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Anna Kolisnychenko

Hart Crane`s interpretation of Indian princess Pocahontas in “The Bridge”

One of the interesting interpretation of Native American mythology is represented in Hart Crane`s poem “The Bridge”. One brilliant example is the section “Powhatan's Daughter”. Obviously Crane did not know that Pawhatan was a tribal title for the Dream-Visioner, not a person`s name. Especially since the leader was not the real father of the Indian princess, but the "father" of the whole tribal alliance. Although the most common information is that her father was a famous leader of the Pohatan Indians, who managed to unite more than thirty tribes (about twenty thousand people) living on the Atlantic coast under his authority. One of the most common variants of translating the Pocahontas nickname is "naughty". Hart Crane in the epigraph (taken from a book by John Smith that was auctioned in the UK in 2002) initially used exactly the same characterization - Pocahontas is shown during obscene games with the colonists' children. For the poet, Pocahontas is a mythical personification of all American land. Crane explains the main role of Pocahontas, interpreting it as a mythical natural symbol that represents the physical embodiment of the entire continent. Charles Larson calls her "America's first woman," "Eve's daughter," "child of the forest," "the mother of us all," "the Great Mother Earth of all Americans." In a letter to the Queen Captain Smith called Pocahontas the first resident of Virginia who spoke English and gave birth to an English-born child. Despite the fact that the legend of Pocahontas and Smith as lovers is found in many films and literary works, but there is no historical confirmation of this fact. Paula Gunn Allen in “Pocahontas: Medicine Woman, Spy, Entrepreneur, Diplomat” recounts that this Indian princess has many names: Matoaka – birth name; Amonute - the spiritual name of sorceress and shaman; Lady Rebecca - a Christian name given in England (a hint of biblical Rebecca who had dark skin and became the mother of two twin sons, that is, two nations; though Pocahontas actually had only one son); and Pocahontas - a teenage nickname. The origin of this nickname is still not

accurate, but two versions are preferred. The first interprets Pocahontas as derived from “powa, pawa” - a kind of energy and paranormal abilities that make it possible to anticipate future events, treat sick people, animals, plants; connected with magic. Even John Smith in his memoirs explains own salvation by princess as part of a special magical ritual. Another version of the interpretation of the name is related to the origin of pocohaak (pocohack), which translates as "evil", "penis". Paula Gunn Allen notes that despite the renunciation of Pocahontas in favor of Rebecca, the Indian has forever retained the spiritual name Ammonut, signaling a lifelong connection with American soil and its traditions. Crane portrays Pocahontas as an eternal bride, turning her into a goddess-earth, "virgin for the last of men." Thus, a ritual dance is a "creative act of time" that combines flesh and imagination; and the bridge stretches between the past and the present. In its highest manifestation Pocahontas is the Muse, Eros, who is constantly pushing for creativity. In “Indiana” section this image acquires an archetypal meaning, transformed into a mother, into the homeless squaw carrying a child. Crane especially distinguishes her eyes: expressive, full of love. That is, in the part of Powhatan`s Daughter, Pocahontas undergoes a series of metamorphoses, beginning with the Indian princess (a real historical figure), and then - the eternal bride, nature, land and mother. As Pocahontas, according to legend, sought to reconcile colonists with Native American tribes, in such an indirect way Crane also understood her figure as an element of the union of the traditions and the innovations, spiritual and material.