

ARTICLES

The Folklore of the Orange Revolution (1)

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The Orange Revolution, which took place in Kyiv between November and December of 2004, shows clearly that folklore is alive and well. The folk tradition is as vital today as it was a century ago, and the bearers of folk tradition react to important social and political events promptly and creatively by producing new folklore. The tumult following the second round of the 2004 Ukrainian presidential election revealed not only a mass political movement but also the enormous creative potential of the folk. Oral folklore is immune to censorship and thus accurately reflects the moods, sympathies and antipathies that the bearers of folk tradition experienced during the Orange Revolution. The rich Ukrainian folk tradition was stimulated by the fact that events of great significance were taking place and responded with a flowering of new folk items. The new folklore of the Orange Revolution took a number of forms. In many cases, traditional texts were revived and some were given new meanings in the revival process. Time will tell whether these newly revived texts survive to become part of oral tradition. The essence of the functioning of folk tradition is the close connection between teller and audience. Texts which do not receive a response from listeners will be forgotten quickly, while adjustments to suit the audiences' interests and mood can change a particular folk community's repertoire. For this reason, studying the folklore created in response to the Orange Revolution and tracking the fate of the various newly-produced items will permit us to make generalizations about folk process: how folklore is born and how it lives, grows, and develops – or dies.

Folklore forms played an important role in the artistic consciousness of the people participating in the Orange Revolution. Because the participants in the Orange Revolution sought to put down the regime in power, the genres they most commonly produced were satirical ones. Ukrainian researchers in a variety of fields immediately noted the carnival nature of the Orange Revolution and historians, folklorists and ethnographers commented to this effect in newspaper articles and conference reports soon after the events took place. A carnivalesque worldview commonly follows social revolution. At such times people become aware of the possibility of freedom from official power, and participate in the temporary illusion of complete liberty and celebration, equality and brotherhood. The lower part of the human body - the sexual organs and the organs of excretion - play a special role in the carnival worldview and receives, in folk texts, the symbolic meaning of an old power's death and a new world's birth [Bakhtin 1990: 5-31]. Understanding the symbolism of carnival culture is necessary to interpret correctly the most brutal and grotesque verbal texts and images associated with Orange folklore. The awakening of a folk spirit, and its accompanying strong emotions, strengthened folklore's function, while political street life enhanced folk fantasies, which found their reflection in short folklore texts.

Texts inspired by political events are organic to a revolutionary folk's everyday communication. We can observe this in the cases of the Civil War after the Soviet Socialist Revolution, the Second World War, and Ukrainian independence movements, both contemporary and historical. The folk genres that are most closely linked to revolutionary communication are anecdotes, short satirical poems, slogans and graffiti. Narrative genres can also become quite popular, especially those which express hopes for a better future. For example, the authors recorded and photographed many lyric and epic poems with a positive outlook. In these, motifs envisioning a better Ukraine to come were more numerous than motifs expressing sarcasm towards the status quo. Small genres naturally took a leading place among the genres of the Orange Revolution; slogans and anecdotes were engendered by almost every political event. Most Ukrainians heard various anecdotes, poems and slogans about the "strong egg" that felled presidential candidate Yanukovich. These appeared in reaction to the incident in Ivano-Frankivsk, when Viktor Yanukovich went to the hospital after an egg was thrown at him by a protestor. There were also numerous jokes to the effect that geese saved Rome while chickens saved Ukraine. An example of a poem based on the egg incident is the following:

<i>Книга Гін[н]еса чекає</i>	The Guinness book is waiting
<i>ім'я такого прикарпатця,</i>	For the Carpathian man's name
<i>Хто довів, що в нашій краї</i>	The one who proved that
<i>Найміцніші в світі яйця.</i>	Ukrainian eggs are the strongest in the world

<i>Хай кричать ворожі круки</i>	Let enemies scream
<i>Най завидує Європа.</i>	Let Europe be envious
<i>Ми простим яйцем із курки</i>	Because we are the ones who, with the chicken egg
<i>збили з ніг пів тонни хлопа.</i>	Put down half a ton of silliness (2)

The Orange Revolution became a moment in Ukrainian life when folklore existed not just within a particular folk group, but became an organic and important part of everyday communication for all politically active people. Political events were immediately reflected and appraised in folk texts. As so often happens when a tradition bearer leaves his community and joins a temporary community united on the basis of common political and social attitudes and goals for the future, something that Victor Turner might term a *communitas* group, the creative potential of that tradition bearer blossoms, producing both new forms and new adaptations of the traditional knowledge inherited from previous generations. The texts that the authors of this article (along with other folklorists and ethnologists) collected in Kyiv during the Orange Revolution, primarily from the followers of Viktor Yushchenko, constitute a strong argument against predictions of the decline and death of traditional folklore in the contemporary world. Ukrainian folklore flowered in response to the Orange Revolution. As in the past, people used folklore to fight social injustice. As in the past, folklore can be a deadly weapon in the struggle. Most of the texts which we collected on Maidan (Independence Square) in Kyiv during November and December 2004 show this quite clearly. For folklorists, it is also a unique opportunity to see folklore being born in response to political events.

Just as Viktor Yanukovych's trip to the hospital after being hit by an egg inspired the poem reproduced above, so Yanukovych's wife's speech in Donetsk also gave rise to folklore. Mrs. Yanukovych blamed "drugged oranges" for the behavior of the crowd in Kyiv. The immediate folk response was as follows: "*Наши патроны – апельсини и лимони*" (Our bullets are oranges and lemons).⁽³⁾ In these texts, traditional form provides the template for an immediate response to new political events. The creative resources of folk tradition include not only plot structures, but also images, symbols, and other artistic means. As a result, folk forms are easily recognized and accepted by the audience. In order to see traditional elements in a contemporary text, one must be familiar with its historical folklore antecedent. The Orange Revolution gave us the opportunity to see how anecdotes which had lost currency and become part of passive traditional knowledge can be reactivated through the substitution of names associated with contemporary politics. Old anecdotes seem to attract listener attention and when new historical events prompt the insertion of new content into old forms, the traditional text comes back to life and starts on a new active phase of existence. For example, a well-known anecdote about a barber acquired new details during the Orange Revolution:

Приходить Янукович до парихмахера стричися. Сідає в крісло, а той бере стрижє і каже:

"Віктор Федорович, ви чули, Ющенко вже президент"

А той каже:

"Не чув."

Ну, так проходить ще два рази, п'ять, а четвертий раз каже:

"Віктор Федорович, ви чули, Ющенко вже президент?"

"Займайся своєю справою, ти ж парихмахер!"

"Вікторе Федоровичу, коли я вам це нагадую, вам волосся піднімається, легше стричи."

(Yanukovych goes to a barber, gets into the chair, and the barber tells him, "Did you hear that Yushchenko was declared president?" Yanukovych says "No." The barber repeats again and again: "Did you hear that Yushchenko was declared president?" "Please mind your own business, aren't you a barber?" "But Viktor Fedorovych, whenever I tell you this news, your hair stands on end and it becomes easier for me to cut it.")⁽⁴⁾

This is a clear case where an old, traditional joke is conducive to the introduction of new political figures and thus becomes interesting and meaningful to contemporary listeners. Well-known plots (part of listeners' traditional knowledge) are frequently reused in imaginative ways during periods of dramatic social change. Thus the slogan, "The smart vote is for Yushchenko," evokes memories of the traditional joke which states that everyone complains about a lack of money, but no one complains about a lack of intelligence.

While most of the texts related to the Orange Revolution that we collected are clearly folklore and their folk antecedents can be readily identified, there are some genres and texts which are of more dubious provenance. Questions which arose during our field work and later while we were analysing our materials include the role of the author and the question of origins. Also, not all of the materials that we collected were transmitted orally. It soon became clear that certain anecdotes originated on the Internet or in other mass media. Although such texts do not meet all of the standard definitions of folklore, we believe that they should be

considered folk and traditional nonetheless. Is the origin of a text a crucial factor in its definition as a folk form? We would say not. Ivan Franko, the nineteenth-century Ukrainian writer and folklorist, for example, argued that folk songs can be authored by a single individual [Franko 1980: 57–65]. Following Franko, we would argue that what is more important is acceptance of a text by the folk so that it begins to live in oral tradition, to be transmitted orally, and to be subject to variation. Thus, mass appeal, oral transmission, and variation are the decisive factors which define a particular text as folklore. Folklore is a spontaneous manifestation of folk interests, wishes and dreams. As such, it is a sphere which cannot be controlled by official censorship or by other legal means. If we leave the question of authorship and the origins of these materials aside, we can concentrate on transmission, the ways in which the texts in question spread among the folk. What is important, in our opinion, is whether or not a particular text appeals to its listeners, whether they are interested in it and eager to disseminate it to others, be it in oral form or by other means such as the Internet. If a new variant of a text is created and performers and their audience, the senders and the recipients of a text, feel that their version is the most interesting variant, then that item is surely part of the folk tradition. Throughout the Orange Revolution, we observed numerous instances where an anecdote or joke, or even a play on a surname, would immediately catch on and create a strong reaction among the public. We then observed that this would prompt additional versions of the text or new texts devoted to the same topic. Thus, the "egg" incident was reflected in a large assortment of folklore forms from poems and anecdotes to slogans: *Яйце то велика сила, що зека завалила* (An egg has power so great that it can fell a prisoner), *Януковичу, ховайся, бо ми привезли яйця* (Yanukovych – hide, because we have brought eggs with us).(5)

Even the name of the candidate was changed in jokes from Yanukovych to Iaitsekhovych because, in Ukrainian, "*iaitse*" means an egg. This situation was further developed in an unexpected way. Texts about "eggs" acquired strong erotic connotations. Group thinking can be powerful and it can change and develop rapidly. Thus, folk creativity soon picked up on the fact that *iaitse* (egg) is a euphemism for testes. A further association was between eggs and chickens and roosters, at which point the fact that "rooster" (*petukh*) is the term that refers to gay men used as sex objects in prison came into play. We can see this meaning in the following item: *Ющенко – друг, Янукович – петух* (Yushchenko is a friend; Yanukovych is a rooster). As certain biographical details of the candidates' lives became known, the prison topic took on a special meaning. Yanukovych had been arrested and had served a term in prison and his prison record appeared in a number of folk texts of various genres. Thus, graffiti in which homosexual and criminal themes were expressed openly and sometimes with unexpected brutality appeared and we were able to photograph such texts (Figure 1). This topic was used frequently in slogans as well: *Янукович голубой, будет Путину женой* (Yanukovych is gay; he will become Putin's wife). Since the Russian president Putin supported Yanukovych in the election, he was the target of many jibes created by Yushchenko supporters.

The above is a clear example of the satirizing of events through ridicule and it is a typical feature of carnival culture. Humor and sarcasm are widely used to influence listeners. Obscene folklore becomes especially popular. These texts are attractive precisely because they do enter prohibited territory. In obscene folklore, everything is allowed and everything is comical. In this "world of laughter," all norms are inverted and

everything, from content to rhythm to form, focuses on the goal of charting the peculiarities of this world [Likhachev et al.1984: 51]. While some bearers of tradition refuse to repeat out loud the obscene texts created by others, they nonetheless take pleasure in them. We have ample evidence of the pleasure of the off-color world in Ukraine's past, including a very popular example from written literature, I. Kotliarevskyi's play "Oneida." This play, too, achieves much of its effect by using folk language, folk images, and a folk mindset.

Why was obscene folklore such a popular weapon during the Orange Revolution? The most archaic pagan rituals and their verbal components: wedding songs and dances, spring songs (*vesnianky*), Kupalo songs, children's lullabies, all have obscene elements and make extensive use of ridiculing jokes. Gustave Le Bon suggested that the instincts and feelings of the crowd have much in common with primitive thought. [Le Bon 1999: 152]. Bakhtin argued that the essence of folk humorous texts is in the organic unity of the cosmic, the social, and the material found therein [Bakhtin 1990: 25]. Thus, the samples of obscene folklore collected during the Orange Revolution are spontaneous and have archaic elements similar to those found in ancient folklore texts and rituals.

The obscene element can be considered an organic part of the traditional method of ridiculing an opponent. As we mentioned before, carnival culture draws imagery from the lower part of the body and this is what is indeed found in the ridiculing texts produced by the Orange Revolution. Lower body imagery is an excellent way of bringing everything down and closer to the ground. Sarcasm is also a feature typical of the carnival atmosphere. It is a primitive and vibrant expressive form. Bakhtin argued that, for the crowd, the carnival provided temporary liberation from official power and an escape from existing social norms. As such, it celebrated change and renewal [Bakhtin 1990: 15]. Even if we ignore the political meaning of the Orange Revolution completely, we cannot ignore the carnival elements in its formal existence and carnival-like behavior of its participants. Even the material objects associated with the Orange Revolution, the orange Christmas decorations, orange articles of clothing, orange garments for dogs and cats, orange automobile decorations, all smack of the carnivalesque. This is not to mention the songs and dances that spontaneously followed any political action and the rituals of barring all representatives of the old political power from the scene. Such celebratory protest behavior is closely tied to laughter in traditional culture. If we consider the decorative elements used in the Orange Revolution, we will again notice that they were based on traditional folk material culture. Thus, the orange wreaths worn by many of the girls participating in the tent city spawned by the Orange Revolution look a great deal like traditional wedding wreaths (Figures 2 and 3). The orange stars carried by children walking along the Kreshchatyk look much like the stars people in villages use for Christmas carolling (Figure 4). Folk material culture mixes freely with elements of the popular culture of today and this was true of the Orange Revolution as well. To wit, a rabbit character from children's cartoons was also seen among the Orange Revolution crowd (Figure 2).



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

One of the important characteristics of the Orange folklore is grotesque realism. Bakhtin coined this term and used it to refer to the process of making abstract spiritual ideals concrete so that they can be ridiculed. This process often uses body imagery [Bakhtin 1990: 26]. Grotesque realism can be considered one of the main characteristics of the folklore texts of the Orange Revolution. Examples include the following:

Через Мінськ і Астану поведу я вас в Європу. Ось лиш штані підтягну, щоб не видно було ж...

(Through Minsk and Astana I am going to lead you into Europe; let me just pull up my pants that no one can see my arse);(6)

Мы помчимся в заоблачную даль, перед всей изумленной Европой, к нам в ладони опустится звезда, а Кидалов сидит в глубокой ж...

(We will soar up into the cloudless skies; we will leave all of Europe in awe; stars will fall right into our lap, while Kivalov will sit deep inside a (homosexual) ass);(7)

Голосуєш ти за Ю – будеш жити, як в раю; голосуєш ти за Я – не будеш мати ні х..

(If you vote for IU you will live as if you were in paradise, if you vote for IA you won't get dick-all.)(8)

As is well known, the carnival atmosphere traditionally requires the use of obscene language so as to more easily create the feeling of complete freedom.

The concept of individualization does not exist in folklore. We do not have characters who are individuals with their own particular traits; we only have types. The polarization of the characters is immediately apparent in folk texts, and they are immediately grouped into the bad and the good. Modern literature, for example, favors characters who are very complicated and difficult to understand. Literature paints characters in multiple shades of grey and this is in stark contrast to the black and white picture typical of folklore. Folklore characters, even if they have names, represent certain general tendencies. This situation holds true for Orange folklore as well. All the characters of Orange folklore are grouped into opposites and extremes. People in authority are juxtaposed to the folk as the top is contrasted to the bottom.

Tradition is very stable and it changes very slowly. At the same time, it can respond instantaneously to any changes in the life of society. The form can remain unchanged for centuries while new names and new events fill the traditional plot. It is impossible to stop or even slow down the spread of folk texts among their bearers; it is impossible to control or regulate oral transmission. Censorship is impossible in the case of oral texts, which are always the most reliable way of disseminating information in a situation of upheaval and unrest, like the Orange Revolution.

It should be taken into consideration that the information passed from one bearer of tradition to another might well have nothing in common with actual facts. Rumors and legends typically originate in a real event. But they live and grow to conform to the expectations of tradition. Or they change to become artistically more pleasing or emotionally more effective. Tradition and aesthetic criteria often take precedence over fact. And, for the folk, a good text that corresponds to their expectations is often more important than a factual one. Le Bon argued that the more witnesses there are to an event, the less truth there will be in its retelling. Legends have a variable and unstable nature [Le Bon 1999: 147]. Some folklore texts look nonsensical; they may seem illogical and bear little semblance to reality. But their function is not to reproduce external reality. Rather, they

convey moral truths. They support good over evil, and ridicule and seek to humiliate the opponents of the good and the true. This can be seen in texts like the following: *Ющенко – князь, Янукович – карась* (Yushchenko is a prince and Yanukovich is a fish). This slogan makes no sense, but it has good rhythm and rhyme and it is perfectly suited for screaming out loud in public demonstrations. This text uses the logic of children's taunts, where the humiliation comes not from any sort of logic or any real insult. Rather, the simple fact that a rhyme can be found to a child's name or physical characteristic (red hair being a favourite) is perceived as humiliating. Many of the slogans used during recent political campaigns link the last name of the candidate in question to a rhyme, and not necessarily a logical one, or to an obscene lexeme. The fact that the techniques of children's insults are frequently found in political slogans offers an interesting commentary on the mindset of participants in the political realm.

Folklore texts function in a very specific way. They live as long as they remain of interest to their audience and they disappear when particular events and ideas stop being interesting to the public. During important changes in society, when events and life in general move at a rapid pace, folklore texts are born and die with special speed. Their genesis, then, is especially noticeable. Their dissemination under such circumstances is unusually rapid as well. We, as folklorists, had a unique opportunity to observe folklore being born as an immediate reaction to a particular set of political events. The power of folklore which plays on the names of political figures can be seen in the fact that one joke claimed that Yanukovich issued a proclamation prohibiting any newborn girls from being named Julia. His sensitivity to this name supposedly stemmed from the fact that Julia is the name of the current prime-minister of Ukraine, Julia Tymoshenko, and that, during the Orange Revolution, she was one of the most active and vocal leaders of the opposition.

The Maidan, or Independence Square, produced a very specific type of folklore. The community where Orange folklore was functioning was not stable. It was a temporary, non-traditional, mobile community which came into being during the political crisis, and was composed of people from all walks of life and a whole range of backgrounds, who came together on the basis of common political interests. Such a community contrasts in many respects with traditional Ukrainian agricultural communities, which can be characterized as stable, isolated, and culturally and ethnically closed. Linda Degh characterized agricultural communities in pre-industrial America as self-contained and isolated from urban life, with a high level of member closeness [Degh 1995: 216]. The language, cultural traditions, and customs of traditional agricultural communities develop over centuries and are reflected in folk life. The community we examined during the events of the Orange Revolution was dynamic, open, and flexible and much closer in its nature to contemporary urban communities. In urban communities, a member of one folk group can often also be a member of several others. He or she can be a bearer of various traditions, those associated with his or her profession, those of his or her family, age group, regional group, and so forth. The contemporary Russian folklorist Sergei Nekliudov described urban communities and their folklore as polycentric and fragmentary. He stated that folklore with these characteristics corresponds to the cultural and social variability of urban life [Nekliudov 1995: 2]. Each of us, under certain circumstances, may become a member of a small group within a larger, perhaps city-wide, group, the bearer of a particular folk tradition. During the Orange Revolution we had an organic mixture of traditional agrarian

folklore and various types of urban traditional cultures and subcultures. This combination made Orange Revolution folklore unusual and especially interesting for further analysis.

Among the texts that we collected, the most productive genres were anecdotes, slogans, graffiti, ballads, and folk poems. This indicates that Orange folklore is most closely related to urban folklore in its structure and its artistic features. The genres we observed are most active during social movements, revolutions, and protests. For example, more political anecdotes were born during the Orange Revolution than during the entire period of Ukrainian independence. Prior to the Orange Revolution, you could even hear people express concern that the political anecdote was dead as a genre once the Brezhnev era drew to a close. But during the two months of the Orange Revolution, political anecdotes returned in full vigor, proving that previous fears about the death of political humor were groundless. An example of political humor that was resurrected during the Orange Revolution is the following:

В Одесі Мойша приходить до Ізі:

“Ізя, ти бачив, що в Харкові написано на біг-бордах”

“Що?”

“Захистіть свої інтереси.”

Ізя:

“В Одессе мудрый сказал бы: ‘Сами украли, сами защищайте.’”

(In Odessa Moshe comes to Isia: “Did you see what’s written in Kharkiv on billboards?” “What?” “Protect your interests.” “In Odessa smart folks would respond: ‘You stole it; you protect it!’”);(9)

40 років водив Ющенко народ вулицями Києва в пошуках корумпованої влади.

(For forty years Yushchenko dragged people through the streets of Kyiv in search of corrupted power);(10)

Or:

Радник приходить до Януковича і каже:

“Маю для вас 2 новини. Добру і погану. З якої почати?”

“Давай погану.”

“Ющенко набрав 55 %.”

“А яка ж тоді може бути добра?”

“Але ви перемогли.”

(Yanukovich's adviser comes to him and says: “I have good news and bad news. Which do you want first?” “What’s the bad news?” “Yushchenko got 55 % of the vote.” “What can be the good news, then?” “You’re the winner”);(11)

Or:

На вулиці 2010 рік. Проходить 46-й раунд виборів, бо на 45-ому знов переміг Янукович.

(It is the year 2010. The 46th round of the Ukrainian elections is about to begin because Yanukovich won the 45th) (12)

The samples given here are limited to texts which we recorded from performers in face-to-face situations. If we were to include the huge level of internet and mobile phone (text messaging) activity, our sample would be many times its size. Computers and mobile phones have become channels for the transmission of folk prose that rival face-to-face narration. In fact, text messaging is often favored over face-to-face communication even when the performer and his audience are within reachable distance from each other. Some items are texted because of their obscene character. Some are too long to memorize under certain circumstances and thus circulate more actively through electronic text messaging. In such cases, mobile phones proved a handy tool for the transmission of oral folk texts. Orange folklore showed that bearers of tradition used contemporary technology freely in their artistic communication. Often, when we requested that someone tell us a particular anecdote or joke, the performer would send a text because it was convenient for both sides. The mobile phone helped overcome the problems of doing field work in a constantly moving crowd, under the open sky, with the snow coming down on everybody's heads.

Urban graffiti was an especially interesting feature of the Orange Revolution. The pictures and inscriptions on the walls that were part of Orange folklore have a very different nature from the everyday Kyiv graffiti that we photographed over the three years preceding the recent set of events. Orange graffiti was distinctive not only in appearance, but also in content. Orange graffiti actually had more in common with the very old wall writing that has been found on the ancient city walls of Kyiv and on the walls of the thirteenth-century St. Sophia Church. During the last decade, Kyiv graffiti writers adopted the balloon convention of the North American continent and texts on walls appeared as part of pictures with complex illustrations where a character's speech was enclosed in a balloon. Orange graffiti are more traditional in form. They look like simple tags or inscriptions. They are executed in a very simple manner, using pen or pencil and mostly one color. The political content of Orange graffiti is, of course, a new element as well. Over the last three or four years we had collected a very limited amount of political graffiti on walls (e.g. "Vote for Hladchuk;" "Bush is a silly head;" "Ukraine go ahead" and a few others). But in the last two weeks, ninety eight percent of the graffiti written on the walls of central Kyiv were political in content. Another important distinctive feature of Orange political graffiti is their public nature and the mixture of politics with the obscene within the picture or text. The places where we photographed them were as open to the public as possible. Earlier, obscene graffiti were written in more discreet places, such as classrooms, public restrooms, and behind garages.

Since carnival-type behavior is not considered normal in contemporary society, people no longer feel free to repeat all the texts which appeared during the Orange Revolution. They may still find the texts funny, but they are now ashamed of the off-color content. Under such circumstances, graffiti become the most appropriate and common way of passing on satirical folklore which is also obscene. Material that people will not voice in public thus appears on city walls. Many of the short poems, anecdotes, slogans with obscene content which we collected were recorded as photographs of graffiti found near the Maidan in Kyiv. Graffiti became a popular genre precisely because it gave performers the chance to express their emotions in a traditional manner without feeling ashamed. Internal censorship prevented some bearers of tradition from retelling texts they heard and liked. For them, the wall became the vehicle for transmission as it helped people

communicate those sentiments that they could not voice otherwise. The wall even allowed people to engage in dialogs, using materials that were inappropriate to a direct exchange of traditional knowledge (Figures 5-8).



Figure 5

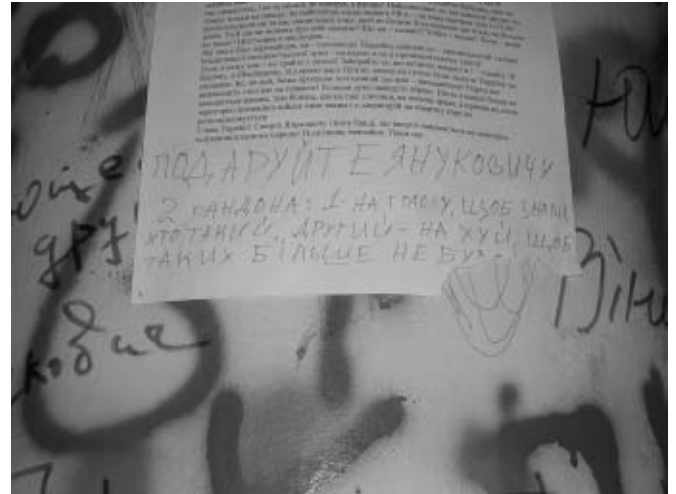


Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

We have already noted that, traditionally, obscene graffiti texts and pictures, especially in Ukrainian settings, are found in places not open to public, places where only a limited number of readers have access. Among the examples of such graffiti recorded by a student of the Kyiv Mohyla Academy inside a classroom in the year 2000 is the following:

На селі переполох, Вася красить глазки, к нам ведуть войска ООН – голубые каски.

"The village is all aflutter; Vasia (a male) is putting on makeup, because everybody is expecting UN soldiers in blue uniforms" (blue is a gay color in Ukrainian traditional culture)

Цвет «Реала» стал голубым, «Динамо» и Киев смеется над ним.

("Real" took blue as their team color; "Dynamo-Kyiv" is laughing at them (Real and Dynamo are the names of two soccer teams in Ukraine))



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11

These are just a few samples of the obscene graffiti to be found a year ago in secluded places. During the Orange Revolution, graffiti achieved new status and new forms of existence. They also spread to new territories and became visible to a very wide audience. A mixture of erotic motifs and politics became their main characteristic. Another interesting aspect is that graffiti appeared not only in traditional locales, that is, walls, but also on cars, flags, and clothing. This made them mobile and observable by an even bigger audience (Figures 9-11).

It would be a mistake to think that sarcastic, obscene texts were the only ones actively produced by the Orange Revolution. Touching lyrical ballads and epics were very popular as well. Since the word "hero" was frequently used by the leaders of the revolution and the crowd, heroic motifs were very common in folk poetry. Just as in fairy tales a hero fights evil to secure a better future, so the hero created by the Orange Revolution, the whole nation, was shown as fighting for its choice of freedom and a better life. The happy-ever-after future of the fairytale imagination was pictured in many recorded texts:

Голос з кожної хати, годі знуцання терпіти, народ буде стояти! Злодії будуть сидіти! (Voices come from all the houses, telling us stop tolerating terror. The people will rise up. Criminals will go to prisons);

Наш бідний Бердичів, моєї держави обличчя. Не всунеш його в болото. Не буде на троні сволота (My poor Berdychev, you are the face of my country. No one will drag you into the mud. The bastards will not sit on the throne);

Владу на нари – народ на Канари. (Let's put the people in power behind bars, and then we'll go to the Canary Islands.)

Here, we see an absolutely mythical image of the future, and a fairy tale happy ending.

Among other folklore genres especially popular at the time were hand-written letter-poems which you could find all over the tent-city on Khreshchatyk. People were constantly passing them around. The motifs of most of them correspond to traditional heroic-romantic ballads or satirical songs. Here are just a few samples of such poems, collected during the Orange Revolution:

<i>Згинь ти темна вража сила,</i>	Die you dark opposing force
<i>Не твоя тут воля</i>	You have no sway here
<i>Буде радість, буде щастя</i>	We will have joy and happiness
<i>І в нас добра буде доля...</i>	And our destiny will be good

<i>Рідна моя, нене Україно,</i>	My dear mother Ukraine
<i>Я твоє дитя,</i>	I am your child
<i>Ти така прекрасна і невинна,</i>	You are so beautiful and innocent
<i>Що сказати? Ти – свята...</i>	What can I say? You are a Saint. (13)

Folklore is distinguished among other forms of spiritual life by its tight connection between performer and listener. As a result, the functioning of folklore is highly dependent upon the context in which it is

performed. One cannot imagine a folk teller who would rather perform for himself than before an interested audience. The folklore repertoire, therefore, not only depends upon the circumstances of a particular historical moment, it is also subject to the ravages of time, from which it has no protection. Literature, by contrast, is protected by the mere fact of being fixed on paper. Folklore is not. Thus, folklore serves as an indicator of the times; it reflects the moods and wishes of its bearers. Folklore is not created out of nothing; it uses traditional forms to represent new events. This permits recognition of well known forms and makes the contact between the performer and the audience easy and pleasant. It aids in the establishment of a dialog and thus prolongs the life of a new text. In Orange Revolution folklore, we observed that performers drew on traditional genres (children taunts, anecdotes and ballads) in order to express thoughts and emotions about current political events. The use of traditional form helped people formulate an immediate reaction to a particular event and, at the same time, to separate out those events which were otherwise attractive and interesting, but would not elicit a reaction from the audience.

The information and observations in this article concern only a very specific area and cannot be applied to other regions with their own specific political preferences and moods. The few texts that we received from outside Kyiv demonstrated that laughter and ridicule were more active on the Maidan than elsewhere. In other parts of Ukraine, these elements played a much smaller role. If we consider laughter a trait of folk culture and seriousness the trademark of those in power, then, following Bakhtin, we can assert that the folklore of the Maidan shares much with the tradition of the carnival. In those parts of Ukraine where the Orange Revolution did not receive full support, the mood of the population was more serious and the folk genres that reflected this mood, rumors, for example, were more serious also. The carnival features of Orange Revolution corresponded well to the mood of its participants and the folklore produced was a good indicator of the carefree mood of its participants.

NOTES

1 Most of the texts recorded during the Orange revolution in Kyiv in December 2004 were collected by members of Ryl's'kii Institute, O.Britsyna, I.Golovakha and M.Maierchuk. They were recorded from Yushchenko supporters on Maidan (Independence Square) and near the tent-city. "Maidan," meaning "square" is the shortened form by which Independence Square came to be known during the Orange Revolution. It is located in the center of Kyiv, just off Khreshchatyk, the main street, and right in front of the main post office. This square, which became the site of the tent city set up by Yushchenko supporters, became a symbol of the Orange Revolution. The tent city grew and eventually spilled out onto and occupied Khreshchatyk itself. Most of the texts were recorded and photographed on or near Maidan, in the tent city of Khreshchatyk, or in the underground passages near this area. Throughout the entire area, people painted graffiti, wrote poems, and screamed slogans.

2 This poem was printed on a piece of paper, and submitted by an informant from Sevastopol' in the Crimea. He collected it while travelling by train. All the other folklore texts given in this article were collected

in Kyiv during the events of the Orange Revolution. The transcription and translation of the texts is by the authors of this article.

- 3 A slogan posted on a tent in the protesters' tent city on Khreshchatyk.
- 4 This text was recorded in the House of Labor and submitted by an informant from Ivano-Frankivsk through the mail.
- 5 Recorded from a protester, age 40, from the L'viv area.
- 6 Part of a poem from the tent-city on Khreshchatyk.
- 7 Part of a poem from the tent-city on Khreshchatyk.
- 8 Graffiti photographed in underground near Khreshchatyk.
- 9 This text was recorded inside a minibus from a male informant who was a Yushchenko supporter.
- 10 Text recorded from a female informant, aged around 50, from Kyiv.
- 11 Recorded from a male informant from the Ivano-Frankivsk area.
- 12 Recorded from a highly educated male informant, age 60, from Kyiv.
- 13 Materials received from T Shevchuk.
- 14 Fragments of two poems, which we received in hand-written form from the residents of the tent-city.

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