробити:
 Уже шандар тиждень гніє, ти будеш рік жити» (Vitkovska, 2021: 302).

The responsibility issue in the work also has a theological aspect. According to the Christian concept, relationships with a married woman are considered adultery: The commandment: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself!” involves “Thou shalt not commit adultery”, “Thou shalt not kill”, “Thou shalt not steal”, “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor”, “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s goods“, and others (*Romans 13: 9*) (*Bible 1992: 191*).

Following anthropocentrism, morality is regarded as the comprehension of God’s essence as absolute, perfection, truth, the root cause of the existence of everything visible and invisible, and prizes of life. The dominants of Christian morality are to respect God, glorify Him, serve Him, imitate Him, and strive for likeness. The eminent theologian of the Middle Ages, Blessed Augustine of Hippo, highlighting the ability of a person to choose between good and evil, interpreted the responsibility concept through the ambivalent spheres of the world – “the City of the Earth” and “the City of God”. At the same time, the “City of the Earth” is characterized by imperfection, and the “City of God” – by higher justice, but the imperfection of the laws of the “City of the Earth” does not hold people free from responsibility (*Havryliuk, 2020: 68–69*).

The above folklore work shows a complex and contradictory image of the gendarme who, on the one hand, “reads apostle” – he is aware of Christian commandments – and on the other hand, publicly violates them by his appearance at the market with the married woman. The existential consciousness of the songwriter stresses essential criteria of moral responsibility, which is manifested bot at the individual and collective levels. Therefore, in this case, moral responsibility is directly related to the category of conscience, that is, to the analysis of personal emotions, relations, intentions, actions, and their correlation with a set of value orientations.

4. Conclusions

As a result of the representation of various existential acts and their understanding, the folklore text contributes to the structuring of a special model of moral activity which can regulate the whole life of society.

A crucial role in implementing the functions of the lyric-epic work belongs to the model of speech action. Reproducing the substantial-proper dilemma, the folklore work not only elucidates the inner essence of the structural components but also contains some heuristic levels: the author-executor asks questions, gives instructions, warns, makes one think, etc. The time-spatial continuum and moments of social interaction are constantly rendered through various facets, differing in both ontological and epistemological components.

By conceiving the issue of moral responsibility in the non-ritual lyric-epic poetry of Ukrainians, it is possible to approach the understanding of the anthropological model’s structuring. Based on the examples of manifestations of human behavior in dumas, ballads, chronicle songs, historical, family-household, and social-household songs, the axiological essence

of the substantial-proper dilemma appears through a hierarchical system. First, it refers to the multifaceted life of the individual, the ambivalence of their feelings, the experience of all collisions of empirical existence, the spiritual dimension of interpersonal relations, the heuristic component of the perception of the world in general, and all things in this world in particular. Secondly, an important axiological aspect of the dilemma is the cultural-historical dimension of the life of society and the country, including the principles of coexistence, faith, traditions, customs, and awareness of one's mission in the fate of people and homeland. Thirdly, the comprehension of the significance of moral responsibility results in distinguishing the interrelation between personal and universal harmony.

Thus, the world model presented in lyric-epic folklore reveals not only a variety of information but also a range of value imperatives, which are formed through original practice and the assimilation of past experience and through the evaluation of everything that is happening around. The value system conveys preferences, requests, needs, internal attitudes, etc. Moral responsibility is a basic factor in the functioning of a socio-cultural system consisting of a plurality of interpersonal interactions.

The above examples of folklore texts demonstrate that every person is an embodiment of the axiological guidelines of their ethnic group, worldview, understanding of good and evil, interpretation of their nature, and the reason for human existence in all the ambivalence of their meanings. As a result, ethnicity can be considered a special anthropological quality of the individual.

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