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PRESENCE OF RATIONAL AND IRRATIONAL ACTIONS IN THE STORIES OF E.I. ZAMYATIN «ISLANDER», «CATCHER OF HUMAN BEINGS» AND THE NOVEL «WE»

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Abstract: The article considers rational and irrational actions of characters in E.I. Zamyatin's stories; destruction of a person caused by indissolubility, duality, discrepancy of human beings and their behaviour is shown. The new stage of work of the writer is analyzed.

The English theme in the works of Zamyatin starts with the stories «Islander» (1917) and «Catcher of Human Beings» (1918). Literary critics treat it as a new stage in his creative work.

V.A. Keldysh noted that alongside with the new English themes the writer developed new creative techniques: “The third person narrator gave way to the author speaking «in person». The Russian storyteller transformed into the pure European whose «merciless, skeptical irony bearing a strong resemblance to highly respected by Zamyatin Anatole France had turned into the finished form» [1]. V.A. Keldysh stressed: «Provincial Russians and respectable Anglo-Saxons as Zamyatin portrayed them seem more live aliens, so different they are. Though, in fact, the elements of their existence are much the same. Humanity are violated with the ill-established social organization as well as the internal anxiety of spirit, resisting the oppression exists in both places» [1].

The researcher is definitely right that «Islander» is intimately associated with early provincial stories «Uezdnoe» (A Provincial Tale) and

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«Na Kulichkah» (At the World's End). Clumsy, slow minded, naïve, undeveloped emotionally and easily manipulated «квадратный грузовой трактор Кембл» (square heavy tractor Kemble) is amazingly similar to «quadrangular» Baryba and «воскресная камена баба» (Sunday stone woman). The lawyer O'Kelly with his refined mendacity is rather like the «winking» lawyer Morgunov. Both characters led «одного из малых сих» (one of those little) as tray and determined the further dramatic lives of Baryba and Kemble. The poetic techniques of character-making and the general grotesque of the plots are also much alike.

Despite the presence of those and a number of other similarities in the early stories and English works of the writer, the innovative method is predominate; thus enabling the modern literacy critics to define the English works as a «pioneering creative mode» of the author.

Due to their antiurbanistic and antitotalitarian tendencies the stories «Islander» and «Catcher of Human beings» can be viewed as the «source texts» of the novel «We» while neomythicizing of narration, prose rhythming, introduction of integral types, elliptical style of narration, playing on symbolic semantics of English proper and place names in the texts make it possible to consider the «English» work of Zamyatin as an actually new stage of writer's creativity.

Y.V. Brown was the first to highlight the propinquity of the ideas in Zamyatin's novel «We» and the stories «Islander» and «Catcher of Human beings». He pointed out the ideas background of the novel «We»: its conception lies in «Islanders». «Islanders» is the first idea sketching of the novel «We» [2].

Further inside into the association phenomenon was made by Kim Song in his article «From social to the philosophic pamphlet». He wrote «The concept of United State as an impeccable and infallible model has already been indicated, vicar Dewley being the precursor of the Benefactor. The «Islanders» characters can be regarded as the prototypes of the characters in the «We»: Kemble – D-503, Didi – O-90 and I-330, O'Kelly – the poet R-13 etc.

Seeing from the antiutopian point of view, with the implied psychological development of the protagonist (unlike the classical utopia tending towards the static character) Kemble appears to be an antiutopian character or a rebel. He suffers from the conflict between his consciousness and mendacious reality around" [2].

Why Zamyatin in his «Islanders» reveals the «antinomy of freedom» in the present day world and strive to convince us that freedom and self-will are different categories taken the foreign realities as the example. It seems to result from the author's desire to highlight the fact that in civilized western society an individual remains a person capable of manifesting not only anarchy and riot but the humility and slave submission as well. Either way the individual ruins himself no matter what level of social evolution he has progressed to. The pattern is illustrated with the examples of numerous characters of the «Islanders».

Vicar Dewley the author of «Precepts of Assured Salvation» resembles the «underground» Dostoyevsky admitting his right to change the world forcibly, compelling others to follow his directions. He is confident that the majority has

no real need for freedom. That is why he comes up with his «Precepts» and aspires to enforce it into the lives of all English people, making them rational. The plot development of English stories proves the bankruptcy of the idea, because irrational always captures the soul when it comes to love.

The behaviour of «квадратного» (square) Kemble confirms the groundlessness of the concept. He breaks the long-established aristocratic rules and at the request of the «actressy» starts boxing round with a man of lower status background. Even Mrs. Dewley (seeming loyal and adherent wife when fallen in love, gives way to irrational impulses and feeling the burden of her marriage with Mr. Dewley asks Kemble to stay with them for a longer period and pleads with her husband for the permission to look after the already recovered hero. In the course of plot development the irrational actions of Mrs. Dewley only multiply reaching their peak of the instant her sweetheart is executed.

It is apparent that the solution to the problem of rational and irrational in people's lives was so crucial to Zamyatin that it becomes the key theme, firstly in his «English» stories, in the play «The society of Honorary Bell-Ringer» and then in the novel «We».

The writer Olga Forsh who was Zamyatin's associate points at the permanent challenging debates of the problem. In her novel «Mad boat» she quotes some extracts from her notebook, which denote the significance of this dilemma solution for the whole writing community.

According to the writer «rational» and «irrational» were the subjects of thorough consideration for Zamyatin. The novel contains the facts of how irrational interest in «чудотворному целителю Епимаху» (miraculous healer Yepimah) who Zamyatin visited more than once resulted in failure of the writer's public career. The description of old man Yepimah, given by O. Forsh implies that this particular man might serve as the prototype of the old men in Zamyatin's short stories. All of them look like «лешаки лесные» (wood goblins) «И почитай, весь он из шерсти: голова, что кудель, глаз – мышка в кустах, нос шишковатый, а прочего ничего – одни заросли. И такая крепость от этого Епимаха – лесом, грибом, ягодой тянет. И не горница тут, а солнцепек на выгоне, а сам он лешак лесной» (And so to see all his body is covered with wool: his head likes a tow, his eyes – a mouse in a bush, his nose is knarred, the rest is not seen – only clumps. And so stiff Yepimah is smelling with wood, mushrooms and berries. And this is not a room but the sun heat on a pasture and he himself is a wood goblin) [3].

The rationalist Zamyatin as he appears in O. Forsh book belongs to «the majority of those, who couldn't find their identity and were looking in romantic blindness for the one, who would develop them rather than complement them» [3].

For Zamyatin, as we see it, irrational is not identical to chaotic, senseless. It's «the intuitive hitch into the eternity, contact with other Universes» (F.M. Dostoyevsky), meeting with love and God.

In February 1928 Zamyatin put down his writing plan: «Запад и Восток. Западная культура, поднимающаяся до таких вершин, где она уже попадает в безвоздушное пространство цивилизации, – и новая, бунтующая дикая

сила, идущая с Востока, через наши скифские степи. Вот тема, которая меня сейчас занимает, тема наша, сегодняшняя – и тема, которую я слышал в очень как будто далекой от нас эпохе» (West and East. Western culture having achieved unbelievable heights, where it appeared in civilization vacuum and new rebelling force came from the East through our skiff steppes. It is the topic which interests me, very modern topic, the one which I heard long, long age, in some distant epoch) [3].

Such a pessimistic treatment of western culture personalized in England had crystallized in writer's mind while he was working at «Islanders», because «безвоздушное пространство цивилизации» (civilization vacuum) presents rational developed to its utmost. «Бунтующая дикая сила» (rebellng wild force) is typical of «диких» (uncivilized) nations of the East is redominance of irrational over the mankind. By having borrowed the heading «Islanders» from N.S. Leskov, the author emphasized his idea that savage, irrational behaviour is more characteristic of a live human soul than rational, leading to «роботообразию» (robot-similarity).

Zamyatin is certain that irrational element wins in the mankind. In spite of that the vicar Dewley is now satisfied: the law of compulsory conforming to his «Precepts» could be introduced «Если бы государство насильно вело слабые души единым путем – не пришлось бы прибегать бы к таким печальным, хотя и справедливым мерам... спасение приходило бы математически неизбежно, понимаете, математически?» (If only the government forced weak souls to follow the same way one wouldn't have resorted to such sorrowful though equitable measures. Salvation would come with mathematical accuracy, believe me with mathematical precision?) [3].

In his English stories «Islanders» and «Catcher of human beings» Zamyatin raises the problem of rational and irrational in people's life, further extending it in his novel «We» he indicates the indissoluble, dual and contradictory nature of this phenomenon in man's behaviour, which is bound to result in personal destruction. Exploiting the idea of I.M. Popova that under the influenced of F.M. Dostoyevsky ideas, who formulated the same issues in his «Notes from the Undegraund», Zamyatin presumed that reconciliation of rational and irrational is only possible through self-restraint in the name of love [4]. Here we want to stress that: the irrational for Zamyatin is not so chaotic as for F.M. Dostoyevsky. However, we think it manifests itself as intuitive, appealing from the inner nature of a person aspiration for love, for the Higher Meaning. Under the absence of love, both rational and irrational are equally destructive for a human nature.

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**Присутствие рациональных и иррациональных действий
в повестях Е.И. Замятина «Островитяне»,
«Ловец человеков» и романе «Мы»**

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Аннотация: Рассмотрены рациональные и иррациональ-
ные действия героев в повестях Е.И. Замятина. Показаны нераз-
рывность, двойственность и противоречивость рационального и
иррационального в человеческом существе и его поступках,
приводящие к разрушению личности.

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