



**REPRESENTATION OF SLAVIC
CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES IN THE
FOLKLORE THEME “MAIDEN SEDUCTION”**

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Dmytro TREHUBOV

Ph.D., Associate Professor,
National University of Civil Protection of
Ukraine,
94 Chernyshevskaya St., Kharkiv, Ukraine,
cxxttregubov1970@nuczu.edu.ua
<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1821-822X>



Iryna TREHUBOVA

Studio Head, Methodologist,
Communal institution "Center for Children's
and Youth Creativity No 1 of the Kharkiv City
Council",
64-A Peremogy Ave., 64-A, Kharkiv, Ukraine,
tregubova0606@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0787-8882>

ABSTRACT

The study relevance is determined by the need to identify the Ukrainian people worldview formation basis based on the folklore analysis. It is still possible because traditional formulas contained in songs have not changed, therefore a systematic

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analysis allows us to understand their original meaning. The spring, wedding, initiatory, Kupala motifs presence within the folklore plot “maiden seduction” were analyzed. An archaic ritual reconstruction variant is presented on the conducted analysis basis. Following plot archaic components were considered: characters’ actions correspondence to “heavenly events”, the solar dramaturgy of the “burning” or “drowning” girl description, the Sanskrit etymology of words “ve-sna”, “so-sna” (spring, pine), pine using in the “World Tree” role. An analogy is shown between gods actions Thunderer and Cloud with World Tree ignition in the folklore. Plot solar elements are singled out: the similarity of first dawn rays touching the pine top with the ignition process, the Cossacks movement from the Don or to the Danube coincides with the sun movement, the Kasunya-Zorya image can be understood as the sun reflection in the “Danube” (“great water”). The pine is used in rituals because it is similar to the World Tree: under sun rays, the bark turns golden. And the girl's braid looks like a snake-cloud, so the fellow with sun first rays must cut it off. According to Sanskrit, “so-sna” can mean an illuminated by the sun tree in marriage ceremonies (as a ritual sacrifice), which “burns” and gives drops, “ve-sna” – enveloping nature by the solar wind with life initiation. The bride white veil in the marriage ritual makes her an analogue of Kasunya-Zorya. The plot general meaning is formulated as a world creation description with the cloud-snake breaking near the World Tree, the sun and water marriage, staged at an archaic wedding during the Kupala holiday.

Keywords: plot, maiden seduction, worldview, pine, spring, sun, Danube.

АНОТАЦІЯ

Відображення світогляду слов’ян у фольклорному сюжеті «звідництво дівчини»

Актуальність дослідження визначається необхідністю виявлення базису формування світогляду українського народу на підставі аналізу фольклорних зразків. Така можливість зберіглася, тому що традиційні формули, які містяться у народних піснях, не змінилися. Відповідно системний аналіз дозволяє зрозуміти їх первісний зміст і походження. Проаналізовано наявність у межах фольклорного сюжету «звідництво дівчини» весняних, весільних, ініціаційних та купальських мотивів. На підставі проведеного аналізу наведено варіант ре-

конструкції архаїчного весільного ритуалу. Розглянуто наступні архаїчні складові сюжету: відповідність дій персонажів «небесним подіям», солярна основа обрядів «спалювання» і «потоплення» дівчини, можливість санскритської етимології слів «ве-сна» та «со-сна», можливість обрядового використання сосни у ролі «Світового дерева». Проведено аналогію між діями богів Громовика та Хмари з фольклорними згадками щодо запалювання тройдерева. Виокремлено солярні елементи сюжету: схожість осяяння верхівки сосни першими променями світанку з займанням, рух козаків від Дону або до Дунаю співпадає з рухом сонця, Касуню-Зорю можна розуміти як відбиття сонця у дунаї. Доведено, що сосна має ознаки Світового дерева, оскільки у сонячних променях її кора набуває золотистого характеру, що зумовлює можливість її використання у ритуалі. При цьому, коса дівчини схожа на змія-хмару, тому юнак з першими променями сонця повинен її відсікти. Виведено, що за санскритом «сосна» може означати осяяне сонцем дерево в церемоніях шлюбу, яке «палає» та дає краплі, з ритуальною жертвою, а «весна» – обгортання природи сонячним вітром з ініціацією життя. Показано, що білий вельон нареченої у шлюбному ритуалі робить її аналогом Касуні-Зорі. Сформульовано загальний сенс сюжету «звідництво» як опис творення світу з розбиттям хмари-змії біля Світового дерева та шлюбом сонця і води, що інсценують на архаїчному весіллі під час свята Купала.

Ключові слова: сюжет, звідництво дівчини, світоглядні основи, сосна, весна, сонце, дунай.

INTRODUCTION

It is believed that folklore has a ritual content and origin to a large extent. An important place in it is occupied by calendar-ritual cycle songs, where the song was the pagan ritual component and modulated the participants rhythmic movements (Trehubova et al., 2021). With the significance loss of certain rites and during development, many of them acquired family-ritual, social household, and ballad features (Myshanych, 2003). At the same time, the song genres formation took place in a diffuse way, when the original basis signs remained. Therefore, ritual songs with a ballad component, ballads and lyrical household songs coexist at the same time. Partly, the balladry is observed in fresyankas, haivkas, rindzivkas, carols, Kupala

and wedding songs. Some of these songs acquired a pronounced ballad character.

During the transformation of original plots, following events occurred: the departure from paganism, the Christianity adoption, the Ukrainian lands multiple occupation, the loss of the national memory bearers. Corresponding transformations have also taken place in the plot “maiden seduction”, the features of which create the impression of cruel treatment of a woman, which requires an evaluation of the events as a criminal offense (Lavrynenko, 2011). However, in actions of plot characters, you can find a calendar-ritual or spring-wedding origin (Trehubov et al., 2022). Freckles and song-hayivkies are mostly associated with the Easter holidays, marking the spring beginning at the equinox. Wedding ritual songs can be associated with the Ivan Kupala holiday on the summer solstice, when they celebrated the spring end, the Marena final death, the summer beginning, which opened the marriage period. The ancient Slavs corresponding worldviews were to be fixed in the “maiden seduction” plot. Understanding these basic worldviews is important for clarifying the Ukrainian self-identification foundations.

Probably, Ukrainian ballads, like Dumas, genetically originate from the “words” genre. This genre main example is “A word about Igor's regiment”. In the plot “maiden seduction” folklore formulas regarding social norms of the behavior with the taboo elements pronunciation are noticeable. But there are reasons to look for echoes of pagan beliefs and rituals in the plot, with a reflection of gods mythological relationships, on which relationships stereotypes between people were superimposed. Therefore, the analysis of this plot and these close to it will deepen the understanding of our pre-Christian period ancestors worldviews. In the “maiden seduction” plot, the following events are typical: treating passer-by men to the girl (or they eat without permission what the girl brings to brothers), coaxing the girl, traveling through stages, the girl's refusal to travel, combusting a pine tree together with a tied girl or her drowning in the Danube, a girl's conversation about an unfortunate fate. Solar, spring, wedding and initiatory motifs can be seen in these events. It is necessary to carry out either their unification on a certain worldview basis, or to deny some components presence in plot roots.

Movement through a disordered world is the initiation rites characteristic (Balushok, 2016) and is one of mentioned plot foundations. A similar children movement through the forest with the mortal danger occurrence observed in folklore

origin fairy tales with the initiatory component “Red Riding Hood”, “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs”, “A Boy Like a Pinky”, etc. The search for a “fern flower” on the night of Ivan Kupala is also similar to echoes of references to archaic initiation rites. It is unlikely that our ancestors who lived in nature did not know that the fern does not produce flowers. On the other hand, the fern resembles a branch of a pine tree, to which a girl undergoing initiation rites is tied. Then the young man's goal is to find a girl before dawn to complete the initiation rite together. Perhaps the girl is a fern flower, and the young man could not have passed the initiation, but got lost in the forest, which filled the search story for the “fern flower” with a mystical plot.

Spring motifs of the plot can be seen in the Danube mention (as a river flood), the comparison of “a burning pine” and “a girl as beautiful as spring”. The similarity of plots about the drowning in the Danube of a girl by a man or a child by a girl with references to Podolyanochka (Bilodanchyk, Kasunya-Zorya) bathing in the Danube also needs clarification (Trehubova et al., 2021).

The plot solar nature is indicated by the travel direction from the Don to the home or to the Danube, that coincides with the sun movement. The wedding motifs of the plot are related to the fact that pine tree burning next to the girl is mentioned in wedding songs (Pashnyk, 2023), and burning the braid used to be the wedding ritual part (Nesen, 2008). Moreover, in the entire course of events of the plot, you can see the stages of a traditional Ukrainian wedding. Perhaps the Danube is a river that has always been considered holy, but on certain days any water in rivers was considered holy – on Easter and Kupala; and then on these holidays any river can be called the Danube, which is mentioned in the folklore. The sanctity of the Danube can be connected with the fact that certain tribes, who later laid the foundations for the Slavic nation formation, originally came from the Danube.

In archaic folklore stories, a mythological worldview can be traced with a description of gods actions and ways of reproducing these actions in rituals. Thus, the “Podolyanochka” ritual contains worldview ideas about the marriage of the sun and water (White God (Bilobog) and Dana) with the birth of their child – a girl-Bilodanchyk, and aims to sanctify girls to marriage readiness (Trehubova et al., 2021). In the “maiden seduction” plot, an initiation ritual related to the change in the young people social status is also seen, in which gods mythological actions are staged (as they say, “marriage is made in heaven”). Since the specified plot is related to the

marriage ritual, it should contain a reflection of the relevant ideas. Therefore, the research task is to find out such a relationship, for which it is necessary to carry out a detailed analysis of plot specified stages and applied formulas in terms of their origin.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The “maiden seduction” plot uses well-known folklore formulas (Trehubov et al., 2022): “three” (drinks, guests, ways) – the unity of world components and life parts; strong “drinks” (honey, wine, beer) symbolize gods gifts; “three guests” – three brothers liberate the sun – “red maiden” after winter, which is similar to the matchmakers' procession to the bride; “burning tree” (more often a pine tree) – touching a tree in the morning with solar fire; “pine tree” or “fir tree” – the bride (“The pine tree is making noise, buzzing, / The little girl is crying, longing” (Tsekhmistruk, 2006)); cutting off or burning the “braid” - the girl transition to the married woman status; “Danube” – river overflow (Yermolenko, 2007); “promises of the best” explain the consent to travel with men; “girl speech” contains a reference to “taboo” and is addressed to a man who “hears” her (is deliberately nearby); the girl “Galya” and the boy “Cossack” generalize the images of “young people”. But the given interpretations of the formulas do not take into account worldview foundations of this plot origin.

According to the myth, which has a similar plot, strangers (voloshins) persuade a shynkar girl (red maiden), who treats them to “noisy vodka, sweet honey and green wine...”, to travel. But then they tie the girl to a pine tree and set fire to the tree. I. Nechuy-Levytskyi believes that the relationship between the gods of Cloud and Thunderer (Khmara and Gromovyk) is described, who ignites the heavenly tree with lightning, breaks the cloud, which descends with rain (drink) on the ground (Nechuy-Levyts`kyi, 1992). The Indian Vedas also contain a similar plot. It is believed that the name Galya is connected with the name of the spring ancient Indian goddess Vasana (or Gulya) (Kolessa, 2009), whose groom is Thunderer (Gromovyk); pine in the myth is the World Tree analogue. That is, F. Kolessa hinted at the possibility of this plot having a deep worldview basis; and I. Nechuy-Levytskyi – provided an interpretation of this plot worldview foundations, but did not substantiate the analogies used and did not extend it to the song folklore certain array.

Pagan rituals are based on the sun “life” phases. With each new phase



beginning, Kolyada, Yaryla, Kupalva, Ovsen, as well as Svitovydy (Bilobog, White God) were honored (Voytovych, 2007). Of them, Svitovid is associated with the World Tree and is honored at the autumn equinox. After the Sun's life this phase is over, his new Christmas is celebrated. An attribute of this holiday is a grandfather (the last sheaf harvested for the autumn equinox), similar to a triple-tree (World Tree). A wedding tree is also similar to a triple-tree. Wedding songs mention a pine tree burning with a girl: "A pine tree was burning... / A girl was standing under it, / Combing her blond hair..." (Il`nyts`kyy, 2009). This character is similar to the "Red maiden" is described as a spring that has noisy water streams ("vodka"), the sun reflection in water ("honey"), green forests and meadows ("wine"). That is, the plot "maiden seduction" contains spring and wedding motifs. And the summer with spring meeting, the wedding period onset is celebrated on Ivan Kupala (on the summer solstice), when the Yarila time changes to the Perun-Thunderer time.

Folklore has preserved references to the fact that according to an archaic wedding ceremony, initiation was carried out in a disordered world with a journey through stages (Teleutsya, 2008): "Oh, we were in the field / In the green oak / We lost the girl / In the cross-shaped periwinkle". The initiation rite stages a ritual death with the birth of a young person new status, often it is a dawn meeting with a river crossing (like on Kupala). At the same time, a girl who is "sinking" or "burning" turns to an unknown guy: "Oh, whoever hears in the forest, let him save me...", "...if someone swims to me, i will be his...". There are similar words in the wedding song: "Let someone hear / Who spends the night in the field. / And it's already spring..." (Yefremova, 2016). From this it can be assumed that in the spring the girl and the chosen one undergo initiation separately, although at the same time, but the boy does not know the girl location.

On the Kupala holiday, the meeting scenario of the sun and water gods, male and female energy is played out (Nechuy-Levyts`kyy, 1992). The ancestors believed that this day is marked by the greatest fertility and sanctifies marriage. During the ceremony, a prepared pine tree and a family tree – kupaylytsa (marena, giltse) are burned (Pastukh, 2014). In the evening, Yaryla is "buried" and Marena is finally driven away; in the morning, Kupalva saves the drowning girl Zorya (the dawn) – the sun reflection (Trehubova et al., 2021): "...on Kupala, / The sun was playing... / But it fell to the girls... to swim across the Danube-Sea... / The girl Olenka drowned" (Kolessa, 2009). We narrow down the "Danube" concept to the river water designation

sanctified by the Sun on Kupala or Easter. Marriage couples were formed on Kupala (Kozholyanko, 2008). The girl's marriage initiation and the archaic Kupala wedding used to take place according to a script (Trehubova et al., 2021): a journey through the disordered world with “matchmakers”, tying a girl to a pine tree with a scythe before dawn (magical time), a girl's cry for help (magical prayer), the consecration-illumination of the pine-girl by the Sun, cutting off the braid by the bridegroom, swimming across the “Danube” as a consecration by Dana and again rescue by the bridegroom. According to some songs, the girl could swim in the “Danube” and take with her a severed braid, or a wreath, which symbolized the braid, which is still preserved in the Kupala ritual: “who catches the wreath, he will take me”. This was the end of the archaic marriage ceremony as a magical ritual, and the girl acquired the woman status. Over time, the ceremony was divided into Kupala holidays and wedding events. But the described ritual leaves questions about the worldview origins of its formation.

The Marena burning on the Shrovetide and Kupala, as well as the Marena drowning on the Kupala, are most reminiscent of human the sacrifice. Researchers distinguish sacrifices several types that were offered to the water or the field in the form of food, living creatures or their substitutes by the drowning or burning: “Marenka went to drown, / And her friends followed her to see...” (Kudryavtseva, 2008). Moreover, they sacrificed food to gods, and living creatures to dangerous forces. Many such rituals were performed near trees, often hollow ones. Moreover, they note that the Kupala sacrifice had a marriage goal. It was also noticed that in the eastern Ukraine part sacrifice rituals by the burning prevailed, and in the western part – by the drowning (Kudryavtseva, 2008). In the same way, folklore plot “maiden seduction” versions with the burning or drowning mention are distributed across the Ukraine territory (Kvitka, 2010). But researchers have paid the little attention to solar and mythological origins of respective rites.

The conducted review showed that folklore preserved descriptions of initiation rites by consecrating a person by staying in a disordered world, by the sun fire and water to acquire a new social status. But the archaic rites reconstruction, which are hidden behind the dramaturgy of the “maiden seduction” plot, was not carried out. The worldview components study of this ritual based on the features analysis of the “maiden seduction” plot will allow us to trace the layering and find out the genetic links between various samples of the ancient Slavs song folklore.

AIM OF THE ARTICLE

The article aim is to study the relationship between the worldview origins of the plot “maiden seduction” and its development features based on the plot elements analysis and the applied relevant formulas.

METHODOLOGY

Research obtained results are based on the analysis and systematization of folklore samples containing certain references to the “burning” and “drowning” of the girl. Also taken into account are related plots that mention the burning process in an unusual way and use the formulas under consideration: the Danube, actions with a scythe, and others. In addition to song samples, mythological and fairy-tale plots are considered.

The understanding of basic elements of the plot “maiden seduction” can be sought on the analysis basis of Ukrainian and related Indian mythology. Parallels with Indian mythology attribute the origin of this and related plots to the 5th millennium BC - the probable period of the Indo-Europeans settlement from Black Sea steppes. Therefore, the work analyzed the place and time, attributes and scenario of a possible ritual within the specified plot. At the same time, we took into account the various motives existence possibility that were at the plot core: spring, wedding, initiation, Kupala motives. For the formulas “sosna” (pine) and “vesna” (spring), etymological connections with Sanskrit are considered to clarify the primitive people attitude to these concepts. Such an analysis will allow establishing the functioning peculiarities of the ancient Ukrainians worldview within certain rites.

On the analogies basis of related plots and the field of certain formulas use in various folklore samples, the paper simulates an archaic rite. In addition, grounds have been invented for separating the “girl drowning” and “child drowning” plots as having different origins.

RESULTS

The ritual location according to this plot coincides with the ritual events traditional location on the worlds border: “forest-river”. The water surface role in this case is that it is an earthly analogue of the sky, as it reflects all heavenly events. In addition, the water and lightning come from the sky, so the river can be considered a part of it. This allows you to stage heavenly events in the ritual actions form in and near the river, and even, just like the Sun, to pass through the sky. At the same time, any solar cycle archaic ritual aims to bring about the desired natural changes and increase prosperity in the community life.

Thus, *heavenly phenomena* are one of the worldview bases of the plot “maiden seduction”. According to the myth, water stolen by a snake (Lizard, Koshchei) falls as rain after Perun (Indra) defeats him. It is noteworthy that under the protection of Perun the Thunderer, the god of thunderstorm, rain and fertility, marriage is also (Kovtun, 2010). There is a similarity between the wedding ceremony and the mythological marriage of Gromovyk and Gromnytsia-Perunytsa, the dawn goddess, the marriage guardian and the lightning personification. The Antis honored the lightning god as supreme. The Slavs considered a thunderstorm to be a heavenly fertilization act (Nesen, 2008).

The indian mythology describes the cloud breaking by lightning as a wedding (Nechuy-Levyts`kyy, 1992) where the Thunderer is the bridegroom of Vasana (Spring goddess). Heavenly actions of Gromovyk and Khmara, as brother and sister, are characterized by a ritual song (Teleutsya, 2008): “And the sister asked her brother: ... / Don't chop me down on Saturday... / Grind me up into small poppy seeds / Sow me in three small gardens, / But it will give birth to a triple-seed...”. Wedding, Kupala and other songs have a similar meaning: “A red rose was burning / A white girl was sitting under it / She was carrying water in a sieve / She was extinguishing a red rose” (Nechuy-Levyts`kyy, 1992); “A linden tree was burning... / A girl was sitting under it, / Sparks were falling on her, / Boys were crying for her. / They carried water in a sieve, / They extinguished the green linden” (Hyzha, 1972); “And the princess got scared, / She hid under the triple tree... / Cut down the clear fires, / We will burn the triple tree... / I will marry the king... / Oh, I would rather rot in the ground, / Than lived with the king in the world!” (Teleutsya, 2008). Thunderstormy plots should be related to summer, and the corresponding rites should be related to the Kupala



holiday, the beginning of the marriage season.

Gromovyk has three main incarnations in the Ukrainian mythology: warrior, farmer, hunter or shepherd (then the “Cossack who plows in the field” can be a ritual analogue of Gromovyk). According to the myth, Ivan the Hunter breaks the cloud with lightning, causing rain (Nechuy-Levyts`kyy, 1992). Folklore sometimes describes Ivan as Perun, but in Kupala songs and carols he appears as the sun: “Between those sirs like a red pheasant... is sir Ivan... and faithful servants... They ask... about the Unbelievers-land: Let's shoot an arrow like thunder across the sky; / Let's gallop on horses like a light rain; / Let's flash our sabers like the sun in a cloud!”. The search for a girl by three brothers (among whom is Ivan) with the shooting of an arrow also takes place in the series fairy tales “The Frog Tsarivna (princess)” or “The Snake Tsarivna (princess)”. According to the plot, Tsarevich Ivan found an arrow in the swamp at a frog; this place in the spring looks like the Danube (flood) with the sun reflection in it. Before the Tsarivna arrival to father of the Tsarevich, there were the alternately rain, lightning and thunder. After that, she is either kidnapped by a whirlwind, or she flies away on her own, and Ivan has to rescue her (as in the carols) from the snake (or Koshchii) from the island thirty-nine lands away. This place and the conditional distance to it can be interpreted in several ways. Since, according to the myth, the World Tree grows on the island, under which a snake is depicted, then: 1) “3+9” is a year of the sun life, where 3 are winter months; 2) if we model a triple tree, then “3” is the first branch, and “9” is the second; then three nine lands are the conventional distance to the heavenly world, where the triple tree (the World Tree) is located. These events can be understood in the sense that Bilobog (Whitegod) is looking for his bride, Dana, who is waiting for him (Trehubova et al., 2021) (in the same way, Nastechka was waiting for the “sweetheart” to come at a time when “the oak forest was burning” and “water was being carried in a cauldron”). Sometimes a girl captured by Koshchei is called Zorya (Dawn).

Thus, key points that need clarification are the reason for the plot solarity, the pine role in this, the relation of the plot to spring or summer rites and the role of the Danube in them.

Let's consider the *solar motifs* in the plot “maiden seduction”. The analysis of formulas and the plot course shows the symbolism of the burning pine tree image. Our ancestors believed that lightning is a sun ray, which ignites the pine tree from

the top to the bottom, like the sun at sunrise, giving it flame shades (Trehubova et al., 2021). In this case, the pine should become the place for the girl's initiation rite and consecrating by the male energy of the solar fire. In addition, the "Cossacks" movement from the Don to the home or to the Danube coincides with the sun movement, which emphasizes the plot solar nature.

The Trypillians tradition to burn their village before moving may have a ritual solar explanation and a sanitary purpose. The rite may be associated with making a ritual sacrifice. As gods could sometimes burn down a house with lightning, which people could perceive as a punishment, so now the Trypillya people themselves gave their houses as a sacrifice to gods. This action may have been accompanied by a human sacrifice. For example, a woman's bone was found near one of the houses in the trypillian village burnt-out area (Nikitin et al. 2023) (likewise, fire caused by lightning often results in the death). That is, gods imaginary actions are always ritually repeated in rites. Perhaps in the "maiden seduction" plot the sacrifice was more or less real, since the wedding song tells that "The pine was burning... Under it stood the girl... Sparks are felling on her / Boys cried for her".

The top, which seems to be on fire, resembles an Orthodox temple. The temple golden dome reflects sunlight at very different angles. Therefore, the temple becomes like a sun part that has come down to the earth. The solar origin possibility for the temple dome construction gives a hint that pagan temples had a similar principle of connection with the solar deity.

Consecration by fire in the ancient times was an rituals integral part. Fire was perceived as the primary active force in the universe, as a particle of the sun, as a living being, because it is born small and grows, needs "food", moves, seems to be reborn after the death. Fire manifestations, as a gift from gods, had "magical" features: the fire provides the life, "sanctifies" and protects the man, destroys plants, but turns them into the fertilizer, chases away darkness, it can be carried by hands, lightning gives rain and sends fire to the earth, if fire is "fed" it becomes immortal, with the body cremation it liberates the soul, unlike living beings, when it eats, it becomes more "hungry" (Kozholyanko, 2008). Therefore, the furnace in the house was the life place of the gods gift, the altar and the feminine principle carrier, where the newborn child was placed, who also became a gods gift and consecrated by them (this makes sense



as a sterilized place). Most stages of the marriage ritual (matchmaking, inspection, etc.) were conducted near the stove with a lit fire (Teleutsya, 2008). In the version of the song “The pine was burning”, the phenomena given by God are compared: “The pine was burning, like a furnace...” (Il`nyts`kyy, 2009), i.e. the burning of a pine is also a gift from the gods.

In the Ukrainian folklore and mythology, solar heroes are sometimes male, and sometimes female: Krasna Panna (Red Maiden, Beautiful Maiden), Zorya, Bilobog, Svarog, Dazhbog, Yarylo, Kolyada, Kupalva, Lad, Hors, Ovsen, Bilodanchik-Podolyanochka, as well as a horse and a falcon. Kolyada is sometimes considered to be a newborn girl-sun hiding under water: on the pre-Christian Vodokres, there was a ritual of the ice hole illuminate with a candle in order to see the light reflection. As if people were checking that the sun-Kolyada is alive, and the time will come – she will be freed from the captivity. Then “Bilodanchik-Podolyanochka” (daughter of Bilobog and Dana) is an already liberated sun-girl in the sun reflection form on the spring equinox (Trehubova et al., 2021). The appropriate round dance helps to prepare this girl for marriage readiness and transformation into Lelya-spring, it at the same time sanctifies the ceremony participants. Then the Red Maiden is the summer embodiment of the sun reflection in the water, as well as the goddess Zorya. That is, female solar images in one way or another, but connected with the water. Sometimes the reflection image has male features: Ivasyk-Telesyk, according to the fairy tale, swam on the river in a golden boat with a silver oar, and then he was stolen by snakes and had to free himself from the captivity.

According to another tale, the witch tricked “sister Olena” and dragged her to the river bottom, but people later pulled the girl out. Such events are close to Lela's awakening in the spring, when the vague sun reflection in the water appears as the Lela's face underwater before the rescue. The spring girl is described in the folklore as follows: “the water is Hanna's beauty... the fish in the Danube is Hanna's body... the grass on the meadows is Hanna's braid” (Il`nyts`kyy, 2009). In addition, folklore mentions that Kasunya-zorya (dawn) floated down the Danube River, and Nastechka stood on a willow board and “lelila” (she shined with reflected light), both of them were waiting for the “lovely one”. “The oak forest burned” can be understood as the sunrise during the leaves unfolding. And the mention of “the beautiful Kasunya... at the wedding time” is an allusion to the Red Maiden and the Kupala holiday. Then Kasunya and Nastechka are other variants of the female image of the sun reflection.

The mention of the “Danube” speaks of the “holy” water for Easter or Kupala, “wedding” – about the Kupala holiday, that is, the whole spring time is outlined.

We observed the phenomenon at dawn – it seemed that the sun began to rise over the sea, but the sun edge appeared a little later, that is, at first we saw some reflections effect. It is this phenomenon of a bright glow before sunrise that our ancestors could consider the goddess Zorya (Dawn), who appears first and only then does her groom in the Sun form appear. This phenomenon occurs on the horizon, which is curved like a bridge, like a willow. This is exactly the place where Nastechka was waiting for the groom. Moreover, it can be expected that if the meeting place of the boy and the girl is located in the sea, even if they are gods, then they needed an island, for example, the Latyr-stone or the island where the World Tree grows. After the Sun and Zorya meeting, the Sun begins its journey across the sky, and its reflection (morning Zorya) stretches across the sea surface. But such phenomena can be observed on the river, and even in the meadow. And if Zorya did not go to meet the Sun today, then it will not rise (cloudy weather), besides, there will be no dew and reflections on the meadow. During the day, Zorya hides somewhere and reappears in the elongated reflection form in the evening – evening Zorya (the Sun path goes through the sky, and the Zorya path – through the water surface). And there on the horizon – she and the sun meet again. Also, our ancestors noticed that the blurred light before the sunrise turns into dewdrops, and after the sunset, the blurred light appears again. That is, our ancestors quite clearly reflected the nature key phenomena in the gods mythological behavior.

The horse, on which the Cossacks moved, acts as a symbol of the masculinity and the Sun, performs the role of a carrier to the afterlife, a mediator and a messenger for both man and the Sun. Therefore, in initiation ceremonies and wedding ceremonies, the horse was one of main attributes (Kinder, 2011).

From this it follows that the girl and Cossacks in the song “The Cossacks rode” repeat gods actions, and the pine is the World Tree analogue. In calendar rites and mythology, the image of the Sun, beginning with the winter solstice, was alternately represented by images of the Kolyada, Yaryla, Kupalva, and Ovsen. On the same dates, the four-faced god of time Svitovyda, who fights for the kingdom of the light with the darkness, was honored. The idol of Svitovyd has a similar structure to the World Tree.

Let's consider *the pine as a World Tree* ceremonial image. In the folklore and



the myth, the World Tree is mentioned as a triple tree, a sycamore, an oak, a willow, a cherry or a pine in the middle of the primordial sea (Mishchenko, 2010). Our ancestors imagined the World Tree as built on triple branches, like the “triple-tree” in the songs, so the pine visually fits this role. The world creation is described in a song: “There was a pine tree in the middle of the Danube... A falcon... He took three seeds from there... earth... wheat... green grass”, where the falcon is the image of the spring sun (Mishchenko, 2010), and the Danube is the sky image as a river or, even, the Danube plays the role of the primordial sea. The world creation is seen as the fire and the water marriage, and the burning process as a love symbol (Yermolenko, 2007). Fire as a male and active element is opposed to the water, a female element. These elements are considered the two main divine phenomena (Teleutsya, 2008). The fire appears in the groom image and the pine in the bride image. The “primeval tree” (World Tree) grows on a lathyr-stone, which is visited by the goddess Zorya. The goddess Lada was born under this tree during the world creation (Voytovych, 2007). Therefore, the bride needs to undergo consecration under the primeval tree analogue a pine tree. The pine “burning” becomes of the marriage image. In the wedding ritual, a small pine tree – “giltse” became the primeval tree simplified image.

Trees were associated with thunderstorm manifestations of gods: Hittites had a coniferous tree, Greeks had an oak. Note that the stage of the wedding ceremony with the newlyweds waiting in the bride's yard front is sometimes called ‘standing in the oak forest’ (Nesen, 2008). The tree connected the people world with the sky through the dead souls, so its image was used in many rites – “giltse” (a small pine branch) at a wedding, a “didukh” (the wheat last sheaf – the tree form) during the Sun Christmas, a “kupaylytsia” (similar to the giltse) and a “marena” (a stuffed tree made of any tree branches, somewhat similar to a diduh) during Kupala (Kvitka, 2010). In Ukraine, there is a long-standing tradition of placing all products as the plant compositions form “fan” upwards (broom, charms, etc.), which symbolizes a living plant and is connected with the World Tree.

The branch was made from the pine or spruce top and decorated with red ribbons or candles (Yefremova, 2016) during the wedding ceremony at the “posad” stage (Nesen, 2008). In wedding songs it is mentioned: “...she created the giltse... From a tall tree, from a spruce / Also from a red viburnum” or “Our tree is bright / Like a viburnum is red / like the sun shines...” (Yefremova, 2016). The main branch of

the giltse with triple branching was called “outfited pine”: “This is a triple branch, / It grew on the quiet Danube... / And on the table it blossomed into gold” (Nesen, 2008). The loaf together with the giltse forms a chain of “bread, tree, paradise” – a world vertical model, this composition also reproduces the World Tree, which grows on the island. In the wedding ritual, the giltse or the broom was burned near the furnace and danced near this fire. A giltse has the characteristics of a tree and a plant (pine) as a feminine, and fire represents a masculine, burning means these beginnings union and a symbolic sacrifice (Nesen, 2008).

Regarding the pine connection in the myth and the folklore with the feminine, several remarks can be made. According to the Greek myth, the chaste nymph Pitis refused from gods advances, for which she was turned into a pine. In the Korean folklore, pine is associated with the female “element” and is called [sonamu], [sol], [song] – “the highest tree”. If a pine is beautiful, it is compared to a woman: [yeosong], [misong]. The pine, as the tallest and resinous tree, ignites during a thunderstorm after a lightning strike “from the top to the bottom” (as in the song), which for primitive people was a sign of the gods' inclination towards them and the gift of the fire. On a lightning-struck surface, the pine produces resin drops like raindrops, matching the World Tree description in song and myth. And the crown and bark color at sunrise resembles the heavenly fire rising. At the same time, the golden bark is a World Tree sign: “And on that pine there is the golden bark... the pearly dew... Forge a wedding ring on my right hand”. Then the wedding ring is a World Tree sign. In the sun's rays, pine bark gives a “golden” effect. According to the myth, near the World Tree trunk there are clouds in the snake form, which prevent rain from watering the earth (Mishchenko, 2010). Then the biblical tree of the good and evil understanding, on branches of which the snake hid, is similar to the World Tree. The girl's braid resembles a snake, thus Galya, together with the pine, partially fulfills the Cloud goddess role and the World Tree with a cloud. Thus, the plot of the Halya burning by the “Cossacks” is similar to the relationship between Gromovyk (Thunderer) and Khmara (Cloud), and the rescue of a drowning girl in the Danube is similar to the Yarila and Lelya meeting.

The word etymology “sosna” (pine tree) has not been definitively clarified: the Indo-European meaning of the “gray” is refuted by a folk song: “... the pine – / Why are you red?”; of Latin origin – “sik” (juice), a resinous tree; or “soplo” (nozzle) – a tree with a hollow with bees (bees are a World Tree attribute as a symbol of drops

(Kinder, 2011); “hollow tree” (Kirilkova, 2014). But we are interested in the version of the word origin “sosna” from the Sanskrit “saura” – belonging to the sun or the sun participation in the marriage ceremony. If we break down the word “sosna” into possible components, we get: [so] – go to the completion; [su] – to receive juice, to bathe, to make a sacrifice, a wish; [osa] – to burn; [usnas] – hot, a body heat; [sna-] – bathing, to flow, to cry, the mourning ablution; [susnāta] – sanctified by bathing; [susnayu] – the sacrifice creator; [susnuṣa] – to have a good daughter-in-law; [sopāsana], [upāsana] – a waiting, a being close, a worship, a household fire; [aupāsana] – a burn for the worship, a sacred fire (Monier-Williams, 1960). Then the generalized characteristic of the word “sosna” (pine) can be: a hollow tree illuminated by the sun in marriage ceremonies, which “burns” and gives drops, with a ritual sacrifice. That is, worship rituals related to the marriage ceremony could take place near the pine. The following parallel is also interesting: [soṣyantī] is a woman in the childbirth or a girl the getting married.

The spring can be considered the world creation first stage. The origin of the word “vesna” (spring) is associated with the Sanskrit “vasanta”, “vasanta” also refers to the Kamadeva helper (the love god) – the ancient Indian goddess Vasana (Kolessa, 2009). These words etymological basis is considered to be the root “vas” – to live, to dress. In addition, the proximity of words “ve-sna” and “so-sna” is noticeable. There are other parallels to “vasanta” in Sanskrit (Monier-Williams, 1960): “vasa” – dwelling, shining, white; “vasati” – dwelling, living, dawn; “vesati” – to love; “vasana” – living place, clothes; “veśa” – dwelling, clothing, decoration, appearance; “veśana” – home, entry somewhere; “vasar” – morning; “snai” – to dress, wrap; “snas” – to live somewhere; “sna” – to bath, to flow, to cry. There are other words similar to the word “vesna”: “vasnam”, “vasna” – housing, wealth, cloth, clothes, price, acquisition, death. The word interpretation “vasanta” as “to wrap” provides even the root “sn”: living in a house means the wrapping by the housing; the death is accompanied by the ritual wrapping; and also it means – radiance, dawn, bathing. If we break down “vasanta” into syllables, then: [va] – air, wind, ocean, water, cloth, clothes (that which envelops); [sa] – to connect; [san] – to love, to give; [santa] – the sun from “satya”; [anta] – end, limit, nature; [ta] – breast, virtue, nectar, jewel, uterus. Then the generalized characteristic of “vesna” (spring) can be: “va+sna” – flood (bathing water); “va+santa” – solar wind; “veśantā” – fire; “vas+anta” – clothed nature; “va+san+ta”

– to dress, to love, uterus. Then you can make a generalized interpretation: “vesna” is the nature wrapping by the solar wind with the life initiation.

Regarding the “burning” pine effect in the spring, let's dwell on the analogy of “vasanta-veśantā” as a solar spring comparison with a fire because it makes awakening. Then the pine, which is supposedly burning, can really be a spring symbol, or the interpretation of “sopāsana-aupāsana” indicates the sacred worship fire. There is another analogy between interpretations of words “ve-sna” and “so-sna”. Namely: “vasanta” – impregnation (Vasana was Kamadeva's assistant) and “soṣyanti” – woman in labor. In this case, there is a connection between the words “spring” and “pine” by origin, which determines the pine place in the spring ritual.

It is interesting to consider the origin of the word “vesillia” (wedding). It is unlikely that a critically important social rite in ancient times was created as “vesely” (fun). Most likely, this ritual summed up the success of “ve-s-na” (spring) and created hope for the fertility. The word ending “-illya”, as in the cases of “porod-illya, zast-illya” (the mother in labor, feast), most likely denotes the state “after” or “next to”. Then the wedding rite calendar place is the spring border, and taking into account the need to act out heavenly actions by bathing in the “Danube”, this corresponds to the Kupala holiday.

Consider *the bathing necessity in the “Danube”*. We draw your attention to the fact that the child-Lelya “bathed” on the spring equinox, and the adult Lelya in the image of the goddess Zorya “bathed” on the summer solstice. Then the plot of the child “drowning” is an belief echo that on the spring equinox, a child-girl of Bilobog and Dana (Bilodanchyk) or Zorya (Bilozorchik) is born in the “Danube”. (Trehubova et al., 2021). It is similar to the plot “a girl throws a child into the Danube”. There is a plot version “maiden seduction”: Cossacks threw the girl into the Danube and helped themselves with sabers (Mishchenko, 2010). This can be considered as a story variant about Thunderer and Cloud (Hromovyk and Khmara). At the same time, the sabers play the lightning role in relation to the cloud reflection, the Cossacks play the role of the Thunderer (“three guests”), the girl plays the role of the Cloud goddess. Considering what has been said, plots “the burning pine with a girl” and “the girl death a in the Danube” describe different stages of the same mythological plot. In the plot “maiden seduction” – bathing a girl with her rescue, on the one hand, stages



the marriage of the sun and water, on the other hand, it tells about the breaking of a cloud by a lightning saber near the World Tree, and this action causes rain.

If the sun reflection in the “Danube” on Kupala is an bride analogue, then bride's clothes should also correspond to this image. Accordingly, her main attribute after cutting off her braids is a white veil (“vellon”), as in the song “The pine burned and was in flames”: “...a girl was standing under it, / Combing her red braid. / Oh braids, you braids are mine... / You will no longer serve me, / You will go under the white veil” (the “giltse” was sometimes called “vel'otka”).

The Slavs considered the white color to be associated with the White God and endowed him with divine qualities of the light. White is a ritual color, as the marriage rite stages the bride ritual death. Then the white veil becomes a parting element of the girl consecration, for whom marriage is the new life beginning in a new “cluster” regardless of the past, because for her parents, the girl as a daughter disappears. According to ancient traditions, when a young unmarried person was buried, she was dressed as a bridegroom or bride (Marchenko, 2001), dead children were also dressed in light-colored clothes to ensure a better fate in the other world. That is, white color is equivalent to daylight and symbolizes good, victory over evil and purification. In this sense, you can consider the Easter Passover. Some researchers see her form as a phallic symbol, but it is inappropriate to the fact of the sun reflection appearance in the “Podolyanochka” image, besides, the Easter Passover was wide. It is, rather, an born incarnation image of the sun: yellow inside, and white outside, similar to the sun reflection, like a bride's veil. Then, together with Easter eggs, the Easter Passover image forms a world construction model and the celebration of the victory of the light forces and life in general.

DISCUSSION

Many folklore plots have a genealogical closeness. In many cases, the sphere of this kinship becomes the solar origins of these plots formation. For example, the image of a tree burning next to a girl is found both in wedding plots and in the “maiden seduction” plot. Images of the bathing and drowning a girl or a child in the Danube can be found in plots “maiden seduction”, “podolyanochka”, “a girl drowns her child”, as well as in shchedrivkas (a generous songs) and Kupala songs. Folkloric variants of the “Podolyanochka” round dance are the “Bilodanchyk” or “Bunny”

dances or games, etc. And it is known that the sun reflection is traditionally called a “solar bunny”. We have divided the indicated plots into Easter and Kupala, which contain different solar images and formulas. Water folkloric embodiments are also mentioned alongside solar images. Then events of the specified plots turn out to be connected with respective gods actions.

The variants presence of the Podolyanochka image named Bilodanchyk and Bilozorchyk indicate that it is about the child-girl Lelya of gods Bilobog (Whitegod) and Dana (or Zorya – Dawn). Then the girl who drowns her child is Dana by origin. This child appears at Easter in the form of a white reflection-bunny on the river. Such a sun-sanctified river was called the “Danube” In addition, New Year's shchedrivkas (the Slavic New Year most likely began on Easter) sings that “Kasunya-Zorya floated down the Danube River”, but it ends with the phrase “Red Kasunya at the wedding time”. The latter can be seen as an allusion to the Kupala holiday, then the song outlines the entire spring time. Then the Easter paska with a white top embodies the newborn sun reflection image, and the bride under the white veil is the Kupala sun reflection image.

The girl drowning is often found in the “maiden seduction” plot (Cossacks drowned a girl and helped themselves with sabers) and Kupala songs (“...everyone swam across, ...only the girl Olenka drowned”). Clouds and the sun can be reflected in the water. In order for it to rain, the cloud must be broken, which is what the Cossacks did. According to the myth, the goddess Cloud, and sometimes her role is played by a Snake or a Lizard, are near the World Tree and prevent the rain from falling, then the Thunderer breaks the cloud with lightning. Cossacks do the same in the song with the cloud mirroring with sabers. Then this is a Kupala plot. Moreover, Marena is burned or drowned on Kupala (just like what happened to the “girl Olenka”). But Marena was chased away and burned four months ago on Maslyana, and now they are already dealing with the goddess Khmara (Cloud). As it was said, the rain should be initiated by the lightning, which at the same time ignites the tree top under which the girl or effigy (which is now called Marena) is standing. Sparks fall on the effigy, which is related to the Cloud goddess, and it catches fire. Perhaps it is being drowned immediately in the river, in the same way that a Cloud not in the sky after the lightning and thunder gives more intense rain, disappears in the sky and joins in an invisible way to the river - that is, it sinks, and the freed sun reflection appears in the river. By the way, somewhere in Kupala there is a rowan night, when a fierce struggle between



the light and darkness forces takes place.

The World Tree analogue in rituals and folklore is often called a pine. It is high and at dawn is illuminated by the sun, as if it were in the fire; its bark is like gold; its branches often have triple branches, and the World Tree is called the triple tree in the folklore. Then the girl, who was placed at dawn near the pine, performs the ritual role of the goddess Cloud or Snake. A girl's braid resembles a snake - therefore it must be burned or cut off (which was done earlier at a traditional wedding). At an archaic wedding, according to the “maiden seduction” plot (by the song), the Cossacks persuaded the girl to the travel, took her through dark forests (perhaps at night), tied her to a pine, then set fire to the pine starting “from the top to the bottom”, that is, dawn broke, the sun covered the pine top with rays. The girl starts to call for help, then another Cossack speaks – “I'm spending the night in the field”, maybe it's the groom, who has to cut off the braid at sunrise. Perhaps he did not even know exactly the place where the bride initiation takes place. But the girl must turn from a cloud-snake into a sun reflection, so she needs to throw herself into the river, and in the next – “whoever can swim to me, he will take me”.

Clarification of generalizations made in this study can be carried out with the help of the wider variants analysis of this plot implementation in the folklore and myth, which can provide new elements for the reconstruction and explanation of the archaic ritual.

In the future, by studying analogies with other archaic folklore plots (such as the ‘gatekeeper’, “queen-frog” or “podolyanochka”), it is possible to more fully reveal the origins and meaning of “maiden seduction” plot components. Conversely, this study results can be used for the other folklore plots analysis, which will allow a deeper understanding of our ancestors world views and relevant archaic rituals peculiarities.

CONCLUSIONS

Cossacks actions in the “maiden seduction” plot correspond to mythological actions Gromovyk, Perun, Ivan the Hunter, and girl actions correspond to goddess Cloud actions, the snake, the “princess”. The plot describes the cloud breaking, the ignition of a triple tree (pine tree), the rain fall, as well as sunvdivine manifestations: the lightning as its ray, the sun reflection in a “Danube”, the pine top “ignition” at

dawn due to illumination.

Primitive man chose a pine tree together with a girl as an earthly analogue of the mythological World Tree, which is why the pine golden bark is mentioned in songs. Since the girl in the ritual played the Cloud goddess role, and her braid played the role of a snake under the World Tree, the braid was cut off. Analysis of the word “so-sna” (pine) by syllables using a Sanskrit dictionary characterizes it as a sunlit tree in marriage ceremonies, it “burns” and gives drops, with a ritual sacrifice. There is a relationship with the interpretation of the word “ve-sna” (spring), if it is analyzed in a similar way: enveloping the nature with solar fire with the life initiation This ties the “maiden seduction” plot to spring events.

The mention in songs of the girl or child “drowning” in the Danube has solar roots, but from various folklore plots. “Drowning” of a child is the “Bilodanchyk” plot on the spring equinox, when the child of Bilobog and Dana (Zorya) “jumps” along the Danube in the sun reflection form. The “drowning” of the girl is a Kupala plot for the summer solstice as a farewell to spring and the marriage of the Sun-Kupalva with Zorya, whom he “rescues”. Then “Danube” is a holy river, similar to the sky, which is consecrated by the Sun on Easter or Kupala.

In this case, the “maiden seduction” plot in its origin describes the annual world creation with the breaking of the cloud-snake near the World Tree and the sun and water marriage, which is played out at the Kupala holiday and at the archaic wedding.

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