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The Concept of Duality in Culture and Myths of Lakota Indians

Koncept duality v kultuře a mýtech Lakotů

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Abstract

The Concept of Duality in Culture and Myths of Lakota Indians

The purpose of the dissertation is to explore and research the broad topic of culture of Lakota Indians from the perspective of secondary abstraction inspired by the structuralist approach to anthropology. The concept of duality is perceived here as a general concept which is – as it is our belief – present across various categories and areas of Lakota culture, both in the past and in the present. The dissertation is conceived as a set of chapters each of which deals with a different area of Lakota culture from the perspective of this secondary abstraction.

First, we specify and define our understanding of duality and show how the original approach of structural anthropology has been modified in the course of time by postmodernists' critique. The theoretical introduction is followed by studies of four areas of Lakota culture in which the concept of duality is shown. The first two topics – Lakota myths and traditional visual art of the Lakota – are based primarily on ethnographical data collected by other researchers of the area. On the other hand, the other two areas – Lakota identity and the phenomenon of contemporary summer powwows in Lakota reservations – are based largely on the author's research in this area in summer 2014 and 2015. However, we have attempted to set the issue of Lakota culture in the context of interconnected global cultural issues through the study of contemporary European hobbyist movement.

Abstrakt

Koncept duality v kultuře a mýtech Lakotů

Tato práce se zabývá širokým tématem kultury indiánů kmene Lakotů z perspektivy, která je inspirována abstrahujícím přístupem, jaký v antropologii představili strukturalisté. Koncept duality je chápán jako obecný koncept, který je možné chápat – jak jsme přesvědčeni – jako kategorii přítomnou napříč oblastmi lakotské kultury, ať už té, kterou označujeme jako tradiční, nebo kulturou v její současné podobě. Tato disertační práce se v jednotlivých kapitolách postupně zabývá různými tématy lakotské kultury právě z hlediska této sekundární abstrakce.

Jako první je upřesněno a definováno naše chápání pojmu duality a zabýváme se též vývojem, jakým prošel původně strukturalistický přístup k tomuto tématu díky kritice pozdějších postmodernistů. Po tomto teoretickém úvodu následují kapitoly věnující se čtyřem tématům lakotské kultury. V těchto kapitolách ukazujeme, jak se do různých oblastí kultury promítá právě koncept duality. První dvě témata – mýty Lakotů a tradiční lakotské vizuální umění – jsou zpracována na základě dat získaných v etnografických muzeích nebo v literatuře, která se těmito tématy zabývá. Naopak dvě zbývající kapitoly, které se zaměřují na identitu Lakotů a současná powwow, která se konají na území lakotských rezervací, využívají do velké míry data získaná během terénního výzkumu v této oblasti v létě 2014 a 2015. Zároveň jsme se pokusili zasadit téma lakotské kultury do kontextu současného globalizovaného světa, a to skrze studii, která se věnuje evropskému hobbyistickému hnutí.

Keywords: duality, structure, Native Americans, Lakota myths, Lakota art, Lakota identity, powwows, hobbyism

Klíčová slova: dualita, struktura, původní Američané, mýty Lakotů, lakotské umění, identita, powwow, hobbyisté

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Introduction

Duality as a term and concept and how we perceive it

As the title of the dissertation suggests, our primary focus in the research is duality and dual aspect of Lakota culture¹. How do we understand this term, and why did we choose to focus on it? The culture of one of the most populous American Indian tribes rich and though it is perceived as “exotic” from the European perspective, it is – at the same time – not completely unknown to the majority of inhabitants of the continent, mainly on account of the imagery about Native Americans presented through popular media. The concept of duality has been set up as one of the starting points of perceiving and considering the complex and diverse system of which Lakota culture consists mainly because it is one of the basic constituents that form the very basis of Lakota mythology and worldview, at last in our (Western, Euro-American, scientific, non-indigenous) point of view.

In terms of methodology we have collected information for our examination of Lakota culture using various approaches. The section on myths was based on the study of collections of Lakota myths which were published in various time periods. Similarly, in the chapter on traditional visual art we also relied on collections from the pre-reservation era, namely on collections of Ethnological Museum of Berlin, Náprstek Museum of Asian, African and American Cultures in Prague, and World Museum Vienna whose curators allowed us to study objects in their depositories. The dissertation is also based on data collected during a fieldwork research in Rosebud, Standing Rock and Pine Ridge Indian Reservations. In two month-long stays in the reservations in summers 2014 and 2015 we have visited the areas with primary focus on powwows. Through initial observation phase we became acquainted with many Lakota who agreed to provide semi-structured or unstructured interviews on selected issues. Some interview partners preferred the form of a narrative interview.

¹ We are aware that the word culture has many connotations and meanings. In the dissertation we understand the word in its most general sense, as the set of ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society (here the Lakota). For more on the issue of culture see Horáková's book *Kultura jako všelék* (Horáková, 2012)

The chapter on European hobbyists is based on European powwows we have visited throughout years 2013, 2014 and 2015, both in summer and winter. Again, the primary method for collecting data was a semi-structured interview, which was – in the case of German hobbyists – often realized with the help of an interpreter. At powwows in Kladno, Berlin and Munchen we contacted Czech, German, Slovak and Polish powwow dancers.

In the dissertation we deal with the structuralist theory applied in cultural anthropology. This approach was often used by structuralists to analyse myths of indigenous cultures to study the given nation or tribe. Similarly, we also start our research on Lakota culture and the concept of duality which we perceive as distinct in it with study Lakota myths. To illustrate the notion of duality we will start with the example of Lakota myths of the creation of the world as they can be found in Ullrich's collection of Lakota myths² and legends (Ullrich, 2002)

Three Lakota myths of the creation of the world (a shortened outline):

1.

Iyanȝ (Stone) had no beginning, and once there was nothing but him in the whole world. Around him there was *Hánȝ* (Darkness). Stone was shapeless and soft, and he had all the energy and power hidden in himself. He decided to create a new thing, an enormous disc named *Makhá* (Earth) as a part of himself, but during this process his veins opened up and all his blood which became rivers and lakes flowed away from his body, and he became shrunk and hard. Force was separated from water, and it became *Škán* – the energy that moves everything in the world, and which got a form of the sky above the Earth. Then *Škán* created lights and also *Wí* (the Sun) to warm the Earth. *Hán* (Darkness) alternated with *Anp* (Light), and thus day and night were created – the first of the four Lakota time periods. The four sacred beings were *Wí* (the Sun), *Škán* (Energy), *Ínyan* (Stone) and *Makhá* (Earth). Together they form the unity of *Wakhan Tanka*³. Each of the sacred beings created another

² For more literature on Native American myths see for example *The Morphology of North American Indian Folktales* by Alan Dundes (Dundes, 1964)

³ The concept of *Wakhan Tanka* is very complex for the Lakota. For more information on their understanding of it see Ullrich's epilogue to Czech edition of *Black Elk Speaks* (Neihardt J. G., 1998, pp. 282-287)

being to be accompanied. *Wí* created his woman counterpart – *Wi-wín* (the Moon). *Makhá* created a being called *Unkté* (Passion). *Škán*, the source of all movement, created *Thaté* (Wind), and *Ínyan* created *Wakínyan*, a terrible thunder being that has to hide himself with clouds, because those who see him, go mad and start doing crazy things. *Wakínyan* himself is the opposite of all natural things: He cries when he is happy, he is kind when he is in rage. *Wakínyan* takes pleasure in contradictions and opposites. Any person who sees him in his real form becomes *heyókha* (restorer), and from that day on he acts in a crazy way, like a fool. Those eight sacred beings formed couples, and their children gradually created all aspects and features of our world as we know it nowadays. Thus *Ksá* (Wisdom) who was a son of *Ínyan* and *Unkté* came into the world. The eight sacred beings also created first human beings – the Buffalo Nation. They lived below ground, and their only responsibility was to serve the sacred beings during their feasts. The Earth was populated by animal and plant nations. (Ullrich, 2002, pp. 16-20)

2.

The Buffalo Nation lived below ground for a long time. The most beautiful of them was *Ité*, the daughter of their chief named *Wazí* and his wife whose name was *Kánka*. *Ité* was so beautiful, that *Thaté* (the Wind) fell in love with her, but *Gnaški* (Folly) also competed for her love. *Gnaški* was a son of *Unkté* and her own son *Íya*, and what he liked the most was tricking others into actions or situations in which they would embarrass or ridicule themselves. In the end *Ité* chose *Thaté*, and *Gnaški* was so furious that he ridiculed *Ksá* (Wisdom) in front of all the sacred beings: He persuaded *Ksá* that both of them would take the form of two almost identical handsome young men, who would be possible to distinguish from each other only after a careful examination. Both *Ksá* and *Gnaški* did as they agreed, but *Gnaški* soon exploited his resemblance. At a feast he waited until *Ksá* left the circle, sat on his place and did his best to ridicule *Ksá* in front of other sacred beings. Only *Škán* recognized who he really was. When *Ksá* came back, *Škán* looked at him with reproach, and told him that from that day on *Ksá* (Wisdom) and *Gnaški* (Folly) would be

tied together with a bond, and that only after a careful examination it would be possible to distinguish who is who.

Ksá was very unhappy about it, and that is why *Íya*, an evil giant managed to persuade him into another trick. At every feast *Ksá* chose someone from the Buffalo Nation, and he secretly took away his wits. *Íya* then announced that the person was possessed by an evil spirit named *iktómi* (a spider), and that he would chase the spirit away, which he always (again with the secret help of *Ksá*) did, but one day *Ksá* himself became possessed. From that day he is known as *Iktómi*, and he no longer lives among sacred beings, but he lives among people whom he tricks, deceives and mocks. (Ullrich, 2002, pp. 25-26)

3.

Ité, the most beautiful of the Buffalo Nation and the wife of *Thaté* got pregnant, and she gave birth to boy quadruplets. *Wazí* and *Kánka* were very proud that their daughter was a wife of one of the sacred beings, and their behaviour changed. They started to act as if they were sacred beings themselves. *Kánka* persuaded her daughter to seduce *Wí* (the Sun) and to make him forget his wife *Wi-Wí* (the Moon). *Wazí*, *Kánka*, *Ité* and *Wí* were punished for this. *Wazí* became an evil wizard *Wazíya*, and his wife became a witch named *Wakánka*. Both still live their lonely life on earth, and they do harm to people. *Ité* was also made to live on the earth's surface. On the back of her head a second and very ugly face grew up, and she became *Anung-Ité* (Double Face) – an evil being that kidnaps small children from their mothers. Before she left the world below earth she gave birth to her fifth son. *Wí* was punished by his separation from his wife. While he wanders through the sky during the day, she wanders during the night. They keep going closer and further from each other, but every time they are close, *Wi-wí* hides her face. That is how the third time – the month was created.

Iktómi – who had been *Ksá* before – was excluded from the circle of sacred beings by *Škán* – the most powerful of them. *Iktómi* replied: “my father *Ínyan* has been in this world before everything else, he is the origin of all beings. I am his first child, and from the beginning I have desired nothing else than other beings' content. I am the creator of all

enjoyment, delight and amusement. I have created all languages, and have given names to all birds and animals⁴. I have always respected those who respected others. I have always done my best to help and serve both sacred beings and people to the content of all. For this reason my desire has been to be respected as one of the sacred beings. My second parent, however, was *Wakínyan*, who is shapeless and strange, and for that reason, my appearance is absurd. Although I have done many deeds to help others, I have been ridiculed. This has numbed my desire to help others, and I have decided to take revenge. I will trick and ridicule everybody, no one will be safe from me, except you *Škán* because you are the only being I cannot reach. Everybody beware of Iktómi.”

The four sons of Iktómi began to live on the surface of Earth together with *Ité*. Each of the four was of a different temperament, and each created one of the four directions. *Éya* created the West, and he is accompanied by *Wakínyan* – the winged Thunder Being. *Yáta* – the oldest of the brothers – rules the cold North, and his companion is the wizard *Wazíya*. *Yánpa* created the East, and *Okága* rules the South. Their fifth younger brother – *Ýúm* – who was born prematurely has remained forever a playful child, and he became a light wind. These four brothers wander around the edge of the World, and the time that takes them to go around the whole circle has created the fourth time – a year. The brothers also fight each other continuously, which causes the changing of the four seasons.

The Earth was populated by birds and animals, but there were only three people, and that was not enough for *Iktómi*, who wanted to do more tricks. One day he and *Anung-Ité* dressed themselves as a young couple, and they set off to the people living underneath the ground to persuade them to live on the Earth’s surface. They told them that up there was a plenty of beautiful buffalo hides, enough meat for everybody, and the life there is much easier. In the end they convinced seven men and their wives and children to follow them on the surface, but *Iktómi* led them to a place where there was neither firewood, nor animals they could hunt. The people were desperate, and *Iktómi* laughed at their misery. Later *Wazíya* and *Wakánka* led the people to the country with pines and they taught them

⁴ In Lakota creation stories, the living beings of the World are divided into these two groups, which differ slightly from the Western taxonomy. See Paul Goble’s version of Lakota myths. (Goble, 2009).

how to hunt, tan buffalo hides, and make clothes and arrows. These seven families were the ancestors of all the Lakota people. (Ullrich, 2002, pp. 24-25)

The outline of the three above described myths of the creation of the world is brief. However, they can illustrate why the concept of duality has been chosen as a cornerstone of the thesis. Let us start with *Iktómi*, the Lakota trickster and cultural hero, because from our perspective he can be understood as an embodiment of duality – his personality represents a combination of completely opposing characteristics of wisdom and thoughtlessness, respect and waggery, the creating and the destroying power. According to Lakota myths *Iktómi* has given names to all birds, animals and things in the world, and he is the being which invented all languages that people speak. On the one hand, he is the originator of human enjoyments and humours, on the other hand, he always attempts to spoil and destroy what people create and what they have joy from. The origin of *Iktómi* himself is in fact a dual one. He is a son of the oldest of sacred beings – *Inyan* (the Stone). In Lakota myths (Ullrich, 2002) or (Goble, ...Walking Along...Plains Indian trickster stories, 2011) this is indicated by the way *Iktómi* addresses other characters: “Younger brother.” He always begins his speech in this way when he talks to an animal or a bird in a myth. And what do we mean by stating that *Iktómi*'s character has a dual origin? One of his parents, *Inyan* – the Stone – represents the essence hardness: he is the one who, according to Lakota myths, gives concrete shape and form to the Earth. However, the other parent of *Iktómi* is *Wakínyan* – the thunder being – who is shapeless and formless. This is also the reason why *Iktómi*'s appearance is ridiculous.

We can see that the personality of the Lakota trickster could be perceived as consisting of two elements opposing each other and forming his essence. In other words, we can view *Iktómi* as a dual being; having a binary character. However, this duality does not appear in Lakota myths only in connection with the trickster. All the four sacred beings that together form the world have their companions with whom they match and make a contrasting pair. Let us remind this dualization in a short scheme: (Ullrich, 2002)

Iyan (Stone) has created, and is accompanied by *Wakínyan*, the Thunder Being.

Wi (the Sun) has *Wi-wí* (the Moon) as his counterpart.

Škán, the source of all movement is associated with *Thaté* (Wind).

Makhá (the Earth) created a being called *Unkté* (Passion).

Let this summary of Lakota creation myths serve as an illustration which attempts to prove that the concept of duality is present in their traditional oral history. However, presenting duality in creation myths as a core of the assumption that the phenomena takes occurrence in other spheres of Lakota culture, both traditional and what can be perceived as modern or contemporary, needs to be explained in more detail, with the historical development of theory in anthropology taken into account. A cultural anthropologist and a philosopher Claude Lévi-Strauss had in the half of the 20th century defined a base of what later became structural anthropology⁵. This branch of cultural anthropology, which was at the peak of its popularity in 1970's, and which took its methodological inspiration from Saussure's structural linguistics (De Saussure, 1915), attempted to deal with traditional issues of social sciences from a perspective typical so far for natural sciences. This then new point of view on cultural and social anthropology was applied most frequently in two areas of the academic discipline: in the study of myth, and in analysis of kinship structures. There are many works dealing with the nature, advantages and likely benefits of the structural method (e.g. (Hage & Harrary, 1984)), so let us sum the fundamental principles of structural anthropology and structural analysis (of a myth) in brief.

According to Hénaff (Hénaff, 1998), structuralism can be perceived both as a scientific method and an intellectual tool, which gives a (cultural) anthropologist an opportunity identify universal laws of a culture, or even of the human mind in general, as they are expressed through such areas as art or the above mentioned myth or kinship system. What is important here is the classification. The core term is "structure." As Hénaff explains, Lévi-Strauss used this term in an innovative way. In it he linked the concept of

⁵ See Lévi-Strauss' following books: *Strukturální Antropologie* (Lévi-Strauss, Strukturální antropologie, 2006) and *Mythologica* trilogy (Lévi-Strauss, Mythologica, 2006)

social structure (organization) in the empirical sense with the concept of linguistic and mathematical structure in the abstract sense. Lévi-Strauss and his followers' effort has been to make sense of ethnographic raw materials, such as myths, through the aid of abstract models, equations and charts. Structural anthropologists have suggested that through such analysis it is possible to gain access to the deep and universal structures, and to bridge the epistemological gap which divide knowledge Western from non-Western knowledge systems.

“We have to resign ourselves to the fact that myths tell us nothing instructive about the order of the world, the nature of reality, or the origin and destiny of mankind. We cannot expect them to flatter any metaphysical thirst, or to breathe new life into exhausted ideologies. On the other hand, they teach us a great deal about the societies from which they originate, they help to lay bare their inner workings and clarify the *raison d'être* of beliefs, customs and institutions, the organization of which was at first sight incomprehensible.” (Lévi-Strauss, *Structuralism and Myth*, 1981)

Parallel to music, which is, according to Lévi-Strauss a mythological narration coded in sounds instead of words (Lévi-Strauss, *Look, Listen, Read*, 1998) a myth “represents an interpretative grid of semantic fields, a matrix of relationships (between signifiers in a given myth), which filters and organizes lived experience, and in a way provides the illusion that contradictions can be overcome and difficulties resolved.” (Lévi-Strauss, *Structuralism and Myth*, 1981) This is why we can suppose that Lakota myths can tell us (at least from the perspective of “Western science”) something interesting about the Lakota worldview and their perception of the world-order. Anyone who has ever visited a Lakota Indian reservation can admit that by the outer appearance – from the material point of view – the life of the Lakota has gone through substantial changes. The nature, living conditions and challenges of the life described in their myths are a significant part of their historical heritage, but probably we could find nobody who lives exactly in the way which is described in these narratives nowadays. However, such specific (material) aspects of the myths do not, according to Lévi-Strauss, matter. What is important is, as he writes, the

interconnection of the semantic fields on the most abstract level of myths. Lévi-Strauss has developed his theory in many books dealing with his view on structural anthropology, most complexly in his trilogy *Mythologica*. (Lévi-Strauss, *Mythologica*, 2006) It is not a purpose of this work to go deep into the theory, but it is necessary to point out the most important messages of his theoretical work and approach to anthropology together with the later criticism of his idiosyncratic views on culture. As Turner reminds us (Turner, 1990), Lévi-Strauss's analytical method is a theoretical synthesis of linguistic and mathematics, and though it is generally perceived as creative and impressively skilful; the theory as a whole "has simply failed to work" (Turner, 1990, p. 564) Claude Lévi-Strauss has adopted the method and terminology of the mathematical group-theory in attempt to create universal models applicable to any set of social or cultural data. Some of his followers have developed this mathematical aspect of his work more deeply to create models applicable to various areas of social organization in cultural anthropology. The work *Structural Models in Anthropology* (Hage & Harrary, 1984) can be given as an example. However, Lévi-Strauss himself has never been successful in his ultimate goal: in creating mathematically satisfying models of general cultural structures⁶. It is interesting that rather than assume "that the failure of structural analyses to model the data might indicate that something is wrong with the models", Lévi-Strauss has "attempted to rationalize the situation by blaming the data." (Turner, 1990, p. 565) The structures of myths that are sketched, generalized and compared as transformations of each other in *Mythologica* are no doubt a result of Lévi-Strauss's rigorous, genuine and deeply focused long-lasting work, but nowadays we can hardly hope that the structuralist approach, which was at the peak of its popularity in the 1960's and 70's, could be successfully applied in cultural anthropology in order to gain data which could be used objectively and universally to various cultures. As Turner concludes, "comparative models of the relations between structures *à la* Lévi-Strauss are of course possible, but they must be recognized as secondary abstractions, not reified as

⁶ Probably the closest he got to this mathematical generalization is his famous canonical formula for the structure of myth: $Fx(a) : Fy(b) \sim Fx(b) : Fa^{-1}(y)$. which he intended to use for interpreting mythic texts.

universal structures ontologically and epistemologically prior to concrete social and cultural constructs.” (Turner, 1990, p. 566)

Postmodernism and the critique of structuralism

One of the most important (and never completely fulfilled) goals of structuralism was the completely objective perception of the phenomena studied. However, with the coming of postmodernism its authors opposed this scientific view on anthropology, and argued that structuralists' goal is neither feasible nor appropriate, because, as Layton writes, "complete objectivity is rendered impossible, because the anthropologist is always situated within the community." (Layton, 1997, p. 190) Similarly, Lévi-Strauss' idea of a universal structure underlying a given culture, has been therefore perceived as incorrect, since postmodernism argued that the idea of collective consciousness is incorrect. (Layton, 1997, p. 199)

While the holistic model of a structure was not accepted by postmodernists, some still used the term, only in a different perspective. One of the critiques of structuralism is Pierre Bourdieu, who in his two theoretical books, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Bourdieu, Outline of a theory of practice, 1977) and *The Logic of Practice* (Bourdieu, 1990) preserves the term *structure*, but he argues against its static notion, and warns against study and analysis of social life as a fixed set of symbols and their meanings. Giddens adds to this that there is an interaction between existing and new usages within a structure of a cultural system. (Giddens, 1979) (We can probably see some similarities between Giddens' view and Derrida's Theory of "free play" of transformations of words' older meanings into new ones through usages in language (Derrida, 1976)). Instead of focusing on "exotic" rituals, Bourdieu advises anthropologists to focus on routines of daily life, and instead of classifying a culture through traditional structuralist dichotomies such as synchronic/diachronic he stresses the importance of what he calls habitus. By this term he describes a system of structure which is set across the categories of the subjective and the objective or the individual and the collective. Though habitus is defined by the culture, its position is in the mind of an individual through his or her understanding of his/her place in the structure. What is also important, Bourdieu does not perceive this social structure as a set of pre-determined rules, but he stresses, that habitus is "the system of structured, structuring dispositions always ordered towards practical functions." (Bourdieu, 1990, p.

52) In other words, social structure (*habitus*) for Bourdieu represents a system where practical function (practice) is set in the centre of attention, and where members of culture are perceived as culturally competent “performers” who intuitively know how to handle situations they find themselves in through individual choices.

Having in mind all this criticism and remarks following the development, zenith and decline of structural anthropology, Lévi-Strauss’s general structural view on myths is one of the reasons why the concept of duality, in this case related to mythology, has been chosen as our way to reflect on Lakota culture. We are far from stating that structuralism in its 1960’s form is the best that anthropology could have offered. We are also aware of the fact that modern anthropology prefers different and more recent theories. However, we believe that some inspiration from the structuralist period can be useful even nowadays, and that we will apply it successfully in the dissertation. The first question is then: How do we define the concept of duality for the purpose of this work? While C. Lévi-Strauss applied his theory especially to myths and to study of kinship systems, other scholars have dealt with structuralism in a more general way. One of them is F. El Guindi, an anthropologist whose research interests also comprised the possibilities of application of structuralism in the study of culture. In her article “Mathematics in structural theory” she defines the general concept of (any) structure in a way we can apply for our concept of duality in this work. First of all, El Guindi points out that structure is not “identical with concrete phenomena but an underlying term.” (El Guindi & Read, 1979) In our understanding, duality is perceived also as a structure, or a feature of Lakota culture, and it is important to realize that we perceive this duality as a general concept that is present in the non-concrete, abstract basis of the culture. The examples of duality shown in this work should be then understood not as our interpretations or renditions of concrete phenomena, but more as examples of the presence of this underlying concept in Lakota culture in general. Understanding of duality in this way also means that though our examples come from selected areas of Lakota culture and are thus limited, it is our belief that the concept of duality could be found also in other manifestations of Lakota culture. At the same time El Guindi also warns us against relying on a defined structure, in our case the concept of duality, too heavily, and to make bold statements or predictions. Though she understands structure as an underlying framework

for a given culture, she adds that we cannot use the structure and structural models in the same way this term is used in science and mathematics: “Models representing concrete social phenomena and behaviour are stochastic because of the impossibility of including all the factors influencing individual behaviour.” (El Guindi & Read, 1979) This means that we have to be aware of the limits of our analysis, because unlike in science, we can never achieve our work to be applicable in prediction. Our understanding of the concept of duality can rather have a descriptive or explicatory function: The purpose is to describe “the way in which individuals and concepts are mapped onto categories.” (El Guindi & Read, 1979)

The main categories, each consisting of dual pairs opposing each other, we are going to deal with when considering Lakota culture here are following: individual and collective, male and female, abstract (or stylized) and concrete (or pictographic), circular and linear. One might of course argue, that similar antithetical pairs could be found in any culture, and that our view on Lakota culture as having a dual structure is not relevant. However, many examples from linguistics show us⁷ that dual structure [of a language, a culture] cannot be considered a universal. To illustrate the statement, here is S. Bassnett’s comment on comparison of English and Guaica concepts of *good* and *bad*. These two words are very general, and cover concepts which in rough could be described as opposing each other – in other words, they form a dual structure. We can expect that the binary opposition can be find in any language, but Bassnett shows that in Guaica, a language of southern Venezuela, the English dichotomous classification does not have an equivalent; the language follows a trichotomous one:

“*Good* includes desirable food, killing enemies, chewing dope in moderation, putting fire to one’s wife to teach her to obey, and stealing from anyone not belonging to same band.

Bad includes rotten fruit, any object with a blemish, murdering a person of the same band, stealing from a member of the extended family and lying to anyone.

⁷ See for example *Translation Studies* (Bassnett, 2002), *A Companion to Translation Studies: Topics in Translation* (Kuhiwczak & Littau, 2007), *In Other Words* (Baker, 1992)

Violating taboo includes incest, being too close to one's mother-in-law, a married woman's eating a tapir before the birth of her first child, and a child's eating rodents." (Bassnett, 2002)

Though the example comes from a different cultural region, the intention was to show that the dual dichotomy is not a universal one, and therefore it is possible to perceive it as a structural attribute of the Lakota culture. We hope that such dual categories can be found across the traditional division into various elements of culture is shown below.

An example of duality in two Lakota myths

In this section, we will return to myths again. It was shown by the example of Lakota creation stories, that the dual structure of Lakota worldview is revealed in the myths intentionally and openly. Looking closer on two Lakota myths, the first one telling a story of a boy named Fallen Star and the second known as The Badger and the Bear, we will reveal more binary oppositions. The version of the Fallen Star myth comes from Ullrich's collection of Lakota myths (Ullrich, 2002); the latter story appears in Zitkala-Sa's collection *Old Indian Legends* (Zitkala-Sa, 1985) The reason for choosing these two particular myths is that, unlikely to Lakota tales of the trickster figure *Iktómi*, both of them contain both male and female "heroes," which is relatively scarce in the case of trickster stories.

Both myths are paraphrased in a shortened version.

Fallen Star

There were once two women who desired to be married to Stars so much, that one day they were both taken up into the sky, and they indeed became wives of two men – Stars. One of the women soon became pregnant, and her husband prohibited her to dig out turnips which grew everywhere up there. However, one day she violated his ban, but she dug too deep, made a hole in the sky, and through this hole she fell down on Earth. Her belly cracked, as she hit the ground. She was dead, but her baby was alive. An old man found her new-born boy, he brought him home to his wife, and they decided to take care of him, since they had no children themselves. The man caught the boy by his legs, twisted him around the tipi, and threw him out through the smoke hole. Soon the boy toddled in on his hands and legs. Again, the man threw him up into the smoke hole, and the boy came in, now appearing to be about seven years old. The old man threw the boy up for the third and fourth time, until the boy came in as a young matured man. They named their son Fallen Star, and he soon became great hunter, so they had plenty of meat and buckskin and buffalo hides in their tipi. One day the old man told his wife: "I must announce everybody how

happy we are.” Then he climbed on the top of their tipi and shouted: “I have so much food, that I can enjoy the best pieces of meat.” The man was the Skylark, and since that time skylarks are called “those who enjoy the best pieces of meat.” Soon their son announced that he was going out to travel the world, and he left. One day he arrived to a village where he met a young man. He invited Fallen Star into his tipi where he lived with his grandmother, but they told him they couldn’t offer him anything to drink, because all those who had gone to fetch some water had never come back, and people were dying of thirst in their village. Fallen Star and his new friend took a water-skin and set off for water, though the grandmother begged them to stay. When they reached the river, they saw only full water-skins scattered everywhere on the river bank. Suddenly they were in a long and dark room full of men and women. Some were dead, others were dying. All of them had been swallowed by a water monster when they were collecting water. Fallen Star cut out the heart and the belly of the monster, and he led the people back to their camp. He was given two wives out of gratitude, but Fallen Star gave them to his friend, and then set off for another journey. Again, he arrived to a village, and was invited by a young man and his grandmother to stay in their tipi. And again, they could not offer him anything. The reason was that all those who had gone to collect firewood for cooking had disappeared. So Fallen Star and the young man set off to find out what caused the trouble. This time the people had been imprisoned in an ear of an Owl, and Fallen Star freed them by shooting an arrow through the Owl’s ear. Also this time he was presented with two wives, and again, he gave them to his friend. Then he walked the world until he came into a village where everybody were starving, because evil *Waziya* was hunting all the buffalos near the village. Fallen Star came into *Waziya*’s tipi and broke his big bow in two. But the following day, when men set off hunting, *Waziya* came again, stole all the meat and stuffed it into his blanket. Fallen Star did not fear *Waziya*, and he tore his blanket to pieces, but *Waziya*’s wife sew the the pieces together again the next day. Then *Waziya* shook the blanket and sent a snowstorm to the camp. Finally Fallen Star managed to conquer *Waziya*, when he used a fan to send the snowstorm back against *Waziya* and his family. (Ullrich, 2002, pp. 150-157).

The Badger and the Bear

On the edge of a forest there lived a large family of badgers. In the ground their dwelling was made. Its walls and roof were covered with rocks and straw. Old father Badger was a great hunter, and every day he came home with some wild game. The mother Badger always cut the meat to stripes and let it dry on the wind and sun. Then she put the pieces of meat into large bags which were beautifully painted. The Badger's children were always well-fed and chubby. One day, when the family was at home, they heard heavy steps, and a large Bear entered their dwelling. He looked very hungry, and sat down next to the entrance and stared at the bags full of meat. His big teeth and strong paws frightened the small badgers, so the father said: "Friend, you look hungry. Will you eat with us?" "Yes, my friend," replied the bear, "I am starving." Then the mother Badger stood up, and cooked the best pieces of meat for their guest. The Bear stayed and ate at the Badgers' until evening, then he left without a word. Every day the Bear came into the Badger's dwelling, and ate his meat until sunset. He came there so often, that the mother Badger laid a fur rug on the place he always sat, so their guest would not sit on bare ground. The Bear became strong and fat, and his fur was glossy. One day the Bear came into the Badger's dwelling again, bared his teeth and growled: "I'm strong. I'm very strong." The Badger agreed, but he added that it is only thanks to his hospitality. The Bear smiled, showing a row of large sharp teeth. "I have no dwelling. I have no bags of dried meat. I have no arrows. All these I have found here in this place," he said, stamping his heavy foot. "I want them! See! I am strong!" he repeated, lifting both his terrible paws. Quietly the father Badger spoke: "I fed you. I called you my friend, though you came here a stranger and a beggar. For the sake of my little ones leave us in peace." Meanwhile mother Badger, laid aside her beadwork. While her husband was talking to the Bear, she motioned with her hands to the children. On tiptoe they hastened to her side. The Bear replied with a loud roar, and chased the Badger family out of their dwelling. The father built a shelter in the forest, but he had no arrows or a bow, so his family was soon starving. The Badger set off in disguise to beg for meat to the Bear and his family. But they only laughed at him and chased him away. Only the smallest and the ugliest of the bear cubs pitied the hungry Badger, and secretly tossed the Badger a small piece of buffalo meat. The next day the father Badger went to beg for

meat again, and again he was chased away. This time the Badger managed to steal a little buffalo blood which remained on the ground where the Bear butchered his catch. The Badger decided to ask the Great Spirit to bless the small piece of blood. He built a sweat lodge and entered in to purify himself and the blood before the blessing. As he exited the *inipi* he was surprised to see that a young Dakota warrior in handsome buckskins followed the Badger. In his hand he carried a magic arrow. Across his back dangled a long fringed quiver. In answer to the badger's prayer, the avenger had sprung from out the blood.

Again the Badger set off to beg the Bear for some meat, but this time he took his son with him. When the Bear saw the two of them coming, he got frightened, and invited the Badger to cut as much meat as he wishes with a knife. The young man said: "You have returned only a knife to my poor father. Now return to him his dwelling." The Bear shook with fear. He took his family, and they fled to the forest again. The Badger's family returned to their home, and the avenger began his journey over the earth. (Zitkala-Sa, 1985, pp. 64-74).

The first dichotomy which is a part of the proposed dual structure of Lakota culture, here revealing itself in the myths is the basic and universal male/ female dualism: In both myths there are male heroes (Fallen Star, the old man-Skylark, Waziya, father Badger, the Bear), and female heroes (mother Badger, two sisters – wives, the Skylark's wife, two grandmothers, *Waziya's* wife). Furthermore, focusing on the two myths in their abstract level, we can find at least four more oppositions forming a dual structure⁸. Both myths tell a story of a young Lakota warrior and his brave deeds. We can notice that both Fallen Star and the Avenger – the Badger's son – were born and became adults in an unnatural and – related to their origin – spiritual way: they are perceived as a blessing from the Great Spirit, and have grown up to adult age abnormally fast. By contrast, there is also the standard

⁸ When we speak about the structure of Lakota myths, it is also necessary to remember the work of a physician and anthropologist James R. Walker who collected Lakota oral history when he served as a physician to the Pine Ridge Sioux from 1896 to 1914. In his books *Lakota Belief and Ritual* (Walker, Lakota Belief and Ritual, 1991) and *Lakota Myth* (Walker, Lakota Myth, 1983) he recorded Lakota rituals and myths as narrated by Oglala holy men from Pine Ridge. In *Lakota Myth* he also provided his own account and analysis of the Oglala creation of the world.

More on structuralism in the American context can be found in Dell Hymes' *American Structuralism* (Hymes & Fought, 1981)

(biological) creation represented here by the mother Badger and her worry about her children. There is also a distinction between two types of spaces where the story takes place. We could call it the in/out-doors dichotomy: both male heroes (Fallen Star and the Avenger) leave their home to do brave deeds, but the indoor space plays a certain role as well as a place where their home is as well as a place for inviting, meeting and hosting guests. Besides, the two myths reflect traditional differences between men and women and their responsibilities in Lakota culture. A respected Lakota elder talks in his book about the gender roles (White Hat Sr., 2012, p. 52):

“A woman has the responsibility to *tiwahle gle*, to establish a home. In old days, one of the strong points in the focus of a woman’s role was to bring life into the world and to nourish it in these teachings. (...) Women have a lot of responsibility in our culture. A woman has a big responsibility. She is the keeper of all our traditions and is the foundation of the home.”

The concept of *tiwahle gle* for Albert White Hat is not represented only by the place to live itself. The notion contains also the responsibility to make it a pleasurable and comfortable space; in the Badger and the Bear myth the mother Badger not only prepares the meat, but she also decorates their home with paint and beadwork. She also cares for the comfort of her guest, similarly to the two grandmothers from the second myth. On the other hand, the male heroes in the myths represent together the virtues of a Lakota man. For example, the father Badger does not hesitate to share his meat with the Bear though the guest comes regularly evening by evening. As R. M. Utley writes in his book on the life of Sitting Bull, it was expected that a Lakota man would share his catch with anyone in need:

“Generosity is one of the four virtues of a Lakota man, together with fortitude, wisdom and generosity. All these qualities were taught to boys from their youngest age, for their future position in the tribe and their reputation depended on how faithfully they lived to these virtues.” (Utley, 1999)

Additionally, the outdoors area, which represents a contrast to *tiwahle gle*, can be understood as a space for male heroes’ brave deeds in myths. Similarly, the same attributes

are ascribed to the outdoors in Lakota culture in general through the tradition of *zuya* (a life's journey). A. White Hat Sr. explains this tradition of Lakota young men to leave their home and set off for a journey in order to gain experience and prove they can live on their own: "These could be long and often dangerous journeys, and when the young man returned, he was held to be fully mature and responsible⁹. The young men who went on *zuya* would very often become very strong members of the tribe." (White Hat Sr., 2012, p. 60)

The last dichotomy is in fact related to the traditional gender roles in Lakota culture: while male heroes are the ones who leave their homes to do brave deeds (saving the village from a man eating giant, killing an evil owl, fighting with Waziya, avenging his father), the actions of the women never extend over their traditional responsibility of *tiwahle gle*.

Graphically, we can make the following overview of the categories forming a dual structure of the myths:

Male	Female
Spiritual creation	Biological creation
Outer space	Inner space
Generosity, fortitude, wisdom, bravery (<i>zuya</i>)	<i>Tiwahle gle</i>
Brave deeds	Social obligations

⁹ Albert White Hat Sr. talks about the tradition in the pre-reservation era. However, further he adds that after the reservations were established, Lakota young men were looking for something that would replace these traditional journeys for adventure and danger. He explains that for many Lakota fighting in war (World War I and II, Vietnam and other war conflicts) has become a modern *zuya*: „They would goof off to another country, they would learn new things, and when they come back, they would have experienced a different life and and know more about what is out there.“ (White Hat Sr., 2012, p. 60)

Lakota traditional visual art

Introduction

In this section we will focus on Lakota traditional¹⁰ art¹¹ and artistic creations, because art is a particularly rich area of study of every “world culture,” including the Lakota. The subject of art itself can be approached from various ways. The perspective on what is art probably vary depending whether it is evaluated by art historians, museologists or for example artists. The anthropological perspective on art as defined by Rebecca J. Dobkins perceives it “on a fundamental level as the material manifestation of cultural processes” (Dobkins, 2008, p. 212). In other words, art is any object that has been modified, adjusted or decorated within a given culture. Her definition seems to be clear and self-evident in its simplicity, but its crudeness can be deceptive. In particular, Dobkins warns against attempts to evaluate and perceive art objectively in anthropology, and reminds us, that an artist should not be detached from his or her work:

“Objects and their makers offer extraordinary access to understanding individual and community beliefs and values, historical, and political-economic processes, and intercultural critique and response. Yet, art objects are easily dislodged from their historical and social contexts, and can have meanings easily projected onto them by outsiders. Artists’ intentions are easily displaced, lost, or misinterpreted.” (Dobkins, 2008, p. 212)

In this chapter, we are going to deal with Lakota art which is usually described as traditional or based on decoration customs originating in the pre-reservation era. Parallel to traditional Lakota narratives – myths and trickster stories – there can be found a dual structure which sorts Lakota art into categories opposing each other, and which offer a

¹⁰ Though the term traditional could appear ancient and well established in the course of history, we are aware of the fact that the contrary is often true in more recent era, and that “traditions which appear or claim to be old are quite often recent in origin and sometimes invented.” (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983, p. 1) For more information see their book *The Invention of Tradition* (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983)

¹¹ Our topic is primarily Lakota traditional art. However, the Lakota have been one among many tribes in the cultural area of the Great Plains, where in terms of visual art many symbols and conventions are universally shared. Also, some of the museum exhibits described in this chapter are labelled as of Plains origin, since the more precise origin is impossible to determine. For these reasons, the term Lakota art and Plains art is used interchangeably in this chapter.

pattern that underline Lakota traditional art (as defined above) in general.¹² Among these oppositions the most pronounced distinction is based on gender, as will be shown below. Some examples of art were taken from publications dealing with the issue, other objects were studied with the permission of ethnographical museums Náprstek Museum of Asian, African and American Cultures in Prague, World Museum Vienna and Ethnological Museum of Berlin.¹³

After focusing on the role of gender in Lakota art we will make an attempt to go beyond the descriptive approach, and analyse its potential function within the context of the given culture. In other words, an artistic creation will be perceived as a graphic sign. To convey the meaning of a sign it is necessary to consider it in relation to other aspects of the culture. As it will be demonstrated further in the article sometimes a graphic sign can have multiple meanings even within the frame of one culture. The reason is that the native perception of the world (which is reflected in an artistic creation) does not make a clear distinction between the natural and supernatural, spiritual and material. Before analysing specific artistic creations, it is important to mention this difference between the role of art in the Western culture and in preliterate societies. As C. Lévi-Strauss puts it,

“Art can be considered as primitive in one of two senses. First, in the sense that the artist does not have sufficient grasp of the technical means or know-how necessary to realize his or her objective (that is, the imitation of a model), and such can only signify it; an example would be what we call naive art. In the second sense, the model the artist would depict, being supernatural, necessarily escapes any naturalistic means of representation:

¹² In this place we can probably remind an assumption of Edmund Leach and other structural anthropologists that in non-literate societies the verbal categories through which the world is described have a dual function of imposing order on and storing up information about the external world, with these categories being applicable equally to all areas of the given culture. Lévi-Strauss states that the native thinking is economical in the sense that the same system of categories characterized in its most basic level by a system of binary discriminations is in a given culture identical in all aspects of the culture, for example language, myths, totemic system. Edmund Leach likens this idea to running several different programs through the same computer at the same time, all using the same computer language (Leach, 1968)

¹³ Dobkins notes that the process of Native American art has been complex, and European ethnographical museums still have not overcome completely the colonial attitude to Native American art in the sense that they exhibit Native art for its „exotic quality and otherness.“ She points out to a predecessor of current museum institutions – to cabinets of curiosity which „collected and then organized for display native arts right along with flora and fauna“ as „wonders of the New World.“ (Dobkins, 2008, pp. 214-215) The issue of (de)colonization of museums is also discussed in Ames’ *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums* (Ames M. M., 1992).

again the artist can only signify, but as a result of the object's excess, and not the subject's shortcomings. The art of preliterate people, in all its different forms, illustrates the latter case.” (Lévi-Strauss, *Look, Listen, Read*, 1998)

It is also necessary to note that this chapter on Lakota visual art – paintings, quilt and beadwork – is based on an article that dealt with the issue from a theoretical perspective inspired by a structural approach in anthropology. (Perlíková, *Artistic Creations of Plains Tribes of North America Viewed from the Structuralist Perspective*, 2013)

Gendered Art

As it has been already mentioned, Plains Indian¹⁴ decorative styles are usually divided into stylized and pictographic styles. Generally, women produced abstract, geometric and highly stylized art, while male artists used the latter type of style (Berlo & Phillips, 1998). However, since art in the context of Plains culture was not perceived as having only decorative function, it is necessary to set any artistic creation into wider context of the culture. In Plains culture the gender distinction did not project itself only in different decorative styles. The difference lied also in the object a man/woman could decorate and what could be a subject of his or her artistic creation. Even the space itself was divided according to gender distinction.

In Plains culture, tipi and all the actions and things related to it were related to the female space (Rosoff & Zeller, 2010, p. 40) or (Deloria E. C., 2007) and other authors. Also, it was a woman who was considered the owner of a tipi her family inhabited (White Hat Sr., 2012, pp. 50-63). Consequently, the decorations on the tipi covers were also produced by women. However, the motives and the way they were depicted or, in other words, the pictographic signs painted on the tipi cover were subject to conventions of a given tribe and their purpose was to emphasize the perception of a tipi as a reduced image of the world. Here are several examples of traditional Plains tipi decoration conventions as described by Rosoff and Zeller (Rosoff & Zeller, 2010, p. 43): A red band along the bottom of a cover represented earth, within the red band there were unpainted circles which represented fallen stars. A row of rounded shapes along the top of the lower band of the cover symbolized foothills, a row of pointed forms stood for mountains. A black top of tipi cover represented night; on the black surfaces there were impainted circles depicting constellations, usually Pleiades or Big Dipper. A cross at the back of the cover near the top symbolized Morning Star. Many Plains tribes such as Lakota, and also Arapaho or

¹⁴ The issue of Plains Indian Art was also dealt with in Czech ethnological journal by Zdeněk Salzmán in two consecutive articles *O umění severoamerických Indiánů* and *O umění severoamerických Indiánů (2)* (Salzmán, O umění severoamerických Indiánů, 2000) and (Salzmán, O umění severoamerických Indiánů (2), 2001)

Cheyenne decorated their tipi covers with circular hide ornaments decorated with quillwork or beadwork. These were also made by women and their production and ceremony of attaching them to the cover were a subject of a ritual re-creation of the world (Santina, 2004). Again, the perception of a tipi as a world in microcosm is stressed. However, although tipi was perceived as a female space or world and as such its cover was also decorated by women, in this female microcosm there was one part of this space which was artistically dominated by men. While the outer cover was decorated with stylized and formalized depictions of the world order, the inner cover – lining – was painted by men. Here a man could record his war deeds, his experience from vision-quests or other significant events of his life (Rosoff & Zeller, 2010, p. 31). In other words, we can say that general features of women tipi decorations were highly stylized, geometrical and conventional designs and ornaments. Men-made tipi decorations, on the other hand, can be characterized with attributes as individualistic, pictorial and often having a function of a historical record. As other examples will demonstrate, this distinction is not valid only for Lakota art, but it can be observed all across the Plains and Prairies area. Although more attention has been usually paid to the men-produced art among scholars¹⁵, the women-produced, stylized art will be discussed here first.

¹⁵ One of the popular subject of study are ledger-art paintings which are rich source for study of tribal histories; they also provide a unique insight into Native perspective on White Americans' attempts to impose Euro-American values and institutional regulations onto Native Americans. The ledger-art was usually drawn by men. See for example (Berlo C. J., 1990)

Quillwork

As museum collections concerning Plains cultures richly demonstrate, Plains Indian women decorated almost every object and tool their family used or wore in their everyday life. Besides painting, they practiced another form of art which was not used by men. Plains Indian women often decorated clothes and objects with dyed porcupine quills or later (approximately since between 1800 and 1840 (Perlíková, *Artistic Creations of Plains Tribes of North America Viewed from the Structuralist Perspective*, 2013) with glass beads. The porcupine did not live in the area of the Great Plains and the tribes living there must have learned the technique from the tribes living east of Plains. According to Lyford the most elaborate and beautiful examples of quill embroidery come from the western Sioux. (Lyford, 1984, p. 15)

The art of porcupine quillwork was extremely time-consuming and it required the artist's precision, skill and patience. Porcupine quillwork was also potentially dangerous, because the tip of porcupine quill is very sharp and hard with backward-facing barbs, so, when manipulated carelessly, the artist could have injured herself. Quills also required preparation to make them suitable for sewing. First quills were washed, preferably in a soapy bath. Then they were dyed with vegetable dyes. Before the coming of coloured glass beads to Great Plains from Europe (before 1800's), the tribes of the Great Plains used the following colours:

Red. Buffalo berry (lat. *Lepargyreaea*) or squaw berry (*Virburnum*) were used to produce red dye.

Yellow. Wild sunflower (*Ratibida columnaris*) or cone flower petals were boiled with pieces of decayed oak bark or with the roots of cattail.

Black. Wild grapes (*Vitis sp.*), hickory nuts (*Hicoria ovate*) or black walnuts (*Juglans nigra*). (Lyford, 1984, pp. 42-43)

Then the artist moistened the dyed quills by holding them in her mouth, points protruding from her lips, in order to soften them. After being moistened the quills were flattened by drawing between teeth and smoothed by a special instrument made of a smooth flat bone (from (Lyford, 1984, pp. 40-44)).

Thus prepared quills were then used to decorate both flat surfaces, such as

moccasins, shirts, dresses or bags and long slender objects, like pipe stems or strands of leather fringes. Among Plains Indians there were known four techniques of applying quills to produce a required pattern: wrapping, weaving, braiding and sewing. Especially the last two mentioned were very elaborate and required extreme skill of the artist.

Traditionally women learned the technique of porcupine quillwork in quilling guilds or secret societies where women met, exhibited their works and explained how they did it. Though the geometric designs produced by each artist consisted only of several repeating elements like triangles, lines or squares, the quill designs made by each artist was considered her personal property, she produced designs which she had dreamed about. To be more precise, Sioux tribes explained the origin of quillwork by a myth of a “double woman” who taught the first woman the quill decoration technique in her dream. As C. Lévi-Strauss notes, women, who mastered the art of quillwork were considered “Double Women” themselves and were both respected and feared:

'When a woman dreams of the Double Woman, from that time on, in everything she makes, no one excels her. But then the woman is very much like a crazy woman. She laughs uncontrollably and so time and time again she acts deceptively. So the people are very afraid of her. She causes all men who stand near her to become possessed. For that reason these women are called Double Women. They are very promiscuous... But then in the things they make nobody excels them. They do much quillwork. From then on, they are very skilful. They also work like a man.' (Lévi-Strauss, *Look, Listen, Read*, 1998, p. 178)

Beadwork

Between 1800 and 1840 first Venetian glass beads were introduced to Plains Indians. These were also called pony beads, and were used by Plains Indians women to make band decorations on shirts, moccasins, skin robes or bags. Around 1860 settlers from Europe arrived to Great Plains, and they introduced smaller and more colourful glass beads from Bohemia and Venice. This type of beads was known as seed beads and native women used them to decorate garments and objects in huge all-over patterns. Though the technique of beadwork decoration is (as the author the paper herself has experienced) still time-consuming and requires extreme preciseness to achieve a regular pattern, it allows the artist to work more efficiently and quickly in comparison with quillwork sewing. Though Plains Indian women maintained the geometric-style tradition, their beadwork designs became more colourful and sophisticated as a consequence of the possibilities the new material offered. Apart from basic geometrical designs as triangles, squares and circles, new patterns as thin lines, terrace and fork patterns on a solid background began to appear around 1870.

Though the art of beadwork decoration succeeded and replaced the former porcupine quill decoration, it has not been perceived as prestigious as its predecessor, and the tradition of women sewing-guilds has almost disappeared. However, the fact that beadwork sewing allowed the artist to decorate larger surfaces with more elaborate patterns meant that, as rich museum collections concerning Plains Indians culture demonstrate, since 1870's beadworkers developed a large number of new designs and patterns that became commonly used by women artists from various tribes. The most common designs were formalized and given descriptive names (eg. dragonfly, feathers, horse-tracks, turtle, and whirlwind). The pattern's name usually referred to a natural object it resembled or referred to. Nevertheless, it is not correct to perceive beadwork patterns as a universal symbolic language shared by all Plains Indian women (or even shared by all women from a certain tribe). There is no doubt that, for its maker, a beadwork design is a symbol with a clear meaning, but, as M. Carocci notes (Carocci, 2009), in Plains Indian art in general there is not a consistent standardized "vocabulary" of graphic signs and their meanings. In other words, when we want to decipher a meaning of a certain beadwork pattern, we should do so from the native emic perspective of the artist. On the other hand, certain designs had a

function of a graphic sign with unambiguous meaning. Embroidery of such pattern on objects, articles or garments conformed to the generally recognized tradition. These were the most common designs that were a part of a shared repertoire of signs:

The spider web design was used on a cradle or a robe of a child to protect and provide future good for the child.

The turtle design. Symbolically, this design had power over the diseases peculiar to women, and also over birth and infancy (Lyford, 1984, p. 78). For this reason, this pattern was worn only by women, and it was also embroidered at the head of a cradle.

The horse track design. This design resembled a square with one side missing. It was usually used on bags made for a brave man to show that he had captured horses from the enemy.

A feather design. An elongated diamond shape with upper half black and the other half white. This design was often embroidered on a bag or a shirt of a man as a sign of his success in warfare. A feather design was also painted in a circular form on ceremonial shields or dancing fans.

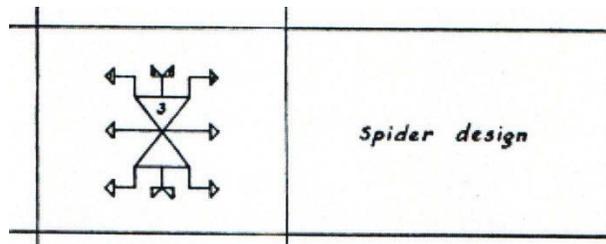


Figure 1

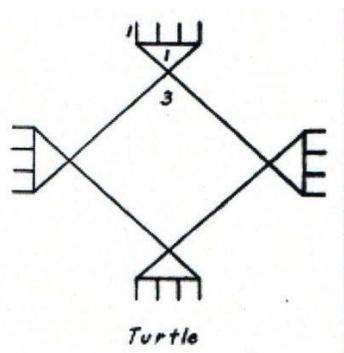


Figure 2



Figure 3

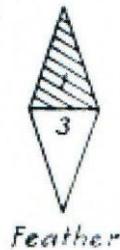


Figure 4

Figure 1-4, source (Lyford, 1984, pp. 73-77)

Another design, which has been frequently used in bead or quill embroidery is the hourglass pattern. As Albert White Hat sr., a grandson of Chief Hollow Horn Bear from Rosebud Sioux Reservation explains in his book *Life's Journey – Zuya*, this simple geometrical symbol refers directly to the Lakota worldview which understands the world as consisting opposing elements creating the complex unity. In this way he gives us another example of the dual principle in Lakota myths which form a base for the traditional understanding of the world-order:

“We have an image in our culture, two triangles, one over the other, the top one pointing down and the two meeting at their apex, like an hourglass. This represents creation into two, male and female. Also, it represents that whatever is on earth, the same thing in in the universe. We use this image all the time in our artwork and our designs. It’s a fundamental symbol of our beliefs. The smaller triangle on the top and the bottom of the second image are simply an elaboration on the basic hourglass shape. There can be many

variations on this, but whatever is on the top will always be on the bottom as well (White Hat Sr., 2012, p. 33):

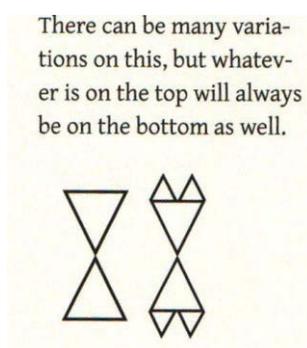


Figure 5

At present the art of beadwork is still very popular and widely practiced not only among the Lakota, but among the majority of Native American tribes of North America who have the tradition (relating both to present and historical times) of holding powwows. The patterns and designs beaded on *regalia* and on items of everyday use are both subjects of the development of fashion and an ownership of a given family. What is important, the strict perception of beadwork as a female art is beginning to dissolve, though women still do more beadwork than men, and girls start to learn how to sew patterns with beads from an early age. Nowadays, it is quite common that the richly beaded decorations of powwow regalia are produced during the winter by both male and female members of a dancer.¹⁶ From a literature on the oral history of the Lakota we can see that this change has been in progress at least since the beginning of the reservation era, and it has probably been getting stronger with the tendencies to create more and more intricate powwow regalia. Here is a testimony of Ollie Napesni, a Lakota woman from Rosebud Indian Reservation, who was born a hundred years ago:

“I will tell you something that my folks did all the year through. They really liked good times. They’d go to dances, *Wacipis*. (...) In the fall when the harvest and everything was done, they were really busy, but when they were done, they’d work on their costumes,

¹⁶ As it was observed during visits in Rosebud Indian Reservation in summers 2014 and 2015.

if they needed any repairing. (...) My dad was not really a dancer then, he was a singer, a drummer, but he used to help my mom. He'd sew on his moccasins because that's rawhide and that's really hard to work with. So even my moccasins or her moccasins, he'd be working on them." (Napesni, 2003)

Painting

Though quill and beadwork decorations represent the artistic skill and perfection of Plains Indian women, decorating garments and object with painted designs was also a part of native artistic tradition. Again, women painted only stylized, geometric patterns, and they used earth colours, and their repertoire was richer than in case of quill dyes. The colours used were red, yellow, black, green and blue.

Plains Indian women used paints to decorate large surfaces of storage bags made of rawhide (parfleche) or saddlebags. The bags were decorated with basic geometrical patterns such as squares, triangles or rectangles. When looking closer on the designs¹⁷, it is evident that the artist first sketched the patterns with a thin black line, and then she decorated them with colours. We can observe very little or no regularity in terms of distribution of particular colours. As the rawhide bags from the collections of World Museum Vienna illustrate, the patterns with a horizontal orientation (flattened diamond-shapes, bands) tend to be painted red most frequently. For the vertical axis, the objects studied do not provide any characteristic colour.

While we cannot find any distinctive rule for distribution of colours, the composition of ornaments in the pattern is subjected to the demand of symmetry. Every bag design had at least one, but more often two axes around which the pattern was symmetrical. In this way the painted rawhide bags suggest that the women-artists who decorated them were concerned not with how the pattern would look, but their main aim was to subject the pattern to the demand of regularity and symmetry. As the examples of the painted bags illustrate, the symmetry and regularity tend to be the most important shibboleth the artist obeyed. In fact, the demand for regularity and symmetry could be perceived as a general tendency in all Plains Indian women aesthetic activities. In the most universal meaning, the symmetry could represent the cultural opposite of the non-symmetrical nature.

Similarly, Lévi-Strauss has also observed that the tendency to obey the rule of regularity was even stronger than the criteria of practicality of the decorated object. In the following quote he reflects on the leather decorations of leggings used by many tribes from

¹⁷The part in which rawhide bags and robes painted by Plains Indian women are described is based on the author's research in World Museum Vienna.

the Great Plains. Usually, leggings are decorated with leather fringes. Some of the fringes are decorated with beads or bones and some are left plain, and the decorated and undecorated fringes are arranged in a regular pattern. When the leggings were worn, the fringes became entangled, even when the person wearing them was not moving, C- Lévi-Strauss notes:

“The woman who made them [leggings] could not have been all that concerned with how they would look. Her calculations, and the care she took to ensure that they were respected, must have had as their sole source the pleasure she derived from their execution. The decorative rhythm at the source of the costume's beauty is similar in nature to dance steps, or the repetitive motions demanded by many technical activities, or, more generally, the regular rhythms of certain motor habits (such as swaying the arms while walking).” (Lévi-Strauss, *Look, Listen, Read*, 1998, p. 163)

As the quote suggests, it seems that the most important condition the artist aimed to satisfy in her work was to produce a pattern which did not lack *rhythm* through which the objects she decorated were in harmony with other aspects of her culture. The rhythm observed by Lévi-Strauss can therefore represent another example of women's tendency to create regularity and symmetry in objects they make.

Painted hides

“Every aesthetic signifier is the sensory manifestation of a structure” (Lévi-Strauss, *Structuralism and Myth*, 1981)

If creation of symmetry and regularity was the most important objective in parfleche designs, the women-painted buffalo fur hides studied in World Museum Vienna (fig. 6 and 7) suggest that the artists who painted them had to subject to more complex rules than symmetry itself.



Figure 6: Painted buffalo fur hide. Photo by Klára Perlíková with permission of World Museum Vienna. May 2014.



Figure 7: Painted buffalo fur hide. Photo by Klára Perliková with permission of World Museum Vienna. May 2014.

Usually, buffalo fur hides painted and worn by women had protective function both in literal and metaphorical meaning. In the first sense, women used the hides to protect themselves and their babies they carried in baby carriers on their backs from cold during winter months. Symbolically, the designs painted on the hides protected the mother and her child wearing the fur blanket. Sometimes, an umbilical amulet was sewn to such type of robes. The designs decorating these robes were less stylized than ornaments on the parfleche bags and they usually represented an animal with hooves, probably a buffalo. The colours used in the designs were the same as in the case of parfleche decorations with white as an additional colour. The use of white and the buffalo design suggest, that the buffalo design could refer to the White Buffalo Woman myth, in which a beautiful woman coming from the sky dressed in white buckskin robe brought the Lakota nation a new spiritual and social order and introduced the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe to the Sioux (Ullrich, 2002, pp. 272-275).

The stylized buffalo image on woman fur robes is also interesting in terms of the means of depicting the animal, because the rule of axis symmetry is applied in a more specific way. While in the case of parfleche paintings or beadwork/quillwork decorations the artist aimed to produce an ornament symmetrical around one or two axes with no other restriction concerning the appearance of the design, in decorating fur hide robes she had to subject to more specified rules. As it has been already mentioned, all painted hides studied in World Museum Vienna depicted a hoofed animal, likely a buffalo. In all cases the animal's body was represented by a large rectangle with two narrow and extended rectangles running down parallel from its two shorter sides representing legs. The animal's hooves are depicted as black triangles or narrowing rectangles vertically cut in two by a white line. In all cases the animal was depicted with a third "leg" represented by an identical but smaller copy of the two legs on the sides of the rectangle. This third "leg" was also parallel with the other two limbs and run down from the centre of the foot of the large rectangle representing the body. From the geometrical decorative patterns on the stylized animal body it is evident that the picture was also symmetrical with the vertical axis running through the animal's body and the middle "leg". If it were not for the third smaller leg and the apparent axial symmetry, the picture could be perceived as a buffalo depicted from its side with one front and one back leg visible on the picture. However, several features of such painted animals suggest that the artist's perspective was probably different.

The first discrepancy is the number of animal's legs, which is three. This is unusual, because in Plains Indian mythology the sacred and magical number is four or seven (Ullrich, 2002, pp. 22-27). Number three plays no special role in any Plains Indian myth, so the three-legged buffalo on the women fur robe cannot refer to any particular ceremony or myth. Second obstacle in perception of such buffalo picture as painted from the side perspective is the absence of any geometric design indicating the animal's head or tail. In other words, the stylized buffalo picture was in all cases studied in the museum axially symmetrical as described above; the left and right halves of the pictures were always identical. Third, though the artist did not paint any ornament which could mark the animal's head or tail, in some cases there were geometric designs, usually circles painted in the upper two corners of the large rectangle representing the body. Sometimes, small identical

triangles were painted on the left and right side of the large triangle. Again, all these ornaments were painted according to the left/right axial symmetry rule. These three features of the buffalo pictures on the hide robes suggest, that the animal was probably not painted from the side perspective. The question is then how is the buffalo depicted. As it has been suggested, all such painted buffalo bodies were symmetrical in a peculiar way. In addition, there is the problem of the number of the animal's legs. However, the inner logic of the pictures begins to emerge when we perceive the middle smaller copy of the animal's legs not as a third limb, but as a tail. Then it is evident that the buffalo's body was painted in style which C. Lévi-Strauss describes as *split representation* style. When describing the art of Indians from Northwest coast he wrote that:

'The animal is imagined cut in two from head to tail...there is a deep depression between the eyes, extending down the nose. This shows that the head itself must not have been considered a front view, but as consisting of two profiles, which adjoin at mouth and nose, while they are not in contact with each other on a level with the eyes and forehead... either the animals are represented as split in two so that the profiles are joined in the middle, or a front view of the head is shown with two adjoining profiles of the body.'

(Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturální antropologie*, 2006, p. 219)

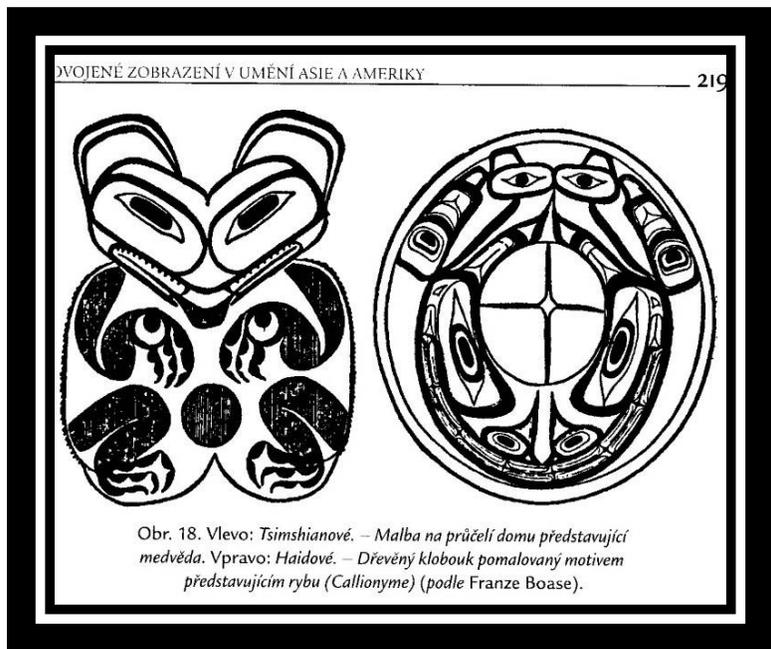


Figure 8: Split representation as described by C. Lévi-Strauss

Also in the case of buffalo bodies painted on the Plains hide robes the animal seems to be depicted as “cut in two from head to tail” but in the examples from the Vienna Museum the buffalo was painted as if from the back view: the tail in the centre made the axis with the two profiles of its left and right side with its back legs extending to the sides of the picture. If the *split representation* perspective is correct, then the circular or triangular objects attached symmetrically to the animal's both sides could represent its head “cut in two” as viewed from the back perspective. This different representative style is interesting because it seems to have been reserved for the women fur hide robes only – we can observe them nowhere else than on buffalo fur hides. It is obvious, that this style is similar to the style of zoomorphic decorations of house entries and totem poles among tribes from Northwest Coast. However, we cannot say that the artists from Great Plains simply copied the style. While in Northwest Coast the animals are depicted as if consisting of two profiles where only the front part of the animal coheres (e.g. its nose or mouth), in the case of Plains fur hide robes the perspective is reversed: the animal's profiles adjoin together at its tail and tailbone. Using the term from Lévi-Strauss' article *Structure and Dialectics* (Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturální antropologie*, 2006, pp. 205-216), the representative style the Plains artists used to decorate women hide robes was a *transformation* of the Northwest artistic convention. However, we have to bear in mind that observations above cannot be perceived as the absolute truth, because decoration techniques – as other elements of culture – develop in the course of time. Originally, Lévi-Strauss described as transformational a relationship between a myth and a ritual when analysing a Pawnee myth he called “A Pregnant Boy”. Comparing the Pawnee myth with the corresponding rituals from the neighbouring tribes of Mandan, Hidatsa and Blackfeet he assumes that myth cannot be perceived as an illustration of a ritual and vice versa. The fur hides from the Great Plains suggest, that the principle of transformation could be perceived as a general tendency in creating an object of *culture* (ritual, a piece of clothing with a special function or significance).

Yet, there is still a question why this split representation style was reserved exclusively for decorating women fur hide robes. Other pieces of garment Plains Indian women wore were always decorated with geometric designs described above; we can find

no hint of the more “plastic” split representation style. However, there is one general difference between the former and the latter type of garment. While both the men and women-worn leggings or dress were always cut, sewn and intricately decorated to transform a natural object (animal skin) to an object of culture, the purpose of the of the fur hide robe seems to be reversed. When studying the robes in the Vienna museum we can notice that the painted buffalo was always painted in the way that when the fur was worn, the painted animal copied the corresponding parts of the body of the wearer: The animal's tail and tailbone followed the line of the woman's backbone, the animal's hind limbs crudely corresponded with her legs, and the part of the robe covering her shoulders and chest was decorated with geometric designs indicating the animal's forelegs and head. Is it only a consequence of the most economical distribution of the ornament on the surface limited by the shape of the raw buffalo skin or was such design layout made on purpose? It seems that the body-design correspondence is too obvious to have been created by chance. In such case, we can perceive the designs on women fur hide robes as having a reversed function to the designs on other women-worn pieces of garment. While patterns on women leggings or dresses have a function of transforming *nature* into *culture*, the split representation designs seem to work in a reversed way – changing the cultural into the natural. When a woman – a member of a tribal society– covered herself with the fur hide decorated with the buffalo design, through the design she in fact *became* the animal – a part of nature. This metonymical impersonation of a buffalo is, in the context of Plains cultures, perfectly logical. Among the tribes of Great Plains buffalo was perceived as an animal who literally made the life on plains possible. The animal provided everything the Plains Indians needed to be able to subsist in the area. The Plain Indians' tipis, originally made from sewn buffalo hides, were generally perceived as a world in a microcosm, and the transformation of a woman into the animal through the painted design could be interpreted as a similar representation of the buffalo as a giver and provider of life. A. Santina describes this relation in her article *Recreating the World: Tipi Ornaments by Cheyenne and Arapaho Women*: 'Among the Cheyenne and Arapaho (and presumably among other Plains tribes) this animal was literally referenced as a mainstay for survival on the Plains; living within a dwelling made of buffalo skins reinforced their connection to and dependence on this

animal. Further, in both Cheyenne and Arapaho beliefs, the buffalo connotes life and good health. Arapaho individuals view the animal as a source of knowledge regarding their material culture and Cheyennes see buffalo as powerful spiritual beings. Buffalo hide tipis, then, indexically signify the life-giving properties of this animal.' (Santina, 2004, p. 938).

Star Quilts

When writing about various forms of art created traditionally by Lakota women, it is necessary to mention one more type. Although it is considerably younger than quill- or beadwork and hide-painting, it plays a significant role in lives of contemporary Lakota: The art of quilting has been adopted by Lakota women relatively recently. They have been introduced sewing first in the reservation era, when the Lakota girls were forced to attend public schools. Lakota women soon learned and adopted the art of patchwork sewing and quilting which was popular among white women in North America, and they transformed it into a distinctive sewing style known as star quilting. The central star-shape ornament on a blanket represents the Morning Star. Native makers of such blankets claim that the (usually) hand-made quilts are “tied directly to Plains Indians mythology and Star Knowledge,” and for this reason they “take centre stage in births, weddings, and funerals, making the star quilt important throughout Plains life.” (Hill, 2007, p. 6) Star quilts are usually made by women, though in some situations men make them as well. To give someone a star quilt represents for Native Americans the “epitome of gift giving,” and it is a way to show the utmost respect, honour, and admiration to a person as well as a way of expressing one’s support to the receiver of this gift. A protective power can also be ascribed to a star quilt. For this reason a star quilt blanket can be often seen in babies’ cradles or prams. Apart from give-away ceremonies, morning star blankets are also a part of a number of celebrations and ceremonies: weddings, birthdays, graduations, pow-wows and parades, as the photographs below illustrate:



Figure 9: Lakota wedding. Photo by Klára Perliková. Potato Creek Powwow. September 2015



Figure 10: Labor Day Parade in Eagle Butte. Photo by Klára Perliková. September 2015.



Figure 11: Labor Day Parade in Eagle Butte. Photo by Klára Perliková. September 2015.



Figure 12: Labor Day Parade in Eagle Butte. Photo by Klára Perliková. September 2015.

A star quilt, made by the bride, also usually decorates a wall or a window in the married couple's bedroom in a Lakota home, where it represents the Morning Star – an important symbol for the Lakota. For the same reason, small babies are given a small quilt with this pattern. In give-away ceremonies, which are often a part of summer powwows a star quilt is often the most precious gift, because it represents both the gesture of respect and love, and the large amount of time and work the maker of the quilt has invested into

her gift.¹⁸ The paradox is that the art of quilting is seldom mentioned by Western scholar works that deal with traditional Lakota arts and crafts, and it can be widely observed¹⁹ that it is almost ignored by the curators of ethnographical museums in Europe. Nevertheless, we can get the idea how important the art of quilting is for the Lakota themselves when we visit any of their tribal museums. An example could be the Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum in St. Francis, Mission (South Dakota). A visitor is, among other exhibits, shown a rich collection of star quilts made by Lakota women from Rosebud Indian Reservation.

¹⁸ Star Quilts given in give-away ceremonies are always sewn and quilted by hand. The machine-sewn quilts are intended for sale in „Indian Crafts“ shops. According to various Lakota women – quilt makers – from Rosebud Indian Reservation, many of them make these for-sale Star Quilts in hand as well, because they „get more money for them, than they would get for the machine-sewn ones“. (Interviews, Rosebud, summer 2014 and 2015)

¹⁹ The statement is based on visits of ethnographical museums in Berlin, Helsinki, Leiden, Leipzig, Prague and Vienna.

Male art

While women-produced art could be characterized as geometric, stylized, formalized (there is a set of common designs which have been part of a shared repertoire) and collective, the art produced by men represents a mirror image of female artistic creations, both in terms of form and meaning. As it has been mentioned, Plains Indian men did not traditionally practice quillwork or beadwork sewing; men-produced art was always painted. As it has been mentioned above, this strict division of male and female crafts has been dissolved to some extent, as male family members often help to decorate elements of regalia used at powwow dancing contests for their daughters, sons, nieces or nephews. The reason is among others the fact that the dancer's success depends also on his or her appearance, and therefore the contest dancers' regalia must be as richly decorated as possible²⁰. There are many books and photographs which explore the richness and colourfulness of contemporary powwow dancers' regalia. Below, we show only a few photographs as a modest illustration of the phenomenon:



Figure 13: Grand Entry at Labor Day Powwow, Eagle Butte, September 2015. Photo by Klára Perliková

²⁰ Interviews with powwow dancers. Summer 2014 and 2015.



Figure 14: Fancy Feather dancer, Rosebud Casino Powwow, July 2014. Photo by Klára Perliková

Nonetheless, the traditional male art has always been individualistic and related to the artist's achievements and his life experience. Men-produced art can be generally divided into two thematically specified groups. The first one is characterized by painted records of specific scenes worth of recording in terms of the warrior-society values (to paint an achievement of someone else was considered a great dishonour for the artist). Men often painted their brave deeds on inner tipi covers, war shirts and later on pieces of paper or cloth (ledger drawings). Such images were painted with respect to various details (e.g. arrows or bullets flying from a weapon). Also, the scenes were depicted with no respect to the concept of perspective or background details that are not important for the painted message. The battle scenes were painted realistically, with the purpose to describe all important aspects of the event depicted. Often the scenes consisted from several images describing consecutive stages of the action in a cartoon manner, and the course of the plot was implied by the direction of horse-tracks connecting separate scenes or images. The second group of men-produced art is characterized by painted scenes from vision-quests or significant dreams. Men painted them on their ceremonial or battle shields to show their personal spirit animal protector. Tribes of the Great Plains recognized a number of spirit animals, each of them giving the man who dreamed about them different powers or abilities.

In contrast with battle scenes, the shields were decorated in a more abstract style which can be compared to Western heraldry designing system in the sense that they carried a personal symbol or meaning for its owner.

In short, the differences between the two types of art could be described by different answers on three questions: What (did men and women depict)? Why (did they paint or sewed)? When (in what occasions did they produce artistic creations)?

Men-produced art contrasts with the art created by women not only in terms of different styles. While men painted their own achievements and often emphasized their personal success by adding written or pictographic design of their name to avoid ambiguous interpretation of the image, women, on the other hand, produced "collective" art. They copied or made variations of geometric designs that formed the repertoire of graphic signs and images that each tribe shared. Also the function of the art produced by men and women

was different. In the case of painted battle or hunting scenes their function was to record and emphasize the incident depicted; the paintings on battle shields were believed to protect their owner. The designs painted or sewed by women, though less original and innovatory in terms of interpretation, had a more complex function. First, the designs decorated objects of everyday use and as such provided aesthetic value of these objects. Second, through the principle of regularity and symmetry of the pattern the ornaments transformed objects of nature into elements of culture. The last difference between men and women-produced art could be characterized by unlike occasions of their creation. As the former examples suggest, the images painted by men reflected individual accomplishments, and their general subject-matter was reflected in the manner they were painted; they were painted individually, with no influence of other artists. Women, on the other hand, produced art in a more collective way. The example of quillwork sewing-guilds where women shared and learned new patterns illustrates this communal aspect of women-produced art. Also, as Carrie A. Lyford notes, women often produced richly beaded or quilled objects as a gift for the occasion of ceremonial gift-giving or some other special occasion (Lyford, 1984, p. 31)

Conclusion

In traditional art of the Lakota (or Plains Indians art in general) we can perceive a strong inclination to duality in the sense that we can find an opposition between masculine pictographic art and its feminine stylized counterpart. In addition, the difference between the two types of art is more complex. These complementing styles are in fact together reflecting the value system of the tribes of the Great Plains. While the women-produced art's common denominator could be described as reflection of the common world-order and world in microcosm, the artistic creations painted by men are defined by individualism of style and the subject of the pictorial narrative. This distinction can be observed not only in the subject of the artistic creations, but also in the circumstances of producing male/ female art. In its most fundamental essence art is very similar to myths: As myths are a source of archetypes, through art and its symbolic language these archetypes are reproduced. To understand Lakota culture, we should not forget to give attention to the way the world was depicted in their traditional art.

The question of modern native art²¹ and whether it is possible to find duality following the same pattern is more complex. Some artists follow accurately the traditional Plains patterns and styles in their works²². Other artists develop their personal style and handle their native heritage individually with stronger or lesser emphasis. For this reason, any generalization similar to the one we used in dealing with the traditional art would sooner or later fail.

²¹ The initial question could of course be what is, and is not modern native art. Dobkins defines modern native artists as “persons of Native or part-Native ancestry whose artistic concerns have been formed by their identification with Native communities” (Dobkins, 2008, p. 222). Berlo and Phillips, who also dealt with the question of modern native art stress, on the other hand, a contextual frame, in which the art functions and state that modern native art is characterized “not by a particular set of stylistic or conceptual categories, but by the adoption of Western representational styles, genres, and media in order to produce works that function as autonomous entities and that are intended to be experienced independently of community or ceremonial context.” (Berlo & Phillips, 1998, pp. 209-210)

²² For example, Daniel Long Soldier, a famous Lakota artist paints his works in the ledger-art style of his Native ancestors. His works are sold all over the world for hundreds of dollars a piece.

Selected Issues Illustrating Duality in Relation to Lakota Identity

Originally the concept of duality as a tool to reflect on Lakota culture was chosen because of dichotomies that seemed to be obvious to us, because we have observed the structure in quite a pronounced way in Lakota myths we studied. However, as the work on the dissertation through various issues progressed, it became evident that the notion of duality in its original sense (as it was defined in the introduction) does not suffice to provide a representative and complete tool to describe Lakota culture, and therefore we need to understand it in a wider context.

As a methodological starting point we have decided to consider the topic from the perspective of Lévi-Strauss's structural view on cultural anthropology, namely his way of decoding cultural patterns using the principle of binary oppositions as introduced by Saussure's structural linguistics (De Saussure, 1915). We suggested that this binary or dual principle can be – from our perspective – found in Lakota culture and worldview, and therefore we can adopt it as a tool for better understanding the culture²³. It is our belief that various structures of Lakota culture operate within dual system of spaces, metaphysical elements and norms and values. However, especially the last two areas mentioned – norms and values – get new and important meaning in the wider context of the interconnected American society. The reality of daily life in Lakota reservations is confronted with other reality presented in TV programs or at school and other public institutions. Taking into account the fact that the majority of Lakota homes own TV, we can truly speak about the existence of at least two dual norms conflicting and influencing each other in a daily routine. The value and norms of the life “in the Rez²⁴” is constantly being disrupted by

²³ We use this term here in the most general sense: a set of ideas, beliefs, and ways of behaving of a particular organization or group of people. However, the word “culture” can convey multiple meanings and connotations (see (Horáková, 2012).

²⁴ A slightly ironical term used by both residents of Lakota reservations and a large number of Native scholars, artists and writers, for example Vine Deloria Jr. (and many others).

intentional and unintentional attempts of Western²⁵ society to introduce to and make Native Americans accept Western norms and values. In this context, by the term Euro-American (or Western) we mean the culture, norms and values recognized as standard or common among the majority of citizens of Europe and United States and Canada. In the dissertation, one of the aims is to show how these non-Native elements distort the whole self-regulatory system of Lakota culture.

Another area, where the negative impact of mixing the dual set of traditional (and orally transmitted) and Western (law-enforced) systems of norms could be seen in how the two systems deal with those who transgress the norms. While the purpose of the Western law is to punish the criminal and revenge the victim, from the Native perspective the most important is to preserve the harmony of the whole society as much as possible (Valandra, 2006). In other words, the Western system seeks for the exclusion of the norm-breaking individual, while the Native logic sets the community above individual self. Many examples from the fieldwork in Rosebud Lakota Reservation in 2014 and 2015 show that this principle could be, in Native logic, applied to a large scale of practices of transgression, from teenage revolting or alcohol abuse to a homicide.

²⁵ The term „Western“ is used in this work primarily as an opposite for „Native.“ However, it is important to realize that even in the „Western“ world there are many sub-cultures whose members often believe in values which are closer to what Donald Fixico and other Native scholars define as „Native“ values. (Fixico, 2009) or (White Hat sr., 2012)



Figure 15: Graffiti in Eagle Butte, South Dakota. Photo by Klára Perlíková. September 2015.

“For the majority of some million and a half variously defined Indians in America, being Indian involves not just the traditions or catastrophes served on a buffalo chip of history, but a conscious set of choices. The central issue is what to fuse of the new and the old, improvisations and continuations from the past.” (Lincoln & Slagle, 1997)

The issue of Lakota identity is from a large part similar to a broader topic of native identity of other tribes of North America, or “being Indian” as the term has become known²⁶. As Cash and Hoover write, “Indians have also been the subject of more than thirty thousand books, but very few address what is it like to be Indian” (Cash, 1995, p. x) In this chapter, we do not intend to provide an ultimate and unambiguous answer to this question, but it is important to realize that until recently this topic has been not been written about frequently, since works on Native American history, ethnography of narratives have prevailed.

²⁶ The term „being Indian“ is used by many scholars who have contributed to the issue of Native American history, culture, narratives and other areas. For example Joseph H. Cash and Herbert T. Hoover (Cash, 1995), Robert R. Berkhofer (Berkhofer, 1978) or Donald Fixico (Fixico, 2009) and of course many more authors, for example McNickle’s *Native American Tribalism* (McNickle, 1993)

To be Indian (and therefore to be Lakota, we can add) can be characterized in many ways and many words. Fixico wrote that “To be an Indian meant being alone in dominant society and its culture.” Further, he explains that term

“(…) is a statement full of political meanings and cultural complexity. An Indian person is subjected to many political definitions at various levels of tribal politics and by state and federal bureaucracies. The conflicting formulas of official tribal acknowledgement, federal blood quantum, and self-identification contribute to a sense of ambivalence. This experience is complicated even more by social and cultural identifications. To be Indian involves a spectrum of identities ranging from a generic Indianness to tribal culture, social need, societal judgement, and psychological self-examination.” (Cash, 1995, p. ix)

In the following section we are going to deal with Lakota Identity, which, as it has been argued, can be perceived as a dual one, mainly because of the existence two cultural norms – Western and Native – which are often hardly compatible with each other. Using Fixico’s words, we can perceive them as “conflicting formulas.” This conflict is more or less obvious in many aspects of life and culture of the Lakota, beginning with their history and how the cultural heritage has been dealt with.

To be more precise, we are going to focus on the Lakota who live in the four Lakota reservations in South and North Dakota. This specification is necessary, because there is also a numerous group of urban Indians, who have not been included in our research and study. There is a large number of books written by non-Native historians and anthropologists on Lakota history, but the Native sense of time and space is different to the one of the Western world, which of course means that the Lakota idea of their self-representation is usually very different to the image provided in works written by “white²⁷”

²⁷ The term “white“ has become a synonym for Euro-American world of scholars, or those who have been raised in the Western-world academic tradition, and we can find it in many books, for example *The white Man’s Indian* and others.

academics. For this reasons, institutions and concepts which are considered “Western,” for example museums or anthologies of oral narratives are used and transformed in Native Lakota context.

Tribal Museums and Identity

Let us start with museums of Lakota cultural heritage, history and arts. In the area of Rosebud and Pine Ridge reservations, there are at least four official institutions which serve as tribal museums. The phrase at least is used on purpose. Apart from buildings fulfilling the concept of museum as a public place of meeting and a depository for collecting, preserving and sharing knowledge about objects having historical or artistic value there are many unofficial improvised “museums:” Native artists display their works directly at their homes. They are not professional craftsmen, and they do not make a living from their artistic works, since visitors (and tourists) are rare in the area. The concept of museum is in these cases re-defined: it was not established as a place of displaying a large number of artistically valuable objects; what is of primary concern here is the need to share with anyone interested in anything about the artist’s culture. We can probably perceive it as another form of the need of sharing traditional knowledge which is described in Albert White Hat Sr.’s book *Zuya* (White Hat sr., 2012). In it he described the purpose of his project in which Lakota Medicine men gave series of lectures on traditional Lakota culture for students of various programmes at Sinte Gleska University in Rosebud: “We saw a need for our students to know something about our culture in order to connect with people who held those beliefs.” As A. White hat pointed out, the medicine men, contrary to general expectation of his University colleagues, agreed to teach the courses, because they perceived it as an opportunity to overcome the image of traditional Lakota culture and spirituality as illegal and undesired, which had been an official rhetoric imposed by federal government in reservations for a long period of time:

“For nearly one hundred years we had been taught to believe our traditional ways were evil, that we worshipped the devil, and were pagans. This was the message we received in our education, and it became the predominant feeling among our people. It was also the reason the medicine men agreed to teach.” (White Hat sr., 2012, p. xix)

These improvised museums can be perceived as a similar expression of the need to eradicate the remains of the colonial past. Native artists set up their exhibitions in order to

“connect” and “share²⁸,” rather than exhibit or sell their works. They can be found in private homes, far from main highway going through reservation, and are indicated only by hardly visible hand-painted notices.

Besides, there are of course official and larger museums of Lakota history, art and culture. In the area of Rosebud Indian Reservation there are two such museums²⁹: Lakota Museum at Buechel Memorial in St. Francis, and Lakota Heritage Center at Sinte Gleska University campus near Mission. When a visitor enters these two museum, at first glance he or she will be probably surprised by the beauty and aesthetic impressiveness of objects displayed there. One can see radiant star quilts and a large number of various richly-beaded objects: pow-wow regalia, ordinary caps decorated with beadwork, belts or even fully beaded Converse trainers. All of the exhibits do not seem to be chosen for the reason that they are old, and therefore, from the Western perspective, valuable,³⁰ because many of them were made relatively recently, not more than 30 years ago. It is evident that the objects displayed there were chosen for exhibition primarily for their outstanding aesthetic value. While Western museums of Native American cultures prefer to display pieces which fulfil the idea of an ancient/ traditional (historical, old, made of leather or buckskin) Native American object, Lakota museums in Rosebud prefer to show their visitors the finest pieces of Lakota art, and the decisive factor is not the old age of the given object or the material it is made from, but its aesthetic superiority. This difference in attitudes to what is worth displaying might explain why we never come across Native American star quilts in European museum: they are probably not considered traditional or genuine Native

²⁸ David Long Soldier. Interview, September 2015.

²⁹ Of course we can find much more museums of Lakota culture that are situated in four Lakota reservations in North and South Dakota: Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, Rosebud Indian Reservation, Standing Rock Reservation and Cheyenne Sioux Reservation. The two museums in Rosebud reservations are used as examples of how Native Americans' (Lakota) approach to this institution varies from the Western concept of a museum, and they certainly do not capture the situation of all the Lakota tribal museums. We are aware of this fact and perceive these two as illustrations of our observations. However, as Z. Buchowska showed in her presentation on tribal museums, many of these aspects are universal and true for tribal museums all over the United States (presentation at American Indian Workshop 2015 in Frankfurt)

³⁰ In case of Western museums we can observe a rough correlation between the age and value of the exhibit. During my visits at ethnographical museums in Prague, Berlin and Vienna we can hear the phrase “this is valuable, because it is very old” many times.

American craft, since Lakota women started to make them relatively recently,³¹ and the material they are made from is usually fabric.

The difference in the character of Lakota and European museums, illustrated by the example above, should be reflected from a more general perspective: Many scholars who come from Native communities all across the world perceive museum as an institution of European imperialism and colonialism,³² which is still a strong agent in creating a (false) image of contemporary indigenous communities not only of North America, but also of other parts of the world. L. T. Smith, a Maori scholar, criticises European anthropologists and ethnologists for misusing their power of an educated authority in the society to create an unrealistic image of her community by selecting informants who fit into their idea of a Maori: “They had a deep sympathy towards Maori people as an ideal while being hostile towards those Maori who fell short of this construct.” (Smith, 1999, p. 86) Similarly, the Lakota refuse the false image of their culture created by museum institutions, anthropologists and also by various hobbyist groups, which is the image of the “Grateful Dead Indian” (Deloria P. J., 1999, p. 182). Although the Lakota have been continually transforming their style of living to fit the 21st century America, until nowadays they are too often conceptualized as people of the nineteenth century. Albert White Hat sr. has expressed his disappointment at this prevailing image of the Lakota like this: “Our rituals have been dramatized and colored with a mysticism and mystery that are simply false. Our lifestyle has been romanticized, and in many cases we’re presented as history. Our cultures are history, and we no longer exist.” (White Hat sr., 2012, p. 27) When we read White Hat’s comment, which speaks for many Lakota and other Native American people, it becomes evident that Buechel Museum in Rosebud and other tribal museums are trying to fight against this stereotype of Lakota people as a nation of the past also by their selection of

³¹ Ollie Napesni, a „Lakota living treasure,“ a story teller, „carrier of culture,“ a Lakota language teacher, and star quilt maker and a lifelong resident of the area of Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota has shared her memories and her life story in a book *Salt Camp*. In it she writes about the origins of star quilt making among the Lakota from the area of Rosebud. Ollie Napesni remembers that she saw and then made her first star quilt in 1959, and the art of star quilt making, which originates from the Amish, has spread among Lakota women relatively recently: “You know, it’s just recently that they really started to make them here because when I came back I never did see quilts and if there was anybody that had quilts they were like blocks or triangle shapes.” (Napesni, *Salt Camp, HerStory Lakota Living Treasure*, 2003, stránky 214-219)

³² See for example Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s book *Decolonizing Methodologies*. (Smith, 1999)

objects exhibited; they show contemporary objects and pieces handcraft (e.g. modern powwow regalia or star quilts). In fact, their message is supposed to be the opposite: Lakota tribal museums attempt to show that their culture is a part of the present rather than of the past. As was stated by representatives from a variety of indigenous cultures who were asked by National Museum of the American Indian to reflect on their heritage in the museum's collections:

“In the future we don't want to end up engraved in a museum's exhibit. We want our music and dance, our songs to our nature, to our homes, and to our motherland performed by our people themselves while they are alive. We don't want to be thought of as dead people to be exhibited in a museum.” (National Museum of the American Indian, 1994, p. 184)

On the other hand, tribal museums exhibit a large number of objects that are, from the Western perspective, historical artefacts: objects of daily use such as horn spoons, moccasins, baby cradles, arrow heads or bone combs from the pre-reservation era. We can see a collection of ledger art drawings which is almost 100 years old, and Buechel Museum boasts a unique collection of winter counts – the oldest of them dating back to 1800's³³. How do these exhibits fit into the concept of a Lakota tribal museum which we claim to be different from the Western museums concerned with Native American (or Plains) cultures? And how do they support the image of the Lakota as not being a part of “history”? Answers to these questions are based on the difference between the perception of time by Native and Western people. Euro-American way of understanding time is characterized by its linear course from the past (or history) through the present towards the future. The Lakota (and Native Americans in general) perceive the world through different lens. Donald Fixico, a Native American (Shawnee, Sac and Fox, Muscogee Creek, Seminole) scholar deals with the distinction between Western and Native worldview in a book *The American Indian Mind in a Linear World* (Fixico, 2009). He characterizes the Native American philosophy as a “circular” one, because it is based on perceiving the world and its order through constantly alternating stages of cycles, both on the individual and the most universal level:

³³ The winter counts are displayed in a separate room, and it is strictly prohibited to take photographs or videos of these exhibits.

the migration patterns of animals, cycles of seasons, and what he calls “Natural Order of Life” (Fixico, 2009, p. 42). For Fixico, the circular way of perceiving the world is universal for all Native Americans and forms the basis of differences between Native and White Americans. He explains the concept of circular philosophy in the following words:

“Like the season changing in cycles every year and like the day and night in a circular change, the circle of life includes all things, according to Indian belief. The past is a part of the present such that history is a continuum without a beginning or an end in the Indian mind.” (Fixico, 2009, p. 45)

Though Fixico is not a Lakota, we can see that the “circular” Native logic can be thought of as universal indeed, because in Buechel and Sinte Gleska museums history is approached precisely from this perspective – as a part of the present. For example, many exhibits which illustrate the life on the plains in past times, such as bone instruments and pieces of garment are displayed with a label saying who was the original owner, and eventually which family he or she was a member of. Since membership in a family or *tios̄p̄aye*,³⁴ and the contact with relatives and knowledge of one’s ancestors and their life stories is very important for the Lakota, we can understand the non-anonymous character of the exhibits as an active link between living members of a *tios̄p̄aye* and their deceased relatives, who – through their names in the museum – share their wisdom with future generations, or, as the quote above says, “they are a part of the present”. Furthermore, names under museum exhibits are not the only symbol of fulfilling the idea of Lakota circular *Natural Order of Life*. Tribal museums intentionally represent the crafts mastered by and the knowledge of previous generations as a fundamental part of education of present-day children, because various pre-school or elementary school classes are frequent visitors here³⁵. For example, in a section dealing with the importance of buffalo for the Lakota, there is an interactive exposition titled “Can you guess what kind of useful items

³⁴ The explanation of this term, which can be crudely translated as “family“ or “family clan” can be found for example in a book a book *Zuya* by Albert White Hat sr. (White Hat Sr., 2012, pp. 37-49)

³⁵ Though we have visited the museums during summer holidays, every time we were there, we met a pre-school/ elementary class of Lakota language and culture studying and talking about the exhibits. As the teachers explained, they consider visiting the museum crucial for the children’s understanding what it means to be a Lakota. A teacher of Lakota Language Summer Elementary School. Interview, July 2014.

can be made of buffalo hides and hair?” It explains how various parts of the animal can be used for making clothes, instruments, food or dishes. What is important, the labels are always in present tense, and also the photographs and illustrations are intentionally related to the present-day use.

The general knowledge and certain skill in crafts of the pre-reservation era among modern Lakota is not maintained only by tribal museums. Until nowadays, it is required in various situations and stages of life of a person, as two quotes bellow illustrate:

On the occasion of her coming of age ceremony³⁶ a girl must be able to pick up a tipī on her own to show she can take care of her future family³⁷.

One can hardly see a *tipī* as a normal dwelling. On the other hand, it is a necessity on various special occasions and ceremonies.

Every summer we would go camping in Ghost Hawk with children. We would live in tipis, prepare food in a traditional way,³⁸ speak Lakota, tan hides and many more things. We have wonderful times every year.³⁹

In school curriculum of every stage we can find courses in Lakota language and culture, and there are many activities among the oldest generation to promote their knowledge, and make their language and culture literally a living part of the lives of their children and grandchildren.

³⁶ White Hat sr. Writes about this ceremony and explains that it the *Isnati* (“Living alone”) ceremony is done for the first few months after a young girl experiences her first monthly period. For the description of the ceremony see (White Hat Sr., 2012, pp. 51-52, 172)

³⁷ A Lakota woman in her fifties, she has four daughters and seven granddaughters. Interview, September 2015.

³⁸ She explained that means to put pieces of meat, herbs, vegetables and water into the raw buffalo stomach, then throw in fire-heated stones, and let everything until cooked.

³⁹ A Lakota language teacher in her sixties. Interview, September 2015



Figure 16: Contemporary art exhibited in Lakota museum at Sinte Gleska University. Photo by Klára Perliková, 2015.



Figure 17: From an exhibition in Lakota museum at Sinte Gleska University. Photo by Klára Perliková, 2015.



Figure 18: From an exhibition in Lakota museum at Sinte Gleska University. Photo by Klára Perliková, 2015.

Linear and Circular World

In the previous chapter Donald Fixico's reflections on the difference between circular – Native –and Western – linear – perception of time were mentioned. When we think deeper about what Fixico wrote about the difference between Western and Native concepts of history and course of time, we realize, that the disparity between these two must be perceived as a structural one in the sense that it affects the most general elements of culture. One of the most important of these elements is the Lakota perception of natural environment, which influences many issues the contemporary Lakota have to deal with. For this reason, we will proceed with the issue of linearity and circularity a little bit further.

As it was mentioned, Native Americans' basic concepts of perceiving and understanding the world we live in radically differ from the worldview shared among Euro-American society, although there are of course many sub-cultures who fit more in the "Native" system of values. How a person understands the idea of time is one among the basic radically different concepts, as the Native quote below puts it:

"(...) the concept of time for Indian people has been such a continuum that time becomes less relevant and the rotation of life or seasons of the year are stressed as important for understanding life. This is inherent to understanding life for American Indians. It is also inherent to mainstream Americans and the rest of the world, although time is less of a factor for comprehending the changes or phases of life from birth to childhood, to adulthood to old age, and to death." (Fixico, 2009, p. 72)

Fixico was raised as a Seminole and Muscogee Creek, but when he writes about Native Americans and their "non-American" values, he makes no tribal distinction, and stresses repeatedly that all indigenous people of North America share a similar philosophical heritage, and that they have in common their dissimilarity with the non-Native American majority. In the quote above, Fixico states that people both in Native (Indian) and Western worlds have always been aware of two types of time – linear and cyclical one – being in conflict in a mind of any living person. For people living in Euro-American society the linearity of time and the flow and progress of an individual's life from

birth to death, from the unreturnable past to uncertain future, or from cause to effect has become the primary way of perceiving the world, and although Euro-Americans are aware of the repeating pattern of changing seasons of the year, they do not consider its cyclical character important or relevant enough to their lives: every beginning of a new year or every new-born baby is perceived as unique and new. In other words, the Western civilization gradually ceased to perceive the world through the circular pattern which Fixico considers the primordial one, whereas Anglo-American people have become a linear society through their obsession of measuring time.

For Native Americans, on the other hand, the perception of time is based on the repeating cycles of natural creation, death and re-creation. Life emerges in spring, grows and ripens during summer and autumn, then everything ceases to live in winter only to emerge again in spring with new energy to repeat the cycle of the year once more. From the Native perspective the life of an individual, perceived by Western philosophy as linear, makes sense only within the context of the cyclical life of nature and everything living in it. Human life is understood as a sequence of events or stages which have a form of a circle from life to death, and this cycle repeats itself from generation to generation⁴⁰. The uniqueness of an individual and his or her short life is regarded as unimportant in view of the course of natural processes: what is central is the regularity and stability of cycles.

It is evident that the difference between the concepts of time in Native and Euro-American cultures determines other basic notions of the given culture. If Native Americans consider the cyclical concept of time primary and natural, their idea of a meaningfully lived life has to differ from the Euro-American notion. Fixico considers order and relationship the most important concepts of Indian culture which represent both the way how to reflect the world and the key to live a meaningful life for an American Indian:

“How atoms, objects, humans, or entities in general are related or associated with each other is imperative to an individual's understanding and comprehension of the world

⁴⁰ A Lakota woman, the wife of the former president of Rosebud Sioux Tribe explains the Lakota idea of the Circle of Life and its seven stages and rites connected with them through the following diagram: The circle begins with Birth followed by the Wiping of The Mouth ceremony. The third stage of one's life is marked by the Making Relatives rite. Later, there is the fourth ceremony, Coming of Age. In another stage of one's life, there are other two ceremonies, Keeping of the Soul, and Wiping of Tears. The seventh stage of life is Death, which is perceived as the return to Birth, and the circle is complete. Interview, July 2014

and the universe. According to the Creator, all things are in a sequential order called the Circle of Life. Relationship and order are essential concepts that help to understand the native ethos of Indian people.” (Fixico, 2009, p. 73)

Let us first take the term “relationship,” and reflect on what meanings it gains in the context of Lakota culture. First, there are of course family relationship – the concept of *tiošpāye* we have dealt with above. It is not only a Lakota name for a formal concept. The term describes a family system in a sense much more complex than the Euro-American idea of each individual’s family. Additionally, the membership in a *tiošpāye* is defined not only through biological kinship, but also through marriage or adoption. However, what is always crucial is the way members of a *tiošpāye* express their feelings towards their relatives: relationship is expressed through showing love and affection to family members, especially to children. In the following quote, Mildred Stinson, an Oglala Sioux remembers her childhood during 1920’s and describes how grandparents and other relatives always dealt attentively and lovingly with children:

“There was always much affection; they put their arms around us and sitting close to them, be sitting around, aunts would reach over and get us and set us on their laps. And things like that. There was always love.” (Cash, 1995, p. 94)

Despite the fact that Mrs. Stinson’s memory comes from a several decades’ time ago, we have seen many times that among contemporary Lakota, children are treated with a similar love and affection⁴¹, especially by the oldest generation. What in Euro-American point of view would have been labelled spoiling a child, is a part of expressing love and respect among members of Lakota *tiošpāye*. Similarly, the same affection which is often showed towards the youngest members is reserved to the elders of a family, since grandparents are respected for what they can teach their grandchildren⁴² and because “grandchildren is their [grandparents’] happy preoccupation” (Deloria E. C., 2007, p. 23).

⁴¹ Of course, this tradition is not a cultural imperative strong enough to prevent some Lakota parents from mistreating their children. The problem of child abuse is not unknown among Lakota, as shows a video-spot by a Native sketch comedy group „1491s“ which intends to support a campaign for positive parenting approach in Lakota families. The video is available on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJHQuTeSFQU>

⁴² When we attended a powwow which happened to take place on the Grandparent’s Day, there were numerous honour songs to honour grandparents, and grandchildren were asked to thank and express affection to all grandparents.

When reflecting on the term “relationship” in the context of Lakota culture, we have to mention the essential term *Mitākūye Oyas’iŋ*, which is usually translated as “All my relatives” or “We are all related.” It is understood as a concept, and Albert White Sr. explains it in this way:

“This is the most fundamental belief in our Lakota philosophy, that we are related to everything on earth and in the universe. We were all formed from the blood of *Iŋyaŋ*: humans, animals, trees, water, air, stones. Everything in the universe, we are all related.” (White Hat sr., 2012, p. 33)

The concept is referring directly to the Lakota creation myth, and for those who adopt the philosophy and live it every day,⁴³ *Mitākūye Oyas’iŋ* represents a way how the environment they live in becomes an integral part of their Lakota identity. This deep interconnection is not only symbolical. We can truly perceive landscape of the Great Plains region as a physical representation of Lakota concern for the environment they live in. As Ames stressed, the landscape is inseparable from Native culture: “Better to speak about landscape in connection with Native Americans and reservations: Landscape defined as the ‘material manifestation of the relationship between humans and the environment.’” (Ames K. M., 2008)

The *Mitākūye Oyas’iŋ* concept teaches the Lakota to respect and use wisely everything that lives, grows and stands around them as their relatives – an approach completely different from the Euro-American view of nature and the resources it provides.⁴⁴ Quite recently, the *Mitākūye Oyas’iŋ* philosophy has gained a very contemporary dimension, when a mining company TransCanada started a project that proposed building tar sands pipeline from oil sands in Canada to refineries in Texas. One of its segments, known as Keystone XL (or KXL) was planned to run also through the Great Sioux Nation treaty lands as defined by the 1851 and 1868 Ft. Laramie Treaties. This project has been practically halted both by the presidential veto in November 2015 (Labott,

⁴³ As with other aspects of Lakota culture, also the concept of *Mitākūye Oyas’iŋ* is now taught to Lakota children both in pre-school and in higher classes, in order to support the revitalisation initiatives of Lakota culture and traditions.

⁴⁴ There have been many books and works dealing with the history of clashes, disputes, disagreements and armed conflicts between the Lakota and Euro-Americans colonizing their territory. One of the books that describe more recent history of Lakota resistance to federal government’s policy towards Native Americans is E. C. Valandra’s *Not Without Our Consent* (Valandra, 2006).

2015) and by significant fall in oil prices that made the project unprofitable. However, the protests against construction of the northern segment of KXL running through South Dakota reveal how Lakota culture, identity and especially their relation to natural environment are a part of contemporary cultural awareness of the Lakota. What is more, the arguments against the KXL pipeline derived from the concept *Miṭākūye Oyas'īṅ* have formed protests going beyond borders of reservations and became a basis of a unique alliance between Native and non-Native residents of the affected area. For this reason, we will use the case of Keystone pipeline to show how the Lakota understand and apply the philosophy of *Miṭākūye Oyas'īṅ* in the modern world, and what forms it can take.

KXL Pipeline⁴⁵

The Lakota opposed the construction of the Keystone pipeline from the moment the project had been announced. Their protests were organized mainly by the actions of Rosebud Sioux Tribe and their initiative “Shield the People” (*Oyate Wahacanka Woecun*). In March 2014 they set up a symbolic encampment – “Spiritual Camp” – which became one of the strongest symbols of the protests, and which is situated⁴⁶ approximately ten miles east of official borders of Rosebud Indian Reservation. The Camp was built in the planned route of the Keystone pipeline on tribal lands on a place considered sacred by the Lakota⁴⁷. Men and women who camped there (some come only for several days, some of them stayed for a long period of time with their families being with them or visiting them regularly) were determined to maintain the camp “twenty-four hours a day until either the proposed Keystone XL pipeline permit is denied or the ground gets broken with pipeline construction.” (Shield the People, 2014)

⁴⁵ At the present time (2017), a similar project with similar reasons for protesting against it– Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) – is being built in the roughly same area. However, in the time of our research DAPL’s construction was not approved, and therefore we do not deal with it in the dissertation.

⁴⁶ Even though the protests against the pipeline were stopped after the official rejection of the project, the camp still exists on its original place and is occasionally used for *inipi* ceremonies and gatherings of people.

⁴⁷ “You’ll sleep well here, ‘cause there’s a good medicine dug in the place.” A Lakota resident of the Spiritual Camp. Interview, July 2014



Figure 19: *Spiritual Camp in the trail of the proposed KXL Pipeline near Winner, South Dakota. July 2014. Photo by Klára Perlíková*

The Spiritual Camp was built on its place also with the intention to protect one of Lakota sacred places, since it would have been destroyed by the construction of the pipeline. As the photo above illustrates, the occupants sleep in tipis, no matter what is the weather like. Some who stayed in the camp for a long period of time took their pets with them, grew small vegetable gardens next to their tipis, or even sheltered small domestic animals such as chicken. There was also one tent with a gas stove and an electric generator which provides the camp's internet connection – their link with the rest of the world and their main tool of resistance. However, the occupants do not have much comfort in the camp, due to severe weather conditions in the Plains. Despite the hot in summer and frost and wind in winter, the occupation of Spiritual Camp continued all year long until TransCanada announced stopping of the project, and even after that day it is not empty. The Spiritual Camp (or Spirit Camp, as it is called by some) is open for anyone who wants to express his or her sympathies with its idea, which refers directly to the concept of *Miṭākūye Oyás'in* and its application to the issue of the KXL pipeline: If the Lakota allow

destroying their land, they will also let their cultural identity be harmed irrecoverably. Shield the People and the Camp's residents do not point out only to the threat of the pollution of drinking water by the possible oil spill from the pipeline, but they protest against the project also for the reason of preserving a spiritual balance within the tribal land. In this context, we can remember, that when Fixico defined the Native concept of "Natural Order of Life" (Fixico, 2009, pp. 41-61), he stressed that all Native philosophies operate in a circular mode which opposes the Euro-American linear one. The Lakota protests operate precisely according to this logic: apart from environmental impacts of the project, they fear of the breaking the "Circle of Life" through destroying their sacred place and therefore disrupting their children's lives. In other words, history is a part of the present and the future. That is why the Camp carries the name Spiritual and why Lakota protests are culturally bound.

The Spiritual Camp is a place⁴⁸ where people can meet, talk about their common cause – the actions against the pipeline – and support each other. One of the purposes of the Camp is also provide the "warriors"⁴⁹ an opportunity to regain strength from prayers, from *inipi* (sweat lodge) ceremony which takes place almost every day, or just by sharing positive news and thoughts with each other. Many of the visitors donate food, candles, or other equipment needed. People come not only from neighbouring Rosebud and Pine Ridge communities: supporters came from New York or even from Europe⁵⁰. Though the Spiritual Camp is a Lakota project, and is based on Lakota worldview and culture, they made efforts to formulate their protests as fighting for values that the Lakota consider universal since they belong to both native and non-Native culture Earth and Water is sacred: for the Lakota, and the threat of pollution of water and soil caused by the construction or possible breakdown of the pipeline causes harm not only in material but also spiritual sense, as it

⁴⁸ We have visited the Spiritual Camp repeatedly, in summer 2014 and 2015. The photographs of the Camp were also taken during these visits.

⁴⁹ The protesters often referred to themselves as „warriors,“ pointing out to the traditional virtues of Lakota men.

⁵⁰ During our visit in summer 2014 there was a group of four young people from New York who had come across the news about Spiritual Camp accidentally on a social network and they decided to express their sympathies to the Camp's occupants in person. The Spiritual Camp's occupants also remembered a visit from Germany that had arrived to see the camp that same summer. Interviews with the Camp's residents. July, 2014.

was explained above. The Lakota also want the politicians and representatives of TransCanada to understand (and accept) their Native relationship to the environment: one does not own the land he or she lives in; everybody are nothing more than another part of creation in which everything has its place and is connected with all. Shield the People also stresses the importance of children (or the youngest generation) for Lakota people, since they are their future; and parents and grandparents feel the responsibility to fight against the pipeline to protect clean environment for future generations.

The deep spirituality and spiritual fight against the pipeline construction is the primary focus and effort of the people staying in the camp. They say that trough this place, the whole tribe stands against the mining company, and the prayers and positive thoughts (spiritual support) send by everyone give the occupants energy to continue their fight.

However, the spiritual unity in protecting water and land does not end at the borders of Rosebud Reservation. As it has been mentioned above, the camp is provided with electricity and internet access, and spreading and sharing the word about the Camp through social networks plays very important role in the protests. Shield the People have their Facebook site and they provide it with news from the camp regularly⁵¹. The posts are written in a positive and encouraging tone, expressing the hope for a good end of the fight and also stressing the unity of all the camp occupants.

Through their blog and Facebook site, Shield the People can share Native perspective on the fight against the pipeline construction, and also the values they are protecting. The rhetoric and purpose of Shield the People project can be characterized as a peaceful and non-violent protest stressing the necessity of protecting traditional Lakota values, and saving the future of the community. However, these values are presented as universal and going beyond traditional ethnic divisions.

On the other hand, in the Rosebud Sioux Tribe community, we can find different opinions on how the protests should go. When in 2014 the U.S. House of Representatives approved the controversial Keystone pipeline bill, Rosebud Sioux Tribal President Cyril

⁵¹ See the Facebook site of Shield the People (Oyate Wahacanka Wocun, n.d.)

Scott called this an “act of war.” As he explained later, by act of war he meant that the Lakota “are going to have to take legal manoeuvres and are going to protect their land and their way of life.” (Indian Country Today Media Network, 2014)

He expressed the feeling many Lakota people have that the history is repeating itself, and the forced construction of the pipeline near Rosebud would be another case of breaking a treaty made between US federal government and Native Americans: “When it comes to treaties, they forget about us. ... People forget that we’re a sovereign nation. Everybody else ... they’re just guests here.” (Ibanez, 2014) Consequently, many who oppose the KXL pipeline (which is in fact the whole tribe), point out primarily to the traditional virtues of a Lakota warrior and their actions and protests are lead in this tradition.

We can say, that these two main forms of protest have roots in, and stress the traditional values of the Lakota: respect for the past and the sense of responsibility for the future generations as a part of the circular concept of time, and the *Miitakuye Oyas’iŋ* concept which stresses people’s spiritual connection with the land they live in. Other protests also point out to the heritage of generations of Lakota warriors. However, the fight against Keystone pipeline (or Black Snake as it is sometimes called) gave rise to an alliance, which is more universal, and goes beyond traditional ethnic and cultural distinctions. It is called Cowboy Indian Alliance, and it unites Native Americans and white farmers, ranchers and landowners from South Dakota and Nebraska. However stereotypical its name might sound, the idea to unite people in their fight for land is perceived as a new and very positive change in the society by both sides.



Figure 20: Protest against KXL pipeline. Source: <http://rejectandprotect.org>

It is true, that the alliance stresses the stereotypical imagery from western movies, but it does this on purpose, and there is a tone of irony, and hyperbole in it. These two traditionally *alien* groups united in a common cause and together they were determined to fight against Federal political decisions that would destroy their homeland where they live, farm, hunt and where their ancestors were buried. We can understand the Cowboy and Indian Alliance as a project in which the Lakota managed to make their concept *Miñakuye Oyas'in* known to farmers in the region and other non-Native people, and in this way their culture and especially their relationship with the environment has become a significant factor in the protests.⁵² Thus their philosophy which forms their traditions for hundreds of

⁵² The Lakota and their project "Shield the People" is not the only one which links indigenous culture with protests against destruction of environment. Probably the largest and most powerful initiative is the "Idle No More" movement. It was founded by three Native women and one environmental activist. Together the women began to "spread the word" about changes in Canadian and US legislatives which would cause further destruction of environment. They operate primarily through social networks where

years has proved to be a concept which can be relevant in and be accepted by the contemporary globalized world and society. That their culturally bound arguments were not ignored by the US society can be also proved by the fact that the news about the Spiritual Camp has got into mainstream media several times.⁵³

sharing such news is an effective way of medialisatation. At the present time “Idle No More” (INM) describes itself as a platform for all movements, actions and gatherings that fight for the protection of environment. As Jakub Hutera stressed in his work, INM has turned (Native) culture into a political category. (Hutera, 2015)

⁵³ For example it appeared in The Ed Show on 31st March 2014. (MSNBC, 2014)

Those Ways: Religion and Spirituality

In the passage above, we have dealt with the importance of landscape and environment to the Lakota living in reservations, and about the way it is rooted in their philosophy and metaphysical perception of the world (besides, the name of the Spiritual Camp illustrates it eloquently). In the following paragraphs, we will deal with the issue of spirituality and what it means for the Lakota in more detail. Though this topic is so wide that it would have needed much more space in order to be researched properly,⁵⁴ we consider necessary to include it here in the passage on Lakota identity and how it can be perceived in a dual mode.

As Bucko writes⁵⁵, religion nowadays is very important for Native peoples and their identity, because it is by many considered the “last thing that the Indian people had left.” (Bucko, 2008). He also notes, that from Native perspective the term is used interchangeably with “spirituality” and “those ways,” and there is often a sense of sentiment expressed with it. At the same time, it is important to realize, that for the Lakota, religion does not represent an isolated category which is separated from their secular lives. On the contrary, it is being lived by the majority of the Lakota every day, though every single individual lives and practices his or spirituality in a slightly different form and way, a fortiori, because Lakota religion – similarly to other Native religions – cannot be perceived as something isolated from new influences. Conversely, it is a subject of continuous changes, borrowings and innovations. For all these reasons, it is necessary to perceive spirituality from a perspective which is different from the Western one: “Religion cannot be separated from other cultural institutions such as healing, political structure, hunting, and success in warfare. Religion is interpreted in relation to the other elements of the society.” (Bucko, *The Lakota Ritual of the Sweat Lodge: History and Contemporary Practice*, 1998, p. 179)

⁵⁴ There are many works dealing with the issue of Native spirituality and religion, among which Deloria Jr's works are one of the most insightful ones. For more detail see his books *God Is Red or For This Land: Writings on Religion in America*. (Deloria V. J., *God is Red*, 2003) DeMallie's *The Sixth Grandfather* is also a classic (DeMallie, 1984).

⁵⁵ Though Bucko often writes about Native American religions in general in his article, he bases many of his observations on his fieldwork in Lakota reservations between years 1988 to 2000. See (Bucko, *The Lakota Ritual of the Sweat Lodge: History and Contemporary Practice*, 1998).

When we study Lakota religion and its external manifestations on the reservations, there is another important factor which has to be taken into consideration. There are two extreme positions towards spirituality among those who can speak authoritatively about it. On the one hand, religion is perceived as something which is not to be shared with outsiders – as knowledge which is “considered sacred and not shared with outsiders.” (Pickering, 2004, p. 21). By many it is perceived as “the last secret and property of the Native community.” (Bucko, *The Lakota Ritual of the Sweat Lodge: History and Contemporary Practice*, 1998, p. 173) On the other hand, some religious practices are open to free interaction and their sharing with outsiders. Lakota ceremony⁵⁶ of sweat lodge is generally considered a ceremony which is open to anyone⁵⁷ and can be example of an act of sharing of religion.

As it was written, Lakota religion can hardly be perceived as an institutionalized and monolithically unified issue. For this reason, the question of who may speak magisterially about it needs to be considered. Among the Lakota – both with and without university diploma – there have been many initiatives which aim at sharing the knowledge about Lakota religion and spirituality through books. The primary purpose is of course sharing the knowledge, but apart from that Lakota authors often mention the intention to correct some misinterpretations which appeared in previous literature on Lakota spirituality, and whose validity has been strongly questioned⁵⁸. As Albert White Hat Sr. writes, another reason for sharing knowledge which has been considered sacred and secret can be the attempt to overcome fear of traditional beliefs:

“When our medicine men began to teach this material, probably 90 percent of our people were deathly afraid of it. For nearly one hundred years we had been taught to believe our traditional ways were evil, that we worshiped the devil and were pagans. This was the

⁵⁶ The Sweat lodge ceremony is now practiced among Native Americans across the whole continent.

⁵⁷ A resident of the Spiritual Camp. Interview, July 2014.

⁵⁸ For example, the notorious book *Black Elk Speaks* by John G. Neihardt was recognized by many as an authentic work on Lakota religion and spirituality. However, as later studies and comparisons have shown, it can hardly be considered as authentic due to Neihardt's edits and omissions. See (Pickering, 2004) and (Neihardt J. G., 2008). See also Ullrich's epilogue to the Czech edition of *Black Elk Speaks*, *Mluví Černý Jelen*, in which he deals with the issue of religion among the Lakota of Black Elk's time (Neihardt J. G., 1998, pp. 233-310)

message we received in our education, and it became the predominant feeling among our people. It was also the reason the medicine men agreed to teach.” (White Hat sr., 2012, p. xix)

Nowadays, there is a strong role of both traditional Lakota religious practices and Christian church, and they are far from being separated from each other. It has been already mentioned that religion and spirituality is an important part of Lakota identity, and it is common that residents of Lakota reservations incorporate both traditions into their lives. Bucko himself writes about dual participation in the two belief systems, and points out that the Lakota are often “compartmentalizing Native and Christian practices and participating in both at different times and for different purposes.” He uses the term “Native Christianity” to describe the process how both traditions form Lakota identity together without devaluation of either of the traditions. (Bucko, 2008, p. 186) Example of such duality in religious belief can be illustrated by Lakota general attitude towards two ultimately liminal moments of human existence – birth and death. While the majority of Lakota families prepare the traditional leather turtle to carry the new-born’s umbilical cord and a star quilt to ensure the baby’s protection and long life, the death of a relative is often reflected through Christian belief in God and resurrection⁵⁹.

⁵⁹ The wife of the former president of Rosebud Sioux Tribe. Interview, July 2014.

Lakota Identity in the Western World: Conclusion

“The American Indian mind has changed and it has become less traditional. The majority of the Indian population is represented by mixed bloods, and the mixed blood thinks differently from the traditional full blood and he or she thinks more like the linear white man due to attending schools with white teachers” (Fixico, 2009, p. 168)

Donald Fixico’s reflexion of Native American identity regardless tribal affiliation does not sound very positive and encouraging. Do the Lakota feel similar regret as described by Fixico? Definitely we do not have the authority to answer the question for all Lakota, but let us consider it through issues we have dealt with in this chapter. First, several examples from museums run by tribal institutions have shown that the Lakota perceive their cultural heritage, history and present differently from curators of ethnographical museums in the West. Though we can find objects from the period before the Lakota contact with Europeans, the function of such exhibits differ in the two cases. Bucko refers to such objects and elements of culture as “ethnographic present,” and notes that it still has some value in study of the Lakota (Bucko, 2008, pp. 176-182). Western museums have a long tradition of ethnographers who collected data and material artefacts among “exotic” cultures in what they believed was an *uncontaminated* (Bucko, 2008, p. 179) state before these cultures would be – in their eyes – lost or radically transformed. The trouble is that nowadays Western museums often put too much emphasis as ethnographical present at the expense of current issues among the Lakota (or other Native American culture). However, it is true that ethnographical present is recognized by current Lakota as well. For example, E. C. Deloria has recently written a whole book dealing with the issue⁶⁰. The difference is that ethnographical present is perceived as a part of today's world for the Lakota: great-grandmother's fan used by her grand-daughter at powwows, the spirit of a deceased grandfather still believed to be present in some objects by his family, rituals and ceremonies, or care and love with which children are taught Lakota language by their family

⁶⁰ See her book *The Dakota Way of Life* (Deloria E. C., 2007)

or teachers⁶¹. In this way, Fixico's view on Native culture being circular in contrast with Western emphasis on linearity is relevant. As a consequence, one of the duality the Lakota have to deal with is to live within these two thought systems simultaneously.

⁶¹ A teacher at Lakota Summer Elementary School. Interview, St. Francis, July 2014.

A POWWOW

There is possibly hardly any issue from contemporary Lakota culture which could illustrate the dual reality of everyday life in the area of a reservation more clearly than a powwow. In this case, by dual we mean primarily the incongruity of the influences of Western culture and pan-Indian interpretations of Native American identity on the one hand, and – on the other hand – traditions and influences which are usually referred to as genuine Lakota by those who are involved in a powwow. Further in the text we will provide examples illustrating this duality. It is also important to point out that the borders among the above mentioned categories are very relative and their interpretation is very subjective. What is perceived as crucial and distinct by some participants of a powwow might be interpreted as irrelevant or even inappropriate by other Lakota (and by other participants as well). Furthermore, a powwow is an event where various groups of Lakota meet: There are dancers, singers and drummers who can be perceived primarily as active participants, but there is also a large number of those who come to the event as visitors, family relatives, local residents or even passers-by, and each of these individuals might have different expectations from or motivations for coming to such event. For these reasons, even though we can observe some dual tendencies, the particular interpretation of a situation is always very subjective. This also means that duality in terms of powwows is to a certain extent relative. We are also aware of the fact that powwows represent only one of many aspects of Lakota (and Native American) world, and certainly not all Lakota attend powwows either in an active or passive way. Despite this fact, powwows can be understood and “read” as an self-portrait that the Lakota create about themselves – an image of self-representation and the message to the rest of the world, because the bigger and “richer” the powwow is, the higher number of non-native visitors who attend it⁶². In other words, a powwow is how the Lakota want to be perceived by the rest of the world.⁶³ On the other hand, Lakota

⁶² The largest powwows organized by the Lakota are probably Rosebud Casino Powwow or a powwow on Labour Day in September in Eagle butte. These powwows take place alongside with rodeos, which can be understood as “white” counterpart to the Lakota event. Metaphorically and with a slight exaggeration, there are “Cowboys and Indians” celebrating together.

⁶³ It is important to note that the concern of self-representation is centred primarily on the happening in the powwow arena. Outside this space there are many Lakota who do not reckon this issue as important.

powwows are not uniquely Lakota in the sense that they share many features, rules and standards which have become common among all Native American people who organize and go to powwows all across tribal powwow grounds, halls and arenas in the United States. In this sense, a powwow also reflects some tendencies of pan-Indianism⁶⁴, because Lakota powwows do not differ significantly from the majority of other native powwows in the sense that they all share a set of similar rules and imagery. We can also reflect on the phenomenon from the opposite perspective. As Strong wrote, “There is a large paradox of Lakota powwows: On the one hand a powwow is always an occasion of displaying Lakota culture and celebrate Lakota identity. On the other hand, through following rules that originate in the pan-Indian idea of a powwow, the Lakota powwows are also influenced by external forces.” Though Strong in her essay on representational practices among North American tribes stresses that all across the Native world we can see a continuous tendency to replace representation by self-representation (Strong, 2008, pp. 324-359), the case of Lakota powwows is in this sense an exception, because alongside with self-representation, there are also some pan-Indian elements: The way Lakota powwows are performed in present times – the organization of the arena, elements of dancer’s regalia, dance steps and conventions, songs and drum groups – has its origins in Plains (or directly Lakota) culture, and from there it has been established and spread as a model pattern for powwows all across Native America, no matter whether powwows are or are not a part of cultural tradition of a given tribe. We can therefore state that Lakota self-representative traditions have – to a considerable extent – become important contributors to the process of pan-Indian tendencies in tribal representations⁶⁵.

However, a powwow is generally perceived by its participants as a demonstration of (genuine) Lakota culture and a reinforcement of Lakota cultural identity. It is an event at which everybody share their Native identity which is on this occasion clearly visualized, and within the micro-cosmos of the powwow grounds it is freed from any ambiguities with

⁶⁴ A sketch comedy group of Native American artists named 1491s have made an ironic video, a fake origin-story of the largest pan-Indian powwow – Gathering of Nations. Their sketch takes place in the museum at Crazy Horse monument, and includes features which the artists consider symbols of such events: New Agers, hippies, and kitsch imageries of Indian princesses and Noble Savages. (1491s, 2012)

⁶⁵ Karolina Majerová, interview, April 2014

which the Lakota – men and women, old and young – are confronted in their everyday lives. A powwow creates a clear and unbiased cultural frame with which its visitors can identify and which enables them to strengthen their sense and idea of being Lakota. This microcosm starts with the entrance to the powwow grounds where the label “No drugs, no alcohol” is, and from there its effect continues not only in the circle of the arena, but also all over the grounds where dancers, their families, and other visitors camp in their large tents and cars, until the very last tent. By many participants, a powwow is strongly perceived as a space and time in which traditional Lakota virtues – generosity, fortitude, strength and wisdom (as described in (Utley, 23-24)) – are recognized and adhered to more consciously by everybody. People are relaxed and enjoy the atmosphere and their time spend together, since a powwow is also an important social event: relatives and friends living far from each other often meet only during summer powwows where the Lakota from various places and reservations travel hundreds of miles, and they often do so every weekend⁶⁶. For children the powwow grounds is one big (and safe) playground, where they are kept an eye on by all adults, no matter whether they know them or not. A unique, relaxed atmosphere and a sense of safety⁶⁷ is also experienced by “outsiders”.

⁶⁶ A mother of a successful jingle dress dancer and other three junior dancers and a wife to a drummer complained: „Our house is a complete mess from June to September, we are on the road every weekend, Friday to Sunday. “

⁶⁷ A personal experience illustrating this sense of safety can be provided: When on a powwow one of my children got lost in the crowd of dancers and spectators around the powwow arena, he was brought back to me by a woman whom I have never seen before: she saw a crying child who was apparently lost, and though she did not know anything about him or his family she did not hesitate to help him find his mother.

Selected Examples of Dual Realities and Paradoxes at Powwows

In the introduction we have stated that at Lakota powwows we can find many cases of clashes between influences of Western culture and traditions and influences that are generally perceived as traditional Lakota. Probably the most iconic and eloquent symbol of this duality is the US flag. The flag is an integral part of any powwow. It plays an important role in powwow ceremonies: For example, there is always raising of the flag (or – more often – several flags) at the beginning of every day of a powwow and its ceremonial lowering after the last dances are over for the day, but, as we can expect, its significance goes far beyond the symbol of statehood of the United States. The symbolic meaning of the flag for Lakota families⁶⁸ in fact illustrates the importance of the flag at powwows. Moreover, it is brought into the arena during the Flag Song, and honour song during give-away ceremonies⁶⁹. In general, the US flag can be perceived as one of the constituents of a powwow, and as such it has been adopted by the Lakota not only as an object which is hung from a flagpole, but its pattern has been broadly adopted in beadwork decorations and star quilt patterns as well.

⁶⁸ It is probably well known that a family of an American soldier who fell in service is sent a US flag. The Lakota men (and also women) have often enlisted, and for this reason many Lakota families own a US flag as a memory of their relative who fell in WWI or WWII (and sometimes in more contemporary military conflicts). For the Lakota, the US flag becomes an important part of a memory of their beloved relative, and is dealt with great affection and care. It is often displayed at home together with the relative's photographs.

⁶⁹ These statements are based on personal observations and experience from Lakota powwows visited in North and South Dakota in 2014 and 2015.



Figure 21: Flags are brought into arena at Grand Entry. Powwow at St. Francis, July 2014. Photo by Klára Perliková

Yet the axiomatic acceptance of the US flag as a common element of powwows is not shared by all Lakota. While its symbolic connotations as mentioned above are questioned very rarely, there are Lakota who perceive the flag in broader historical context in which the US state symbol contradict the basic principles of a powwow as a Native American (in this case Lakota) activity or event:

“For me and many others the US flag is a symbol of the oppressive US government and what they did to our nation. What they still do to us. They do not respect the treaties...the KXL and so on. I know that the flag honours the warriors – the veterans, and that it is a memory of them. But I am not happy to see the US flag on our powwows. We have our own flags, why don't we use our tribal flags?⁷⁰”

⁷⁰ A Lakota male dancer at Labor Day Powwow in Eagle Butte. Interview summer 2015.

Despite similar voices, the US flag is still accepted and used at Lakota powwows with no exceptions or official negative comments as an integral part of opening and closing ceremony and other moments during the event. Yet, it is still important to be aware of the fact that the symbol has not been internalized by all, and as such its interpretations might vary on an individual level.



Figure 22: Grand Entry, Potato Creek Powwow, September 2015. Photo by Klára Perliková

As we can see in the photograph above, the Lakota veterans – men and women – carry not only the US flag, but they also bring into the Circle flags of military operations in which they participated during their military service (Operation Iraqi Freedom and Desert Storm), or a military unit they joined when they were in the US Army (we can see the flags of U.S. Air Force and United States Marine Corps in the photograph, but at other powwows there were even veterans of WW2). Above the heads of the veterans there is always the POW/MIA flag as a symbol of family relatives' and kin concern about all the men (and women) taken as prisoners of war (POWs) or listed as missing in action (MIA).

Similarly to the symbolic meaning of the US flag itself, the various US Army military operations flags are not perceived primarily as symbols of American statehood

(which is in official legal terms superior to Lakota nation). For the dancers, veterans, relatives and visitors these flags represent primarily the bravery and courage of modern Lakota warriors who are still respected and honoured in Lakota culture as role models for the young generation. When we observe Grand Entries of various Lakota powwows, we can notice – apart from the tradition of bringing-in flags from military operations – that Lakota war veterans are always followed in the parade by a group of girls and young teenage women titled “Little Miss” or “Miss” of various fairs, powwows and other similar events. Thus at one powwow there can be, for example, Miss and Little Miss Rosebud, Miss Indian Day, Miss and Little Miss of Labour Day Fair and many other who carry this title for the given year. While in Western culture this title is a synonym for physical beauty, the Lakota perceive the term in much broader and complex sense. Those who have the honour to be elected (Little) Miss for the given year are also often titled the tribal royalty,⁷¹ and they are expected to act in accordance with virtues and moral qualities of a young Lakota woman, and thus represent the tribe. First of all, the royalty is expected to show generosity and compassion for other people: to share with those in need or sponsor some event⁷². The members of royalty also meet the Tribal council, and are thus symbolically appointed to represent the tribe at powwows and fairs all across North and South Dakota or even further and share information about their tribe. Last but not least, we can observe a particular symbolic bond between royalty and Lakota Veterans. For example, the members of royalty (with assistance of their families) often feed the veterans on the occasion of Veterans’ Day on November 11, and the bond between the two seemingly contradictory groups is stressed also at the Grand Entry by royalty’s following the veterans in leading the opening parade. The symbolism of the act is deeper than it might seem at a first glance. Therefore we will deal with it in more detail.

For someone who sees a Grand Entry for the first time the sight must be at least an unusual one: War veterans in their uniforms proudly leading the parade circle bringing in

⁷¹ This is how the Misses are always announced by the powwow MC during the Grand Entry: „And here comes our royalty.“ For this reason, we will use the same term here, primarily to stress that this title is not an assessment of its bearer’s physical beauty but – as it is explained further in the text – that it implies certain moral duty to behave in a particular way.

⁷² For example, the Miss Rosebud 2015-2016 sponsored parade and powwow for the youth in St. Francis to honour her new title.

the flags and often carrying their machine-guns are followed by small girls and young women in their teen-ages titled “Miss” or “Little Miss.” When the Flag song is played they greet and shake hands with the veterans and stand in the circle together with the male warriors.



Figure 23: "Royalty" at Labor Day Powwow, Eagle Butte, September 2015. Photo by Klára Perliková



Figure 24: "Royalty" standing behind Veterans at Grand Entry. Potato Creek Powwow, September 2015. Photo by Klára Perliková

We can perceive this as another example of the presence of duality at Lakota powwows. As one of the male dancers explained, there is a bond between the war veterans and the royalty:

“We respect our brave warriors who fight in battles. But we’re also proud of our young, of our royalty. They are our future. In the Grand Entry, men always dance around our women in the circle in the opposite direction, so that they can protect them. That’s our Lakota tradition. Other tribes don’t do it⁷³.”

At Grand Entry the two worlds which would hardly come across each other in real life symbolically unite to create an image of the Lakota world within which its set of fundamental values is complete and whole, with veterans representing male virtues and responsibilities, and members of royalty bring the account of moral qualities to a whole with the example they are expected to represent. In this way both representatives of role models are made equal and complementing each other, reminding all participants that their idea of being a Lakota – whatever it means for them – always consists of the mixture of the two role models, a veteran or a young member of “tribal royalty.”

Powwow and Humour

Probably it is difficult, if not impossible, to describe the meaning and unique atmosphere which usually prevails at a Lakota powwow only from mediated sources. The example of the contrast of veterans and royalty opening the Grand Entry together is only one example, but there are many more situations which – if described only – sound odd, if not inappropriate or absurd to listeners from “the outside”, and which need to be seen and experienced personally and in full context to be perceived and comprehended correctly. For this reason Lassiter suggests that for a scholar who wants to reflect on the subject the best he or she can do is to “approach the matter through the lens of experience (Lassiter, 2008).” In other words, we can never fully understand what powwow participants feel and what impressions they get until we ourselves become participants of the event, and perceive it

⁷³ A Lakota male traditional dancer at Graduation Powwow, Kyle. Interview, summer 2014.

through all our senses⁷⁴. This is also very true for another phenomenon having a dual character and nature – the use of humour in various moments and situations at a powwow. There have been many researches done, and many materials written on this subject.⁷⁵ For this reason, we will deal with the issue here only in a concise manner, and in connection with our primary interest – the concept of duality. Where is the place of humour at a powwow? In what situations and occasions it appears, and what is or might be its function during such an event? Let us attempt to answer these questions with respect to the underlying topic of duality.

John Lowe wrote in his article on ethnic humour that ‘to be funny indicates a lack of seriousness.’ (Lowe, 1986, p. 440) In other words, he suggests that any situation has to be either serious or it has a humorous character. However, the humorous moments at powwows are usually different. In fact, we can draw a parallel between the nature of a Grand Entry and the humour used at a powwow. Similarly to Grand Entry, where the childlike innocence and feminine tenderness of junior, teen and young tribal royalty stands together with their opposites impersonated by Lakota Veterans, humour is also present at a powwow in moments which are at the same time very serious and deal with important issues. Sometimes we can spot this duality in various small details which do not relate to any form or structure of the event. Like when a small child touches his or her father’s beaded roach spreader, which is considered dangerous for the child, the adult does not deepen the gravity of the situation by threatening his child with what might happen to him or her if the roach was manipulated improperly.

⁷⁴ Though it is important to add that we can never become full participants; we will always be only observers.

⁷⁵ There are indeed many extensive works on this topic, and it would be impossible to make a full list here. To name just a few of them, we could mention Kenneth Lincoln’s book *Indi’n Humor*, and we definitely cannot omit the classic *Custer Died for Your Sins* (Deloria V. J., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*, 1969). Among non-Native scholars we can mention for example Lowe’s *Theories of Ethnic Humor* (Lowe, 1986). The issue of humour at Native American powwows was dealt with – for instance – by Sylvie Jacquemin in her documentary films on the broad topic of Native Americans and non-native American hobbyists who are interested in contemporary powwow dancing. Though her films cannot be considered strictly ethnographical or anthropological, they definitely provide an interesting perspective on the subject. (Jacquemin, 2016)

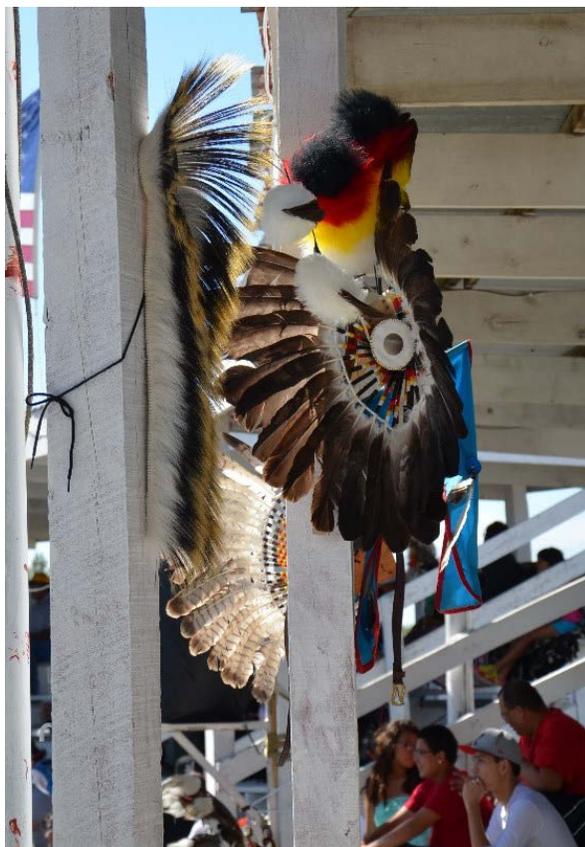


Figure 25: A roach spreader. Photo by Klára Perliková. Labor Day Powwow, September 2015.

Even though everybody involved in such incident believe that the child might be harmed by touching the object – which is believed to have supernatural powers – the father (or uncle/ grandfather) transforms his strong warning into a humorous tone which the child accepts emphatically and without less awareness about the seriousness of the moment⁷⁶. The situation is thus very grave and relaxed at the same, and it contradicts the general dichotomy between the seriousness of the situation and the humorous tone in which it is communicated. This duality could serve as an illustration of one of the function of humour described by Lowe. He writes that “jokes can be shaped and re-shaped to fit any potentially dangerous situation.” (Lowe, 1986, p. 441) Even though he had in mind primarily the danger of a conflict between two different individuals or groups, we could perceive the threat of conflict between the parent and his child as a particular form of a relationship

⁷⁶ The example given is based on multiple personal observations and following interviews at powwows across South Dakota in summer 2014 and 2015.

between two human beings. Taking into account the fact that among the Lakota (similarly to other Native American tribes) a child is respected and seldom shouted at or even punished by adults, the use of humour in such a grave situation as warning against the improper manipulation with a roach might serve as a tool to mediate the danger of conflict between a parent and a child.

To mediate conflict between groups is only one function of humour. Further in his paper Lowe states that jokes also “dispel animosity, and use shared human failures to avoid conflict,” either between two groups or among members of one group itself (Lowe, 1986, p. 442). A perfect example of such function at powwows are dances in which men dance women steps and in women clothes⁷⁷. Such dances, both with and without prizes, are usually scheduled at the very end of a powwow day, so they take place very late at night. Predictably, these sessions are full of humour on both ‘sides’. Men borrow various pieces of female dance garments – fans, shawls or even dress – and they imitate women’s dance steps. However, they not only make effort to dance like women as accurately as possible. Men also overact their female role and parody the stereotypical feminine behaviour: they keep making faces and giggle, pretend to make up their hair and face, speak in a high-pitched excited voice and pretend to gossip all the time. Since they are not skilled in the unfamiliar dance steps, they often parody them as well interacting with other dancers in the circle, and their performance resembles an improvised farce. Women – and the rest of the audience – on the other hand make fun both of their silly appearance and unskillfulness in dance steps as well as they laugh at the elements of female behaviour the men make fun of. Not surprisingly, such dance sessions serve not as a form of amusing counterpart to much more serious dance competitions which happen during a powwow day. Accordingly to Lowe’s comment on the function of humour in a group, these mock-dances function also as a way to express male’s feeling about those elements of female behaviour that men find annoying or irritating. However, it is done in a form which does not offend anyone, and which transforms the critique into a moment of amusement shared by everyone: the

⁷⁷ On the other hand, we have never witnessed the reverse – that the women would have danced in male garments and did their steps.

potentially dangerous situation of pointing out one's misconduct is transformed into a joke experienced by all.

Hopefully it has been made clear from the two examples analysed above that humour belongs to Lakota powwows to the same degree as the serious moments of raising and honouring the flags, remembering relatives who passed away and give-away or honouring ceremonies. Jokes and teasing is an essential part of the powwow atmosphere. MC's announcements are often brightened with humorous comments and jokes. Laughter belongs to a powwow much like tears; without it the event would miss one of its constituent elements. We can realize better how important humour is when we consider how Lakota powwows resemble similar events organized by hobbyists⁷⁸ in Europe. Such non-Native meetings and dance sessions have certain tradition both in Europe and United States, and their general atmosphere can hardly be considered similar to Lakota powwows. Obviously, there are multiple reasons, but the lack of humour as it was described in the context of Lakota powwows is definitely one of the most significant factors. At hobbyist meetings, we would not find the situational duality of the humour and seriousness present at the same time. Many hobbyists express their respect of Native American powwows through the effort to conduct Grand Entries and other official moments of a powwow as accurately as possible. Some even admit that they feel anxious about "doing everything right and not offending Native American traditions"⁷⁹ This might then be the primary reason why non-Native powwow organizers and dancers – hobbyist are so reluctant to express their emotions, and they often try to behave in a solemn and ceremonial way when they participate a powwow⁸⁰. As a result the general impression from hobbyist powwows is very different from the Lakota ones, which only shows us the importance of humour at such events.

When we talk about the Lakota and duality, we feel that it is important to deal with the hobbyist movement⁸¹ as well. Although hobbyists are very far from the Lakota or other

⁷⁸ The term hobbyist will be explained further in the text in more detail.

⁷⁹ Karolina Majerova and Milan Mraz. Interview, March 2013.

⁸⁰ This generalizing statement is based on personal observations from powwows in the Czech Republic and Germany in summer and spring 2013, 2014 and 2015.

⁸¹ If it can be considered a movement at all, because the notion of hobbyism is very diverse.

Native American tribe in terms of ethnicity, these two groups have been influencing and communicating with each other since the beginnings of hobbyism. The Lakota – whether they like it or not – are constantly challenged by hobbyists' projections of Native American identity. We can perceive this projection and its ethnic template as another case of duality which has to be taken into account when we reflect on Lakota culture and identity. Since this hobbyists' notion of “being Native American” become the most pronounced especially at powwows organized by non-Native groups, the next passage will deal with this phenomena in order to make an outline of this duality.

Native American Powwows Vs Powwows in Europe (and can we call it a powwow?)

The section on hobbyist powwows is based primarily on a research among hobbyists from Central Europe who attend various powwows in the region. The interviews were made mainly with hobbyists from Germany, Czech Republic and Poland, but occasionally there were also visitors from more distant countries such as France or Sweden. The aim was to explore what “being Indian” means for hobbyists, and how their Indian identity is created. We have also focused on the transmission, both active and passive, of information about Native American and Indian identity. To avoid confusion, we have adopted the strategy of Glenn Penny (Penny, 2006) to distinguish between living people (Native Americans), and their hobbyists' projections (Indians). From a large part, the text is based on observations from and interviews made with dancers⁸² on Powwows in the Czech Republic, Germany and Poland.

A powwow in the context of Europe always represents something foreign, imported, exotic, and set out of its original context. Let us skip the discussion of whether such events should or should not take place out of their original cultural frame, or whether European hobbyists are “committing” cultural appropriation. Instead, we could look at the issue through Euro-centric lens and take into account the crude fact that powwows have been taking place in Europe for several decades, and therefore we can state that they have – though imported from overseas – strong tradition in the region. Typically, a powwow in this context is attended by three groups of people. The first and the most numerous one are hobbyists – non-Native active participants who are interested in the culture and life of Native Americans. Their interest in Native American culture can vary from a mild curiosity to a fully internalized philosophy of living and perceiving the world. Some contribute to the event through taking part in dance contests, others join powwow dances in a non-contest way, enjoying the special atmosphere of the event. The second group, usually less numerous are visitors who are not hobbyists. Some attend powwow for the first time, they do not know much about Native Americans, and usually arrive out of their curiosity. The third and

⁸² In this article by ‘dancers’ we mean hobbyists who actively participate on European powwow contests. While every dancer is also a hobbyist, not all hobbyists are dancers.

most special group visiting European powwows are Native American Indians. Although they are not very numerous, their influence on powwows in Europe is significant. Into this category we can also include Native Americans who are not physically present *at* powwows in Europe, but who can comment on and influence these events in an indirect way through social networks, and through their evaluations of videos and photographs from hobbyists' powwows shared online. These three groups are communicating with and influencing each other. To understand why and how the interaction between the groups works, we can sketch it as a scheme of a three-party and three-direction communication, in which various kinds of information about Native Americans are transmitted.

The first direction of information transmitted can be understood as flow of knowledge about Native American culture to hobbyists' groups in Europe. The issue here is in what elements of Native culture hobbyists are interested, how they use or transform the knowledge, and what their sources for getting information are. In other words, we can ask how the Indian identity of hobbyists is created. We are aware of the fact that the term hobbyist is very wide and ambiguous. Generally it refers to people who have, for a wide range of reasons and motivations, adopted either Indian-re-enactment or various elements of Native American culture into their lifestyles. Further in the text we are going to deal primarily with hobbyists who are interested in powwow dancing, and who form a specific international community within other hobbyists whose main interest is, for example, authentic Indian craft and camping.

The second direction of transmission of information is the opposite – from hobbyists to Native Americans, or how Native Americans react to various demonstrations of hobbyists' notions of their Indian projections of identities, again particularly at powwows.

In this case we have in mind primarily the variety of Native Americans' responses to the imagery of European powwows. Some of their reactions have a form of feedback or a comment, both positive and negative, to photographs and videos presented by hobbyists themselves on the internet. Other way of transmitting information from hobbyists to Native Americans is established by personal contact between hobbyists and their Native American friends. Generally, what all these information have in common is that they carry a message

about how hobbyists perceive Native Americans: what, in their eyes, is crucial for a construction of an Indian identity, and how to make this identity ‘authentic’ in the European (or Euro-American) context?

The third direction – from hobbyists to visitors – deals with various representations of Native Americans presented either consciously or unconsciously to powwow visitors. This aspect of powwows is quite important, because apart from various western movies and novels with Native American topic, powwows in Europe are relatively strong agents in constructing the symbolic meaning of a word ‘Indian’ in the society. Again, there are two main ways of communication. The first one is represented by powwow organizers’ intentional efforts to provide visitors with further information about cultural background, symbolic meaning, protocol and history of powwows, powwow-dances and garments (regalia). Therefore the organizers have to balance their need to inform (for example by explaining things on stage) with the requirement to make the powwow attractive for general public who visited such an event for the first time⁸³.

At the same time, the dancers provide the visitors with a wide range of images and impulses with which the visitors create, confirm or modify their (more or less cliché) images of ‘Indians.’ These three directions will be now examined successively in more detail:

The *first direction* is in fact a synonym for the process of creating hobbyists’ ideas about what Indian identity consists of. At the same time hobbyists go beyond learning and mimicking Native American culture and lifestyle, because they apply their variously gained knowledge selectively to construct their own versions of Indian identity which they adopt more or less complexly into their lives. However, the issue of Indian identity could be in many cases perceived from even a wider and more general context. Some of the people interviewed at powwows admitted that, when asked about the roots of their interest in Native Americans, these cultures were not the only ones through which they have constructed their life philosophy or worldview. This group could be characterized as

⁸³ One of the organizers has, when we came across this dilemma, noted: „it is so tempting to explain everything when you are an MC (Master of Ceremonies, or the voice of the powwow). But you can’t talk all the time, all the public would run away.” Berlin Powwow, interview January 2014.

blended or amalgamated⁸⁴, because such hobbyists are not interested or inspired only by North American native cultures. One of the dancers claimed, that his interest in Indians is only a part of his more general interest in “native and ancient nations,” naming “Mongols, Egyptians, Aztecs and Inca people⁸⁵”. Other hobbyists own and use various Indian, Viking, Celtic and other costumes which they use at correspondent events. Common denominators of such cultures are probably antiquity, exoticness and idealised notion of balance and order of these societies, and of course the societies’ ability to live in harmony with the environment. What is also important, these cultures are often perceived as distant, either in terms of time or geography, and extinct (“they do not exist anymore⁸⁶”), and therefore unable to develop or transform. This notion of static stability then makes the culture easier to grasp for such hobbyists. The fact that Indians are put together with ancient cultures also indicates that certain group of hobbyist prefers the idea of Indians as a society of the past,⁸⁷ preserved in certain form in ethnographic museums and old photographs. At the same time, they often stress the visual aspect of Indian culture and perceive it from the ethnographic perspective, focusing primarily on the visual: making imitation of Indian garments and objects in the ‘authentic’ (usually meaning pre-industrial) way. The issue of distance, either temporal or geographical, is also connected with perception of Indians as ‘exotic other’ – as an alternative to European culture and society, a space of escape or ‘mind immigration.’⁸⁸

‘Two things that most hobbyists have in common are the owning of a costume and liking for attending powwows. The word ‘powwow’ indicates a gathering of hobbyists – usually for a weekend – during which they wear Indian costumes, sing and dance Indian, and trade.’ (Deloria P. J., 1999, p. 123).

This generalization from *Playing Indian* (Deloria P. J., 1999) was made about American hobbyists. However, at least the first part of the statement fits equally well to their European colleagues. Concerning the question of attending powwows, the rate of

⁸⁴ Term used by Reiner Hatoum. Interview, Dresden, March 2013.

⁸⁵ A male dancer, interview, Berlin Powwow, January 2014.

⁸⁶ A male dancer, interview, Berlin Powwow, January 2014

⁸⁷ Deloria (1999) defines this phenomenon as a notion of ‘the grateful dead Indians’.

⁸⁸ Peter Bolz. Interview, Berlin, March 2013.

hobbyists who do not dance at powwows is reasonably higher in Europe than in United States⁸⁹. Despite this fact, we will deal here only with hobbyists who actively participate at Central European powwows. The powwow scene of this region has also several specific features. First, the community of people who attend powwows here is relatively small, and all dancers and singers in fact know each other⁹⁰. In this aspect powwows here resemble their Native counterparts, because their function as social events where people meet and enjoy time with friends (or in the Native case also with relatives) who live far away is very important. Second, it is important to realize that hobbyists from the former Eastern bloc used to have very limited access to accurate information about the life and culture of Native Americans in the era of Iron Curtain. We will get back to this in detail further in the text. In this place, it is important to point out that powwows from this part of Europe differ considerably from Western European powwows even nowadays.

What tribe do you specialize on?

When a dancer is asked if he or she specializes on a particular tribe, the most common answer is either “Plains Indians style in general” or “Lakota Indians”. The reason for the popularity of the Great Plains can be traced back to Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show European tour at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. (Mráz, 2014, p. 2) Since that time the majority of European ethnographical museums have built up a section dedicated to North American indigenous cultures. Some of them have even specialized on this region⁹¹. We can therefore state, that although the ‘real’ Native Americans had been inaccessible for the majority of Europeans, the American Indian, based on an image of a Plains Indian, has become a powerful ethnographical and literary object comprehensible to most people in Europe. Though many dancers admitted that their interest in Native Americans began with this idealized cliché image of a “Plains Indian” of the historical past, they are interested in the present Native American cultures. This they demonstrate through two main ways. First, most of the younger hobbyists have Lakota friends with whom they are in touch through social networks. Second, many of those who are interested in Lakota culture claim that they

⁸⁹ According to Reiner Hatoum. Interview, Dresden, March 2013.

⁹⁰ Karolina Majerova and Milan Mraz. Interview, Prague, March 2013.

⁹¹ One example is Ethnographical Museum in Prague, whose collections were, at the time of its beginning, exclusively of Native American origin. Even in modern days the museum has an unofficial status of a „Museum of American Indians,” rather than the one of World cultures among general public.

are learning the Lakota language. It has become a generally recognized norm among hobbyists in Europe to know at least several phrases or words in Lakota language⁹². However, a foreign language does not function here as a means of communication, since this role is reserved for English. It is used as a tool of creating a more authentic Indian identity (primarily through hobbyists' adopting 'Indian names') or reality (a powwow MC at an European powwow usually uses several phrases in Lakota, for example). At the same time, almost all dancers, at least those who fit into the category of 'people hobbyists' said that they have already been to an Indian reservation, plan to go there, or at least share information with their friends who have already visited an American powwow or an Indian reservation. Especially for the majority of German hobbyists, a trip to a Native country is perceived as an unofficial rite of passage in which European dancers hope to experience an authentic powwow atmosphere⁹³.

On the other hand, there are also hobbyists who deliberately avoid being in touch with contemporary Native culture. They usually admit that they have created their own idea of Indian culture which they use as a mode of escapism⁹⁴. Though they are aware of the fact that their notion does not correspond with the reality, they do not want to have their imagery disrupted⁹⁵.

It is evident that Lakota culture is not the only one which became an inspiration for European hobbyists. The second category of dancers at powwows of Central Europe are people who are interested in the 'Indian culture in general⁹⁶,' and their Indian costumes are mixtures of various styles, tribes and historical periods. Other dancers admitted that their interest begun with Plains tribes (or namely Lakota), but then they found that it is too common among hobbyists so they decided to turn their interest to less common tribes, for

⁹² In the communist era in Czech Republic a linguists and an admirer of Native American culture J F Ullirch has written and published illegally a Czech-Lakota textbook of Lakota Grammar and a dictionary. It was extremely popular among Czech hobbyists and scouts (Jana Makásková. Interview, May 2013), and even nowadays many hobbyists are familiar with it.

⁹³ Peter Bolz. Interview, Berlin, March 2013.

⁹⁴ For more information on escapism see *Contemporary Achievements: Contextualizing Canadian Aboriginal Literatures* (Lutz, *Contemporary Achievements: Contextualizing Canadian Aboriginal Literatures*, 2015) or (Lutz, "Indianer" und "Native Americans": Zur sozial- und literarhistorischen Vermittlung eines Stereotyps, 1985)

⁹⁵ Reiner Hatoum. Interview, Dresden, March 2013.

⁹⁶ A male dancer. Interview, Berlin Powwow, January 2014.

example Pawnee, Crow or Woodland tribes in order to be more original⁹⁷.

Costumes⁹⁸

For many hobbyists, whether he or she is dancing in a contest or not, the costume is very important. Again, there are many differences according to how the dancers make their costumes and where they get inspiration. We have already mentioned a variability associated with personal interest in some tribe. What also matters is individual opinion on what is or is not authentic Indian. Some hobbyists consider authentic only natural materials, and they sew their dancing costumes using only animal hide and sinew. However, they usually make an exception in decorating their costumes with rich beadwork embroidery, copying the style of Plains Indians. Yet other hobbyists use both fabric and hide, and they decorate their costumes with painting and beadwork. What have both groups of hobbyists in common is that their costumes have a personal meaning for their owners. Nowadays – as the access to relevant information has improved – a person who would mechanically copy a beadwork ornament or a whole costume is a very rare exception among nowadays hobbyists⁹⁹.

In terms of costumes there is also a difference between hobbyists who attend a powwow in a specific dance category contest (these categories are analogical to the ones at Native powwows), and who usually follow general rules of what the costume should consist of. On the other hand, those dancers who join only intertribal dancers wear more variable costumes.

⁹⁷ Karolina Majerová. Interview, Prague February 2014.

⁹⁸ We have decided not to label hobbyists' dancing garments as 'regalia' as it would be appropriate for their Native American counterparts. The reason is, that we wanted to make a distinction between Native American dancing clothes in its full form, with all its symbolic meanings, and the European hobbyists' counterpart, which in many cases represent only an approximate copy of the original.

⁹⁹ We have been told that in the pre-internet era the situation was different: especially in the isolated region of Central and Eastern Europe hobbyists usually copied patterns and costumes from a limited number of photographs or drawings that circled among the community. Their origins were sometimes authentic (provided by their friends from Western Germany), or they were pseudo-Indian – usually copied from Indian movies of European origin with Winnetou series being among the most popular. (Karolina Majerová and Milan Mráz. Interview, Prague February 2014.



Figure 26: Intertribal dance at Kladno Powwow. March 2013. Photo by Klára Perlíková

We are also grateful for an observation of one of the judges, through which she illustrated how some tendencies in powwow dancing develop separately at Native American powwows and in Europe: While in the United States it is now a standard that male dancers wear shorts under their breechcloth (in Germany it is similar), among Central European dancers the tendency is opposite, because it is perceived as more authentic (Mráz, 2014, p. 7).

Indian costume is probably the most distinctive visual attribute of a hobbyist, but it is also interesting to focus on what other elements of Native American culture do (Central) European hobbyists adopt. Though every dancer, when asked about reasons for and roots of his or her interest in Indian culture, gives partially different answer, there is a general tendency shared by all hobbyists. They are all looking for an alternative to a Western mass consumption culture. Fixico writes about Euro-American culture as ‘ego-centered and

linear,' while the Native American culture is characterized as 'circular, focused on the unity with the environment, spiritual, and based on the principle of unity and cooperation' (Fixico, 2009, pp. 1-21) in a way, all hobbyists pursuit these non-linear values.

However, there are differences between what aspects of Indian culture hobbyists stress depending on the nationality of each groups of dancers: When asked by what aspects of Native culture was a dancer inspired the most, the hobbyist from Germany mostly mentioned the Native relationship to nature and environment, and their 'ecological' way of life. Czech hobbyists, on the other hand, mentioned primarily the spiritual aspect of the Native culture.

It is probable that this difference might be connected with the stronger appeal for individual's environmental responsibility in Germany, and, in the case of Czech hobbyists, the interest in spirituality might be caused by the fact that in Czech culture the role of traditional religions in the society was undermined and damaged during the communist era, and for this reason some people look for spirituality in their lives in other cultures.

In Poland, on the other hand, dancers also often mentioned that they are inspired by the importance and function of Family in Native culture – in the idea that family members should help each other in hard times¹⁰⁰.

'Everything was backwards. It was like stepping into a giant mirror. We're Natives, and we're just like Europeans. And they're Europeans, and they're dressed just like Natives. I felt like 'what's wrong with that picture?' I didn't really know what to do, whether to cry or laugh or get angry.' (Paskievich, 1995)

The quote above comes from the film *If only I were an Indian* which features a group of hobbyists from the former Czechoslovakia during their summer camp, where three Native Americans (two Cree from Manitoba, and an Ojibwa from Winnipeg) were invited. The film depicts the development of the reactions between the two worlds – Native and European – from initial astonishment to mutual understanding, and respect. The words from

¹⁰⁰ A Polish women's traditional dancer. Interview, March 2014.

the quote represent the first reaction of one of the Native visitors to seeing the hobbyists' camp where everybody live, do things, and are dressed like Indians from the Great Plains in the pre-reservation era. His words can be used as an eloquent description of Native American feelings about hobbyists: it is a mixture of various emotions and opinions which might contradict each other. Through the quote we get to the *second direction*: Native Americans' reflexions and reactions to various European hobbyists' ideas of what is or is not 'authentically Indian.' In the context of powwows in Central Europe it means primarily ways of how Native Americans influence and correct the form of Indian powwows in the European region from the position of judges and originators from whom the tradition has been borrowed (and, as a consequence, transformed). Nevertheless, it is important to add, that for many Native Americans hobbyists represent primarily a source of amusement and jokes, such as an anonymous Lakota woman describes below:

“Anonymous: They came to the reservation last summer in tens and twenties and camped at Ghost Hawk¹⁰¹. They took off all their clothes – both men and women – and were skinny dipping and dancing around down there.

Question: Were they Indian dancing?

A: I've never seen any Indians dance like that. But I suppose they were doing what they thought was Indian dancing.

Q: were any of the Indians dancing with them?

A: No. We were all in the bushes and trees with cameras taking pictures. We'd never seen anything quite like that.

Q: Then what happened?

A: The tribal police came and arrested them and took them away.” (Cash, 1995, p. 218)

¹⁰¹ Ghost Hawk Park is a grassy recreational area in a creek by the Little White River in Rosebud Reservation. It is a popular place for swimming, barbecue or camping among local people.

There are many factors which influence the process of interacting between the two groups, among which geographical distance and limited opportunity of personal communication between Native and hobbyist communities play central role. The form of powwows in Central Europe has also been influenced by recent history and political development of the region.

To illustrate how complex this ‘second direction’ among hobbyists from central Europe could be, we provide a short description of history of powwows in the Czech Republic, which is in general not very different from the situation in Poland or former Eastern Germany.

The first official Czech powwow was held in 1995 (which of course does not mean that there were no hobbyists before that date). At the time of pre-internet era the possibilities of getting information about dance steps, costumes and music were very limited. The organizers admitted that hobbyist community used to share one videocassette with powwow dances and two or three audiocassettes with dance songs brought by their friends from USA. The result was, of course, that everybody literally copied the steps, costumes and songs from these limited sources. In the course of time both hobbyist dancers and singers got more information and feedback from Native Americans, and found that some songs cannot be played in certain categories or that some songs are considered personal property, and the singers have to ask for the owner's permission to ‘borrow’ it. Similarly, the dancers learned that it is highly inappropriate to copy completely other dancer’s regalia or use its ornaments and elements with special symbolic meaning without the permission of its original wearer¹⁰².

The process of the hobbyist community’s learning about Native American powwow dancing has been described to us as a small child progress in gaining knowledge of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in new situations: until the adults tell the child that his or her actions are wrong, the child is not aware of doing something offensive¹⁰³. Similarly, when the dancers (and musicians) did not know that they were misusing elements of costume, or playing an inappropriate dance song for some dance category, they, from the

¹⁰² Karolina Majerová and Milan Mráz. Interview, Prague February 2014.

¹⁰³ Karolina Majerová. Interview, Prague February 2014.

hobbyists' point of view could not be blamed for violating Native powwow traditions. In recent years it has become a common practice that hobbyists look up information about Native regalia, dance steps and songs on the internet, and, vice versa, that Native Americans provide both positive and negative feedback to hobbyists' videos from powwows shared online through video platforms. However, as many European powwow judges add, even nowadays there are hobbyists who consciously disrespect commonly known rules and traditions of Native powwow dancing and costumes¹⁰⁴. For this reason on some European powwows a list of rules to be respected is distributed among dancers and other participants. For example, these rules usually mention the symbolism of eagle feathers in Native culture, and explain in what cases a dancer is allowed to wear them.

Looking up information about Native powwows, and contrariwise, Native Americans' influencing the form of European powwows using internet as a main communication channel is not the only interaction between European dancers and Native Americans. Most powwows in Europe have their 'special' Native Americans guests. They are either Native Americans who have settled in Europe, such as Native Americans (most commonly Lakota men) who came to Central Europe with US Army in 1970's, or they are dancers who live in United States but visit European powwows regularly¹⁰⁵. These Native guests are always treated with great respect by hobbyists, and they are perceived as a supreme authority and a confirmation that a powwow is going on in a correct manner. When such a Native guest attends a powwow, and is having a speech in front of European hobbyists and visitors, he or she usually represents more than a symbol of authenticity. Such guests often express their impression about hobbyists' effort they put into powwow dancing and organizing. Though they do not speak for all Native Americans, those who visit European powwows consider hobbyist powwows a way of paying respect to Native American tribes, and feel honoured by such actions. On a symbolical level, they do not serve only as a validation of hobbyists' work. They also highlight the value of community at such gatherings. This notion of community is the reason why many hobbyists go to powwows. At such gathering they have a feeling of solidarity and friendship in their lives.

¹⁰⁴ A male judge at Czech International Powwow. Interview, Kladno, March 2015.

¹⁰⁵ A Lakota man living in Berlin. Interview, Berlin Powwow, January 2014.

The majority of hobbyists stated that are aware of the fact that their hobby represents a mode of escapism. However, they claim that it fulfils their needs to rest and hiatus from what they deem to be a stressful life in civilization. ‘Being Indian’ can therefore be understood as living outside anything considered ‘civilized’ world.

The third direction. Visitors of European powwows are very diverse. Apart from dancers themselves there are also their families, hobbyists who do not contest in a specific category, and of course there is always a large variety of visitors who have come to a powwow out of curiosity to see something exotic or new¹⁰⁶.

Especially people from the last group mentioned usually visit a powwow for the first time, and they don't know exactly what to expect. Then it depends on organizers how they deal with the fact, and on their decision to what extent they are determined to inform the general public about powwows and Native American culture in general. At some powwows visitors receive a printed handout where they are informed in detail about the meaning and form of Grand Entry, Flag Song and other important moments of a powwow. They are also given instructions about how they are expected to behave and pay respect, for example, when and why it is important to stand up and remain silent. Usually there is also a short description of different dances and regalia. Additionally, a lot of information about what is happening in the powwow arena is provided by a powwow MC (moderator).

What is then the most important message hobbyists (organizers, dancers) send to powwow visitors? Apart from showing them the stereotypes of ‘exotic other’ Indian, which is something the visitors expect, they also demonstrate that the culture of Native Americans is still alive, and that it continually develops and transforms in the course of time¹⁰⁷. For some people who visit such an event for the first time, seeing an as-if-Native dancer dressed in a brightly coloured fancy-feather costume might be a myth-busting experience, because a large number of visitors expect ‘authentic’ Indians to be clad in buckskin dress or shirt decorated with a modest beadwork embroidery. In other words, they expect to see images they know from western movies. The concept of what is (not) an Indian cultural tradition

¹⁰⁶ From this group the largest number of visitors are parents who take their children to powwow in order to show them “real living Indians.”

¹⁰⁷ Karolina Majerová and Milan Mráz. Interview, Prague February 2014

in this way also contrasts with the European idea of traditionalism. In Central Europe traditional culture is usually associated with regional folklore, primarily folk songs and costumes, which have remained in an “unchanged” form for one hundred years or more. For the majority of Europeans ‘traditional’ is a synonym for ‘old-fashioned, uncommon, and belonging in the historical past.’ The ‘living tradition’ of contemporary Native Americans then might come as a surprise.

How could we conclude the brief excursion into the world of non-Native powwows? First, European ‘Indian’ powwows cannot be perceived as an imperfect copy of Native American powwows which take place in South and North Dakota (and other states of the US). If a visitor walks through a hall or grounds where European powwow takes place, he or she could make a very long list of differences from the ‘original.’ However, it would be a mistake to focus only on visual differences, and perceive these events only through looking for what is done ‘properly’ (which is, how it is done on Native powwows), and what is ‘wrong’ or ‘incorrect’. The reason is that every powwow in Europe is in fact taking place out of its original context and cultural frame, and as such, it is evident that many of its original constituents wouldn’t make sense in this new environment. Because of this they need to be changed or omitted. A good example might be honouring ceremonies which are an integral part of Native powwows, but which would become empty symbolic action in the context of Western (Euro-American) society. Despite of all differences, Central European powwows always have a specific ‘non-Western’ atmosphere, which make such events special for all participants. The atmosphere is not created only through the most obvious visual and aural signals – hobbyists’ Indian costumes and drumming and singing: People from various countries are happy to meet their hobbyist friends with whom they meet only once or twice a year; parents are less strict with their children than they would be in ordinary circumstances. There are many details that make such events specifically ‘non-European’ (or non-Euro-American). Besides, we have to bear in mind that Indian hobbyism has had a long history in Europe, and in case of Central Europe its development has been a specific one. It has already been mentioned above that due to the political situation in this region hobbyist remained isolated from much information that could have

come ‘from the West¹⁰⁸.’ This of course means that many people created their own versions of Indian culture and Indian way of life. They often found inspiration in movies and books of European provenience which were accepted as politically correct by the Communist regime. These movies usually repeated stereotypical images and clichés about Indians and Indian culture that had been grounded in European conscience since the days of Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show tour. Hobbyists then built up their own – often romantic – versions of Indian culture, and they used their ideas to create a space of escape from the reality of everyday life. The question is what hobbyists chose from Indian culture for their inner or mind immigration. Ellis and Knight (Ellis & Knight, 2008) have noted that ‘at the heart of the Indian lore movement lay the urge to encounter the authentic amidst the anxiety of urban industrial and post-industrial life.’ They further explain that people

‘(...) caught in the grip of the cities, cut off from nature, captured by the machine age (...)’ and that at the beginning of 20th century ‘(...) for men like Ernest Thompson Seton, Indian lore's greatest champion, town life of the worst kind was ruining the moral and social fibre of young people. 'City rot,' he thundered, ‘has worked evil in this nation.’ But Seton and his followers believed they had the answer: Indian lore, with its emphasis on nature, generosity, and simple living, could revive America!’ (Ellis & Knight, 2008, p. 6)

The same can be stated several decades later about hobbyists in Europe. However, for those who lived in the Communist regime of Central Europe the Indian lore had also an added value of a life in freedom and harmonic society.

Though the tradition of official powwows in the region has been started in the post-Communist era of 1990’s, the romantic and idealized attitude to Indian culture is still shared among some of the hobbyists. As Deloria notes, such hobbyists can be labelled as ‘object hobbyists’ who are “interested in Indian culture, but not in (real) Indians themselves.” On the other hand, there is of course a large group of hobbyists whose interest is not limited to the historical “museum” form of Indian culture. In contrast to the previous category, these

¹⁰⁸ Since contacting citizens of or obtaining information or an object from countries of Western Europe or USA has been considered an act of alliance with alien capitalistic countries, an overtly deep interest in Native American cultures was considered illegal. Male hobbyists who have been living through communist era often admitted that they have been persecuted even for wearing long hair.

can be characterized as ‘people hobbyists’ who ‘enjoy the intercultural contact and boundary crossing they found at contemporary powwows¹⁰⁹’ (Deloria P. J., 1999, p. 135). In other words, while hobbyists fitting into the first group prefer using imagination in constructing their ‘Indian’ identity, for people hobbyists the social contact is necessary in this process. Because of geographical distance between Native Americans and European hobbyists, (and due to financial demandingness of such travels) this contact is not limited to dancers’ literate participation in Native powwows. Apart from travelling to United States, some hobbyists prefer virtual contact through internet. Still others actively participate in actions that directly concern contemporary Native Americans, but that are not restricted to this area. By this we mean charitable projects or petitions that support Native American rights and affairs¹¹⁰ in both North and South America. In this way European hobbyism has also social and activist overlap, which sets the phenomenon of hobbyism in this region into wider social context.

Last but not least, powwows in Europe in general can be understood as an action to honour Native American culture. Hobbyists at powwows try to show and mediate what they define as respect to the indigenous: They try to honour Native American culture and way of life through their dances and songs at powwow meetings. In this way the dancers understand themselves as facilitators between European and Native American culture. During interviews the majority of dancers stated that being and showing respect for Native Americans has to be executed the right way by Europeans. In their understanding a person cannot simply put on a costume and ‘play Indian’. For many dancers ‘being Indian’ is expressed through the right social and formal behaviour they think Native Americans should have: for some hobbyists this is a way of showing respect they feel towards Native Americans, their worldview and way of life.

¹⁰⁹ Though Deloria had in mind American hobbyists who obviously have more opportunity to meet Native Americans at powwows in US, the same can be stated about ‘people hobbyists’ from Europe, since visiting dancers from North America can be found on a large majority of European powwows.

¹¹⁰ For example, Czech hobbyists have organized protests against tar-sands oil mining in Alberta, Canada. They protested in front of Canadian embassy in Prague.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have dealt with a Lakota powwow from various point of views in detail, because the phenomena could illustrate many aspects of dual realities of Lakota culture and everyday life. A powwow – large or small, attended by tens or hundreds, with or without non-Native visitors – is always a picture of Lakota self-representation. The powwow grounds become a space where people are expected to (and the majority do) behave according to Lakota values and traditions. For the Lakota these traditions do not mean that everybody pretend to live in the past; the traditional word is “in your head.”¹¹¹ On the other hand, the form and course of every powwow includes many non-Lakota – Western – elements which have become a part of the event alongside with Native traditions and ceremonies, and which create situations that are read variously by individual participants. We can perceive such clashes of interpretations as an example of Native/Western duality which the Lakota have to face, and which probably becomes more pronounced at powwows and other special events. In the chapter this duality is illustrated by the case of the US flag, its meanings, functions and place at a powwow.

However, a powwow creates many situations which have a contradictory (or dual) character even without pointing out to Euro-American influences. These are moments which gain their full symbolic meaning through embracing two antithetic concepts, and which in this way repeat a more general concept of Lakota culture¹¹² suggesting that unity is in fact composed of two contrasting elements. One of such examples of unity in diversity could be observed at powwow’s Grand Entry, where war Veterans – usually in their uniforms and carrying guns – stand together with Lakota *Royalty* (a group of selected girls and young women) in the centre of the Circle during the Flag Song and Honouring of the Flag ceremony. These two groups which represent the opposite of each other in many aspects, and which would hardly ever stand together in an everyday situation have an important role at a powwow: They are both symbols of certain values which are crucial for the Lakota, and which represent two types of role models complementing each other.

¹¹¹ Emman Robertson, the wife of a former president of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. Interview, July 2014.

¹¹² For more details see the chapter on Lakota traditional art which deals with male- and female-created art and the use of pictorial and geometrical patterns in Lakota artistic creations.

Through standing side by side in the Circle's centre they remind all participants that neither the qualities of a Lakota warrior nor the virtues of a Lakota woman are more or less important for their culture. Similarly, the function and use of humour and jokes at a powwow seems to have similar general characteristics, at least in some situations. It was shown above on examples that even situations that are serious, because they potentially dangerous or could result in a conflict always incorporate a joke in a warning and humour in a reproach. In other words, Lowe's comment of humour which describes each situation as either funny or serious (Lowe, 1986) is not valid in the case of the Lakota. Again, we can observe the general tendency of two contradictory concepts complementing each other in a whole.

In the last part of the chapter on a Lakota powwow we have dealt with a broader issue of powwows and non-Native hobbyists. Should the topic be mentioned, since the work focuses primarily on the Lakota and Lakota culture? Is it relevant to mention powwows which take place in Europe? As we believe, the answer to both of the questions is yes. The central argument is that the two "worlds" do not exist separately, and that they influence each other. Certainly, there is a large group of hobbyists who have not got beyond "romantic and reductionist treatment of indigeneity" (Fowler, 2008), and who perceive Native Americans (and therefore also the Lakota) in a very simplified and trivialised manner. On the other hand, our attempt was to show that there are simultaneously many hobbyists – groups or individuals – who communicate with Native Americans, and who are aware of the fact that Native communities are subjects to the same continual change in the course of time as other societies and cultures. In the passage on hobbyists we have made an attempt to sketch this diversity among hobbyists, and to suggest that the Native-hobbyists relationships are complicated and cannot be reduced to only one point of view. At the same time, we can perceive hobbyists as an abstract mirror which reflects some elements of Lakota world, which means there that these mirror images have the potential power to create retroactively dualism in Lakota culture: Some Native Americans (not only Lakota) are not only aware of the fact that the phenomenon of hobbyists powwows exist; they also make efforts to influence it, which can be done in many ways: From active participation, to providing negative (or positive) feedback on such events, to making jokes

and parodies about hobbyists. From this perspective, duality can be seen in the fact that Lakota powwows, which are geographically and culturally set in the region of the Great Plains are at the same time a part of the globalised Western world and society.

Conclusion

The purpose of the dissertation was to research the concept of duality in Lakota culture on examples both from historical and contemporary period. In the first chapter we have explored the methodology of structuralism and its later critiques in postmodernism and set them as a point of departure to use and apply this term.

Though the first structural anthropologists – among whom Claude Lévi-Strauss plays an important role (Lévi-Strauss, *Strukturální antropologie*, 2006) – aimed to bring scientific objectivity into cultural anthropology, later research has shown that this goal can hardly be ever achieved, and objectivity is impossible. For this reason duality – which can be also considered a type of structure – is perceived as a secondary abstraction or an abstract concept is in the dissertation, and we have been inspired by later approaches to the term in humanities. Bourdieu’s term “habitus” was mentioned in the introduction with the explanation that according to him it is defined by the culture, but set in the mind of an individual (Bourdieu, *Outline of a theory of practice*, 1977). We are convinced that this view of structure which runs across the traditional dichotomy of subjective/ objective can be also applied to our understanding of duality in Lakota culture: It is neither an all-embracing universal rule, nor an individual’s approach to a particular situation. When we look for duality among the Lakota, we find out that it is an abstract concept which combines both of these attitudes. Additionally, when writing about duality we also had in mind another note of Bourdieu concerning structure in culture. According to him, members of culture are perceived as culturally competent “performers” who intuitively know how to handle situations they find themselves in through individual choices (Bourdieu, *Outline of a theory of practice*, 1977). Applied to our study of duality, this means that even though the term has not been mentioned directly in interviews or observed situations (for example powwows), we can still suppose its existence in the Lakota culture as researched by us both in reservations and museum collections. Our intention was to show that despite the fact that structuralism is not a topic in current anthropology, its theoretical conceptualizations can still be useful in some cases. Besides, a similar theoretical approach was applied to Native

American culture before when Ortiz wrote his work on the Tewa culture, and in which he also stressed the importance of dual organizations (Ortiz, 1972, pp. 121-137).

One of the areas in which – as we are convinced – the dual structure can be found in a very pronounced form are Lakota myths. This is also the reason why the analysis of Lakota myths of creation of the world and myths named *Fallen Star* and *The Badger and The Bear* are presented in the introduction as an illustration of how duality is present in them on the abstract level. In the analysis of the above mentioned myths we have come into a conclusion that in all of the stories we can find certain set of dichotomies which are connected to a more general male/female dualism which is considered crucial also by Lakota scholars (for example (Deloria E. C., 2007) or (White Hat Sr., 2012)).

In following chapters we examine various areas of Lakota culture, and try to look for the presence of the concept of duality in them on their abstract and general level, similar to the one found in Lakota myths. The choice of these areas has been influenced primarily by the criteria of accessibility. Therefore the first two topics, Myths and Art, are based on studies from sources available to any scholar interested – collections of myths in the former case and research of collections of ethnographical museums in the latter case. The two remaining areas of our study – Selected Issues Related to Lakota Identity and Powwows – are to a large extent based on information gained during research in Lakota reservations in summer 2014 and 2015.

The chapter on art aims to examine examples of artistic creations of the Lakota, and to look for an underlying dual structure, if there is any to be found. However, the term “Plains art” or “Central Plains” is often used here as well. The reason is that groups and tribes in this region (Western Sioux, Crow, Cheyenne, Arapaho) have been contacting and learning from each other, and the assessment of the artist's origin can often be set regionally only (Lyford, 1984, pp. 8-9). The first distinct dichotomy we have observed in Lakota/Central Plains art is with no doubt the gender distinction which drives a line between artistic creation produced by men and women. First we have dealt with female art, namely quill and beadwork embroidery, paintings on parfleches and buffalo fur hides and the art of star quilts. We have come into a conclusion that the common denominators of all

these forms of artistic decorations are stylization, symmetry and regularity of patterns embroidered or painted. Besides, women usually created their work together, so their art has also a collective character, though copying of someone else’s pattern without permission was considered inappropriate. On the other hand, art (largely paintings) created traditionally by men represents symmetric opposite to artistic activities of women. They painted on inner tipi covers or later on paper to record their brave war deeds, achievements or spiritual experience and visions, and contrary to female art, men always painted in a more realistic manner. We can outline the symmetrical opposition in the following table:

female art	male art
stylized	pictographic
collective, reflecting world order	individualistic

In the chapter on identity we have dealt with selected issues which – as we perceive it – can provide an insight into what the Lakota consider essential and generic for their self-identification with their culture. (What does it mean to be Lakota?) As it has been mentioned above, the study is based on observations gained during fieldwork research, and issues in the chapter reflect data collected within this period. As a result, we have examined the following issues: tribal museums in Lakota reservations, Native perception of time, selected issues of Lakota religion, and Lakota relation to the land and environment they live in and to the world on a global scale. We believe that in all these issues we can also recognize an underlying dual structure which – in its most general meaning – could be understood as a dichotomy of Native and Western/Euro-American worldview and mindset. The question was how non-native elements distort or affect the system of Lakota culture. In the section on tribal museums and perception of time we have shown that circular way of thinking about the course of the world which is, according to Fixico (Fixico, 2009), characteristic of all Native cultures affects the way tribal museums organize and present their exhibitions. In this case, the influence of the Native/Euro-American dualism does not

have to be necessarily negative. The same can be said about another example where the dichotomy projects itself – in the issue of Lakota relation to the land or *Unci Maka* (Grandmother Earth): Though Lakota religion and identity is regionally bound (Bucko, 2008), their concern for this integral part of their Native-self can surprisingly well fit into the global issue of protection of environment. On the case of Lakota struggle to stop construction of a KXL pipeline we have shown how the same (Native/Euro-American) duality interacts and through which the Lakota (Native, regionally-bound) voice is strengthened by its non-Native counterpart and vice versa. We can thus conclude, that in terms of the Native/ Euro-American duality the effect is not completely negative or distortive, as ixico stated in his book (Fixico, 2009). However, it is important to stress that the imagery presented by White Hat, Fixico and other Native scholars represents only one of many realities of Lakota lives and culture. In their works they accent some elements of their culture. Nevertheless, we also have to realize that many Lakota families find themselves in a marginalized position considered in relation to the mainstream American society. Therefore their interpretation of reality can be in discrepancy with the imagery presented by Native scholars cited in the dissertation. An attempt to bring forward the issue of the marginalized position of the Lakota can be shown on the example of the work of the Native sketch comedy group “The 1491s¹¹³.”

The last chapter, which deals with Lakota powwows, is tightly connected with the previous one, since we consider these events an occasion for Lakota (self-) representation (in other words, how the Lakota wish to be perceived by others and among themselves, and what values and norms they perceive as fundamental in their culture). Since powwows are held mainly in summer time on Lakota reservations, many data about this phenomenon were collected during research in summer 2014 and 2015, and we believe, that at Lakota powwows we can observe a specific type of duality, which is in fact similar to duality described in Lakota myths: In the section on myths we have stated that in Lakota creation stories there is always emphasis on dual origin of mythical characters (e.g. Iktomi’s origin represents both the essence hardness and shapeless and formless being). Some moments at powwows can be understood likewise in the sense that they combine two antithetic

¹¹³ <http://www.1491s.com/>

meanings or connotations to create an integrated and compact impression. In this way we have analysed the meaning and role of US flag at Lakota powwow, the use of humour, and the function of role-models of Lakota values during Grand Entry – an important ceremony of every powwow. In the second part of the chapter we have decided to include results of research among non-Native participants of powwows (usually labelled as hobbyists). Though the topic does not deal directly with the Lakota, we attempt to show how communication between hobbyists and Native participants of powwows (not necessarily only Lakota) can and does affect both groups. In this way, we perceive the interconnectedness of these two “worlds” as another layer of duality which in the contemporary world certainly shapes the Lakota identity.

In conclusion, the dissertation attempted to pursue duality in Lakota culture. We believe that dichotomies shown in various chapters of the work can confirm our initial presupposition of existence of such an abstract structure, though it became evident that this duality has various forms, and it is not an important issue for all who consider themselves Lakota, because this group can hardly be perceived as unbiased. For further research, we suggest to focus on the issue of Native/Euro-American dichotomy, particularly on the question of how the Western (non-Native) elements distort the system of Lakota culture, which is to a large extent self-regulatory (Napesni, 2003, pp. 229-234), and which pursues different strategies to maintain order and harmony in the society than the generally enforced Western system. It would be interesting to study and compare effects of these two regulatory mechanisms and their interaction in the area of Lakota reservations. However, this question will remain unanswered in this dissertation.

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