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Perception of space exploration in the *Grass Dancer* by Susan Power

Moving from notions of historical perspectives to imagining of Native Americans into the future technology world this article provides an analysis of "Indigenously-determined" world outlook of space exploration, eloquently built on what may be seen as oft-overlooked nuance of Native American survivance in the modern world of technology.

Abdul Jan Mohammad in his famous work *The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonial Literature* writes that colonial literature represents the world on the border of civilization, a world that has not yet been mastered by Europeans, as a signification or even codification of an unknown ideology. Scholar stresses that colonialist literature is an example of *exploration and a representation of a world at the boundaries of 'civilization,' a world that has not (yet) been domesticated by European signification or codified in detail by its ideology. That world is therefore perceived as uncontrollable, chaotic, unattainable, and ultimately evil. Motivated by his desire to conquer and dominate, the imperialist configures the colonial realm as a confrontation based on differences in race, language, social customs, cultural values, and modes of production* [1,p.18].

Native Americans as people in the viewpoint of Europeans are incurably different, they would have little intention to adopt a viewpoint of that alterity. James Ruppert admits that the greatest problem of interpretation of texts written by representatives of the indigenous writers of North America lies in the domain of the difference in worldviews, he is certain that modern Indian prose is focused primarily on the restructuring of the views and beliefs of the reader. Native American writers, as a rule, see their task in changing the way of thinking their readers [2, p. ix]. Therefore, as the researcher explains, radical writers write at the same time for two audiences - indigenous and non-indigenous. In order to enlighten and clarify, they use different cultural codes at the same time, and for their further surprise, the significance of these works will be implied by the reader himself who managed to overcome the every minute and illusory confusion before the Other.

According to the widespread literary tradition, the analysis of works, which refers to the connection between the earthly and spiritual worlds, is carried out in the realm of the theory of magical realism. Magic realism, as Rawdon Wilson, the author of *Magical Realism* fundamental study stresses, is used to study virtually any literary text, where there is the slightest hint of a binary opposition or antinomy. In addition, it is widely used as a historical-geographical term in cases where the text has hidden meanings [3, p. 223].

Literary works to some extent are given the role of "retransmission" of the society dominant ideology. That is why Susan Power, author of the resonance novel *The Grass Dancer*, commented: "*Well, 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"[4]. The novel tells about absolutely new to the western outlook views and approaches to the universe, which are typical of the traditional community of North America. Power's novel requires a critical review of what should be considered as a reality. The key to realism is the source of debate among Native American literature researchers: how to classify Indian prose, which practically challenges the established western concept of reality. The colonizers invariable assumption about his moral superiority leads to the fact that the question of validity of the dominant society outlook is practically never raised. "*Dream imagery shines through as another theme of the text, as well as an illustrative tool. Power writes of Sioux culture using such poetic language that it reads like a dream world. At the same time, the reader is transported into the reality of the reservation and its situations. Power uses this imagery to foreshadow the future and revisit past issues that are essential to life. These dream images bring the reader closer to the characters and their customs by exposing ideas and circumstances that may not otherwise be talked about. Through this use of dreams and visions, Power demonstrates their importance to Native Americans as sources of guidance and enlightenment. Power stated in an oral interview that, "Given the culture I was raised in, this is not magical realism, this is actually reality to me." It's the reader's cultural interpretation that perceives it as dream imagery*" [5].

The Grass Dancer strives to put alongside the dominant Western-European and indigenous points of view on the ways of knowledge, the creation of stories and, more generally, the very history. Power refuses to assimilate her vision or to give any preferences to mastery epistemology.

Bright example of that is the episode when Harley Wind Soldier observes the first astronauts on the Moon. While his aunt Elvi seeks to persuade all the attendees of the significance of the event, which certainly goes down in history, she does not notice that the last moments of her mother's life are coming to an end, which, responding to her replica that this is a historical moment, said that *it is all history* [6, p.115]. The approaching death for Margaret Many Wounds is marked by the influx of water that gradually fills its room. Like many other peoples of the world, they believe that the living world is separated from the world by the dead by water. Before leaving Margaret explains to his grandson the difference between the physical and spiritual component of the objects and phenomena of the universe.

Tokaya, come here. I will show you the moon. <...> He felt the moon enter the back of his head. It merged with bone and popped his ears. He felt 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 passages of his ears, wave upon wave like the undulating roar of conch shell. <...>

That is the moon. That is the way into the moon". <...> So she pointed to the television screen, where the men walked in a floating manner that was both heavy and light. "They can walk only on the surface" [6, p.116].

Even the death of Margaret Many Wounds is closely connected to the Moon exploration. As Margaret explained to her first husband, Charles, Bad Holy MacLeod, who encountered her on the verge between the physical and spiritual world, that she "left home early", to have time to create their own magic. She decided to show her own children that the spirit of man is immortal and omnipotent. Margaret goes to dance for the moon. It was this dance that saw Harley on the TV screen, watching the first steps of a man on a lunar surface.

As he listened, the voices of Walter Cronkite, the astronauts, and ground control in Houston were socked away. He heard the Sioux flag Song pounding from black vent on the television set. <...>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 aluminium scoop fitted into an extension handle to collect samples of rock without bending over. Aldrin was using a set of nongs to pick up larger pieces. Somewhere inside the music Harley heard a familiar voice calling "Tokaja". <...> 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 steps powwow steps, 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 men in space suits. He waited for Armstrong and Aldrin to see her, but they must have seen only the ground. Finally she came upon them, and Harley caught his breath because Margaret danced through Neil Armstrong. The astronaut never ceased digging at the ground, leaving footprints like heavy tank treads, but his oxygen system quivered a little as she passed [6,p.120-121].

The writer emphasized the commonality of the unusual, placing alongside the first human steps on the moon and the departure of a person into another world.

Tokaya, 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.[6, p.121-122].

As a structure formation in the novel, one should determine the connection between time and space, which directly refers the reader to the category of memory, functioning in the text as "the thread of Ariadne." The memory of the past gives meaning to the present and explains the structure of the universe from Sioux point of view. What the white reader perceives as a manifestation of magic and seeks to explain through literary technique, like magical realism, for modern Dakota, as well as for their predecessors, was simply the discovery of ancient religious beliefs, confirmation of the truth received from the ancestors.

Reference

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