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A psychological motif for the popularity of a myth about Endymion and the Ukrainian translations of the literary endymionade

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Abstract: Popularity of mythological plot about Endymion is investigated. The author researches different versions of the myth to discover their dominate motifs: “BEAUTY - LOVE – IMMORTALITY”, which explain psychological peculiarities for the popularity of myth about Endymion and reflect the universal values, ideals that determine the spiritual experience of mankind in all socio-historical formations. An active creative reconsideration of a mythological material in the context of the world art is considered as basic tendencies of functioning of endymionade that means the interpretations of the ancient Greek myth about Endymion, distinguished by various forms of rethinking of the ancient material and reproduce the contemporary author's reality through the artistic prism based on sensual psychic perception of such universal values as beauty, love and immortality.

The Ukrainian translations of the literature interpretations about Endymion are of particular interest. This article is believed to be the first step to investigate psychological peculiarities for the popularity of the functioning of the ancient myth about Endymion and opens the prospects for further consideration of literary endymionade like orphism, faustianism, robinsonism, quixotism etc.

Key words : Myth, Endymion, The Goddess of the Moon, Beauty – Love – Immortality, An eternal sleep, Translation, Endymionade.

The study of reinterpretation of myth is related to one of the priority tasks of modern comparative literature [1, p.5-6]. The ancient sources of the myth and its reception in the Renaissance art were firstly investigated by Natalia Agapiou in her research “Endymion au carrefour. La fortune littéraire et artistique du mythe d'Endymion à l'aube de l'ère moderne. Ikonographische Repertorien zur Rezeption des antiken Mythos in Europa” [2]. The first study of endymionade was investigated by L. Fomina [3] in 2014. The functioning features of traditional mythological plot about Endymion were researched in synchronic and diachronic

aspects, the characteristics of English poetical endymionade were given in the context of various literary movements and trends of the XIX-th century (Romanticism, Aestheticism, Neoclassicism).

Nevertheless psychological peculiarities for the popularity of myth about Endymion have not become the object of special study yet. Therefore the topicality of present article is out of the question. The novelty of our research is determined by lack of investigations devoted to this problem. Therefore the purpose of the article is to study psychological aspect of the activity of the ancient material about Endymion.

As for the methods of investigation they are following: psychological method of concrete research, Comparative historical analysis of the myth sources to characterize the way of interaction of culture, aesthetics, literature and psychology; analytical method and mythopoetic analysis of literary interpretations.

An interest in the ancient myth about Endymion has not diminished for many centuries. According to Greek mythology Endymion (Ἐνδυμίων) is a young man, who is famous for his beauty and his state of an eternal sleep. The translation of the name *Endymion* has not been documented in any of known mythological dictionaries. However, the Greek name *Ἐνδυμίων* has the prefix Ἐνδ- that means “intermediate”, “temporary”. It allows us to put forward the hypothesis that the Greek name of the mythological character reflects his condition: “neither living nor dead”. So, Endymion exists in an intermediate state between life and death. A similar meaning is confirmed by another lexicographic source. According to the Latin dictionary, the word *Endymioneus* borrowed from the Greek language [4,p.370] means “sopores”: 1) sleepy; 2) gifted with sleepiness [4, p. 942].

The first images of the sleepy Endymion were preserved on the Greek vases of the V-th century BC, and later the fragment of myth about Endymion was depicted on the front panel of the Mantua sarcophagus in Duke's Palace of Gonzaga in the middle of II century. The cult of Endymion existed in Hellas and in Caria (in Asia Minor), on the Mount Latmus [5, p. 275].

The centuries passed, but the name of a mythological character Endymion was not forgotten. On the contrary, it has become an allusion that is widely used by different peoples in all spheres of their life. This mythological image was also mentioned in the allegorical codification of prophecies for future generations by Nostradamus (Centuria II: 71-80: 73 (2.73) 173). The ancient Greek plot became the source of inspiration for the creation of musical compositions (operas: “Endymion” by Haydn and Johann Christian Bach, “A New Opera, Call'd Cinthia and Endymion: Or the Loves of the Deities” by Thomas Durfey, W. Onley, 1697, T. Shevchenko's sketches of Selena and Endymion, paintings by such artists as A. L. Girodet de Roucy-Trioson, Edward John Poynter, George Frederick Watts etc., sculptures (Paolo Andrea Tricornia,

Antonio Canova), works of applied art (the plate of the Italian Majolica (XVI century) depicting a scene from the myth “Diana and Endymion” that is kept in the St. Petersburg Hermitage (Russia). The sailing frigate of the Royal Navy of Great Britain in 1797 and the brig of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in 1900 were named after this ancient character. An asteroid 342 (discovered by the German astronomer Max Wolf at the Heidelberg-Königstuhl State Observatory on October 17, 1892) was also called “Endymion”. Today, the myth about Endymion has become the basis of the Japanese animated series “Sailor Moon” (dir. N. Takeuchi) and the Japanese Action Wizard Magic: The Miracle Endymion, 2013 (directed by Nishikiori Hiroshi). Endymion became the name of the Dutch music group, then the Canadian island, a trademark in the perfume industry of England, as well as a new sort of flower hyacinths (*Endymion Hyacinthoides hispanicus and Scilla non-scripta*), a subspecies of the beetle of the family *Ensema endymion*, butterfly (*Polyommatus endimion*), Trilobite (*Endymionia, or Endymion*). However, the most significant response to the ancient myth has been found in the world literature.

The first mentions about Endymion can be found in the works of ancient Greek writers such as Lycimnius (about 400 BC) and Lucian of Samosata (125-180 AD). The author of the verse version of the myth saved in small fragments was the poet Alcaeus (626-622 - after 580 BC). Touching upon the mythological material about the Endymion, F. Bacon carried out a parallel between the ancient myth and his society. From his point of view Lady Moon and Endymion were allegorical images of a ruler and his favorite. According to Bacon, the ruler willingly allows himself to descend from the height of his grandeur, as Lady-Moon from her orbit, to remove the mask of a statesman, which must be worn constantly as a heavy burden, and behave simply, relax with such a favorite as Endymion, who is always “in a dream” and far from active social life. As for Endymion’s grotto mentioned in the myth it is considered as a cozy place where the ruler can rest and have fun [6, c. 167-168].

Hence, we propose the chronological list of the world literary endymionade concluded by us to prove the stability of functioning of the myth about Endymion in all cultural and historical epochs. The first publicly available literary interpretations of the ancient myth were the Elizabethan poets’ works of John Lilly's (Lyly or Lylie; 1553 or 1554 –1606) “Endymion, The Man in the Moone” (1588) and Michael Drayton (1563 –1631) “Endymion & Phœbe” (1595). The authors of the literary interpretations of the myth about Endymion also were the French writer Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle (1657-1757), and the German poet Christoph Martin Wieland (1733-1830), author of the verse “Diana und Endymion” (1767). From the 19th century, interest in this myth was evident in English Romanticism. John Keats (1795-1821) created a romantic poem “Endymion” (1818) and Thomas Hood (1799-1845) wrote a sonnet on the theme

of Keats "Endymion". The authors of the interpretations based on the myth about Endymion became German playwrights Wilhelm Carboni, Karl Weichselbaumer (1791-1871), who wrote the comedy "Diana and Endymion, or Men's Oaths and Faithfuls" ("Diana und Endymion, Oder Männerschwur Und Männertreuedritter", 1821); little-known English poet Hugh Donald Barclay (17 ?? -18 ??), the creator of the poem "Endymion or the boy who cried for the Moon" (1877); American poet Henry Beck Hirst (1813-1874), the author of the work "Endymion. A Tale of Greece" (1848); English writer Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde (1854-1900), who wrote the verse "Endymion (For Music)", 1881; English poet Stephen Phillips (1864-1915), the author of the poem "Endymion" (1898); a writer and a premier of England Benjamin Disraeli, Earl Of Beaconsfield, the creator of the novel "Endymion" (1880); the American writer, humorist Charles Godfrey Leland (1824-1903), whose chapter 9 in the book "Aradia, or the Gospel of the Witches" (1809) was devoted to "Diana and Endymone"; American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882), the author of the poems "Endymion" and "Keats"; Dutch poet Simon Vestdijk (1898 - 1971), who wrote the sonnet "Endymion"; Russian poets: O. I. Polezhayev (1804 - 1838), author of the verse "Endymion" (1837) and A.A Fet (1820-1892), who wrote the work "Diana, Endymion and Satire" (1855); Czech writers Yaroslav Vrhliisky (name and surname of Emile Fried (1853-1912), the author of the verse "Endymion" (1873) and Jirga Karasek of Lviv (1871 - 1951), who called one of his poetry collections "Endymion" (1909) From the twentieth century, the literary versions of endymionade were complemented by the Swedish writer Carl Gustaf Werner von Heidenstam (1859-1940) who wrote the novel "Endymion",1889); American poet W. S. Di Piero (born 1945), the author of the work "Endymion" (2009); American prose writer Dan Simmons (born 1948) wrote the bestselling *Hyperion Cantos* -"Hyperion"(1989), "The Fall of Hyperion"(1990), "Endymion" (1996) and "The Rise of Endymion" (1997) which firmly secured Simmons' fame as a science fiction luminary. "The Rise of Endymion" was awarded by Lotus Prize for Literature in 1998. Since then "The Endymion Omnibus" (2005) has been created. English writer Matthew Skelton (born 1971) became an author of "The Endymion Spring" (2006). Ukrainian literary critics V. I. Paschenko (born in1918), N. I. Paschenko (born in 1936) wrote the poem "Endymion" (2007). Undoubtedly, mythological material about Endymion is widely spread in the world literature.

To investigate the psychological reasons of so tremendous popularity of the ancient character, we have analyzed all known versions of the myth about Endymion from the point of view its dominant motif. As for the complete version of the myth, proposed by Robert Graves (1895-1985) in his book “The Greek Myths”(1955) it can not be taken into consideration because of its eugenic feature.

Punishment is a dominant motif in the version of Apollonia Rhodes, (IV 57) [7, p. 58-60]; Endymion [8, p.7]. According to these sources a handsome young man Endymion taken to the sky by Zeus, was loved by his wife Hera. As a punishment the God of Thunder dipped him into an eternal dream in the cave of the Kara Mountain.

Love and beauty dominate as the main theme in the work by Apollodorus (I 7, 5) [9, p.133] and Lucian`s “The Conversations of the Gods” XI. “Aphrodite and Selena” [10, p. 212, 11]. According to their plot the Goddess of the Moon, Selena descends from the sky to kiss a sleeping good young man to whom she has felt a strong love.

The theme of **Immortality** is also widespread. Selene asked Zeus to endow Endymion with an eternal youth. So to be immortal a beautiful shepherd was immersed in the eternal sleeping. [12; 13, p.67-81].

Comparison of the ancient versions of the myth shows that *Punishment, Love and Beauty, Immortality* are the social universals which are of interest in various cultural and historical societies due to the presence of “eternal motifs”, such as punishment, love, beauty, immortality. However, according to James Hall, Lucian`s version about **love and beauty** is the most attractive for arts. Poets and artists perceive Endymion as a symbol of eternal beauty and the source of “human joy” associated with love [10, p. 212].

Although each of the leitmotifs is characterized by artistic autonomy created by writers, artists, and sculptors depending on the trends in the development of the historical and cultural situation the integral feature of each version of the myth is the “symmetry” of the images (according to the term of A. E. Niamtsu [14, p.50]): Endymion ↔ the Goddess-Moon. Endymion symbolizes the cult of masculine beauty; The Goddess-Moon symbolizes deep female devotion and love.

Thus, the axiological triad “BEAUTY - LOVE – IMMORTALITY” explains a **psychological motif** for the popularity of a myth about Endymion. It reflects a sensual form of psychic phenomenon regarding to the universal values, ideals that determine the spiritual experience of mankind and they are relevant to all socio-historical formations.

Thus the motif of endymionade is distinguished by the consistent repeatability from ancient times to the present days. Despite the diversity of forms of new interpretations the new versions always maintain the factor of the recognition of this traditional plot due to the axiological triad

“BEAUTY - LOVE – IMMORTALITY”, which reflects and defines the relations of the main characters: Endymion and his beloved Lady Moon. The definition of the literary endymionade (the term is ours [3, p.173] means the interpretations of the ancient Greek myth about Endymion, which are distinguished by various forms of rethinking of the ancient material; these new independent versions of the active traditional plot reproduce the contemporary author's reality through the artistic prism based on sensual psychic perception of such universal values as beauty, love and immortality. For instance, the nineteenth century provides the interpretational variety of the myth about Endymion in English poetry. Keats's Endymion is a romantic character who is looking for an ideal of beauty and love embodied in the Goddess-Moon. Barclay`s Endymion is weak-willed. His suicide symbolizes the collapse of romantic ideals in the reality of Victorianism. Wilde`s character is a sensual bisexual. Phillips`s Endymion is a true strong nature, who sacrifices himself for the sake of eternal love. As for the image of the Goddess-Moon it also differs in all interpretations. She embodies an ideal of femininity, passion, spiritual and physical beauty in the poems by Keats and Phillips. Barclay`s neomyth depicts a pragmatic, narcissistic, mentally stale beauty, belonging to the elite society. Having enjoyed Endymion`s youth and beauty she leaves him. She prefers to live in luxury on Olympus. Wilde`s Moon goddess is a rival in love.

Each of the literary interpretations of the ancient myth about Endymion, created in specific national-historical conditions, considers Endymion and the Goddess Moon as carriers of certain artistic ideas, or representatives of a particular social contingent. Thus, the interpretation of the myth about Endymion by Victorian writers is marked by a variety of storyline collisions, original motivations, ways of rethinking and dramatizing mythological material. This is evident in the example of the various destinies devoted to Endymion in Victorian society: death (Barclay), a sexual promiscuity (Wilde), self-sacrifice in the name of love (Phillips), political Olympus (Disraeli). Moreover, the English literary versions of the myth consider the peculiarity of the aesthetic concept of romanticism (Keats); reproduce pictures of the social life of the Victorian society (Barclay, Phillips); They actualize the problem of the loss of the Victorian morality (Wilde, Barclay) or reproduce an objective picture of the political life of England at the end of the XIX-th century in particular the details of not only domestic policies (the struggle between the “Tories” and “Whigs”), but also the external, the British imperial idea of colonization of other countries (Benjamin Disraeli).

The world endymionade is constantly replenished. The number of literary interpretations of the myth about Endymion increases not only due to the writing of new works by modern writers, but also due to digitization in the electronic library of the “old”, previously written receptions of the myth, which have been recently found (often in one copy) in the library book depositories. Thus,

thanks to the efforts of the researchers, unknown works replenishing literary endymionade, were digitized. For example, on August 3, 2006 the University of Oxford published an online version of the myth about the Endymion by John Arthur Coupland "Paris and Helen: and Endymion" (1883), and on May 18, 2012, the University of Minnesota (USA) published an interpretation of the myth by Verner von Heidenstam's "Endymion: Novel" (1889). Also, in 2012, "Nabu Press" (USA) published a comedy by Marie Josephine Warren "Endymion: A Comedy in Three Acts" (1909) and others.

New translations of the literary endymionade prove a persistent interest in antique material. The last 15 years have been marked by such Russian translations done by Yeg. Feldman (a poem "Endymion" by Keats) and K. Koroliov (Dan Simmons's endymionade). As for Ukrainian translations, L. Fomina's work [15] is of special attention. The poetry about Endymion by Lily, Hood, Wilde, Barclay, Phillips have been translated for the first time. Moreover the discovery of a little-known English poet Donald Hugh Barclay has been introduced as a new name to the literature criticism. This first Ukrainian translation makes available interpretations about Endymion for a wide range of readers.

Thus this research is believed to be the first step to investigate the psychological motif of functioning and popularity of the ancient myth about Endymion in English poetry and opens the prospects for further consideration of literary endymionade like orphism, faustianism, robinsonism, quixotism etc.

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