

Kamarovskaya Tatyana

Belarus State Pedagogical University

Sovietskaja str. 18, 220809 Minsk, Belarus

Tel. +375 172 848 610

E-mail komar37@mail.ru

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ADAM AND THE WAR

The aim of the article is to show the relationship between idealized perception of life and complicated and brutal reality of the war, between national innocence and the trials of experience gained by participation in the war analyzing Robert Penn Warren's novel "Wilderness" (1961). The scientific methods of the research are the traditional cultural-historical and the mythological based on American national mythology which determines American national mentality and national psychology, that is the American dream and closely connected with it the myth of New Adam in the New World.

R. P. Warren, a writer and a philosopher, treats the Civil War as a myth, for him Civil War is the prototype of any war. In his book "Legacy" he states that studying this war one can come to the understanding of national consciousness and national identity. His central character is also to a large extent a mythological figure whose name is Adam. He embodies both the American innocence (New Adam in the New World, his belonging to the ancient people who created the Bible is one more reference in the novel implying this idea) and at the same time he conveys European idealized notion of the United States.

Adam is a poor Jew from Germany who came to the United States to fight for freedom by taking part in the Civil War. The plot of the novel consists in the hero's search for Freedom, Truth, Justice, moral ideal; its conflict is based upon the clash of abstract dreams and ideals of the hero with American reality excluding in Warren's representation genuine freedom and justice. Having overcome hard trials Adam could cope with his despair and disillusionment. He begins to see real aim in his fight for freedom and human values, he has become a man who is ready to take responsibility upon himself, and at the end of the novel he takes the gun ready to defend them.

The title of the novel has double meaning: first, it refers the reader to the Battle in the Wilderness where the action in the last scene of the novel is laid, and, second, it conveys the idea of the hero's getting out of the wilderness of his loneliness and despair by joining humanity fighting for real noble aims.

The Adam of the American war novel may be involved in different conflicts (depending upon the historical circumstances and the author's artistic task) but the American war novel is always skeptical and pessimistic.

KEY WORDS: idealized perception, national innocence, myth, New Adam in the New World, Freedom, Truth, Justice, wilderness, American war novel.

The aim of the article is to show the relationship between idealized perception of life and complicated and brutal reality of the war, between national innocence and the trials of experience gained by participation in the war analyzing R. P. Warren's novel *Wilderness*. The scientific methods of the research are the traditional cultural-historical and the mythological based on American national mythology which determines American national mentality and national psychology, that is the American dream and closely connected with it the myth of New Adam in the New World.

The novel "Wilderness" by R.P. Warren has been given little attention on the part of literary scholars from the start. H. L. Moore in the book "Robert Penn Warren and History" uses it to find out how Warren's historical imagination and his philosophy of history deal with a concrete historical event. R.Chase and R. M. Gidycz considered the novel in the context of the American literature of the 60-s concentrating on the traits of the novel which reflected the spiritual atmosphere of the time. T. Kamařovskaya, the author of this article, in her books analyzed the novel from the point of view of its peculiarity as a historical novel. Basically, that's all the study of the novel boils down to.

R. P. Warren, a writer and a philosopher, treats the Civil War as a myth, for him Civil War is the prototype of any war. In his book *Legacy* he states that studying this war one can come to the understanding of national consciousness and national identity. Despite the subtitle of the novel *A Tale of the Civil War* the Civil war in the artistic structure of the novel is a convention, a historical precedent which the author uses to solve ethical problems he is interested in. There are no real historical personalities (except a short scene in which General Grant appears) and real historical events in the novel. The Civil war remains behind the scenes. The episodes representing it in the novel are not the ones that express its historic essence: spontaneous riots in New York caused by the law on general draft and directed mainly against Negroes; the severe hibernation the Army of the North had to survive in Virginia. More important is something else. The author is not interested in the analysis of the authentic historical conflict, its cause and effect, its moving strings, its real historical significance. The only important historical event described in the novel is War in the Wilderness, the battle between the armies of the Confederacy and the North which to a large extent determined the outcome of the

war, but even that is treated in the novel not as a real historical fact but, rather, as a suitable historical scenery, the background upon which the author stages the spiritual drama of his hero. The characters of the novel are not historically concrete social types, they don't express tendencies common for some groups of the population of the country during the Civil war; their existence in the novel is in itself a challenge to the principles of the creation of characters in the traditional historical novel.

Warren's central character is also to a large extent a mythological figure whose name is Adam. He embodies both the American innocence (New Adam in the New World, his belonging to the ancient people who created the Bible is one more reference in the novel implying this idea), and at the same time he conveys European idealized notion of the United States.

Adam is a poor Jew from Germany who came to the United States to fight for freedom by taking part in the Civil War. His father was a poet who took part in the barricade fights in Germany during the Revolution of 1848. He was arrested, put to prison where he spent many years and was let out only to die of tuberculosis which he had developed in the prison cell. Before his death Adam's father renounced the cause which was his life aim and which gave the meaning to his life-that is fight for freedom. The son decides to continue his father's cause and sets out to the USA to fight for Freedom and justice by taking part in the Civil war. The United States are for him the embodiment of the ideal Freedom and Justice. He is from this point of view the personification of European idealized perception of the American dream.

The plot of the novel consists in the hero's search for Freedom, Truth, Justice, moral ideal. The dream of Freedom is the main motif of all the characters of the novel: the protagonist himself, the shoemaker who made Adam a special shoe for his deformed leg (Adam is a cripple by birth) and refused to take money for his work. He explains his refusal saying in this way he will feel the shoe is his, it is as if he himself would trample the American soil (Warren 1961, p. 25) It's the motif of the soldiers who shouted on the ship "Für die Freiheit!", of a peddler who by the end of the novel has got crazy on money and who shouts to Adam in frenzy and despair: "No one is free!" So there are many Adams in the novel looking for, lusting for one noble aim-freedom, but not acquiring it; Europeans with their constant dream of freedom and unrealized possibilities attainable only in America.

But in America Adam meets a lot of disappointment and hardships since his first steps on the land of Freedom sacred for him, for the first thing he sees is a Negro hanged upon a pole and the scene of lynching of another Negro. The conflict of the novel is based upon the clash of abstract dreams and ideals of the hero with American reality excluding in Warren's representation genuine freedom and justice. The construction of the novel is based on controversy, on the principle of paradox. All the characters turn out to be their opposition; the

appearance of events doesn't coincide or comes into conflict with their essence. The peddler Jeard is the son of a planter from North Carolina. In his youth he was driven in disgrace from his home and his native state for testifying in court to a Negro against his white master, the wealthiest planter in the state. At the end of the novel it turns out that this deed that elevated his life and himself he had performed not for the rescue of the Negro's life or for the triumph of justice; that was an act of revenge on his father who cringed to this planter that was an act of self-assertion. Negro Moses who saved Adam during the riots did it for his own self-preservation. In army he proved to be a coward and soon deserted it. His thoughts are mean; he ends up in the novel by committing murder for money. But at the moment of catharsis he cries he could be no worse than other soldiers, he could sacrifice his life for another, but Negroes were forbidden participation in battles, they were used for digging and cleaning lavatories. The army doctor who has become a drunkard and is trusted at present only to embalm the dead once saved one of the characters — sucked out his diphtheria abscess, thus risking his own life.

What is worse race prejudice and race discrimination rule in the Army of the North as well, though this army is fighting for the liberation of black people (the official cause the North was fighting for). The cavalry captain is weeping because a Negro has saved his life and is now dying himself. "I didn't ask the black son of a bitch to save me" (Warren 1961, p. 203). The soldiers of the army singing glory to the heroes fallen at Gettysburg express disgust when they have to drink from a bowl after black Moses.

Having overcome hard trials Adam could cope with his despair and disillusionment. In the last scene of the novel (the action is laid during the Battle in Wilderness) Adam got over despair which overwhelmed him after the first murder he committed in the novel, the first murder he had ever committed. He takes up the gun again. His idealized love for abstract freedom has got concrete form, has hardened in trials and hardships, and has acquired concrete aim. He begins to see real aim in his fight for freedom and human values, he has become a man who is ready to take responsibility upon himself, and at the end of the novel he takes the gun ready to defend them.

The scene in which the hero changes his shoes has a symbolic meaning.

Having lost his own shoes Adam puts on the shoes of murdered soldiers, as if he had lost his former self of the idealist isolated from the world and now is ready to join humanity and accept genuine human values; he wants to be worthy those nameless soldiers who have worn these shoes before him.

The title of the novel has double meaning: first, it refers the reader to the Battle in the Wilderness where the action in the last scene of the novel is laid, and, second, it conveys the idea of the hero's getting out of the wilderness of his loneliness and despair by joining humanity

fighting for real noble aims. For him, this now American Adam, the war means really a new start in life. The war waged for the noble aim created him.

In this philosophical novel we, basically, perceive one of the main themes of US literature in general: initial innocence, naiveté of the American Adam who through experience comes to know life and genuine values; the theme so wonderfully elaborated in the books by Henry James (American innocence — European experience). This theme becomes the principal one in the American novel devoted to the wars United States waged in the 20th century. It can be traced through *A Farewell to Arms* by E. Hemingway in which young and naïve American Frederic Henry comes to the understanding of the character of the war in Italy up to the American war novel devoted to World War II. The main characters of I. Shaw's *Young Lions*, of N. Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead*, of J. Jones' *From Here to Eternity*, of J. Hersey's *The War Lover* are such young Adams who through gaining experience and with it-understanding of the true character of the war, lose their innocence, sometimes-purity and become part of suffering and struggling mankind. K. Vonnegut later on will even call his famous novel *Slaughter-house — 5* or *the Children's Crusade*, emphasizing in this way the childish innocence, ignorance of the American boys who were brought to Europe in 1944 and suffered severe losses in the battles against the still strong enemy. This theme and its corresponding conflict (Adam and the war, Adam in the war, Adam versus the war) will find its continuation in one of the last books closing the century on this account — *When Madeline Was Young* by J. Hamilton. One of the characters of this book, a fine and promising boy brought up by his step-father senator in the officially patriotic way takes part as a volunteer in the Vietnam war, brings up his own son in the same spirit of official patriotism, and his boy in his turn goes as a volunteer to Iraq and finds his death there. The father is heart-broken and revalues his life.

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Kamarovskaja Tatjana

Baltarusijos valstybinis pedagoginis universitetas, Baltarusija

Moksliniai interesai: amerikiečių studijos

ADOMAS IR KARAS

Santrauka

Analizuodama Roberto Peno romaną „Wilderness“ autorė bando parodyti idealizuoto gyvenimo suvokimo ir komplikotos, brutali karo ralybės santykį, o taip pat santykį tarp tautinės nekaltybės ir patirties išbandymų, įgytų dalyvaujant kare.

Savo romane autorius į pilietinį karą žvelgia kaip į mitą. Centrinį romano personažą autoriaus vaizduoja kaip itin mitologizuotą figūrą. Ne veltui jo vardas Adomas. Pilietinis karas romane tėra istorinis precedentas, kuriuo autorius grindžia savo kūrinį, kad galėtų spręsti jį dominančias dorovės ir etikos problemas. Romane beveik nevaizduojami realios istorinės asmenybės ir istoriniai įvykiai. Pilietinis karas – už kadro. Autoriaus visai nedomina tikrosios jėgos ir istorinio konflikto priežastys, jis jų neanalizuoja. R. P. Warreno nedomina tikrų istorinių įvykių atkūrimas, žmonių istorijos matavimas. Istorija jam — puiki dekoracija, tinkamas fonas, kuriame vaizduojama herojaus sielos drama. Romano personažai nėra istoriškai konkretūs socialiniai tipai, neįkūnija jokių tendencijų, būdingų konkrečioms socialinėms grupėms JAV šiaurės ir pietų karo metu. Romano konfliktas grindžiamas konfliktu tarp abstrakčių svajonių apie kovą už laisvę ir gyvenimo realijų JAV, kur nėra nei tikros laisvės, nei teisingumo. Dialektinis charakterių ir situacijų prieštaravimas atspindi gyvenimo prieštaravimą, kurį suvokia herojus. Romano personažai išreiškia būties filosofiją, jie parodo žmogaus asmenybės sudėtingumą; personažai sukurti tam, kad herojus galėtų priartėti prie tikrojo žmogiškumo ir suvokti tikrąją kovos už laisvę prasmę vidinės ir išorinės nelaisvės sąlygomis. Šis amerikietiškas antikarinis romanas persismelkęs antikarinio patosu, alsuoja skepticizmu ir pesimizmu.

REIKŠMINIAI ŽODŽIAI: idealizuotas suvokimas, nacionalinis nekaltumas, mitas, Naujasis Adomas Naujajame pasaulyje, Laisvė, Tiesa, Teisingumas, dykvietė, tankuma, amerikietiškas karinis romanas