

CONSTRUCTING THE SOCIAL MEMORY OF A PLACE: THE "SENSE OF PLACE" OF THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

Nataliya KHALINA

Professor, Ph. D.

(Altai State University, Russia)

nkhalina@yandex.ru, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2478-5669>

Abstract

The article discusses the modeling of a memory reservoir for the mobile mental landscape of the American frontier based on the Declaration of Independence of the States of America.

Keywords: *frontier, sense of place, the Declaration of Independence of the States of America, constructing reality*

Rezumat

În articol, se supune cercetării modelarea unui „rezervor de memorie” pentru redarea peisajului mental mobil al frontierei americane pe baza „Declarației de independență a statelor Americii.

Cuvinte-cheie: *frontieră, simțul spațiului, Declarația de independență a statelor Americii, construirea realității*

The turn of the XXth and XXIst centuries was marked with qualitative changes in the tempo and essence of social existence which, of course, was influenced by political transformations of society that entailed the movement of significant human flows from one region of the world to another. Migration processes, having become iconic processes of human life, have predetermined a certain inevitability of the modification of the mental landscape of the Earth and the consideration of frontier semantics in its formation.

Frontier semantics is a mental content that definitely becomes part of mental activity of a "migrant" who is intellectually and emotionally experiencing transformations that take place in his life. The mass migration of the population of Europe to the lands of America, the migration of the population of the Russian Empire to Europe, America and the countries of the Asia-Pacific region led to the development of identical behavioral models of both representatives of various ethnic groups and national groups themselves.

If we talk about self-identification of the migrants belonging to different ethnic groups, then the unifying component of their characteristic, non-identical worldviews represent the component of frontier semantics, requiring from its user, first of all, to be able to feel the value of land – the value of the place, the land that took (for a European who stepped on the land of America, or the one that remained "in the rear", "behind", in the past tense), but never in the "past" (for a Russian migrant).

The American frontier in the XIXth century occupied a strip of hilly prairie 600 kilometers long, which stretched from Canada to the current Mexican border, an area on the Great Plains, beyond the Forests of the Mississippi Valley, to the west of which the Rocky Mountains with snow-capped peaks rose. On this territory, the "other America" took its origin. In the modern formulation of research problems, according to I. Basalaeva (Basalaeva, 2012), the understanding of the frontier is far from being limited to the meaning of the territorial locus. The frontier is a landscape phenomenon, "the process and result of the social construction of reality, and therefore its representation is directly related to the mental sphere" (Basalaeva, 2012, p. 47).

In the case of the American frontier, there is a social construction of reality, associated primarily with the construction of historical memory, taking into account its integration with the historical consciousness of society [Romanovskaja, 2010]. Historical memory is a symbolic representation of the past, the most important component of self-identification of both an individual and society; memory is a deep source of human imagination. German egyptologist Ya. Assman (Assman, 2004) developed a theory of cultural memory, within which he distinguished between "living" communicative and symbolic cultural memory. Living communicative memory is associated with an oral tradition arising from the experience of the past and the cultivation of memories in the context of interpersonal interactions in everyday life.

Symbolic cultural memory correlates to a formalized tradition that goes beyond the experience of individuals or groups and is expressed in memorable places, dates, ceremonies in written, pictorial and fine arts monuments. Communicative memory is distinguished from cultural memory by its fragility (only 80-100 years) and the absence of generally recognized "fixation points" linking it with the deep past.

It is the communicative memory - little formalized, arising in the interactive context of human relations in everyday life - that is characteristic of the American frontier. V.S. Švyrev (Švyrev, 2003) recognizes the text in which culture is a continuous dialogue as a representative of the communicative type of rationality.

Ū.B. Grâznova (Grâznova, 1998) considers the text of culture as a reason for thought and a place of entry into the communicative space of culture. At the same time, it is argued that the text has a special structure, which is metaphorically designated as a "network", and the orientation of interpretation moves from the meaning-bearing elements to the existing connections between these elements. The signified belongs to the text space, which is expressed by such a text parameter as performativity. The performativity of a text is a condition for its entry into communication, its existence as a point of event generation.

The property of performativity is inherent in the text, which for the first time signified the fact of the creation/emergence of a new state entity and

type of state organization – the "Declaration of Independence", developed by the Philadelphia Congress and published on July 4, 1776 on the behalf of 13 States that existed at that time.

This was not the first declaration developed by American colonies in the struggle with England, in the War of Independence. It was preceded by Declaration of Rights and Grievances October 19, 1765; Virginia Nonimportation Resolutions, 17 May, 1769; Declaration and Resolves on Colonial rights of the First Continental Congress October 14, 1774; Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms (1775).

Although the author of the Declaration was Thomas Jefferson, a well-known opponent of slavery, all the ideas that were progressive for the XVIII century and proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence, concerned only the white population of the States, the rights of Indians, Negroes, former slaves on southern plantations, were not recognized. The further displacement of the Indians from their ancestral territories was not canceled, as well as the destruction by the colonists. Each colony was declared a state, and their totality formed the United States of America.

The "Declaration of Independence" was enthusiastically accepted by representatives of all population segments. Its text was read out to the sound of bells and cannon salutes.

The condition for the entry of the text "Declaration of Independence" (Declaration of Independence, 1776) into global communication was its performativity, the ability to exist in the communicative space as a point, or place, the generation of an event. The "declaration" acquires a unique function of a "place of memory", a commemorative mnemonic place which, according to P. Hutton (Hutton, 2003), strengthens stereotypes of consciousness, awakening specific memories of the past. When interpreting the "Declaration" as a place of memory, we are based on an expanded understanding of the terminological combination of "place of memory", proposed by P. Nora (Nora, 1989) and developed by other researchers (Székely, 2004), (Gorovei, 2017).

When interpreting the "Declaration" as a place of memory, we are based on an expanded understanding of the terminological combination "place of memory" proposed by P. Nora (Nora, 1989) who believes that "places of memory" can be events, people, buildings, traditions surrounded by a special symbolic aura. "Places of memory", performing the symbolic role of a reminder of the past, giving meaning to life in the present, exist due to the threat of memory destruction, to maintain a sense of the continuation of history.

Bott, Cantrill and Myers (2003) believe that a place can be represented as a point at which physical and cultural characteristics of space merge with the emotional perception of an individual and his functional needs. If we consider the "Declaration" in this way, then this text sets 4 vectors of development: geographical, cultural-landscape, ethos and functional-pragmatic.

The first vector involves the development and cognition of the actual geographical text of the territory, the rules of "reading" which are not

transmitted by the ancestors and are not included in the genetic capital. The lack of such skills in the arsenal makes it necessary to create and develop new strategies for reading a geographical text. The result of its reading becomes a cultural landscape. Calaã and Vedenin (1997) consider it as an integral and geographically localized set of natural, technical and socio-cultural phenomena formed as a result of the integrated influence of natural processes and artistic, creative, intellectual and life-supporting activities of the inhabitants of the territory. The marker of deconstruction zones, and, consequently, frontiers, in F. Turner's theory are "interested self-representations" such as *American social development, fluidity of American life, American life, the forces dominating American character, American character, westward expansion, American history.*

Understanding frontlines semantics and its role in the life of the frontier's settler – a frontiersman – made the basis of the theory of the American frontier by Frederick Jackson Turner (Turner Frederick Jackson, 1861-1932). The first step to work towards the establishment of the theory of the American frontier is the speech "The Significance of the Frontier in American History"), spoken in 1893, on the opening of the world exhibition in Chicago. The American historian speaks about the uniqueness of the American historical experience, interpreted through the phenomenon of the frontier, which becomes equivalent to its world significance. Here are several interpretations of F.D. Turner, including the comparison of the American frontier with the European frontier:

'The frontier is the line of most rapid and effective Americanization'.

"The American frontier is sharply distinguished from the European frontier – a fortified boundary line running through dense populations".

"The most significant thing about the American frontier is, that it lies at the

hither edge of free land. In the census reports it is treated as the margin of that settlement which has a density of two or more to the square mile".

"We shall consider the whole frontier belt, including the Indian country and the outer margin of the "settled area" of the census reports".

The presence of the threat of memory destruction and destruction of the place of memory initiated the development of an American strategy of culture, which received its verbal expression. Strategic culture as a system of symbols includes (1) basic ideas of the strategic environment ordering, or strategic environment, i.e. the role of war in the human situation (it is an inevitability or aberration, distortion, deviation from the truth, about the nature of the enemy and the threat he poses (with zero or variable sum) and (2) taking into account the effectiveness of the use of force (the ability to control the results of interaction, eliminate threats, as well as determining the conditions under which the use of force is useful).

Together, these two components of strategic culture constitute the central paradigm of strategic culture (Johnston, 1995). The central strategic paradigm proposed by A.I. Johnson (1995) makes it possible to clearly demonstrate the "volume" of the memory place and the memory reservoir modeled for the mobile mental landscape of the American frontier and its frontiersman.

The text that actually composes this volume, we believe, for the mental history of the American frontier and the history of the American mental landscape is the Declaration of Independence of the States of America, adopted on July 4, 1776. This text contains at least two symbol systems: a point-verbal system, which is comparable to the algorithm for modeling the behavioral text of a frontiersman, and a system for clocking the speech-thinking activity of the innovative political and organizational structure "The States of America".

A chain of verbal symbols, indicating the way forward in the text of The anonymous Declaration of the thirteen United States of America, paves a route through the mental landscape of a new geopolitical unity of the "States of America". The system of verbal symbol connections deconstructs the original for the American frontier – European, Anglo-Saxon, semantic matrix. Moreover, as the main method of deconstruction, F. Turner chooses the method of segmentation or fermentation, thereby defining as a dominant both for the interpretation and construction of the organizational whole of the "States of America" the relations of mereology – the relationship of a part to the whole, the relationship of a part to a part within a single whole, which is reflected in the nomination of this whole "United States of America".

Actually, the territorial principle itself is being deconstructed: humanity is offered for a project approval of self-organization of local identifications - migrants from Europe to America (America as a continent) create a system of interaction, sociability of the community, "thrown", like a network, identified as a "place of feeling", "place of memory" by the native, non-European, population of these territories. As a result, there is a deconstruction of the semantic continuum authentic for America, "cutting" it into segments or strata.

Each State is also a certain state, a "sense of place", i.e. building one's relationship with the space of settlement, assuming mastery of this space and possession of the space as 'one's own'. This, apparently, is where the parameters 'knowledge', 'competence', 'skills' will appear as mandatory parameters for a European socializing through educational institutions. The requirement of mobility for a student at the university of the XXIst century, apparently, also has its roots in the requirement of mobility of the frontiersman's mental boundaries, plasticity of his cognitive contour.

According to V.P. Šestakov (2012), the propensity to change places, migration has always been a feature of Americans. America in the XIXth century resembled a large hotel, where someone constantly moved in, someone left

or came for some reason. The American historian George Pearson defined in his book "Mobile America" three factors determining the formation of the American character, or the "three M factor": migration, mobility, movement (Šestakov, 2012).

Pearson contrasted the "Three M factor" with Turner's "frontier hypothesis". He believes that the development of Western lands - the movement to the West - is only a part of the process characteristic of the American society with tendencies towards migration, mobility and movement.

Historian Henry Commager argues that the American, having a weak sense of the past, had a sharpened vision of the future (Commager, 1956, p. 6). The American's mind was not focused on history: the American looked into the past with the eyes of the future: not disorderly dusty towns, but sparkling cities, not cluttered shops, but factories bursting with fire, and not rutted roads, but rails running away into the distance.

In the text of The anonymous Declaration of the thirteen United States of America, a stratification model of knowledge is created for an American, many Americans, whose active components are strata describing individual "slices", aspects of the subject area.

The life tasks of the future society are defined in the declaration by three textual conceptual dominants: THE COURSE (PROCESS), the BOOK OF JUDGES (Judges), SEPARATE RESIDENCE (SEPARATION). The construction, protection and redesign of personal identity become a constant life task of a person of the American frontier (Zajceva, 2016). The construction of existential identity in the discourse of freedom and dignity serves as a response to cultural and social challenges to the image of a holistic, projective and developing community.

Žiláková (2005), describing the stratification model, asserts that each stratum (layer) is an inhomogeneous semantic network with a variable topology containing the names of the properties of objects, the connections between them. Relationships between layers are characterized as relationships that exist between objects belonging to these layers. In the text the unanimous Declaration of the thirteen United States of America three strata-sections are obvious: Course (course, progress), Judges (Book of Judges, magistrates), Separation (partition, separate residence). The Course stratum (course, progress) is constructed by lexical units that model the volume of the content space of the constructed new type of state - the state of connections of landscapes of consciousness, fragments of physical space, physical landscape: *the Laws of Nature, Nature's God, Creator, Rights, Life, Liberty, Happiness, Governments, Men, Form of Government, Right of the People, Government Safety, Happiness. Governments Object Despotism, Government, Guards Colonies; Systems of Government. King of Great Tyranny States. Facts Assent Laws, Governors Laws Assent Laws Representation in the Legislature, Records, Representative Houses / the Legislative Annihilation, the People; the State, these States; the Laws for Naturalization of*

Foreigners Appropriations of Lands, the Administration of Justice, Assent to Laws Judiciary.

The Judges stratum section (The Book of Judges, Judges) plans the scope of the "power discourse" of a new state, the rules to regulate relations within the network structure of states that form the mental landscape of the territory and, accordingly, the prospects for integration into the global geopolitical space: *Will New Offices, Officers Standing Armies without the Consent the Military the Civil Assent Acts Legislation: Quartering Trial, from punishment for any Murders States, Trade, Taxes, Consent, Trial by Jury: Seas the free System of English Laws Province, Arbitrary Boundaries Colonies: Charters, Laws, the Forms of our Governments: own Legislatures, Government Protection and waging War our Coasts, Armies of foreign Mercenaries Cruelty the Head of a civilized nation. Citizens Captive Seas Arms their Country, Brethren, Hands. Indian Savages, Oppressions Petitioned for Redress Petitions A Prince a Tyrant, We Brittish.*

Separation stratum plans the scope of the "power discourse" of a new state, the rules to regulate relations within the network structure of the states that form the mental landscape of the territory and, accordingly, the prospects for integration into the global geopolitical space: *Enemies in War, in Peace Friends. We, Representatives, United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, the Supreme Judge, the Name, Authority the good People Colonies, That United Colonies Right Free Independent States; Absolved Allegiance the British Crown, the State of Great Britain, Free Independent States, Power War, Peace, Alliances, Commerce, Acts and Things Independent States Declaration, Providence, Lives, our Fortunes Honor.*

The Separation stratum is a kind of conclusion of the frontier judgment, which summarizes (a) the main postulates of the strategic culture of a new state-organizational formation; (b) the "points" joint cognitive route of territories, the content of which is filled according to the principle of "melting pot"; (c) differentiation of two states of consciousness "war" and "peace", which alternately act as a dominant, defining reflection models relevant to the newly created organizational system (while it is necessary to clearly realize that the "United States" is primarily organizational culture); d) a draft behavioral text of a new type of state, which life policy is regulated by the organizational culture of 'independent states-countries' for which at least three types of independence are projected – three variants of organizational freedom as a presentation of organizational culture: (1) independence from the power of the "head office" - Britons from Britain, (2) independence of the formed political landscape from the physical landscape (the phenotext of the nation from the genotext), (3) independence of the state of war from the state of peace, and vice versa.

The basis of the created behavioral text becomes the movement "deep", structurally regulated by two positions: (1) the actual initial moment of movement, the starting point for the beginning of movement in space, (2) the vector of movement, respectively determining the direction of movement and presumably requiring the consumption of human and natural resources.

In American grammar, the vector of movement is transformed into the deep structure of the language of Britons independent from Britain, or a system of surface points that outlines the contours of the cognitive route laid in the grammar of the English language on a territory that is not native to it. Thus, the use of the depth category does not imply immersion in a semantic reservoir, a reservoir of meanings. This is "immersion", or moving further, moving forward in the plane.

As J. Derrida believes (Derrida, 2007), the world is often characterized by the process of "sliding" the plane into the depth and "bringing "the depth" to the "shoal" of the plane. J. Derrida considers the topological dynamics of depth and surface. The philosopher introduces the concept of "abyss" as an assumption of the possibility of their complete "wrapping". J. Derrida eliminates the boundary between the plane and depth, thereby he establishes the fundamental equality of all directions and connections of the world. The plane for Derrida is a space of fundamentally equal events, a space devoided of height and depth, containing a dimension of "event". According to Deleuze, disembodied events play on the surface of things, like a fog, a thing and its depth exist as a mixture, one thing flows out of another thing, like a liquid.

Political scientists define culture as a kind of ideal model in order to distinguish it from behavior as a dependent variable. However, it is recognized that there is no one-to-one correspondence between cultural forms and decision-making. The actual concept of political culture used by political scientists is considered as political codes, rules, recommendations, assumptions that impose strict restrictions on the concept of the political environment. Regarding culture as a whole, it is recognized that it consists of general assumptions and decision-making rules that determine the order of formation of individual and group ideas about the social, organizational or political environment. Cultural models of behavior are models of interaction of representatives of cultures with the environment.

Strategic culture is associated with a unique ordered set of strategic choices, on the basis of which it is possible to make an assumption about the possible behavior of people in certain circumstances. Strategic culture is an ideational environment that restricts behavioral choices. But it can also be assumed that these limits should allow us to make specific predictions about the choice strategy.

Strategic culture is an integrated system of symbols (for example, argumentation structures, languages of analogy, metaphors) that acts to establish pervasive and long-term strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and effectiveness of military force in interstate political affairs.

Strategic culture as a "system of symbols" consists of two parts: (1) basic assumptions about the ordering of the strategic environment, that is, about the role of war in human affairs (whether it is inevitable or it is an aberration), about the nature of the enemy and the threat he poses (with zero

or variable amounts) and about the effectiveness of the use of force (about the ability to control the results and eliminate threats, as well as the conditions under which the applied force is useful). Together they form the central paradigm of strategic culture; (2) the second part consists of assumptions at a more operational level, which strategic options are the most effective to combat the threat of the environment, determined by the answers to the first three questions.

Human thought affects the landscape surrounding it, and human beings change the territory of their habitat on a much larger scale than other living beings. The earth around us, according to J. E. Malpas, one of the recognized researchers of the ideology of place, is not only a reflection of our practical and technological capabilities, but also a reflection of our culture, our needs, our hopes, concerns and aspirations (Malpas, 2004).

E. Casey insists that there is no knowledge or sense of place other than the knowledge 'to be in this place, to be able to feel this place' (Casey, 1993). The nuclear component of frontier semantics, a kind of hypersystem, as well as the nuclear element of temporhythm, has become a space that has taken over the status of the metanarrative framework of modern civilization from the category of time, and identified with the component of the space of experience - a Place, a structural element of which, according to Basalaeva (2012), is a sense of Place, constituted by individual biography.

The digitalization of social time has abolished its model as a vector of movement that encourages social action, replacing it with the desire for a timeless experience of the current moment in heterotopic spaces and institutionalizing the non-classical concepts of 'place', 'flow', 'network'. The place began to be understood as a meaningful event-stay, the uniqueness of which is enhanced by a sense of belonging. A place is already a semantic complex, a pattern that defines the scope of actions in accordance with certain rules, the connection of the physical landscape and social interactions typical for it.

References

- Assman, Â. (2004). *Kul'turnaâ pamât': pis'mo, pamât' o prošlom i političeskaâ identičnost' v vysokih kul'turah drevnosti* (perevod s nemeckogo M. M. Sokol'skoj. Âzyki slavânskoj kul'tury).
- Basalaeva, I.P. (2012). *Social'naâ dinamika v lokal'nom sociokul'turnom prostranstve*. Avtoreferat dissertacii na soiskanie učenój stepeni kandidata filosofskih nauk. Izdatel'stvo Kemerovskogo universiteta.
- Bott, S., Cantrill, J. G., & Myers, O. E Jr. (2003). Place and the Promise of Conservation Psychology. *Human Ecology Review*, 10(2), 100-112.
- Čalaâ, I.P., Vedenin, Ū.A. (1997). *Kul'urno-landšaftnoe rajonirovanie Tverskoj oblasti*. Rossijskij naučno-issledovatel'skij institut kul'turnogo i prirodnogo nasledia.

Casey, E.S. (1983). *Getting back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*. Indiana University Press.

Commager, H. S. (1950). *The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Thought and Character*. Oxford University Press.

Declaration of Independence: a Transcription. <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>.

Delëz, Ź. (1998). *Logika smysla*. M. Fuko (per. s fr.). Delovaâ kniga.

Derrida, Ź. (2000). *Pis'mo i razliãe*. Akademiãeskij proekt Sankt-Peterburg.

Gorovei, Źt. S. (2017). *Mãnãstirea Dragomirna* (ed. a 2-a). Putna.

Grãznov, Ŭ.B. (1998). *Performativnye teksty v metodologii nauki*. Avtoref. diss. uã. st. kand. filosof. nauk. Moskva.

Hatton, P. (2003). *Istoriã kak iskusstvo pamãti*. Izd-vo «Vladimir Dal».

Johnston, A.I. (1995). Thinking about Strategic Culture. *International Security*, 19(4), 32-64.

Mahlas, J.E. (2004). *Place and Experience. A Philosophical Topography*. Cambridge University Press.

Nora, P. (1989). Between Memory and History. In *Les lieux de mémoire. Représentations*, 26, 7-24.

Romanovskaja, E. V. (2010). Moris Hal'bvaks: kul'turnye konteksty pamãti. *Izvestiã Saratovskogo universiteta. Ser. Filosofiã. Psihologiã. Pedagogika*, 10 (3), 39-44.

Źestakov, V.P. (2021). Amerikanskaâ kul'tura: v poiskah nacional'noj identičnosti (ã.1). *Kul'turologičeskij Źurnal*, 4 (10), <https://readera.org/170174289>.

Źvyrev, V.S. (2003). *Racional'nost' kak cennost' kul'tury. Tradiciã i sovreemennost'*. Progress-Tradiciã.

Székely, M.M. (2004). Mãnãstirea Putna – loc de memorie. In *Źtefan cel Mare Źi Sfãnt. Atlet al credinãei creŹtine. Sfãnta Mãnãstire Putna*.

Turner, F. J. (1893). *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*. <https://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/gilded/empire/text1/turner>.

Zajceva, Ŭ.E. (2016). Â-narrativ kak instrument konstruivovaniã identičnosti: êkzistencional'no-narrativnyj podhod. *Vestnik SPbGU*, 16(1), 118-136.

Źilãkova, L. Ŭ. (2007). Metody poroŹdeniã znanij v dinamiãeskoj stratifikacionnoj. In *Konferenciã "Intellektual'nyj analiz informacii"*, Kiev, 2007. <http://www.iai.kpi.ua/archive/2007>.