

Saparkhojayeva N.P.

**Description of the myth and role of Judge Temple in the Pentalogy about the Leatherstocking Tales by J.F.Cooper**

The paper is devoted to the description of a mythic hero in the Pentalogy about the Leatherstocking Tales by J.F. Cooper. The paper analyses the divergence in concerns and intentions between J.F.Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales and the remainder of his works. Such divergence has led many scientists to perceive "two Coopers" instead of one. By tracing the development of the hero within this novel, this article attempts to reconcile these divergencies; realize the fullness of the myth; and isolate the principal concern which informs all of J.F.Cooper's work. It is necessary to note that the works of James Fenimore Cooper have long widespread popularity. But critics are divided about the nature of J.F.Cooper's strength and achievement. This situation derives largely from the fact that different works within his corpus appear to have little in common. Much of his writing, such as "The American Democrat" and "Home as Found", has the appearance of hard-headed political and social comment. On the other hand, the Leatherstocking Tales stand out as an example of lyrical beauty which seem totally removed from his other works.

**Key words:** Myth, mythic hero, concern, intention, function, society, nature.

Сапарқожаева Н.П.

**Дж.Ф. Купердің тері шұлық жайындағы Пенталогиясындағы Темпл төрешінің рөлі мен мифтің сипатталуы**

Жұмыс Дж.Ф. Купердің тері шұлық жайындағы Пенталогиясындағы Темпл төрешінің рөлі мен мифтің сипаттамасына арналған. Жұмыс Дж.Ф. Купердің тері шұлық жайындағы Пенталогиядағы және оның басқа жұмыстарындағы ниеті мен қарым-қатынастың алшақтығын талдайды. Мұндай алшақтық көптеген ғалымдарға біреудің орнына екі Куперді ажыратуға итермеледі. Бұл романдағы кейіпкердің дамуын бақылай отырып, бұл мақала осы алшақтықты жақындатуға тырысады, мифтің толықтығын сезіндіреді; Дж.Ф. Купердің жұмыстарындағы барлық қарым-қатынастарды көрсетеді. Дж.Ф. Купердің жұмыстары кең танымалдыққа ие екенін атап айту керек-ті. Бірақ сыншылар Дж.Ф. Купердің күшінің табиғаты мен жетістіктеріне қатысты топтарға бөлінді. Мұндай жағдай көбінесе, оның корпусындағы түрлі жұмыстардың ортақ дүниесі жоқтығынан болады. «Американдық демократ» және «Ол үйден тауып алған нәрсе» сияқты романдарының басым бөлігі оның саяси және әлеуметтік ескертулерін көрсетеді. Екінші жағынан, тері шұлық жайындағы Пенталогия басқа шығармаларында табылмайтын лирикалық әдеміліктің үлгісі болып табылады.

**Түйін сөздер:** миф, мифтік кейіпкер, қарым-қатынас, ой, функция, қоғам, табиғат.

Сапарходжаева Н.П.

**Описание мифа и роли судьи Темпла в «Пенталогии о Кожаном чулке» Дж.Ф. Купера**

Работа посвящена описанию мифа и роли судьи Темпла в «Пенталогии о Кожаном чулке» Дж.Ф. Купера. Работа анализирует расхождение в отношении и замыслах у Дж.Ф. Купера в «Пенталогии о Кожаном чулке» и в других его работах. Прослеживая развитие героя в этом романе, автор статьи пытается осознать полноту мифа и выявить основное отношение, которое имеется во всех работах Дж.Ф. Купера. Работы Дж.Ф. Купера имели широкую известность, однако критики разделились во мнении по поводу природы силы и достижений Дж.Ф. Купера. Большая часть его романов демонстрируют образцы политического и социального комментария. «Пенталогия о Кожаном чулке» выделяется как пример лирической красоты, которая отсутствует в других работах Купера.

**Ключевые слова:** миф, мифический герой, отношение, замысел, функция, общество, природа.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE  
MYTH AND ROLE OF  
JUDGE TEMPLE IN THE  
PENTAGONY ABOUT  
THE LEATHERSTOCKING  
TALES BY J.F.COOPER**

The American novel-reading public was served principally by European authors, and it was a consciousness of this fact that prompted J.F. Cooper to begin writing. When Cooper began to write, there was little native American literature. The story of J.F.Cooper's indignant resolution to emulate a European work of fiction he was currently reading seems drawn from the pages of one of his own most melodramatic stories. But it is important that the influences to which he was subject were primarily English, and even the titles of his early works are reminiscent of those of English novels then in vogue. Thus, it is not surprising that J.F.Cooper should come to be styled "The American Scott", drawing heavily as he did on the adventure story techniques of the romancer of the Scottish border country. We note that the manners of his characters are based on those of Scott and also of Jane Austen: such are the resemblances between the style and manners of Austen's *Persuasion* and Cooper's *Precaution* that L.Fiedler isn't alone in confusing the titles.

At a time when America was most self-consciously asserting its independence from English government and traditions, the American public was beguiled by the works of the contemporary English writers, and even J.F.Cooper, as whole-hearted a patriot as any, employed the device of suggesting English authorship for his first novel. Thereby, he hoped it would be received more congenially. As well as the lack of an indigenously American literary tradition, J.F. Cooper felt the need for an established American culture to provide the material for a novelist to work with. In his works he laments the lack of material available to the historian, the satirist, the romancer, or the moralist. Because of the dearth of American material and literary precedent, J.F. Cooper's writing took a direction which places him in a tradition, as L.Fiedler sees it, which includes Scott, Poe, Mrs. Radcliffe and «Monk» Lewis. For other reasons, English culture attracted J.F.Cooper: the European way-of-life squared with his social convictions, if not his democratic, political philosophy. Had Cooper been born English and not American, it wouldn't be difficult to imagine him enjoying the urbane conversation in the coffee-houses of Bath.

We know that in America, J.F.Cooper's political situation was delicate: he was a powerful land-owner whose estates were leased to farmers who had fought to overthrow the landlordship of the de-

tested English sovereign. He was accustomed to all the luxury to which the rich of that period had access. His social position was an aristocratic carry-over into a society where lives were quite literally mortgaged, under the land-lease arrangement; gain no more than a frugal sufficiency. J.F. Cooper had little trouble in justifying his social position to himself; he gave no thought to the fact that he might appear to be a representative of overthrown European culture. On the contrary, he was adamant that landed gentlemen such as he could exert a salutary influence from above, and act as a caveat against the simplistic democratic principle of the straightforward rule of the majority.

J.F. Cooper's father, William Cooper, enabled his family to enjoy a life of colonial ease and sufficiency. He owned large tracts of land in New York State which his sons inherited after his death in 1809. William Cooper had been a land speculator, a "shrewd operator". Sometimes such people, "had ideas of baronial grandeur, insisting on leases rather than sales in fee simple and reserving the choicest sites for their own use". We can note that *The Pioneers* is close in many aspects to the situation in Cooperstown in which James Fenimore Cooper grew up. The township of Templeton is reminiscent of Cooperstown; Judge William Cooper, unlike the unscrupulous dealers mentioned above, was probably quite like the beneficent Judge Temple, amiable, rich and concerned for the community.

Some critics do attempts to perceive centralizing themes to Cooper; one such is Russel Kirk, but his comments don't seem incisive: "The regular aim of his literary endeavours was to demonstrate how any society, if it would be civilized, must submit to moral discipline, permanent institutions, and the beneficent claims of property" [1]. Most other critics centralize their interest around one or other aspect, but even then don't seem to be in agreement. Samuel Clemens light-heartedly parodied the whole Pentalogy about the Leatherstocking Tales in his essay "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses" [2].

R.W.B. Lewis calls the Pentalogy about the Leatherstocking Tales a beautiful "dream-legend" [3]; and D.H. Lawrence instructs his reader to read the Tales "as a lovely myth" [4]. L.Fiedler delves deeper into the substance of the series and decides that the novels contain "a secret theme" [5]. Each opinion is relevant in a different way, but the only one which sheds any substantial light is Lawrence's injunction to read the Leatherstocking Tales as myth.

We consider this is as the basis of Cooper's achievement in the Pentalogy about the Leatherstocking Tales, and by analyzing the extent and the

basis of the myth which he created, it is possible to see the Tales in the context of Cooper's thought as a whole. We can say that as a writer who is primarily a myth-maker, J.F. Cooper stands outside of the area usually of interest to the critic. J.F. Cooper is of less interest artistically than mythically. We note that the subject of the myth which J.F. Cooper gave to America was the fate of the European consciousness when transferred to America, and the ways in which this consciousness had to be modified to adapt to the American situation. The famous scientist R. Graves sees myth as a necessary aspect of any culture, incorporating a body of knowledge concerning pre-existent order "to answer the sort of awkward questions that children ask" [6]. The most important of such questions are "Who made the World? How will it end? Who was the first man?". Perceiving how "myths develop as culture spreads", R. Graves points out how they become particularized, and therefore become means "to justify an existing social system and account for traditional rites and customs". On this level, therefore, the function of myth is cultural, its basis being firmly in the society with which it is concerned. Such is the case with the myth of America which J.F. Cooper forged in the Pentalogy about the Leatherstocking Tales. R. Graves calls myth as "a dramatic shorthand record of such matters as invasions, migrations, dynastic changes, admission of foreign cults, and social reforms". J.F. Cooper's "dramatic shorthand record" of the admission of white culture into America centres around one character: the mythic hero of the Leatherstocking Tales who, for J.F. Cooper, represents the idealized prototype of the white, Christian, ex-European consciousness translated into the American wilderness. The Pentalogy about the Leatherstocking Tales has an almost super-human dimension consistent with the magnitude of his prototypal position; around him, in the Tales, a situation develops to clarify the precise nature of the position he occupies. We are sure that both in his life and in his fiction, the idea of the gentleman, the natural aristocrat, characterized by material success, sensitivity and moral integrity attracted J.F. Cooper. Such a person, he maintained, wasn't only allowable within a democratic society but desirable.

In the light of such interests, his attraction to the frontier seems unlikely, but not only was J.F. Cooper drawn creatively by the frontier situation, but this area provided him with material for the most powerful and the most lasting of his fictional production. The first book of the Tales series about the American frontier, *The Pioneers*, is much closer to a discussion of things as he knew them. It can be interpreted

as being largely biographical because of the resemblances between Judge Temple and his father, and between Templeton and Cooperstown. Formally the plot is constructed around the hero, Oliver Effingham, and the heroine, Elizabeth Temple, who eventually marry. As in so many of his novels, the plot consists only of a rehearsal of the complications which prevents the hero and heroine from marrying at the outset. During the events which precede the final union J.F. Cooper fills in much of the social background of the frontier settlement. He was interested in the frontier since this was such a tremendously important part of contemporary American life, but at this stage his interest had a distinct bent. Later he defined the frontier as "those distant and ever receding borders which mark the skirts and announce the approach of the nation, as moving mists precede the signs of day. [7, 73] But the characters of *The Pioneers* exist in a more nearly civilized environment, one with more direct relevance to the experience of the author".

As far as Cooper was concerned, the process of settlement occurred in three distinct phases. In *Home as Found* he expounds the concept which lies beneath the whole of the construction of *The Pioneers*: the first stage was one of mutual help as the settlers established physical stability; the second was a period of competition as the greedy and the vulgar sought to outdo one another; finally virtue and merit would win through and a tangible social order would be established [8, 162-164]. Pursuing this notion of the tripartite evolution of civilization, J.F.Cooper probes the morals and manners of the frontier settlement, presenting the aristocratic, humanistic apogee of his ideals in the person of Judge Temple. In this regard, his considerations in *The Pioneers* are close to his discussion of the Effinghams in the later Littlepage Manuscripts and coincide with beliefs he espoused throughout his life.

At the beginning of *The Pioneers*, Judge Temple is seen as he who can eventually bring about a situation in which, "men and things come within the control of more general and regular laws" [8, 162], and in which, more especially; there will be a "division into castes that are more or less rigidly maintained, according to circumstances" [8, 162-164]. In *The Pioneers*, therefore, J.F.Cooper was engaging a problem with a two-fold interest for him: that of an emergent aristocratic society, and also that of dealing with a fundamentally American problem in a location drawn from his own experience. The basic premise of Judge Temple's theory of civilized man is that "Society cannot exist without whole-some restraints" [9, 369]. These he attempts

to impose upon his fellow settlers with varying degrees of success. And, by and large, the majority of his proposals do appear as "wholesome" as he intended them to be. Although J.F.Cooper briefly undermines the structure of his own approval for Judge Temple by showing him constricted by his reliance upon trial by jury the Judge is originally conceived as the moral norm of the novel. He is generous, pleasant, considerate, and has all the other attendant virtues of the beneficent legislator. He is contrasted throughout the novel with his cousin, Squire Jones, whose character is full of antithetical faults: rashness, bad judgement and self-advertisement, which Judge Temple significantly lacks. Jones fulfils the elementary function of demonstrating how admirable his cousin is at all levels: a good father, a loyal friend, a strict legal practitioner, and an advantageous acquaintance. The point of view of the book is one which dwells on urbane forms and civilized practices. Hence, there is a long description of Squire Jones' feats of architecture, prolific reference to legal practice, and a lengthy summary of the education, practice, merits and demerits of the local doctor. Conversely, a figure like Billy Kirby, the woodcutter, merits no investigation into the details of his trade. At one point Kirby is visited by Judge Temple, his family and friends, while they are out riding. Kirby is making maple sugar, an interesting and visually a very impressive and fascinating scene, but the episode quickly degenerates into farce as Kirby tricks the Frenchman, Monsieur le Quoi, into drinking scalding syrup in repayment for a supposed insult. Kirby's occupation earns no further exposition: J.F.Cooper is more interested in the tension arising between these last two named than in the details of the settler's trade.

The book is subtitled *The Sources of the Susquehanna* and the diversity in the tributary streams is meant to represent the variety of types and nationalities to be found in the single location of the book. Certainly they are various and each is made to speak in a quaint, deliberate form of speech which represents Cooper's approximation of the phonetics of Cornish, French, German and Dutch pronunciation. It seems to have been Cooper's intention to illustrate the pragmatic democracy which made a unified structure out of the widely differing types of people found in Templeton. As F.J.Turner puts it: "Our early history is the study of European germs developing in an American environment" [9, 3]. But it soon becomes clear that it isn't Cooper's intention to demonstrate a process of straight-forward homogenization: consistent with his beliefs about the developing



social stratification, he is particularly attracted to the differences between the protagonists as well as the ways in which they become a community.

Cooper's subject matter in *The Pioneers* was pre-determined because of the indigenously aristocratic qualities of the romance as he knew it. However, there do seem to be two distinct structures to the book, one containing the overt sequence of events concerning the reinstatement of Oliver Effingham to a position analogous to that of Judge Temple, and another curious, tortuous structure built around Natty Bumppo, his companion Mohegan John and the wilderness itself. The curious unevenness of the book is reflected in the fact that there are three central characters in the novel, each one a "hero" in a different way. The formal hero is Oliver Effingham who is restored to his proper station in life and wins the heroine; Judge Temple is the central character around whom all the events of the novel turn; Natty Bumppo, though not consistently presented in a sympathetic manner, is the one who excites most immediate admiration for his masculine prowess and the air of mystery which surrounds him.

But we should note that it is Judge Temple whose excellence is most frequently stressed. It is he who knows the agony of difficult decisions; he who knows sufficient about life itself to conceive a plan and to encourage others to live by it. The responsibility for the observance of the law in the settlement is certainly his, but his responsibilities extend further. Not only is he the law-giver, he is also the patron and protector of his people. In one conversation with his daughter, he reminisces upon the former hardships of the settlement and burden which fell upon him. He tells her: *"I had hundreds, at that dreadful time, daily looking up to me for bread. The sufferings of their families, and the gloomy prospect before them, had paralyzed the enterprise and efforts of my settlers. Hunger drove them to the woods for food, but despair sent them, at night, enfeebled and wan, to a sleepless pillow. It wasn't a moment for inaction. I purchased cargoes of wheat from the granaries of Pennsylvania; they were landed at Albany, and brought up the Mohawk in boats; from thence it was transported on pack-horses into the wilderness, and distributed among my people"* [11, 222].

Throughout there is the topic that Judge Temple is the guardian of these people and it becomes plain that the Judge discharged his duty with great paternal feeling and at great expense. Having brought the settlement into prosperity, it is his further duty to guarantee its welfare in every way possible. He has the vision to plan for the future; he is disgusted by

the irresponsible depredations made upon the wilderness with no regard for anything but immediate needs. He denounces the use of seine nets in the lake to catch thousands more fish than will ever be eaten. He abhors the use of a cannon to decimate the flocks of migratory pigeons, and even offers a bounty on the heads of the wounded birds so that their misery will quickly be ended. His wisdom isn't received with acclaim on all sides. Richard Jones doesn't see that the advantages of nature need to be used sparingly and intelligently in order to derive maximum benefit from them. When reprimanded for his extravagance, he replies: *"But this is always the way with you, Marmaduke; first it's the trees, then it's the deer, after that it's the maple sugar, and so on to the end of the chapter. One day you talk of canals through a country where there's a river or a lake every half-mile, just because the water won't run the way you wish it to go; and the next, you say something about mines of coal, though any man...can see more wood than would keep the city of London in fuel for fifty years"* [9, 248].

But as Cooper knew from experience, it was no easy thing to retain the respect and affection of one's neighbors and inferiors when one wished to pursue an independent policy. However, carrying Cooper's wholehearted approval, the Judge remains as the moral focus, and the cornerstone of the structure, of the novel. Standing as he does for the best aspects of civilization, the foundations of his excellence are broad-based, though they are therefore liable to be undermined. Despite being depicted, abstractly, as a potent moral force, there is one person to whom all Temple represents is distasteful. This person is Natty Bumppo, called Leatherstocking in this book, who is the eventual hero of the series, and the actual representative of the best of Cooper's art.

In *The Pioneers*, however, he is devoid of his heroic status; he is an anachronism driven into the settlement by some mysterious circumstances. And mysterious they are. J.F. Cooper required some exceptional state-of-affairs to keep Bumppo in proximity to the settlement: this turns out to be that Bumppo is hiding old Major Effingham in his shack. Effingham is the dispossessed former co-owner of the property, now decrepit and mentally deranged. Through loyalty to Effingham therefore, Bumppo is kept close to the settlement, but a strange figure he appears in this environment. At the beginning of the book, he stands out as an object of the author's disgust: his physical appearance is repellant, he is known as "the Leatherstocking" but beneath his deer-skin he wears stockings of blue, worsted wool. He is a pathetic remnant of a way of life which no

longer exists nor has any relevance to that community. His accuracy with a rifle and the mystique surrounding him earn him the ambivalent tolerance of the community at large, but when he speaks it is with bitterness and for some time he remains a morose, unpleasant figure intractable to the kindness and benevolent nature of Judge Temple. He is drawn into the affairs of the settlement only through his association with Oliver Effingham; otherwise he is content to exist, aloof and recluse, with his Indian companion on the other side of the lake. His agency in the main plot of the novel only becomes active one third of the way through the book when Elizabeth Temple enlists his help in the Christmas Day turkey-shooting match. And it is through the three major shooting incidents in the book that Bumpo becomes attractive. First, when he kills the turkey in the shooting competition; then when he shoots one specific pigeon separated from the millions in their migratory passage over the valley; finally when he shoots the panther to save the life of Judge Temple's daughter. It is because of such feats as these that he achieves his stature in the novel rather than because of the symbolic role he plays as victim of society. Throughout, he is the hunter and marksman, the man who shoots the panther rather than the man who goes to prison for slitting the throat of a deer out of season. He is the adventure-story hero displaced from centrality because Cooper's concerns were more socially oriented at this stage.

The fact that J.F.Cooper entitled the book *The Pioneers* instead of *the Pioneer* seems to reflect the bias of the author in that Judge Temple and Oliver Effingham are the most sympathetic characters, rather than the character most germane to the frontier situation, the Leatherstocking. J.F.Cooper's interest in the way civilization impinged upon the wilderness is explicit, as we know from *Home as Found*, and he declares his preoccupation with the way in which society evolves vertically rather than the way it expands horizontally. These polarized interests constitute the central confusion of the book, the way in which he attempts to advance the cause of Judge Temple over that of Bumpo. But Bumpo is a character who interests him. In spite of his old age, debilitation and surliness, he has a vigour which makes the Judge's best attributes seem sanctimonious and his worst seem like self-induced suffering. The confrontation of the two results from the deer killed out of season and Bumpo's refusal to allow his shack to be searched. There is a superstructure of secondary interests here: whether or not Natty has found a silver mine; what is the secret of his shack; and wherein lies his antipathy to Judge Temple. But the

main clash is only between two different ways of life. Temple represents the sophisticated social intelligence while Leatherstocking represents the untutored, and recalcitrant man of nature. The result is therefore inevitable and Bumpo must be punished while the Judge must be lenient to maintain the character of one exercising "wholesome restraints".

The courtroom scene was a difficult one for J.F.Cooper to portray since the verdict had to be pronounced against Natty to preserve the hypothesis of the novel. But by this time, the prowess and steadfastness of the old hunter have increased his stature. Therefore, Bumpo comes out of court a character engaging the sympathy of the reader: "Natty seemed to yield to his destiny, for he sunk his head on his chest, and followed the officer from the court-room in silence" [9, 360], and Temple becomes the impotent legislator, constricted and manipulated by the system he is meant to interpret. The Judge isn't without sympathy for the old man and feels anguish for the punishment which the hunter must receive. This clarifies one of the interesting parallels of the book in that Judge Temple becomes more of an acceptable character, the more like Natty he becomes. Among his genuinely endearing qualities are his consideration for nature and creation in general, albeit in a very utilitarian way. The Judge is in favour of a cautious exploitation of nature, which likens his position to that of the old hunter to whom nature is sacred. Bumpo shoots one pigeon, spears one fish, but he also kills one deer and is therefore persecuted by laws which are intended to safeguard the attitude of which he is the living embodiment: frugality, respect and utility. Hence the nascent ambivalent feelings towards the Judge on the part of the author, whose sympathy becomes redirected towards the hunter.

J.F.Cooper points out clearly the hunter's purity of heart during the night fishing episode on the lake. The villagers had to work hard to build a fire by which to see the fish and illuminate the scene. When built, their fire was fitful and erratic. As the villagers drag the thousands of fish to the shore they will eventually rot upon, they see the old hunter fishing on the other side of the lake. At first they see only his torch: "*Such an object, lighted as it were by magic, under the brow of the mountain, and in that retired and unfrequented place, gave double interest to the beauty and singularity of its appearance. It didn't at all resemble the large and unsteady light of their own fire, being much more clear and bright, and retaining its size and shape with perfect uniformity*" [9, 251]. And soon the old hunter becomes visible intent on catching, more correctly "spearing", the one fish which will be enough for his needs.

Unfortunately, J.F.Cooper makes the whole statement too explicit when he has the old man castigate the wanton excess of the villagers, and rescue one of their number who has fallen in the lake. But this is the aspect of the hunter's personality which prevails: the competent, self-reliant, reverent force which abhors the "wasty ways" of the settlers. At this point there begins a weakening of the primary theme of the novel, that which "centres around the Temples and Effinghams, and strengthening of sympathy for the Leatherstocking who, in this novel, appears at first as no more than the associate of the formal hero". Given J.F.Cooper's explicit interest in the developing social forms within a pioneer community, and the way in which the direction of *The Pioneers* shifts towards the old hunter, it seems Cooper didn't fulfill his original intention in the book. *The Pioneers* begins as a creative exposition of moral excellence oriented to social practices, and ends as an examination of the frontier hero. In the subsequent Tales, J.F.Cooper developed this figure

more fully, creating a situation in which the frontier hero is seen as the mythic prototype of the American consciousness.

We attempt to trace the way in which the full status of the hero becomes apparent; and to see the ways in which the underlying themes of the myth are common to the remainder of J.F.Cooper's work. On these themes, the most important are his passionate love and concern for America. We deal with the emergence of the mythic hero in *The Pioneers*, where Cooper's concerns were originally more oriented towards a literal approving exposition of social order. Also we trace the specialized distinction between America and Europe which J.F.Cooper erects, especially in *The Prairie*. Also we discuss the light in which J.F.Cooper sees the Native Americans (the Indians), the race with which white civilization must come to terms. We focus on *The Deerslayer*, the last book of the series, in which J.F.Cooper expounds most fully the white, Christian characteristics of his mythic hero.

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