

Déroulement

1.An introduction to the notion of Myths and Heroes

A myth or a legend embodies the main ideological aspects (aspirations, desires, fears, hopes) of a people and its environment.

Heroes come as vehicles of the great aspirations and expectations of a people at a certain period of time. It means that myths can change all through the times even if some traits can be repeated. Also, myths interact.

So we understand well that myths are part of the identity of a people, they help explain a people or civilization.

In America for example, you have the myth of the American Dream, the frontier, the barrier between civilization and savagery, wilderness. They helped justify colonization, immigration and the genocide of Indians.

You also have the myth of the Manifest Destiny which permit America to invade Central America and the Caribbean (Cuba, Grenada).

2.So why do peoples create heroes ?

Myths and heroes give peoples common backgrounds. They identify themselves through myths and heroes. They give people a sense of togetherness, of belonging to the same community.

As a conclusion, we can say that heroes and myths may be be figments of a people's imagination but they have a very important social and ideological function which is quite human as they help individuals develop a sense of belonging not only to a people but also to the mankind.

3.Commentary of John Passos's poem : Andrew Carnegie : « Prince of Peace »

It shows a man who is distributing money. Everywhere in the capitalist world, money is considered as the most important element if you want to buy or exchange. It is synonymous of wealth and success. So, this man appears as a rich and generous man who seems happy to share with everyone.

Commentary.

The document that I have to deal with is entitled « AC : prince of peace » ; This title is giving us clues about the character's temper but also about the structure of the poem.

Dos Passos (1896-1970) was a famous american novelist, a traveller. He participated in the WWI and pioneered in writing because his books were not written in a linear form. Politically speaking, he moved from supporting capitalism to communism then shifted to pacifism and became Ernest Hemmingway good friend at the end of his life.

Knowing all these details, we understand better the poem.

Andrew Carnegie's poem is obviously praising Andrew Carnegie who symbolises the typical self-made man who achieved the American Dream. A.Carnegie is portrayed as an ambitious, energetic, hard-working and ambitious young man. He did not refrain from doing any kind of job. He accepted menial jobs even if he did not get a good salary. He worked in the textile factory as a bobbingboy. He

was employed in transportations and telecommunications. Yet, this gave him confidence, trust and above all, experience. Andrew Carnegie is the typical self-made man who believed in the virtues of hard work and perseverance. As a result, he became the richest man in the world. He was a generous man who created foundations and helped charities structures. He was also a nonviolent person who promoted universal peace. One important point in his character is also his patriotism which reflected Dos Passos' own military career. AC adopted America's values. In times of war, he supported American efforts.

As a conclusion, we can say that AC can be regarded as the typical hero of the 20th century as he embodies most of the qualities of the American hero. We must bear in mind that he contributed to developing the myth of the American Dream which helped attract people of many talents to America.

It's thanks to this myth that America is a diverse, multicultural country. This also explains to some extent why it is the first superpower in the world till today.