

«WE MUST LOVE ONE ANOTHER OR DIE...» THE CONVERSATION OF PRAYERS (W.H. AUDEN – S. MAUGHAM – D. THOMAS)

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The investigation focuses on the phenomenon of the coincidence of the prophetic thoughts about the consequences of wars, misanthropy in the art of a variety of 20th century writers.

One of such prophetic ideas was worded in the poetic lines of Anglo-American poet W.H. Auden (1907-1973), in his famous poem “September, 1, 1939”, published in the American journal *The New Republic* in October, 1939. The poem was written under the influence of the events of this first day of the II World War, but in reality – on the cause of any Revelation, which threatens a human being and the humanity.

A contemporary author of the article about this poem by Auden, Jan Sanson, defined it as “one of the greatest work of the 20th century”, the long life of which is explained by the fact that it gives «simple answers to difficult questions which not necessarily a good thing”. Giving such title to his article as “The right poem for the wrong time”, its author justly underlines the topicality of Auden’s ideas nowadays. That was demonstrated quite obviously in September, 2001, when after the terroristic act in New York the lines of Auden were heard from the USA national radio.

The global nature of the first war day consequences together with Auden foresee not many people. And the voice of those who were among them was not very much distinct. Such was the voice of S. Maugham, who turned out to be in France in the first days of the War. The writer shares the patriotism of the country that underwent the treacherous attack of the enemy. He was at that time, according to the notes of one contemporary investigator his life, “not mere observer in this national tragedy”. But being, as it is known from Maugham’s biography, to some extent “a citizen of the world”, he, while reflecting over the essence of everything happening round him, discovered some other sides of this essence, very often coming to Auden’s prophetic ideas and results.

In the history of which Maugham tells us in his short story “*The Unconquered*”, 1943, the writer, observing disgraceful pictures of France fall, anew thinks over the pathetic slogans of the War first days crying about French army being always unbending, courageous and victorious. The image of a French girl Annette presented by S. Maugham – a kind of Jeanne d’Arc, a Freedom on barricades – causes a mixture of feelings: both the esteem for her being unconquered by the enemy who raped her, and the horror from the act – the murdering of a newborn child – that is unnatural, barbaric for any man, for a woman, first of all. In the both – Hans and Annette – the war initiated the hatred which in the absence of love leads to self-destruction. Maugham, as it seems, catches Auden’s lines We must love one another or die. This thought is visible in the undercurrent of the events, in the struggle of misanthropy and humaneness which all the characters undergo.

One more literary work – the poem by Dylan Thomas (1914-1953) “The Conversation of Prayers” from the collection of poems “Deaths and Entrances”, (1946), pours into the accord of the philosophical sense of Maugham’s short story and Auden’s poem. The very title of the collection Deaths and Entrances refers to the ontological problem of “The Unconquered” and other works of Maugham of the War period.

The key Biblical allusion in D. Thomas poem – is the allusion to the story of Solomon, who fell in love with Philistine girl while being in war with her people. His sever battle with them to exterminate them lead as a result to the death of the people as well as Samson himself. All that in a certain way illustrates again the idea of Auden We must love one another or die.

Auden, Maugham, Thomas are in accordance in their understanding of the things about which they warned others: any confrontation of people on any ground of intolerance – war, race, national, political, cultural and so forth – is the way to self destruction.

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