

# HOME-FIELD-TEMPLE AS EXISTENTIALS OF UKRAINIAN CULTURE

TETIANA VLASEVYCH

Department of Theory and History of Culture, Faculty of Philosophy,  
Ivan Franko National University of Lviv  
Universytetska 1, 79000, Lviv, Ukraine  
E-mail address: [tetyana.vlasevych@lnu.edu.ua](mailto:tetyana.vlasevych@lnu.edu.ua)  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5245-582X>

## ABSTRACT

**Aim.** To analyse the spiritual and mental existentials of Ukrainian culture, which allows identifying the immanent features of Ukrainian culture itself through the symbolic-thematic series *Home-Field-Temple* and examine the symbolism of the concepts "Home," "Field," and "Temple."

**Results.** The thesis that spiritual and mental existentials, in particular the Home-Field-Temple, reveal the mentality of the Ukrainian people, its spiritual and cultural identity has been further developed.

**Conclusion.** The essence of the mentality of the Ukrainian people is revealed with the help of spiritual and mental existentials Home-Field-Temple. They play an important part in the creation of a single mental field of the Ukrainian nation, being revealed in its ideological life by certain inclinations or archetypes. The Home-Field-Temple symbol is a reference point for searching for certain archetypes of the nation. The concepts of Home-Field-Temple symbolise the trinity of one spiritual state of man, which is objectified in three guises. These concepts are so intertwined in the minds of Ukrainians that they see them as an inseparable unity – something symbolising their homeland. Home, land, and church have always been reliable support for the Ukrainian people.

**Keywords:** existential, identity, national mentality, archetype, Home, Field, Temple

## INTRODUCTION

In today's globalised world, characterised primarily by processes of integration and unification, technicalisation, and informatisation, the most pressing issues are the problems of spirituality and national identity, and the explication of spiritual and mental existentials of national culture. With their help, one can identify a people, a nation, as well as reveal the distinctive features of the authenticity of an individual and a community.



The spiritual being of man can be interpreted as the transformation of the types of human presence in the world into certain existentials of his existence. The term "existential" was introduced by Martin Heidegger in his *Being and Time* instead of the traditional philosophical term "category." According to Heidegger, existentials express the modes of existence of the world in their inseparable connection with the existence of human consciousness, or, which is the same, the modes of human existence. The division of single integrity – the human world – into its various aspects and the description of each of them so as not to lose sight of all the integrity – is the task of existential analysis of here-being (*Dasein*), as defined by Heidegger in *Being and Time*. Consequently, the existentials allow one to consider oneself as a whole with the world, indivisible into an object and a subject; at the same time, they cause an acute perception of oneself as different from others, "not like" another. Whereby we can discover being in ourselves and merge with it (Blikhar, 2020).

The concept of identity may be a certain analogue of the existential, but there are fundamental differences between them. Cultural identity, therefore, implies the identification of an individual with a particular cultural group, cultural tradition, and the status of reality behind the concept of "cultural group," as well as the direct meaning of the word "identification" remains unclear. The category of existential allows us to describe this process as the interaction of two existentials of personality and culture, while each of them retains its integrity and individual structure.

Spiritual and mental existentials are revealed in great detail in the works of Ukrainian philosopher Serhiy Krymskyi (2006). In defining the sacred space of national existence, he relies on the teachings of Heidegger on the "Being-in-the-world" and the ontology of "being there"; and these consist of Earth, Heaven, Home-Field-Temple. The German philosopher establishes the existential rootedness of a person in his native species, in "labours and days" in his yard, between earth and sky, which are eternal and temporal, sacred and profane horizons of human existence. According to Heidegger (1991), any true creation is rooted in the soil of our native land. Heidegger quotes Johannes Goebel to support this: "We are plants that, whether we want to realise it or not, must take root in the earth in order to rise, flourish in the ether, and bear fruit" (Heidegger, 1991, p. 105). He argues that the rootedness of present-day man is threatened, and the loss of rootedness comes from the very spirit of the times. Heidegger states that the mass media "today are closer to man than the fields around his yard, the skies above the earth, closer than the change of night into daytime, than the customs and habits of his village, the legends of his native world" (Heidegger, 1991, p. 106). According to the author, the Home-Field-Temple are the topos of the real existence of man, determining the horizons of his rootedness, the "edge" of his personal and ancestral, national existence.

In modern Ukrainian culture, the horizons of spirituality are defined through such existentials as "faith," "hope," "love," "home," "field,"

“temple,” as well as “creativity” that distinguishes spirituality as the ontological core of man, which highlights his identity. We should agree with Heidegger’s opinion that the existential of each nation’s existence is revealed through the concepts of Home-Field-Temple. Different nations fill these concepts with different life content. Let’s consider the national mentality of the Ukrainian people, in particular, through the symbolic and thematic series Home-Field-Temple.

## RESULTS OF RESEARCH

The concept of “Home” usually means something sacred for a person, related to their homeland and family, being also a symbol of warmth and kindness. The home has always been an intermediate link between a person and chaos – forest, wild field, steppe – the third zone, which a person gradually mastered, expanding the boundaries of his own oecumene. At the same time, the home has been a realm of order, part of an orderly space.

“Home” in the system of symbolic and existential dimensions of human existence in the world concentrates all the variety of meanings associated with family life, conjugal love, love of parents for children and children for parents, common work, and life in all its everyday and festive displays behind the walls that preserve family warmth. Finally, the symbol of the home is applied to the people in general, when it comes to the “national home” as a prerequisite and guarantee for the preservation of the nation. As Krymskyi (2006, p. 274) notes, “Home is a niche of man in the universe.”

In Ukraine, the house could not be imagined without the adjacent piece of land, which was planted with an orchard and flower garden – the so-called estate, which was also part of the sacred environment of man (“Everyone is a master in their own house,” “Own house – own truth”). The Ukrainian house was also considered a centre of individual freedom, the presence of a separate, one’s own opinion.

In Ukrainian proverbs and sayings, the concept of home is a kind of measurement of a person’s happiness, their spiritual aspiration, a symbol of a calm, orderly life, which becomes a counterweight to the free Cossacks. In the old Ukrainian literature of the twelfth century (*Teachings of Volodymyr Monomakh* – 1125, *A tale of Igor’s campaign* – 1187), the symbol of “home” was seen as a symbol of power and unity, the centre, the point around which “Ruthenian land” gathers. Of course, it was the prince’s house and the prince’s family that were taken into account. According to Dmytro Chyzhevskyi (1994, p. 100), “Monomakh was undoubtedly an outstanding and popular politician, whose positive ideal was the peaceful coexistence of individual principalities and the joint struggle against a common enemy – the Polovtsians.”

In the Ukrainian mentality, the concept of “Home” gave rise to several archetypal ideas. The most important of these was the archetype of free-

dom. Given that the Ukrainian state has been fighting for its right to exist and independence for many centuries (and is still doing so nowadays), the archetype of freedom can be considered a leading one for the Ukrainian nation. The fighters for the freedom of the Ukrainian people are worth noting: Cossacks, Sich Riflemen, soldiers of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, and now – the glorious warriors of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, territorial defence and volunteer soldiers and civic volunteers who have laid their lives on the altar of Ukraine's freedom. The spirit of freedom permeates all the work of the Ukrainian titans – Taras Shevchenko and Ivan Franko, who are the spiritual fathers of the nation. So, freedom in the past and at present is the main archetype of the Ukrainian mentality (Vlasevych, 2017).

Despite the constant globalisation changes taking place in the modern world, the concept of "Home" remains a sacred thing for Ukrainians. This is explained not only by the centuries-old traditions that have developed among the Ukrainian people but also by the constant movement of people in the world. The erasing of borders and the simplification of moving from country to country have led to the fact that a significant part of the earth's population is cut off from their small homeland. Staying on other continents, a Ukrainian is mentally always in his home. This concept also symbolises the state for him. Therefore, "Home" in the Ukrainian sense embodies the national features and existence of the Ukrainian people and their mentality.

The concept of "Home" is closely related to the concept of "Field." The symbolism of the Field concept establishes a connection between nature and the home table and reveals the meaning of food as a source of human life. The field is not only a steppe but also a forest, mountains, and nature in general. We understand this concept as a field of life – a source of livelihood, a way of survival. For Ukrainians, the "Field" has always been identified with their native land, homeland. The Ukrainian people could not imagine themselves without a house and a field. The image of the field also associates the archetype of land as a source of prosperity and national unity. As Oleksandr Kulchytskyi (1992) noted, the archetype of "Magna Mater" is the most characteristic for the Ukrainian collective unconscious – the type of "good," kind," fertile," and "earth – the Ukrainian black soil" (Kulchytskyi, 1992, p. 55). The earth was understood as a maternal force, and in the general case – as a life-giving force that gives rise to the feminine side.

The mental portrait of the Ukrainian people is very closely connected with the earth: Symbol systems of ethnocultural communities have conceptual centres in their arsenal that create a mental portrait of the people. One of the centres that have long influenced the formation of the mentality of Ukrainians is the concept of the earth (Lobur, 1996, p. 22).

Ivan Mirchuk (2000) consider attachment to the land to be one of the leading features of the Ukrainian national worldview because our people

are "a nation of agriculture, whose whole being and thinking revolve around the 'land of fields' " (Mirchuk, 2000, p. 45).

Among Ukrainians, the cult of the earth was one of the most ancient and basic:

(...) giving rise to a whole pantheon of earthly gods: Triglav, Veles, Dianna, deities of spring, winter, summer, and others. Mother Earth has got a lot of higher forces, which she commands to be mediators between her and people. These forces give birth from the earth to everything that grows on it (Voitovych, 2002, p. 189).

The earth, therefore, is a spiritual substance, with which the religious ideas and beliefs of the Ukrainian people are connected.

In pagan times, the earth was identified with the god Veles, whose symbols, in particular, were a snake and a horse skull. In this regard, the story of Prince Oleg's death is indicative: he died from the bite of a snake that crawled out of a horse's skull. In other words, Oleg, as the invader of Kyiv, dies from the Veles' force. Symbolically, this means that the Ukrainian land is a source of life for its masters and a deadly one for its enemies. As Krymskyi (2006) points out, the earth is not only soil but also a social phenomenon.

Ukrainian proverbs and sayings reflect the centuries-old experience of the peasant's relationship with the earth ("The earth gives all and takes all away," "Mother Earth," "Hold on to the earth so you won't fall" etc.). The image of the earth is one of the most intense images that people use to express their worldview. This includes the soil that man cultivates and lives on and the substrate that feeds all living things, into which the living things, completing their life cycle, return. It is also the local landscape that surrounds a person, where he or she was born and lives. That is, the archetype of the earth can be considered in three associative fields: existential (the earth is the nursing mother), religious (the earth is the mother that gives birth to everything and takes it back to its bosom after death) and statist (the earth is the motherland).

In the Ukrainian national mentality, one can see a noospheric seal (using modern terminology) in the archetype of the earth. Indeed, according to Slavonic beliefs, the earth grows the "world tree," that is, the cosmic order of existence. It is no coincidence that in the art of the Ukrainian baroque, the earth becomes a symbol of the world as a flowering garden. That is why the Ukrainian mentality is quite consistent with Voltaire's understanding of the meaning of life as the task of cultivating one's garden.

For Ukrainians, nature has always been processed – either by work or by song. It is decorated with flowers and poetized, i.e. it becomes a garden in which ethnonational identification takes place. In this sense, the "Garden" coincides with the "Culture" as "a second nature" – arranged by man, man-made. The dream of every Ukrainian is to live in the Garden, which is aesthetically reproduced not only in numerous fairy tales and songs but also in the historical life, the everyday reality of our nation.

The archetype of the "Garden" is common to Ukraine and all cultural Europe. For example, Renaissance paintings in the Annunciation scene often used the motif of the "closed garden" as a symbol of the chastity of the Mother of God Mary. Hryhoriy Skovoroda called his collection of poems on biblical subjects *The garden of divine songs*. Images of garden and landscape art inspired baroque and classicism poets, artists and architects. The idea of a "regular garden" moved from classicism to avant-garde and postmodernism. Modern Western intellectuals call the people of the future "Gardeners of the World" today.

The Garden is a profound archetypal image of the Ukrainian cross-cultural mentality, which is spiritually rooted in ethnonational and European traditions, folklore, religion, art and ecological consciousness. It combines the concept of nature and culture, life and fairy tales, history and the future, aesthetic and sacred.

So, the image of the Field and the archetype of the Earth, being an integral part of the Ukrainian mentality, run through the entire history of Ukrainian spirituality, from ancient times to the present day. The concepts of "Field" and "Earth" are still very important for Ukrainians. Nowadays, every villager has his own piece of land that feeds and keeps him in this world. Due to urbanisation and the constant migration of people, part of the countryside people has become cut off from the earth. The war has forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee abroad, to be far from their native land and home. The modern world with its dynamics has broken the age-old connection of Ukrainians with the land, although the concept of "Field" remains in the minds of Ukrainians as a symbol of the native land.

Researchers consider religiosity to be one of the most important features of the Ukrainian mentality. Victor Moskalets (1993, p. 67) writes that "Religion has always taken an important place in the life of the Ukrainian people" referring to religiosity as a feature of the Ukrainian national character. Victoria Khramova (1992), considering the problem of the Ukrainian mentality, emphasises the "religious formation of the soul of the Ukrainian nation" (Khramova, 1992, p. 29).

Mykola Kostomarov gave a thorough description of the spirituality of Ukrainians, emphasising their inner religiosity, desire to spiritualise the whole world, and national tolerance. His conclusions are in line with Volodymyr Antonovych's observations: Ukrainians live with intimate feelings about faith; they pay very little attention to rituals; warmth and sincerity are inherent in their religious feelings; they are tolerant of the beliefs of others.

Hryhorii Vashchenko (1994), a Ukrainian scholar of the first half of the 20th century, called the religiosity of Ukrainians "innate," noting that:

(...) it was not only external religiosity; our people have always combined it with deep religious feelings. The Christian faith has become deeply embedded in the everyday life and psyche of our peasantry. Every more or less important work the Ukrainian peasant always begins with a prayer. In the same way, he finishes the work with a prayer (Vashchenko, 1994, p. 137).



He associated this innate religiosity primarily with the agricultural-peasant type of menage, inherent in the Ukrainian people since ancient times. After all, the success of peasant labour depended on natural conditions, which were not always favourable. Therefore, one could only hope for the mercy of supernatural forces and ask only them for support. And nature itself, in the midst of which the Ukrainian lived, with its beauty, mystery, and inaccessibility to man, convincingly testified to the existence of a supreme creative force.

Temple, another spiritual and mental existential of Ukrainian culture, has always been a centre of faith and holiness for Ukrainians. "Temple" is the personification of shrines for each person, related to their national characteristics and ethnic traditions. This is heavenly intercession for a person, community, or nation. Its combination with the national idea is the ideology of the nation's existence. However, the concept of the "Temple," which declares national shrines in the Ukrainian mentality, cannot be limited to the Orthodox (or any other) church. In Ukraine, Christianity is not one-confessional and cannot be a monocentric sphere of the national idea. The shrines of the Ukrainian people were usually associated with the national idea, with the archetype of the Word (language) and with the archetype of Sophia, the signs of the wisdom of life itself, illuminated by grace. The temple has always been a centre of faith and holiness for Ukrainians.

With the restoration of Ukrainian statehood, there was a spiritual revival of the nation. Lots of old temples have been reconstructed and new ones built. Today, the attitude of young people to religion has changed. If earlier, mostly those middle-aged and elderly used to be church parishioners, nowadays, a lot of young people have shown up. This means that the concept of the "Temple" is becoming increasingly important for Ukrainians. The formation of the Ukrainian state is inextricably linked with the concept of the temple and spirituality. At the same time, the temple has not only an ecclesiastical and religious definition but, above all, spiritual and moral, traditionally conservative imperatives as value-substantial (not subject-material) rooting and self-identity of the community and the individual.

For Skovoroda (1994), the concepts of "Home" and "Temple" are identical, synonymous, differing only in the shade of meaning. Both the former and latter mean a place of stay for the human soul. The difference between the concepts is only in the quality level of "housing." The concept of "Home" in Skovoroda is not a place to live, but the spiritual fundamental principle, the cradle from which the whole generation comes, in which life ideals were instilled, and from which the path of knowledge begins. "Home" is a symbol of harmony, and order in the human soul. And therefore, as Skovoroda (1994, p. 355) teaches, "When you build a house, build it for both parts of your being – soul and body. While dressing and adorning your body, do not forget about your heart...". Skovoroda believed that a person should strive throughout their life to "build" a temple for the

soul within themselves, that is, to improve and educate themselves. He saw human happiness in this because a high moral person is free.

In our opinion, the concepts of Home and Temple are almost equivalent in the minds of Ukrainians. Both in the house and in the church they feel protected and have peace of mind. Of course, if we consider the spiritual aspects, the Temple in this respect stands above the Home, because the temple is a place of spiritual purification of man, his communion with God. As for the concept of Home, in the minds of Ukrainians, it acts as a certain shore, from which a person embarks, yet always strives to return there; a source of warmth and security, something very dear, which certainly fits into the concept of Motherland.

## CONCLUSION

“Home-Field-Temple” is a trinity of one spiritual state of man, which is objectified in three guises. These concepts are so interconnected in the minds of Ukrainians that they see them as an inseparable unity – something symbolising their homeland. Own house, land, and church have always been reliable support for the Ukrainian people.

Thus, the concepts of Home-Field-Temple belong to the main existentials that reveal the essence of the national mentality of the Ukrainian people. They play an important part in creating a single mental field of the Ukrainian nation; they are revealed in its ideological life as certain inclinations or archetypes. These inclinations have a historical origin, often going beyond the chronological boundaries of the nation’s existence. Therefore, the symbols of the Home-Field-Temple, in addition to universal definitions, also act as guidelines for the search for certain archetypes of the nation. However, the most representative manifestation of the Ukrainian mentality is the national culture. Of course, culture cannot express all the diversity of our mentality, but it is the main form of its functioning.

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