

# A Study of Russian-Ukrainian War Predicting Signs in Autobiographical Narratives of Ukrainians

**Oksana Labashchuk**

Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University  
E-mail: [lov081168@elr.tnpu.edu.ua](mailto:lov081168@elr.tnpu.edu.ua)  
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6000-7237>  
<https://ror.org/02j98rq95>

**Tetiana Harasym**

Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University  
E-mail: [garasym@tnpu.edu.ua](mailto:garasym@tnpu.edu.ua)  
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4971-7809>  
<https://ror.org/02j98rq95>

**Tetiana Reshetukha**

Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University  
E-mail: [rewetyhatv@elr.tnpu.edu.ua](mailto:rewetyhatv@elr.tnpu.edu.ua)  
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4515-3425>  
<https://ror.org/02j98rq95>

**Summary.** The article analyzes the semantics of oral narratives of modern Ukrainians who perceive the Russian-Ukrainian war as an anomalous phenomenon that was ‘predicted’ through various signs and omens and had its premonitions in nature, social life, and dreams. The narratives reveal that contemporary interpretations of the war rely on metaphorical models deeply rooted in traditional folk culture. These models emphasize the sense of a disrupted natural and social order, expressed through astronomical, meteorological, and zoomorphic images. Special attention is given to unusual animal behavior, sudden changes in weather, celestial anomalies, and prophetic dreams, functioning as culturally encoded indicators of looming danger. The analysis shows that these representations have a long history, since similar motifs appear in the recordings of the folklorist Volodymyr Hnatiuk during World War I and later, in oral testimonies from World War II. In times of crisis, individuals return to traditional explanatory frameworks conceptualizing the world as an interconnected system, where any deviation from the norm is interpreted as a meaningful sign. At the same time, modern mass media, social networks, and digital communication platforms contribute to new folklore plots, demonstrate the adaptability of folk tradition and reveal how contemporary communicative environments reshape collective interpretations of traumatic events.

**Keywords:** oral tradition, folklore, autobiographical narrative, Russian-Ukrainian war.

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## Передвісники російсько-української війни в автобіографічних розповідях українців

**Анотація.** У статті проаналізовано семантику усних наративів сучасних українців, які сприймають російсько-українську війну як аномальне явище, що нібито було «передбачене» через різноманітні знаки й перестороги та мало свої передвісники у природі, суспільному житті та сновидіннях. Зібрані матеріали свідчать, що сучасні інтерпретації війни спираються на символічні моделі, глибоко вкорнені в традиційній народній культурі. Ці моделі підкреслюють відчуття порушення природного й соціального ладу, що виявляється через астрономічні, метеорологічні, зооморфні образи та зміни у людській спільноті. Особливу увагу приділено символічним маркерам – незвичній поведінці тварин, різким змінам погоди, небесним аномаліям і пророчим снам, які функціонують як культурно закодовані індикатори майбутньої небезпеки. Показано, що такі уявлення мають тривалу історію, адже подібні мотиви зафіксував Володимир Гнатюк у період Першої світової війни, а пізніше вони з'явилися в переказах про Другу світову війну та у розповідях наших оповідачів про сучасну війну. У кризові періоди люди звертаються до традиційних пояснювальних моделей, що розглядають світ як цілісну систему, де будь-яке відхилення від норми трактується як значущий символ. Водночас сучасні масмедіа, соціальні мережі й цифрові комунікаційні платформи створюють інформаційні прецеденти для появи нових фольклорних сюжетів, демонструючи адаптивність народної традиції в інформаційному суспільстві та показуючи, як нові комунікативні середовища трансформують колективні інтерпретації травматичних подій, зберігаючи при цьому ключові символічні структури народної свідомості.

**Ключові слова:** усна традиція, фольклор, автобіографічна оповідь, російсько-українська війна.

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## Rusijos ir Ukrainos karo požymių tyrimas ukrainiečių autobiografiniuose pasakojimuose

**Santrauka.** Straipsnyje analizuojama šiuolaikinių ukrainiečių, Rusijos ir Ukrainos karą suvokiančių kaip anomalų reiškinį, kurį buvo galima „numatyti“ iš įvairių neįprastų pranašingų ženklų, o jo pranašystės atsispindėjo gamtoje, socialiniame gyvenime ir sapnuose, autobiografinių pasakojimų semantika. Tirti autobiografiniai pasakojimai rodo, kad folkloriniai karo paaiškinimai grindžiami gamtos ir socialinės tvarkos pažeidimo jausmu, išreikštu astronominiais, meteorologiniais, zoomorfiniais ir kitais simboliniais vaizdais. Analizė rodo, kad tokios reprezentacijos turi ilgą istoriją, nes panašių motyvų randama folkloristo Volodymyro Hnatiuko užrašuose iš Pirmojo pasaulinio karo laikotarpio. Socialinių sukrėtimų laikotarpiais žmonės grįžta prie tradicinių aiškinimo modelių, kurie atspindi pasaulio kaip holistinės sistemos idėją, pagal kurią visoks nuokrypis nuo normos suvokiamas kaip ateities įvykių ženklas. Kartu šiuolaikinė žiniasklaida ir internetas daro įtaką naujų folklorinių siužetų formavimuisi ir rodo liaudies tradicijų dinamiškumą ir prisitaikymą informacinėje visuomenėje.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** žodinė tradicija, folkloras, autobiografinis pasakojimas, Rusijos ir Ukrainos karas.

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## Introduction

Since 2022, the Ukrainians' everyday life has been defined by war<sup>1</sup>.

Military actions in the center of Europe in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are so incredible, unexpected, and anomalous that they deserve to be understood by schol-

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'war' is specifically used in the article to denote the full-scale invasion of Ukraine that the Russian Federation launched in February 2022.

ars of various scientific disciplines. Ethnologists, linguists, sociologists, oral historians, and folklorists are all interested in changes in the oral tradition of Ukrainians that reflect various experiences of living the war [Makhovska 2023; Коваль-Фучило, 2023; Кузьменко, 2023; Labashchuk et al. 2023; Вільчинська et al. 2023; Пастух, 2023].

Stories about lived experience are keys to understanding and interpreting the folklore phenomena in the modern Ukrainian oral tradition. We fully agree with the Finnish folklorist Barbro Klein who believes that, “in the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the words ‘narratives’ and ‘narrating’ are becoming as frequently and as loosely used as ‘identity’ and ‘culture’” [Klein 2006]. In fact, according to our observations, narratives are the most relevant form of representation of the nation’s modern culture and one of the most important factors in constructing personal identity (national, ethnic, social, cultural, gender identity, etc.). This opinion is shared by Anthony Giddens who claims that “All our lives, we are involved in intertwining these complex grand narratives with the equally complex small ones through which we communicate with one another. It is through such processes that we shape our senses of ourselves: the efforts of modern individuals to create their own ‘thoroughly reflected identities’ are, to a great extent, narrative projects” [Giddens 1991, 215].

Thus, semantic analysis within the framework of narratives which, in modern folklore studies, are associated with stories and personal experiences, is important for our study.

Scholars are actively conducting humanitarian understanding of the war experience in Ukraine. A person cannot perceive and interpret individual experience without the semiotic basis provided by culture: “[b]etween what our body tells us and what we have to know in order to function, there is a vacuum we must fill ourselves, and we fill it with information (or misinformation) provided by our culture. The boundary between what is innately controlled and what is culturally controlled in human behavior is an ill-defined and wavering one” [Geertz 1973, 50]. Similar considerations can be found in Mircea Eliade: “The development of cultural ethnology and the history of religion has shown that ‘man’s reaction to nature’ was determined more by culture” [Еліаде 2001, 11]. In other words, as the Polish folklorist Piotr Kowalski notes, “The existential experience of the individual is translated into the language of symbolic thinking” [Kowalski 2007, 471].

A person seeks to explain the unusual and incredible situation of war in which he finds himself, and seeks to find an explanation for this experience. One of the means he uses is traditional folklore representations, transmitted in the narrative form.

## Research Methods and Materials

The issue of choosing the material and methodological approaches for research is of major significance. The hypothesis that formed the basis of this article is that the traditional folklore system is capable of reproducing itself in similar social-political situations. At the beginning of the previous century, the territory of Western Ukraine was the scene of the First World War events. Analyzing historical sources and folklore material allows us to trace the stability of cultural patterns in the context of military trials.

In 1916, the folklorist Volodymyr Hnatiuk, a native of the Ternopil region, published the article “*War and Folk Poetry*” in the journal “*Calendar for Sich Riflemen and Soldiers-Ukrainians. 1917*” [ГНАТЮК 1916], where he asked his readers to pay attention to the experience of the First World War by Ukrainian combatants of the armed forces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, most of whom were peasants. Two years later, the scientist published the article “*War and Folk Beliefs*” [ГНАТЮК 1918], in which he included a questionnaire with 50 questions related to various aspects of folk beliefs about the war, as well as behavioral patterns of Ukrainian soldiers, as determined by folklore tradition. The questionnaire also contained several questions that we find significant since there are similar motives to be observed among the autobiographical narratives about the experience of the Russian-Ukrainian war recorded within the timeframe of 2022–2024. The research explored how people used predictions, signs, and interpretations – such as dreams, folk prophecies, celestial phenomena, and spiritual beliefs – to foresee, explain, or make sense of the outbreak, course, and causes of the war [ГНАТЮК 1918].

The comparison of Volodymyr Hnatiuk’s questionnaire with contemporary autobiographical narratives recorded during the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2022–2024 opens the prospect of comparative analysis. This allows us to assess the extent to which the traditional folklore continues to function in similar social-political conditions.

Based on Volodymyr Hnatiuk’s questionnaire, we formed a questionnaire to which we got comprehensive answers. Thus, from the entire body of received materials, we singled out answers to several questions related to meteorological and astronomical predictions of war and anomalous phenomena in animate and inanimate nature, in which our storytellers saw predictions of a full-scale Russian invasion.

Violetta Krawczyk-Wasilewska is correct in her opinion that folklore – as a separate part of symbolic culture – is characterized by the fact that it reveals the state of consciousness of people and their actual attitude to phenomena and cultural and social problems [Krawczyk-Wasilewska 2016, 25]. We agree with

the researcher's opinion that since folklore reflects everyday thinking and has a universal character, it is able to convey the social group's expectations, fears, anxieties, joys, prejudices, etc. [Krawczyk-Wasilewska 2016, 25].

To interpret cultural phenomena, we use the method of condensed description proposed by the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz. The analysis of maternal narratives about the experience of pregnancy and childbirth based on Geertz's 'condensed description' technique has proved to be successful [Labashchuk 2013; Labashchuk et al. 2020; Labashchuk et al. 2020a].

According to Clifford Geertz, human thinking functions due to a system of 'meaningful symbols' or elements of reality that people attribute meaning to in order to understand their experience better. Culture serves as a mechanism that allows a person to interpret the world through symbolic comprehension. On the other hand, biological factors cannot fully ensure the formation of a cultural space. Thus, symbols become the primary means of cultural orientation. A person adopts some symbolic models from the cultural environment and forms the rest based on his experience, creating individual meanings. Therefore, Clifford Geertz calls for considering culture as an interpretive context to help understand social phenomena and personal behavior. In this approach, not only artifacts, i.e., material evidence of culture, are important, but also mentifacts, i.e., figurative and imaginary structures, influence thinking and shape consciousness [Geertz 1973, 57].

The article aims to investigate the predictions and signs of war in the oral narratives of Ukrainians within the timeframe of 2022–2024, in particular, those related to astronomy, meteorology, flora, and fauna with the objective to reveal their semantics and connection with traditional Ukrainian beliefs and to explore the transformation of these ideas under the influence of mass media and the Internet.

The research material consisted of 88 recordings obtained through structured narrative interviews carried out by the article authors and students of Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University from 2022 till 2024. In 2022, 5 narrative interviews were recorded, followed by 55 narrative interviews in 2023 and 38 narrative interviews in 2024, in which the motifs we are studying have been retrieved. Only 7 interviews were those with men, whereas women recorded 81 interviews. Most respondents at the time of the interview were residing in Western Ukraine. In the narrator's passport, we indicated the initials, gender, year of birth, and the place of the respondent's permanent residence. All interviews were recorded on digital media and subsequently transcribed, taking modern transcription requirements into account.

## Presentation of the Materials

### 1. War Signs in Inanimate Nature

The stories shared by our respondents show that some modern Ukrainians perceive war as an anomaly that is not subjected to human will. First of all, changes are noticeable in inanimate nature: the sun, the moon, the stars, and the sky become different. Strong winds or thunderstorms can foreshadow war. The idea of the prevalence of traditional ideas about predicting war by unusual astronomical and meteorological phenomena is represented in the materials published by Andrei Gura [Гура 1995].

#### 1.1. Astronomical phenomena

An unusually red sunset can serve as evidence of the war:

*I was walking in the evening and saw the sunset; it was as red as blood. And the thought (not mine) occurred; my grandmother told me that before the war [World War II], the sky was so blood-red, and old people said that there would be a war (SA, 76 y.o., f., Kyiv region)<sup>2</sup>.*

An even more common sign is the appearance of a red moon: *If the moon acquires red shades, this indicates that <...> such events occur on the eve of bloody wars (AK, 51 y.o., m., Rivne region).*

An elderly woman recalls the appearance of crosses in the sky, which is considered a negative sign: *Before the war, a cross lined with stars was clearly visible in the sky. Before World War II, people had already seen such a cross (DH, f., 86 y.o., Ternopil region).*

In general, any anomaly appearing in the sky is a bad sign: *If there is a rainbow in the middle of winter, in the middle of spring in the sky, then something <...> is not good (SL, f., 53 y.o., Khmelnytskyi region).*

In fact, a person's look into the sky at significant moments in their life can be meaningful. According to Mircea Eliade, "the sky remains present in religious life through symbolism" [Еліаде 2011, 68]. The symbolism of the sky can be expressed not only in the form of signs but also in the dream interpretation. Here is a typical story:

*The youngest daughter, <...> told me in the car: "Mom, I want to tell you something. I was dreaming of the sky, I saw it in flames, <...> I was so scared and didn't know what was happening." And then I realized that it was real <...> this war was supposed to*

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<sup>2</sup> The system of abbreviations operates as follows: SA (the initial letters of the narrator's name and surname), 76 y.o. (the narrator's age at the time of recording), f. (the narrator's sex, with 'f' standing for *female*, and 'm' for *male*), Kyiv region (the area of Ukraine where the narrator would reside before the full-scale invasion).

*happen. Moreover, they [flames from the dream] were <...> probably those planes in the sky* (KO, f., 54 y.o., Kyiv region).

Oksana Kuz'menko also gives examples of the symbolism of 'red' and 'fiery' as war predictions based on folklore materials about the First and Second World Wars [Кузьменко 2018, 248–249].

The sky as a locus predicts the future:

*But when the war broke out, it had already begun, we moved then, and many of my friends, those from Kharkiv<sup>3</sup>. We began to see images of angels or birds with wings in the sky. Everyone started taking pictures of them and posting those photos on social networks. They said it was like "the sky helps us" in this way. For example, I still remember seeing a rainbow. It was shining then. Those in Kharkiv also took pictures and said it was like a "sacred dome" protecting our territory* (KN, f., 40 y.o., Kharkiv region).

## 1.2. Meteorological phenomena

### a) Wind

According to modern Ukrainians, ominous signs predicting war are unusual meteorological phenomena. Stories about a heavy wind that blew before the war and damaged significant religious or symbolic objects are prevalent. One recorded story is about the fall of a cross on St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv, a church built in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and considered one of the symbols of Ukrainian Orthodoxy. A total of five interviews were recorded with such a plot: *Before the war, a cross fell from St. Sophia Cathedral because of a very heavy wind. There is not one dome; many domes, but the cross fell. And now there was a heavy wind, and the cross fell again, but all the confessions existing in Ukraine gathered there; everyone prayed, made a new dome, and put up a new cross. There is hope that it will soon be over* (SO, f., 77 y.o., Kyiv).

A similar story about the fall of the cross in Rome before World War I and the attempts of the kings of all lands to raise it is given in the article by Oksana Kuz'menko [Кузьменко 2020].

One of the most common stories is the fall of state flags and Christmas trees in Ukrainian cities. A total of seventeen such stories were recorded. Their source is not so much the oral tradition but Internet sources containing information about these events (NV, 23.08.2021; TCH, 21.01.24). It is important for us that the Ukrainian oral tradition adopted such stories, and they began to be actively shared:

*Well, there were such signs as the mass fall of flags. In August 2021, just a few days before the celebration of Ukraine's Independence Day in Kherson<sup>4</sup>, a giant flagpole with*

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<sup>3</sup> Kharkiv is a city located in the Northeast of Ukraine.

<sup>4</sup> Kherson is a city in the South of Ukraine. It was under Russian occupation at the beginning of the full-scale invasion.

*a trident on the top fell. Also, in January 2022, the wind tore the tallest flag of Ukraine in Kharkiv and, at the same time, in Kramatorsk<sup>5</sup> and Donetsk<sup>6</sup> Region, <...> Another such unusual event occurred when a Christmas tree in Mariupol<sup>7</sup> fell in front of the Drama Theater. This happened in January 2022. The wind blew away Christmas trees all over the country. As if a warning that now the celebration is not very appropriate (TN, f., 21 y.o., Ternopil region).*

### **b) Thunder and lightning**

Other meteorological phenomena that can symbolize misfortune are thunder and lightning, especially if they appear in an untimely season, for example, in winter:

*I don't remember, then it thundered and flashed so much that people thought it was some missile. And then those missiles thundered. And there were such flashes of lightning in the middle of winter <...> So I think it was also a sign, some premonition that something bad would happen (HI, f., 49 y.o., Ternopil region).*

The analyzed material allows us to conclude that there are certain symbols with which a person forms memories of the war's inevitability. First, it is the red color of the sun, the moon, and the sky. In the research material, there was a recorded plot about a dream in which people get water from a well, and it is red as blood, which the respondent also interprets as a sign of the approaching war (KS, m., 51 y.o., Rivne region). Ukrainian folklorist Yevhen Pashchenko publishes a folklore narrative in which he tells how an old man opens three coffins filled with blood, predicting the beginning of World War II [Пашченко 2008, 72–73]. Any natural anomalies (heavy wind, thunderstorms, especially in the 'wrong' season, i.e., time of the year when they are not expected to be observed) are among meteorological phenomena that function as war signs and most often occur in the recorded narratives. The connection of thunder and lightning with war can be attributed to the ancient Ukrainian idea of the war god Perun (later, his functions were taken over by the prophet Elijah), whose weapons were lightning and thunder. This connection can be traced in the traditional Ukrainian culture: "When the prophet Elijah runs on horseback through the clouds, then thunder rumbles" [Заглада 1929, 137].

<sup>5</sup> Kramatorsk is a city in the Donbas region of Eastern Ukraine.

<sup>6</sup> Donetsk is an industrial city in Eastern Ukraine. It is temporarily occupied by Russia (as of the time of writing this article).

<sup>7</sup> Mariupol is a city in Donetsk region, situated on the Northern coast of the Sea of Azov. It is temporarily occupied by Russia (as of the time of writing this article).

## 2. War Signs in Wildlife

### 2.1. Plants

The research material shows that flora also predicts the beginning of war with several anomalous phenomena. In particular, many hardwood trees dry up and uproot in the forest: *And once I was told that when a lot of oak trees dry up in the forest <...> or storms uproot a lot of this species, then this indicates that war may begin* (KS, m., 51 y.o., Rivne region).

Another anomaly is the flowering of trees at an unusual time of year: *Well, in the period before the war, a year before the war, a chestnut tree bloomed in January. I remember always being told that something bad must happen when a tree blooms in winter* (DM, f., 52 y.o., Ternopil region).

Another common sign of an impending disaster is an unusually large harvest of vegetables and mushrooms: *However, avid mushroom pickers will definitely remember the fall of 2021. There were an unusually large number of mushrooms* (HD, f., 86 y.o., Ternopil region).

It is emphasized that there was such a great harvest of mushrooms before World War II:

*I know that a massive harvest of mushrooms, cucumbers, or apples is a sign of a bloody war and many losses and deaths. My grandmother <...> said that even before the attack of Hitlerist Germany on the Soviet Union, there was an unprecedented harvest of mushrooms for two years in a row* (KY, f., 18 y.o., Ternopil region).

The negative symbolism of a large harvest of mushrooms is because mushrooms in folk culture are associated with the otherworld and are endowed with demonic properties [Kolbushowski 1895; Kolbushowski 1896]. A persistent pattern used in the recorded narratives is the comparison of mushrooms with graves<sup>8</sup>. This comparison uses alliteration and rhyme, contributing to its stability in folk tales. A total of nine narratives were recorded, and similar comparisons were found.

*Well, there are so many mushrooms in the forest that everyone who came could pick them. The one who hadn't gone to that forest didn't pick any. Well, if there are many mushrooms, there will be many graves, and we see that it is like that* (HI, f., 48 y.o., Lviv region).

Generally, a large harvest of vegetables is considered abnormal; it necessarily predicts some disaster:

*Of course <...>, I had a lot of cucumbers before the war. Moreover, the harvest of this vegetable indicates the approach of disaster; that is, war. My grandmother told me that*

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<sup>8</sup> 'Гриби' (*gryby*, mushrooms) and 'гробы' (*groby*, graves) in Ukrainian.

*our great-grandparents, in the times of a great cucumber harvest, began to prepare for war because it happened like that in 1940 and 1914* (HM, f., 17 y.o., Lviv region).

The given examples demonstrate the connection between the war of 2022 and the previous two world wars in the respondents' minds, emphasizing the regularity and inevitability of the events. Oksana Kuz'menko, a researcher of the symbolic folklore codes related to the war, notes that comparing war with the bloody harvest is inherent in the folk tradition [Кузьменко 2018, 250].

## 2.2. *Animals*

The behavior of animals before the war is also abnormal and strange. Numerous testimonies of our storytellers confirm this fact:

*Also, the famous signs of trouble, as our ancestors would call them, were black flocks of crows circling over the houses for a long time. <...> This frightened many people, but no one thought about why it was like that and that this could really predict war. I also know about wolves approaching human dwellings in the fall, in broad daylight. This is also a very strange phenomenon for wolves, but not only wild ones, but also tame ones begin to behave in an unusual way* (HM, f., 17 y.o., Lviv region).

The use of such hidden metaphors is generally characteristic of the recorded stories. In the following example, thousands of flocks of flies are compared to an attack by enemy planes: *Thousands of flies with large wings were crawling along the street on one side. Occasionally, they would spread, rise, and crawl in the other direction again. This predicted an attack by enemy planes* (LR, f., 80 y.o., Ternopil region).

The following example shows that the feathers of black ravens are compared to the crosses on the graves of dead young men: *Black ravens can foretell the beginning of war. They fly high in the sky in huge flocks, dropping black feathers to the ground. Furthermore, this indicates that a war will soon begin, and many young men will die. And these feathers are like crosses on their graves* (DH, f., 86 y.o., Ternopil region).

The origin of the following story is connected with Internet sources. It is about the fact that on January 26, 2014, Pope Francis prayed for peace in Ukraine and released two white doves. A crow and a seagull attacked the doves, but the birds managed to escape (Збруч, 26.01.2017). The symbolic interpretation of this event was widespread in Ukraine and is still remembered. In total, there are such eleven recorded stories: *Then, when in the year 2014 in Rome, they released doves as a sign of peace in Ukraine, birds of prey attacked these doves and started pecking with their beaks; they also said that it was a bad sign* (KYu, f., 48 y.o., Zaporizhzhia region).

Animals are mentioned in the narratives about the beginning of the war primarily because of their unusual behavior – aggressiveness, gathering in flocks,

etc. Our respondents notice an abnormal increase in the number of certain species of animals. Besides, there was a story about white doves being attacked by birds of prey, which respondents interpreted as an evil omen.

## **Conclusions**

Thus, the comparison of the research material confirms the hypothesis about the similarity of the themes of narratives-prophecies about the approach of war, recorded in 1914–1916 (World War I) and in 2022–2024 (Russian-Ukrainian War). Unfortunately, Volodymyr Hnatiuk was very ill at that time, and therefore he did not publish any work on the material he recorded. The scientist's archive is stored at the Mykola Ryl'skyi Institute of Art History, Folklore, and Ethnology of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine but inaccessible to researchers. We can only assume that if Volodymyr Hnatiuk had asked similar questions in his questionnaire, he would have had the corresponding material recorded on the territories of Western Ukraine during the war at his disposal. The similarity of the material may indicate the continuity of tradition, as well as the fact that extreme moments in a person's life, war, for example, activate the appeal to oral tradition and folklore. In traditional beliefs, our respondents seek explanations for everything happening in their familiar world. It should be noted that the modern era of mass media and the Internet has impacted the folklore tradition. Stories about doves of peace released by the Pope and about the fall of Ukrainian flags and Christmas trees first appeared in mass media stories and only then entered the oral tradition.

Modern Ukrainian folklore retains a connection with the traditional system of ideas, where the world is thought of as a single organism, and any violation of the natural order is interpreted as a harbinger of important events. War is perceived as an anomaly, manifested through changes in nature, animals' and people's behavior, as well as in signs interpreted as warnings of an approaching catastrophe. The preservation of traditional symbolism in modern narratives testifies to the continuity of the folklore tradition. However, today, its formation is significantly influenced by mass media and the Internet. Plots that first appear in the media are gradually integrated into oral folk tradition, enriching it with new images and interpretations.

## ***Author contributions***

**Oksana Labashchuk:** conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, investigation, writing – original draft, writing – review & editing.

**Tetiana Harasym:** formal analysis, resources, investigation, writing – original draft, writing – review & editing.

**Tetiana Reshetukha:** investigation, methodology, formal analysis, resources, writing – original draft.

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