The discourse of COVID as a cultural phenomenon in Ukraine in 2020-2022

O discurso da COVID como fenômeno cultural na Ucrânia em 2020-2022

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Abstract

The article problematizes the formation of the topic of COVID-19 as part of the Ukrainian cultural discourse. Within the scope of this study, a repository of representative samples of literature was formed, texts of modern folklore devoted to this topic, as well as selections of poetic works were analyzed. The features of communication during the pandemic and its influence on literary creativity have been established. The conducted research made it possible to come to conclusions about the presence in Ukrainian culture of a scheme for dealing with crisis phenomena such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which involves the formation of a layer of folklore works at the first stages of working on the topic, then – working on it in the form of poetry, performances, etc., creating prose texts and new layer of folklore at the final stage of assimilation of the phenomena by the cultural discourse.

Keywords: COVID-19; Vaccination; Social networks; Folklore; Memes.

Resumo

Este artigo problematiza a formação do tema da COVID-19 como parte do discurso cultural ucraniano. No âmbito deste estudo, formou-se um repositório de amostras representativas da literatura, analisaram-se textos do folclore moderno dedicados a este tema, bem como seleções de obras poéticas. As características da comunicação durante a pandemia e a sua influência na criatividade literária foram estabelecidas. A investigação realizada permitiu tirar conclusões sobre a presença, na cultura ucraniana, de um esquema de resposta a fenômenos de crise oriundos da pandemia da COVID-19, que envolve a formação de um conjunto de textos de circulação popular sobre o tema, na forma de poesia, *performances* etc., depois em prosa, e, um novo conjunto, na fase final de assimilação dos fenômenos pelo discurso cultural.

Palavras-chave: COVID-19; Vacinação; Redes sociais; Folclore; Memes.

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has become one of the global crises that has affected all spheres of life: from issues of social distance, rules for organizing the workspace, mass events to cultural and artistic practices. According to WHO data, more than 5 million cases of infection and 109,918 deaths[2] were recorded in Ukraine alone during the quarantine (WHO, 2023). However, the topic of COVID has not been fully discussed in the Ukrainian cultural discourse. With the start of a full-scale war between Russia and Ukraine in 2022, the emphasis shifted from one threat to another (Hetman, 2022). In fact, in one day the quarantine was unofficially canceled (officially it continued until June 30, 2023[3], that is, the quarantine on the territory of Ukraine lasted for another 16 months from the beginning of the war). And now, after the epidemiologic constraints are over and the discourse of COVID-19 has developed in culture, we can finally conduct a detailed analysis of the cultural experience of the pandemic and establish what kind of phenomenon we were really dealing with.

Of course, scientists have already paid attention to the topic of the pandemic, restrictions, transformation of cultural practices and communication. P. Phillips and T. Cassidy examine COVID-19 as part of the cultural discourse presented in UK and China newspapers. Researchers have emphasized the importance of analyzing texts intended for distribution among a wide audience, because they are capable of both constructing dangerous myths about diseases and refuting them (Phillips; Cassidy, 2023).

In scientific circulation, there are many materials dedicated to changing communication strategies, updating the linguistic system, as well as cultural practices under the influence of the pandemic. T. Kosmeda, T. Osipova, and V. Slipetska in their research focus on the transformation of communication practices, changing the vocabulary of the language and strategies for presenting information in private conversations, as well as in public discourse (Kosmeda; Osipova; Slipetska, 2021). C. Fuchs, when analyzing new communication strategies, paid special attention to the spread of fake news and the functioning of social networks during the quarantine period (Fuchs, 2020).

Researchers consider the COVID-19 virus in different contexts (Erni; Striphas, 2021). Most often, we are talking about the crisis, quarantine restrictions, vaccination, protests the authorities, etc. an example is the analysis of anti-vaccination protests and protests against restrictions as a means of protecting one's own borders (Bratich, 2021). This work is important in view of revealing the theme of resistance, which will be reflected in the cultural discourse of COVID-19, including in memes and poetry. Pandemic as a catalyst for disruption of social problems is considered in the work of P. Frosh, M. Georgiou. Researchers consider COVID-19 as a crisis in times of constant global crises and tensions and note its special importance for the themes of breaking boundaries, imposing norms of behavior both in everyday life and in the media (Frosh; Georgiou, 2022). A similar opinion can be traced in other studies (Silva, 2021).

More interesting from the point of view of the study of literature and artistic practices are the works in which the COVID-19 virus is considered as part of the cultural discourse (Hussein; Aljamili, 2020; Kay; Wood, 2020). For example, J. Sonnevend talks about infection as a symbol, the main element of various images that appear since 2020. The researcher writes about this as follows: "The virus is a unique performer. Invisible to the regular eye, yet widely represented in spectacular visuals" (Sonnevend, 2020). Many researchers consider COVID-19 as a central component of memes of 2020-2023 (Amici, 2020; Freitas; Bevilaqua, 2023), analyze their impact on maintaining people's mental health, overcoming stress and adapting

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[2] See: https://who.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/ead3c6475654481ca51c248d52ab9c61
[3] See: https://www.kmu.gov.ua/npas/pro-vidminu-na-vsii-terytorii-ukrainy-karantynu-vstanovlenoho-z-metoiu-zapobihannia-poshyrenniu-na-terytorii-ukrainy-hostroi-respiratornoi-khvoroby-i270623-651

to new living conditions, etc. (Cullen; Gulati; Kelly, 2020; Reitas; Bevilaqua, 2023).

In the article "Displacement of cultural and information-communicative orders under the COVID-19 pandemic", N. Kostenko examines the state of meeting the cultural and entertainment needs of the population during the period of coronavirus restrictions and comes to the following conclusions:

> The coronavirus crisis also affected such important aspects of everyday life as conditions for rest, leisure, and participation in culture. Every second among the respondents experienced a worsening of the conditions for satisfying needs in at least one of these spheres of life (Kostenko; Skokova; Naumova, 2021, p. 55)[4].

Some scholars have focused their attention on the importance of different forms of art in maintaining the mental health of people during the pandemic (Myrick; Nabi; Eng, 2022). As for the Ukrainian cultural space itself, it has not been studied much in the context of COVID. Most of the research on this topic is devoted to changing the lexical composition of the language, etc. The presented work is designed to fill this blank.

The purpose of this article is to study the discourse of the coronavirus as an element of the Ukrainian cultural space of 2020-2022. To realize this goal, the following tasks were completed: a repository[5] of samples of Ukrainian art dedicated to the topic of COVID-19 was created; a selection of poems about the pandemic was analyzed; a review of the meme collection was carried out – common models of achieving a comic effect and using symbolic images were identified; a general model

of processing adverse phenomena by Ukrainian culture has been established.

The material for the presented research was elements of modern Ukrainian folklore dedicated to COVID-19 (fakes and memes) and artistic texts posted in thematic selections on the Chytomo portal. For more convenient processing of the material, a repository of memes dedicated to COVID was created. It included 40 samples representing the most popular topics: wearing masks, vaccination, distance learning during the pandemic, compliance with hygiene standards, etc.

COVID-19 as an element of cultural space

COVID-19 entered the Ukrainian cultural space in March 2020 with the beginning of the official announcement of quarantine throughout the country. The first resolution on quarantine restrictions was adopted on March 11[6]. In accordance with this document, restrictions on holding mass events will be introduced. In the future, several resolutions were adopted that regulated the procedure for using public transport, visiting shopping centers, and even parks. Several rules governing access to public places were changed until February 2022.

The cultural sphere has undergone great changes during the quarantine period. Yes, most book festivals were canceled, the conditions of bookstores[7], state cultural support programs, etc. changed. The change in the paradigm of literary life led to a few consequences. The first is greater involvement of Ukrainian writers in the international cultural space due to participation in foreign online festivals[8]. The second is the transition to a digital format. If before the pandemic, poetry

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[4] Koronavirusna kryza poznachylasia y na takykh vazhlyvykh aspektakh povsiakdennoi zhyttiediialnosti, yak umovy vidpochynku, dozvillia, uchasti v kulturi. Kozhen druhyi sered opytanykh vidchuv pohirshennia umov zadovolennia potreb shchonaimenshe v odnii z tsykh sfer zhyttia (Kostenko; Skokova; Naumova, 2021, p. 55) (translation ours).

[5] See: https://zenodo.org/records/10024005?token=eyJhbGciOiJIUzUxMiJ9.eyJpZCI6IjI3YTlmZDE0LWE1MjgtNDNmZC04ZGZhLWIyZDBhN2YzNzczOSIsImRhdGEiOnt9LCJyYW5kb20iOiI3YTU5MmU3ZDYwODU5OGJkZjY2ZWIyOGFhZDdhYjI0MiJ9.S4vqnWDEbKHtmPJS4mkNyQxl-GPRhncmsTRlQX-v4yDs6Hq01kADWHG_3aal5g2ABpVoU9IZz1shGwcI3M7JXA

[6] See: https://www.kmu.gov.ua/npas/pro-zapobigannya-poshim110320rennyu-na-teritoriyi-ukrayini-koronavirusu-COVID-19

[7] See: https://chytomo.com/iak-ukrainski-knyharni-perezhyvaiut-pandemiiu-rozmova-z-dvoma-dyrektorkamy/

[8] See: https://chytomo.com/na-iaki-festyvali-virtualno-izdyly-ukrainski-pysmennyky/

collections were mostly published in print, after the beginning of the COVID-19 restrictions, most of the texts were already published in online format. This gave impetus to the development of the Ukrainian blogosphere. The third is the increase in problems with financing cultural projects.

Speaking about the peculiarities of the impact of the pandemic on the change of the cultural space, it is worth highlighting the following features: globality – the coronavirus restrictions affected all spheres of cultural life and affected all regions of Ukraine; unpredictability[9] – the rules for holding events, access to libraries and cultural spaces in 2020-2022 were constantly changing[10]; lack of clear mechanisms for supporting the cultural and artistic sphere at the state level and compensation for damages.

The coronavirus pandemic became a factor that strongly influenced the configuration of the Ukrainian cultural and artistic space. Kosmeda, Osipova, Slipetska in their article "Changes in communication and language thinking of Ukrainians in the era of the coronavirus pandemic: innovative creativity" say that COVID-19 has activated several trends in the communication process, including addiction to gadgets, reducing the number of differences between written and spoken speech, the use of ethnocultural symbols in communication. Researchers also talk about changing audiences. In particular, the article notes that in the conditions of virtual communication, a person cannot be convinced that he is communicating with the speaker directly.

The first works that made sense of the new pandemic, the previously unseen counter mechanisms of everyday human life, were poems, posters. Such thematic selections began to appear on major book portals already in the spring of 2020. As for prose, they were not widely represented in the cultural discourse. Exceptions are only popular science books that described the mechanisms of infection, and later – the mechanisms of immunity formation due to vaccination, etc. (Baranova, 2020). However, there were difficulties here as well. Thus, in connection with the transition to a digital format, most authors of popular science literature chose short videos or instructional posters instead of the traditional text format.

Poetry dedicated to COVID-19 can be conditionally divided into several subthemes. The first is the theme of invisible death, protection of loved ones. In such texts, the topic of the coronavirus often resonates with the topic of war, the end of the world. "My love, the apocalypse grows and grows like a tree in a crack in a wall – crooked, unstoppable"[11] is written by Kateryna Kalytko (Voitovych, 2020). The motif of a mortal threat in this text is supported by images-symbols of devastation, canceled events, the theme of war – a symbol of flags "All our cities under the flags of disease"[12] (Voitovych, 2020).

The contexts of the unknown can be read in Serhiy Zhadan's poetry. The coronavirus is not directly mentioned or named here. The impending disaster is described through a change in the surrounding world, the impossibility of touching another person, etc. The virus appears here as an unknown and atypical threat:

> […] there is no story yet, there is still time
> stops, anticipating the novel,
> it's a story that speaks to us
> further emphasizes its atypicality (Voytovych, 2020)[13].

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[9] Dumky i pohliady naselennia Ukrainy shchodo pokhodzhennia koronavirusu i yoho poshyrennia u sviti: traven-cherven 2020 roku. [Opinions and views of the population of Ukraine regarding the origin of the coronavirus and its spread in the world: May-June 2020.]. KMIS. See: https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat= reports&id=952&page=1

[10] The rules related to the number of visitors, the presence or absence of certificates, etc. They could be changed in one day. However, some of them were absurd. For example, you could enter some stores only with a vaccination certificate, while others were free to enter. We are talking about stores located in one shopping center.

[11] Liubove moia, roste y roste apokalipsys, yak derevo u shchilyni muru – kryve, nespynne (Voytovych, 2020) (translation ours).

[12] Vsi nashi mista pid praporamy khvoroby (Voytovych, 2020) (translation ours).

[13] Shche nemaie opovidi, shche chas zupyniaietsia, peredchuvaiuchy povist, tse istoriia, shcho nahovoriuie nas, shche pidkresliuie svoiu netypovist. Quoted from (Voytovych, 2020) (translation ours).

In some texts there is a symbol of constant repetition. Such poetry marks the virus as something known, long present in human culture. "Nothing new. Rogues and viruses"[14] write Maryana Savka in her poetry, calling to return to work despite the tension and terrible news (Voitovych, 2020). The consonant motif is presented in the poetry of Tatiana Sladkovska "You don't know who is marked by death, who is kissed..."[15]. The poet reflects on the topic of the return of epidemics and provides markers of the repetition of time through the images of sunrise and sunset, the celebration of Easter, etc. (Voitovych, 2020).

In general, the virus in the poems of this selection is considered as an invisible evil. In Ukrainian literature, little is said about him as a separate hero (in contrast to what can be traced in the genres of modern folklore, and not only Ukrainian – J. Sonnevend sees similar trends in other cultures as well (Sonnevend, 2020). Mentions of him are often accompanied symbols of desolation, death, apocalyptic visions. Less often, the virus is seen as part of everyday life. Often, in the texts of Ukrainian poets, the threat of infection is contrasted with pictures of ordinary life, the repetition of such phenomena as the sunrise, the onset of spring, etc. Often, alongside COVID-19 as a symbol of death, symbols of Easter, resurrection, and new hope appear. Such an opposition allows us to understand the crisis in eternal categories.

It is worth saying that the discourse of COVID-19 prepared the necessary platform for understanding Russia's war against Ukraine. This was done due to the preparation of social media, changes in user behavior and deeper development of certain genres of mass culture. One can agree with the theses about the military discourse of COVID-19, which were put forward in their work by P. Phillips and T. Cassidy. Researchers compare materials about COVID and note that they contain a lot of vocabulary. Related to the topic of war:

The most commonly occurring discourse throughout the reports relates to constructing the COVID-19 pandemic as a war against an invisible enemy, with constant rhetoric about "fighting" and "combat" identifiable throughout the accounts. In both UK and Chinese media accounts there is evidence of anchoring to this representation, conveyed through language such as "fight," "battle," "confront," "combat," and "defeat" (Phillips; Cassidy, 2023).

In the Ukrainian cultural space, COVID-19 also had such a context. Therefore, with the beginning of Russia's war against Ukraine, the discourse of COVID was naturally replaced by another one – close in lexical content and general direction – the invisible enemy was replaced by a known, visible, identifiable enemy. Appropriating the Discourse of the Coronavirus: Updated Genres and Forms, Anti-Fake Strategies, Data Moderations, etc. From February 2022 to Now Used to Cover the War. Contrasting war with symbols of eternal life, love, hope, repetition of seasons and days of the week remain widespread. This makes it possible to talk about a certain model of processing crisis phenomena, which is inherent in Ukrainian poetry in general. This model has a certain connection with folk traditions of counting down from Christian holidays, for example, Easter (as in the case of COVID-19). Within such a tradition, certain ritual actions are performed, which should program a person for a successful life within one year or until the next big holiday. The use of such strategies allows you to transfer a pandemic or other adverse phenomenon from the category of new unknown threats to the category of familiar adverse factors that have been successfully experienced before.

The coronavirus and new folklore genres

If Ukrainian poetry focused on processing complex emotions, longing for the old life, etc., folklore forms contributed to reducing the mental

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[14] Nichoho novoho. Padliuky i virusy (Voitovych, 2020) (translation ours).
[15] Ty ne znaiesh khto michenyi smertiu tsilovanyi khto (Voitovych, 2020) (translation ours).

burden on the population. The first memes, fakes, gossip related to the COVID-19 pandemic appeared on the Internet even before the official announcement of the quarantine – at the end of February 2020. Several factors will affect this.

Several researchers note the first factor in the spread of memes during the quarantine period. is the need to reduce the level of stress on society. A. T. Hussein, L. N. Aljamili write about this:

> People resorted to social media in order to exchange jokes and humorous items with the hope to mitigate the effects of these changes which have resulted in stress and uncertainty. The spread of the virus and its ambiguous nature had led to the emergence of feelings of vulnerability throughout the society (Hussein; Aljamili, 2020, p. 163).

L. Bischetti, P. Canal, V. Bambini (2021) in their work emphasize the different forms of humor that have been used since the beginning of the pandemic. Regarding the choice of the type of jokes by different categories of recipients, the researchers note the following: "Some of them made fun of different facets of the pandemic experience such as life in quarantine; others ironically criticized harmful behaviors or contained pungent remarks about how politicians dealt with public health policy".

As in other countries, in Ukraine memes about COVID have been published more than once. The same schemes of creating jokes could be replicated, individual elements could be replaced or modified. Similar processes in other countries are described by M. Dynel. The researcher notes:

> Moreover, when memetic modifications are posted or when the same meme is reposted, that is replicated verbatim across social media with no additions (often going viral, as is the case with a few instances presented in the course of this paper), the voice of the meme subject/author/previous poster may be re-purposed (Dynel, 2020).

Such a statement makes it possible to say that most of the Internet content dedicated to the pandemic is based on repetition and self-repetition. This complicates the process of selecting materials for analysis but allows us to draw general conclusions based on a small group of samples, since behind each meme there is a typical scheme of creation.

Myrick, Nabi, and Eng (2022) see the positive role of the use of memes in social networks: "because memes generated positive emotions that were in turn related to increased COVID-19 coping efficacy". The researchers also note that individuals who viewed memes about COVID-19 had a deeper processing of information than those who viewed memes about other topics (Myrick; Nabi; Eng, 2022). Such judgments suggest that the formation of memes about COVID allowed the topic to be quickly processed in cultural discourse and provide recipients with a therapeutic function manifested in reducing stress and overcoming anxiety. Today, memes dedicated to Russia's war against Ukraine play a similar function.

The spread of content dedicated to COVID-19 in modern folklore forms was facilitated by a change in communication strategies. Thus, researchers said that during the epidemic, speakers tend to remain anonymous, as this has certain advantages: you can say whatever you want, whatever you want – and not only the truth – not necessarily must be correct, delicate (Kosmeda; Osipova; Slipetska, 2021, p. 33). Therefore, the change in the communication strategy also contributed to the emergence of memes as a form of folk creativity for working on the topic of COVID. Along with them, such genres of modern folklore as fakes and gossip functioned, but they received a different function. Instead of relieving tension, they instead spread harmful false information about COVID-19 and vaccination, which led to severe consequences, among which: higher mortality from COVID due to people's refusal to seek help from doctors (the main thesis used by this group of people is "on us experiments will be conducted), delaying the vaccination process, especially in older age groups[16].

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[16] Representative in this regard is the meme about the transformation of a Ukrainian man into a yogi as a result of testing an Indian vaccine on him. To achieve a comic effect, stereotypical images are used here, for example, Ukrainians are dressed in

In terms of themes and creation formulas, Ukrainian memes dedicated to COVID are diverse. Among the main motives here, the following should be highlighted: mocking bans on movement in the city, use of personal protective equipment (memes with different types of masks – to protect against fire, radiation and a deadly virus[17]); problems of shortage of products in stores, related to people's desire to buy as many products as possible in advance); difficulties of distance learning; vaccination jokes and government payments to individuals who participated in the government vaccination program. A separate group consists of memes dedicated to the absurd statements of government officials regarding quarantine.

An important element of the system of folk works about COVID are memes, in which Ukrainian customs, folk clothes, and musical instruments are played. For example, in this model, to avoid infection, it is recommended to use your trembita (a type of wind musical instrument that is 2.5 meters or longer), avoid mass events, refuse to wear a mustache, etc[18]. These jokes are based on stereotypical images of Ukrainians.

Samples with recycled quotes from Ukrainian classics occupy a special place among memes about COVID. Dominant here are the topics of vaccination, a conscious attitude to vaccination certificates: "If you were vaccinated properly, then wisdom would be yours" (in the original text: "If you studied properly, then wisdom would be yours" (Shevchenko)[19]); "Nations do not die from a heart attack – first their immunity is taken away" (in the original text: "Nations do not die from a heart attack – first their language is taken away" (Kostenko)[20]); "Only to vaccinate means to live" (in the original: "Only to fight means to live" (Franko)[21]).

It is worth saying that not just ordinary writers are chosen for such memes. The mentioned figures in one way or another are included in the Ukrainian populist canon (Movchan, 2018). That is, for the average Ukrainian man or woman who studied at school, they are persons who represent classical Ukrainian literature. Such a distortion of their quotes could be seen as a mockery of iconic works. but in fact, this phenomenon represents other processes. It is generally representative of Ukrainian literature and, depending on the circumstances, may mark a change in the stylistic paradigm and a rethinking of the current canon (however, in this case, we will not be talking about individual fragments of the text, but about whole landmark books, for example, "Kobzar" by Taras Shevchenko), or processes a new crisis. Currently, similar processes are observed in the Ukrainian cultural discourse, related to the elaboration of the theme of war and resistance. In both cases, the use of individual works of literature, which correlate with the theme of resistance, is characteristic. For example, the above quote by Lina Kostenko is currently used in the context of language protection, national identity, etc.

In addition to national cultural markers, memes dedicated to the COVID-19 pandemic also elaborate on examples of global pop culture, including fragments of "Star Wars", "Winnie the

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traditional clothes, only one of them, who took the vaccine, is depicted without clothes and already in a pose similar to the lotus pose.

[17] Meme mask 3v. collections: https://zenodo.org/records/10024005?token=eyJhbGciOiJIUzUxMiJ9.eyJpZCI6IjI3YTlmZDE0 LWE1MjgtNDNmZC04ZGZhLWIyZDBhN2YzNzczOSIsImRhdGEiOnt9LCJyYW5kb20iOiI3YTU5MmU3ZDYwODU 5OGJkZj Y2ZWIyOGFhZDdhYjI0MiJ9.S4vqnWDEbKHtmPJS4mkNyQxl-GPRhncmsTRlQX-v4yDs6Hq01kADWHG_3a al5g2ABpVoU9IZz1shGwcI3M7JXA

[18] Meme trad 3 in the collection: https://zenodo.org/records/10024005?token=eyJhbGciOiJIUzUxMiJ9.eyJpZCI6IjI3YTlmZD E0LWE1MjgtNDNmZC04ZGZhLWIyZDBhN2YzNzczOSIsImRhdGEiOnt9LCJyYW5kb20iOiI3YTU5MmU3ZDY wODU5O GJkZjY2ZWIyOGFhZDdhYjI0MiJ9.S4vqnWDEbKHtmPJS4mkNyQxl-GPRhncmsTRlQX-v4yDs6Hq01kADW HG_3aal5g2ABpVoU9IZz1shGwcI3M7JXA

[19] See: https://www.livelib.ru/quote/42623695-i-mertvim-i-zhivim-i-nenarozhdennim-zemlyakam-moyim-v-ukrajni-i-ne-v-ukrajni-moe-druzhnee-poslanie-taras-shevchenko

[20] See: https://osvitoria.media/experience/lini-kostenko-92-yiyi-prorochi-virshi-pro-ukrayinu-vijnu-i-svobodu/

[21] See: https://www.ukrlib.com.ua/books/printit.php?tid=13788

Pooh", the series "Chernobyl" from HBO, "Lord of the Rings". The structure of these memes is simple: an image that symbolizes the pandemic is superimposed on a familiar picture (it can be a schematic image of the virus, a mask, gloves, a vaccination certificate) and a comedic text about COVID-19 is added (in the first stages of the pandemic, it will be about the ways of infection, safety measures, China, biolaboratories, etc., in the future – about vaccines and restrictions). In some cases, for example, when exploiting materials from the series "Chernobyl" from HBO, the image may not be modified at all, the humorous element will be concentrated exclusively in the caption[22].

The change in connotations with the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian war

From February 24, 2022, COVID lost its place as the main national problem and threat in the Ukrainian cultural space. This place was taken by the full-scale war of Russia against Ukraine. People were no longer required to have a vaccination certificate, a fresh test, etc., during evacuation and stay in storage facilities. Similar rules were ignored in the hospitals where the wounded were taken. In this situation, the topic of the pandemic recedes into the background and is identified with a set of everyday problems of Ukrainians: low incomes, problems in providing for their own families, an uncertain future, etc.

During this period, COVID-19 as a symbol of the previous crisis remains only in folklore discourse. In poetry and prose, it is replaced by war. The topic of coronavirus, wearing masks, vaccinations, distancing can acquire distinct positive connotations. As an example, we will give memes that were distributed on the network in February-March 2022. In them, the virus is considered as a form of

protection of the population "Have you heard anything about COVID?" "They say he signed up for TRF[23]".

It is worth noting that this is included in the concept of perceiving the virus as an independent character, which J. Sonnevend writes about in his work:

> Likely due to the limited iconic power of the lead actor, the virus, the roles of the "hero" and the "villain" are assigned to other performers. From early on in the crisis, healthcare workers and grocery store workers were framed as "essential workers", often described as "heroes" (Sonnevend, 2020).

The second common connotation of the COVID-19 pandemic is the perception of it as more favorable and safer times. This form is also embodied in numerous memes that compare the times of COVID with the period of war, for example the need to wear a mask and a vaccination certificate with the need to hide in basements during air raids. In general, the comparison of similar elements of the crisis discourse in this period turned out to be a fruitful topic for review. Yes, in separate memes we have a comparison of military experts and experts on coronavirus and vaccination.

To create a humorous effect in these cases, the same schemes as at the beginning of the pandemic are used. This is an overlay on previously familiar images of pandemic symbols and military symbols, elaboration of elements of cartoons, TV series, etc. in February-March 2022, to elaborate on the theme of war, they use the usual jokes that were common at the beginning of the coronavirus restrictions, namely: the lack of products in stores in the first days after the invasion (as well as in the first days after the announcement of the pandemic), the spread of gossip about threat, exploitation of folk Ukrainian traditions.

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[22] This is due to the fact that for the majority of Ukrainians, the pandemic resonated on a semantic level with the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. The main markers here were: the need to wear masks, travel on passes, invisible infection, lack of control over the situation.

[23] TRF or Territorial Defense Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine is a separate type of units designed to carry out combat missions on the ground: https://tro.mil.gov.ua/istoriya-tro/

As of the end of 2022, COVID is on the periphery of cultural discourse. It is replaced by more important social narratives: the possibility of a nuclear war, terrorist attacks at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station, anticipation of the end of the world, blackout. The reduction of attention to this disease in the cultural space is facilitated by the restriction on the circulation of information associated with blackouts in all regions of Ukraine. Having limits on connecting to social networks and using other forms of information, people check first information about electricity supply schedules, current news on the front, information about shelling. During this period, jokes about COVID-19, poetry dedicated to this phenomenon, analytical articles, drawings, etc. are pushed out of the cultural space. If the pandemic is considered, then in the context of the old crisis, the problems of which (decrease in the level of education, change of the medical system) will need to be solved soon.

Concluding remarks: the discourse of overcoming adverse factors

The discourse of COVID in the cultural space of Ukraine represents how quickly and whether that acute social topic, which has remained one of the main ones for 2 years, can go to the margins due to the appearance of another, more important for society. In this case, it can remain unprocessed by certain genres and forms of literature, being fixed only in those formats that allow the promptest response to social changes. In this case, it is poetry, as well as such genres of modern folklore as memes and fakes.

Despite the sudden stop and rapid curtailment of the topic of the pandemic in Ukrainian culture, the analysis of the discourse of COVID-19 made it possible to reveal the specifics of the response to adverse factors in this society and their processing in the cultural space. A review of poetry and samples of folk art made it possible to establish the following sequence of handling the crisis: description of the threat, identification of it with an unknown, incomprehensible evil, a sign of the coming of the apocalypse; humorous depiction of a dangerous phenomenon with the aim of reducing social tension; the introduction of a threat into the discourse of everyday life, processing it as an element of the world familiar to an individual; giving positive connotations to an unfavorable phenomenon. Completion of work with one crisis topic occurs when the next one appears. The speed of discontinuing the discourse of the previous threat depends on the level and type of the new one, their relationship, etc.

It assumed that the scheme of COVID-19 as a symbol of danger in the Ukrainian cultural discourse has already been applied to other unfavorable factors and can be reproduced (of course, with certain amendments) in the discourse of Russia's war against Ukraine, of course, with certain amendments, because it is difficult imagine a higher-level threat in the given context. However, certain signs of repeating the scheme of processing the discourse of danger in Ukrainian culture can be observed. These include multiple examples of humor based on the theme of war (with similar patterns of meme creation), and poetic texts focused on the theme of the approaching apocalypse, and individual works that consider war as part of everyday discourse. The analysis of these phenomena in the context of models of processing crisis phenomena in culture is a perspective for further research.

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