

**THE CONCEPTUAL OPPOSITION “HOME – FOREIGN LAND”  
IN ORAL NARRATIVES OF UKRAINIAN EMIGRANTS  
ABOUT GERMANY**

**Oksana LABASHCHUK**

*Doctor of Philological Sciences, Professor,  
Professor at the Department of Theory and Methodology  
of Ukrainian and World Literature  
Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University  
2 M. Kryvonosa str., Ternopil  
ORCID: 0000-0001-6000-7237  
lagoshnyak@ukr.net*

**Nazarii SLOBODIAN**

*PhD in Philology,  
Associate Professor at the Department of German Philology and Methods  
of Teaching the German Language  
Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University  
2 M. Kryvonosa str., Ternopil  
ORCID: 0000-0001-6117-3958  
nazariy.sln@gmail.com*

The article analyzes the conceptual opposition «home – foreign land» in the oral narratives of Ukrainian migrants about Germany. Oral autobiographical stories reveal the mechanisms of self-identification, cultural perception of the «other», and intercultural adaptation. A key semantic tool for organizing experience is the binary category «one’s own – the alien», which in contemporary narratives is realized through the conceptual pair «home – foreign land». The concept of «home» represents security, family ties, and traditional norms of life, whereas «foreign land» reflects distance from one’s roots, the need to adapt to an unfamiliar order, while simultaneously acquiring traits of organization, social justice, and opportunity. The study is based on approximately 100 transcribed narrative interviews with Ukrainians aged 18 to 60 who lived or worked in Germany. Analysis of the narratives showed that the opposition «home – foreign land» is realized through spatial, axiological, and symbolic markers, including the image of a paradise garden as a utopian model of foreign space, which reinforces the contrast with the native environment. In the narratives, Germany emerges as both a heterotopia and a utopia: orderly, disciplined, clean, just, and predictable, while «home» functions as the space of familiar everyday life and implicit critique. The study demonstrates that the motif of «distant lands» transforms

in contemporary migration narratives into a cognitive-semantic model through which narrators verbalize the experience of migration, construct the value coordinates of their personal «I» and collective «we», and delineate the boundaries between «own» and «alien». The results highlight the significance of oral autobiographical narratives as a source for understanding cultural representations of space, identity, and intercultural communication among contemporary Ukrainians.

*Key words:* concept, Germany, migration, motif, narrative, national identity, opposition.

## **КОНЦЕПТУАЛЬНА ОПОЗИЦІЯ «ДІМ – ЧУЖА ЗЕМЛЯ» В УСНИХ НАРАТИВАХ УКРАЇНСЬКИХ ЕМІГРАНТІВ ПРО НІМЕЧЧИНУ**

**Оксана ЛАБАЩУК**

*доктор філологічних наук, професор,  
професор кафедри української та зарубіжної  
літератур і методик їх навчання*

*Тернопільського національного педагогічного університету  
імені Володимира Гнатюка  
вул. М. Кривоноса, 2, м. Тернопіль  
ORCID: 0000-0001-6000-7237  
lagoshnyak@ukr.net*

**Назарій СЛОБОДЯН**

*доктор філософії, доцент кафедри німецької філології  
та методики навчання німецької мови*

*Тернопільського національного педагогічного університету  
імені Володимира Гнатюка  
вул. М. Кривоноса, 2, м. Тернопіль  
ORCID: 0000-0001-6117-3958  
nazariy.sln@gmail.com*

У статті досліджується концептуальна опозиція «дім – чужа земля» в усних автобіографічних наративах українських емігрантів про Німеччину. Усні оповіді розглядаються як особливий тип дискурсу, що оприявнює механізми індивідуальної та колективної самоідентифікації, способи культурного сприйняття «іншого», а також стратегії міжкультурної адаптації в умовах еміграції. Важливим інструментом організації досвіду виступає бінарна категорія «свій – чужий», яка в сучасних еміграційних наративах реалізується через концептуальну пару «дім – чужа земля» та визначає структурування просторових та ціннісних опозицій.

Матеріалом дослідження стали 100 транскрибованих усних наративних інтерв'ю українців віком від 18 до 60 років, які мали досвід проживання в Німеччині. Аналіз

автобіографічних оповідей засвідчив, що дихотомія «дім – чужа земля» реалізується через сукупність просторових, аксіологічних і символічних маркерів, зокрема через образ райського саду як утопічної моделі чужого простору, що посилює контраст із рідним середовищем і водночас виконує компенсаторну функцію.

Через концепт «дім» у досліджуваних наративах репрезентується простір захищеності, родинних зв'язків, емоційної прив'язаності та традиційних норм життя. Натомість концепт «чужа земля» позначає віддаленість від «рідної землі», необхідність пристосування до незвичного, чужого соціального й культурного порядку, але водночас може набувати позитивних конотацій, таких як організованість, соціальна справедливість, стабільність та перспектива особистісної реалізації. Німеччина характеризується респондентами як гетеротопія та утопія водночас, тоді як «дім» репрезентується як простір звичного побуту, емоційної близькості, але й імпліцитної критики соціальних та культурних реалій. Дослідження показує, що традиційний фольклорний мотив «далеких земель» у сучасних оповідах трансформується у складну когнітивно-семантичну модель, через яку оповідачі вербалізують досвід еміграції, конструюють ціннісні координати власного «я» та колективного «ми», а також окреслюють межі «свого» та «чужого».

Отримані результати підкреслюють значущість усних автобіографічних наративів як джерела для розуміння сучасних культурних уявлень про простір, ідентичність і міжкультурну комунікацію українців у контексті міграційних процесів.

***Ключові слова:** концепт, Німеччина, еміграція, мотив, наратив, національна ідентичність, опозиція.*

**Problem statement.** Oral autobiographical narratives, as a form of recording individual experience and manifesting collective memory, constitute an important source for studying contemporary worldview transformations, mechanisms of self-identification, as well as specific cultural models of perceiving the «other» sociocultural space. In the context of the current challenges faced by our country, oral autobiographical accounts of Ukrainians about Germany acquire particular significance, as they represent experiences of intercultural communication, adaptation, and the interpretation of new social practices through the lens of native cultural tradition. In such narratives, real events (migration, work, education, everyday life) are often transformed into narrative structures in which a life fact is reproduced not merely as a «story», but as an interpretation that requires organization and explanation.

One of the key semantic mechanisms shaping the organization of experience in oral autobiographical storytelling is the opposition «one's own – the alien». In the humanities, this binary model is regarded as a fundamental category of cultural semiotics that defines the boundaries of one's own space and outlines the «other/alien» world as different, potentially threatening, or attractive. In Ukrainian oral autobiographical narratives about Germany, this opposition acquires a concrete spatial-existential dimension and is realized through the conceptual pair «home – foreign land». This dichotomy appears not only as a linguistic cliché or stylistic device, but as a specific cognitive

model through which narrators explain their own condition, determine the boundaries of safety and threat, and make sense of the experience of living outside Ukraine.

According to Ukrainian and foreign scholars, the lexeme «home» may be considered through the prism of symbolism associated with a range of connotations: «a house intended for dwelling, the dwelling itself where people live», «a holy, sacred space» and «a symbol of the continuity of generations, fidelity to traditions, and attachment to one's native land» [1–4]. These connotations «collectively reflect the multidimensional space of historical memory» [5, p. 500]. As the researcher of Ukrainian folklore O. Kuzmenko argues, «the semantic field of «home» consists of related spatial images *land, homeland, village, house, church, road* which form its conceptual core» [5, p. 501].

The concept of «home» in oral narratives is predominantly associated with ideas of security, family ties, orderliness, and the «normality» of life. By contrast, «foreign land» actualizes notions of distance from one's roots, the need to adapt to an unfamiliar order, the experience of an alien cultural environment, as well as the reassessment of one's identity. At the same time, it should be noted that the folkloric concept of «foreign land» in contemporary oral narratives reveals semantic ambivalence and is not limited to negative connotations: the concept acquires features of orderliness, justice, social protection, or opportunity, gradually losing its original markedness.

**The relevance of this study** is determined by the need for an in-depth analysis of contemporary oral narratives as an integral component of folk narrative culture functioning under conditions of active migration processes and intercultural interaction. Oral autobiographical accounts of Ukrainians about Germany constitute a valuable source for identifying changes in the traditional perception of the space of the «one's own» and the «alien», tracing the processes of the formation of a discourse of cultural adaptation, and analyzing the linguistic and figurative means through which concepts significant to collective consciousness are verbalized.

**The aim of the article** is to analyze the conceptual opposition «home – foreign land» in oral narratives of Ukrainians about Germany and to outline its key semantic dominants.

The material for the study consists of recorded interviews conducted according to the narrative interview methodology, which involves recording information on digital media followed by transcription in accordance with the requirement to preserve the lexical, grammatical, and syntactic features of the narrator's speech. The study is based on approximately 100 narrative interviews recorded and transcribed over the past five years by the authors of the article and students of the Faculty of Philology at Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University. The respondents were natives of Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk, Volyn, and Lviv regions aged 18 to 60 (labor migrants and students), whose lives are in one way or another connected with Germany.

**Presentation of the main material.** An analysis of Ukrainian emigration folklore of the late 20th – early 21st centuries reveals that the oral folk creativity of this period has been examined primarily in studies devoted to Ukrainian folk songs and the oral

poetic tradition. In the preface to the publication «Stay Well, My Land: Ukrainian Folk Songs about Emigration», the Ukrainian folklorist Sofia Hrytsa emphasizes that this creative tradition constitutes a significant spiritual heritage, since it «arose on the thorny path of forced separation from one's native land, home, and the encounter with a foreign country, to which people traveled in the hope of improving their own fate and that of their children. [...]. This path was not an easy one; it was illusory, shrouded in the uncertainty of the future, and left to the mercy of fortune» [6, p. 3]. The researcher stresses that it is precisely in songs that a wide range of images, plots, and life situations becomes manifest, partly transcending traditional canons and forming a «dramatic epic about seekers of a mirage-like «earthly paradise», filled with hopes, anxieties, happy surprises, or even disappointments» [6, p. 8].

This view is supported by the contemporary Ukrainian folklorist O. Hinda, who adds that «emigration was a new and extremely dramatic phenomenon for the Ukrainian peasant. New and previously unknown realities entered people's lives, and new themes and plots entered folkloric memory, reflecting these events» [7, p. 136].

One of such new genres that gained prominence during the waves of Ukrainian emigration was narratives about «distant lands». Unlike folk songs and poetry, this layer of oral folk creativity has remained outside systematic scholarly attention. One may only single out the folkloric records of D. Yavornytskyi, P. Dziakovych, H. Nadkhin, and Ya. Novytskyi, made as early as the second half of the 19th century. All of them are represented by individual plots of legends and tales about the Zaporizhian Sich.

The motif of «distant lands» where «milk and honey flow» is a stable and ancient component of European and world folklore tradition. It is traceable in the oral creativity of many peoples and belongs to universal plot models of legends [8, p. 21]. In Europe, similar narratives became especially widespread during the Age of Great Geographical Discoveries, when ideas about India, China, Japan, as well as the discovery of America after the expeditions of Columbus and Vespucci, actualized stories about the natural and material wealth of new territories.

The transformation of folkloric perceptions of «alien» space is noted by H. Bulahev, who states that «legends about the earliest encounters between peoples caused the expansion and modification of narratives. The foreign enemies of prehistoric times left in popular memory a vague – and, moreover, gloomy – image and entered folk poetry in the form of giants» [9, p. 26]. This confirms that in oral tradition the image of the «alien» undergoes gradual reinterpretation under the influence of historical events and intercultural contacts.

The Ukrainian folklorist, historian, and ethnographer Ya. Novytskyi addressed the image of «distant lands» in a number of his works, analyzing it through representations of the Zaporizhian Sich, which in folk tradition appears as a symbol of prosperous and happy existence [10]. In a similar vein, I. Pavlenko argues that «the emphasis on wealth and the large amount of uninhabited and uncultivated land, as well as the minimization of labor required, partly provoked mass migration to these territories» [11, p. 51]. Later, after Catherine II abolished the Hetmanate, collective memory of the Cossack

era gradually crystallized into the motif of a «lost paradise» – an idealized space of harmonious life in balance with nature.

For several centuries, the Zaporizhian Sich remained for Ukrainians an embodiment of prosperity and freedom, a kind of image of a «happy land». In contemporary migration discourse, however, one of such «distant lands» is increasingly represented by Germany: among European Union countries, it occupies leading positions in terms of migrant numbers and, for decades since the fall of the Berlin Wall, owing to its strong economy and developed labor market, has become a «second home» for many Ukrainians.

Field materials demonstrate that the perception of Germany in Ukrainians' oral autobiographical narratives has a distinctly symbolic character. Considering that folklore as a phenomenon of traditional culture functions within a symbolic dimension, it can be argued that contemporary narratives likewise contain a system of images through which narrators conceptualize the experience of «alien space». In this context, the statement of the Polish folklorist V. Kravchyk-Wasilewska is indicative: «Folklore as a distinct part of symbolic culture is characterized by its capacity to reveal the state of people's consciousness and their actual attitudes toward phenomena and cultural-social problems» [12, p. 99]. Although the symbols of contemporary autobiographical narrative are not identical to traditional folkloric symbolism, they perform a similar function: they shape stable perceptions of the «one's own» and the «alien», contributing to the mythologization of space and the verbalization of concepts significant for collective consciousness.

However, the motif of the «distant land» proposed in the narratives should be considered not only as a traditional plot-motif component of oral creativity, but also as a semantic-cognitive model structuring the narrators' experience and forming the conceptual opposition «home – foreign land». In this sense, the narratives of Ukrainian migrants about Germany appear not merely as accounts of another cultural space, but as a verbal representation of mental categories through which emigration, cultural interaction, and personal identity are interpreted.

Within the framework of a cognitive-folkloristic approach, a concept can be understood as a culturally determined unit of collective consciousness, manifested in the text through a system of lexical markers, evaluative attributes, stereotypical images, symbols, spatial metaphors, and narrative scenarios. Thus, the image of the «distant land» in oral narratives about Germany acquires the status of a conceptually significant sign, which relates not so much to a real territory as to a mental model of the «alien», the «other», or the «ideal», opposed to «one's own». The following examples illustrate this point.

*«It's completely different there, because it's clean. Germans are Germans, it's just clean there. They wanted to show me the city, because I lived there and had to find my way. Everything was so beautiful: shops, hospitals, everywhere I was taken, I really liked it. It seemed to me that all this beauty was not created by people!»* (SBY, female, 52 years old).

*«Once I was told that if you step outside in socks in Germany in the morning, you won't dirty them, because their road service washes the streets with soap» (MBS, male, 45 years old).*

*«In my memory, there will always be beautiful landscapes, good roads, delicious buns. And most importantly: meeting wonderful people. At first, Germans seemed like people from another planet to me» (LVP, male, 53 years old, Ternopil).*

The collected material shows that the opposition «home – foreign land» is realized in the narratives primarily through spatial and axiological (value-based) characteristics, where «home» signifies a familiar life world associated with personal norms, memory, and family tradition, whereas «foreign land» represents a space of another order: discipline, cleanliness, social justice, abundance, and predictability. This opposition manifests both in direct contrasts («there – here») and in narrower comparisons through the metaphorization of alien space: «other planet», «other world», «paradise garden».

*«We have our own, they have theirs. Personally, it seems to me that Germany is just lucky not to be a neighbor of Russia; its geopolitical location is more favorable. And in general, it's like the other planet! Of course, they work a lot, so they achieve everything they want. Overall, they live well, have good jobs, and also help foreigners. I think Ukraine needs at least forty more years of hard work, and then maybe we will have the same standard of living as in Germany» (ZVB, female, 24 years old).*

Particularly noteworthy is that most testimonies contain a stable oppositional formula: «everything there is different from here», which functions as a universal marker between «one's own» and the «alien». From a cognitive perspective, this formula categorizes space: Germany is structured as an «other world», separated from «home» not only geographically but also in terms of values and mentality. Therefore, in these texts, «foreign land» acquires features of a heterotopia – a place that exists in reality, yet in the narrator's mind appears as an idealized model, almost denying ordinary reality.

*«I especially remember the beautiful Alpine nature. Painted houses, the closeness of nature and humans. Why do people say everything there is different from here? – Everything is very clean and organized, maximally simple and convenient for people. A very large number of pensioners travel the world, and this really surprised me, because you rarely see this at home. Pensioners travel, maybe even more than young people. In the mountains, all hiking routes are clearly and understandably marked; you never get lost» (SOL, female, 28 years old).*

The verbalization of the concept «foreign land» is carried out primarily through an attributive series: *clean, tidy, organized, punctual, lawful, polite, fair, abundant*. These features function as key semantic dominants and form a stereotypical image of Germany as a space of «properly organized life». At the same time, the concept «home» in these narratives is often implicit: it is not always named directly, but emerges through contrasting characteristics, such as *dirt, chaos, trash, or «not like there»*. Thus, «home» in the texts appears not only as a locus of belonging, but also as a space critically reinterpreted by the narrators.

*«Well, every people have their own. When we arrived, the large houses immediately caught our eyes, it was clear that people live well and in abundance. There is a lot of work of various kinds, one could earn money, unlike at home. Order everywhere, the areas around the houses are tidy. When leaves fall from trees, they sweep them immediately to keep it clean» (MSM, female, 49 years old, Ternopil).*

*«What surprised me first of all is German punctuality at every step, their precision, pedantry, order in everything. From streets and buildings to relationships with people. Also, their politeness and tolerance. But it was striking that they are calm people, almost without emotions. Emotions are kept to themselves» (BBI, male, 39 years old, Kobylyvoloky, Ternopil region).*

Thus, the motif of «distant lands» in contemporary oral narratives of Ukrainian migrants about Germany should be regarded as a conceptually organized discourse, in which the traditional folkloric model of utopian space is actualized under new socio-cultural conditions. The opposition «home – foreign land» performs not only a descriptive but also an identificatory function, since through spatial comparison the narrators construct the value coordinates of their own «I» and the collective «we», positioning themselves between two poles – the familiar and the alien.

It is noteworthy that respondents quite often associate Germany with the idealized image of a «paradise garden». This image has occupied an important place in the symbolic system of the ethnic community since ancient times. Formed on the basis of biblical tradition, the symbolism of the paradise garden can be traced in various manifestations of both material and non-material culture.

In a historical and cultural dimension, the image of paradise performed a number of functions and often served as a kind of «landmark» for human ideas about an ideal space. This was particularly evident during the Renaissance, when the idea of a paradisiacal country stimulated the desire to discover new territories. This is confirmed by a saying that has long existed in the oral traditions of many peoples: from the Phoenicians to the Portuguese – all great geographical discoveries were inspired by the myth of a paradisiacal country [8, p. 36]. At the same time, it should be emphasized that paradise should primarily be understood as an archetype of social (collective) consciousness, since the analysis of different models of «paradise» reveals a correlation between the nature of these ideas and the economic and geographic conditions of a given community.

An anthropological approach allows us to consider paradise not only as an archetype of collective, but also of consciousness in general – with its inherent psychological intentionality and special metaphysical experience. Building on this specificity, M. Eliade emphasizes the social function of the image of paradise. Above all, it becomes a kind of point of support in conditions of instability and uncertainty, helping to transcend chaos, fear, and anxiety. Importantly, this is not only about belief in a happy extraterrestrial existence: the myth of the paradise garden has significant social functions in real life – from the idea of an ideal earthly order to the fulfillment of basic human needs for safety and normal living [13, p. 244].

In the narratives we studied, the mythologeme of paradise is most vividly actualized through the image of the paradise garden, which, in a cognitive-semantic dimension, can be interpreted as a symbolic marker of the concept «foreign land». In this way, the real geographical space of Germany, in the consciousness of narrators, acquires features of an idealized, orderly, and safe world, contrasted with the experience of «home» as the space of familiar everyday life. Thus, the topos of the garden functions not only as a poetic image but also as a conceptual model that defines the narrative representation of alien space and reinforces the opposition between «own» and «alien».

It should be emphasized that the garden topos has a number of characteristic markers that ensure its semantic recognizability across different cultural traditions. The definition of this term is given by T. Dynnichenko, who notes that it is a «significant semiotic, culturally typological unit that appears in the text in the form of an artistic image with spatial characteristics of an oppositional type» [14, p. 69]. It is precisely these spatial characteristics that allow us to trace how the conceptual boundary between «home» and «foreign land» is verbalized in oral narratives about Germany, as well as how the idealization of alien space transforms into a stable folkloric image.

*«For example, Dresden was completely destroyed during the Second World War, and currently all the ruined buildings are being restored at a rapid pace, and new construction has begun. It is not just a city, it is simply a paradise garden! They leave everything in its original state, exactly as it was. They do not try to build anything new. In contrast, take Ivano-Frankivsk, for example – they do not take care of architectural monuments at all. Instead of restoring old buildings or opening museums, they demolish them and build new nine-story buildings»* (DOV, female, 42 years old).

*«I remember the architecture and the mentality of the Germans. The cities are extremely beautiful, adorned with various buildings: three-story, four-story; they are very attractive. The structures look very grand and luxurious»* (DIM, female, 43 years old).

Paradise, being a mythological synonym of the «golden age», in a socio-cultural aspect embodies the dream of a perfect society [15, p. 86]. In oral folk creativity, this motif became widespread during the existence of Zaporizhzhia, «where all were equal and independent, rich and happy, wealthy and warlike, rooted both in objective factors – the special social position of the Cossacks, and in subjective factors – the desire of the Cossacks to create their own ideal image among peasants and other social groups» [11, p. 51].

*«Germans, in general, are very law-abiding; they respect authority and would never do anything illegal. They do not chase fashion or value clothing; they are very modest. They do not have the arrogance that ours do. Of course, young families pay more attention to fashion, but the older ones are very simple, very trusting. The law works for them. If Germans are wrong, they always admit their mistakes and apologize. They are very punctual and everything has to be perfect, hence such an ideal country»* (BRG, female, 48 years old).

It should be noted that contemporary humanities discourse reflects increased attention to the study of spaces that go beyond everyday human experience, as well as to the

ways they are conceptualized in different eras and cultures. In this context, the analysis of the image of paradise / garden remains relevant, taking into account conceptual approaches of the late 20th – early 21st centuries. In particular, in the works of the French cultural and historical theorist Michel Foucault, the notion of «heterotopia» is used – in fact realized utopias, i.e., places which, unlike the unreal, exist in reality but are simultaneously endowed with mythologized features. Such spaces can appear in a «reduced» format (e.g., public institutions) as well as «expanded» (other territories, states, countries), including and negating all other real toposes (museum, cemetery, prison, fair, etc.). Within this concept, M. Foucault interprets the garden as one of the oldest heterotopias of human culture – an «other space»: «The garden is a minimal part of the world, and at the same time a world in its entirety» [16, p. 19]. The garden, combining several incompatible spaces within a single locus, serves as a microcosm representing a symbolic image of an orderly and perfect world.

In our study, Germany is represented as a model of an idealized society, endowed in the collective consciousness of narrators with utopian characteristics:

*«First, I want to point out that Germany is an extremely clean country. I was amazed by the cleanliness of the streets... Prices are completely different in Germany, the quality of products, even the attitude of the same sellers towards customers is completely different: better, more pleasant. I am telling you from my own experience... <...> The friendliness of people impressed me. Walking down the street, no one looks at you askance; they are always smiling. In my opinion, the typical traits of Germans are discipline, neatness, punctuality, and thrift. All decisions are made calmly. I can add diligence as well. Abroad, Germans are easy to recognize by their neat style of dress and confidence in every movement» (NAS, female, 52 years old).*

The excerpt below characterizes the «typical German» as a perfect person: ideally honest, ideally responsible, ideally punctual:

*«For example, here with us, we can be late, we might not come if we agreed on a meeting, and sometimes without any apology, just not come – and you will wait. But there, that does not happen. Responsibility comes first, and second by second, they are never late; people are honest. Even in a hotel, if you leave your belongings with price tags, they come, take them, and the money remains – no one touches it. That does not happen here» (BOS, female, 52 years old).*

Another example vividly illustrates the image of Germany as a country endowed with idealized, and sometimes utopian, traits.

*«<...> I also noticed one trait, I think it is a great trait. Germans are economical people. We Ukrainians love to eat. For example, when a holiday starts – the tables are overloaded with food, and we want more. There, I noticed, it is not like that; everything is somehow organic, organized. Even an ordinary weekend is very different from ours. There are many other traits; you can say Germans are honest people. Even if a small mishap happens, they will not stay silent; they take responsibility themselves. At my work, something happened with the washing machine. I immediately went to the senior worker, she said not to worry. I think here they would have deducted money from the*

*salary, or paid for the washing machine themselves. I also liked how Germans address others. They do not say «hey, come here» or something like that. Even at work, if you are a simple worker, they immediately say «Ms.» or «Mr.». Germans are very attentive, very polite, and very fair» (MLV, female, 60 years old).*

Respondents often emphasize the harmonious interaction between society and nature, narrating life stories about daily life and living conditions. From the perspective of the structural organization of the narratives we recorded, this is one of the most developed scenes (term by J. Genette). Semantically, it gives the impression that the narrator seeks to convey the maximum number of details – from general impressions to seemingly minor details.

*«There, in the yard, we had bunnies, ordinary wild bunnies. God forbid anyone touch them. We lived in a private house, just us Ukrainians, and in the morning we opened the little window, and there under our door sat a bunny. There lived a whole family; they ran everywhere. It is not like here, where everyone goes hunting and shoots wild animals – there, rabbits cannot be touched. They are very strict about this» (SOI, female, 53 years old).*

The image of Eden, where all creatures live in harmony with each other, where animals and humans walk in pristine nature – this is how Germany appears in the perception of our narrator.

*«It surprised me how, in Germany, people live in harmony with nature. In the forests, at every step, there are reminders not to shoot, or, for example, not to fish in the lake. We still need to grow in this regard, to be as conscious about wildlife as Germans are. Sometimes you walk in the forest, and there is an animal under a tree, and it does not run away in fear, it just moves around. <...> I think they are used to people; for them, humans are good» (BVO, male, 30 years old).*

**Conclusions and prospects for further research.** In summary, the examples from oral narratives of Ukrainian migrants about Germany demonstrate not only the actualization of the traditional motif of «foreign land», but also the manifestation of a stable conceptual opposition «home – foreign land», which structures narrative material at the level of value contrasts, spatial metaphors, and recurring formulas of comparison («there – here», «other world»). In these texts, «foreign land» is most often verbalized through attributes of order, cleanliness, legality, punctuality, and abundance, while «home» is presented through an implicit backdrop of everyday «normality» and, at the same time, through markers of critique that reinforce the contrast.

Germany, in the consciousness of narrators, appears as a real geographical space which, in the process of narration, acquires heterotopic and utopian characteristics and transforms into an «other space» functioning as a point of reference: by comparing it with «home», narrators not only describe the alien country, but also construct their own value coordinates, model the desired social order, and define the boundaries between «own» and «alien». Therefore, the study of this opposition is productive and promising for understanding contemporary Ukrainian oral tradition in the context of migration experience and intercultural communication.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Жайворонок В. Дім. Знаки української етнокультури : словник-довідник. Київ : Довіра, 2006. С. 189–190.
2. Benedyktowicz D., Benedyktowicz Z. Dom w tradycji ludowej. Wrocław, 1992. S. 11.
3. Bartmiński J. Dom i świat – opozycja i komplementarność. Językowe podstawy obrazu świata, wyd. 2. Lublin: Wyd-wo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2007. S. 176.
4. Халюк Л. Усні народні оповідання українців-переселенців Лемківщини, Холмщини, Підляшшя та Надсяння: жанрово-тематична специфіка, художні особливості. Київ, 2013. 216 с.
5. Кузьменко О. Драматичне буття людини в українському фольклорі: концептуальні форми вираження (період Першої та Другої світових воєн). Львів : Інститут народознавства НАН України, 2018. 728 с.
6. Грица С. Буд здорова, землице. Українські народні пісні про еміграцію. Київ : Музична Україна, 1991. 176 с.
7. Гінда О. Поетична творчість української трудової спільноти в Італії початку ХХІ століття в контексті фольклорної традиції : монографія. Львів : ЛНУ імені Івана Франка, 2015. 546 с.
8. Tschistow, K. Der gute Zar und das ferne Land. Russische sozial-utopische Volkslegenden des 17–19 Jahrhunderts. München : Verlag Wasmann, 1998.
9. Булашев Г. Український народ у своїх легендах, релігійних поглядах та віруваннях: космогонічні українські народні погляди та вірування. Київ : Довіра, 1992. 414 с.
10. Новицький Я. Твори : у 5 т. / гол. ред. П. Сохань. Запоріжжя : Тандем, 2007.
11. Павленко І. До питання про соціально-утопічні мотиви в українському фольклорі (на матеріалі легенд та переказів про Запоріжжя). *Культура народів Причорномор'я*. 2005. № 69. С. 51–54.
12. Kravchuk-Wasilewska, V. W obronie folkloru, czyli dialog między tradycją i współczesnością. In: Simonides, D., red. 1995. Folklorystyka. Dylematy i perspektywy. Opole : Uniwersytet Opolski, Instytut Filologii Polskiej, 1995. s. 99–104.
13. Еліаде М. Трактат з історії релігій / пер. з франц. О. Панича. Київ : Дух і Літера, 2016. 515 с.
14. Динниченко Т. Інтертекстуальний перегук повісті А. Жіда «Ізабель» і п'єси А. Чехова «Вишневий сад». *Літературний процес*. 2019. С. 68–73.
15. Fleming, J. The Roman de la Rose. A Study in Allegory and Iconography. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.
16. Foucault, M. Space, Knowledge and Power (Espace, savoir et pouvoir; entretien avec P. Rabinow; trad. F. Durand-Bogaert). *Skyline. mars*, 1982. p. 16–20.

## REFERENCES

1. Zhaivoronok, V. (2006). *Dim* [Home]. *Znaky ukrainskoi etnokultury: slovnyk-dovidnyk* [Signs of Ukrainian ethnoculture: Dictionary-reference book]. Kyiv: Dovira. P. 189–190 [in Ukrainian].

2. Benedyktowicz, D., & Benedyktowicz, Z. (1992). *Dom w tradycji ludowej* [Home in folk tradition]. Wrocław. P. 11 [in Polish].
3. Bartmiński, J. (2007). *Dom i świat – opozycja i komplementarność* [Home and world: opposition and complementarity]. In *Językowe podstawy obrazu świata* [Linguistic foundations of the worldview] (2nd ed.). Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej. P. 176 [in Polish].
4. Khaliuk, L. (2013). *Usni narodni opovidannia ukraintsiv-pereselentsiv Lemkivshchyny, Kholmshchyny, Pidliashshia ta Nadsiannia: zhanrovo-tematychna spetsyfika, khudozhni osoblyvosti* [Oral folk narratives of Ukrainian settlers from Lemkivshchyna, Kholmshchyna, Podlasie and Nadsiannia: genre-thematic specificity and artistic features]. Kyiv. 216 p. [in Ukrainian].
5. Kuzmenko, O. (2018). *Dramatychne buttia liudyny v ukrainskomu folklori: kontseptualni formy vyrazhennia (period Pershoi ta Druhoi svitovykh voien)* [Dramatic human existence in Ukrainian folklore: conceptual forms of expression (World War I and II period)]. Lviv: Instytut narodoznavstva NAN Ukrainy. 728 p. [in Ukrainian].
6. Hrytsa, S. (1991). *Bud zdrava, zemlytse. Ukrainski narodni pisni pro emihratsiiu* [Be healthy, dear land. Ukrainian folk songs about emigration]. Kyiv: Muzychna Ukraina. 176 p. [in Ukrainian].
7. Hinda, O. (2015). *Poetychna tvorchiist ukrainskoi trudovoi spilnoty v Italii pochatku XXI stolittia v konteksti folklornoj tradytsii: monohrafiia* [Poetic creativity of the Ukrainian labor community in Italy at the beginning of the 21st century in the context of folk tradition: Monograph]. Lviv: Ivan Franko National University of Lviv. 546 p. [in Ukrainian].
8. Tschistow, K. (1998). *Der gute Zar und das ferne Land. Russische sozial-utopische Volkslegenden des 17–19. Jahrhunderts* [The good tsar and the distant land: Russian social-utopian folk legends of the 17th–19th centuries]. München: Verlag Wasmann [in German].
9. Bulashev, H. (1992). *Ukrainskyi narod u svoikh lehendakh, relihiinykh pohliadakh ta viruvanniakh: kosmohonichni ukrainski narodni pohliady ta viruvannia* [The Ukrainian people in their legends, religious views and beliefs: cosmological folk concepts]. Kyiv: Dovira. 414 p. [in Ukrainian].
10. Novytskyi, Ya. (2007). *Tvory* [Works] (Vols. 1–5). P. Sokhan (Ed.). Zaporizhzhia: Tandem [in Ukrainian].
11. Pavlenko, I. (2005). Do pytan'nia pro sotsialno-utopichni motyvy v ukrainskomu folklori (na materialy lehend ta perekaziv pro Zaporizhzhia) [On social-utopian motifs in Ukrainian folklore (based on legends and narratives about Zaporizhzhia)]. *Kultura narodov Prichernomoria* [Culture of the peoples of the Black Sea region], 69, 51–54 [in Ukrainian].
12. Kravchyk-Wasilewska, V. (1995). *W obronie folkloru, czyli dialog między tradycją i współczesnością* [In defense of folklore: dialogue between tradition and modernity]. In D. Simonides (Ed.), *Folklorystyka. Dylematy i perspektywy* [Folklore studies: dilemmas and perspectives]. Opole: Uniwersytet Opolski, Instytut Filologii Polskiej. P. 99–104 [in Polish].

13. Eliade, M. (2016). *Traktat z istorii religii* [Treatise on the history of religions]. O. Panych (Trans.). Kyiv: Dukh i Litera. 515 p. [in Ukrainian].
14. Dynnychenko, T. (2019). Intertekstualnyi perehuk povisti A. Zhida *Izabel* i piesy A. Chekhova *Vyshnevyyi sad* [Intertextual parallels between A. Gide's *Isabelle* and A. Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*]. *Literaturnyi protses* [Literary process], 68–73 [in Ukrainian].
15. Fleming, J. (1969). *The Roman de la Rose: A study in allegory and iconography*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
16. Foucault, M. (1982). Space, knowledge and power. *Skyline*, March, 16–20.



Стаття поширюється  
на умовах ліцензії відкритого  
доступу (CC BY 4.0)

Дата першого надходження статті до видання: 30.01.2026  
Дата прийняття статті до друку після рецензування: 22.02.2026  
Дата публікації (оприлюднення) статті: 10.04.2026