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**СЕМАНТИКА СИМВОЛІВ У ПОВІСТІ «КУРЯЧИЙ БОГ» ЮРІЯ  
ЗБАНАЦЬКОГО**

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**THE SEMANTICS OF SYMBOLS IN THE STORY «CHICKEN GOD»  
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*Abstract. The article is devoted to the semantics of symbol in the story "Chicken God" by Yurii Zbanatskyi. The concepts «garden», «home», «way», «sea», «mountain», «magic stone» and others are interpreting as archetype symbols. They create the specific chronotope of the story for children.*

*Key words: chronotope, genre, story for children, poetics, archetype, image, symbol.*

**Introduction.**

In the 60s Yurii Zbanatskyi (1914-1994) tried to upgrade thematic, problem, genre diapason and poetics of a novel for children by modifying it with the help of the synthesis with other genres. He used the archetypal symbolism and created his own one, with elements of neomythologisms and "magical realism". That was shown the best in the story "Chicken God" (1966), which should be investigated in the light of semiology and mythocritics.

**Review of the literature.**

The story "Chicken God" by Yurii Zbanatskyi was analyzed in textbooks [5-9,11], literary critiques [5,10, etc.], but the semantics of characters symbols in it has not been the subject of a special study.

**The main text.**

Due to its extraordinary poetry the story "Chicken God" differs not only in the work of Yurii Zbanatskyi but also on the background of the whole Ukrainian

literature for children. The story's title itself creates an atmosphere of a myth. The phrase "Chicken God" (or in short "Godeye") is mysterious for a modern reader and it was used to mean "a ritual object, an amulet for poultry. The role of a chicken god could be performed by through-hole stones, a pot, a pitcher without bottom, the neck of a broken glass, worn sandals and so on [2, p.271]. The stones with a hole were used in folk medicine" [2, p. 267]. Some people today believe that Chicken God, gives health and happiness if you carry it with you. Kids love to collect these pebbles and play with them.

Thus, the name of the story attracted readers by its mystery, dealing with ancient myths, although chronotope covers only one day of travelling during which a four years old boy Serhiiko Momot travels around the seacoast and mountains, the boy was born in the 60s of the twentieth century. Sometimes the time space frames of the story are expanded by using retrospective inserts (for a example, a former sailor's memories about the war).

The plot of the story is simple, not full of events, but adventures prevail among them. It gives dynamism to the development of an action. The exhibition in the story is laconic, focused on the image of circumstances that led to the escape and the journey of the protagonist.

Serhiiko was taken to the seaside for summer together with other pupils of the kindergarten, but the life of kids was monotonous and boring here. A young teacher cares only that nobody be naughty or lost. Kids leave the yard only when they go to the beach, always holding hands of each other, they go to water "orderly" and get out in the same way. Sometimes Children are naughty and quarrel because they are bored. When Serhiiko had a conflict with Yulka, who stole the chicken god which he had found, the teacher took the side of the girl and said, "Shame on you, Momot?". The offended boy escaped from the kindergarten - and the tempting in itsinfinity and unexplored world was opened before him. Serhiiko could not resist the temptation and went on a journey. This moment is an introduction of the plot.

Yurii Zbanatskyi updates in his story the archetypal symbolism of travels as the way to explore the world. The whole development of the action is put into the chronotope of the travel. Serhiiko travels first to the seacoast, which is considered to be the “boundary”, “dangerous” space, but the kid feels no fear or even anxiety, while there are people around him. The boy gathered a full pocket of chicken gods and from time to time looks at everything through the holes in the magical stones. “And here it is – said Yurii Yarmysh – that little traveler is a poet, because he sees through a hole the wonderful world. And there a sailor lives, whom people believed was killed and even engraved his name on the monument, fair fishermen live in it, whose fire the boy was guarding till the night, merry students and wise shepherds” [11, p. 235]. People who communicate with Serhiiko, think that he lives somewhere nearby, although a small fugitive managed to get to a boat and go far enough. Left alone on the beach in the evening, the boy decided to go up to the mountains, where students invited him jokingly.

Night mountains are more dangerous place than the coast, but Serhiiko was lucky to come across the shepherds who warmed and fed him. Then the younger of them took the traveler to the students’ tent camp. They were the same students whom the boy had met on the beach. Moreover, in the morning Serhiiko saw another friend, a former sailor, whose name was engraved on the monument. It turned out that he headed the same vinicultural team in which students worked. Finally, the runaway saw a horse from the kindergarten, harnessed to the cart. The cart was loaded with baskets of grapes, and then the gardener of the kindergarten came out of the bushes. It was the auntie Zavoryna, as the kids called her.

Besides the flow through chronotope of travel, chronotopes of meetings, chance, accident and adventure play a significant role in the story “Chicken God”. They create a plot under the principle of chain stringing, and in the scene at the vineyard the author uses the principle of concentration. At first glance it may seem that the coincidence of accidents is excessive in this scene as almost all good people whom Serhiiko met on his way are gathered in it. In our opinion, this method has conceptual load. The bearers of good gather around the kid on the

mountain. As it is well-known, the mountain is not only a symbol of the space but it is also a spiritual symbol. There is a child in the center of this symbolic space of the height of the human's spirit as the greatest value in the world. In our opinion, this is the climax of the story.

Serhiiko is exceptionally an observant boy. He is sensitive to good and beauty, has a passion for knowledge and he has an impetuous poetic imagination. On his way home, he fantasizes that "this journey on the cart will never be ended. The Antie Zavoryna and he will travel the whole world on their horse Siryi. They will see the unseen things, fairy lands, will hear incredible things, will discover the undiscovered things" [3, p. 425]. These fantasies of little heroes often create unlimited chronotope, which is peculiar to the stories for children of high artistic merit.

The resolution of the plot fills the reader's soul with happiness. Having returned to the kindergarten, Serhiiko generously gave chicken gods to kids. He didn't forget Yulka as he is not vindictive and wants to make everybody happy. However, only one boy saw in the aperture of the stone the same wonderful world as the main character. Thus, Serhiiko is endowed with remarkable features, he is a romanticized character. Although not only the main character has poetic imagination (it is a common feature of children's understanding of the world), the author shows that not in every child this feature develops in equal measures. The resolution is very optimistic. Everyone rejoices of Serhiiko's return. It is pleasant to him to be in the limelight and the sun shines brightly, the sea sparkles with colors and makes friendly noise.

N. Chukhontseva, considered the story "Chicken God" in the context of adventure and maritime stories, made the conclusion that the story belongs to this genotype. Indeed, as the researcher says, the adventurous component plays a very significant role in the story. The sea is not just a landscape background in it, it is a peculiar character and "universal chronotope". It performs not only a descriptive function, but also it creates genre [10, p. 327]. The researcher pointed out that the maritime motive in a great measure determines the original style of story, which

“impresses by the variety of coloristics and by symphonic style of sound orchestration” [10, p. 327]. It must be added to this that the mountains are described perfectly in the story and they also appear as a peculiar chronotope. This chronotope is not only real but also symbolic, connected with archetypal semantic of space and philosophical understanding of height of the human spirit.

In its symbolic incarnation, the images of the sea and the mountains reveal their archetypal semantics also in terms of “strength test” of the main character. In the motif of the journey, there are elements of initiation. We suppose that in the process of image creation of Serhiiko, the author (consciously or subconsciously) focused on the archetype of Divine Child.

The archetypal image of a magical stone (crystal), which can be found in the fairy tales of many countries, in the story of Yurii Zbanatskyi gained the national form of chicken god. The ancient beliefs of Ukrainian people was associated with it. The phrase, which is the name of the story was transformed by the author into a symbol of beauty, good and romance.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Symbols in the literary text accumulate in themselves relatively stable forms of artistic thinking, because they are usually associated with certain archetypes. In the period of social realism the usage of archetypal symbolics made it possible for writers to escape from the profane time and refer to the “eternal” human problems. In the Ukrainian literature in the 60s of the XXth century even the “Soviet classics” to whom belonged Yurii Zbanatskyi didn’t neglect that opportunity. The study of archetypal sources of symbolics allows to reveal a peculiar “cryptography” of the author's idiolect, to better define chronotypical coordinates of the story, and therefore to define its genre specifics.

So, “Chicken God” represents a new genre modification. It is a lyrico-epic, adventure and maritime story-journey with elements of neomythologism and thus, with the elements of magical realism which give the story a certain philosophical

aspect. The story is equally interesting for both children and adults. “Chicken God” corresponds the highest requirements of artistic merit and belongs to the stories of everlasting value.

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