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THE FUNCTIONS OF HERALDIC SYMBOLS IN THE ENGLISH FICTION

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ABSTRACT

The article considers the main functions performed by heraldic symbols due to their verbalization in blazons as descriptions of coats of arms by a specific set of language constructs. Heraldic symbols as the quintessence of culture are analyzed in the communicative-functional aspect. There are some special characteristics of heraldic symbolic units, namely, their multifunctional orientation, the possibility of multiple interpretations, the presence of a nomination mechanism, and others. The mediative and mnemonic functions of symbols, taken from the works of Lotman, are manifested in the heraldic symbols of fiction as one of the mechanisms of cultural memory, therefore, the symbol is a mediator of the semiosis spheres. The list of functions is supplemented by the consideration of the social dimension, because heraldic symbols are potentiated in the society, therefore, the essence of the identification-integrative and adaptive-regulatory functions of heraldic symbolism is revealed. The concepts of multimodal imagery and synesthesia effect, which are embodied in the interaction of verbal and nonverbal symbols, are involved in the analysis of the blazons on the material of English fiction. The theme of symbols functioning is supplemented by the classification of the main functions and subfunctions proposed by the author. The focus of the study is also the identification function, resulting in an emphasis on the role of a special heraldic language in the expression of the personality. Taking into account the types of coats of arms, the article considers the coding function in the punning and allusive coats of arms, as well as in the heraldic lexemes borrowed from other languages. The cross-cutting idea of the article is revealed through the interpretation of heraldic symbols in their functioning in the works of English fiction and poetry and summarized in the definition of the symbol not only as a linguistic unit, but also as a semiotic phenomenon of culture.

Key words: heraldic symbol, verbalization of symbols, blazon, mediative function, mnemonic function, semiosis, multimodal imagery, synesthesia effect, punning and allusive coats of arms.

Ю. Мойсеюк. Функції геральдичних символів в англomовній художній літературі. В статті розглядаються основні функції, які виконують геральдичні символи, через їхню вербалізацію в блазонах як описах гербів специфічним набором мовних конструктів. Геральдичні символи як квінтесенція культури аналізуються в комунікативно-функціональному аспекті. Виділяються деякі особливі характеристики геральдичних символічних одиниць, а саме, їхня поліфункціональна спрямованість, здатність до множинності інтерпретацій, наявність механізму позначення та ін. Медіативна та мнемонічна функції символів, взяті з робіт Лотмана, проявляються в геральдичних символах художньої літератури як один з механізмів пам'яті культури, отже, символ є посередником сфер семіозису. Перелік функцій доповнюється розглядом соціального виміру, оскільки геральдичні символи потенціюються саме в соціумі, отже, розкривається сутність ідентифікаційно-інтегративної та адаптивно-регулятивної функції геральдичної символіки. До аналізу блазонів на матеріалі англomовної художньої літератури залучаються поняття мультимодальної образності та синестезійного ефекту, які реалізуються у взаємодії вербальних та невербальних символів. Тема

функціонування символів доповнюється класифікуванням основних функцій та підфункцій, запропонованих автором. У фокусі дослідження перебуває також ідентифікаційна функція, в результаті чого робиться акцент на роль особливої геральдичної мови у вираженні персони. З урахуванням типів гербів кодувальна функція розглядається в промовистих та алюзивних гербах, а також в геральдичних лексемах, запозичених з інших мов. Наскрізна ідея статті розкривається через інтерпретацію геральдичних символів у їхньому функціонуванні в творах англомовної художньої прози та поезії і підсумовується у визначенні символу не тільки як лінгвістичної одиниці, а і як семіотичного феномену культури.

Ключові слова: геральдичний символ, вербалізація символів, блазон, медіативна функція, мнемонічна функція, семиозис, мультимодальна образність, синестезійний ефект, промовисті та алюзивні герби.

Ю. Мойсеюк. Функции геральдических символов в англоязычной художественной литературе.

В статье рассматриваются основные функции, которые выполняют геральдические символы, через их вербализацию в блазонах как описаниях гербов специфическим набором языковых конструкторов. Геральдические символы как квинтэссенция культуры анализируются в коммуникативно-функциональном аспекте. Выделяются некоторые специфические характеристики геральдических символических единиц, а именно, их полифункциональная направленность, способность к множественности интерпретаций, наличие механизма обозначения и др. Медиативная и мнемоническая функции символов, взятые из работ Лотмана, проявляются в геральдических символах художественной литературы как один из механизмов памяти культуры, следовательно, символ является посредником сфер семиозиса. Перечень функций дополняется рассмотрением социального измерения, поскольку геральдические символы потенцируются именно в социуме, следовательно, раскрывается сущность идентификационно-интегративной и адаптивно-регулятивной функций геральдической символики. К анализу блазона на материале англоязычной художественной литературы привлекаются понятия мультимодальной образности и синестезийного эффекта, которые реализуются во взаимодействии вербальных и невербальных символов. Тема функционирования символов дополняется классификацией основных функций и подфункций, предложенных автором. В фокусе исследования находится также идентификационная функция, в результате чего делается акцент на роль особого геральдического языка в выражении персоны. С учетом типов гербов кодирующая функция рассматривается в говорящих и алюзивных гербах, а также в геральдических лексемах, заимствованных из других языков. Сквозная идея статьи раскрывается через интерпретацию геральдических символов в их функционировании в произведениях англоязычной художественной прозы и поэзии и суммируется в определении символа не только как лингвистической единицы, но и как семиотического феномена культуры.

Ключевые слова: геральдический символ, вербализация символов, блазон, медиативная функция, мнемоническая функция, семиозис, мультимодальная образность, синестезийный эффект, говорящие и алюзивные гербы.

1. Introduction

With the help of heraldic symbolism, people have always been looking for the ways to communicate to each other something that transcends the limits and possibilities of language. The sign-symbolic space of heraldry is an act of constructing reality by its definition and classification, which forms the understanding of this reality.

The heraldic symbolic system, which is a mental-national image of a fragment of the world, has five dimensions: 1) rational-conceptual; 2) activity-regulatory; 3) psychological (sensory in the broadest sense of the word); 4) axiological (value) and 5) sacred (Averintsev, 2001, p. 9). Accordingly, the heraldic symbol can be defined as such a semantic generalization, which has a linguistic or visual expression at the level of sensory experience of man and which acts as a regulation of practical, value and sacred human relations to reality (Averintsev, 2001, p. 10).

The symbol is the foundation on which culture rests, and therefore symbols permeate culture from the beginning of its emergence within syncretic culture to the present. Heraldic symbols as the embodiment of self-identification, the message of social status, the expression of aesthetic tastes of

its bearer can be studied in a number of sciences (Bortnik & Rezko, 2008; Fox-Davies, 2007; Pimbley, n.d.). This article addresses a number of functions performed by heraldic symbols in the communicative-pragmatic aspect, which forms the main focus of analysis.

Today, linguistics focuses on the study of lingual phenomena in the context of extralingual factors. The involvement of the communicative-functional aspect of the analysis opens up new possibilities for the interpretation of heraldic symbols. Accordingly, in this paper, the study is context-oriented. The material for my analysis is lexical units, which are the elements of the description of coats of arms, i.e. contain heraldic symbols, selected from the 12th-21st century's texts of English works of fiction of different genres. These works of English and American literature are mostly represented by historical and knightly novels and ballads, works of classical literature and modern works of fantasy and science fiction abundant in the linguistic units that explicate heraldic symbolism and allow to build a model of heraldry in the system of language signs.

In this article I aim to identify the main functions of heraldic symbols by analyzing their linguistic expression in the fragments of the description of coats of arms and to establish the whole set of functions that are inherent in heraldic symbolism.

To reach this aim I will first discuss the conceptional and operational definitions of the units of the study together with the method of the interpretation of the blazons and identification of their functions (section 2); then analyse the main functions that the blazons can perform and claim some of their subfunctions (section 3); and finally, in conclusions (section 4), I will summarize the results obtained and provide some tentative questions for further possible research.

2. Method

In this study, I trace the functional features of the verbalization of heraldic symbols in the linguosemiotic aspect, i.e. establish a set of functions that are inherent in the heraldic symbolism in the discourse of English fiction. The study involves the analysis of fiction text samples with the involvement of the corpus method elements, obtained by continuous sampling, and the creation of an experimental database of the text fragments extracted from Anglo-American works of fiction of different periods through processing language material. A significant part of the factual material, organized in such a way as to simplify the search and systematization of examples, is a set of electronic texts to which there is a common interface for access. Based on the needs of this study, fragments of the literary text with a coat of arms description are satisfactory for the study of the heraldic vocabulary functional properties. So I used excerpts from English literary texts and texts of electronic corpora COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English, 400 million words, 1990-2009), COHA (Corpus of Historical American English, 400 million words, 1810-2000), Early English Books Online (1470-1690), BYU-BNC: British National Corpus (100 million words, 1980-1993), created by Mark Davis of Brigham Young University, Utah, and available at <http://corpus.byu.edu/>, which are known and standardized electronic databases of fiction (as well as scientific and journalistic) literature that are freely available.

The method of corpus analysis (Egbert et al., 2020) included formulation of the requests to the database and obtaining lists of contexts (concordances) that satisfy the request. The next stage of my analysis of words was discussion. At this stage, I used the descriptive method with its methods of external and internal interpretation, the method of linguo-cultural and linguo-stylistic analysis of nominative units to identify the connotative meanings of the heraldic lexemes, and the method of analysis of vocabulary definitions to involve some background (encyclopedic) information to interpret heraldic symbols.

The specificity of the interpretation lies in the fact that the meaning of the symbol can be explained only by correlating it with the subsequent symbolic chains, which will add clarity, but will not reach the level of pure notions (Barden & Williams, 2007; Hardy, 2018). To understand the language of symbols, it must be broken down into individual elements to interpret, decipher the hidden meaning, expand all the symbolic layering.

The symbol is not a rigid scheme, it is multi-layered and variable, so its meaning is easier to grasp in relation to its subsequent symbolic connections, i.e. the symbols are not isolated from each other, they can exist and function together, and these compounds are either episodic or permanent, stable, invariant, so I distinguish between micro-symbols, or single symbols, and macro-symbols by the criterion of quantity-volume of symbolic meaning, by which I mean the stable compounds of symbols with cumulative meaning, which are mainly coats of arms.

This is exactly how the description of the coat of arms depicted on the grave of the main character appears on the last pages of Hawthorne's work (Fig. 1):

- (1) *All around, there were monuments carved with armorial bearings; and on this simple slab of slate—as the curious investigator may still discern, and perplex himself with the purport—there appeared the semblance of an engraved escutcheon. It bore a device, a herald's wording of which may serve for a motto and brief description of our now concluded legend; so sombre is it, and relieved only by one ever-glowing point of light gloomier than the shadow: “ON A FIELD, SABLE, THE LETTER A, GULES”.” (SLR, p. 311)*



Fig. 1

Each component of the coat of arms (Fig. 1) has its own symbolic meaning: the symbolism of black tincture includes modesty, death, mourning, calm and tranquility; red enamel symbolizes courage, bravery, love; the use of letters in heraldry is considered inappropriate and obscene, unless it is an inscription on the motto, and the letter 'A' as an occasional symbol signifies the marital betrayal of the main character. The content of the whole macro-symbol as a whole corresponds to the plot outline of the novel: the coat of arms on the grave symbolizes the life and death of a person stigmatized by an adulter, who bravely survived the condemnation of citizens and finally rests in peace.

Microsymbols enter into the contextual connections with each other. In such compounds, it is important not to overlook or misinterpret any detail, as it may change the meaning of the whole macrosymbol. That is, the groups of microsymbols are structured in such a way as to compose a message in which individual microsymbols function according to parts of speech and in which there may be conventional rules of connection, their own syntax.

To identify the specifics of the functioning of coats of arms, the method of interaction analysis is involved, sometimes in combination with linguo-stylistic analysis. Thus, the representative / identification function is performed by the blazon (coats of arms description) in the following example, where Dunois recognizes the coat of arms of de la Marck (see Fig. 2), the leader of the villains:

- (2) *Dunois, observing the boar's head and tusks – the usual bearing of William de la Marck – in another part of the conflict, called out to Quentin, “Thou art worthy to avenge the arms of*

Orleans! I leave thee the task”. – “Balafre, support your nephew but let none dare to interfere with Dunois’ boar-hunt!” (QD, p. 557)

In this situation, the coat of arms of de la Marck serves as a marker and at the same time an incentive for Dunois, a vassal of King Louis, that is, it challenges him to battle. It should be noted that this text fragment contains metonymy (instead of de la Marck's name a heraldic figure from the blazon of his coat of arms is used) and a metonymic antithesis (opposition of de la Marck's armor to the coat of arms of Orleans (Fig. 3) symbolizing their conflict).



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

3. Functional features of verbalization of heraldic symbols in English fiction

Symbols play an important role in the interaction of cultures, reflecting national priorities, cultural phenomena, symbols are involved in the transformation of cultural forms into images, norms and standards of peoples, in the formation of socio-cultural and ethnocultural systems and configurations, take an active part in socio-cultural communication, perception and interpretation. assimilation of cultural phenomena (Fernández et al, 2016; Losev, 1995, p. 89; Sebeok, 2001). For example, we learn about the history of the Miztec tribe, reflected in the legends, from their coats of arms:

- (3) *Upon this story is founded the lordship of all the caciques of Mizteca, and upon their descent from this mighty archer, their ancestor. Even to this day, the chiefs of the Miztecs blazon as their arms a plumed chief with bow and arrows and shield, and the sun in front of him setting behind gray clouds.* ((BNC-COHA, p. 68)

The leaders of the Miztec tribe blazon their coats of arms with arrows because their tribe originated from a powerful archer.

Heraldic symbols are characterized by a multifunctional orientation, which is manifested in the simultaneous implementation of several functions in a particular unit. On the one hand, these functions are stratified by different language and communication subsystems. On the other hand, these functions within one subsystem are able to be summed up in an interdependent set of special,

specialized roles. Simultaneous implementation of several functions can be perceived both as a result of analysis and as an immanent property of the unit.

Russian semiologist Lotman emphasizes the mediative function of the symbol (Lotman, 2001, p. 46). He considers the symbol as one of the elements of the cultural continuum that connects the chronological layers of culture, thus ensuring the continuity of the spiritual tradition: the symbol, being a complete text, may not be a part of a syntagmatic series, and if included, it retains at the same time structural and semantic independence. It is easily separated from the semantic environment and just as easily enters the new text environment. Related to this is its essential feature: the symbol never belongs to any slice of culture – it always permeates the slice vertically, moving from the past to the future. The researcher especially emphasizes the significance of the symbol in the system, which is to some extent isomorphic and isofunctional to the memory of the individual, i.e. highlights the mnemonic function of the symbol (Lotman, 2001, p. 52). Heraldic symbols preserved information about the glorious deeds of the past. Memory was perceived as a shield:

- (4) *So Memorie doth still preserue
eche thing in his degree:
And rendreth unto euey one,
his doughty dignitie.
How needfull then is Memorye
to rule a publicke weale:
In things deuyne & eke prophane:
God graunt it neuer fayle.
Or how can it in any tyme,
be spared in the fielde:
That is so requysite at home,
and strong defending shielde.* (BNC-COHA, p. 486)

The poem says that memory is necessary for the society because it preserves everything and is a strong shield.

Symbols are among the most enduring elements of culture. They are able to store large and significant texts in a condensed form. As an important mechanism of cultural memory, symbols transfer texts, plot schemes and other semiotic formations from one historical period to another.

Penetrating the diachrony of culture, constant sets of symbols largely absorb the function of unity mechanisms: carrying out the memory of culture about themselves, they do not allow it to disintegrate into isolated chronological layers. The unity of the main set of dominant symbols and the duration of their cultural life largely determine the national and areal boundaries of cultures (Archer, 2017; Chandler, 2007). The symbol as a special sign of inference structures the meanings, organizes the chaos of sensory data. Thus, indirectly, through practical goal-setting, symbolic thinking is able to create a new material reality. However, the nature of the symbol considered from this point of view is twofold.

On the one hand, penetrating the thickness of cultures, the symbol is realized in its invariant essence. In this aspect one can observe its recurrence. The symbol will act as something inhomogeneous to the surrounding text space, as a messenger of other cultural epochs, as a reminder of the ancient foundations of culture. On the other hand, the symbol actively correlates with the cultural context, transforms under its influence and transforms it as well. Its invariant essence is realized in variants. It is in those changes to which the 'eternal' meaning of the symbol is subjected in a given cultural context that this context most clearly reveals its variability.

The symbol as a socially conditioned mechanism of cultural memory of nations and families (Meyer, 2020; Shaw, 2020; Shevchenko, 2017) also functions as a mechanism of ordering. It is

specifically true for heraldic symbols, and the verse of Gybson, the 17th century writer, proves that heraldry books were highly appreciated for their providing of methods of study and meanings:

- (5) ... *ARMES*.
Of which the severall Blazonnes, Rankes, & Rites
Now first explain'd by their dewe shades & lights
In perfect METHODE wrought, with praecepts, Lawes
Examples & distinctions, for eache cause,
GWILLI'S elaborate hande, hath with such spright,
Inform'd as every parte hath life & Light. (BNC-COHA, p. 322)

It is a mediator between different areas of semiosis, as well as between semiotic and non-semiotic reality. It is equally a mediator between the synchronicity of the text and the memory of culture. In a symbol, concentration and fluidity of meanings is allocated; the symbol contains potential text functions (Torop, 2019). According to Lotman (2001), the symbol is endowed with the ability to be a mediator between the non-symbolic act of transcendence and the symbolic context.

The symbol is realized as a plurality of interpretations, as an irreversible and predetermined mechanism of signification, and as a thing that creates certain states of consciousness of the recipient (Aslamazishvili, 2007, p. 5).

A number of key functions of symbols include cognitive, informative, adaptive-regulatory, phatic, identification-integrative, information-communicative, and the function of socialization. Within the cognitive function, the symbol shapes concepts and ideas that may have different semantic facets for interpretation. Therefore, the interpretation of the symbol implies the work of the person who perceives it in a certain temporary ideological and world-view context. Relying on their own experience from the native culture and the knowledge of the ethics and aesthetics of other cultures, a person can make the meaning of the symbol from a non-native culture.

In the function of socialization, symbols are designed to be a way of understanding the ideas and values adopted in the culture in which the individual undergoes socialization. In this case, the symbols have certain traditions in the interpretation of their meaning, enshrined in the system of science, religion, philosophy, art, and education. I claim that propaganda and suggestive function belong to the function of socialization. The following poem is dedicated to the Battle of Steenkerque where the Duke of Luxemburgh fought William of Orange. The purpose of the verse is to influence the readers by convincing them of the might of William (his coats of arms contain the English Lion) and of the weakness of the Duke (his blazon contains the lion rampant but the author describes it as *couchant*, in subdued and cowering position):

- (6) *In Belgian Plains whilst th'English Lyon ramps,*
Terror's diffus'd thro' Gallis Forts and Camps
See how his deadly lifted Paw
Keeps couchant Luxemburgh in awe!
At William's mighty Name
A ll France with it's [sic] exalted Idol sh'akes
William's bright and sounding Fame
Like Lightning when from Heaven it breaks
Troubles the great offender's sight. (BNC-COHA, p. 253)

Symbols perform an adaptive-regulatory function: they help the individual to learn and accept as basic the concepts, norms and values of their culture. The symbol is an adaptive mechanism for involving people in certain ways of perceiving and understanding the world. Being a means of adaptation to the world and cultural environment, the symbol sets a model of behavior that would

match the rhythm of social groups' lives and of nature. I claim that, in the broader set of heraldic functions, there is a directive subfunction within adaptive-regulatory function of symbols. For example, the work of Edward Ward shows how common people are given political guidance and how the Mighty Men rule them and their opinions by cheating with heraldry:

- (7) *For Mortals oft by Names are cheated,
And by bifarious Terms outwitted;
As Red and Green, with Men of Art,
In common Coats, are Gules and Vert;
But when the Bearings of a King
Shall fall beneath our blazoning,
If we're in Heraldry ingenious,
Those Colours must be Mars and Venus
Besides, sometimes the World may see
High-Treason blazon'd Loyalty:
And then again, for some new reason,
Loyalty shall be call'd High-Treason:
Therefore Words signify no more
Than what our Betters take 'em for.
Which shows, that mighty Men, as proud
As Heathen Gods, must be allow'd
To cheat, with Names, the common Crowd.* (BNC-COHA, p. 321)

The essence of the identification-integrative function is that symbols serve as a means of uniting people into social groups and communities, as well as a way of identifying individuals. Symbols reveal the social status of individuals, their social ties, and relationships. Heraldic symbols confirm the legitimacy of the person as in a widely known quotation from Shakespeare's "Richard II":

- (8) *From my own windows torn my household coat,
Razed out my imprese, leaving me no sign,
Save men's opinions and my living blood,
To show the world I am a gentleman.* (BNC-COHA, p. 24)

According to the plot of "Richard II", Henry Bolingbroke condemns the deaths of Bush and Green, accusing them of destroying his coat of arms. Damage to the family insignia was considered a great insult, and the code of honor of the then hierarchical society with the principles of inheritance of social status symbols required Bolingbroke to take decisive action against those who dared to mock his identification insignia.

If the recipient is able to recognize the symbol and read it, then the informative-communicative function of the symbol is realized. Symbols are the way of establishing intercultural communication not only between individuals and groups within a single cultural space, but also between different cultures. Symbols have the ability to communicate and express meaningful information. So, Rebecca, watching from the window, describes the coat of arms of the knight during the siege of the castle at the request of Ivanhoe in order to find out if they will get hope for salvation:

- (9) *These appearances she hastily communicated to Ivanhoe, and added, "The skirts of the wood seem lined with archers, although only a few are advanced from its dark shadow". "Under what banner?" asked Ivanhoe. "Under no ensign of war which I can observe", answered Rebecca. "A singular novelty", muttered the knight, "to advance to storm such a castle without pennon or banner displayed!—Seest thou who they be that act as leaders?" "A knight,*

clad in sable armour, is the most conspicuous”, said the Jewess; “he alone is armed from head to heel, and seems to assume the direction of all around him”. “What device does he bear on his shield?” replied Ivanhoe. “Something resembling a bar of iron, and a padlock painted blue on the black shield”. (BNC-COHA, p. 574)

Describing the coat of arms, Rebecca looks closely at what it depicts, not missing any of the components: something resembling an iron ingot, a padlock, painted blue on a black shield, which testified to the steadfastness of the knight-owner of this coat of arms (Fig. 4).

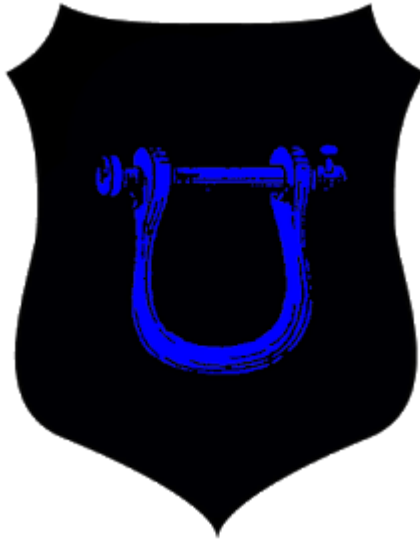


Fig. 4

From the standpoint of communicative pragmatics, it is also important to note that the symbol should not be presented only as a visual sign, picture, and image. All channels connected to the human senses must be used to transmit / perceive symbols. Subject to the use of multimodal imagery, the symbols are realized most fully. I claim that a kind of synesthesia effect is present in the description of the Irish coat of arms (Fig. 5):

(10) *The standard of the United Irishmen was now hoisted. It displayed a gilded harp formed on a banner of green silk, surrounded with the mottoes of “Erin-go-bragh”, and “Liberty and Equality”. In martial music the insurgents at Larne were deficient; for they had only one drum and one fife; but these animated their spirits with the sounds of national airs, and they had just begun their march to the tune of “The Volunteer’s Quick Step”. (BNC-COHA, p. 127)*

In this case, the meaning is construed multimodally (see Shevchenko, 2019) through the interaction of text (the mottos “*Long live Ireland*” and “*Freedom and Equality*”), graphics (image of a gilded harp) and audio associations (marching music that accompanied the raising of the flag with the Irish coat of arms, with its tune of the national song encouraged the fighting spirit).



Fig. 5

Averintsev (2001, p. 89) points to the existence of the communicative-pragmatic function of the symbol, the function of ‘binding’, the connection of people as the members of society. From the myth the symbol inherited its communicative functions. The symbol retains a single, unifying nature; connecting object and content, it also ‘connects’ people who have accepted this content. That’s why we definitely have to mention a phatic function which can be observed in blazons verbalized in compliments:

- (11) *And art thou born, brave babe? Blessed be thy birth!
That so hath crowned our hopes, our spring, and earth,
The bed of the chaste lily, and the rose!* (BNC-COHA, p. 267)

In example (11), Ben Jonson describes the birth of the royal baby Charles and his reference to the lily pays a particular compliment to the French queen.

The epithalamia of Francis Lenton records the shields of the families united due to the marriage and underlines their nobility, high virtues and merits thus verbalizing the phatic function of compliments in blazons:

- (12) *The auntient Name of Banister doth beare,
Argent on a Crosse flurrey sable, there
proper and plaine which is accounted best,
And Jun’s Bird (the Peacock) is their Crest
Braue Lewys sable beareth, to be seene
The Lyon Rampant Argent sett betweene
Three silver flower de luces of the same,
which shewes that Family of auntient Fame.
The Coat with which He quarters owne the Name
of William and soe vnited were,
In Loue in Honor
Armes Lewys the Best
The Lyon rampant Argent being his Crest.
The Lyon thus with all his Maiesty
Joynes with the Peacock in Rich Brauery,
Of Mynd and Body, And soe both vnite,
In youthfull Flames & Loues most chast Delight.* (BNC-COHA, p. 24)

Following Kretov (2000), I consider the constructive function of symbol and symbolism for cultural formation, the constitutive role of symbolism for specifically human mechanisms of fixation and broadcasting of sociocultural information in the space of culture, value and worldview tint of the notion of symbol, communicative-dialogical nature of symbol in culture space, symbol and symbolism orientation towards creative activity, the transformation of reality, the philosophical understanding and dialectic (p. 119).

Symbol is a special communication model that integrates individual types of consciousness into a single semantic space of culture. The dialogic nature of the symbol performs individualizing and differentiating functions, which we propose to include in the identification-integrative function as a subfunction.

It should be added that verbal design is crucial for the fullest realization of the meaning-generating function of the symbol. But the symbol is also seen as a special powerful tool, a tool of social management, tested by millennial experience, based on the fact that symbols fill a person's daily life, remind them of something, influence them, allow and forbid, impress and subdue, thus performing an imperative function. Undoubtedly, the symbol as a multifunctional category, is, among other things, a means of identifying and cognition of the surrounding reality, representation of social groups, constructing human behavior, performing certain functions of social cohesion or dysfunction, as well as representative, ideological (including educational), advocacy functions, which can be included in the imperative function. For instance, Americans are proud of their national flag (Fig. 6), which is expressed through the adjectives-attributes 'big', 'beautiful', 'silk' and an exclamation mark, which emphasizes the sublime emotional state:

(13) *It was a red, white and blue, star-spangled banner... a large, marvelously silky one!* (BNC-COHA, p. 57).



Fig. 6

Heraldic symbolism is an essential part of the communicative space of culture, a way of embodying values and meanings of culture in the minds of the bearers of culture. The symbol, being a sphere of functioning of unconscious, suggestive-emotional influence on the person, is capable to embody those values which have not yet become a subject of logically differentiated rational knowledge. Possessing emotional suggestibility, concentrating the idea of meanings and values in itself, the symbol performs a socio-organizing function, influencing the mass movements and actions of people to some extent. By evoking emotions, the symbols emphasize the significance of the event and thus enrich the consciousness.

Being one of the mechanisms of formation and functioning of the axiological sphere, the symbol also becomes the basis for the formation and differentiation of aesthetic values. Heraldic symbols as significant components of the aesthetic whole, for example, in various artistic texts, acquire aesthetic functions. Karmadonov (1998, p. 37) insists that each symbolic unit has a

significant aesthetic potential, and also implements the epistemological function. The symbol is not just an ontological essence, but also a universal way of artistic cognition of reality.

Emblems and elements of coats of arms perform the following communicative and pragmatic functions: representative (nominative, distinctive, identification), coding, attractive, aesthetic (decorative) and socio-cultural. Let's consider these functions in the separate text fragments.

Blazons involved in the novel by W. Scott include such figures as hogs and swine:

- (14) *Then turning on his saddle, he called out to thouse around him, “Gentlemen of France, form your line, level your lances! Let the rising sunbeams shine through the battalions of yonder swine of Liege and hogs of Ardennes, that masquerade in our ancient coats”.* (QD, p. 556)

Marked blazons from the pragmatic point of view perform simultaneously representative, decorative and coding functions, because in this fragment of the novel coats of arms, decorated with pigs and hogs, represent warriors belonging to the territories of Liege and Ardennes, whose symbols are these animals, making them easy to distinguish for a herald or a noble person.

The blazon also performs a representative / identification function. For example, a noble knight Dunois, using heraldic language, identifies himself as a Frenchman who will never be subjugated and will not add his enemy's heraldic figure to his coat of arms:

- (15) *“Enough, enough”, said Dunois, “my bar sinister may never be surmounted by the coronet of Croye – I will live and die French”.* (QD, p. 537)

The coats of arms in example (15) convey the idea of belonging to the family, the significance (nobility) of the origin of the owner. In the epoch of complete illiteracy, the use of coats of arms to denote their identity and legitimate their property becomes the only way for many people to prove their names and rights. This is an identification function, because a blazon as a distinctive sign was clear to everyone at the time when coats of arms became widespread. The connection between the coat of arms and the name, i.e. the nominative function, is illustrated in the following verse of the 17th century:

- (16) *What doe these cutting sutes portend but shame,
ensigns to bawdie tauerne boulsteres,
the stayned map of a loose gouerned name.* (BNC-COHA, p. 151)

In example (16), the author condemns such cases when tailors demanded that they be given the same coats of arms as their clients, wealthy lords. Heraldic symbols were compared to a map that identified a name and helped outline social status. Thus, in the given verse the heraldic symbol is considered as a synonym of the name of its owner, and is identified with self-determination of the person. The conscious use of heraldic language to express personality is present in the poem by George Daniel “Emblem and Portrait”, which is placed next to the portrait and the coat of arms of the author in the manuscript of the 17th century. The first line indicates that George Daniel viewed the portrait as his shadow, which in turn was overshadowed by his coat of arms:

- (17) *This shadow, overshadowed, is a Tipe
Of my full Selfe; if you (who see't) are ripe
To Judge of Art, behold: a twofold grace
In one small Draught; my Fortune and my Face.* (BNC-COHA, pp.1-4)

Daniel describes his coat of arms as a metonymic connection to his personality and speaks of his inherited affiliation, “Fortune”, and his physical shell, “Face”, represented by a portrait. The tension of the fiction narrative is caused by the contradiction between the objective identification of the

author in the coat of arms and the subjective one in the portrait, which gives rise to the reflections on the possibility of self-knowledge.

Henry Gooder's panegyric poem "Lord Chancellor" confirms the property of coats of arms to identify the identity of their owners:

- (18) *The North and Southerne Poles the two fix'd Starres
Of worth and dignitie, which all just warres,
Should still maintaine, together: be here met
And in your selfe as in your Scutchion set.* (BNC-COHA, pp. 1-4)

So, the coat of arms of the Lord Chancellor represents two five-pointed stars and a crescent moon, which symbolize his dignity and virtues (Fig. 7 and 8).



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

An important function inherent in heraldic symbolism is coding. Along with the ability to be informatively open and meaningful, heraldic vocabulary has the ability to make the same information hidden so that the uninitiated cannot decode it – the verbal and nonverbal signs available in the coat of arms were mastered by a limited number of people. In addition, the heraldic language is full of borrowings, which also contribute to the implementation of the coding function. It is not easy to trace the internal form of a word in the borrowings, so the function of the borrowings is to hide a secret, as well as increase the complexity and prestige of heraldry.

In the English language, there are many units that present difficulties of decoding even for native speakers. The language subsystems of professional communication, including the language of heraldry, which consists mainly of borrowings, are especially saturated with such signs. A borrowed sign becomes arbitrary, its internal form can not be read, so the function of borrowing is to keep secret.

For example, Fleur-de-lis (Fig. 9) is the main floral symbol in English heraldry. The name of the element is borrowed from French and means a lily flower, although there is a variant of the 'folk' etymology 'Louis' flower'. In this heraldic lexeme there is an additional shade of meaning – 'royal flower':

- (19) *They passing by, were guyded by degree
Vnto the presence of that gracious Queene:
Who sate on high, that she might all men see,
And might of all men royally be seene:*

*Vpon a throne of gold full bright and sheene,
Adorned all with gemmes of endlesse price,
As either might for wealth haue gotten bene,
Or could be fram'd by workmans rare deuice;
And all embost with Lyons and with Flourdelyce. (BNC-COHA, p. 146)*



Fig. 9

The coding function is realized in the so-called punning or cunting arms (from the French ‘*armes parlantes*’), which were very popular in the Middle Ages, and which contain puzzles, namely, heraldic figures that hint at the name (rarely a sign) of its owner. For example, the Quatremayne family from Oxfordshire had a coat of arms (Fig. 10):

(20) *Gules a fess between four dexter hands couped argent.* (Wade, 1989, p. 39)

The family name Quatremayne encodes the phrase quatre mains – from French ‘*four hands*’.



Fig. 10

The shield of the knight Persanta (Blue Knight) of indigo color hints at his origin from India:

- (21) *“Lo!” seyde she, “syeste thou yondir pavylyon that is all the coloure of inde?” And all manner of thyng that there is aboute, men and women and horsis, trapped shyldis and sperys, was all of the coloure of inde. And his name is sir Parsaunte of Inde, the most lordlyest knyght that ever thou lokyd on. (WSTM, p. 228)*

The coding function is inherent in allusive coats of arms, depicting the circumstances under which a person received their coat of arms. Allusive coats of arms can refer to legends, myths, facts from the life of the owner of the coat of arms. These coats of arms certainly contain a symbolic meaning and convey a certain message, acting as an important means of communication. In fiction they are an active component of the plot, sometimes deciding the fate of the characters. In the Middle English work “The Death of Arthur”, fairy Morgana creates a shield that depicts the adulter of Queen Guinevere, in order to inform King Arthur about it and sends the knight Tristram with this shield to the tournament, where the king and queen were to be present:

- (22) *“Madame,”seyde sir Trystram, “let me se the shyld that I shall bear”. Than the shyld was brought forth, and the fylde was gouldes with a kynge and a quene therein paynted, and a knyght stondynge aboven them with hys one foote standynge uppon the kynges hede and the othir uppon the quenys hede. “Madame,” seyde sir Tristram, “thys is a fayre shyld and a myghty, but what signyfyeth this kynge and this quene and that knyght stondynge uppon bothe their hedis?” “I shall tell you,”sayde Morgan le Fay. “Hit signyfieth kynge Arthure and quene Gwenyver, and a knyght that holdith them bothe in bondage and in servage”....dame Morgan ordayned that shyld to put sir Launcelot to a rebuke, to that entente, that kynge Arthure myght undirstonde the love betwene them. So sir Trystram toke that shyld and promysed hir to beare hit at the turnemente of the castell of Harde Rooche. But sir Trystram knew nat of that shyld that hit was ordayned ayenste sir Launcelot, but affirwarde he knew hit. (WSTM, p. 554)*

One can assume that fairy Morgan did not accidentally choose Sir Tristram to present his shield, as this shield can be correlated with his personal love story with Isolde and the conflict with her husband, his uncle, King Mark.

Thus, the coding function is expressed in allusive and punning coats of arms or by borrowings.

4. Conclusions

This study has demonstrated that, in various modeling systems of culture (ritual, language, myth, religion, art, etc.), symbols perform multiple functions, among them cognitive, nominative, mediative, mnemonic, epistemological and ontological, adaptive-regulatory, identificative, imperative, therapeutic and protective, aesthetic, and the function of socialization.

The heraldic symbol under analysis is functionally conditioned, i.e. it possesses a differentiating ability, communicativeness, the ability to be easily remembered. Thus, I claim that the coat of arms is a cultural and socio-historical phenomenon that cumulates information about the person, their ancestry, legal status, possessions, religion and beliefs, and plays a huge role in various spheres of socio-cultural life.

In the heraldic tradition, consideration of the symbol as a multifunctional phenomenon expands and enriches the knowledge of culture as endowed with unique abilities, infinite polysemantism and potential ways of development. The broader implications of this study lie in the areas of pragmatics, discourse analysis, and semiotic mechanisms of information storage and transmission across generations. Additionally, I hope further analysis will facilitate a deeper understanding of heraldic symbols for undergraduate and postgraduate students of English as a second language.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND SOURCES FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

- BNC-COHA – British National Corpus, Early English Books Online, Corpus of Contemporary American English, Corpus of Historical American English. Retrieved from <http://corpus.byu.edu>
- QD – Scott, W. (1962). *Quentin Durward*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House.
- BD – Carter, P. (1986). *Bury the dead*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- GT – Martin, G. (2000). *A game of thrones*. Charleston: BiblioBazaar, LLC.
- SLR – Hawthorn, N. (1850). *The Scarlet Letter: A Romance*. Retrieved from <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/25344/25344-h/25344-h.htm>
- WSTM – Malory, T. (1967). *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory*. (E. Vinaver, Ed.). Oxford: Clarendon Press.

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