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**THE IMAGE OF MT. FUJI AS A NATIONAL SYMBOL OF JAPAN IN
R.ZELAZNY'S '24 VIEWS OF MOUNT FUJI BY HOKUSAI'**

The article presents R.Zelazny's *24 Views of Mount Fuji by Hokusai* as subtly and poetically constructed model of the spiritual values that are embodied in a symbol of Japan, Mount Fuji. The paper deals with the analysis of the image of Mount Fuji in R.Zelazny's work from the perspective of the imagological problem of perception of the "Other" and the specific image formation of Japan. The paper presents possible interpretations of the image of Mount Fuji and reveals main features of perception and representation of Japan in Zelazny's work. The article distinguishes various levels of representation of *japaneseness* in the text. In Zelazny's work imagery and aesthetics of traditional Japan are transformed into a volumetric semantic code that can be traced in the work at different levels: the plot level, the intermedial level, the imaginative level etc. Mount Fuji which in the engravings of the artist is a symbol of eternity and beauty of the world, in Zelazny's work becomes a complex of living experiences. The image of Mount Fuji is mythologized not only because of its symbolic importance in the life of the heroine, but because of the tradition of perception of Fuji through works of art. The article analyzes the intertextual relations of Zelazny's work with the works of Japanese and world literature (Basho, Natsume Soseki, Yasunari Kawabata, Dazai Osamu, Geoffrey Chaucer, William Blake, Rudyard Kipling, J.D.Salinger, R.M.Rilke etc) and proves that "*24 Views of Mount Fuji by Hokusai*" with its numerous citations and allusions to the world literature is to some extent the discourse about impossibility of real and "pure" experience which can be called "Japan". The set of semantic associations connected to Mount Fuji operates in a specific semantic field. This is due to the symbolic meaning of the sacred topos of Japan. Mount Fuji, which embodies all possible Japanese national characteristics, is interpreted both in nationalist and anti-nationalist ways. Zelazny's work could be opposed to nationalist view of Japanese identity as it is presented in the theory of *nihondjinron*. Researcher Miyake claims that "Japanese identity is an elusive phantom because to be Japanese is to possess an essence, a consciousness or spirit, beyond the grasp of language and the power of rationality", and it is necessary to distinguish between nationalism and cultural authenticity. Creating the image of Japan, Zelazny does not imply nationalist assertion and construction of stereotypes.

Key words: the image of the Other, stereotype, *japaneseness*, Fuji, Hokusai.