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IN SEARCH FOR IDENTITY: DISCOURSE OF THE FUTURE IN MODERN DYSTOPIA BY VANESSA VESELKA "ZAZEN", ALEJANDRO MORALES "THE RAG DOLL PLAGUES"

ИДЕНТИЧНОСТЬ: ДИСКУРС БУДУЩЕГО В СОВРЕМЕННОМ РОМАНЕ-ДИСТОПИИ ВАНЕССЫ ВЕСЕЛКИ «ДЗАДЗЕН», АЛЕХАНДРО МОРАЛЕСА «ЧУМА ТРЯПИЧНОЙ КУКЛЫ»



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The article deals with the collective and individual identity problem in the context of changing world and socio-political conditions in hypothetical reality. World literature is an ever-living source for understanding a variety of possible options for development of civilization, the role and place of the individual in the future society. The authors examine representation of individual and collective identification in the dystopian novels by modern writers: V. Veselka "Zazen" (2011) and A. Morales "The Rag Doll Plagues" (1992). *The object of the study* is the socio-political discourse of the future, outlined in fiction form. The subject of the research is the process of individual and collective identification in the context of the predicted future reality. *The purpose of the study* is to analyze Veselka and Morales' dystopian novels for outlining factors influencing the process of individual and collective identification in the hypothetical future. *The research methodology* is based on the principles of semiotic-communicative and cultural-historical approaches. The discourse of the future is considered as a political discourse, a set of verbal signs that performs a certain function in political communication and conveys information about social processes, norms and values in a given socio-political situation. Within the framework of the cultural-historical approach, the literary text is studied as a product of social life in specific cultural-historical conditions. Individual and collective identity is forming in the conditions of an unfavorable, "negative" version of the future civilization. Veselka and Morales project in their works nowadays socio-political problems in a hypertrophied form: terrorism, epidemics and pandemics, environmental disasters, dehumanization, consumerism, etc. The analysis of dystopias clearly indicates that main factors in individual and collective identification are ethno-political, ethnocultural and psychological ones. Ethno-political and ethnocultural factors affect deeply the process of social identification, while psychological factors have a major impact on the search for individual identity

Key words: *discourse of future, dystopia, political discourse, ethno-politics, collective identity, individual identity, socio-political set-up, Veselka, Morales.*

Статья посвящена проблеме социальной и личностной идентификации в условиях изменяющегося мира и трансформации общественно-политического устройства прогнозируемого будущего. Мировая литература представляет собой неиссякаемый источник для осмысления возможных вариантов развития цивилизации, роли и места личности в обществе будущего. В статье рассматриваются особенности репрезентации процесса личностной и социальной идентификации в произведениях современных писателей жанра романа-дистопии: Ванессы Веселки «Дзадзен» (2011) и Алехандро Моралеса «Чума тряпичной куклы» (1992). *Объектом исследования* является социально-политический дискурс будущего, представленный в художественной форме. *Предмет исследования* – процесс личностной и социальной идентификации в условиях прогнозируемой реальности будущего. *Цель исследования* – посредством анализа художественного текста «романов-предупреждений» В. Веселки и А. Моралеса определить факторы влияния на формирование личностной и социальной идентичности в гипотетическом обществе будущего. *Методологию исследования* составляют принципы семиотически-коммуникативного и культурно-исторического подходов. Дискурс будущего рассматривается как политический дискурс – совокупность вербальных знаков, которая выполняет определённую функцию в политической коммуникации и передаёт информацию об общественных процессах, нормах и ценностях в сложившейся социально-политической ситуации. В рамках культурно-исторического подхода литературный текст исследуется как продукт общественной жизни в конкретных культурно-исторических условиях. Конструирование идентичности в романах В. Веселки и А. Моралеса происходит на фоне неблагоприятного, «негативного» сценария развития будущего. На воображаемое общество будущего авторы проецируют, в гипертрофированном виде, современные социально-политические проблемы: терроризм, эпидемии и пандемии, экологические бедствия, дегуманизацию, потребительство и др. На основе анализа романов-дистопий выявлены основные факторы, влияющие на процессы личностной и социальной идентификации: этнополитические, этнокультурные и психологические. Этнополитические и этнокультурные факторы определяющим образом влияют на процесс социальной идентификации, в то время как психологические факторы преимущественно воздействуют на процесс личностной идентификации

Ключевые слова: дискурс будущего, дистопия, политический дискурс, этнополитика, социальная идентичность, личностная идентичность, социально-политическое устройство, Веселка, Моралес

Introduction. The interest of modern writers and scholars to the future comes from the aspirations towards searching for new forms of social development and ways of person's identification in the society of predicted future. The ambiguity of the term "future", the multiplicity and multivariance of the ways of societal and individual development inevitably lead to a comprehensive consideration of this concept using the methodology of various social sciences: political studies, philosophy, sociology, literary criticism, cultural studies, etc. During different historical periods, both futurologists (V.I. Vernadsky, K.E. Tsiolkovsky, E. Toffler, etc.) and science fiction writers (J. Verne, S. Lem, A. Azimov, etc.) sought to predict the future by extrapolating existing and predicting future technological, economic and social trends. "Artistic futurology" [1], or "artistic and political modeling" [7], i.e. modelling political structure of society by using artistic means, allows, according to Y.S. Chernyakhovskaya, make it possible to state "the distinctive cognitive possibilities of this form of understanding reality" and "forestalling of writ-

ers in terms of socio-philosophical and political forecasting" [7, p. 97–98]. A genre of fiction concerned with depicting "dangerous, pernicious and unforeseen consequences associated with the construction of society"¹, was called "dystopia", or "a novel about the future in its experimental negative version" [6, p. 185]. The development of the literary dystopia genre at the turn of the 21st century shows that modern authors are turning to understand current socio-political reality in an effort to realize the mistakes of the historical past and determine what the search for a person's identity will be associated with in a changing reality. T.S. Paniotova emphasizes the warning, preventive nature of dystopia: "dystopia purposefully creates an image of a society even worse than the present <...> this worst can become a reality precisely if humanity refuses to change" [4, p. 24]. Appeal to the crucial issues of the individual and collective identification process in a dystopian novel caused by the need to comprehend the features of a person's self-consciousness in the changing reality of the future.

¹ Литературный энциклопедический словарь / под общ. ред. В. М. Кожевникова, П. А. Николаева; редкол.: Л. Г. Андреев, Н. И. Балашов, А. Г. Бочаров и др. – М.: Сов. энциклопедия, 1987. – 752 с.

The object of the study is the socio-political discourse of the future, presented in the dystopian novels of contemporary U.S. writers V. Veselka "Zazen" (2011) and A. Morales "The Rag Doll Plagues" (1992). The subject of the research is the process of individual and collective identification in the context of the predicted reality of the future. The purpose of the study is to analyze Veselka and Morales' dystopian novels for outlining factors influencing the process of individual and collective identification in the hypothetical future. Research problems are: revealing the features of the socio-political situation in the future society; determination of the factors of influence on the dystopian characters' individual and collective identification.

The different worlds, the different dystopian realities which are outlined in the novels "Zazen" by Veselka, and "The Rag Doll Plagues" by Morales present various levels of the hypothetical realities such as the polluted notions of certain socio-political concerns, the effluence of the societal values, as well as the "contamination" of the self which can be profoundly individual, personal, as opposed to the collective or societal one. Within a world stricken by the global 2020-2021 Covid 19 pandemic, now more than ever it seems understandable and justifiable (and even not so dystopian after all) to address what was considered to be a "trans-historical trope for the paradoxical human capacity to create diseases (different kinds of it) and also to heroically try to eradicate them" [16, p. 83] as we are currently living in a massive attempt of eradication of the pandemic process through a vaccination, immunization and creating of a herd community effects. But even though the dystopian narratives generally describe societies in cataclysmic decline, with characters who battle environmental ruin, technological control, and government oppression, it is important to further explore and determine more local aspects. For example, searching for identity in changing reality determined by variety of internal and external factors such as ethnicity, culture, self-concept and individual psychological make up.

Methodology and research methods. The study is based on the position that literary works in the genre of dystopia can be considered as a type of political discourse, which is understood as a set of verbal signs (including a literary text) that performs a certain function in political communication and conveys information about social processes, norms and values in a given historical and socio-political situation. E.I. Sheigal in her work "Semiotics of political discourse" (2000), devoted

to the general features of political discourse, confirms the presence of intersections of political discourse with artistic one: "Artistic discourse indirectly, through aesthetic influence, serves to form political consciousness, political preferences and dispositions" [9, p. 43–44]. For this article, the most significant is the thesis that "literary works of this kind contribute to the assertion or destruction of existing stereotypes, the creation or exposure of socio-political myths, critical reflection and interpretation of the past with a projection into the present" and the future. Within the framework of the cultural and historical approach, the literary text is considered as a product of social life in specific cultural and historical conditions. The work uses a set of methods, including the method of structural-functional and comparative analysis, supplemented by methods of literary criticism, as well as general scientific methods, such as comparison, analysis, synthesis.

Research results. Dystopias "Zazen" by Vanessa Veselka and "The Rag Doll Plagues" by Alejandro Morales give a speculative overview on the future of globalization through presenting various types of individual and collective contaminations. Veselka's novel mainly deals with the issues of psychological factors in the formation of individual identity, while Morales' novel focuses on ethno-political and ethnocultural factors of collective identification.

The debut novel of the contemporary American writer Vanessa Veselka (b. 1969) "Zazen" (2011) deals with the problems of world community that disturb the author: the threat of wars with the use of mass destruction weapons, terrorism, the depersonalization of the individual, and the general dehumanization of society. According to the plot of the book, in the not distant future of America, bomb explosions and terrorist attacks become the everyday norm. Describing the attempts of the young educated woman Della, the main character of the novel, to find herself in the "new world", the writer exposes the modern consumer society to a satirical rethinking and creates a kind of dystopian future model. Veselka addresses kind of dystopian nightmare, evolving around one's contaminated self, but also, a gruesome reality which is on pause at the moment due to the pandemic - life in the face of the increasing terrorist wrongdoings and bomb attacks and the contamination of the soul and self of the main protagonist Della who finds pleasure in participating (in a way), and with a smile on her face, in such hideous activities.

Veselka portrays a very weird, yet gifted, well-educated and tenacious heroine attempts to prevent global catastrophe by creating one, but eventually ends up being not only 'contaminated' but also absorbed, all-consumed in the whirlwind of the everyday paranoia, with a distorted mind of the anomalous, polluted 'self'. Veselka's "Zazen" offers a novel vision, a different kind of dystopian reality by manipulating time and space at times, presenting a frozenness of existence in an industrial wasteland of a city where even the bombs' explosion is a constant and everyday reality. The premise of the polluted self in the face of the contaminated collective is given with the introductory notes, with the description of the lushness and blooming as a normality of the abnormal: "War A going on well and no longer a threat, small and mature. Like a Bonsai. War B is in full flowers. Its thin green shoots reaching across the ocean floor like fiber optic cable." And within the apparent normal living in her brother's attic, working in a vegan diner, practicing yoga, a young, 27 year old paleontologist whose hobby is collecting pictures and making maps of historic self-immolators, faces symbolic plagues; a collective one, which goes far beyond the reappearing of a rat infestation in the diner, or rivers of people leaving their country, escaping the 'societal pollution' under the excuse of eco-tourism, and a personal one, in which she relishes the panic and confusion created by her own fabrication and false bomb threat alarms.

The state of so-called mental contamination, which happens in the mind of Della, provoked by images, thoughts, and memories changes and deteriorates. According to some analysis, the before mentioned state as a clinical case has a human source and is "caused by a violation such as degradation, betrayal, emotional abuse, humiliation. The source of *contact* contamination is inanimate - dirt and/or disease - but the source of mental contamination is human. The feelings of dirtiness or pollution are internal, diffuse and pervasive and they are easily re-evoked by mental events" [22, p. 3]. In Della's case, the source is collective, which at first initiates feelings of disgust and compassion, whereas later on, as the exposure to the contaminated state of living lingers, it triggers a pathology of deviant enjoyment and pleasure in the personal act of creating general fear and panic: "I heard about the bombing on the bus ride home. When the man told me about it, I thought he was lying. Then I knew he wasn't. My spine felt like a seismograph. I couldn't breathe.

I might have screamed something. Someone handed me an inhaler. Someone else told me to shut up. I took deep breaths and thought of marine deposits. Everything falls silently to the sea-floor. It's nothing personal at all" [24, p. 38].

The pathology of a contaminated self deepens, and by observing the crowds panicking and running away, it slowly shifts from the level of voyeurism to sociopathic behavior and experiencing pleasure in other people's agony: "I was laughing so hard my jaw hurt. Tears streamed down my face and every time I tried to get a handle on myself and calm down, I lost it again. It was better than being fourteen on mushrooms <...> my ribs were so sore from convulsive laughter that I felt like I'd been beaten" [24, p. 79]. Even though analyses say that most instances of mental contamination arise from upsetting events, humiliations, memories or thoughts, in the absence of direct contact with a contaminant" [11] in this case, it can be located not only in an upsetting event but in the constant reconstruction and repeating of the tragic occasion of the death of Della's thirteen-year-old sister who was killed by a bus, a sad episode which reoccurs since "mom believes that it is important to re-experience pain as a political construct, an anniversary, a family gathering". In Veselka's gripping narrative, we witness the fact that the trauma expands from a personal to a local level, adding more fuel to the heated sociopathic mind which enhanced the overall notion of pleasure, raised to another level: "I liked the idea of eating somewhere I had recently threatened to bomb" [24, p. 133].

The contaminated areas only begin to cleanse and purify towards the end of the novel, when Della becomes aware of the utmost necessity to overleap her dire compulsive, pathologic need in the light of the cruelty and danger that she was creating, being further involved into deeper conspiracies, realizing how things easily slipped out of control and "what it would feel like to watch a real bomb exploding around real people", hence trying to make amends, trying to decontaminate her inner self: "I wanted everything to be okay, everything to change, and no one to get hurt. I was ashamed of myself" (24. P. 206) deciding that "though the world is a violent child none of us will get to see grow up" yet she will love it anyway [24, p. 257].

Unlike Veselka's highly-engaging debut about personal decontamination, Morales' triptych "The Rag Doll Plagues" deals with ethnopolitical issues and collective identification in fictional future. Alejandro Morales (b. 1944) is

one of the leading figures in Chicano (Mexican American) literature. Originally a derogatory name for Mexican-Americans, "Chicano" was reappropriated by "young civil rights advocates in the 1960s and 1970s as a way to reclaim both the power of self-definition and the pride in a rich, bilingual, cross-cultural heritage" [14]. Chicano literature tends to focus on themes of identity, discrimination, and border culture, with an emphasis on validating Mexican-American culture or Chicano culture in the United States. Alejandro Morales writes in Spanish and English and has authored several historical biographies in which he tells the fictional story of a character's life using historical personages and events. Morales is known by his experimental writing style and using "fantastic counterhistories, magical realism, challenging metanarratives, and flesh-and-blood aesthetic innovation" [12]. In his famous dystopian novel "The Rag Doll Plagues" (1992) he touches different aspects of 'contamiNation' by linking three distinct diary-like narratives, books I, II and III, which are located in the borderlands zone between Mexico and the U.S.A., in the surrounding area of Trump's imaginary wall and immigrant camps, where the shared denominator of the three stories juxtaposes with the gripping pictures of historicity's vortex. The novel revolves around a recreation of the interrelated contexts of imperialism, postcolonialism and environmental destruction which span throughout three centuries.

Mexican-American author Alejandro Morales in his dystopian novel "The Rag Doll Plagues" employs a variety of contaminations to illustrate the numerous historic changes, the ruptures, and connections from prenatal to postnational socio-cultural constructions in the Western world. Morales' text, according to Priewe, in its subversion of racial and cultural purity, postulates that miscegenation and hybridity could be considered potentially positive, even liberating, forces [22]. For Priewe, the term 'contamiNation' is in fact a national construct which further reveals a set of cultural bio-interchanges that modify the integrity and unity of the individual and the group. More specifically, 'contamiNation' "refers not only to epidemic infections of a single body, but also connotes a process of making impure, by contact or mixture, on a collective, cultural level". In this respect, the narratives of Morales and Veselka have this common denominator, a trope of 'contamiNation' which just shifts from the individual towards the collective and vice versa, from the general to the more specific, polluted 'self'. Even more,

Priewe points out the visibility of the 'otherness within the apparent homogeneity of the body or the collective, a term offering a means to disclose the multiform complexion of the unity' [22] which, in this manner, refers to the unveiling of number of additional layers of the 'polluted self', based on the political, social and cultural circumstances within the two narratives when "the outside world is nothing anymore, just a franchise of nations" [24, p. 34].

In a similar manner, Priewe also asserts that this is most evident in the second and in the third, or final part of the novel "The Rag Doll Plagues" which reflects on a multiethnic future where individual and communal bodies will not be constituted through essentialist exclusions or ethnoracial purity, meaning that this multilayered unity would be saved from the complete contamination of the oppressive and colonial system is to return to the origins and to heal its atomic core, to decontaminate completely. However, ultimately, difference is not erased in Morales' magico-realist visualization of a hybrid past-present-future continuum; in fact, the collective human survival only becomes possible through partially contaminated bodies and cultures.

From the very beginning of Book I, we witness the collective, societal contamination through the images of 18th century Mexico City's scenery of disaster portraying "a diseased, infested population" [17, p. 29]. The outbreak of an epidemic weakens the conquistadores, clearing out the colonies, depicting horrible images of an overwhelming human deterioration and individual contamination as well, being inflicted by a disgusting illness in which the corpse feels like a rag doll <...> as in a natural death, but remains soft like a wineskin" [18, p. 30]. The horrors of contamination storms throughout Book II as well, in which, violence, drugs, and AIDS are just some novel names for "la mona" (Spanish for "ape, monkey", figuratively "plague") of the contemporary society; the HIV virus emerges as a threatening menace, as an individual and collective polluting device. The techno-sophisticated Lamex confederation is threatened by a rising plague originating from the oceans that exterminates the population, and none of the gadgetry at hand can curb the epidemic from spreading. The environmental destruction is devastating, the population is effected instantaneously, and such plagues, which travelled through the air, land and sea, penetrating populated areas have killed thousands, and "from our pollution we had created masses that

destroyed or deformed everything in their path" [17, p. 139] and only the pure-blooded Mexicans have mutated to adjust the threat of pollution, thus the only way out of the horrible disease is being outside the hi-tech society and can be only found within the healing knowledge from the past.

Book III provides an insightful, ecological and even ecocritical overview of a world stricken by a new form of ecodisaster threatening to eradicate the entire civilization. Morales' narrative not only does it tackle the notions of (post)colonialism, cultural hybridization, and ethnorelativism, but also, it discusses the segments through which such environmental calamity poses a threat to the humanity, hence leading to an expression of societal, collective and individual identification. It is interesting that Morales features a rigidly stratified hi-tech society – LAMEX – which is a post-NAFTA conglomeration of Northern Mexico and California under the direction of the Triple Alliance of Canada, the USA, and Mexico. Morales' technocratic city created by combining Los Angeles and Mexico at U.S.-Mexico border turns out to be in keeping with the ideas about regional security expanding in the 2nd half of the 20th century "in terms of environmental, terrorist, military, migration, epidemiological threats" [6, p. 69], which are becoming more and more noticeable in certain regions and countries of the world. The protagonist of the 3rd part of the book, doctor Gregory Revueltas, who is a grandson of Gregory from the previous book, is called upon to fight a serious epidemiological threat – the disease 'la mona' of the late 21st century, this time called the Blue Buster. It is interesting that "recurring" hero is called Gregorio or Gregory Revueltas. The name of the hero can be translated from Spanish in two ways. First: from the word "revolver", which translates as "to return to the place (back)"² and the word "revuelto" derived from it can be translated as "mixed, disorderly, confused". This meaning indicates the mixed origin of the hero, his half-breeding. Second translation: from the word "revuelta" – "mutiny, rebellion, unrest, quarrel". Such a definition connects the hero with historical events: in each part of the book, social unrest is described. According to Lopez-Lozano, the cure for this modern-day plague is in so-called 'pure-blooded transfusions' of Mexicans which relegate these people into "virtual slaves" [15, p. 94]. Even more, the novel's Book III not only does it present a distinct, ecological perspective, but al-

so, it presents a direct criticism of capitalist exploitation, interweaving the recent day concerns of ecological nature which are closely connected to pollutants, environmental contamination, and virulent pandemics. Furthermore, López-Lozano suggests that the environment of contagion presents "the conditions of unequal exchange" in a dystopic post-NAFTA borderless North America [15, p. 64].

At the first glance, ironically enough, especially in the light of the evermore strengthened white supremacy ideologies and hegemonic notion across the USA, "The Rag Doll Plagues" twists and antitheses the anxieties regarding the Mexican immigration to southern California in the 1990s and even today by imagining a future in which the entire populations' lives would depend on having access to pure Mexican blood, which further on leads to such figurative meaning of what might be perceived as collective contamination. Morales brings up to date ethnopollitical foundations of the U.S. nation-building, which has been associated with a complex of problems throughout the history [3, p. 140], namely, about American expansion in the context of U.S.-Mexico border formation as a result of the Mexican-American War and the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848. On the one hand, such a significant increase in the country's territory exacerbated the internal contradictions of American society on the issue of slavery, becoming a milestone on the road to the Civil War (1861-1865). On the other hand, the annexation of the vast territories that were previously part of Mexico allowed the United States to become the leading power in the Western Hemisphere [3]. Alejandro Morales, referring to the ethnopollitical situation to the point of the attitude towards Mexicans in American society, calls into question adherence to the principles of "relations of peace and friendship, <...> reciprocal benefits upon the citizens of both <...> concord, harmony, and mutual confidence in the two people should live, as good neighbors" [24], proclaimed in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

Morales in his novel creates the metropolis that would connect the border territories of the United States and Mexico. I. G. Chubarov and E. V. Mikhailova state, that today the metaphors "transboundary metropolis" [13] and "Bajalta California" [20] are used in the literature to designate the rapidly growing urbanized space of

² Загорская Н. В. Курчаткина Н. Н., Нарумов Б. П., Сердюкова Н. Н., Супрун А. В., Хисберт Таленс М., Якучанис Е. С. Большой испанско-русский словарь / под ред. Б. П. Нарумова. – М.: Рус.-Медиа, 2006. – 828 с.

the U.S.-Mexico border between San Diego and Tijuana, thereby emphasizing the interconnection and mutual influence of neighboring areas [8].

John Blair Gamber in his book "Positive Pollutions and Cultural Toxins", in chapter 2 which is entitled "Toxic Metropolis," explores the roles of toxicity and positive pollution in Morales's "The Rag Doll Plagues" discussing at the same time that the novel's theme of the "pepenador" (or rum-mager) exemplifies a recognition that humanity cannot be differentiated from the waste it produces [11]. Gamber emphasizes that Morales' narrative demonstrates how urban communities salvage cast-off objects and individuals to show their inherent value, and by doing so, Morales further portrays interethnic communities of people of diverse descents that intermingle in order to create an idealized hybrid within the occasionally toxic cityscapes of Mexico City and Los Angeles. Such urban spaces include environmental histories of how these places have become among the most toxic regions in the Western Hemisphere, which adds to the aspect of the wider, collective contamination. The human and its natural environment are "polluted" and destroyed in synchrony, so that the physical markers of race are rendered unintelligible coinciding to the process of destruction through which the Earth ceases to become recognizable as a place of human habitation, which, further on, is an addition to the collective "pollution". Likewise, the whole existence of these twisted, contaminated spaces, the transgression in the public space of hetero-normative systems and hegemonic moralities endanger the stability, the sanity and the hygiene of the colonial city, making it vulnerable to secular contamination, environmental diseases and socio-ideological illnesses [22].

Veselka's and Morales' imaginary worlds since the contaminated local and the contaminated collective reflect in the actions (wrongdoings) of the protagonists and societies. At the same time, the authors endow the main characters with the ability to feel and see manifestations of goodness, love and hope in reality, described mainly in pessimistic tones. The final lines of Veselka's novel are deeply symbolic: "I looked around at the smoke and people. I couldn't find any hate in me anywhere. The world is a violent child none of us will get to see grow up. I decided to love it anyway" [24, p. 90]. The author sees the acceptance of the world and oneself in it from the standpoint of focusing on universal (universal) values as an opportunity to overcome the "negative" compo-

nents of the current socio-political situation: being in a state of constant war, dehumanization of society, consumerism as the prevailing ideology. In Della's self-affirmation as a person and part of society, one sees the realization of the symbolic meaning of the title of the novel – "zazen" – (literally "seated meditation") – practice of the Zen Buddhist tradition, in general it can be regarded as a means of insight into the nature of existence.

In Morales' novel, the symbolic overcoming of the ethnicity-based caste system of the future society, is associated with the birth of 'mestizo' children. At the end of the first chapter, Gregorio decides to adopt a newborn girl who appeared from the relationship of a high-ranking European and an Indian woman who was sick with the plague and died in childbirth. Don Gregorio adopts a girl, a real mestizo, and remains to live in Mexico. The birth of the girl Monica Marisela symbolizes the birth of a new era for the hero: "I kissed Monica Marisela and I heard liberation in her innocent giggle, which offered a new century in my new country" [17, p. 66]. The final episodes of the first and last parts of the novel make up a kind of circular composition – in the third chapter, another baby is born. With Gregorio's help, a Chinese-Mexican child is born, despite the state's ban on having children in the poor neighborhoods of LAMEX and the epidemic. The appearance of a baby on the last pages of the novel is highlighted by the author as a positive event, it marks for the protagonist the hope for a possible victory of the human over the technological in the more distant future: "that child represents the hope for the new millennium" [17, p. 200].

In both novels, the idea of love for one's own kind and equality of all people in the global world of the future, the multiethnic future, is clearly heard. It comes to mind the Biblical passage (Galatians 3:28), in which Paul states: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" [18]. Karin Neutel argues that the verse points to a utopian, cosmopolitan community. Noteworthy, earlier another well-known Mexican-American writer, Carlos Morton, expressed the idea of the unity of all people of the world, using the symbol of the "circle of racial harmony". The key moment of his popular play "El Jardin" is God's conversation with Eve, where the Lord explains to her that the variously colored wheel that she sees is "the circle of racial harmonia singing together down the road of the future and we are the people who must set an example to all of the others because we are

the hub, the center of that wheel"³. Consequently, those negative features of the socio-political situation, which can be actualized and intensified in the expected future, should, according to modern authors, remain in the historical past.

Conclusions. Dystopia as a specific form of political discourse and "artistic and political modeling" ("artistic futurology"), as a rule, draws an image of an unfavorable development of the future. Dystopias "Zazen" by Vanessa Veselka and "The Rag Doll Plagues" by Alejandro Morales give a speculative overview on the future of globalization through presenting various types of individual and collective identities. Without any doubt, Veselka's novel mainly deals with psychological factors that influence individual identity, while Morales' dystopia concerns ethno-political and ethnocultural factors in collective identification.

The authors project on the imaginary society of the future the features of modernity, which are associated with the life experiences of the authors themselves, and express the anxiety born of this experience about the strengthening of various threats to human well-being: terrorism, environmental disasters, epidemics, pandemics, technological progress, etc. At the same time, the

endings of the novels do not convey feelings of desperation, but advance hope for a person to overcome these threats, emphasize the leading role of the striving for universal human values.

Collective identification assumes the predominance of the collective principle over the individual in the "heroes-society" interaction in dystopia. With the development of the plot, sharp contradictions arise between the individual and the collective, during which the hero is aware of any trend in socio-political development as a negative one (involvement in subversive organizations in Veselka's novel, the position of Mexicans as a lower class in Morales', etc.). The impact of ethno-political and ethnocultural factors on the characters' identity turns out to be the strongest in this case. An integral part of the dystopian characters' inner world are doubts, which become an expression of their inner disharmonious existence in the current socio-political situation. Revealing the problem of individual identity in the future society, the writers state the importance of the spiritual component of human consciousness and universal values that contribute to the unity of people and the harmonious development of society.

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