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CONFRONTATION AND MUTUAL REFLECTION OF TWO WORLDS IN “THE GRASS DANCER” BY SUSAN POWER

Під час вивчення творів письменників корінного походження, важливий пласт дослідження становлять критичні студії, які направлені на стратегії створення властиво індіанської літературознавчої теорії і практики. Маємо прагнення відокремити корінну традицію від широкої американської, зокрема, англо-американської, з іншого – визнати індіанське письменство складовою мультикультурної парадигми. Наразі існує помітне протистояння між двома таборами літературознавців – одні з них більше орієнтовані на європейські літературознавчі теорії й вважають, що саме вони мають лягти в основу літературних інтерпретацій творів корінних письменників. Інше крило визначається потребою з'ясувати особливості літературної парадигми «індіанського реалізму» у контексті глобалізованого суспільства з урахуванням нових літературознавчих моделей рецепції етнічних меншин. Необхідність написання статті спричинена відсутністю в українському літературознавстві комплексного розуміння проблеми та зростанням об'єктивного інтересу до творчості індіанських письменників, зокрема Сюзан Паувер. У статті запропоновано концептуальну та методологічну визначеність дослідження літературного тексту, написаного у стилі індіанського реалізму, що дає змогу розкрити порушену наукову проблему на багатьох рівнях. Основна мета дослідження – окреслити послідовну теоретичну та емпіричну модель багаторівневого функціонування концепції національної ідентичності Дакоти в романі Сюзан Паувер «Танцівник по траві». Також метою є обґрунтування провідної концепції інтерпретації літературних проявів національної ідентичності Сіу як унікального коду, епістемологічного, соціокультурного та художньо-естетичного чинника, що відіграє значну роль у процесі формування сучасного світогляду та міфотворчості представників суспільства Дакота.

У статті використовуються історико-культурний і структурний підходи, які відповідають меті і завданням дослідження; також були використані *методи* культурно-семантичного аналізу і феноменологічні методи.

У статті розглянуто як у тексті роману Сюзан Паувер «Танцівник по траві» художньо переломилася драма втрати, пошуку і нового набуття народом Сіу національної ідентичності. Постановка і розгляд проблеми національної, культурної ідентичності, художньо-естетично відображеної в романі «Танцівник по траві», передбачає можливість побачити розмаїття художньої інтерпретації особистої долі людини і народу загалом, літературознавчих уявлень про особливості вірувань народу Сіу, їх естетичної складові та місце у американському культурному каноні, але й уникнути пастки ідеологізації теорії мультикультуралізму, у якій критики вбачають можливість для інтерпретації текстів корінних письменників, яка прихована за політкоректністю та ідеологією колоніального домінування.

Ключові слова: Корінні народи Північної Америки, індіанський реалізм, магичний реалізм, дакота, індіанці, літературний процес, хейока.

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The paradox of North American heterogeneity is in the presence of marginalized population groups which clearly outlines the specifics of society, reorienting it to a particular syncretic paradigm. Transcultural processes of synthesis and at the same time fragmentation demonstrate the uniqueness of this culture as a whole.

Applying the strategies of postcolonial analysis, researchers often use the concept of “native” – a colonized subject that manifests polylogism embedded in a multicultural system. In a multicultural country, there are acute boundary situations provoked by the relations between the ethnic groups forming its population (immigrants from other continents and aborigines). At this level, the fact that there is a traditional oral-written Native American cultural hybridity helps to identify Indigenous culture relation to white one. This idea is able to express the cultural traditions of the Native American in a foreign language – English – in the new artistic forms. Such binary oppositions form the basis of the confrontation between autochthonous and non-autochthonous cultures. At the same time, the concepts of “mixed” culture are targeted by transculturalists’ theories of hybridity and syncretism. In particular, according to L. Marakl, the image of the bridge implies transcultural harmony: not the capture of one culture by another, but mutual exchange between them. In the same way, in his “third space”, H. Bhabha recognizes the necessity of the existence of a sphere that does not concern the “colonizer/colonized”, but is a place of intercultural communication.

Ideas of hybridity demonstrate not only the way colonization transformed indigenous cultures, but also that they adapted their traditions to new conditions of existence, becoming central to the understanding of Indigenous literature, their continuation in a new type of mediality fits into the context of postcolonial practices. The North American postcolonial model positions the literature of Native American authors in “transconnections” with their own histories and cultures, and the problems of ethnicity are considered in it at the linguistic, discursive, narratological and, above all, identity levels.

From this point of view, the revision of traditional canon-making codes is a relevant projection of national identity research. *The purpose* of this research is to investigate the evolution of the Indigenous identity formation, to make an attempt to evaluate the empirical and theoretical-methodological potential of the identity search in the context of “The Grass Dancer” analysis, as well as the national identity functioning in Susan Power’s text at the level of a sign, metaphor, allegory, symbol, which is done through the applied method close reading. The methodological base chosen for this article involves historical-cultural, structural approaches, corresponding to the purpose and tasks of the research; *methods* of cultural-semantic analysis and phenomenological methods.

The study of Native American experience and cultural heritage is relevant and innovative for modern humanitarian studies. Firstly, their tradition embodies a different type of worldview compared to the European one. It reveals a different aesthetic, a different vision of history, a different relationships’ vision between people and other communicative codes. Secondly, the introduction of the discourse of the Other provokes the denial of the Western monopoly of the European epistemological tradition. The privileged place of the Western worldview, the exaltation of European values, the unification of the Western system of knowledge as universal, the treatment of representatives of non-European civilizations as inferior, subordinate Others (strangers) caused the ethnic crisis of the 20th century. Philosophical thought explains the main essence of this crisis as “a reevaluation of values and a rearrangement of the components of its spiritual core”. According to philosophers, in the conditions of the intensification of globalization processes, the informatization of the world society, such phenomena as globalization, multiculturalism, intercultural communication acquire a different character, they must be analyzed through the prism of such an important principle for intercultural interaction as tolerance.

Nowadays, due to the involvement of the voices of those who were forced to remain silent and mute for a long time, we have the processes of building a new type of society based on tolerance and dialogic traditions. A distorted dialogue between Indigenous nations and ethnic groups, which for a long time was burdened with stereotypical ideas about the Other, is gradually being established. As Habermas notes, the success of a communicative act depends on the readiness of the dialogue participants to play the role of both speaker and listener.

Immersion in the vision perspective of the Other is the key to an effective “fusion of horizons” [Borradori, 2003, p. 36]. The formation of individual and collective identities for members of each Indigenous community is based upon cultural and semantic codes. H. Murray, E. Erikson, A. Maslow, E. Fromm, E. Smith emphasized personal need to belong to a social group, to feel part of it and to realize unity with its representatives. This need is expressed in learning of the desired group behavioral code. It contains the “DNA” of the community, the assimilation of which helps in the community process identification. B. Burke writes that there is no such phenomenon as “authenticity of views in the Native American literature, because of this there are no units of authenticity measurement. “Traditional American Indian communities do not conceive of ‘religious knowledge’ apart from its complex relations with other domains, including economics and politics” [Burke, 2011, p. 6]. There is no knowledge other than what is lived out, and there is no living out that is not political and historical. Because religious views are fundamentally embedded in traditional life, reading an author’s work often becomes a matter of measuring how embedded a writer is in his/her own tribal belief system.

Many modern critics are tempted to analyze Susan Power’s “The Grass Dancer” as a magical realism work. According to the widespread literary tradition, works dealing with the connection between the earthly and spiritual worlds are analyzed within the framework of the magical realism theory. The very term of “magical realism”, according to Rawdon Wilson, the author of the fundamental study “Magical Realism: Theory, History, Society”, is used to study almost any literary text where there is even the slightest hint of binary opposition or contradiction is present. In addition, it is widely used as a historical-geographical term in cases where the text has some hidden meanings [Wilson, 1996, p. 223]. Such texts “traces the combination of fantastic storylines with real collisions, when in the everyday layer of the text magical stories are interspersed, naturalistic and real intersects with the mysterious and imaginary, civilizational intertwined with the barbaric, the rational with the sensual. These opposite aesthetic principles in magical realism harmoniously coexist, which distinguishes this option with nuances chronotope from other modernist directions and currents. Lois Zamora and Wendy Feris emphasize that the term realism “emphasizes its version of the world as the only possible objective, universal representation of the natural and social environment. <...> Therefore, realism functions as an ideological hegemony” [Zamora, 1995, p. 3]. A writer in magical realism is able to cast spells on the environment, change it and improve it by discovering non-materialistic dimensions. In the works of magical realism, time presented subjectively, the space is concrete around the hero, however, it does not correlate with the real historical and geographical topos. A hero in this “magical” time and space refuses his own adequate conformity to the community, from the psychological motivation of their actions. It is revealed in the works irrational laws of existence in their vitality and modern realities of technology.

Literary works to a certain extent have the role of “retransmitter” of the society’s dominant ideology. That is why Susan Power, the author of the resonant “The Grass Dancer”, worriedly comments: “I know that it’s something beyond my control; what a reader makes of my work is beyond my control. I’m just always amazed people read my work. It’s just always kind of a little dull to me and I think, ‘Oh, this seems pretty obvious’. It’s a world that I’m so familiar with that it doesn’t seem all that interesting. Once I’ve figured out the story it’s like” [Oslos, 2000]. The novel tells about views and approaches to the world structure that are completely new to the Western worldview, it is absolutely new characteristics of the North American traditional community. One of the reviewers of the novel draws attention to the fact that “Power uses the influence of deceased elders to tell the stories of those ancestor’s lives through dreams, their stories help teach the descendants who experience those dreams how to live their lives. Power allows her writing to shift freely through each chapter, using a different first or third person voice to tell the story. Power brings the reader in touch with a world that may have previously been foreign to them. Power makes it very easy for ‘outsiders’ to understand the lifestyles of the Native American. However, it may be difficult for those without much previous knowledge of Native American culture to see how important the connection to dreams, magic and family really are to the native people” [Carlson, Dedinsky, Duesterhoeft, Oslos, 2009].

Vanessa Diana sees the source of the potential non-perception by the Western reader of the novel “The Grass Dancer” of the starting points on which the author builds her story. “Power’s

novel demands of readers that they think critically about what they define as the real. The thorny question of realism is an additional subject of debate among scholars of Native American literature: how do we classify Native fiction that challenges Western concepts of the real?" [Diana, 2009, p. 6]. The author of the novel clearly expressed her demands on the readers and her disagreement with attempts to classify her novel as magical realism. "The one thing that people mentioned over and over, although I actually do disagree with this, is they talk about how my work is an example of magical realism and making references to writers such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez. I really feel that given the culture I was raised in, this is not magical realism, this is actual reality to me. It might not be another culture's reality but it is not a literary strategy for me. I'm really writing character's reality. It never offends me when critics characterize it that way because I understand where that's coming from. It's their cultural interpretation. But I think it's a mislabeling so whenever I get the chance to talk about it I always mention that. But it's not something that upsets me" [Oslos, 2000].

Kim Hyung-Hee reacts to the writer's statement quite categorically. Despite the fact that "Power rejects the categorization of his novel as a phenomenon of magical realism, literary critics have no alternative and can not find another place for this novel in literary theory" [Hyung-Hee, 2014, p. 72]. Actually there is simply no other theoretical base that would be the basis for the similar literary phenomena interpretation. Instead, the literary critic Lee Schweninger proves why magical realism is not quite a suitable definition for the works of most indigenous authors. From a purely Western point of view, the label magical realism tends to devalue what is called magical... It is widely recognized that the theory of magical realism does offer ways of interpreting Power's novel. The concept lies in the realm of the dichotomy between "magical" and "real", and it is this division that Power resists in her novel. The use of the terms magical and realism is extremely problematic in relation to the text of the novel. Despite all the differentiation of categories, the basic semantics remains unchanged: reality is opposed to the magical, reality is opposed to what does not exist.

Lee Schweninger proves that in the text of "The Grass Dancer" Power seeks to juxtapose the mainstream Western European and indigenous positions about the ways of knowing, creating stories, on history in general. In doing so, she refuses to assimilate her vision or give any preference to mainstream epistemology. "As Power herself has said, having grown up between two cultures (her mother is of Dakotan descent and her father of Western, non-Indian), she moves easily between the two, and accepts the validity of both. Power recognizes and details realities that might seem to counter the experiences of uninitiated or unprepared Western readers" [Schweninger, 2004, p. 53]. The literary scholar agrees with the thesis that examining the novel through the prism of magical realism will certainly make life easier for the critic, but the approach to it due to the involvement of a completely non-indigenous philosophy leads to the risk of completely losing the "Indianness" of this prose (this concerns not only the works of Power, but also of all other indigenous writers).

Susan Power enables the reader to "put aside" their mainstream worldview, to which most of them are so accustomed in everyday life, to see the surrounding world from a completely different point of view. On the pages of the novel, space technologies and ancient customs of Dakota live simultaneously, they do not contradict each other, they may even intersect at some point. The only question is whether modern man is able to see how ancient wisdom and modernity coexist in human life. One of the first researchers of the Indigenous literature, Richard Fleck, says that these two worlds are so closely intertwined that we have the opportunity to see from a completely new perspective what is real or unreal. "The eternal mythological presence constantly breaks into modern life" [Fleck, 1989, p. 4].

A prime example is five-year-old Harley Wind Warrior watching the astronauts land on the surface of the moon on TV. Aunt Evie tries to convince everyone present of the event's importance, which will undoubtedly go down in history, but she does not notice that this is the last minutes of her mother's earthly life. The woman, responding to the remark that this is a historical moment, said that all moments of life will one day belong to history. The approach of Margaret Many Wounds' death is marked by a water rush that gradually fills her room. Like many other peoples of the world, the Dakota believe that the world of the living is separated from the world of the dead by water. Before leaving, Margaret explains to her grandson the difference between physical and spiritual components of objects and phenomena of the universe.

“Harvey alone remained behind to entertain his grandmother. He saw there were two moons in the world: one on television and one in the sky outside his grandmother’s window. ‘Two moons’, he told Margaret, curling thumb and forefinger into the telescope he peeked through. ‘More than that’, Margaret told him, ‘many, many more. For every person who can see it, there’s another one’ <...> ‘That way everyone has a moon of their own’. Harley extended his arm so his hand neatly blotted the moon outside the window. <...> ‘Tokoja, come here. I will show you the moon’. Harley turned away from the window and stood beside Margaret’s bed. She told him to close his eyes and pretend. She would pretend right along with him. He felt the moon entered the back of his head. It merged with bone and popped his ears. He felt an expansion, then adjustment. Harley stood before his grandmother with the moon in his skull, eyes pouring cool light onto her quilt-covered body. Stellar wind rushed through the passage of his ears, wave upon wave like the undulating roar of a conch shell. Harley could read his grandmother’s lips but couldn’t hear her. She was saying, ‘That is the moon. That is the way into the moon’. He shook his head because he didn’t understand. So she pointed to the television screen, where the men walked in a floating manner that was both heavy and light. ‘They can walk on the surface’, Margaret mouthed” [Power, 1995, p. 115–116].

Perhaps thanks to her grandmother’s encouragement, Harley was able to see her spirit after her physical departure. As Margaret explained to her first husband, Charles Bad Holy MacLeod, who met her on the border between the physical and spiritual worlds, she “left home a little early” to have time for creating her own charms. The woman decided to show her own children that the human spirit is immortal and all-powerful. Margaret goes to dance on the moon. It was this dance that Harley saw on the TV screen, watching the first steps of man on the lunar surface.

“As he listened, the voices of Walter Cronkite, the astronauts, and control in Houston were sucked away. He heard the Sioux Flag Song pounding from the black vent on the television set, but when Harley checked over his shoulder, he saw that no one else seemed to notice. Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin were facing the camera, and Harley smiled because they reminded him of two white turtles standing upright. Armstrong was using an aluminum scoop fitted into an extension handle to collect samples of rock without bending over. Aldrin was using a set of tongs to pick up larger pieces. Somewhere inside the music Harley heard a familiar voice calling, ‘Takaja’. Harley was no longer lonely or invisible on the chair. He saw his grandmother’s figure emerging on the screen, dancing toward him from the far horizon behind the astronauts. He recognized her weaving dance as Sioux powwow step, but her beautiful blue-beaded dress was unfamiliar to him. He said to himself, *Grandma is young*. But then she smiled at him and the smile was old. Her hair was black and her hair was white. Her progress was steady, and she didn’t bounce like the man in space suits. He waited for Armstrong and Aldrin to see her, but they must have seen only ground. Finally she came upon them, and Harley caught his breath because Margaret danced through Neil Armstrong. The astronaut never ceased digging in the ground, leaving footprints like heavy tank treads, but his oxygen system quivered a little as she passed” [Power, 1995, p. 120–121].

The writer emphasized the ordinariness of the unusual, juxtaposing the first steps of man on the moon and the departure of man to another world. “Takoja, she called with her spirit. Look at me, look at the magic. There is still magic in the world. Margaret danced beyond the astronauts and their stiff metal flag. She kept moving forward until she came to the beginning of her trail, mired in the gritty Lake of Dreams. She raised a foot and found Wanagi Tacanku, the Spirit Road, rippling beneath her feet. She set off, no longer dancing, walking briskly toward the council fire, five steps beyond the edge of the universe” [Power, 1995, p. 121–122].

The relationship between time and space is structured in the novel, which directly forces the reader to turn to the category of memory, which functions in the text as “Ariadne’s thread”. The memory of the past gives meaning to the present and explains the structure of the universe from the perspective of the Dakota (Sioux) people. What the white reader perceives as a manifestation of magic and seeks to explain with the help of literary technology, such as magical realism, for modern Dakotas, as for their predecessors, seems simply to reveal ancient religious beliefs in life, a kind of confirmation of the truth of the ways of their ancestors. Such a “connection” to the meta-memory of the ancestors allows Harley to witness the events of the distant past, namely the moment, thanks to which Christianity was accepted in the Sioux lands.

“Harley Wind Soldier squinted at the Missouri, his eyes nearly closed. Within that strained vision he could see the figures emerge, stepping from the past to line the present river. His ancestors in their smooth buckskins streamed by him in a dignified parade. They were followed by their children and cavorting dogs, the whole village turning out to watch the eventful passage. A ripple went through the crowd, which pulsed forward for a better view. Harley was the last to see it, gliding toward him. The flat-bottomed streamer rolled across the water, spun forward by its great wheel. The boy searched the deck, and there it was, an elegant upright piano inlaid with mother-of-pearl. The pedals glinted in the sun, and the ivory keys were arranged in such perfect symmetry that Harley was reminded of the spine of a fish. A young man in a bowler hat seated himself at the instrument and pumped the pedals as if to test them. His fingers drifted to the keys, and then the young man teased music from the wood-and-ivory table, his eyes closed and torso rocking: so intent on his performance he didn’t notice the dense crowd along the shore and never guessed that he was ushering in a new religion” [Power, 1995, p. 70–71].

In an interview with Shari Oslos, Susan Power admits that in her youth she knew the complete text of “Romeo and Juliet” by heart. “The Grass Dancer” has its own images of eternal love, which have a lot in common with Shakespeare’s characters [Oslos, 2000]. It is the sacred clown of the Dakota tribe Ghost Horse and the warrior woman Red Dress. Called to fulfill their duties to the tribe and thus separated for life, they become husband and wife after the death of Red Dress.

“I was raised to believe that discipline and self-control were signs-control, were signs of maturity, necessitating the suppression of individual desires. My feelings swept over me now; I was in a womb of my affections. Music penetrated the fluid and my wandering soul, a piercing sweetness from our Dakota courting flute. It was a tune composed by Ghost Horse, the thunder dreamer, a melody he played when carried water from the river or collected wood for kindling. <...> My spirit throbbed in anger. Ghost Horse and I were victims of utter faith, I realized. We were Job, lonely and afflicted. Chosen” [Power, 1995, p. 277].

The motif of Orpheus and Eurydice is not something new for the Western reader, so the appeal to this mythopoeic situation is, at first glance, not something exceptional. Susan Power does not seek to adhere to the traditional scheme with the return of the beloved from the chthonic space; instead, she offers another one, which is based on the spiritual tradition of the Dakota. “Ghost Horse did not bury me in the ground or build a scaffold, but settled me in a branch near the crown of a majestic burr oak tree. I was cradled by its spreading branches, rocked in its stout arms. My husband stood beside me in the tree and looked in every direction. He ate the fruit of a dried plum, and when its meat gone, he very gently placed the pit in my mouth. It was the most intimate gesture that ever passed between us” [Power, 1995, p. 279].

According to Dakota belief, the soul of a loved one can be held on earth for a certain period of time if one of the living loves it dearly and does not want to let it go, so that it may travel the Wanaga Takanka, the Spirit Path to the Hearth of the Ancestors, as Margaret of Many Wounds did. In the posthumous fate of the Red Dress, this role was played by Ghost Horse.

“Ghost Horse kept my spirit for one year, the most onerous form of grief. His younger brother, Wind Soldier, agreed to help him, and together they prepared my spirit lodge and collected goods to be distributed at the culmination feast. But when the year had passed and the village assembled for my spirit release ceremony, it was unsuccessful. Ghost Horse did what was expected of him, said the words, and gave away his last possessions, but he did not loose me from this earth. His heart was a stone room without doors” [Power, 1995, p. 280].

Lovers are given to experience another separation, this time – eternal. As the Red Dress explains: “My husband sought death on the battlefield, and it wasn’t long before a bold Arikara complied. I did my best to deflect the arrows, pushed the air with both hands to send them swerving harmlessly away” [Power, 1995, p. 280–281]. The Red Dress hoped for a long-awaited meeting with her beloved one, but instead she met loneliness, “there was no one living to capture his spirit as he had captured mine” [Power, 1995, p. 280].

Particular attention should be paid to the image of Ghost Horse, who bears the burden of spiritual duty to his own people, as he was the Dakota sacred heyoka clown who received the visions from storm creatures. This is a very productive image for the North American Great Plains culture. Many Indigenous nations have a common practice of seeking visions, during which

contact with representatives of the “spirit world” is established. Such spiritual creatures become guardian spirits throughout a person’s life and help him or her to find personal purpose in the world [Nelson, 1998]. Heyo’ka (haunted in translation from the Lakota language) are those to whom the spirits of storm and thunder (Wakinyan) have appeared. The vision endows a person (usually a male person, although there may be exceptions) with great power, but at the same time such a person must be afraid of thunder and lightning that will strike him if he does not perform his calling well. When a heyo’ka does not fulfill his duties at all, lightning and thunder will destroy his entire family, for representatives of Indigenous peoples this is the most terrible punishment in the world. The holy clown performed heyo’ka rituals for his settlement, was the herald of storm creatures, clowned around, did everything inside out, causing people to laugh [DeMallie, 1984]. When a Lakota became a hey’oka, a dog-cooking ceremony had to be performed, which had to be killed quickly and without leaving a trace, as lightning kills. Pieces of the cooked animal were first offered to storm creatures, according to the belief of the Lakota, they lived in the west, and then to other spirits of sacred directions. After that, the whole community was fed, this food brought blessings.

Black Elk tells about the great Heyo’ka of Lakota “I heard many wonderful things about the Wanekia that these men had seen and heard, and they were good men. He could make animals talk, and once while they were with him he made a spirit vision, and they all saw it. They saw a big water, and beyond it was a beautiful green land where all the Indians that had ever lived and the bison and the other animals were all coming home together. Then the Wanekia, they said, made the vision go out, because it was not yet time for this to happen. After another winter it would happen, when the grasses were appearing” [Neihardt, 1959, p. 163].

The concept of the sacred clown-heyo’ka was first presented to the European public in 1932, after the publication of the book “Black Elk Speaks” by J. Neihardt. The holy man of the Lakota people spoke about the sacred rituals and traditions of his people. Black Elk explains the purpose of the heyo’ka rituals. It’s the other way around, because you need people to feel joy first, then the power can reach them more easily [Neihardt, 1959, p. 159]. The revelation that the heyo’ka has to give is easier for people to accept when they are having fun. Everything happens in a mirror sequence compared to the thunderstorm, which first scares people, and then brings joy after it ends. The truth comes into this world with two faces, according to the Black Elk, with a sad and cheerful one, but it is the same truth. “When the world is already sad, then a smiling face becomes closer to them” [Neihardt, 1959, p. 161].

“Stubbornness” is the leading feature of sacred clowns of warrior communities. Heyo’ka dresses, behaves and speaks contrary to the established norms of behavior of a particular society. As Black Elk, who was also a heyo’ka, explained: “Our bodies were covered in red paint, and lightning bolts were painted on top of the black. The left side of the head was shaved, and strands of long hair hung down on the right” [Neihardt, 1959, p. 161]. Heyo’kas were usually dressed in rags or wore their clothes inside out, put on warm clothes and shivered from the cold in the middle of summer, and ran around almost naked in winter, complaining of the heat. The shaved part of his head spoke of obedience to the Storm Creatures, marking the place where lightning could strike. The clown rode backwards on a horse, and also wore shoes. The language was full of contradictions: they agreed, meaning no. Such behavior caused laughter from others. “This wholesome laughter at the contradictions of ‘upside-down’ and ‘cold in the middle of summer’ made people more open to the perception of new experiences necessary for their present” [Tedlock, 1975, p. 106]. According to M. Bakhtin, this kind of carnival is opposed to the tragic and the epic, and its ambivalence serves as a reference to both the embodied incompleteness of all that exists, and to the end, death and resurrection. Tragedy is combined with parody, which contains the charge of debunking the potential for renewal.

It was necessary to be very careful about accepting the heyo’ka’s offer of help, because usually you can get something diametrically opposite. Clowns were part of religious ceremonies and even in meetings of the council of elders, the purpose of their participation was to make fun of the elders and shamans. It would seem that such behavior weakens respect and leads to sacrilege, but the behavior of the heyo’ka usually indicated the path of correct decisions [Tedlock, 1975, p. 109]. The behavior of the heyo’ka shook the social norms established in society, violated all taboos, clowns focused attention on the manifestations of negative emotions –

greed, selfishness, gluttony, teased the members of the gathering, testing the mouths of society for vitality. There seemed to be no shrine for the holy clown, who was assigned the role of supreme social critic. Heyo'ka reminded people that the energy of the creator is outside the fixed categories of good and evil and is not connected to human ideas of right and wrong. Heyo'ks were mirrors of society: if someone from the community was too immersed in their own importance, a sacred clown was nearby to lighten such a burden. Heyo'ka was engaged in healing, generating laughter, and speeding up recovery. In the midst of battle, the heyo'ka fearlessly rushed into the thick of the battle, denying their natural fear of death with their behavior. At sacred ceremonies, they moved in the opposite direction (counter-clockwise), sang when others were silent, and did everything with their left hand. Heyo'kas were able to look into the world of spirits, beyond the border where people did not dare to look. Clowns saved people from death without receiving anything in return, this gift could become a curse for the person who received it. A clown's duties required him to see the world with the pure eyes of a child, but to judge it with the wisdom of an elder, while it required the true courage of a warrior to voice the most unbiased judgments, regardless of the status of the interlocutor.

A real sacrifice was required from a heyo'ka person. Usually, they were lonely, poorly dressed, lived in leaky tepees, due to the forced dangerousness of their behavior, despite their sanctity, people shunned the heyo'ka, only famous clowns received respect and honors. Others were often forced to shorten their lives abandoned and lonely [Hassrik, 1967, p. 272]. Among the most famous sacred clowns of the Lakota people is Crazy Horse, the victor of General Custer, his late Black Moose. They were both Lakota spiritual leaders at one time. Due to their desperate bravery and straightforward frankness, the heyo'ka were especially dangerous for the colonizers, they wanted to be the first to destroy them, because they were more dangerous than the rest of the warriors. Among the people of the indigenous community, it was considered sacrilegious to kill the sacred clown, but this hardly stopped the invaders. Heyo'ka is an extremely rare phenomenon in the modern world, even in traditional communities. However, heyo'kas managed to survive by learning to "get lost" in the crowd.

In "The Grass Dancer" by Susan Power, the century-old history of one of the Lakota communities has been unfolded, the writer raises the issue of spiritual continuity. The plot of the novel is grouped around the formation of Harley the Wind Warrior, which is impossible without an awareness of the history of his ancestors, who continue to play a leading role in the present. The story of the relationship between the heyo'ka Ghost Horse and the warrior woman Red Dress is of great importance to Harley. For Harley, who lives in the 20th century, the concept of heyo'ka is a kind of familiar stranger, because among the current Lakota there is no sacred clown. "This uncle of yours had a powerful dream, where the thunderbirds appeared to him. You know what that means?" "Yes", said the boy. "Sure. He had to become heyo'ka. And that is hard", Herod ran his thumb in jagged lines across his arm. "He painted the lightning on his arms and legs and his face too. He did everything the opposite of the way it's usually done, and he said what he didn't mean" [Power, 1995, p. 67–68].

The character of the heyo'ka Ghost Horse is a central image of the novel, it is mentioned in almost every chapter, it is told by the healer Herod Small War, the witch Mercury Grim, Harley the Wind Warrior himself and, of course, his beloved Red Dress. Most contemporaries see the Spirit Horse as the heroic ancestor of the Harley, a distinguished hey'oka, but in the eyes of Red Dress he is not just a sacred clown, but a man who bears the burden of a heavy duty. "He quieted, sat up, and dusted his graceful arms. White streaks of lightning painted his arms and legs, and his face was striped with vertical lines in black and white. A bunch of switchgrass was tied to his forelock, hiding eyes I knew were clear and black as polished buffalo horns. A cold wind was blowing from the northwest, the place winter came from, but Ghost Horse didn't shiver. He fanned his face and complained of the scorching heat. After dreaming of the giant thunderbirds who could shoot lightning from their eyes, Ghost Horse had become heyo'ka, a sacred clown. His behavior was perverse: he wept at social dances, laughed at solemn events, shivered in the hot sun, and sweltered in the frigid temperatures. He rushed into battle ahead of other warriors, treating war as play, and he always said the opposite of what he meant. I sensed he was lonely, burdened by his powerful dream, which obligated him to appease the thunder-beings through public humiliation" [Power, 1995, p. 244–245].

Red Dress also had a calling from the spirits of her ancestors, according to which she must leave her ancestral home and go to the enemies of her people. In parting, Ghost Horse handed her a shield, as it should be worn by a true warrior, on it was a woman in a red dress, holding a lightning bolt in her hand. This love story is sad – both of them put their duties to the community above their own feelings. Red Dress had to fulfill a mission assigned by the Lakota guardian spirits. Skillfully using knowledge of the language of the conquerors, attracting spiritual knowledge, the girl goes to Fort Lamarty to infiltrate the rear of the enemy under the guise of a priest's secretary. Her beauty, refined English, along with her exotic background (she was considered an Indian princess, which in European terms was not so far from the truth, since she was the daughter of one of the most influential chiefs of the Sioux people), made several soldiers and even officers fall in love with her. Red Dress used this in the interests of her tribe – with the help of hypnosis, she encouraged lovers to commit suicide. "You are another one we won't have to fight", I tell him" [Power, 1995, p. 270].

The author's ability in his own way to transform traditional images and situations, well known to the reader with a Western worldview, into images and situations rooted in the culture of indigenous peoples, in particular in the culture of the Sioux people, is an indisputable highlight of the novel "The Grass Dancer". Red Dress, a real "chthonic creature", is one of the narrators of the novel, has a dual nature: she is an insidious killer of white officers, who actualizes the image of the biblical Judith in the mind of the reader, and the protector of her own people, a function that she continues to perform centuries after her own death. The transformation of the traditional composition scheme allows the writer to fully convey the complexity of the heroine's image, the fabric of the novel appears as a kind of game with the traditionally Western scheme, when mythopoetics serves as the basis of the artistic technique.

"At least a hundred years have passed, and the plum pit in my mouth has become a grove of trees. I can smell the fruit when it ripens, and my breath makes the leaves rustle. I am hitched to the living, still moved by their concerns. My spirit never abandons the Dakota people, through sometimes all it can do is watch. I was there when the army confiscated our horses to cut off our legs. I stood behind the Ghost Dancers, and when they fainted in desperate, useless ecstasy, I blew a refreshing wind into their faces. There have been too many soldiers and too many graves. Too many children were packed into trains and sent to the other side of the country. Many times I ran alongside those tracks and waved at the bleak cooper faces. *You are Dakota*. I called to them. *You are Dakota*. One time I stood in front moving forward, but it blasted through me. I saw the language shrivel, and though I held out my hands to catch the words, so many of them slipped away, beyond recall. I am a talker now and chatter in my people's ears until I grow weary of my own voice. *I am memory*. I tell them when they're sleeping" [Power, 1995, p. 281–282].

Memory is a meaning-making factor in the novel, which forms the figurative, compositional, and actual content vectors of the work. It is related to important events in Lakota history that are a kind of antidote to the problems of today and the difficulties of modern Dakota existence in mainstream white society. Memory as a symbolic image and as a living being unites in the fabric of the novel the disparate semantic and conceptual spaces, revealing hidden textual meanings, actualizing the complex problems of Lakota existence. Literary projections of identity, as presented to the reader by Susan Power, demonstrate the ability of identity to transform into a system-creating element of collective memory.

Susan Power wrote the novel "The Grass Dancer" about the Lakota and based on the national traditions of her people. With this, the writer emphasizes the integration of the literature of the Lakota people into the system of North American literature, and represents the importance of the textual organization of the chronotope for the explication of narrative strategies. For all the diversity of the material, widely presented in synchrony and diachrony, the chapter is structured around central interconnected patterns, revealed according to key semantic blocks: the history of the first nations in the context of colonial ambiguity, the gnostic perception of the universe as a form of anti-colonial resistance, biblical symbolism as a transcultural code of colonialism, post-traumatic syndrome and its traditionalist overcoming, reception and reinterpretation of the Windigo archetype, space as a narrative of national identity, acentrism of Indian ideological space as a paradigm of home, binary construction of "I – Other" as a marker of national identity. Any of the above-mentioned concepts is argued with the corresponding artistic material, which

provides a fairly complete idea of the functioning of the forms and models of the analyzed phenomenon modifications. The author notes the nature of confrontation and mutual reflection of two worlds – Dakota and Eurocentric in a historical perspective.

Along with the essential functioning of the paradigm of heterogeneity within the polyethnic picture of Dakota world in the text of “The Grass Dancer”, the culture of the indigenous inhabitants of the Great Plains territory are distinguished by special attributes unique to it, which collectively structure the unique phenomenon of the Dakota worldview, based on a genetically inherited mythology with its complex mythological constructs. And therefore, the phenomenon of multiculturalism, becoming the mainstream of the modern North American context, explains a kind and variation of cultural heterogeneity, explaining such a situation in society in which members of different ethnic groups are able to acquire their own identity. The indigenous population of both countries, living in their original territory, formed a community that exists according to common natural and social cycles. After all, for the culture of the native population of the USA, the state border is to some extent an “official convention”, since their historical homeland is the North American continent as a whole. Here, the individual positions himself in the role of a member of an ethnic group or nation because of the difference from the concept of “foreigner”, starting from the awareness of his outsidersness.

Having created the original and unsurpassed text of the novel, Susan Power joined the great project of creating a literary canon of the Indigenous nations of North America. Forming their literary canon, writers of Indigenous origin created an alternative system of values based on beliefs about the equality of all beings in the universe. The leading task of writers of indigenous origin is to subliminally form in the readership an alternative image of culture that could effectively oppose the replicated colonial stereotypes. The colonial worldview creates stylization, primarily in the interests of the colonizers, adapting the culture of the conquered people to their own norms and rules, which has a strong assimilation aspect.

The most important genre decision in “The Grass Dancer”, designed to bring the ancient Dakota beliefs closer to the historical and ideological present, is the creation of an allegorical picture of the world in it. Some morphological elements that are part of the ancient archetype of Dakota genre acquire an additional historical, political, ideological meaning, unforeseen by the non-native readers.

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CONFRONTATION AND MUTUAL REFLECTION OF TWO WORLDS IN "THE GRASS DANCER" BY SUSAN POWER

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An important layer of this research is dedicated to critical studies, which are directed at the strategies of creating a peculiarly Indian literary theory and practice. We have a desire to separate the indigenous tradition from the broad American, in particular, Anglo-American and recognize Indian writing as a component of the multicultural paradigm. Currently, there is a noticeable confrontation between two camps of literary critics: one of them is oriented to European literary theories and believes that they should form the basis of literary interpretations of indigenous writers' works; another wing is determined by the need to clarify the peculiarities of the literary paradigm of "Indian realism" in the context of a globalized society taking into account new literary models of the perception of ethnic minorities. The need to write the article is caused by the lack of a comprehensive understanding of the problem in Ukrainian literary studies and the growing objective interest in the works of Native American writers, in particular Susan Power. The article proposes a conceptual and methodological determination of the study of a literary text written in the style of Indian realism, which makes it possible to reveal the raised scientific problem at many levels.

The article examines how the drama of loss, search and a new acquisition of national identity by the Sioux people was artistically and aesthetically reflected in the text of Susan Power's novel "The Grass Dancer". The presentation and consideration of the problem of national and cultural identity provides an opportunity to see the artistic diversity in the understanding of the personal destiny of a person and the people in general, literary ideas about the Sioux people beliefs peculiarities, their aesthetic component and place in the national cultural canon. The main thing is to avoid the trap of a politicized and ideologized theory of multiculturalism, in which modern critics increasingly see an opportunity to interpret the texts of indigenous writers, which is actually the ideology of colonial domination hidden behind political correctness.

The main *purpose* of this article is to outline a coherent theoretical and empirical model of multi-level functioning of Dakota national identity concept in the novel "The Grass Dancer" by Susan Power. Also the

aim is to substantiate the leading concept of Sioux national identity literary manifestations interpretation as a unique code, epistemological, socio-cultural and artistic-aesthetic factor that plays a significant role in the modern worldview formation process and myth-making of Dakota society representatives.

The following article involves historical-cultural and structural approaches, which correspond to the purpose and tasks of the research; methods of cultural-semantic analysis and phenomenological *methods* were also used.

The persistent deconstruction of the Eurocentric canon of world literature, not only at the level of academic discussions, but also in the system of university teaching of world literature, demands new texts such as "The Grass Dancer". The reformatting of canons is, of course, a permanent process, but the globalization of the literary canon today acquires a qualitatively new scale and breadth proposed by Susan Power. Multiculturalism with its influence on cultural dynamics and the idea of national and cultural identity can't be considered the driving cultural stimulus of changes in all its ambiguity. To an even greater extent, transculturalism, proposed by Power, aimed at defining common interests and common values across cultural and national borders for non-native readers. That is her main contribution to the construction of a more globalized literary canon. Susan Power as a Native American writer has repeatedly addressed the specified range of the Indigenous problems, which constantly tested the agreement prevalent in the non-native science with the most urgent problems of Native literary studies.

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