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## THE MYTHIC THEMES, STRUCTURES AND SYMBOLS IN ENGLISH BAROQUE NOVELS

*У статті розглянуто особливості імплементації міфоматеріалу в англійському бароковому романі. Досліджено основні наративні стратегії в романі «високого бароко» на прикладі твору Дж. Маккензі «Аретіна» (1660). Зв'язок галантно-героїчних романів з античністю пояснюється інтересом освічених аристократів до давньої історії, а також розумінням людської природи в XVII ст. як константи й репрезентація Британії як спадкоємиці культури Давнього Риму. Основним концептом галантно-героїчного роману є героїзм, який репрезентується у творі через міфопоетичну наративну стратегію героя.*

*Життя людини представлено в романі алегорично як вертикальний рух (“yet shall never climb to Heaven” – ще ніколи не сягнули Небес), земне життя уподібнюється календарному циклу.*

*На перший план в імплементації міфоматеріалу виходить мовний рівень: складна асоціативно-метафорична структура образів, словесна гра, звернення до константних символів. Загалом міф у бароковому романі функціонує не лише як ремінісценція, алюзія, але й є протоструктурою, до якої звертається автор задля моделювання світу, міфологічний шар, об'єднаний з фактом творення міфологізованої текстової дійсності.*

**Ключові слова:** бароко, міф, міфопоетична парадигма, символ, роман.

The reading of myth and the making of myth are basic phenomena in the literary process throughout human history worldwide. Writers consciously and unconsciously pay tribute to ancient knowledge. In his book “Myth” (1997), Laurence Coupe explains how the mythic universal paradigm is used in a variety of literary and cultural texts. He distinguishes four main mythic narrative patterns: the paradigm of the fertility myth, the paradigm of the creation myth, the paradigm of the myth of deliverance, and the paradigm of the hero.

Oxford University professor Colin Burrow explains that in the 16-th and the 17-th centuries the mention of myth in literature was a matter of a writer’s education. To demonstrate immersion in “serious” literature like drama, the novel or tragedy, the writer should have obtained a PhD. Burrow, who has thoroughly studied Shakespeare, mentions that the grammar-school-boy Shakespeare alluded to myth in comedies and represented classical antiquity ironically. Also, Burrow argues that Shakespeare, who lacked a university education, alluded to myth as a way to elevate his social status:

“Many of Shakespeare’s contemporary professional playwrights were not just grammar-school boys. They also had university degrees. This entitled them to call themselves “gentlemen”, which was a significant mark of social status in this period. It also guaranteed that they were, as they were called by virtue of their degrees, Masters of Arts, people skilled in ancient tongues who were evidently learned. Shakespeare had no university degree, and in a society which was highly stratified, and in which learning was one of the means of social stratification, it was social death to display mere “grammar school” knowledge. Through the early 1590s the Cambridge scholar Gabriel Harvey had an extended pamphlet war with Thomas Nashe, who was a Cambridge graduate, but not a doctor” (Burrow, 2013). Burrow describes how Harvey constantly mocks Thomas Nashe for his mere grammar-school learning and poor understanding of ancient knowledge.

The aim of this research is to study English Baroque novels and distinguish their mythic themes, structures and symbols. The materials for analysis in this article include “Aretina” by George Mackenzie (1660). In 17-th century novel was a popular genre. The most well-known English Baroque writers and their novels are the following “Parthenissa” by Roger Boyle (1655–1669), “Theophania” by William Sale (1655), “Panthalia: or the Royal Romance” by Richard Brathwaite (1659), “Don Juan Lamberto : or a comical history of the late times. The first part. By Montelion Knight of the Oracle” by John Phillips, Thomas Flatman (1661), “Princess Cloria” by Sir Percy Herbert (1661).

Speaking about 17-th century literature, British critics often use the term “early modern period literature” instead of “Baroque”. English Baroque novels follow medieval novel traditions and their idealization of chivalry, but at the same time, transform the novel. Literary critics correspondingly distinguish high from low Baroque, as well as a wide range of novel types, such as political, allegorical, serious, comic, and picaresque.

In vol. 3 of "The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism" George Alexander Kennedy and Glyn P. Norton distinguish the peculiarities of 17-th century romances and novels. The scholars examine the characters in novels as the products of writers' imaginations; the reader of the novel is called Narcissus, because he or she gets the satisfaction of illusionary images, but the characters in romances are historical figures. In romance, the writer often gives a deep analysis of historical events as a background for contemporary developments in England. The romance as a genre, in fact, became popular during the Civil War in England.

In line with Laurence Coupe's myth paradigm theory, this research focuses on the transformation of myth in George Mackenzie's romance and the writer's interpretation of the place of human being in the world.

George Mackenzie (1636/1638 – 1691) was a Scottish lawyer and honored in the royal court, receiving an award from King Charles I in 1678. The political situation in the 17-th century England is the key subject of Mackenzie's books. Mackenzie followed the medieval tradition of *speculum principis* and preferably wrote roman à clef. The *speculum principis* is a discourse about an ideal ruler who enhances the state and works for the good of his people. In his books, George Mackenzie honors the king's wisdom.

Mackenzie wrote his first book "Aretina; or the Serious Romance" in 1660 and published it in Edinburgh, Scotland. In the preface to the novel, he mentions that this book mainly addresses women as "fair ladies". In the very first line of the novel, the writer says: "To all ladies of this nation."

The key mythic narrative paradigm is the myth of the hero. The writer compares himself with the mythic character of Moses's mother, who trusts God's will:

I Do, like Moses trembling mother, leave this my first  
born upon the banks of envies current, exposed to  
the muddy and impetuous streams of merciless censure;  
wishing, that the fair hands of the meanest of  
your number would vouchsafe to dandle it in the lapp of  
your protection; It is but an abortive birth, posted to the  
world before its time, by an unavoidable emergent, and  
so I fear shall never prove strong, nor be able to go much  
abroad: Yet if it be admitted to suck the breasts of your favour,  
it may possibly prove strong enough (shielded by your affection)  
to grapple with malice, and all other opposition (Mackenzie, 1989).

The main mythic theme in "Aretina" is the divine narcissism that corresponds to the divine right of the king to rule directly from God's will. This novel has a didactic mood, and it teaches the reader to be rational and merciful. It explains the importance of controlling emotions. The main character is Monanthropus, the ruler of Egypt, who has lodged himself with Melancholy. He has gone to a wild valley to think over his abilities as a king and discusses the matter of how to run a country fairly and how to control his feelings:

MELANCHOLY having lodged it  
self in the generous breast of Monanthropus  
(lately Chancellour  
of Egypt) did, by the chain of its  
Charms, so fetter[s] the feet of his  
Reason, that nothing pleased him now but that  
whereby he might please that passion; thinking  
all the time misspent which was not spent in its  
service, frequenting more Woods than Men,  
deeming them the only fit grove to sacrifice in,  
the choicest of his thoughts to the worst of his  
passions (Mackenzie, 1989).

This novel is dedicated to the historical loss of Scottish independence. The novel takes place in Athens, but for the attentive reader it is obvious that the author is writing about his native Scotland. The king of Egypt feels a deep melancholy thinking over the possibility of praying towards an old oak tree and trusting it with his true thoughts. In the novel the oak is a mythic symbol that corresponds to the groves where Druid priests made sacrifices.

The sacral place in the novel "Aretina" is a desert. In the novel the desert is the place of king's initiation ceremony, as he has left his home and gone through a threshold in order to obtain new knowledge. The ceremony of the king's initiation closely connects to the myth of fertility. The desert is also a symbol of death. The old king is in a hurry to get to the neighboring desert with no trees or fruits. He is tired and wants to rest his thoughts in a peaceful place, a place which is good for meditation and melancholy:

Wherefore, having one day wandered abroad  
in a neighbouring Desert,  
he came at last to a deep Valley,  
fruitfull of nothing but Trees,  
and Trees fruitfull of nothing  
but Melancholy, overlook by Rocks,  
in whose wrinkled faces,  
aged Time had plowed thousands  
of deep furrows, whose gloomy brow threatened (Mackenzie, 1989).

Melancholy was a particular state of noble people at that time. Many English salons during the time of Queen Henrietta Maria, the wife of King Charles I, borrowed the idea from French salons of paying tribute to the feeling of melancholy. In the 17-th century England, melancholy was considered to be a state in which a person did a lot of mental exercises in order to enhance imagination ("the game of imagination") and to absolutely control his or her emotions.

For example, when melancholy "lodged itself in the generous breast of Monanthropus", Monanthropus observes how two ladies are captured by two men in masks, but another two knights save the life of ladies (Mackenzie, 1989).

The mythic narrative strategy of deliverance and ritual offering is fundamental for the plot. Two young ladies decide to rescue their brother and go to Delphi to bring two turtledoves as a ritual offering to the god Apollo. On their way the ladies are captured and two cousins who have gone with them are murdered. Among criminals the two young ladies suffer a lot, and the demonic world opens before them through the face of a witch who takes care of the masked men. The image of the witch, in contrast to the image of mother, shows the duality of the world. But good luck and the good will of the two knights who happen to see the young ladies in the desert save the ladies from slavery.

Observation is a key narrative form in the novel and a traditional one for myth. The mythic image of the garden in the novel is a symbol of paradise on the Earth and a place for the relaxation of the Egypt ruler. The macrocosm of landscape reveals the microcosm of humanity and society:

"So going abroad, he conducted him to a Garden, all enameled with Flowers, chequered all alongst according to their several colours, and thereafter to an Aviary, wherein grew many fragrant odoriferous Trees, wherein Birds of All Nations, and of all colours, nested, and withal shadowed a Walk, wherein one would hear their dissonant voices conspiring to make one melodious harmony, which seemed to be Natural Lute <...>; her Monanthropus used very morning and evening to recreate both his ears and eyes, with variety both of notes and colours (Mackenzie, 1989)".

The final scene of the novel also takes place in the garden where two knights, Megistus and Philarites, propose to Agapeta and Aretina. Aretina is a daughter of the Egyptian ruler. The prince of Ethiopia, Megistus, marries Agapeta.

George Mackenzie, in his novel, reveals the idea of a Christian god and honorably treats the Roman gods:

"The omnipotent and omniscient God (for I acknowledge but one; for, if there be any God, he must be infinite, and if infinite, he must be one is not infinite, seeing he wanteth the perfections of his fellows, and so something may be added to his perfection. And the diversity of your gods, shewes not the plurality of the gods, but denoteth only the diversity of the true God his Attributes: for, he is wife, and his wisdom is represented by your Apollo; He is most irresistible, which is figured to you by your god Mars" (Mackenzie, 1989).

In conclusion, the representation of mythic material in the English Baroque novel is obvious at the linguistic level, such as through symbols, metaphors, and similes. In general, myth in the Baroque novel is represented not just through allusions, but as a structure for modeling the world. The mythic paradigm of the hero is a dominant in English Baroque novels.

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#### **THE MYTHIC THEMES, STRUCTURES AND SYMBOLS IN ENGLISH BAROQUE NOVELS**

*The article deals with the mythopoeic analysis of English Baroque novel "Aretina" (1660) by George Mackenzie.*

*The aim of the study is to examine the mythic themes, structures and symbols in English Baroque novels.*

*This article reports to the results of Laurence Coupe and his classification of mythic paradigm, distinguishing the paradigm of the fertility myth, the paradigm of the creation myth, the paradigm of the myth of deliverance, and the paradigm of the hero.*

*The interest to heroic novels among English noble people in the 17-th century is explained with the fact that well educated people always have interest to the history and interpretation of human nature. Also, English artists represent Great Britain as a successor of the ancient Rome. The main concept in English baroque novels is heroism represented through the mythopoeic narrative strategy of the hero.*

*In the novel "Aretina" by G. Mackenzie, the human life is shown as an allegory of vertical movement ("yet shall never climb to Heaven"), the life on Earth coincides the calendar cycle.*

*The representation of mythic material in English Baroque novel is obvious at the linguistic level: symbols, metaphors, and similes. In general, myth in the Baroque novel is represented not just through allusions, but as a structure for modeling the world. The mythic paradigm of the hero is a dominant in English Baroque novels. The article is of interest to those who are interested in mythopoeia and English Baroque literature.*

**Key words:** Baroque, myth, mythic paradigm, symbol, novel.

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