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**CULTURAL- AND SELF-IDENTIFICATION  
IN AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN'S POETRY:  
MAYA ANGELOU, SONIA SANCHEZ, AUDRE LORDE**

*The paper addresses the issue of cultural- and self-identification as constituted by African American women poets. The question of identification in the analyzed poems by Maya Angelou, Sonia Sanchez, and Audre Lorde is viewed mostly from a multicultural perspective, which includes ethnic, national, racial and gender awareness.*

*The author also discusses linguistic and rhetorical means that secure the identification on the textual level. They include conceptual and linguistic oppositions and dichotomies, allusions to precedent names, usage of music and tale-telling patterns, lexical and syntactical repetitions, etc. A special emphasis is made on the dialogic nature of poetry that is viewed as a linking chord between generations or community members in transmitting cultural codes.*

*The theoretical framework of the paper is outlined by the ideas of women studies, US history and literature studies within the multiculturalist paradigm.*

**Key words:** African American women's, identification, multiculturalism, poetry, ethnic (cultural, gender) awareness, voice duality, signifying, cultural code.

The question of identity has been an eternal focus of literature. Literary works suggest answers to this question either implicitly or explicitly. J. Culler affirms that readers of fiction may follow “the fortunes of characters as they define themselves and are defined by various combinations of their past” [4, 106]. The crucial issue emerges when the personage's self is assessed at the counterpoint of two options: as something given, or as something created. In other words, personal identification is generated from existential dilemmas any individual faces, as well as social forces that are imposed on characters and thus influence their choices concerning their identities. A combination of the given and the acquired traits reinforces the inner core of a personality and presents the self as “determined by its origin and social attributes” [4, 104, 106]. Besides, there is a necessity for any person to be open to constant changes resulting from being socialized within a particular community. This involves acquiring knowledge and skills that would enable one to become conscious of the existing communal preferences, alternatives, prejudices, biases, and value sets in all spheres of a particular social environment.

Literature offers an infinite variety of models in which identity is formed. Recent theories about gender, race, and sexuality serve to testify to the fact that fiction is a powerful means of identity reflection and formation. The latter becomes possible through encounters (conforming to, or struggling against) with the surrounding world. For African American authors, identity has always been at issue since the surrounding world brings a number of challenges facing writers of black origin. For centuries American

history has witnessed attempts at racial segregation to the point of appearing to be “white,” the role of blacks limited and reduced to otherness [5, 149]. African Americans were not allowed to enter the realm of the “word,” in the majority of cases being prohibited from conducting any writing activities. Consequently, they were not considered a part of American literary history. Moreover, their experience did not find its reflection directly, but via a “white” mediator. This led to further distortion of African American history and literature. Since the emergence of early slave writers, the narrative of freedom and finding one's voice has gained priority among non-white authors. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century this idea evoked an urgent need to give it a proper shape and a clearly defined identity that would challenge existing stereotypes.

Contemporary American literary discourse is marked by an increasing interest in the multicultural aspects of the literary process. Nowadays, the role of various ethnic cultures and traditions in defining the national literary scope cannot be considered in isolation from the mainstream literary expression. The whole of US history is being reconsidered from the perspective of the given multiethnic nature of the American community. Natalia Vyssotska argues that the need to reinvent American national identity model originates from the changes in the socio-cultural mapping of the country. Academic and educational circles witness discussions concerning a shift in national self-portrait, cultural wars, and the implications of multicultural sensibility for literary studies. Undoubtedly, a different philosophical perspective will affect both spiritual endeavors and cultural institutions [7, 26–268].

Furthermore, the once widely accepted metaphor for America as a “melting pot” of nations, which stood for racial and social assimilation of immigrants, has become inadequate for a full representation of American civilization. It has given way to the idea of a mosaic, which emphasizes variety and differences between those cultures that are united within a single concept of the American nation. As stated by Manohar Samuel, “There is now more than ever before a felt need for more space for diverse cultural voices and perspectives, and a stress on the value of diversity” [15]. American literature, as one of the brightest manifestations of the cultural landscape of the country, welcomes mutual sharing and exchange of myths, symbols, imagery, etc., that promote enrichment of the aesthetic potential of literary experience in general.

Under such circumstances, ethnic voice becomes distinct in assuming a number of manifestations, such as condemnation of any kind of inequality and unfairness, and celebration of native tradition as well as both material and spiritual cultures. More importantly, the voice calls for ethnic self-awareness, dignity and tolerance as well as readiness to communicate, cooperate, and share in human values. In connection with this, the opinion of Audre Lorde becomes significant. She writes, “In our work and in our living, we must recognize that difference is a reason for celebration and growth, rather than a reason for destruction [...]. We need to use these differences in constructive way, creative way, rather than in ways to justify our destroying each other” [qtd. in 6, 86].

The **objective** of the paper is to focus on the literary manifestations of women writers’ self-identification in terms of their multicultural, racial and gender awareness, and to identify the stylistic and rhetorical means used for the purpose. The issue appears to be **crucial** as multicultural identification defined here refers to both the American nation as a whole and to its ethnic components, as well as to individuals. *The corpus of the experimental material* in the present article includes poetic and essayistic pieces by Maya Angelou, Sonia Sanchez, and Audre Lorde. In the paper, the interpretive analysis appeared to be the most productive **method** of research.

The poetry of African American women is marked by ethnic, national and gender factors that all deserve close scrutiny. A combination of those factors provides a woman writer with a possibility of viewing her own personality and relationships within a community as a tool of understanding the most vital social issues. Besides, according to a number of feminist critics, Elaine Showalter including, it is impossible to view women’s literature outside the dominant patriarchal (male) context. The scholar claims that “the concept of a woman’s text in the wild zone is a playful abstraction: in reality to which we must address ourselves as critics, women’s writing

is a ‘double-voiced discourse’ that always embodies the social, literary, and cultural heritage of both the muted and the dominant” [Showalter, qtd. in 1, 160].

As Showalter argues, engaging the notion of a dialogue, or the Bakhtinian ‘double-voiced’ discourse, appears to be productive. This strategy enables literary critics to single out “the otherness” of women writing compared to the mainstream tendencies in culture and society. Accepting the polyphonic nature of female literature makes it possible to consider creativity as a mixture of various discourses and narrative techniques. The critic further affirms: “A Black American woman poet, for example, would have her literary identity formed by the dominant (white male) culture, and by a muted black culture. She would be affected by both sexual and racial politics in a combination unique to her case” [Showalter, qtd. in 1, 160]. Thus, a piece of framework is created, within which the *female / male* opposition, in the physical, mental, and spiritual sense, becomes crucial for finding means of self-identification and self-awareness. This argument may be illustrated by Sonia Sanchez’s “Poem at Thirty” [14]. The poem features the characters of a father and a husband, both African American, and therefore playing an essential role in the physical and mental life of a woman. Now that the lyrical “I” has turned thirty, she finally overcomes her fears (that of night and her dependence on men). From now on it is the heroine herself that will decide how to perceive her own personality, associate with the people within their community, select a lifestyle and behavioral patterns, etc.:

*line 1* it is midnight  
no magical bewitching  
hour for me  
i know only that

*line 5* i am here waiting  
remembering that  
once as a child  
i walked two  
miles in my sleep.

*line 10* did i know  
then where I  
was going?  
traveling. i’m  
always traveling.

*line 15* i want to tell  
you about me  
about nights on a brown  
couch when  
i wrapped my

*line 20* bones in lint and  
 refused to move.  
 no one touches  
 me anymore.  
 father do not  
*line 25* send me out  
 among strangers.  
 you you black man  
 stretching scraping  
*line 30* the mold from your body.  
 here is my hand.  
 i am not afraid  
 of the night.

(Sanchez, "Poem at Thirty")

Lines 22–32 exemplify the idea that the lyrical "I" does not accept any patriarchal authority from the outside; she is the authority herself. In such a way the character expresses her openness to experience and feeling what she desires. Sanchez's heroine is thus ready to discard everything that interferes with her personal choices and in such a way strives for her independent future. The color palette of the poem ("black", "brown" / lines 18, 27/) and contextually related "midnight", "nights", "bewitching" / lines 1, 2, 32/), in conjunction with the negatives ("do not", "not afraid", "no one" / lines 22, 24, 31/), creates a gloomy mood, on the one hand, though, on the other one, it implies that nothing can prevent the heroine from finding her identity.

Due to its short lines, elements of a narrative, and numerous repetitions that are so frequent in oral tale-telling Sonia Sanchez's poem is evocative of a jazz tune, which suggests that specific syntactical structures of the poem tend to reflect the ethno-cultural mapping of the world by a black community, as well as a way of creating traditional imagery. As advocated by Nadija Vorobej, a Ukrainian scholar researching textual markers of traditional music genres (jazz, rap, and blues), the creativity of African American authors demonstrates parallels between rhythmic and syntactic structure of poetry, on the one hand, and the rhythmic composition of the music trends, on the other hand [8, 14]. The music pattern observed in the poem by Sanchez is another linking chord between African American poetry and a particular ethnic community.

The universal *male / female* opposition suggests a model of society which is either male- or female-centered. No matter how vital it may be, becoming independent of male power does not seem to be the only way of finding one's own self for a woman. Personal liberation needs time, effort, and a desire to develop high self-esteem. Regarding these ideas, in her essay "In all ways a Woman" Maya Angelou

argues that it is high time a woman stopped considering herself an imperfect replica of a man and started to resist treating herself a "lesser version of her male counterpart" [10]. To support the point, the author makes a list of gender-marked lexemes ("poetess," "Negress," "rectoress" etc.), which in her opinion violate a proper estimation of a female personality. Angelou writes, "She is not a sculptress, poetess, authoress, Jewess, Negress, or even (now rare) in university parlance a rectoress. If she is the thing, then for her own sense of self and for the education of the ill-informed she must insist with rectitude in being the thing and in being called the thing" [10]. Hence, any woman is to start with her own self-perception, judgments and opinions as well as ability to be flexible in viewpoints, attitudes, behavioural modes, and evaluations, etc. It is up to women writers themselves to create the poetry that may help them to find their place in the society where "women have evolved distinctive values within a male-dominated society" [2, 413]. The utmost purpose is to become a phenomenal woman, as the title of Angelou's work suggests — "In All Ways a Woman." Certainly, it is not an easy task, concludes the author, but it is worth aspiring to, "The struggle for equality continues unabated, and the woman warrior who is armed with wit and courage will be among the first to celebrate victory" [10].

Continuing the discussion, one cannot overlook Maya Angelou's poem "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" [9]. Its leading concept — freedom — is depicted as universal and all-embracing. Poetically, the sense of freedom is illustrated by the image of wings that aspire to reach the heights that only sunbeams can reach, or the blue of the sky, or tender winds that fondle tree leaves:

*line 1* A free bird leaps on the back  
 Of the wind and floats downstream  
 Till the current ends and dips his wing  
 In the orange sun rays

*line 5* And dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks down his narrow cage  
 Can seldom see through his bars of rage  
 His wings are clipped and his feet are tied  
 So he opens his throat to sing.

*line 10* The caged bird sings with a fearful trill  
 Of things unknown but longed for still  
 And his tune is heard on the distant hill for  
 The caged bird sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another breeze

line 15 And the trade winds soft through  
The sighing trees  
And the fat worms waiting on a dawn-  
bright  
Lawn and he names the sky his own.

line 20 But a caged bird stands on the grave  
of dreams  
His shadow shouts on a nightmare scream  
His wings are clipped and his feet are tied  
So he opens his throat to sing.

line 25 The caged bird sings with  
A fearful trill of things unknown  
But longed for still and his  
Tune is heard on the distant hill  
For the caged bird sings of freedom.

(Angelou, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings")

The verse cited above expresses an idea that trivial everyday things appear to be objects of the cherished liberty, which, in turn, stands in opposition to frustrated dreams. The latter ones are metaphorically presented through the cage — the image of the broken flight (both in its direct and transferred, or metaphoric, meanings). The universal idea of freedom also acquires here its cultural implication. The poem's key notions can be interpreted as components of ethno-cultural concepts of slavery and freedom. Both acquire their artistic manifestation through specific imagery and carefully selected diction. Thus the nominative linguistic unit "caged bird" has become a stereotypical symbolic trope in African American poetic tradition to connote a black man/woman's deprivation of freedom. The idea of non-freedom is intensified by the following lexemes: "grave" (line 19), "nightmare" (line 20), "clip(ped)" (line 8), "tied" (line 21), "cage(d)" (lines 6, 10, 23, 27), "bar(s)" (line 7). Its opposite concept finds its verbal expression in: "current" (line 3), "ray(s)" (line 4), "wind" (line 2), "breeze" (line 14), "dreams" (line 19), "freedom" (line 27), "distant hill" (line 26) etc.

On the other hand, self-identification of an African American woman in multicultural surroundings can be realized with regard to a dichotomy defined by W. E. B. Du Bois as "two-ness": "an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" [Du Bois, qtd. in 1, 166]. Similarly, the nature of an African American woman herself may be viewed as double, sometimes triple, or even multiple. Raising and contemplating such questions as: 'What does it mean to be a woman?'; 'What

does it mean to be a black woman?'; 'What does it mean to be a black woman in the USA?'; 'What does it mean to be a black woman in a male-centered and white-dominant society?'; 'What does it mean to be an African-American writer or poet?,' etc., suggests ways in which identity can be articulated in a particular environment.

The above mentioned idea of "two-ness" can be applied to an appropriate interpretation of Angelou's poem "On the Pulse of Morning" [11] and Audre Lorde's "Coal" [13]. The synthetic image of oneself and another, the kaleidoscopic nature of the world outlook can find their poetical expression on two levels:

a) *a conceptual level* (Angelou appeals to the patriotic feelings of Americans as well as their cultural, social and ethnic roots, stressing a combined nature of identity markers);

b) *a linguostylistic level* (in Audre Lorde's poem "Coal" the poetics of 'blackness' appears as a trope of the feministic image of a womb / "... the total black ... from the earth's inside"/, or the antinomic notions /coal — diamond/. The overall message of the poem highlights the idea of pride in one's ethnic and national history, no matter how different from the mainstream it might be.

In addition, an inalienable part of a multicultural worldview is a reference, both conscious and unconscious, to the idea of "signifying." The term itself comes from African American studies developed by Henry L. Gates, who defined *signifyin(g)* as "a metaphor for formal revision, or intertextuality, within Afro-American literary tradition. ... [which] represents the peculiar relation African-American writers have with regard to standard English and the vernacular of black American speech" [qtd. in 1, 167]. Consequently, according to Gates, the ambivalence of African American literature, originates in an ancient controversy between the normative English writing format and oral narrative traditions and techniques of the black folk.

The crucial aspects of signifying — revision and repetition — aim at condemning prior lack of full and complete presentation of the events. As Olena Lomonos states, for a long period of time, African Americans were prohibited from encountering their cultural codes. Thus, their historical experience was mainly reflected in myths, folk tales and music, where signifying was a very peculiar and meaningful device through which to express attitudes towards reality [5, 155]. In literature signifying has become a rhetorical means employed by a number of African American authors, because it emphasized the original performative aspect of African American art. These traditional spirituals were promoted through performances, such as that of Maya Angelou's well-known poem "On the Pulse of Morning" [11], which was presented at the inauguration ceremony of President Clinton:

A Rock, A River, A Tree

...

line 40 There is a true yearning to respond to The singing river and the wise rock.

So say the Asian, the Hispanic, the Jew,  
The African and Native American, the Sioux,  
The Catholic, the Muslim, the French, the Greek,

line 45 The Irish, the Rabbi, the Priest, the Sheikh,  
The Gay, the Straight, the Preacher,  
The privileged, the homeless, the Teacher.  
They hear. They all hear  
The speaking of the Tree.

line 50 They hear the first and last of every tree  
Speaks to humankind. Come to me, here beside the river.  
Plant yourself beside me, here beside the river.  
Each of you, descendant of some passed on Traveller, has been paid for.

line 55 You, who gave me my first name,  
You Pawnee, Apache and Seneca,  
You Cherokee Nation, who rested with me,  
Then forced on bloody feet,  
Left me to the employment of other seekers-  
Desperate for gain, starving for gold.

line 60 You, the Turk, the Swede,  
the German, the Eskimo, the Scot,  
the Italian, the Hungarian, the Pole,  
You the Ashanti, the Yoruba, the Kru, bought,  
Sold, stolen, arriving on a nightmare  
Praying for a dream.

line 65 ...

line 100 Here on the pulse of this new day  
You may have the grace to look up and out  
And into your sister's eyes,  
Into your brother's face, your country  
And say simply

line 105 Very simply  
With hope —  
Good morning.

(Angelou, from "On the Pulse of Morning")

Recollecting the history of her nation on the territory of a new continent, the poetess resorts to conceptual tropes / images: "the rock," "the river," and "the tree". The author endows them with a symbolic connotative meaning that stands for

strength, wisdom, pride, beauty, vitality, tolerance, multitude of cultural implications, and "togetherness." The latter is visible in references to personal and possessive pronouns ("you," "yours", "we", "us", "I", "my"), which create the effect of presenting oneself

as a part of a whole nation. People of all ethnicities, religions, social strata, gender and ages (lines 42–47, 56–64) are united under the name of “brothers” and “sisters” (lines 102, 103). Considering herself to be one of them, Maya Angelou calls on her compatriots to have a hopeful vision of the future that becomes renewed, to listen to and hear the hearts of one another, and to read the wishes of happiness in the eyes of the neighbor.

Another of Maya Angelou’s poems “The Black Family Pledge” [12] also presents a symbolic re-reading of history and pity for the lost spiritual heritage of the ancestors. Even the mood and the compositional structure of the piece evoke a reconstruction of the way the cultural code can be transmitted to further generations. Thus, the code requires renewal as it has lost the basic values, such as wisdom, love and forgiveness as well as belief in God:

line 1     BECAUSE we have forgotten our ancestors,  
            our children no longer give us honor.

            BECAUSE we have lost the path our ancestors cleared  
            kneeling in perilous undergrowth,  
line 5     our children cannot find their way.

            BECAUSE we have banished the God of our ancestors,  
            our children cannot pray.

            BECAUSE the old wails of our ancestors have faded beyond our hearing,  
            our children cannot hear us crying.

line 10    BECAUSE we have abandoned our wisdom of mothering and fathering,  
            our befuddled children give birth to children  
            they neither want nor understand.

            BECAUSE we have forgotten how to love, the adversary is within our  
            gates, and holds us up to the mirror of the world shouting,  
            “Regard the loveless.”

line 15    Therefore we pledge to bind ourselves to one another, to embrace our  
            loneliest, to keep company with our loneliest, to educate our illiterate,  
            to feed our starving, to clothe our ragged, to do all good things,  
            knowing that we are more than keepers of our brothers and sisters.

            We ARE our brothers and sisters.

            IN HONOR of those who toiled and implored God with golden tongues,  
            and in gratitude to the same God who brought us out of hopeless desolation, we make  
line 20    this pledge.

*(Angelou, “The Black Family Pledge”)*

The poem is based on conceptual oppositions, though it acquires its integrated form due to the anaphoric repetition of the word ‘BECAUSE’ that suggests a cause-and-result follow-up in rendering the cultural code. By contrasting ancestors and children, Maya Angelou emphasizes the necessity of filling out the generation gap. This can be done by showing the significance of realizing the self as a member of a definite ethnic and social group. Logically, the author’s diction here

is also rich in antonymic vocabulary, which finds linguistic reflection in the following lexico-semantic and conceptual chains:

a) *generations* — ancestors, children, brothers, sisters, mothering, fathering, we;

b) *social group identity markers* — illiterate / educated, fed / starving, clothed / ragged;

c) *encoding and lack of understanding* — forget / no longer give honor, lose the path / not to find one’s

way, wisdom / refusal to understand, to love / regard the loveless, etc. The concluding metaphoric epithets serve as the overall message of the poem declared by the pledge: "In honor of those who toiled and implored God with golden tongues, ... 'in gratitude to the same God who brought us out of hopeless desolation'" (lines 20–23). These lines empower African American community to find its specific place within the multiethnic American society.

According to Henry Gates, whose opinions are grounded in the theory of Roland Barthes, the poetic form of the cultural code and its renewal suggest a parallel between the 'speakerly text,' as stated by Gates, and African American literary discourse where

"rhetorical strategy is designed to represent an oral literary tradition, designed 'to emulate the phonetic, grammatical, and lexical patterns of actual speech and produce the 'illusion of oral narration'." [Gates, qtd. in 1, 170].

Attributing this observation to an African American literary text, we can say that such kind of writing expresses both the point of view and the element of otherness within it. A written voice that is given to an oral story-telling illustrates the idea. It is certainly true that the multicultural nature of African American women's poetry engages the mentioned duality as well. The polyphony can vividly be seen in Sonia Sanchez's "Catch the Fire" [17]:

*line 1* (Sometimes I wonder:  
What to say to you now  
in the soft afternoon air as you  
hold us all in a single death?)

*line 5* I say —  
Where is your fire?  
I say —  
Where is your fire?  
You got to find it and pass it on.

*line 10* You got to find it and pass it on from you to me from me to her from her  
to him from the son to the father from the brother to the sister from  
the daughter to the mother from the mother to the child.  
Where is your fire? I say where is your fire?  
Can't you smell it coming out of our past?

*line 15* The fire of living... not dying  
The fire of loving... not killing  
The fire of Blackness...not gangster shadows.  
Where is our beautiful fire that gave light  
to the world?

*line 20* The fire of pyramids;  
The fire that burned through the holes of slaveships and made us breathe;  
The fire that made guts into chitterlings;  
The fire that took rhythms and made jazz;  
The fire of sit-ins and marches that made

*line 25* us jump boundaries and barriers;  
The fire that took street talk sounds  
and made righteous imhotep raps.  
Where is your fire, the torch of life  
full of Nzingha and Nat Turner and Garvey

*line 30* and DuBois and Fannie Lou Hamer and Martin  
and Malcolm and Mandela.  
Sister / Sistah Brother / Brotha  
Come /Come  
CATCH YOUR FIRE... DON'T KILL

*line 35* HOLD YOUR FIRE... DON'T KILL  
 LEARN YOUR FIRE... DON'T KILL  
 BE THE FIRE... DON'T KILL  
 Catch the fire and burn with eyes  
 that see our souls:  
*line 40* WALKING.  
 SINGING.  
 BUILDING.  
 LAUGHING.  
 LEARNING.  
*line 45* LOVING.  
 TEACHING.  
 BEING.  
 Hey. Brother / Brotha. Sister / Sista.  
 Here is my hand.  
*line 50* Catch the fire...and live.  
 live.  
 liveliveline.  
 liveliveline.  
 live.  
*line 55* live.

(Sanchez, "Catch the Fire")

The coexistence of voices is secured by abundant repetitions (lexical: "fire", "live"/"living", "catch"; syntactical parallel constructions: "the fire of living... not dying"/"the fire of loving...not killing"; "hold your fire...", "learn your fire...", "be the fire..."), free punctuation, allusions to jazz rhythms and precedent names: Nat Turner, Garvey, DuBois, Fannie Lou Hamer, Martin, Malcolm, Mandela) as well as conceptual dichotomies. Stylistically, the image of fire as a source of life, love and struggle, running throughout the whole piece, appears in the following metaphors: "catch your fire," "be the fire," "burn with eyes," "see our souls," "the fire of Blackness" (lines 36, 39, 40, 41, 19). The mentioned names provide historical context for identity search. They seem to be properly chosen (ranging from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to early 21<sup>st</sup> century) considering that these are the names of keynote spokespersons of the democratic views on African American rights.

In the final stanza (lines 50–57), the traditional call on future generations to continue living in pride and dignity rounds off the whole poem. Here, the reader is again plunged into authentic forms of African American poetic self-expression. Those include a reference to a metaphoric reflection of a long lasting and complex experience of African Americans as well as archetypal music patterns. All this is aimed at maintaining connections within the community and over generations. The poem is reminiscent of a dialogue, a spontaneous verbal and nonverbal interaction that requires active participation of all

participants. The call, loudly uttered by the lyrical heroine, is supposed to elicit a response from the listener in such a way that the use of a dialogue claims conscious connectedness to and importance of assessing women's knowledge claims [3, 763].

To sum up, we may state that African American women's poetry is a complex phenomenon embracing many cultural, ethnic and ethical levels. Such combination performs an extremely significant role in women authors' self-identification. Thus creativity appears to be an existential necessity rather than a mere hobby, or job for a woman. Audre Lorde claims:

For women, then, poetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence. It forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action. Poetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought... [14].

Thus, in the scrutinized pieces by Sonia Sanchez, Maya Angelou and Audre Lorde, the idea of personal and cultural identification acquires a number of poetic forms. In order to achieve this aim, the authors resort to such textual and stylistic devices as: allusion, linguistic and conceptual metaphor, symbol and other troping as well as music patterns and oral story telling techniques. The multicultural nature of African American women's writing proves to be polysemantic. Further research into their creativity, with emphasis laid on phonographic and compositional means of rendering various cultural codes should be advocated here.



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### **Ольга Долгушева**

#### **КУЛЬТУРНА ТА ОСОБИСТІСНА ІДЕНТИЧНІСТЬ АФРО-АМЕРИКАНСЬКОЇ ЖІНОЧОЇ ПОЕЗІЇ: МАЙЯ ЕНЖЕЛОУ, СОНЯ САНЧЕС ТА ОДРІ ЛОРД**

Статтю присвячено культурній та особистісній ідентифікації у творчості афро-американських жінок-поетів. Питання ідентифікації, що розглядається у поетичних та есеїстичних доробках Майї Енжелоу, Соні Санчес та Одрі Лорд, тлумачиться з точки зору його мультикультурних проявів. Останні включають національну, етнічну, расову й гендерну самосвідомість. Автором статті окреслюються стилістичні та риторичні засоби презентації самосприйняття на текстовому рівні, а саме: концептуальні та лінгвістичні дихотомії, алюзії на прецедентні імена, звернення до музичних і традиційних наративних прийомів, різного роду лексичних та синтаксичних повторів тощо. Особливу увагу приділено діалогічній природі поезії, що розглядається як з'єднувальний ланцюжок у передачі культурних кодів між поколіннями й членами спільноти.

Теоретичною базою слугували положення феміністичних студій та мультикультурного підходу до інтерпретації історії та літератури США.

**Ключові слова:** афро-американська жіноча поезія, ідентичність, мультикультуралізм, етнічне (культурне, гендерне) самоусвідомлення, двоголосся, сигніфікація, культурний код

**Ольга Долгушева**

### **КУЛЬТУРНАЯ И ЛИЧНОСТНАЯ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТЬ АФРО-АМЕРИКАНСКОЙ ЖЕНСКОЙ ПОЭЗИИ: МАЙЯ ЭНЖЕЛОУ, СОНЯ САНЧЕС И ОДРИ ЛОРД**

*В статье рассматривается проблема культурной и личностной идентификации в творчестве афро-американских поэтесс. Произведения Майи Энжелу, Сони Санчес и Одри Лорд анализируются с поликультурной позиции, которая включает в себя этнические, национальные, расовые и гендерные аспекты формирования самовосприятия.*

*Автор статьи также исследует лингвистические и риторические средства презентации культурной и личностной идентификации на текстовом уровне. К таким средствам относятся языковые и концептуальные оппозиции, аллюзии на прецедентные имена, обращение к музыкальным ритмам и традиционным фольклорным нарративным приемам, разного рода лексические и синтаксические повторы и др. Особое внимание уделяется диалогической природе поэзии как элементу, который обеспечивает связь поколений и членов общества в плане передачи культурных кодов.*

*Теоретическую базу статьи составляют положения феминистических студий и мультикультурного подхода к интерпретации истории и литературы США.*

**Ключевые слова:** афро-американская женская поэзия, идентичность, мультикультурализм, этническое (культурное, гендерное) самосознание, двухголосие, сигнификация, культурный код.

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**Володимир Кузьменко**

### **«ПИСЬМЕННИК — НЕРВОВА КЛІТИНА НАЦІЇ»: СПЕЦИФІКА НАЦІОНАЛЬНОЇ САМОІДЕНТИФІКАЦІЇ АВТОРА В «ЩОДЕННИКАХ» ОЛЕСЯ ГОНЧАРА**

*Стаття присвячена дослідженню «Щоденників» Олесь Гончара крізь призму специфіки національної самоідентифікації автора. Перший запис датовано червнем 1943 року, останній — липнем 1995 року.*

*З'ясовано, що українські національні ознаки проявляються в щоденниковій прозі О. Гончара як на рівні змісту, так і на рівні форми через систему пов'язаних між собою домінант. Простежено особливості їх виявлення в хронологічних нотатках митця. Здійснено аналіз основних мотивів, виявлених у «Щоденниках», які реалізуються в образній палітрі, архетипах, топонімах, об'єднаних етнонаціональною специфікою.*

*Світоглядні орієнтири письменника так само ідентифікували генезу народного сприйняття дійсності: від щирої апологетики соціалізму в довоєнний час, романтичного захоплення європейськими революційними ідеями, через втрати, трагедії, розчарування й невдачі війни, поступове усвідомлення справжньої сутності радянської влади, кривавих злочинів Сталіна проти власного народу, до невідомого захоплення нетривалою «хрущовською відлигою», ліквідація якої в брежнєвську добу переконала О. Гончара в необхідності демократизації суспільства, а Чорнобильська катастрофа, занепад національної духовності, витіснення української мови на маргінеси буття поставили його на чолі духовного відродження України.*

*Щоденники О. Гончара поглиблюють уявлення про автора як людину високого духовного заряду, людину щирої і принципової, істинного патріота рідної землі.*

**Ключові слова:** щоденник, національна самоідентифікація, автор, мемуарна література, жанр, стиль, художня саморефлексія.

Два останні десятиліття в українському письменстві та науці про нього виокремлюються неабиякою увагою не тільки авторів художніх творів, а й дослідників до жанру письменницького щоденника. Цьому сприяло декілька обставин: лібералізація суспільства, повернення в літературу

заборонених раніше постатей, потреба у висвітленні особистого погляду на суперечливу добу ХХ віку. З'явилась низка наукових студій О. Галича, Л. Курило, Г. Мазохи, В. Пустовіт, Т. Черкашиної, Н. Видащенко, А. Черниш, А. Галича, О. Максименко, присвячених дослідженню