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## **The Phenomenon of "the Other" in the context of the American Dream in American Proletarian Literature and Left-Wing Political Discourse of the 1920s and 30s / Феномен "Другого" в контексте Американской мечты в американской пролетарской литературе и левом политическом дискурсе 1920-30-х годов**

Альбулани Альван Хассан

ORCID: 0000-0003-0997-5472

доктор филологических наук

аспирант, кафедра русской и зарубежной литературы, Российский университет дружбы народов

117198, Россия, г. Москва, ул. Миклухо-Маклая, 6



✉ 1042218123@pfur.ru

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**Аннотация:** В условиях разворачивающегося мирового кризиса, вызванный пандемией COVID-19, является одним из самых глубоких со времен Великой депрессии. Глобальный кризис, порождающий серьезные социальные потрясения, усиливает политизацию литературного процесса и пробуждает литературный дискурс, выдвигающий на первый план "непреходящую реальность" национальной идентичности и социального класса. Пролетарская литература США 1920-30-х годов и вторящий ей левый политический

дискурс этого периода являются ярким примером понимания этих вопросов в американском обществе и в жизни простого человека. Данная статья своей целью имеет анализ и обобщение наиболее принципиальных аспектов американской пролетарской литературы, как явления 1920-30-х годов, и левого политического дискурса, проливающие свет на взаимосвязь двух феноменов, непосредственно связанных с американской идентичностью, - «Другого» и «Американской мечты». Статья основана на междисциплинарном анализе, который позволяет организовать и осмысливать исторические, литературные и социально-политические аспекты исследуемых явлений в рамках этой литературной традиции. Темы идентичности и инаковости в американской истории и литературе данного периода были критически проанализированы на примере исторических документов, художественных текстов и теоретических исследований. Статья вносит вклад в научную дискуссию о взаимосвязи литературы, истории и идеологии в формировании представлений о факторах формирования идентичности и диалогических исключений, ведущих к таким социальным последствиям, как отчуждение и маргинализация. Новизна исследования заключается в ее синтезирующем характере; выявлены важные аспекты и закономерности, объединяющие корпус источников разнообразного масштаба по теме Американской мечты и концепта «Другого», относящейся к отдельным лицам или группам, которые исключены из идеализированного видения успеха, по причине существования системных препятствий доступа к тем же возможностям и результатам, которыми обладает основная или доминирующая культура. Результаты исследования открывают путь для дальнейших литературоведческих исследований более широких социально-политических контекстов, которые формировали производство и восприятие пролетарской литературы, и их значения для современного понимания американского общества и социальных вызовов, которые стоят перед ним.

**Ключевые слова:**

сравнительное исследование, пролетарская литература, американский роман, политический дискурс, Американская мечта, идентичность, концепт Другого, мейнстрим, отчуждение, маргинализация

**Introduction: The American Dream and the Concept of the "Other"**

In 2020, the modern world faced a global crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Like previous global economic crises, the subsequent coronavirus recession caused significant changes in the social sphere. The pandemic has become another "black swan" of globalization, which has intensified the existing problems of geopolitics and economics, becoming a harbinger of serious social upheavals. Unequal access to public goods and healthcare, deterioration of social well-being, loss of income have exacerbated the problems of social differentiation and inequality [\[1, p. 2139\]](#). The social consequences of the post-coronavirus reality have been the displacement of people to the margins of society, to social isolation and loneliness. These changes in people's lives and their social identity happened unexpectedly, and all they were left with was an undermined self-awareness. For these people, this is a time of survival, when many ideologies and beliefs are shaken and questioned, including the trust and faith of the working class that "hard work will bring prosperity," as promised by national myths and stereotypes that give significance to events in everyday life, such as the American Dream [\[2\]](#).

The American Dream has long been revered as a cornerstone of the United States' national identity. It encapsulates the belief that industriousness and perseverance pave the way for success and upward mobility, irrespective of one's background or circumstances. This aspirational framework has animated the ambitions of countless Americans across generations, instilling in them an unwavering resolve to pursue their dreams and aspirations. Nevertheless, amidst the vigorous pursuit of this ideal lies the stark reality of exclusion and marginalization experienced by those categorized as "the other".

The concept of "the other" is an integral element of modern identity theories, the relevance of which in the light of the study of national and social identity is beyond doubt [\[3, pp. 46-47\]](#). The figure of Other is intuitively obvious to many researchers and is taken as an abstract carrier of the function of a "boundary marker" or "mirror reflection" [\[4\]](#). At the same time, the transfer of the concept of "the other" from philosophy to the social sciences and humanities requires the problematization of what seems "obvious". The processes of such rethinking have already intensified in many disciplinary areas, including comparative literature studies.

The purpose of the article is to summarize the most fundamental aspects of American proletarian literature, as a phenomenon of the 1920s and 30s, and left-wing political discourse, shedding light on the relationship between two phenomena directly related to American identity - the "other" and the "American Dream" - and outline a range of issues that need additional research and theoretical understanding. Critically, this exploration is guided by an awareness of the structural limitations within the traditional narrative of the American Dream, prompting a reevaluation of its inclusivity and accessibility. By critically examining the underlying assumptions and inherent biases embedded within this narrative, we seek to shed light on the discrepancies between the idealized vision of the American Dream and the lived realities of marginalized communities. The concept of the "other" we use to analyze the situation of marginalized individuals and groups who find themselves deprived of the opportunity to fully realize the promises of the American dream [\[5, p. 28\]](#). These people face systemic barriers and widespread discrimination based on factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic status that prevent them from accessing the same opportunities and resources enjoyed by their more privileged counterparts.

Our analysis is based on an interdisciplinary approach combining historical, literary, and socio-political aspects of the phenomenon under study. This will make it possible to organize and comprehend the research material in the context of this literary tradition, as well as the sociological and thematic boundaries that defined the genre of proletarian literature. Based on a corpus of primary sources, including historical documents, literary texts and theoretical studies, we critically analyze the themes of identity and otherness in American history and literature of this period using the example of the American novel. Using this methodological framework, we strive to contribute to the scientific discussion about the relationship of literature, history and ideology in the formation of ideas about national identity on the example of the United States.

### **Understanding the American Dream**

The image of the American dream is deeply woven into the fabric of American society. There have been many interpretations of the American dream. The symbol is multifaceted, universal and still open to interpretation. According to Bernard DeVoto, "the feeling that was not too accurately called the American dream is a complex feeling that is not so easy to formulate... it was hidden in the desire to move West, which became both its result and

condition" [\[6, p. 54\]](#).

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines it as "an American social ideal that stresses egalitarianism and especially material prosperity," to which it adds: "a happy way of living that is thought of by many Americans as something that can be achieved by anyone in the U.S. especially by working hard and becoming successful" [\[2\]](#), while the definition given by the Oxford English Dictionary almost rephrases the idea: the American Dream is "the ideal that every citizen of the United States should have an equal opportunity to achieve success and prosperity through hard work, determination, and initiative." [\[7\]](#)

One fundamental tenet underpinning the American Dream is the principle of equal opportunity. At its essence, the American Dream encapsulates the belief that every individual, regardless of their background, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, possesses the inherent right to pursue their aspirations, attain economic prosperity, and ultimately find fulfillment and happiness. This foundational concept embodies the notion that the United States is a land of boundless possibilities, where hard work, determination, and meritocracy are the pathways to success.

Embedded within the fabric of the American Dream is the promise of upward mobility, where individuals can transcend the circumstances of their birth and carve out their destinies. The American Dream asserts that regardless of background, everyone has an equal chance to realize their potential and fulfill their dreams.

Furthermore, the American Dream embodies the idea of a meritocratic society, wherein individuals are rewarded based on their talents, efforts, and contributions rather than their inherited privileges or social connections. This meritocratic ethos underscores the belief that success is attainable through personal initiative and persistence rather than being predetermined by factors beyond one's control. "[...] There could be no other limit to what Americans could do but the sky. [...] There was no other limit but the sky: American ingenuity, American willpower, American energy could not be stopped, and it would go on forever [...]" [\[6, p. 55\]](#). In essence, the American Dream encapsulates the aspirational vision of a society where equality of opportunity is the cornerstone of progress and prosperity. It is a beacon of hope that inspires individuals to pursue their ambitions, overcome obstacles, and strive for a better future, regardless of their circumstances.

However, not everyone agrees with these beliefs. A number of researchers [\[9, p. 10\]](#) argue that there is no single American dream. There are many American dreams, depending on the ideas about it. The latter are formed under the influence of various factors such as class, race, origin, age and religion. Thus, the American Dream can be described "as beliefs and ideals associated with America and with achieving success in life, rather than with one thing" [\[8\]](#). Nevertheless, it is a significant part of the national identity of Americans, which remains a dream for many who believe in it [\[10\]](#).

Understanding America as an "invention" rather than a discovery is pivotal to grasping the embryonic concept of the nation. In *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (1991), Stephen Greenblatt discusses this construction as the product of "the imagination at work" or "practical imagination." This notion of invention, or myth-making inherent in the American Dream, starkly contrasts an authentic portrayal of America, serving as a means to reveal the true essence of the nation. Greenblatt delves into the early discourse surrounding discovery, viewing it as "a supremely powerful register of the characteristic claims and limitations of European representational practice" [\[11, p. 23\]](#). This colonial

discourse vividly illustrates the challenges encountered in bridging the gap between two divergent systems of representation. By rejecting notions of reciprocity, the colonizers "project vain fantasies" [12]. The encounter with otherness occurs within the cultural framework imposed by the "discoverers." [11, p. 117]. Thus, the concept of the American Dream is symbolic, subjective and ambiguous to the extent that it absorbs different, including opposite meanings, but the encounter with otherness ("othering") always occurs within the framework of the culture imposed by the "discoverers" [13].

### Defining "the Other"

The concept of the "other" is an important element of many modern theories of identity, regardless of its level [3, p. 47]. Having considered the genesis of the concept of the "other" in interdisciplinary discourse, we will outline a number of points that are particularly important for this study.

In the personalist philosophy of the 20th century, the concept of the "other" is primarily associated with the problems of intersubjectivity and communication. At the same time, some authors believe that the existence of the Other is an obligatory stage in the development of an individual's personality, while others assert the opposite characteristics of the Self and the Other. When analyzing the category of the Other as one of the central ones in the theory of identity, we see that when moving from the topic of personality formation to collective political identity, a system of the Self and the Other arises, as well as models of Our Own - Others or Us - Them.

In modern research, the concept of the "other" is debatable. Its semantics are related to otherness, differences that are perceived as significant, setting boundaries. Otherness has various social consequences, from recognizing the dissimilarity of the Self and the Other to antagonism and hostility. Since the category of the Other describes the construction of boundaries, it is associated with a complete or partial exclusion [4]. At the same time, otherness is quite often associated with antagonism and extreme forms of exclusion, as well as subsequent alienation and marginalization. Unlike political discourse, in social practice, the construction of boundaries using differences does not always involve exclusion. There is a multiplication of hybrid identities based on partial inclusion or exclusion for various reasons [13].

Most researchers of the phenomenon of the "other", considering the phenomenon of the "other" within the constructivist paradigm, as a dynamic relationship. At the same time, there are few studies that consider the mechanisms of its constitution and reproduction. An interesting attempt to answer the question of the reasons for endowing individuals and groups with the properties of the "other" is the work in the field of postcolonial and feminist discourses.

Indian literary critic, Professor at the University of Pennsylvania Ania Loomba, "the Other" as a concept is pivotal in shaping Creole and hybrid identities [14, p. 179]. Otherness, within a postcolonial context, establishes a distinction between the colonizer and the colonized. Literary critic, postcolonial researcher and one of the most famous researchers in the field of postcolonialism Homi Kharshedji Bhabha elaborates on this dynamic by illustrating how the colonizer extends an "invitation to identity," whereby individuals are categorized as "doctors, writers, students," thereby accentuating their perceived differences and solidifying their status as part of the colonizer's realm [15, p. 174]. This act of invitation effectively constructs the Other. The notion of difference becomes central to the formation of the

Other, as highlighted by Bhabha [\[15, pp. 12-23\]](#). He elucidates on the gap between the colonialist self and the colonized Other, terming it as the figure of colonial otherness. Literary critic Edward Said further explores this concept, contending that through the imposition of hierarchies, the West delineates its own identity by juxtaposing it against the essentialized characteristics attributed to the Oriental "other" [\[16, p. 210\]](#). The West establishes its identity by accentuating cultural disparities and positioning the East as the Other.

According to the American-Palestinian writer and literary critic Edward Said, the definition of identity or otherness in the routine practice of individuals is based on socially shared structures - "grammars" or sets of rules according to which "otherness" is articulated [\[16\]](#). The grammar of Said's orientalism dictates the logic of a hierarchically arranged binary opposition, which represents the Self and the Other in a mirror image - direct or inverted. Said argues that by imposing hierarchies, the West outlines its own identity, contrasting it with the essential characteristics attributed to the Eastern "other" [\[17, p. 210\]](#). The West establishes its identity by emphasizing cultural inequality and positioning the East as something else.

Despite the widespread opinion that identities are formed through contrasting the identities of significant others, there is no unity in the theoretical literature in understanding in which cases the "other" can be considered "significant", and what makes it so. The notion of the Other, as delineated above within postcolonial and feminist discourses, differs from the concept articulated by Greenblatt [\[11\]](#). In Greenblatt's framework, the Other is defined by authority, where the determining factor lies in the perspective of the individual in power. For instance, if the authoritative figure happens to be a woman, she may perceive a man as the Other, mainly if she views him as possessing demonic or heretical traits. In this context, the designation of the Other is contingent upon the subjective judgment of the authority figure, representing an individualized decision-making process. In contrast, within postcolonial and feminist studies, the construction of the Other is shaped by broader societal, cultural, and historical forces. Here, what constitutes the Other is collectively determined, reflecting the consensus of the community or culture at large. The alienation of the Other within this framework is regarded as a socio-cultural phenomenon, stemming from systemic processes rather than the unilateral decision of a single individual.

In postcolonial and feminist analyses, the construction of the Other is intricately tied to power dynamics and historical narratives of domination and subjugation. Colonial encounters often involved the imposition of Western norms and values onto colonized peoples, categorizing the colonized as the Other. This process was instrumental in justifying colonial rule and perpetuating systems of oppression. Similarly, within feminist discourse, the concept of the "other" is often linked to patriarchal structures that marginalize and subordinate women, relegating them to a position of alterity vis-à-vis men.

Moreover, the construction of the Other within postcolonial and feminist frameworks extends beyond individual interactions to encompass broader social structures and discourses. It is not merely a matter of personal perception but rather a product of entrenched societal norms, cultural representations, and historical legacies [\[10, p. 99\]](#). The Otherness attributed to specific groups or individuals is often reinforced and perpetuated through institutional practices, media representations, and discursive formations, shaping both individual identities and collective consciousness. Thus, the the "other" is a critical lens to interrogate power relations, cultural hegemony, and systems of privilege and

marginalization in society. Thus, social identity is determined by many factors, but to a greater extent by such "national" characteristics as social interactions and spatiality. The concept of the "other", in turn, reflects a critical view of power relations, cultural hegemony, and systems of privilege and marginalization in society.

### **Calls for Rediscovery and Attempts at Counter narratives**

The first years after the revolution were marked by an explosion of popular energy in many countries. At this time, literature is born, which comes out of the depths of the artistic potential of the common people. The literature of this period is characterized by an amazing diversity of thought. The very concept of proletarian literature as a genre presupposes literature that mediates the sociological reality of the working class and its cultural expression, which was emphasized in the 1920s by Mike Gold's fundamental formulation that the purpose of proletarian literature is "to create a picture of what the working class looks like in this country" [\[18\]](#). As Edwin Seaver argued at the Congress of American Writers in 1935, "[... It is not the style, not the form, not the plot, not the characters and not the class that are the fundamental differences of the proletarian novel, but the interest in political issues" [\[19\]](#).

The onset of the Great Depression in the late 1920s called into question the notion of individual economic success that was at the core of American identity. Leftist movements gained momentum, and the number of members of the American Communist Party increased dramatically, which sparked theoretical discussions about the cultural and political goals of the movement. Publications such as *New Masses*, founded in 1926, became platforms for intellectuals and writers to discuss the nature of "proletarian literature" [\[20, pp. 9-28\]](#).

In the midst of the economic turmoil of the Great Depression, a counter-project arose that challenged the capitalist and individualist spirit of America [\[21\]](#). This counter-project promoted a collective approach based on class struggle, challenging the idea of America as a society of unlimited possibilities [\[22, p. 6\]](#).

On the one hand, the concept of "proletarian literature" is based on different slogans, declarations and creative personalities, but, on the other hand, it represents a certain unity of ideological and aesthetic phenomena, which reflected the features of literature, as it seemed, of "multitudes", i.e. the masses awakened to active life. The works of these authors provided an adjustment to depoliticized fiction focused on the whims of the bourgeoisie. It was considered necessary to reflect the difficult and turbulent history of the US labor movement and other interconnected and overlapping liberation movements [\[23\]](#).

Literary works showcasing a variety of genres and formal experiments. Works by Michael Gold ("Jews without Money", 1930), Bruno Traven ("Death Ship", 1926), Agnes Smedley ("Daughter of the Earth", 1929), Edward Dahlberg ("Bottom Dogs", 1929), John Dos Passos "USA", 1930), Erskine Caldwell ("The American Land", 1931), Jack Conroy ("The Disinherited", 1933), Robert Cantwell ("The Land of Plenty", 1934), Henry Roth ("Call It a Dream", 1934), Clara Weatherwax's ("Marching! Marching!", 1935) John Steinbeck ("The Grapes of Wrath", 1939), although they did not fully define the nature of all art words, but they expressed the mood of the era, the peculiarity of the spiritual atmosphere of a complex and controversial moment in American history.

Despite the ideological constraints imposed by the Communist Party, many writers maintained autonomy. They incorporated experimental techniques from modernist movements into their works. Left-wing writers and intellectuals, especially those associated

with the "proletarian" movement of the early 1930s, sought to create counter-narratives in their works, restoring American identity and rethinking it. Proletarian literature brought a renewal of revolutionary romanticism," it created a fundamentally new psychological atmosphere in literature. The novelists of the Great Depression period were the first artists who "heard the footsteps" of the new hero. They endeavored to amplify alternative voices from American history and discourse, experimenting with form and content and introducing new figures such as the worker, the wanderer, and women. However, despite their efforts, the legacy of these works has largely been overshadowed. The prevailing image of the Great Depression remains one depicted by authors like Steinbeck, who focused on the plight of poor farmers (Okies), or by photographers like Dorothea Lange, whose iconic images captured stoic faces amidst adversity.

The commonality of the ideals of the galaxy of proletarian authors leads to a commonality of stylistic tendencies, which manifests itself in the form of appeals, angry invectives, socially saturated symbols. These literary works aimed to debunk the fundamental myths about American identity, questioning concepts such as freedom of movement and the power of personality. They deliberately featured foreign characters to emphasize the importance of solidarity beyond national borders. However, despite their disagreement, the relationship of radical writers with America remained difficult, as they often referred to the fundamental principles of the nation, even challenging the prevailing narrative [\[17, pp. 21-30\]](#).

In fact, these attempts to create counter-narratives were aimed at offering alternative interpretations of American identity and history, challenging the dominant discourse and advocating social change.

It is important to note that proletarian literature in the United States has an ambiguous history, full of hard struggle against repression and marginalization. The post-World War I era in the United States was characterized by a resurgence of American identity, marked by concrete measures of repression against perceived threats to national unity [\[24\]](#). In his 1920 election campaign, US President Warren G. Harding declared, "America's present need is not heroics, but healing; not nostrums, but normalcy; not revolution, but restoration; not agitation, but adjustment; not surgery, but serenity; not the dramatic, but the dispassionate; not experiment, but equipoise; not submergence in internationality, but sustainment in triumphant nationality" [\[25, pp. 71-81\]](#). This speech advocated a return to normalcy, which starkly contrasted the policies of his predecessor, Woodrow Wilson. Instead of venturing into international politics, Harding promoted America's withdrawal within its borders, encapsulated by his campaign slogan, "America first." But what exactly does this "normalcy" he espouses entail?

Understanding this notion of "normalcy" requires considering the "abnormality" it seeks to counter. In the 1920s, certain groups were excluded from the consolidation of the American national narrative. This narrative centered on themes of success, individualism, and the pursuit of prosperity, effectively marginalized various groups, including blacks, immigrants, radicals, and avant-garde artists, deeming them "un-American." Radicals, in particular, were scrutinized due to their ethnic origins (many anarchists and communists were of foreign descent), social beliefs (advocating for the proletariat contradicted individualism), and political convictions (being labeled as "reds" implied subservience to foreign powers like the Soviet Union).

During the "white terror" or red scare of 1919-1920, led by Minister of Justice A. Mitchell Palmer, hundreds of anarchists, socialists, and communists were arrested, some subjected

to beatings, and others deported to Russia [26, p. 119]. Throughout the 1920s, strikes and labor movements faced violent suppression, exemplified by events like the Gastonia strike in North Carolina in 1929, which inspired novels such as "To Make My Bread" by Grace Lumpkin and "Beyond Desire" by Sherwood Anderson, both published in 1932. A defining moment in the exclusion of the "other" from the national community occurred in 1920 with the arrest of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, anarchists and Italian immigrants, whose subsequent execution in 1927 became symbolic of America's rejection of certain groups [27, p. 371].

Questions arose about whether proletarian literature should exclusively feature proletarian authors, focus solely on proletarian themes, or adopt a particular stylistic approach. These debates were central to shaping the direction of the movement, particularly between "organic" intellectuals of the Communist Party and fellow travelers accused of wavering in their solidarity with workers.

### **The "Americanization" of Communist Discourse and the Triumph of Consensus in the American National Novel**

Exclusivity is deeply rooted in American ideology, but it has been criticized more than once [28, pp. 1-39]. The American Communists were accused of overemphasizing the peculiarities of capitalism in their country and of succumbing to factionalism. In particular, Stalin's speeches delivered at the presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International on May 6 and 14, 1929, were later translated and published in the United States as a pamphlet in 1931. Against this background, the debate around the relationship between communism and Americanism continued in party-related magazines throughout the 1930s, especially on cultural and literary issues [29, p. 13-36]. For instance, in his article "Wilder: Prophet of the Genteel Christ," published in The New Republic in October 1930, Michael Gold, the editor of New Masses, criticized writer Thornton Wilder for his "cosmopolitanism": "Mr. Wilder is he Swedish or Greek, or is he American? A foreigner would have difficulty knowing this by reading his books" [30, p. 49]. Even after the purges of the late 1920s and the alignment with the proletarian turn of the Comintern, the question of Americanness persisted. Writers and intellectuals who engaged with the Communist Party and its ideals during the 1920s and 1930s often grappled with their relationship to their own country. While vehemently condemning the capitalist system of the United States, many could not completely renounce the ideal of America. As early as 1921, Michael Gold saw in Walt Whitman the first American proletarian writer [22, pp. 20-24].

This convergence culminated in the politics of the popular front and Earl Browder's slogan in 1936: "Communism is the Americanism of the 20th century" [31, p. 104]. Reflecting this shift, a debate published in Partisan Review and Anvil in 1936 on the relationship between Marxism and Americanism vividly illustrates the continuity many writers perceive between the promise of America and communism. For Joseph Freeman, sy prideals of America inevitable lead to communism: "Long before I heard of Lenin, Long before the October Revolution, I leaned from America sources those ideas which, taken to their logical conclusion, lead straight to communism" [32, pp. 4-14]. Proletarian novels abound with references to the symbols of America: The War of Independence, the 4th of July, the character of Washington, and the Declaration of Independence. These symbols aim to reconstruct a new America by dissociating its foundations from those of capitalism. This theme is evident in Clara Weatherwax's novel "Marching! Marching!" published in 1935. At the end of the book, one of the characters attending a union meeting declares:

"They talk about radical stuff from elsewhere. But communism is Americanism! That's what it is! Americanism? Didn't we make the revolution to create our country? To have our freedom of expression? To have a government for the people and by the people? And the people are not the masses? Well, I would like to see what we are if we are not the people. And now that all these bosses and politicians are running the country with their pockets full, it's time to take it back from them and run it for us, the people, again. We have already buried some, kings. We did it in 1776, and good God we're going to do it again" [\[33, p. 208\]](#).

The nation's history sets the stage for a communist revolution, wherein "the masses" and "the people" become synonymous. Once viewed as a foreign ideology, Marxism becomes seamlessly integrated into the national narrative.

In Michael Gold's autobiographical novel "Jews Without Money" (1930), a similar theme emerges. America is depicted as a land of illusion—a new Eden masking the reality of a new Egypt for Jewish immigrants—and as the land of the free, offering the narrator the opportunity to forge a new identity. Generational divides widen, with parents clinging to the relics of their past. At the same time, their children strive to embrace America despite its contradictions:

"The backyard was a curious spot. It had once been a graveyard. Some of the old American headstones had been used to pave our Jewish yard. The inscriptions were dated a hundred years ago. But we had read them all, we were tired of weaving romances around these ruins of America. Once we had torn up a white gravestone. What an adventure. We scratched like souls with our hands deep into the earth until we found moldy dirty human bones. What a thrill that was. I owned chunks of knee bone, and yellow forearms, and parts of a worm-eaten skull. I had them cached in a secret corner of my home, wrapped in burlap with other treasured playthings" [\[34, p. 62\]](#).

Through their actions, the children create a dual identity: they are seen as both the outsiders condemned by "native" Americans and the legitimate heirs to the abandoned remnants of the nation. The transformation from pristine tombs to weathered bones symbolizes reclaiming ownership as these artifacts find their way back into the hands of those who identify with them. Immigrant children aspire to take ownership of these remnants of America, even if they are worn and decayed. Their excitement arises from the rebellious act and the sense of pride in finally possessing a tangible piece of America, thereby solidifying their sense of belonging in this country.

The paradoxical integration of foreigners into the American narrative reaches its zenith in John Dos Passos' U.S.A. trilogy, where the characters of Sacco and Vanzetti – Italians, workers, anarchists – are likened to the pilgrim fathers fleeing England for the New World in the 17th century. They are thus portrayed as the true founders of America: "How can you know who are your betrayers, America, or that this fish peddler you have in Charlestown Jail is one of your founders, Massachusetts?" [\[35, p. 350\]](#).

Conversely, it is the "powerful" figures such as judges and university presidents who are depicted as traitors, foreigners, "strangers who have turned our language inside out who have taken the clean words our fathers spoke and made them slimy and foul" [\[35, p. 330\]](#). The conflict between two classes transforms into a battle between two Americas.

The appropriation of American symbols by proletarian and radical novelists raises questions about whether it amounts to an abandonment of dissent, merely reiterating the American

promise without fundamentally challenging it. However, this recourse to founding ideals can also be viewed as a deliberate form of protest, expressed within the framework of American rhetoric, aimed at exposing the construction of a national narrative that, despite its universal facade, ultimately serves to protect class interests. Despite this "Americanization" of communist discourse, the legacy of these works was discreet at best, quickly overshadowed by the more conciliatory tone of Popular Front productions. This raises broader questions about the American national novel's capacity to assimilate or erase dissenting voices and whether it ultimately signifies the triumph of consensus.

### **Conclusion: Towards Further Inquiry**

This study was devoted to generalizing the most fundamental aspects of American proletarian literature, as a phenomenon of the 1920s and 30s, and left-wing political discourse, shedding light on the relationship between two phenomena directly related to American identity - the "Other" and the "American Dream".

To achieve this goal, we critically analyzed the concepts of the American dream, identifying its inherent biases and limitations in taking into account the diverse experiences and realities of marginalized communities. We have questioned the widespread notion of the American Dream as a universally achievable goal, given how systemic inequalities and entrenched social hierarchies prevent marginalized groups from realizing it.

In addition, we examined the approaches to the concept of the "other" that exist in interdisciplinary discourse, including postcolonial and feminist analysis. These approaches can hardly be automatically transferred to philology, but they seem very promising for the purposes of literary analysis: studying the internal logic of different ways of using the "other" makes it possible not only to simply admit that "there is no self without the "other", but to analyze different modalities of identity formation at any level and dialogical exceptions leading to social consequences such as exclusion and marginalization. However, the "Self"- "Other" relationship is not limited to antagonism and exclusion. The range of variants of "otherness" that can manifest themselves in different ways in relationships with the "Self" is wide, so we can talk about the "multiplication of hybrid identities."

The study of proletarian literature in combination with the left-wing political discourse of the 1920s-30s gives an idea of the complex interaction of politics, culture and literary criticism in the 1920s-30s and allows us to draw the following conclusions.

The marginalization of radical and proletarian works in subsequent decades, particularly after McCarthyism and shifts in literary academia, underscores the enduring influence of political ideology on cultural production and reception. This phenomenon highlights the importance of historical context in shaping literary discourse and transmitting literary heritage.

The enduring importance of proletarian literature lies in the formation of ideas about American identity and cultural heritage. Further research is needed to better understand the complexities associated with proletarian literature and its perception. Future research may focus on the broader socio-political context that influenced the creation and perception of these works, as well as their significance for modern understanding of American identity and cultural heritage. Moreover, studies of the interrelationship of race, gender and class in proletarian literature offer fertile ground for further research on identity construction and representation, exploring how the voices of marginals intersect and diverge within the proletarian literary landscape.

By continuing to explore the intersections of politics, culture, and literary criticism, scholars can contribute to a fuller understanding of the enduring legacy of proletarian literature and its relevance to contemporary discourse. The revival of interest in proletarian literature during the social upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the revival of socialist discourse in recent years, indicates the continued relevance of these works. This revival not only helps to bring back the voices of the marginalized, but also encourages a critical reassessment of the dominant narratives and cultural representations.

This study's significant contribution lies in its elucidation of the concept of the "other" within the context of the American Dream. By highlighting the exclusionary nature of the idealized vision of success, we have underscored the pervasive systemic obstacles marginalized individuals and groups face. Immigrants, people of color, and others marginalized by societal structures often find themselves relegated to the periphery of the American Dream, denied equal access to opportunities and outcomes enjoyed by the dominant culture. While the American Dream remains deeply entrenched in American culture as a symbol of hope and opportunity, our study reveals the urgent need for introspection and action to address systemic inequalities and dismantle barriers to success. By recognizing the realities faced by "others" and confronting them, we can strive to forge a more inclusive vision of the American dream in light of ongoing discussions about social justice and equality.

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## Результаты процедуры рецензирования статьи

В связи с политикой двойного слепого рецензирования личность рецензента не раскрывается.

Со списком рецензентов издательства можно ознакомиться [здесь](#).

Представленная на рассмотрение статья «Американская мечта и определение «другого» предлагаемая к публикации в журнале «Litera» на английском языке, несомненно, является актуальной, ввиду обращения автора к изучению особенностей реализации «американской мечты», которая долгое время была центральным принципом

национального духа в Соединенных Штатах.

В этой статье автор исследует пересечение американской мечты и концепции «другого», стараясь выявить, как эти две идеи взаимодействуют и формируют социальный ландшафт Соединенных Штатов.

Статья является новаторской, одной из первых в российской филологии, посвященной исследованию подобной проблематики. Однако не совсем понятно к какой области относится исследования, так как ни филологической, ни философской методологии автором не было применено в ходе исследования. Неясен практический материал исследования, на который автор опирается в своей работе. Теоретические измышления не иллюстрируются статистическими данными или языковыми примерами, а также не представлены убедительные данные, полученные в ходе исследования.

Работа создает впечатление компиляционной, нежели чем исследовательской.

Исследование выполнено в русле современных научных подходов, работа состоит из введения, основной части и выводов. Структурно во введении отсутствует постановка проблематики, нет четких целей и задач, что не позволяет сопоставить вводную часть с выводами по итогам работы. Вводная часть не позволяет сделать вывод о наличии новизны исследования и восполнении научной лакуны.

В основной части отсутствует ход исследования, позволяющий сделать суждение о наличии научной методологии. Суждения автора не подкреплены научными данными, примерами, статистическими выкладками.

Заключение в статье в научном понимании отсутствует. Автор не приводит выводов, которые можно было сопоставить с поставленными задачами, также отсутствует перспектива дальнейшего исследования.

Библиография статьи насчитывает 20 источников, среди которых представлены работы как российских, так и зарубежных исследователей. Неясно зарубежные работы приведены в русском переводе или автор перевел названия книг самостоятельно.

Считаем, что обращение к научным работам российских исследователей, таких как диссертации и монографии по сходной тематике, несомненно, обогатило бы теоретическую оставляющую работы.

В общем и целом, следует отметить, что статья написана простым, понятным для читателя языком.

Работа является новаторской, представляющей авторское видение решения рассматриваемого вопроса и может иметь логическое продолжение в дальнейших исследованиях. Практическая значимость исследования заключается в возможности использования его результатов в процессе преподавания вузовских курсов по теории и культуре. Статья, несомненно, будет полезна широкому кругу лиц, филологам, магистрантам и аспирантам профильных вузов. Статья «Американская мечта и определение «другого» может быть рекомендована к публикации в научном журнале после внесения корректировок, а именно уточнение методологии исследования, его цели и задач; подтверждения выводов практическим материалом, полученным в ходе исследования.

## **Результаты процедуры повторного рецензирования статьи**

*В связи с политикой двойного слепого рецензирования личность рецензента не раскрывается.*

*Со списком рецензентов издательства можно ознакомиться [здесь](#).*

Предметом исследования статьи «Американская мечта и определение «другого»» автор видит «идентичности, динамику власти и социального неравенства ... присущих осуществлению Американской мечты в американском обществе», фактически же, автор

анализирует рабочее движение Америки между двумя войнами 20 века. То есть, в статье присутствует несоответствие между заявленным и реальным предметом исследования.

Методология исследования, заявленная автором, претендует на единство социологического, культурного и исторического анализа Американской мечты и ее взаимосвязи с концепцией "Другого". Фактически в статье автор предлагает небольшой обзор исследовательских трактовок концепта «американская мечта» и концепции «Другого» в его этническом аспекте и исторический анализ положения рабочего как Другого, на основании американской литературы 20-30-х годов.

Актуальность исследования, по замыслу автора, связана с критикой распространенного представления об Американской мечте как об универсальной и достижимой цели, выявлением механизмов, конструирования «Другого» как представителя иной расы, этнической принадлежности, класса, пола и других осей идентичности в американском обществе.

Научная новизна статьи должна была бы состоять в раскрытии критического потенциала концепта «Другой» по отношению к декларируемому универсализму американской мечты, что к сожалению, не происходит.

Стиль статьи характерен для научных публикаций в области гуманитарных исследований, однако логика построения работы нарушена. Автор допускает логическую ошибку, заключающуюся в несоответствие поставленных целей и реально осуществленных задач. Ряд выводов статьи носят декларативный характер. Примером этому может служить утверждение о том, что «тщательно изучая различные аспекты Американской мечты, мы выявили системные барьеры и неравенство, увековечивающие ее неуловимый характер, особенно для маргинализированных сообществ», поскольку «различные аспекты» представлены в работе рассмотрением нескольких литературных произведений и не затрагивают никакие другие аспекты культуры и социальной жизни Америки, выводы слишком глобальны по отношению к проводимой в статье аналитике. Отсутствует в работе и заявленная методология – «качественный подход, включающий контент-анализ и дискурсивный анализ», которые по замыслу автора, должны были бы позволить «детально разобраться в сложностях Американской мечты и ее последствиях для сплоченности общества».

Структура и содержание представленной работы не полностью соответствуют заявленной теме. В заглавии и введении, автор выражает намерение исследовать динамику трактовок «американской мечты» и практики ее критики с позиции маргинализированных групп, на которых не распространяются реалии «равных возможностей». Автор заявляет, что его исследование направлено на изучение «последствий этой динамики для более широкой социальной справедливости и равенства». Однако содержание статьи значительно уже и ограничивается констатацией "выпадения" из американской мечты представителей рабочего класса. Рассматривая концепцию «Другого», автор берет тот ее аспект (ссылаясь на исследования Лумба, Бхабха и Саида), который делает это понятие ключевым для формирования гибридной идентичности, отражает отношение колонизатора к колонизируемому. Однако, эта теоретическая посылка не рассматривается на фактическом материала. Во второй части статьи речь идет о «пролетарской литературе» Америки 20-30-х годов, отражающей позицию рабочего как Другого, который, несмотря на преследования властей, оказывается увлеченными коммунистическими идеями, связывая их с традиционными ценностями американской культуры. Получается, что первая часть статьи, посвященная постановке проблемы и анализу того, чем по сути является нарратив «американской мечты» делает серьезную заявку на более глубокое исследование, чем то, которое фактически содержится во второй части работы. Автор обещает в первой части статьи «рассмотрение потенциальных путей устранения системного неравенства и формирование более

инклюзивного видения американской мечты», но этого не происходит, в качестве выводов автор подчеркивает «непреходящее значение пролетарской литературы в формировании представлений об американской идентичности и культурном наследии». Вызывает вопросы и представление статьи на английском языке, что могло быть оправдано тематикой работы, если бы вся используемая автором литература не была либо исходно русскоязычной, либо переведённой на русский язык.

В настоящем виде статья не может быть рекомендована к публикации. Однако, тема, поднимаемая автором весьма интересна и ракурс рассмотрения – американской мечты сквозь призму Другого – весьма продуктивен. Автору необходимо при переработке статьи реализовать дону из двух стратегий: либо доработать фактическую часть исследования в соответствии с заявленными в первой части целям и для этого принять в круг рассмотрения не только дубовость рабочего, но и этнических, гендерных, религиозных «Других», не ограничиваясь литературными источниками. Либо, сделав ставку на второй части работы, согласовать с ней цель и задачи исследования, так чтобы выводы относительно «пролетарской литературы» соответствовали теме исследования.

## **Результаты процедуры окончательного рецензирования статьи**

*В связи с политикой двойного слепого рецензирования личность рецензента не раскрывается.*

*Со списком рецензентов издательства можно ознакомиться [здесь](#).*

В условиях идеологического противостояния и все усиливающегося давления со стороны коллективного Запада на Россию становится актуальным исследование идеологического дискурса, который находится в полярном отношении к главенствующим идеям экономики потребления и крайнего индивидуализма с их тягой к навязыванию идеи превосходства рационального и успешного человека «передового» мира. Так, данная статья посвящена исследованию изучению политического дискурса с «левым» уклоном в литературе США 1920-30х годов, а именно феномену «Другого». Автор весьма последовательно и четко раскрывает предмет исследования, сформулированы его основная цель и ключевые задачи. В структурном отношении статья разбита на тематические подзаголовки, что делает восприятие материала очень удобным для читателя. Научная и практическая новизна не вызывают сомнений, а тематика исследования вполне релевантна проблематике журнала Litera. Список литературы представлен значительным количеством зарубежных источников. Статья производит впечатление завершенного и полноценного исследования, выполнена на достаточно высоком научном уровне и может быть рекомендована к публикации без внесения каких-либо значимых исправлений или дополнений. Данное исследование вызовет значимый интерес у читательской аудитории журнала и всех специалистов, которые интересуются проблематикой идеологического и культурного спектра в философской литературе. К небольшому замечанию критического плана могло бы быть отнесено отсутствие какой-либо визуализации и инфографики, которая на наш взгляд могла бы наиболее наглядно описать феномен «другого» в американской литературе исследуемого периода. *In conditions of ideological confrontation and ever-increasing pressure from the collective West in Russia, the study of ideological discourse, which is in polar relation to the leadership of the ideas of the consumer economy and, to some extent, individualism with their craving for imposing the ideas of the superiority of the reasonable and profitable person of the "advanced" world, becomes relevant. So, a spectacular article devoted to the study of the political course of the United States with a "leftist" bias in the*

book of the 1920s and 30s, namely the phenomenon of the "Other". The author reveals the subject of the study in great detail and clearly, formulates its main goal and main objectives. Structurally, the article is divided into thematic subheadings, which makes the perception of the material very convenient for the reader. The scientific and practical novelty is beyond doubt; the case studies are fully consistent with the issues of the Litera journal. List of literature presented from foreign sources. The article gives the impression of a complete and reliable study performed at a fairly high scientific level and may be preferable for publication without making any significant corrections or additions. This study is of considerable interest in scientific journals and all readers who are interested in problems of an ideological and cultural nature in philosophical literature.