

Abstract

John Updike belongs to the post-war generation of contemporary American writers, whose work was largely determined by the philosophical direction and the aesthetic level of the contemporary literary process in the United States. The work of John Updike was addressed by such researchers as R. Dottweiler, E. and K. Hamilton, J. W. Hunt, L. Taylor, D. Greiner and many others. The theoretical significance of the dissertation is due to the need to study the problems of literary cyclization in its relations with such categories as world recognition and the style of the writer. The works of American literary scholars devoted to the study of genre studies of American short stories and problems of the literary cycle will be introduced into the thesis. The object of research of the thesis are short stories by John Updike in the 50-70s which together form "Too Far to Go". The subject of the study is the theme of the family and its embodiment in the short story cycle of John Updike. The purpose of the dissertation is to study the features of John Updike's short stories on the material of the "Too Far to Go", following the development of the theme of family, marriage, relations between men and women and its solutions.

The expression of the family conflicts in the short story cycle *“Too Far to Go”* by John Updike

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Introduction

John Updike belongs to that post-war generation of modern American writers, whose work largely determined the philosophical orientation and the modern literary process in the United States. Being a significant figure not only in the literature of his country but also in the history of world literature, John Updike is one of the few US writers who were awarded both the Pulitzer Prize¹ and the National Book Awards. His works have become the subject of attention not only of journal reviewers but also of academic critics. The peak of the popularity of his works falls in the 70s.

My thesis focuses on Updike's short story cycle "Too Far to Go" (1979) and on the expression of family conflicts in it. Previous examinations of this work include Detweiler's. In his 1984 monograph *John Updike*, along with the study of stories, poems and plays by the writer, conducts a detailed analysis of short stories from the collections: "The Same Door" (1959), "Pigeon feathers" (1962), "The Music School" (1966), "Bech a Book" (1970), "Museums and Women" (1972), "Too Far to Go" (1979) and "Problems and Other Stories" (1979). In the chapter on the cycle "Too Far to Go", the critic traces the development of the main topics, indicates the presence of autobiographical elements in the work. Unfortunately, the author of the monograph does not pay attention to all the components of the cycle.²

In the monograph, *The Other John Updike* Greiner explores poetry, drama, and small prose genres in the works of Updike. Analyzing the short stories of the collections "The Same Door", "Pigeon Feathers", "Olinger Stories" (1964), "The Music School", "Museums and Women", D. Greiner traces the formation and development of the skills of the Updike and polemicalizes with the opinions of other critics. Sharing the point of view of the majority of scholars of the American prose writer, Greiner comes to the conclusion that the social prose of Updike is a metaphor for America in the middle of the century. Greiner also rightly observes that short stories in "Too Far to Go" are a vivid portrait of the crisis of everyday life in the middle class and family instability has never been so noticeably illustrated so far.³

My thesis aims at providing a detailed examination of Updike's skills as a short story writer as it emerges in "Too Far to Go" while tracing his treatment of the theme of family,

¹ [The 1982 Pulitzer Prize Winner in Fiction](https://www.pulitzer.org/winners/john-updike), <https://www.pulitzer.org/winners/john-updike>

² Detweiler, R., (1984), *John Updike*, Boston: Twayne

³ Greiner, D., (1981), *The Other John Updike: Poems, Short Stories, Prose, Play*, Athens: Ohio Univ. Press

marriage, and relations between a man and a woman. This topic is fundamental both in the short story cycle and in his other works.

In the first chapter, the cyclization is examined and the basic concepts of the literary cycles are identified. Particular attention is paid to the principles of cyclization of the American short story of the XX century.

In the second chapter, the place of Updike in the context of the US short story of the second half of the twentieth century is assessed. The concepts of family and marriage, which are characteristic of Updike, are considered in the context of American culture and literature of this period. Particularly emphasized are the themes of the family, the relationship between a man and a woman in the work of John Updike.

In the third chapter is specifically devoted to the short story cycle "Too Far to Go" and its themes of love, marriage, family relations.

CHAPTER I: Cyclization of stories to create a new genre form

1.1 The specifics of the story cycle genre

The phenomenon of literary cyclization is one of the fundamental problems of literary criticism of the 20th century. Cyclization in a dissertation means the unification of groups of independent works into a new multicomponent artistic unity. Cycles arose in literature at various stages of their development. In antiquity, there were cyclic poems, in the Renaissance, cycles of stories (Canterbury stories by D. Chaucer, Decameron J. Boccaccio), in the era of romanticism, epic and fairy-tale cycles (Jewish melodies of J. Byron, Caravan of W. Gauf). In the 20th century, the tendency to form cycles is also clearly seen in the short story genre. Cyclization is especially pronounced in American literature. This is primarily due to the fact that in the twentieth-century short story genre that became the most popular and in-demand in the United States.⁴

It should be noted that America has a rich tradition of the short story with Washington Irving at the forefront as the first American writer to be recognized in Europe, as well as Edgar Poe, one of the first professional writers in the United States, an internationally recognized critic and theorist of American literature. The American short story of the second half of the twentieth century is characterized by the tendency to introduce into the short story genre the techniques traditionally inherent in a poetic narrative. A number of American researchers have noted the penchant for writers to this trend.⁵

The development of the genre of the lyric short story, which, from the point of view of American literary criticism, is a short, concentrated reflection, the structure of which is determined more by feeling than by external action, was facilitated by Sherwood Anderson, who was influenced by the works of Chekhov and Katherine Mansfield. In this regard, important for this study is the observation that the choice of the short story form by Updike gives the writer the opportunity to show reality through the individual experience of the hero.⁶

⁴ Paul Schellinger, (2014), *Encyclopedia of the novel*, Routledge

⁵ May, Charles, (1976), *Short Story Theories*, Athens, Ohio University Press

⁶ Robert. M. Lusher, (1995), *John Updike and the Montage Story: "Farraginous Narrative"*, *Modern American Short Story Sequence: Composite Fictions and Fictive Communities*, New York: Cambridge University Press

The reader receives a completely generalized picture of reality directly seen by the narrator since, in stories written in the first person, the author looks at the world through the eyes of the hero. The use of elements of poetic narrative in the American literature brings the short story closer to the lyrical genres, namely the lyrics, as you know, are most easily amenable to cyclization. It should be noted that along with the great popularity of the short story genre itself, one of the reasons for the increased interest in the cyclization of short stories in the 20th century was also the tendency of periodical literary publications, meeting the tastes of readers, to publish not just works independent from each other, but rather series of interconnected short stories.⁷

In literary criticism over a considerable period of conducting both practical and theoretical research on this problem, many theories have also been put forward regarding the defining features of the cycle and the essence of literary cyclization. As a result, many names of the corresponding literary form were proposed: short story composite (J. Silverman), short story compound (J. Reed), an integrated short story collection (P. Reed, T. Alderman), short story sequence (R. Lusher, H. Calisher, H. Canby), short story cycle (F. Ingram).

Canby emphasizes the idea that the form of the short story, as a rule, allows you to show one episode from only one angle. The cyclization of short stories contributes to more comprehensive coverage of the same event from different angles of view: each short story explores a single, seemingly independent, event from the smallest detail. At the same time, a short story can be a component of a more significant conceptual whole, while focusing on those aspects of the problem that it cannot illuminate without being a component of the cycle.⁸

R. Lusher points out the kinship of the cycle of short stories with the sequence of sonnets and modern lyrical cyclic forms, emphasizing the proximity of the short story genre to the lyrics.⁹ From the point of view of the researcher, as individual components of the cycle, individual short stories do not lose their individuality, but rather expand and develop the meaning of contexts, characters, symbols, and topics presented by other short stories.

Among the signs underlying the generality of short stories in the cycle, R. Lusher identifies the name of the cycle not duplicating any of the names of its short stories (Eudora

⁷ Oleneva, V., (1973), *Contemporary American Novel Problems of the Development of the Genre*, Haukova Dumka

⁸ Canby, H., (1974), *On the Short Story, What Is the Short Story*, Glenview

⁹ Lusher, R., (1989), *The Short Story Sequence: An Open Book, Short Story Theory at Crossroads*, London, Louisiana State Univ. Press

Welty, *Golden Apples*), an epigraph to the whole cycle (J. D. Salinger, *Nine Stories*) or a series of epigraphs to each short story, author's introduction (D. Updike, "Olinger Stories"), the time or place of action common to all short stories (C. Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*), as well as the type of narrator, recurring images of secondary characters, the image of the protagonist, thematic complex, retrospection.

To determine the genre characteristics of the short story cycle, the researcher compares this literary form on the one hand with the book of short stories (miscellaneous collection) and on the other with the novel. In this case, the subject of analysis is the cycles of short stories by S. Anderson ("Winesburg, Ohio") and U. Welty ("Golden apples"), R. Lusher notes that the author of the cycle relies more on the reader's ability to establish logical connections than the author of the short stories between the components of the cycle, which produces its creative interpretation, Unlike just a book of short stories, which is characterized by different topics and types of characters, as well as the lack of an author's attitude to the perception of short stories as a whole, a common theme is characteristic of the cycle, the development of relations between its components, the dynamism of the narrative. Thus, the book of short stories begins to take on the genre characteristics of a cycle as soon as independent short stories begin to obey one general idea. On the other hand, as soon as the short stories begin to lose their individuality, revealing only the main, common theme for all of them, the cycle begins to acquire genre signs of the short stories.

Consonant with the ideas of R. Lusher are statements about the cycle of short stories by V. Aiser and F. Steve. V. Aiser raises the question of the variability of readers' perception of the main idea of the cycle. Expressing this idea in a metaphorical form, V. Aiser notes that two people watching the night sky at the same time can look at the same cluster of stars, but one will see the image of the Big Dipper, while the other will seem to be looking at Ursa Minor constellation. The connections between the stars of the literary cycle are diverse. Undoubtedly, the author's intention has a great influence on the readers' perception of the main idea of the cycle, but not a single writer who masterfully knows the art of reproducing reality in a work of art will strive to fully identify the connections between the components of the cycle, relying on the ability and desire of readers to independently engage in the search process of these

connections between the stories of the cycle, and the construction, therefore, of a logical sequence.¹⁰

P. Stevick explains the popularity of cyclization the fact that the tendency to create a single whole is inherently inherent in human nature: The desire to combine disparate elements into an integrated picture is the main property of human consciousness, says F. Stevick, and, accordingly, the tendency to combine individual texts in a closed sequence according to a certain model is a consequence of the human perception of reality.¹¹

What is important is the statement of R. Lasher that there is no universal model that underlies the formation of the cycle of short stories, although each of them is a complete aesthetic whole arising as a result of a unique creative impulse.¹² Fundamental to this work is the monograph of the American scientist F. Ingram on the cycles of short stories of the XX century. In his book, the researcher conducts a detailed analysis of the cycles of F. Kafka, W. Faulkner, S. Andersen and characterizes the basic principles of cyclization in the history of the 20th century. Taking into account the supra-genre nature of cyclic structures, F. Ingram defines a cycle as a group of works combined with each other in such a way that a balance is maintained between the individuality of each of the works and the integrity of the whole cycle. Cycle structures, as the researcher notes, can include works of different genres and authors, which can be formally combined or not combined in a cycle. The typology of cycles according to the genesis proposed by the researcher is important: a priori and secondary, depending on what arises earlier - an idea or a text. F. Ingram calls a priori such cyclic structures, the interconnections between the components of which were originally the basis of the author's intention. Secondary cycles are groups of short stories that could be created by the author initially as works independent of each other but then united by him into a cycle on the basis of the unity of themes, motives, characters that arose during the work of the writer.¹³

Creating a secondary cycle, the writer, according to the researcher, can add short stories to it that deepen and develop the theme of works already assembled into a single whole. The structure of the cycle may also undergo changes depending on the change in the author's intention, and the introduction of new meaning into the cycle by the works added during the

¹⁰ Iser, W, (1974), *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*, Baltimore

¹¹ Stevick, P., (1970), *The Chapter in Fiction: Theories of Narrative Division*, Syracuse, N.Y.

¹² Lusher, R., (1989), *The Short Story Sequence: An Open Book*, Short Story Theory at Crossroads, London, Louisiana State Univ. Press

¹³ Ingram, F., (1971), *Representative Short Story Cycles of the Twenties century*, Paris

work. The chronological sequence of the initial components of the cycle can be changed in the final version. The most common model of cyclization of short stories in the XX century, which is manifested at all levels of the cycle, F. Ingram considers the dynamic pattern of recurrent development. It lies in the fact that the same motives, phrases, symbols, characters are repeated in a modified form in each of the components of the cycle, receiving a new sound in a new context. It is noteworthy that the development of these motifs and symbols occurs in such a cycle and in the opposite direction. In the retrospective vision, their initial use also acquires a new meaning. Thus, the cycle of short stories of the 20th century F. Ingram defines as a book of short stories, combined with each other by their author so that the reader's consistent perception of the structure of the cycle at different levels significantly modifies the perception of each component individually.¹⁴

Cyclization reveals itself as a trend characterizing the features of not only the poetics of a particular work but the artistic thinking of the author, groups of contemporary authors, the literary era. One of the reasons for the emergence of cyclic structures is the cyclic habit of mind, which is the tendency to create and combine independent works into a single whole. Such a need to a greater or lesser extent arises among writers of different eras and cultures. This provision applies to the American short story of the XX century. The tendency of the authors of this period to cyclic thinking is determined, in our opinion, by the desire, especially in the post-war years and during the black decade, to create a holistic picture of the world, the most complete, systematic understanding of life. Cyclization underwent works of different genres. The cyclization of short stories in American literature of the 20th century is due, firstly, to the popularity of the short story genre in the United States during this period, and secondly, to the strengthening of the lyrical beginning in the short story. The principles of combining short stories into a single multi-component artistic unity are diverse. Cyclization can be based on:¹⁵

- 1) semantic core, unity of purpose, implemented in a common theme
- 2) the completeness of the components of the cycle, determining its integrity
- 3) compositional techniques
- 4) cross-cutting characters

¹⁴ Mustard, H., (1946), *The Lyric Cycle in German Literature*, New York

¹⁵ May. Ch., (1976), *Short Story Theories*, New York: Ohio University Press

- 5) the image of the protagonist
- 6) common name
- 7) chronotope
- 8) retrospection
- 9) principles of character building
- 10) stylistic features
- 11) autobiographical

It should be noted that, along with the above methods, an important sign of cyclization in American literature of the 20th century can be called suggestive components, a hidden meaning, due to which unity of impression is created and the author's intention is realized.

1.2 Cyclization in the fiction of John Updike

In connection with the study of the works of Updike, it should be noted that in addition to "Too Far to Go" in the writer's work, there are other short-story cycles: "Olinger Stories", "Bech: A Book", "Bech is Back", which, as Lacher rightly observes, indicate a tendency of the writer to cyclization and his determination to experiment with the boundaries of the short story genre.¹⁶ The first short story of the collection, "Friends from Philadelphia," was written by the author after graduating from Harvard University, commissioned by *The New Yorker*. The rest, during his stay in Oxford and ongoing collaboration with this magazine. From the point of view of American literary criticism (R. Detweiler), the criteria for combining short stories into a collection are formal.¹⁷

The "Olinger Stories" included most of the short stories from the first two collections of the writer whose place of action is Olinger. According to many critics, Olinger is the literary name of the hometown of Updike - Shillington, in the love of which he confessed throughout his life. "I loved Shillington, not as one loves Capri or New York, because they are special, but as one loves one's own body and consciousness because they are synonymous with being."¹⁸

¹⁶ Robert. M. Lusher, (1995), *John Updike and the Montage Story: "Farraginous Narrative"*, New York: Cambridge University Press

¹⁷ Detweiler, R. (1984). *John Updike*, Boston: Twayne

¹⁸ Updike, J., (1989), *Self-consciousness: Memories*, London

Thus, autobiography and chronotope underlie the cyclization model of these short stories. The principles of creating the image of the protagonist - a young man, whose worldview is largely based on the memories of Updike about his childhood, also formed the basis for combining individual short stories into a single artistic whole. The writer himself remarked on this subject: he has different names and he finds himself in different situations, but in principle, this is the same young man as a provincial youth from Olinger.¹⁹

The image of the protagonist lies at the heart of combining short stories into “Bech: A Book” and “Bech is Back” cycles. The protagonist of these short stories, Henry Beck, first appears on the pages of the Bulgarian Poetess short story, which was originally part of “The Music School” collection.

The short story form, although it allows you to convey in a concentrated form the feelings and emotions that the heroes of the work experience, do not allow the author to trace the dynamics of their relations, especially the characters' perceptions of the same moral and everyday categories at different stages of life together. The cycle form, on the contrary, allows the author to show the relationship of many aspects of family life, to more fully reveal such a multifaceted topic as the relationship between a man and a woman. The formation of Updike was greatly facilitated by the fact that at the beginning of his career he acted not only as a promising writer but also as a talented critic. In his essays and critical articles, he repeatedly turned to the contemporary literary process. In the last part of the collection of critical articles and essays “Assorted prose”, Updike comments on the situation that developed in American literature in 1950-1960, which, as you know, was influenced by the philosophy of existentialism. The problem of human alienation formed the basis of the ideology and aesthetics of the hipster generation of a group of young intelligentsia, which called itself a broken generation (J. Kerouac, A. Ginsberg, W. Burroughs).

In Assorted prose, Updike complains about the situation in American literature: a fever of self-confidence swept American literature. The only possible result of unjustifiably high hopes for achievements in the literature can be only failures, and painful inability the only acceptable proof of sincerity. When in the history of literature was so much appreciated sloppiness of narration? In such an apocalyptic atmosphere, the greatest sinner has the highest

¹⁹ Burchard, R., (1971), John Updike: Yea Sayings, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press

chance of salvation. Literature research threatens to become a sort of paleontology of failure and criticism of arrogant psychoanalysis of writers.²⁰

The rapid development in the American literature of the 50s and 60s of various directions (realism, modernism, existentialism) had a tangible effect on many contemporaries of the writer. Nevertheless, the variety of literary trends did not prevent Updike from maintaining his personality. Already at the beginning of his career, he formed his own, unique view of the world, his worldview and attitude, which was manifested even in his first short stories and led to the formation of the Updike approach to eternal topics - love, marriage, family relations, a unique Updike style. The problems of the contemporary writer of realistic prose were mainly social, ethical, philosophical in nature. The focus of American short story writers of the second half of the twentieth century, as a rule, turned out to be eternal topics: the theme of fathers and children (J. Cheever, "Date", "Ocean"), the theme of the value of human life in the modern world (B. Malamud, "Road to idiots", "Refugee from Germany"), the theme of the effect of war on human destiny (J. D. Salinger, "The Last Day of the Last Leave").²¹

In the work of John Updike, this is the theme of human loneliness, the motive of moral throwing of the hero who finds himself in difficult life situations, the theme of guilt and its atonement, the theme of family, and the relationship between a man and a woman. It cannot be said that the Freudian theory of the pernicious suppression of sexual instincts gained great popularity in the post-war decades in America. Such reproaches, in our opinion, are unfounded. Short stories of Updike, in particular, the collection "The Music School", allow us to conclude that the coverage of details of intimate life is not an end in itself of the writer. Moreover, sex in his works is the cause of many problems of the characters. Suppressing a sense of dissatisfaction with life, they are embracing new hobbies instead of learning how to enjoy the joy of coexistence with one person. Indicative in this regard is the short story "My Lover Has Dirty Finger Nails".

The protagonist, who has lost interest in her husband and is disappointed in her lover, is trying to achieve peace of mind. She sees the resolution of her problems in the search for a new man, whom she believes will be her psychiatrist. It is with him that she shares her deeply intimate experiences. The harmonious interweaving of the topics mentioned on the pages of the Updike stories allows us to understand the philosophical concept of the American prose

²⁰ Updike, J., (1965), Assorted Prose, New York: Alfred A. Knopf

²¹ Ibid

writer, the peculiarities of his worldview, and those individual features of his artistic prose that distinguish the writer's short story from the works of his contemporaries. It is the choice of topics that explains the success of Updike's works among readers by American researcher of his work R. Burchard:²²

“His works are very successful because in them he seeks the truth. He is the one who accepts no as an answer to questions if the answer is no. That is why his reasoning regarding those questions for which the answer is yes, are valuable to the reader. The reader discovers important truths: there is a virtue in man; kindness exists in the world; the existence of each person is of great importance; life in general, with all its complexities, is good; and a person must learn to accept both its positive and negative sides.”

The choice of themes determines the type of hero. In the works of Updike, this is most often a young man capable of deeply feeling the subtleties of human nature. He is characterized by a love of nature, he is inquisitive and smart, but often lonely and does not understand others. Gifted with a rich inner world, he often does not fit into the framework generally accepted in modern American society. On the one hand, as noted by R. Burchard, the Updike stereotype bears traits characteristic of the hero of postmodernity, who constantly seek self-determination and strives for freedom in difficult post-war times. On the other hand, the hero of Updike has its unique features that are not inherent in anyone else.

In short stories of the collection “The Same Door”, Updike showed the development of a young man, who gradually comes to the realization of important truths. Moments of insight of the hero, as a rule, are not accompanied by violent passions. They arise against the background of everyday life, and the realization of some truths comes to the hero unexpectedly, like a gift. This moment of insight is present in all the short stories of the collection. The main character of the short story “Ace in the Hole,” Fred Anderson, having lost his job, returns home. He is gripped by nostalgic memories of a time when he was considered the best player on a baseball team. Not morally matured, Fred lives on the illusions of his adolescent achievements and childish egoism. Gradually, Updike brings his hero to the understanding of what is real. Life is not as cloudless as it seems to a teenager at first glance. An unexpected gift for the protagonist is the understanding that the cause of family problems and internal disharmony is his unwillingness to live according to the laws of adulthood. The process of growing up a

²² Burchard, R., (1971), John Updike: Yea Sayings, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press

teenager, the development of his personality is in the focus of the author and in the short story “The Happiest Moment,” which is written in the form of the hero’s memories of the Christmas holidays spent in his hometown. Updike captures the moment in the life of a young man when, standing on the threshold of adulthood, he has not still completely parted with the perception of the world around him that was usual for adolescence. After a stormy party with booze and ambiguous hints exchanged between teenagers, one of the girls participating in this party falls asleep, confidentially leaning on the hero’s shoulder. This gesture becomes an unexpected gift for him. The young man realizes the importance of a sense of responsibility for another person for that girl who needs his protection.²³

Updike's interest in the complexity of the inner world of man manifested itself in the first collections of short stories of the writer. To create a psychological drawing of the characters' characters, Updike resorts to numerous tricks. Among them are internal monologues of heroes – “Dentistry and Doubt”, brief characteristics of what is happening in the souls of heroes – “You'll Never Know, Dear”, “How Much I Love You”, a description of the impressions of the characters from the world around them – “The Happiest I've Been, analytical characteristics by the author as a narrator of those feelings that he experiences the hero at one or another turning point in life – “Ace in the Hole”, expressive dialogues and talking details – “Pigeon feathers”, dreams, and hallucinations – “Waiting Up”.²⁴

In the short stories of Updike, as a rule, an implicit, subtext, secret psychologism predominates, when the feelings and moods of the heroes are only guessed. This brings him closer to Chekhov's short story, where the experience of heroes is usually spoken fluently and casually.²⁵ Over the years, psychologism in the works of the writer deepens, and the lyrical beginning intensifies. If we take into account the fact that it is precisely psychologism that becomes one of the characteristic features of realistic little prose of American literature of the second half of the 20th century, then the significance of Updike cyclization in the context of American literature of this period becomes obvious. His experiments with short stories built on the principle of editing testify to the propensity of Updike to improve the genre of short stories, to innovate in the field of the short story. The “Pigeon feathers” and short stories “The Blessed Bostonite” completing the collection are characteristic in this regard. Both short story cycles consist of narratives that are diverse in the plot, thematically related to each other,

²³ Updike, J. (1959). *The Same Door*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf

²⁴ Burgess, A., (1966), *Language, Myth, and Mr. Updike*, Commonwealth

²⁵ Halizev, V. E., (1999), *Theory of Literature*, Higher School

between which there are practically no formal connections. The unifying component in them is the style and voice of the narrator, constantly referring to the past. The author engages the reader in the process of an intense search for correspondences and connections, which are outlined only schematically. In the first short story, such a technique is due to the need to confirm the main idea of the work, which consists in the fact that the writer cannot show life in its entirety.²⁶ The writer often uses the installation technique in his further cyclization works. The narrator depicted during the collection, a collage of fragments of memory is present, for example, in the short stories *Trust Me*, *“Museums and Women”*, *Son*, *Death of A Distant Friend*.

Updike was guided by the principle of editing and when combining individual works into cycles (*“Olinger Stories”*, *“Bech: A Book”*, *“Too Far to Go”*, *“Bech is Back”*). Productive for understanding the peculiarities of the cyclization of Updike is its comparison with another famous American writer of this period - J. D. Salinger. Even though these writers belong to different generations (Salinger became known in the 40s, Updike came to literature in the 50s, recognition came to Updike ten years later than Salinger), comparing their work is not unfounded. Both writers collaborated in the *New Yorker* magazine. They are brought together by their common theme, the ability to capture specifically American phenomena and show them through art. Both writers have a deep interest in the younger generation, so the heroes of their works are most often young people, adolescents, children, that is, all those who most sensitively perceive the environment and react most sharply to it.²⁷

Like the heroes of Salinger, the heroes of Updike preach the idea of forgiveness and all-encompassing kindness. It is no coincidence that the American critic R. Mayne notes that the short stories of the first collection of *“The Same Door”* by Updike were written in the spirit of Salinger. It should be noted that even though J. D. Salinger and D. Updike have a lot in common, the worldview of these writers is far from identical and their artistic systems are different. The subject matter of both writers is the same reality. Their characters live in similar interiors, are surrounded by the same things, find themselves in similar situations.²⁸ In the works of Updike, the natural life process itself is the basis for the transformation of everyday reality into a poetic one. In Updike, these metamorphoses occur through birth and death,

²⁶ Oleneva, V.I., (1973), *Contemporary American Novel. Problems of the development of the genre*

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Itkina, H. L., (2002), *Metaphors of John Updike, Aesthetic Problems of American Literature of the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Moskow

through a natural change of ages, through the accumulation of experience, reflection, and the intellectual development of personality.

In the collection “Pigeon Feathers”, from the point of view of researchers of the works of E. Updike and K. Hamilton, J. Hunt, A. Mayzener, R. Detweiler, the main theme is memory.²⁹ It should be noted that this topic occupies a large place in the work of the American prose writer. The first two collections of short stories (“The Same Door” and “Pigeon Feathers”), the first two short stories (“The Poorhouse Fair”, “Centaur”) and Fermat's novel are based largely on the writer's childhood and youth. Updike himself, in the preface to the series Olinger stories, where he collected most of the short stories from the first two collections, calls these short stories the crystallization of memory.³⁰

So, the realistic world of Updike and the features of the style were determined, first of all, by the writer's collaboration with the famous literary and art magazine *New Yorker*, whose school influence is manifested in the writer's first short stories. When Updike began his career as a promising writer, it could not but affect the writer's work. However, in his short story, the characteristic Updike principle, connected with the writer's realistic worldview, is manifested. It is reflected in the principles of depicting a hero who has become a kind of Updike stereotype. Updike's significant contribution to the development of the genre form of the modern American short story. Deepening of psychologism, strengthening of the lyrical principle, experiments in the field of the form, which the writer manifests in using the editing technique - all these features of the Updike style were in tune with the development trends of the American short story of the 50s and 70s.

In the short story “Walter Briggs”, Updike's attention is concentrated on the mood of the main characters of the spouses Jack and Clara, captured by the memories of happy days spent five years ago on the lake. The pictures that stand before the mental gaze of the heroes are so real that they are enveloped by the same feeling of light sadness that they experienced in the past.³¹ The theme of memory is also reflected in Richard's internal monologue, which occupies a significant place in the short story “Wife wooing”. The plot in the event plan in this short story is practically absent. The author focuses on the description of family scenes that have archetypal and symbolic significance.

²⁹ Hunt, J. (1980). *John Updike and the Three Great Secret Things: Sex, Religion, and Art*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans

³⁰ Updike, J. (1964). *Olinger Stories*, Ballantine Books

³¹ Updike, J. (1963). *Pigeon Feathers and Other Stories*, New York, Alfred A Knopf

An analysis of his works allows us to see the change that was reflected in the writer's work on the material. At the first stage (collections "The Same Door" and Pigeon feathers), the writer captures in his short stories the process of becoming the personality of a young man, open to the world and changing with it. The scene of most of them is the town of Olinger, a provincial, patriarchal outback. The years 1964-1966 are a transitional stage to the second period of the work of Updike. "The Music School" compilation reflects this transition. The geographical habitat of the heroes is changing. This is New England, most often the fictional town of Tarbox, symbolizing the booming suburb. As Updike himself noted, the difference between Olinger and Tarbox is more of a difference between childhood and adulthood than a difference between two geographical locations. They are the steps of my progress and not the spots on the map. The characters in this collection have matured, most of them over thirty. These are heroes whose life is overshadowed by an approaching or already occurring divorce. The theme of separation, with the accompanying motives of adultery and loss, becomes central to the collection. It is no coincidence that the American researcher of the writer V. Hunt rightly observes that between 1965 and 1967. problems of marriage, personality formation, loss of faith in the religious, political, and other spheres become central to the work of Updike. It is noteworthy that loss does not cause despair, do not lead the heroes to tragedy. They learn to live with their losses.³² The name of the collection is symbolic, which coincides with the name of one of the short stories "The Music School". The action of this short story takes place in the lobby of the music school, where the main character is waiting for the end of his daughter's classes. The sounds of music coming from classes evoke images of the unreal world inhabited by angels in the minds of the protagonist. But the real world is far from ideal. Thinking about life, the hero tries to figure out the reasons for his unfaithfulness to his wife (his wife is on the verge of a divorce), and also reflects on his unfaithfulness to a long-conceived, but never written novel. The image of divine harmony that arose in the consciousness of the hero is contrasted with the image of a music school, which symbolizes the real modern life in the short story. Just as a daughter is unsure, through trial, error and hours of exercise trying to learn new tools, to comprehend the secrets of music, the father learns to overcome the inevitable blows of fate, put up with losses and disappointments.

The theme of the youth movement is clearly reflected in the short story *The Hillies*, whose main characters are a group of young people - hippies, or, as the writer calls them hillies (living on the hill). They looked less exotic than hippies. Many of them were the offspring of

³² Ibid, 1980

noble citizens: the son of the president of the bank, the daughter of the owner of a butcher's shop. They stated that they only wanted to be left alone.³³ The inhabitants of the hill are becoming the subject of attention of decent citizens, the city is seized with fear and foreboding of trouble. The feeling of insecurity, mental confusion, distortion of moral standards, which, in turn, led to instability of family ties, were reflected in the pages of most short stories in the collection "Museums and Women". The characters of the short stories included in it, having matured and reaching middle age, look tired and psychologically exhausted, unable to gain wisdom. The inability to catch the forever disappearing possibilities of the present gives rise to a feeling of bitterness and dissatisfaction with the heroes of the short stories Updike. They gratefully recall the past, while experiencing fear of the future.

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³³ Updike, J. (1972). *Museums and Women and Other Stories*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf

³⁴ Phillips, R. (1973). *Museums and Women and Other Stories*, Commonwealth

³⁵ Samuels, C. T. (1974). *American Writers: A Collection of Literary Biographies*, John Updike, New York, Scribners

³⁶ Greiner, D.J. (1981). *The Other John Updike; Poems/ Short*, Athens, Ohio University Press

The hero stops searching for the ideal companion, which in his mind is associated with the statue of a naked sleeping woman in the museum, realizing that these searches are unpromising. His wife, whom he also met in the museum, understands this more clearly. She tells William that the body of one of the statues depicting a perfect woman is in the Boston Museum, while her head is exhibited in the Louvre Museum. The subtext of her words is obvious - the ideal is absent in real life. Respect and reverence become love, the hero comes to this conclusion, and love, in turn, implies obligations, duty. Despite her passion for her lover. William does not leave his wife. He understands that he can have as many hobbies as he can (visit as many museums as possible in search of an ideal), but he will always remember his responsibilities as the head of the family. The five short stories of the cycle, originally published as the final part of the collection "Museums and Women", reflect the characteristic features of family-middle-class relations of America's middle class. Love, care and mutual understanding are replaced by deceit, betrayal and infidelity, but the family, which is a model of society, a metaphor for America in the middle of the 20th century, does not break up, nor does the American nation break up, in spite of all the cataclysms. The short story Plumbing, which before the inclusion in the cycle "Too Far to Go" finished the first part of the collection "Museums and Women", deserves special attention. In it, as in most short stories of the collection "Pigeon Feathers", the theme of all-consuming time is revealed. In the water supply system it is reflected in various motives (gratitude in relation to the past, fear of the future and inevitable death, frailty of all things).

Thus, memories of the past, especially those associated with family and conjugal love, are especially important to the author. Perhaps the writer's appeal to the topic of memory at the beginning of his work and its development in the collection "Pigeon feathers" was associated with Updike with his fascination with the works of M. Proust in the late 1950s. They were not part of the writer's university program, and he first met them, being already an employee of the New Yorker magazine and a beginning writer. As Updike recalls on the pages of an essay on the works of D. Joyce and M. Proust in the collection of critical articles and the essay Favorites, these works, and first of all, Towards Svan, had a great influence on him. It is also possible that this was due to a new surge in the 50s, interest in the work of M. Proust in the university environment and among American intellectuals.³⁷

³⁷ Updike, J. (1975). *Picked - Up Pieces*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf

In the short story "The Persistence of Desire", the theme of memory is connected with the image of the main character - Clyde, who comes to the city of his childhood. In the reception room with an ophthalmologist, he accidentally meets Janet's girlfriend of youth. This meeting enlivens the past in the hero's mind, and he begins, as in former times, to show her signs of attention. The past is experienced by Clyde in the present as sharply as in the years of adolescence. Dialogues that determine the structure of the novel give the author the opportunity to show how the state of the hero changes: with each new girl's remark, his excitement increases, his feelings worsen. In the finale of the short story, he feels like an incredibly happy person: Maples, asphalt, shadows, houses - everything seemed to his visually impaired sparkling, like a scene preserved in memory. He again felt like a child in this city, where life seemed a distant adventure, a subtle ear and always promised joy.³⁸

The heroine of another short story "Lifeguard" of cycle, Caroline Garris, having lost confidence in her husband's allegiance, suspects him of an intimate relationship with a divorced neighbor Alice Smith. Once together at one of the New Hampshire ski resorts, women become witnesses of an accident - on one of the slopes an elderly woman severely injured her leg when falling. Caroline and Alice are forced to stay with her until help arrives. Watching the behavior of the rival, Caroline convinces herself that her husband could not get carried away with such a fussy woman. Without proving or refuting the fact of her husband's betrayal, the heroine was still able to find a solution to the problem. Although the relationship between the spouses has not improved (they are still on the verge of a divorce), having overcome his suspicions, Caroline regains confidence in her husband, which is an integral condition for the coexistence of people in a civilized society.

The theme of the family is central to the writer's work. To reflect the whole gamut of experiences of heroes, the writer, as a rule, creates a complex psychological drawing, asks questions that have no definite answers. The disharmony in relations between the sexes, from the point of view of Updike, is not limited only by the influence of external, socio-economic factors. In his short stories, he also raises eternal themes of an ontological nature. This is already emphasized in the names of the main collections of the writer, which have symbolic significance. They testify to the writer's penchant for understanding life from a philosophical point of view. So, "The Same Door" is a symbol of the transition to a different worldview associated with the recognition of important truths; "Pigeon feathers" is a symbol of self-

³⁸ Updike, J. (1962). *Pigeon feathers*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf

determination of a person associated with religious quest and gaining faith; “The Music School” is a symbol of life itself, teaching a person valuable lessons, punishing him for mistakes and rewarding him for fruitful efforts; “Museums and Women” are a kind of metaphor for the unattainability of an ideal in real life.

Analysis of the main collections of short stories of the writer of the 50-70s allows us to draw the following conclusions. The focus of Updike during the named period was the process of becoming a teenager and the peculiarities of the worldview of an American middle class. Updike reflects in its novels the process of socio-cultural development of the United States - the influence of feminist ideology on the perception of the status of women in society, the decline of the institution of family and marriage, depersonalization resulting from the socio-political events of the black decade of America, the crisis of public consciousness.

CHAPTER II: Family dynamics in America Post WWII decades and its expression in literature

2.1 The expression of family conflicts in America in the Post WWII decades

The ideology of the family and the hearth has been repeatedly rethought in American society in the second half of the 20th century. For a number of reasons, the attitude to the institution of marriage during this period was ambiguous. On the one hand, in the post-war years, the image of a prosperous, prosperous American family was actively created by the media and cinema. Conflicting views on the family are reflected in the literature of this period. The ambiguous attitude of American society towards the institution of marriage is shown through the perception of the teenager Holden Caulfield, the protagonist of the world-famous novel by J. D. Salinger "The Catcher in the Rye" (1951). The American family is in danger - such is the conclusion that J. D. Salinger brings his reader to in his short stories.³⁹

The idea of the importance of the family as a social institution was strengthened by the emergence of a large amount of literature on parenting. The greatest recognition was received by B. Spock's book "The Baby and Childcare" (1954). The best-selling author advised parents to rely on their instincts in the process of raising and communicating with their children. The popularity of this book was so great that between 1946 and 1976, 23 million copies were sold. It should be noted that the Second World War became a significant factor in the formation of attitudes towards marriage and the values of family life. The results of sociological studies show that in the period from 1944 to 1948, the United States was second after Egypt in the number of marriages.⁴⁰

The consequence of this massive desire to create a family, which was called the marriage boom in historical and sociological literature, was an increase in the birth rate - baby boom. The birth rate of the third child in the family doubled between 1940 and 1960.⁴¹ The desire to marry and raise children was reinforced in the minds of many Americans by confidence in the future, faith in the undoubted prosperity and economic stability of the nation. In the light of these changes, a large number of centers and public organizations appeared, the

³⁹ Salinger, J.D. (1983). *The Catcher in the Rye*. A story. *Nine Stories*, Little, Brown, and Company

⁴⁰ Gilbert, J. (1982). *Another Chance Postwar America 1945-1985*, Oxford University Press

⁴¹ Chafe, W. (1972). *The American Woman. Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Roles, 1920-1970*, Oxford University Press

purpose of which was to preserve and strengthen the family. The role of family psychologist and psychotherapist increased. In 1950, the Committee on Family Affairs was created, headed by the famous American psychologist W. Menninger. Public opinion also reflected the growing role of the institution of the family in the minds of Americans in the 50s. According to a sociological survey, 35% of US citizens believed that stricter divorce rules should be established, and only 9% believed that existing laws should remain unchanged.⁴²

In modern American literature, the prevailing view is that the nuclear family has dominated America since the colonial period. This conclusion is made on the basis of new materials first introduced into scientific circulation, and with the help of new methods, especially mathematical ones. Thus, the serious significance of a large or extended family is rejected not only for the present but also for the past.⁴³

However, researchers find its elements in modern times. Even the term “extended family” is proposed; it is meant to preserve the emotional bonds between grown children and parents who do not live together.⁴⁴In American literature, it is customary to distinguish between an orientation family, that is, the family from which a person originates, and a procreation family, that is, a family that gives offspring. It should also be taken into account that the terms household and family differ very sharply, the former being understood in the economic and territorial sense, and the latter sometimes in the sense of kinship. What are the main varieties of the current American family, as they are covered by modern US literature? The nuclear family consists of only two generations. According to 1970 data, only 7.5% of families had relatives besides parents and children.⁴⁵ Moreover, wives work in almost half the cases. This, according to American authors, leads to egalitarianism in the family. Some English sociologists, emphasizing the rejection of patriarchalism, called the modern family "a symmetrical family."⁴⁶

Having grown up, children in many cases leave the family. When getting married, this is the rule. For the parental family, the period of the so-called empty nest begins. However, family ties remain, often not only emotional but also in the sense of practical help. To a greater

⁴² Ibid, 1982

⁴³ Bromley Y.V., Kashuba M.S. (1982). Marriage and family among the peoples of the US, Science, 1982, p. 82-83

⁴⁴ Reiss I. L. (1980). Family Systems in America. N. Y., pp. 418, 419.

⁴⁵ Bane M. J. (1976). Here to Stay. American Families in the Twentieth Century. N. Y., p. 39.

⁴⁶ Degler C. N. (1980) At Odds Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present. New York — Oxford, p. 452, 453.

extent, this applies to African Americans, Puerto Ricans, Italians, and several other ethnic groups. The number of actual marriages or cohabitations that are not registered by any official procedure and easily break up is growing rapidly. In 1982, there were more than 1.8 million such families. Premarital sex was a rule. A significant and growing category of nuclear families is represented by families consisting of one parent (in the overwhelming majority of cases mothers) and children, i.e., practically matrifocal families. This is the result of divorces (official or actual) and illegitimate births. At least 20% of American children live in such families.⁴⁷ The most frequent are similar families in low-income strata. The USA is distinguished among other countries by a very high rate of divorce. In 1981, there were 109 divorced people out of 1,000 married and living together Americans, that is, twice as many as a decade ago. Nine Similar, like some other trends noted above, aroused alarm among the public, predictions were made about the collapse of the American family. One of the collections on family issues, published in 1979, had the distinctive name *American Family: Is it dying or developing?*⁴⁸

The growth of divorces is exacerbated by mass unemployment of the last period: the frequent breakdown of unemployed families has been established by many observers. Pessimistic forecasts of the development of the American family are disputed by a number of authors, citing the fact that divorced spouses often enter into a new marriage.⁴⁹ True, the second, third, etc. marriages break up even more often than the first. Re-marriages became so widespread that they created a new type of family and family ties. The anthropologist P. Bohannan proposed the terms chain of divorces and quasi-kinship for their designation. Innovations in the family structure affect children the most, and according to 1978, every eighth American child living in a family headed by two spouses has a stepfather or stepmother. The sociologist Cherlin gave in his book a diagram that depicts the relationship of the children of the second family from the first marriages of the husband and wife with the father (mother) and their new families, with half-brothers and sisters, etc.⁵⁰

The new type of family in America has become the so-called group families, the emergence of which usually leads to the currents of the counterculture of the 60s. This is a kind of community, sometimes commune, uniting (according to one California study) from three to

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Reiss D., Hoffman H. A. (1979). *The American Family: Dying or Developing*, New York—London

⁴⁹ Cherlin A. J. (1981). *Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage*. Cambridge (Mass) — London

⁵⁰ Ibid

several hundred people. These groups are often religious, besides a variety of interpretations from eastern religious and philosophical cults to Protestant fundamentalism.

As part of the increased interest of Americans in family problems in the 50s of the 20th century, the role of women in modern society has become the subject of general discussion in the United States. In the post-war period, many women were either fired or voluntarily left work. This was largely facilitated by popular culture, which created the stereotype of a modern American woman, whose main purpose was to preserve a cozy family hearth. The concept of popular women's magazines of this period was based on the statement: home and garden - the perfect environment for every American woman. The suburbs were considered the best place for the revival of a happy family, and the ingenuity of a woman who was supposed to act in several roles at once was the key to prosperity: as the mother, responsible for raising children - full-fledged citizens of modern democratic society, an experienced housemaid, doing an excellent job of housework, seducing, intriguing and intriguing her husband. The provincial housewife was to "create at home an oasis of comfort and tranquility for her husband, weary of worries.

The ethnic diversity of the US population also has led to various features of its family development. All immigrant groups are characterized by a greater fortress of kinship than the old-timed American population. It does not affect the preservation of large families - households (this is rare), but in kindred mutual assistance, in emotional ties, in the tradition of family gatherings, etc. This feature in different forms is characteristic of such different ethnic groups as Chicanos (Mexican-Americans), American Japanese, American Italians, and many others. A number of researchers rightly emphasize that strong ties of kinship (like a number of other ethnocultural characteristics) could be preserved and even developed because they were not just a residual form of past life, but had functional value for the group and its members in a new, American setting. It is known that immigrant novices helped relatives settled in America to get a job, that these novices often settled down in them, that kinship relations gave people emotional support, etc. Among the Japanese, family ties formed the basis of economic life. Among Italians (especially at the beginning of the century), kindred families often settled in one large house, sometimes belonging to a relative. The importance of the support of relatives for the matrifocal families has been said above. A similar role is often played by the ritual relationship (*compadrasgo*), in particular among Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics. Thus, some traits traditional for immigrant groups were included in the new ethnocultural system, adapting to it, but thereby changing it. However, during the assimilation processes, the structure

of the immigrant family changed, becoming more and more similar to the family structure of the host society with its class structure. The birth rate in immigrant families decreased, initially higher than that of the surrounding population. More and more practiced family planning. The role of women in the family increased. This was partly prepared by the course of migration, in which a woman could for a long time remain the only support of the family in the country of exit. This was especially true by the middle of the 20th century. as women are involved in social production. The nuclear family (especially in the sense of households) gained more and more dominance. The most dramatic change was the socialization of children, who gained greater independence, as well as the attitude of generations in the family. The influence of the American environment on the descendants of immigrants prevailed over their family traditions. On this basis, intra-family conflicts between generations and even intrapersonal conflicts among the younger generations matured. These conflicts began for immigrant children in their school years. Attitudes of the American school were often contrary to the norms of an immigrant family. For an Italian group, this was explored by a prominent Italian teacher L. Covello.⁵¹

Having grown up, young Italo-Americans, reluctantly, gave their earnings to the family (this was taken for granted, it contradicted American customs), but they already chose marriage partners on their own. Forms of marriage have changed for all immigrant groups with patriarchal traditions. In America, parents could no longer marry children - the children themselves found a mate, although they reckoned with the inclinations of their orientation family.⁵²

The popularization of this idea in the postwar years contributed to the rooting in the minds of American women of the idea that the family is the most important component of modern society, and the role of the guardian of the hearth is the most worthy occupation for a woman. The influence of such an ideology was amplified as a result of a large number of television programs devoted to family issues. By the mid-50s, television, having gained more popularity than cinema, had become the main means of family entertainment, filled most of the leisure of American women. For eight years, starting in 1954, the television series *Father Knows Best* was broadcast on CBS and NBC. The life of post-war America, full of hope and confidence in the upcoming prosperity, was portrayed in rainbow colors in it, as the song

⁵¹ Covello, L. (1967). *The Social Background of the Italo-American School Child*. Leiden

⁵² *Ibid*

chosen by the producers of. as the musical design of the show *Just Around the Corner*, *There's a Rainbow in the City*.

In the early 60s, the situation in the American family changed significantly. The myth of happy family life was debunked, and by the end of the 60s, the image of a broken marriage became the main product of popular culture. The traditional idea of the family as a union of a man and a woman based on love and mutual understanding has been rethought. As a result of a large number of divorces in the late 1960s and 70s, many single parents appeared. One of the main factors contributing to the breakup of most families, American sociologists and historians consider the events of the post-war years, associated with the general desire of Americans to marry.⁵³

The age of most newlyweds of that period did not exceed 20 years. This meant that marriages were made between people with unstable outlooks on life, often after a very short period of acquaintance. It is noteworthy that if in the 50s the main reasons on the basis of which the spouses received a divorce were the ill-treatment or disappearance of one of the spouses, then in 1969, by all consent, the most popular was the divorce by mutual consent, for no specific reason. One of the negative consequences of the increase in the number of divorces in the 1960s and 70s was the rapid increase in juvenile delinquency. According to FBI research, the number of adolescents accused of both petty crimes and brutal murders has increased every year. This fact indicates that the breakdown of marriages had a strong traumatic effect on adolescents who were brought up from birth with an idealized concept of the family as a stable public institution.⁵⁴

Another factor that influenced the change in Americans' perception of the concept of family was the change in the status of women in society, associated with an increase in the level of female employment in the labor market. From 1940 to 1960 the number of working women doubled. It is noteworthy that many women began to consider their work not only as a means of improving their financial situation, but also the possibility of self-expression. This has led to significant changes in the perception of the nature of the relationship between spouses. If earlier a man, the only source of income was considered the head of the family, and a woman his support and assistant, unquestioningly fulfilling the will of the spouse, then in the 1960s and 70s. in the minds of Americans began to prevail the concept of a family as a union

⁵³ Leslie, J. (1989). *The Family in Social Context*, Oxford University Press

⁵⁴ Gilbert, J. (1982). *Another Chance Post-war America 1945-1985*, Oxford University Press

of two equal personalities. A great influence on the ideology of marriage during this period was exerted by the women's independence movement. In the 1960s the house and family remained the center of attention of the woman but ceased to be her only prerogative.

All the phenomena described are both the result and the instrument of assimilation processes. Especially indicative in this sense are mixed interethnic marriages. As is known, each ethnic group, in principle, seeks to observe endogamy as a means of preserving its integrity. However, a violation of this principle for communities in a foreign ethnic environment can hardly be considered, as is sometimes done, almost the only indicator and means of interethnic integration. Assimilation also occurs in groups that retain mainly endogamy. But the frequency of interethnic marriages indicates the level achieved by assimilation, the degree of its intensity. During the XX century the number and frequency of mixed marriages in the United States have steadily increased concerning a wide variety of ethnic groups. Strong acceleration of this process was outlined after the Second World War, affecting ethnic groups as well.

Mixed marriages are frequent among Indians (about half of whom now live in cities), both tribal and non-Indians. As for the marriages of African-Americans with whites, their frequency is growing rapidly, but the absolute number is still small. In 1977, there were 125 thousand such pairs. Interethnic marriages are relatively more commonly concluded by people brought up in the same religion. Facts of this kind at one time served as the basis for the theory of a triple melting boiler, the failure of which is confirmed by the experience of recent decades. Interfaith marriages are also becoming more frequent.

The propaganda of feminist ideas by the media has become so widespread that it could compete in popularity with the events of the Vietnam War, student riots, and newspaper articles about inflation. Activists of the women's movement picketed the Miss America contest, staged demonstrations and protest marches, demanded the elimination of discrimination on the basis of sex, annulment of laws prohibiting abortion, and actively supported the idea of creating round-the-clock kindergartens. The American historian W. Chafe, characterizing this era, not without reason says that sometimes it seemed to him that all the media were absorbed in the women's independence movement.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Chafe, W. (1972). *The American Woman. Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Roles, 1920-1970*, Oxford University Press

The ideological basis of the feminism of the 60s was the book of the American writer B. Friedman “Women's Secret”. From the author’s point of view, in the post-war years, an American woman became a victim of a set of ideas imposed on her - the theory of female mystery, in the light of which she appeared to be a satisfying existence in the world of a bedroom, kitchen, sex, children and home.⁵⁶

Proponents of feminist attitudes emphasized the idea that such a restriction of freedom had a devastating effect on the psychology of women. Not having the opportunity to self-actualize in other areas besides family and household, the woman was forced, in their opinion, to compensate for this shortcoming by emotional tyranny in relation to her husband and children. The popularity of feminism increased in the USA in the 60s also because the demands of feminist movement supporters were largely in keeping with the spirit of the times. The 1960s in America were marked by global social changes as a result of the civil rights movement. Prejudice against any group of people based on physical, racial, religious differences caused a storm of protest from public opinion. In the light of these sentiments, the women's rights movement received great support and was encouraged by different sections of the population, as a result of which feminist proponents made significant strides. Between 1965 and 1970, the number of three and four-year-old children attending kindergartens doubled. By the end of the 60s, the number of women self-supporting families increased by 50%.⁵⁷

In 1966, the National Organization of Women was created under the leadership of B. Friedman. The demands of women’s movement supporters were considered in the House of Representatives; in 1972, the Senate approved an amendment to the US Constitution on gender equality. A vivid confirmation of the fact that the influence of feminism on the institution of family and marriage during this period was significant can serve as the results of surveys conducted during these years among students in elementary and middle classes. Children of working and active women ’women spoke respectfully of their mothers, seeing them as role models. Feminist ideology, on the one hand, allowed American women to feel more confident, on the other hand, led to negative results in the sphere of family life. One of the consequences of the influence of the ideas of feminism in the 60s was the increasing tendency of women to postpone the creation of a family and the birth of a child. Parenting has ceased to occupy a paramount place in the life of a woman. These factors became one of the main reasons for a

⁵⁶ Ibid, 1972

⁵⁷ Ibid, 1972

large number of divorces, the growth of juvenile delinquency, and the rethinking of moral standards led to the degradation of the system of life values.

2.2. The American Family in American Literature (the 1950s-1970s)

Changes in the society and consciousness of Americans are directly reflected in the literature of this period. The collapse of marriage and the degradation of moral principles have become one of the main themes of the work of J. Updike. This theme reached its climax in the short story "Couples". In it, an American writer creates images of spouses living together, raising children, but not experiencing feelings of love for each other. The only sphere of manifestation of the individuality of heroes remains intimate relationships. Updike commented on the relations of its heroes as follows:

"Sex, of course, does not constitute the entire content of Par. They talk about sex as an emerging religion, as the only thing that remains. The heroes of the book exist in society but have no desire to rebuild it. They seek consolation for themselves in intimate relationships and communication with each other."⁵⁸

It should be noted that the writer's frequent appeals to the topic of the family ("The rabbit trilogy", "Marry me", "Couples") are associated not only with the widespread decline, as Updike believed, of the institution of family and marriage in America in the second half of the 20th century, but also with the difficult family relationships of the writer. According to Updike a. the basis of family relationships should be love. Updike also explains his passion for the theme of love by the fact that the love element is an important plot-forming factor in any work. In his speech "The Future of the Novel," delivered in February 1969 before the meeting of English writers in Bristol, the writer remarked: "In addition to love, we have many other problems and concerns, however, being transferred to literature, they very rarely cause the same interest as portraying love experiences."⁵⁹

Updike believes that none of the problems that arise on the pages of works of art can compete with the theme of love since love is a natural attraction of people to each other. In the mouth of one of the heroes of the short story "Marry me", an American writer puts the same thought, only in a more pointed form: "To not love is to die slowly."⁶⁰ Along with Updike,

⁵⁸ Updike, J. (1989). *Self-Consciousness: Memories*, London

⁵⁹ Mulyarchik, A. (1980). *Post-war American novelists*, Moscow

⁶⁰ Updike, J. (1976), *Marry me*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf

many of his contemporaries have repeatedly written about the degradation of moral standards and the crisis of the institution of marriage. The theme of love and the relationship between a man and a woman was clearly reflected in the work of J.K. Oates. She admitted that she writes on the most traditional topic for women - the theme of love. love, which is so different on different social levels.⁶¹ On the pages of his short stories, J.K. Oates creates the image of the American of the 60-70s, seeking to understand himself and the world around him, to find his place in it. Most of her short stories are distinguished by profound psychologism and are typologically close to the traditions of Anderson, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Faulkner.

Representing the vicissitudes of the personal lives of the heroes, the writer draws them into the sphere of spiritual struggle. In his short stories, J.K. Oates paints the image of a woman - a predator: Clara ("Garden of earthly joys"), Maureen ("Those"), Dory ("Fulfillment of desires"), Helene ("By the river"), Madeleine Randell ("You"). The writer created a stereotypical figure of a modern woman. A similar image of the American of the 60-70s is present in the short stories of Salinger, Cheever, and Updike. The themes of childhood, family, marriage are constantly present on the pages of McCarthy's works. Capturing in her short stories the characteristic features of the spiritual crisis experienced by the Americans, the writer explores the inner world and the psychology of her characters. Thus, the heroine Weeds concludes that her marriage, born of loneliness and despair, can bring nothing but loneliness and despair.⁶²

Recognizing the crisis of the institution of family and marriage, McCarthy rightly notes that in a society where everything is built on competition, envy is often mistaken for love.⁶³ The theme of family troubles and the status of women in the modern world is one of the main topics in the collection by Chiver Brigadier and the widow of a golf club (1964). The theme of loneliness passes through all the short stories of the collection: there are so many lonely men around (the short story Ocean). Sometimes it seems to me that the modern woman is the most miserable creature in the history of mankind. You see, they found themselves in the open sea, in the middle of the ocean (short story "Angel of Bridge").⁶⁴

Salinger, starting in 1948, constantly refers to the Glass family. The first mention of it appears in the short story A well-caught banana fish. The family theme also arises in novels of

⁶¹ Ibid, 1979

⁶² McCarthy, M. (1950). Cast a cold eye, HBJ

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ Cheever, J. (1961). Angel of the bridge

a later period: "Franny" (1955), "Zooney" (1957), "Raise High the Roof-Beam", "Carpenters" (1955). It is implemented by the writer in the book of "Seymour: An Introduction" (1959). In the novels about the Glass family, the heroes are beautiful, intelligent, gifted people with different fates, but in each person's life, childhood, adolescence, and family left an indelible and unpleasant trace.⁶⁵

Along with the problems of adultery and family disintegration, youth subjects were widely covered in the literature of this period. Illustrative in this regard is Kerouac's novel "On the Road" (1957). Based on the events and facts of personal life, this story has become a self-portrait of a bit - generation. The main characters of the novel are the holy, crazy genius Dean Moriarty, intoxicated by the reading of Nietzsche, Freud Marcuse and the successes of fans and admirers, and the sad, reflective and critical mood of Sal Paradise. Both the one and the other cross the American continent several times to rediscover their country, in the process of knowing which they also gain an understanding of themselves - the tragic children of the night, rolling towards the end of civilization. Kerouac surrealistically fits his heroes into the everyday context, presenting them against the background of Middle America, next to ordinary people. In a more traditional vein, the young generation is described by E. Friedenberg. In his novel "The Vanishing Adolescent" (1959), teenagers are victims of ideas imposed by numerous public organizations. The plot is based on the conflict between young Americans and society. For the writer, in a society that does not have a worthy goal, the crime of the law is a completely natural reaction of young people to events taking place in the country and the world.⁶⁶

The demographic, social, emotional crisis of the 1960s American family was captured in Capote's "In Cold Blood" (1966). The author's attention in this work is focused on senseless killing. Over the years, Capote has been collecting material related to the sensational case of the murder of two young people in 1959 by a farm family in Kansas. The writer was able to combine the accuracy of the reporting report with the artistic insight into the psychology of criminals and their victims. The documentary story of the representative of the new journalism about the inexplicably brutal, unprovoked murder becomes a parable about America, outwardly prosperous, internally explosive, desperate about America, brutalized, seething with violence, which came into clash with America sane, secured, comfortably smug. The leitmotif of the whole work is the author's thought that the image of an ideal, prosperous American family,

⁶⁵ Blackstock, A. (2007). J.D. Salinger. Magill's Survey of American, Revised Edition. Pasadena, Ca: Salem Press

⁶⁶ Elkin, F. (1960). Review of The Vanishing Adolescent, American Sociological Review. 25 (3)

created in the postwar years by literature, popular culture, journalism, disappears from the minds of Americans. The senseless murder of the Clutter family by two ordinary young people, descriptions of Capote, symbolizes the crisis of the institution of marriage in America of the 60s, which gave rise to murderers who were ready for the sake of money to take the lives of strangers without experiencing the slightest remorse.⁶⁷ Since the late 1950s, the concept of an ideal American family has increasingly become a myth. The number of divorces increased, the level of juvenile delinquency increased, moral standards degraded. Under the influence of feminist ideology, the attitude to the status of women in American society has changed, as a result of which the traditional idea of marriage and parenting has lost its relevance. Events of this period related to changes in the sphere of family life and their consequences had a wide resonance in the media, and the image of a broken family became one of the main in the literature of this time.

⁶⁷ Capote, T. (1966). In *Cold Blood*, Publisher: Random House

Chapter III: The Short Story Cycle “Too Far to Go”

3.1 The complex of family motives as an element in “Too Far to Go”

The complex of family motives includes the motive of adultery, the motive of the fundamental difference between the nature of man and woman, the motive of a strong beginning in marriage, and the motive of separation. The combination of these motives is subject to the disclosure of the main theme of the cycle - the relationship between a man and a woman in modern American society. The functioning of these motives is subordinated to the dynamic model of repetitive development. In each subsequent short story, the same motive receives a new interpretation. The motive for adultery is present in almost all the short stories of the cycle, but the writer most clearly reveals it in the pages of the short stories “Snowing in Greenwich Village”, “Giving Blood”, “Marching through Boston” and “The Taste of Metal”.

The realization of the motive of adultery in the first short story of the “Snowing Greenwich Village” cycle is closely connected with the image of the guest of the spouses Rebecca Kune. She is not just a friend of Richard and Joan as she represented. From the very beginning of the story, by her very presence, she involves the heroes in the situation of adultery. The first hint of Updike to her duplicity is the name of the heroine. This is an allusion to the image of the heroine of the works of W. Thackeray Rebecca Sharp, who represents the type of adventure woman in Victorian literature in England. The duplicity of the heroine is emphasized by the writer in Rebecca's numerous characteristics. Speaking about her work (she does not say directly what she is doing), Rebecca remarks that what she is doing now, her friend taught her in just one day. Moreover, she begins to work at ten o'clock every day, and not every morning. Spouses also become aware that until recently, Rebecca lived in a hotel. Talking about her relationship with friends (one young couple), she makes it clear that her role was to be between someone. Even on the mailbox of the house where the young couple lived, sheltered Rebecca, her name was in the middle. At first, Rebecca manages to take her place between the Maple spouses: Joan's naive attractiveness cannot resist the charm of Rebecca. Updike emphasizes that both heroines are pale, but their pallor has a different effect on Richard. Joan is associated with the heroines of Modigliani's paintings, while the beauty of Rebecca awakens the images of Leonardo da Vinci's paintings in his mind.

Thus, the pallor of Joan is associated with sadness and simplicity, and the pallor of Rebecca with mysticism, mystery. At that moment, when Richard feels completely fascinated by the guest, Joan notices that it is snowing on the street. The symbol of snow is a very significant day of the art world of the cycle “Too Far to Go”. Snow here is a symbol of virtue, a warning sent down to the hero from above. This symbol is also present in the title of the short story. Seeing the snow, Richard and Joan spontaneously hug, forgetting about Rebecca. From that moment on, she loses her power over Richard. Feeling instinctive, she says that she had better leave.

Rebecca is not just an insidious seductress and adventurer. Her image in the short story carries a more significant burden. Rebecca and the Maple couple belong to different worlds. Virtue, sincerity, and fidelity are precisely those values on which the spouses' worldview is based, and which are closely connected in their minds with the idea of a family hearth. The contrast between the moral stagnations of Richard and Joan, capable of a sincere, great feeling, and Rebecca Kune, introducing disharmony in the relations of her friends, is emphasized in the short story of the numerous allusions to the Bible. The image of Rebecca is associated by the author with the image of the insidious harlot from the Kishy of the Proverbs of the Solomons. The guest captivates Joan and Richard with funny stories from her life that seem very fascinating to the spouses. In the Bible an insidious harlot is described as a woman noisy and unbridled: "The mouth of someone else's wife exudes honey, and her speech is softer than oil."⁶⁸ “The house of the harlot in the Bible is described as the path to the underworld, descending into the inner homes of death.”⁶⁹ Rebecca, in turn, says that her room is hot, like hell.⁷⁰

On the way to Rebecca's house (Richard, at the request of Joan, goes to accompany her), the heroes see six mounted police officers. In the Bible, horse riders in pairs signaled the fall of Babylon. In the short story, Updike shows Rebecca's final defeat in her attempts to upset the harmony of relations between spouses. In the short stories “Giving Blood” and “Marching through Boston”, the motive of adultery, being secondary, is not emphasized by Updike to the same extent as in the first short story of the cycle, but it acquires a new sound. In the “Snowing at Greenwich Village”, the hero becomes involved in the adultery situation through no fault of his own. He makes every effort to resist the destructive influence of the seductress and does

⁶⁸ The Bible, 5: 3, 7:11

⁶⁹ Ibid, 7:27

⁷⁰ Updike, J. (1979), “Too Far to Go”, New York, Alfred A. Knopf

not allow the thought of cheating on his wife. In the story “Giving Blood”, Richard himself becomes the initiator of such situations. All night before going to Boston, Richard was dancing at a party with Marlen Brossman, one of the spouses' neighbours. The idea that he prefers another woman, rather than Joan, although he irritates the hero, but does not cause him to feel guilty about his wife. Trying to distract Joan's suspicions from himself, Richard accuses her of flirting at a party with other men, too. Offended by her husband's behaviour, but still calm and able to think rationally, Joan explains to him that the men's attention to her was caused only by pity — she looked lonely and abandoned. “Everybody there felt sorry for me; you could have at least let somebody else dance once with Marlene, if only for show.”⁷¹

Understanding the injustice of her husband's reproaches, Joan is aware of their root cause. She remarks: “You think you can match me up with another man so you can swirl off with Marlene with a free conscience.”⁷²

His wife's prosperity amazes Richard, and in order to smooth things over, he is trying to joke about yesterday's party. “You're right,” he said. ‘But I want to get you a man your own size; I'm very loyal that way’.⁷³

But Joan, whose husband's behaviour hurts, no longer wants to talk about this subject, pretending to be indifferent. His wife's tactics increase Richard's irritation even more; he throws a new rebuke at her: “It's your smugness that is really intolerable. Your knee-jerk liberalism I don't mind. Your sexlessness I've learned to live with. But that wonderfully smug, New England – I suppose we needed it to get the country founded, but in the Age of Anxiety it really does gall.”⁷⁴

Thus, in this short story, Richard himself creates a situation leading to adultery. Although the reader does not know whether Richard's manifestation of increased attention to Marlene is a prelude to intimate relationships outside of marriage. The very fact of the hero's lack of guilt and his desire to hide his passion through reproaches to Joan, which have no basis, indicate that in the hero's mind marital fidelity loses the status of an inalienable condition that is the basis of the union between a man and a woman. In a more veiled form, the motive of adultery is present in the short story “Marching through Boston”. For Joan, participation in such an event was an unsuccessful attempt to act not in the role of a provincial housewife familiar to her, but in the role of an independent woman. The new look of the wife delights and

⁷¹ Updike, J. (1979), “Too Far to Go”, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, p.21

⁷² Ibid, p.22

⁷³ Ibid, p.22

⁷⁴ Ibid, p.23

excites Richard, so he agrees to take part in one of the protest marches with her. However, the transformation of Joan does not bring the spouses together.

The atmosphere of the march enhances the spirit of protest against social injustice in the heroine, but in the mind of the protagonist, this event is more likely associated with the carnival. Feeling that Joan at this moment belongs to another world, that her involvement in the events gives her a feeling of happiness that she could not find with Richard, the hero sends a new hobby and finds him. At first, his sister, the former psychoanalyst Joan, whom they meet by chance, attracts his attention “Come meet my sister. The command sounded strange to Richard; ‘sister’ seemed a piece of psychological slang, a euphemism”.⁷⁵ “The illusion crossed his mind that he was destined to seduce this woman.”⁷⁶

During the march, Richard is next to the sixteen-year-old schoolgirl Carol, thoughts about which have occupied him throughout the story. Feeling attracted to her, he periodically looks up to Joan, but each time she is too far from him. Next to the young girl, Richard has a strange feeling of exaltation and excitement, as if he was sentenced to give someone a new life. He wanted to share this feeling with Carol. The key here is the verb destined, symbolizing the inevitability of betrayal in the consciousness of the hero. The march of protest reaches its climax, and Richard's desire intensifies: “The march turned left down Charles and began to press against itself, to link arms, to fumble for love.”⁷⁷

Until that moment, although Joan was not next to her husband, he could watch her from a distance. Richard later lost sight of her. The idea of adultery in this situation takes more clear forms in the mind of the hero. Richard sees the reason for this in the impossibility of avoiding situations that provoke him to infidelity. Betray is not painful for the hero, it performs another function - justifying his behaviour, at least in his own eyes. The motive of adultery is further developed in the short story “The Taste of Metal”. The plot of the short story and its symbolism connect it with the first short story of the cycle. Just like in the “Snowing in Greenwich Village”, the snow here symbolizes a sign from above, but this symbol receives additional meaning. In the short story “The Taste of Metal”, the element played out is not just a warning, but a clear sign of fate, to which Richard does not pay attention. Describing the unleashed elements, Updike uses not just the word snow, as in the first short story of the cycle, but more

⁷⁵ Updike, J. (1979), “Too Far to Go”, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, p.48

⁷⁶ Ibid, p.49

⁷⁷ Ibid, p.52

expressive synonyms flurry and storm. As in the first short story, the spouses are entertained by entertaining anecdotes by the charming storyteller Eleanor.

Rebecca in the short story "Snowing in Greenwich Village" proceeds to decisive action, exposing Richard's face for a kiss only in his apartment, where it is hot, as in hell. Eleanor, the heroine of the second short story, kisses Richard for the first time in similar circumstances - after he turns on the stove and it gets hot in the car. Mounted policemen in the first short story of the cycle, symbolizing the guardians of the sacred law of marriage, angels guarding the borders between the worlds of virtue and sin, pass by the heroes, while in the short story "Taste of Metal", policemen stop right in front of Richard's car. Their appearance at the moment when the hero hugs and kisses Eleanor, happens not by chance. It indicates that a disaster that the hero managed to avoid in a relationship with Rebecca was inevitable in a relationship with Eleanor. In Rebecca's apartment, it seems to Richard that the meagre atmosphere of the room seems to lose its verticality, which is associated with a righteous life in the hero's mind. After the appearance on the pages of "Snowing in Greenwich Village", the Maples couple disappears from the work of Updike for seven years and reappears in the novel "Wife wooing". Before being included in the cycle, it was part of the second collection of his short stories "Pigeon Feathers", published in 1962. In the short story "The Taste of Metal", the telephone pole into which the car crashes is exactly in the middle of the windshield as if separating Richard and Eleanor, reminding the heroes of the laws of marriage, implying loyalty of spouses to each other. In this context, the function of the expressive part is especially pronounced, which plays a significant role not only in short stories but also in the short story's work of the writer. Strengthening the motive of marital infidelity in this short story, Updike emphasizes the fact that the hero not only violates the laws of marriage that seemed sacred and unshakable to him but intentionally ignores them. The name of the short story is symbolic. The taste of metal in the mouth (the dentist put Richard's gold crowns before the party) is associated with the ban in the hero. Richard feels that this ban also applies to his feelings towards Eleanor, but he ignores it, as does his wife's remark that the road is slippery. The realization of the motive of marital infidelity is achieved in the short stories update and due to the pun.

Throughout the short story, Richard's attention is focused on the perfection of the forms of Eleanor, who constantly provokes the hero through her actions: "She listened for an echo that wasn't there, and twitchily crossed and recrossed her legs. Her legs were handsome and vivid and so long that, after midnight, when parlor games began, she hitched up her brief shirt and kicked the lintel of a doorframe. The host balanced a glass of water on his forehead.

Richard, demonstrating a headstand, mistakenly tumbled forward, delighted at his inebriated softness, which felt to be an ironical comment upon the flesh that his new metal teeth were making.”⁷⁸ “Eleanor crossed and recrossed her legs. Half the length of a thigh flared in the intimate green glow.”⁷⁹

Joan warns her husband: “Darley, you know you’re coming to that terrible curve? Richard’s responsive laugh was held in suspense as the car skidded on the curve.”⁸⁰ Richard does not notice the turns on a slippery road, as he is absorbed in observing the curves of Eleanor's body. After the incident, Eleanor notices that they enter this pillar so often that it became an annoying obstacle for this area, bearing in mind that the laws of marriage, implying loyalty of spouses to each other, are unnecessary restrictions on human freedom, and the best way to find it is not to pay them attention.⁸¹

Notably, Eleanor in the car sits next to Richard in the front seat, while Joan sits in the back. The development of the motive of adultery in the cycle occurs at the level of the hero's perception of the category of adultery. At first, the hero perceives it as the basis of the union between a man and a woman. Correlation with biblical texts, the opposition of sin and virtue emphasizes the idea that loyalty to the wife is sacred in the hero’s mind at the beginning of the cycle, which does not allow him to cross the line of what is permitted. The fact that the hero himself later becomes the initiator of situations leading to adultery and the absence of guilt at the same time indicates that the need to comply with the laws of marriage is optional for him. Further, the category of marital fidelity recedes into the background, the category of treason begins to play a paramount role in the story, and the hero has a motivation for this transformation - a man, by virtue of his nature and certain circumstances, is doomed to infidelity. The evolution of concepts of marital fidelity and adultery reaches an apogee in Richard's mind. He begins to perceive loyalty to his wife as a restriction of freedom, an unnecessary convention, which he has the right to ignore.

Conceptually important in the cycle is the motive of the fundamental difference between the nature of man and woman. For the first time, he appears on the pages of the short story “Giving Blood”. In this short story, Updike emphasizes the idea that one of the main laws of nature is the ability to sacrifice. Unlike a man, a woman who is more penetrating in nature

⁷⁸ Updike, J. (1979), “Too Far to Go”, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, p.55

⁷⁹ Ibid, p.57

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.57

⁸¹ Ibid, p.58

understands that it is necessary to make sacrifices for the sake of others in order to receive in return those benefits that she needs. Richard's inability to recognize this truth is emphasized on the first pages of the short story.

When the couple travels to Boston to giving blood for a seriously ill distant relative, Joan, he does not understand his wife's desire to help her relative: "I'm exhausted. I'm emotionally, mentally physically exhausted, and she isn't even an aunt of mine. She isn't even an aunt of yours"⁸² To Joan's objection that She's a sort of cousin, albeit a distant one, Richard vehemently protests, saying that every New England resident is a kind of distant relative and annoyingly adds: "must I spend the rest of my life trying to save them all?"⁸³

After completing the procedure, Richard, watching Joan, realizes that this act of self-sacrifice, which for him seems like a real nightmare, brings self-satisfaction to his wife. Instinctively, he comes close to the truth, but he cannot fully understand the meaning of what happened: "I don't really understand this business of giving something away and still somehow having it. What is it – the spleen?"⁸⁴

The hero's inability and unwillingness to self-sacrifice is repeatedly emphasized by the author at the level of metaphors. Richard had never Giving blood before - he was unfamiliar and alien to the sense of self-sacrifice for the sake of others. Moreover, this did not happen not because there was no need, but because Richard always avoided this procedure. His unwillingness to part with himself and a hostile attitude towards everything that happens to him in the hospital ward is also expressed in his attitude to the medical student conducting the procedure. In Richard's mind, a young man is a brutal, awkward vampire.⁸⁵

Despite the fact that Richard succumbed to the persuasion of his wife and gave his consent to giving blood for a man completely alien to him, internally he protests. Before the procedure itself, blood tests are taken from the spouses, but the medical student at first cannot take a drop of blood from Richard's finger. Blood simply does not flow, and this episode symbolizes the fact that the hero of the short story does not want to make such sacrifices. Richard's refusal to help his neighbour is opposed in the short story by his wife's willingness to sacrifice. While Richard is tense and angry, Joan is calm and balanced, realizing, unlike her husband, the importance of what is happening. Her calmness and determination amaze and

⁸² Updike, J. (1979), "Too Far to Go", New York, Alfred A. Knopf, p.21

⁸³ Ibid, p.21

⁸⁴ Ibid, p.32

⁸⁵ Ibid, p.25

anger Richard (the readiness of blood to leave her body pierced him like physical pain), and he caustically calls Joan Joan of Arc. The metaphor of the story is emphasized in the title of the short story.⁸⁶

This motif is further developed in the short story "Twin beds in Rome." Richard's inability to realize the fact that the difference between the nature of a man and a woman is fundamental and very significant in relations between spouses is the reason for the disharmony of their relationship. The hero's thoughts are centered on Joan. Constantly hurting her with his inability to maintain a balance in the relationship, he, at the same time, wants to see her happy. This contradiction, caused by the unwillingness to understand the intricacies of female nature, leads to the constantly ongoing agony of the marital relations of the heroes of the short story. Joan, with her feminine insight, understands what is the cause of their problems. Exploring the sights of Rome, she shows a deep knowledge of the history and architecture of the ancient city. Richard, being himself a well-educated man, admires her knowledge: "She was so intelligent."⁸⁷

But this definition, which accompanies the image of the heroine in the short story, has another meaning. It symbolizes not only her well-read and deep knowledge in the field of art but also female wisdom. The heroine does not blame her husband, who repeatedly brought her to tears, but on the contrary, tries to convey to him the fact that a man and a woman differ from each other not only physically, being representatives of the opposite sexes, but also belonging to different worlds that exist in their own, dissimilar friend on drug laws. At the end of the short story, she expresses this idea in a metaphorical form: "Darley, I know what was wrong with us. I'm classic, and you're baroque."⁸⁸

It is not accidental that the choice of the city to which the couple go to cure or permanently destroy their marriage. It is in Rome that these two different styles coexist, harmoniously interwoven with each other. Joan, unlike her husband, realizes that harmony is possible in the relationship between a man and a woman, if only they try to understand each other. Even at the beginning of the short story, she tells Richard, unhappy that their hotel room has not one big, but two single beds: "Richard, don't be sad. You've been sad enough. You're

⁸⁶ Ibid, p.26

⁸⁷ Updike, J. (1979), "Too Far to Go", New York, Alfred A. Knopf, p.39

⁸⁸ Ibid, p.43

supposed to relax. This isn't a honeymoon or anything, it's just a little rest we're trying to give each other. You can come visit me in my bed if you can't sleep."⁸⁹

Bearing in mind that it's like being safely in this eternal city such styles and cultures, which are so different in nature, are combined, there exists a man and a woman completely different in nature, without causing each other pain and suffering.⁹⁰

The next short story of the "Marching through Boston" series, where the motive for the difference between the nature of man and woman is further developed, is largely similar to the short story "Giving Blood". Just like in the story "Giving blood", the heroine shows her willingness to show sympathy and help her neighbor. But while Joan seeks to help a distant relative in the "Giving Blood" short story (this is just one visit to the hospital), then in the March through Boston short story, her altruism takes on a more significant scale.

It manifests itself in the desire to actively express social identity, taking a direct part in the movement for civil human rights. The heroine's self-sacrifice, her zeal, and activity to perform in a new role for her give her a tired housewife a sense of freedom. She is transformed even outwardly. Just like in the story "Giving Blood," Richard does not understand the social status of his wife's self-identity. Although he agrees with her to take part in the march but this time his resistance is more active. If in the story "Giving Blood" Richard's unwillingness to go to the hospital and help a distant relative is expressed mainly with the help of the hero's sarcastic remarks, in the short story "March through Boston" Richard openly insults his wife, parodying the leaders of the movement Joan is angry with. The reason for this is the fact that the husband of the civil rights movement is more distinct than the husband of a woman who seeks to help only one person, sees that dedication, the victim gives Joan the opportunity to feel happy, while he, not realizing the importance of what is happening, feels miserable.

So, the development of the motive of the fundamental difference between the nature of man and woman, as we see, is determined in the Updike cycle by contrasting the views of the main characters on the act of self-sacrifice. The reluctance of the protagonist to sacrifice himself for the welfare of other people Faces the altruism of his spouse. In her mind, she associates her worldview with her willingness to follow one of the main laws of human existence. A dynamic model of repetitive development manifests itself at the level of changes in the response of the protagonist to events. In this regard, it seems possible to build the

⁸⁹ Ibid, p.37

⁹⁰ Flint, J. (1968). John Updike and "Couples": The WASP's Dilemma / Flint Joyce //Research Studies, 36

following logical chain reflecting the change in the state of the protagonist: inability to realize the truth, puzzling about the actions of the spouse - the protagonist's reluctance to make sacrifices, accompanied by irritation about the woman's actions - an open protest, accompanied by sarcasm and insults in her address. Thus, the main reason for the disharmony in the relations of the heroes within the framework of the above motive is the inability or unwillingness of one of the spouses to understand the character of the person living next to him. The motive of the fundamental difference between the nature of man and woman in the cycle is closely related to the motive of a strong beginning in marriage. Since ancient times, the traditional basis of the union between a man and a woman has been the predominance of the masculine principle. Being a stronger half, the man is the head of the family, the leader, while the woman, who is initially softer in nature, is the slave. In the cycle "Too Far to Go", the idea is repeatedly expressed that the family is a model of society, in connection with which the union of Richard and Joan Maple is compared by Updike in a metaphorical form with the state, and its head - Richard - with the king, whose wisdom and prudence depends on the well-being of this state, that is, the family in this case.

In the short stories "Giving Blood", "Twin Beds in Rome", "March through Boston", "Eros Rampant", "Here comes the Maples", this motive is manifested primarily in the characteristics of Richard, embedded in his mouth, as well as in the mouth of his wife. In the story "Giving Blood", where this motif first appears, the hospital ward reminds Richard of the room where he worked on teletype many years ago. In the consciousness of the hero, he was then the king of his corner. In the short story "Twin beds in Rome", while walking around the city, Joan recalls the little funny king from Hemingway's short story Farewell to Arms!. The author refers these words to Richard. In the short story "March Through Boston", one of the secondary characters is the leader of the independence movement, Martin Luther King.⁹¹

It should be noted that although in the second half of the 20th century in America neo feminism gained great popularity, and the woman not only in society as a whole but also in the family begins to take a more active position, the heroine of the short story cycle Updike still perceives Richard as the head of the family. the king of his small state. Unlike her, Richard himself more often feels like a slave than a master. This is primarily because any dominance, whether it is the power of the head of state or the head of the family, is associated with obligations and duty, the fulfillment of which is the key to the well-being and happy existence

⁹¹ Lusher, R. (1995). John Updike and the Montage Story: Farragnious Narrative, Modem American Short Story Sequence: Composite Fictions and Fictive Communities, Cambridge Univ. Press

of the lord and his subordinates. Richard is not able to cope with these duties, moreover, they are a burden to him. A vivid confirmation of this is the hero's annoying remark at the end of the story "Giving blood": "I work like a bastard all week for you and those insatiable brats and at the end of it what do I have? One goddamn crummy wrinkled dollar."⁹²

It is no coincidence that the few episodes of the cycle in which Richard feels like a king coincides with the hero's realization that he, as the head of the family, has a great responsibility. In the story "Giving Blood", he thinks of himself as a king in his mind, recalling the times when, having just married Joan, he did not ignore the duties of the head of the family.

The noun king is adjacent to the adjective responsible in this episode. The overthrow of Richard to the status of a slave takes place in a cycle gradually, and in this regard, it is no coincidence that the appearance in the story "Giving blood" of the image of the Arab king (King of Arabia), who, accompanied by four wives, is treated for glaucoma in the same hospital where the heroes come. This image carries great semantic meaning in the short story since it is Richard's metaphorical double. In order to intelligently manage the state, to know and see everything that is happening in it, this king needs to get rid of his vision problems, to see clearly. His illness in the short story is also symbolized by Richard's illness - the inability to behave rationally, to cope with the duties of the head of the family, to see that the welfare of the union depends not only on Joan's efforts but also on his actions.

Thus, Richard acts as a sick king, whose ailment does not allow him to rule reasonably. An interesting interpretation of the image of the Arab king, proposed by American scholars Alice and Kenneth Hamilton, Focusing readers on the deep knowledge of Updike in the field of history, literary scholars notice that the writer did not choose the "eastern" character. The East, as you know, has always been famous for its achievements in the field of medicine. The basis of many teachings, including on diseases associated with vision, is the theory of four fluids in the human body. Now, the researchers write, the East is forced to come to the West to use the scientific methods of Western medicine.⁹³

But the Western world has forgotten the wisdom of the East, whose theory of the four fluids is applicable to the human psyche. In modern psychology, it is known that four types of human temperament are distinguished: choleric, sanguine, phlegmatic, melancholic. Knowing the characteristics of each of them allows you to better understand a person, to understand the

⁹² Updike, J. (1979), "Too Far to Go", New York, Alfred A. Knopf, p.34

⁹³ Hamilton, A. (1970). The Elements of John Updike, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, P.65.

reasons for his behavior and actions. The image of the Arab king in the short story is a reminder to the heroes of this truth. It is no coincidence that at the beginning of the short story, the couple wondered whether they would see the Arab king, that is, whether they could remember more. This allows Updike to use one of the most common in the cycle of tricks - a pun. So, Richard repeatedly, although unsuccessfully, tries to joke in the hospital room. A significant moment of the short story becomes an episode in which the Maple couple try to remember the difference between the types of the temperament of a person. Joan is close to this, but Richard can't remember anything: "God. I've totally forgotten the humors. What are the others - phlegm and cholera?"⁹⁴

That is, he, unlike his wife, can not realize that only with a tribute of insightful, attentive to the people around him, disharmony in relations can be avoided.

Richard's inability to remember when he sees him reduces the hero to the status of a slave. He feels depressed. In the story "Giving blood, at the end of the procedure, he says that Joan and the children completely emptied him, and then sent him on the rack. "That's right; drain me dry and then put me on the rack."⁹⁵

Relations between the spouses began to remind the hero of the ladder leading to nowhere. This is emphasized by Updike in the short story "Twin Beds in Rome". The architecture of Rome, the ruins of the eternal city symbolize the collapse of marriage:

"Soon they were pressing their faces together to the window to follow the Colosseum itself as, shaped like a shattered wedding cake..."⁹⁶

"Then the Maples, she carrying the Hachette guidebook and he his American shoes in a box, walked down the Via Nazionale to the Victor Emmanuel Monument, a titanic flight of stairs leading nowhere. 'What was so great about him?' Richard asked. 'Did he unify Italy? Or was that Cavour?'"⁹⁷

If the short story "Giving Blood" emphasizes mainly Richard's inability to be king, then the short story "Twin Beds in Rome" motives a strong beginning in marriage is further developed by emphasizing the writer's reluctance to behave royally. The image of Rome, where everything is saturated with the spirit of the royal people who once lived and reigned in it - a detailed metaphor - a reminder to the hero of his duty. It is no coincidence that a

⁹⁴ Updike, J. (1979), "Too Far to Go", New York, Alfred A. Knopf, p.32

⁹⁵ Updike, J. (1979), "Too Far to Go", New York, Alfred A. Knopf, p.33

⁹⁶ Ibid, p.36

⁹⁷ Ibid, p.39

concomitant pain motive arises here. Richard feels pain in his leg, as soon as he steps onto the marble floor of one of the palaces, he also has pain in his stomach and increases significantly at the moment when the hero demonstrates his unwillingness to visit the Basilica of Constantine. He himself, trying to find the reason for the sudden ailment, trying to joke, he says that the pain appeared in him as a result of the fact that in Rome he had to spend too much money on tips. But even his explanation becomes a symbol of non-royal behavior. For centuries, generosity has been considered the privilege of kings. Richard's pain is a kind of retribution for stinginess shown in Rome.

Feeling himself a servant of a tyrannical and excessively demanding family from him, Richard becomes a slave of his egoism as a result of his wife having to fulfill the function of head of state, which is not characteristic of her by nature. In the short story "Twin beds in Rome", the couple are shown, according to the author's comment, as two crazy kings.⁹⁸ The change of roles in the family is more clearly emphasized in the short story "Marching through Boston". Active participation in the civil rights movement gives Joan a sense of freedom and independence. For Richard, the transformation of his wife strengthens his feeling of oppression. In Richard's mind, these marches, which became a symbol of freedom and a new status for Joan, become a symbol of slavery for himself. There were notes in the heroine's intonations that her husband had never heard before - her voice had become strangely firm and persistently melodic⁹⁹, and now she began to seem to Richard an invisible spirit, which left him for the sake of existence in the world of press and television.¹⁰⁰

In the psychological portrait of Richard, self-characteristics prevail, which are mainly lamentations of the oppressed slave. After the march, the hero reproaches his wife: "How could you crucify me that way? How could you make this miserable sick husband stand in the icy rain for hours listening to boring stupid speeches that you'd heard before anyway?"¹⁰¹ The groundlessness of this reproach is obvious since the hero himself agreed to take part in the march. Joan later remarks: "You're a very sick man."¹⁰²

This remark has a twofold meaning: the heroine has in mind not so much the physical malaise of the spouse as his internal, psychological ailment. It is noteworthy that Richard echoes her and, thus, agrees that he is a sick king, unable to intelligently manage his state: "I

⁹⁸ Ibid, p.35

⁹⁹ Updike, J. (1979), "Too Far to Go", New York, Alfred A. Knopf, p.46

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p.45

¹⁰¹ Ibid, p.53

¹⁰² Ibid, p.53

know, I know I am. That's why I wanted to leave. Even your pasty psychiatrist left. He looked like a dunked doughnut."¹⁰³

The key, from the point of view of expressing the motive of a strong beginning in marriage in a short story, is the following phrase: "a voice crying for attention from the depths of oppression. High in the window, the late-afternoon sky blanched as the storm lifted."¹⁰⁴

This motive is reinforced at the end of the story. Richard's actions here no longer resemble the behavior of a slave oppressed by the tyranny of a master. He appears at the end of the short story rather in the form of a jester, parodying the speech of the leaders of the movement. This farce goes so far that the behavior of the father scares the children.

The development of the motive of a strong beginning in marriage culminates in the short story "Eros Rampant", in the scene of Joan's recognition of unfaithfulness to her husband. The frank confessions of the heroes are nothing more than a search for the ideal, sublime love, which is opposed to marriage, with its imperfection and earthliness.¹⁰⁵ Despite all the disagreements that arise between spouses, they are unanimous in that obligations towards each other and especially towards children are an inalienable foundation on which any union is based. Numerous attempts by the heroes to combine love and duty lead to quarrels and a breakdown of hopes, but a divorce, which, it would seem, could solve all the problems, free from all obligations, in the minds of both Joan and Richard is unacceptable. Updike makes it clear to the reader that the hero may not comprehend the difference between the nature of man and woman, and the heroine may have as many new hobbies as possible, without receiving due attention from her husband, but both will realize that the children, their main obligation, will remain with them forever. The architectonics of this short story is interesting. The hero's internal monologue, with which the short story begins, and in which he reflects on what love is, is followed by two dialogues that are related to each other thematically: dialogue of Richard with his alleged mistress Penelope and dialogue of the hero with his wife. Chronologically, the dialogue of the hero with Penelope occurs before the actions described in the short story, but the inclusion of his Updike just before the dialogue with Joan is not accidental. Both heroines tell Richard about their love affairs, but the effect that their confessions have on him is ambiguous. The initiator of the conversation in the first dialogue is Richard himself. Asking questions, he behaves very tactfully, trying not to offend the interlocutor, controls the situation

¹⁰³ Ibid, p.53

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p.54

¹⁰⁵ Muradian, T. (1965). The World of Jolm Updike, English Journal, 54

and feels at his best. Although with some remarks by Penelope he is a little nervous, he generally feels as if he and his grandmother are considering a collection of fragile, mysterious souvenirs.¹⁰⁶

The initiator of the second dialogue is Joan. She wants to switch roles with Richard and make him feel what she felt for a long time, being repeatedly deceived by her husband. The heroine succeeds. The change in Richard's behavior is emphasized by the style of his answers, testifying to the state of the hero during a conversation with Joan: as soon as she falls silent, his heart stops beating, shocked, he is on the verge of hysteria, his chest hurts, he is terrified.¹⁰⁷ An analysis of Richard's feelings gives the reader an idea of the infantilism of the hero and the inability to understand and take care of the women who meet on his life path and, above all, Joan. Able to control the situation outside the family hearth and taking his betrayal for granted, the hero, at the same time, is shocked by his wife's confessions. This episode from their family life makes his position as a "slave" extremely pronounced.¹⁰⁸

Richard's fall becomes catastrophic but more catastrophic is the fact that the hero is ready to put up with his new status and is not trying to protest. If in the previous short stories of the cycle this motive was expressed mainly implicitly (the inability of the head of the family to pay the bill in the cafe, the inability of the hero to remember the difference between the types of temperament, Richard's unwillingness to visit the sights of Rome associated with the images of ancient rulers, the stinginess of the hero, the parody of the speeches of leaders of the independence movement, etc.), then in the story "Eros Rampant" in the episode where Richard begs his wife to name all her lovers, the words *serf* and the verb *to beg* appears.

"Who else?" he begs as if each name is a burden of treasure she will lay upon his bowed shoulders. 'Tell me all your men.'¹⁰⁹

The final answer to the question of who is the embodiment of a strong beginning in the marriage of the Maple spouses is embedded in Richard's mouth in the last short story of the cycle. The protagonist accidentally gets a brochure with excerpts from a scientific article that discusses four types of sieve interactions that determine all in the world: "Thus, he read, it was already known in 1935 that the natural world was governed by four kinds of force: in order of

¹⁰⁶ Updike, J. (1979), "Too Far to Go", New York, Alfred A. Knopf, p.75

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p.76

¹⁰⁸ Ward, J. A. (1962). John Updike's Fiction, Critique: Studies in Modern Fiction, Vol. 5.

¹⁰⁹ Updike, J. (1979), "Too Far to Go", New York, Alfred A. Knopf, p.83

increasing strength, they are the gravitational, the weak, the electromagnetic, and the strong. Reading, he found himself rooting for the weak forces; he identified with them.”¹¹⁰ Reflecting on the years lived with Joan, the hero realizes that the weak strength, the weak spirit in their union is not Joan, but he himself.

Thus, the realization of the motive of the “strong” beginning in marriage takes place in a cycle at the level of perception by the main character of his status in the family. The functioning of the dynamic model of repetitive development is manifested in the evolution of the protagonist's interpretation of the concept of the head of the family. The metaphorical assimilation of the family of the monarchy, with its hierarchical structure, allows the author to trace the gradual overthrow of Richard along the hierarchical ladder: king - sick king - slave - jester.

In the latest short stories of the cycle, the main one is the motive for separation. Confessions of Joan in the story "Eros Rampant", which became the culmination of the relationship between the spouses, along with the events described in the short stories "Waiting up", "Plumbing", "Sublimating", "The Red-Herring Theory", become the impetus for the upcoming divorce. The symbolism of color conveys a sense of impending catastrophe. In the short story "Eros Rampant" there is a symbolic scene of likening heroes to dark fish swimming in ink.¹¹¹

The dialogue between the spouses takes place in a darkened room, the kitchen, where Richard goes down after talking with his wife, is dark.

In the short story “Waiting up” the hero peers into the darkness of the backyard.¹¹² The sense of hopelessness is enhanced by the synonyms of the word "abyss", which become key in the episodes, in a metaphorical form describing the relationship between the characters. Spiritually moving away from each other, the heroes perceive themselves as mysterious abysses on the earth's surface. The glasses that Richard fills seem to him balancing on one edge of the abyss. The inability to reach its other edge seems to the hero a “terrifying loss.

In the short story "Plumbing", a premonition of a breakup of the Maple spouses is the main lyrical motive. There is no plot in the event plan in this short story. Richard calls a specialist to troubleshoot the house, together they go down to the basement. The speech of the

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p.154

¹¹¹ Ibid, p.80

¹¹² Updike, J. (1979), “Too Far to Go”, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, p.70

plumber, who perceives his work as an art rather than a chore, makes Richard think about the time that is subject to everything in the world around us. The hero, who first went down to the basement of his house, sees in the communication system only pipes corroded by corrosion, the repair of which will cost him certain financial expenses. The plumber, whose image is a metaphor for an artist who is sensitive to the past, sees the same picture with different eyes.

“The old plumber bends forward tenderly, in the dusk of the cellar of my newly acquired house, to show me a precious, antique joint. ‘They haven’t done them like this for thirty years,’ he tells me. His thin voice is like a trickle squeezed through rust... You had to chip it away and begin again. That’s how we had to do it when I started out. A boy of maybe fifteen, sixteen.’ He knows my plumbing; I merely own it. He has known it through many owners. We think we are what we think and see when in truth we upright bags of tripe are.”¹¹³

The past is expensive to a plumber - an artist. This is also expressed at the lexical level. The keywords here are tender, precious, antique. He realizes that it is impossible to suspend the passage of time. Richard realizing this after him, recalls the words of his little daughter, who subconsciously also feels the power of time. She is not happy about the upcoming birthday, the fluidity of time (then I will have to become an old woman and die). Approaching a solution to such a complex and inevitable conflict, Updike emphasizes the idea that the irreversible process of the passage of time can be slowed down, often turning to the experience of the past. To realize the significance of the present and extend its existence in the future, it is necessary to open the door to the past more often - the hero comes to this conclusion. The door to the basement of Richard's house is nothing but a metaphorical door to his past, to his memories. A plumber is a symbolic figure that makes Richard remember the great truth: without the past, there is no present and no future. The metaphorical ending of the short story is optimistic. Richard concludes that he can call the plumber, this poet, who will replace the clogged pipe and thus slow down but will not stop the passage of time.¹¹⁴

Of particular importance in its disclosure belongs to the description of the Maple family moving to a new home. Richard recalls the years spent in the old house, about the neighbors, about his childhood. At the center of this description is the quarreling man and woman who appear in front of the storyteller’s mind in ghost images: “Feeble ghosts. They fade like breath on glass.”¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Ibid, p.89

¹¹⁴ Leslie, G. (1989). *The Family in Social Context*, Oxford Univ. Press

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p.93

Heroes are not called by their first and last names. The inclusion of the haunted scene by Updike brings the reader to the idea of divorce, the ghost of which begins to appear on the horizon of the family life of the Maple couple.

In the short story “The Red-Herring Theory”, heroes see divorce as the only way out of this situation. Late in the evening, after a party, Joan sarcastically announces to Richard:

“The properly equipped suburban man, as you call him, has a wife, a mistress, and a red herring. The red herring may have been his mistress once, or she may become one in the future, but he’s not sleeping with her now. You can tell, because in public they act as though they do.”¹¹⁶

In the perception of the heroine - this is someone with whom the romance is imitated to distract attention from a real hobby. The conversation of the spouses turns into a clash of two characters. The atmosphere is heating up, the heroes once again begin to denounce each other in infidelity. At the end of the short story, Joan asks her husband to help her with the cleaning: Help me clean this mess. to which Richard pointedly remarks: Yes, this is exactly a mess, bearing in mind that the relations between the characters resemble the consequences of a stormy party, a mess, the only way to get rid of which is to divorce.

Evidence that the crisis in the relationship of spouses reaches a limit point is the appearance in the short stories “Plumbing” and “Sublimating” of a motive of violence accompanying the relevant scenes. In the short story Pipeline, a scene of violence (a quarrel between spouses turns into a fight) appears only in the mental eye of the narrator, he observes it as if from outside. Updike said in an interview: “I feel a tenderness toward my characters that forbid making violent use of them.”¹¹⁷

In the short story “Sublimating”, the hero’s desire to use physical force takes on more distinct forms: Maple’s son spouses builds a toy guillotine (he studies the period of the French Revolution at school in history; Richard violently cuts plants in front of the house, shocking the children; in one of his conversations with Joan, he was seized with a strong desire to hit his wife in the face.

The author most accentuates the inevitable breakup of the Maple spouses in the last four short stories of the cycle - “Separating”, “Gesturing”, “Divorcing: A Fragment”, “Here Come the Maples”. They are talking about the end of the marriage of the Maple couple, about

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p.97

¹¹⁷ Detweiler, R. (1984). John Updike: Twayne

their divorce. American critics praised these short stories as an example of an exciting and unique depiction of marriage breakdown.¹¹⁸

In the short story "Separating," Updike talks about the unsuccessful attempt of Richard and Joan to report the impending break to the children as painlessly as possible. Children, although they try to restrain their emotions, are deeply worried about their parents' decision to leave for the summer. Richard himself also cannot hold back tears, which leads to the bewilderment of younger children. R. Detweiler rightly notes that this short story is a masterpiece, both in the context of the cycle and in the context of the entire short story work of the writer. At the very end of the short story, Updike describes the reaction of the eldest son to the decision of the parents; In his father's ear he moaned one word, the crucial, intelligent word: "Why?" Why. It was a whistle of wind in a crack, a knife thrust, a window thrown open on emptiness. The waiting white face was gone, the darkness was featureless. Richard had forgotten why."¹¹⁹

Every day in this scene rises to the height of the tragedy. Divorce, the author claims, no matter what the reasons for it, is always a tragedy for both its participants and for people close to them and, above all, children. In the context of the short story "Gesturing," the motive for separation acquires a different sound. Having twenty years of married life in the past and new hobbies in the present, the couple parted seriously this time - at the request of his wife, Richard leaves for Boston to avoid daily meetings with Joan (he lives separately, not far from the house where his wife and children live, but having dinner with his family). The title of the short story already contains an indication that sign language is becoming a significant moment in the communication of heroes. Non-verbal communication helps them express those feelings and emotions that, as they think, cannot be expressed in words.¹²⁰

Repeating from meeting to meeting (Joan sometimes comes to Richard in his bachelor's apartment in Boston), gestures and facial expressions add up gradually in a language that only two of them understand and become a means of communication between two people very close to each other. The image of the unfinished glass skyscraper, which is visible from the windows of Richard's apartment, is closely connected with the motive of gestures in the short story. This monolith, a beautiful disaster, as Updike calls it, from which glass constantly falls and breaks, is a metaphor for a huge cracked mirror that reflects movements (insignificant and significant

¹¹⁸ Updike, J. (1979), "Too Far to Go", New York, Alfred A. Knopf, p.133

¹¹⁹ Ibid, p.169

¹²⁰ Hamilton, A. (1970). The Elements of John Updike, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans

gestures of the city and Richard himself). The image of the constantly collapsing skyscraper in the short story is opposed by another, no less significant symbol: words from the newlywed vow: With this ring, I betroth you engraved on the window in Richard's apartment by the previous tenants. They symbolize the desired constancy, which gives marriage and the atmosphere of the family hearth.

The image of breaking glass and the motive of gestures symbolize both fragility and stamina, the strength of alliances between people. Relations can be formally terminated, but the relations between people who have lived together for many years do not completely disappear. Although the heroes of Updike split up, live in different places, but it is they who are fighting with a friend, and not with anyone else, they trust the most intimate details of their life with the new chosen ones. Despite the fact that Richard is not inclined to listen to details from Joan's life with another man, she tells him: "Don't be such a prig. You're the only person I can talk to, it doesn't mean a thing."¹²¹

This gesture of deepest trust and affection strengthens Richard's belief that even an official divorce will not be able to destroy the bond that has formed between him and his wife over twenty years of marriage. Although the official court decision on divorce was between them, the author notes, her gestures were stronger than even death itself.¹²² The subtext that Richard hears in the words of his ex-wife expresses one of the main ideas of the whole cycle: "these lovers, however we love them, are not us, are not sacred as reality is sacred. We are reality. We have made children. We gave each other our young bodies. We promised to grow old together."¹²³

The same idea is emphasized by Updike in the introduction to the cycle:

"The musical pattern, the advance and retreat, of the Maples' duet is repeated over and over, ever more harshly transposed. They are shy, cheerful, and dissatisfied. They like one another and are mysteries to one another. One of them is usually feeling slightly unwell, and the seesaw of their erotic interest rarely balances. Yet they talk, more easily than any other characters the author has acted as agent for. A tribe segregated in a valley develops an accent, then a dialect, and then a language all its own; so does a couple. Let this collection preserve one particular dead tongue, no easier to parse than Latin."¹²⁴

¹²¹ Updike, J. (1979), "Too Far to Go", New York, Alfred A. Knopf, p.145

¹²² Ibid, p.147

¹²³ Updike, J. (1979), "Too Far to Go", New York, Alfred A. Knopf, p.146

¹²⁴ Ibid, p.4

For the author, the short story “Divorcing: a fragment” is incomplete (in the preface, Updike says that this is a fragment that needs to be completed). Probably, the writer has in mind the small volume of the short story compared to other components of the cycle. Nevertheless, in this fragment, Updike reliably conveys the suffering that the breakup of the marriage entailed. At one of the next meetings with children, Richard finds Joan in a state of severe depression, almost on the verge of suicide, which makes both doubts for a moment in the correctness of the decision. But both heroes, however, reckon that returning to a former life will not change anything: Yet there was no way out, no way but a numb marching forward, like a soldier in a discredited cause, with tired mottoes to move him.”¹²⁵

In the last short story of the cycle - “Here come the Maples”, which describes the divorce procedure itself, the narrative creates an unexpectedly joyful, albeit with a touch of bitterness, mood. Here, the interpretation of the parting motive is consonant with its above-proposed interpretation in the context of the short story “Gesturing”. Moving away from each other physically, the heroes become closer spiritually.

This effect is achieved primarily due to the fact that the rhythmic narrative model does not coincide with the chronological. Most of the short stories are episodes in which Richard, collecting the necessary documents for a divorce, recalls the wedding and the honeymoon and, thus, compares the beginning and end of a twenty-year union. Unlike the hero’s wife, the upcoming ceremony in court is scary. He calls the certificate of divorce a shocking document, Richard is once again surprised by Joan’s stamina and endurance, who finds the process of divorce amusing. Despite the formalism of the situation, the hero this time does not feel miserable. He feels satisfied that “he no longer blames her for anything. Updike reproduces the complex gamut of feelings of the hero in Richard’s internal monologue, built on metaphors and allusions: “ He had set her free, free from fault. She was to him as Gretel to Hänsel, a kindred creature moving beside him down a path while birds behind them ate the bread crumbs.”¹²⁶

Forgetting to kiss the bride before the altar twenty years ago, in the courtroom, Richard is now kissing his ex-wife, and this is his farewell gesture of gratitude and reverence. Dynamic: a model of repetitive development is manifested in the framework of the motive for parting at the level of changing the internal state of the protagonist. The hero’s relationship with his wife evolves from hatred, as evidenced by the appearance of a concomitant motive for violence, to gratitude, the final expression of which is a farewell kiss after a formal divorce procedure. So,

¹²⁵ Ibid, p.148

¹²⁶ Updike, J. (1979), “Too Far to Go”, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, p.160

the motivational complex lies at the basis of combining the components of the cycle into a single whole. Reflecting on the unity of the author's plan, the motives of adultery, the fundamental difference between the nature of man and woman, a strong beginning in marriage, parting are intertwined, explain and complement each other. This allows Updike to reveal such a multifaceted topic as the relationship between a man and a woman in modern American society. The evolution of motives is subordinated to the "dynamic model of repetitive development", which consists in the fact that the same motifs in a modified form are repeated in all components of the cycle. Their development takes place at the level of perception by the heroes of short stories of concepts and categories that are significant for the art world, such as marital fidelity, the act of self-sacrifice, the status of a man in the family, and spiritual intimacy between spouses. A wide range of techniques used by the author contributes to the realization of cycle motifs, including symbolism, allusions, puns, figurativeness, retrospection, and metaphorical narrative.

Romantically inclined, Richard carefully and admiringly watches Joan, who is engaged in daily household chores, and this generates in his mind a chain of memories that stretches to the very beginning of their marriage. The glimpses of the fireplace, before which the family dines, awaken in it the memories of the honeymoon spent by the spouses in the Christian youth camp, and they, in turn, give rise to the memories of the wedding ceremony in the church. She is associated in Richard's mind with the image of a red church window made in the Gothic style, which reminds him of Joan, deprived of innocence. Using the technology of the stream of consciousness and addressing the topic of memory allows the writer to bring the hero to the realization of an important truth, to determine the essence of the relationship of a man to a modern woman. With a woman, a man (in this case, Richard) associates the possibility of self-expression. The wife, as a primitive woman, on the one hand, and as a holy virgin, on the other, is, from the point of view of the author and the hero, the key to the benefits (intimate, domestic) on which he depends, but which he should not perceive as something granted. The third and fourth short stories of the cycle "Twin beds in Rome" and "Giving blood" were originally part of the third collection of short stories Updike "The Music School". According to Updike, in the work of any writer, two large periods can be distinguished. The basis of this division is, according to Updike, the author's ability to perceive and reflect the surrounding reality in his works of art. Vividly manifested in childhood and adolescence, this ability weakens over the years, and in works of more mature age, reflection caused by memories of the past acquires special significance. Nothing that happens to us after twenty years is free of memories, because

only at this moment we have time to write. The life of writers breaks into two halves. By the time it becomes possible to write, the ability to perceive is weakening.¹²⁷

The heroes of the short story “Your lover just called” is playing a dangerous game in which the border between reality and fantasies disappears. The phone rings, but as soon as Richard answers, they hang up on the other end. Realizing the injustice of his reproach, a wounded hero tells his wife that this was her lover's call. When the call is repeated, Joan comes up to the phone, and, having talked, answers the husband demanding explanation that it was the seller of the World Encyclopedia. On the same day in the evening, they have dinner with Mac Dennis (Eleanor's ex-husband - the heroine of the short story “Taste of Metal”), Richard leaves for cigarettes and, returning, finds his wife and guest kissing. The next day, when Joan answers the phone, they hang up on the other end, and now it's her turn to assume that it was Richard's mistress. With his reproaches at the beginning of the ensuing conflict, Richard seemed to be trying to push Joan to treason. He is not interested in the truth (the reader does not know if Joan really has a lover, she explains Mac's kiss as friendly).

The self-satisfaction that Richard receives from a verbal duel with Joan, reproaching her of infidelity, reaches its climax when he finds her and Mack kissing. The ridicule and taunts with which he showers them give him the greatest pleasure. Richard is not so much shocked by the fact of what he saw as how satisfied his pride. The reason for his hypocrisy seems to be his own unfaithfulness to his wife. Joan, convicting him, says; What really interests me is why are you so happy?¹²⁸

If in the short story “Your lover just called”, the author’s sympathies were on the side of Joan, who did not create, at first glance, the prerequisites for the breakup of the family, then in the next short story of the cycle – “Eros Rampant”, both spouses equally contribute to the destruction of the marriage. In the short story “Your lover just called”, the heroes tried in every possible way to avoid the truth, in “Eros Rampant” the moment of revelation becomes inevitable. Joan confesses to her husband that she has an affair with a work colleague, and then talks about all the other fans, including Mac Dennis. Her recognition, which is the climax, both in the plot of this short story and in the development of relations between spouses, changes their life. The writer’s attention is focused on Richard’s reaction. He is excited by his wife’s confession. Frankness gives Joan traits of mystery and novelty (it seems to him an abyss of

¹²⁷ Hunt, J. (1980). John Updike and the Three Great Secret Things: Sex, Religion, and Art, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans

¹²⁸ Updike, J. (1979). “Too Far to Go”, New York, Alfred A. Knopf

secrets). For Joan, this recognition becomes the realization of her attempt to change roles with Richard: to become a leader, not a slave. Trying to resist the efforts of his wife, the hero demands more and more confessions from her. Both spouses, having lost mutual trust, seek control over each other, which indicates the degradation of their marriage, leading to the destruction of the family hearth. However, in this short story, the heroes remain together. In the short story “Sublimating”, spouses who have been married for eighteen years by this moment are trying to save the marriage. They decide to abandon sex because they see in it one of the main reasons for the deterioration of relations. Sex was the only stumbling block in their marriage.¹²⁹ This decision made by the heroes does not, for the author, improve their relations, but only exacerbates the current situation. The purification returns the reader to the first short story of the same name by the collection “Museums and Women”. which is the key to understanding the basic idea of the five short stories included in it about the Maple spouses and gives an answer to the question that naturally arises before the reader: why did the heroes never cross the line behind the divorce. The name of the short story is symbolic. In the minds of the main character - William Young, women are associated with museums. In each of them, the hero finds another hobby, a new love. The words “Museums and Women” merge for him into a single whole, become synonyms that entail in his mind a paradigm of associations consisting of four words: brilliance, antiquity, mystery, and duty. Although over time, the aura of mystery surrounding the world of museums and the creature of a woman becomes less noticeable, the hero remains the temptation to touch both worlds. Although William knew a woman in a sexual sense, her nature and essence will forever remain incomprehensible to him, just as the ideal is incomprehensible to man.

3.2 The image of Richard Maple as the artistic dominant of the short story

Extremely important for combining the components of the cycle into a single whole is the image of the main character - Richard Maple. The conflict of the work is based on the clash of two polar views - men and women - on marriage, family, and relations between spouses. Updike - a recognized master of psychological prose, reveals the inner world of both Joan and the children of the Maple couple and their friends, however, all the events of the cycle are shown by the writer, primarily through the prism of the perception of men. It is the image of Richard that is the artistic dominant of the cycle.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 1979

In this regard, the problem of the author - the reader seems urgent. Although the spatula, as a universal form of artistic refraction of the perceiving subject, is not specified and localized on the pages of the short stories of the cycle, but it is implicitly present in the work. This is a recipient reader, an implicit reader. In the verbal and artistic composition of the short stories Updike there is a certain program of influence on the reader. The very structure of the texts is a message sent to the reader. The impact potential invested in the work by the author determines its perception by the real reader.

The features of perception by the reader and recipient of the texts of the short stories of the cycle are caused not only by the reader's spiritual initiative, his views on the world and on the artistic conception of the author, but also by gender differences. Getting acquainted with the short stories, the reader in his own mind follows the path outlined in the work by the author. The creative results of reading the cycle by the male reader and the female reader will be different, since the same artistic reality will be perceived by them from different angles. For example, the same scene (Richard, reflecting on the relationship with his spouse, carefully watches her) in the masculine perception will be associated with the reader, most likely, with the experience of a male subject observing a female object. In fashionable perception, the same scene will be interpreted by the reader from the point of view of the female object being monitored. From this point of view, the statement by the American researcher J. Culler, who considers the problem of the writer and the reader in the light of tender studies, seems fair: "The life experience of women on bus loves the fact that they evaluate works of art differently than men who are important , from the point of view of women, the problems seem insignificant."¹³⁰

For the analysis of the inner composition of the cycle, the "point of view" is important - "the position from which the story is told or from which it is perceived An event of the story of a narrative hero."¹³¹

Famous Russian literary scholars B. Korman and B. Uspensky, who studied various aspects of composition, along with ideological and value (ideological), linguistic ("phraseological"), spatio-temporal, external and internal, highlight the psychological point of

¹³⁰ Culler, J. (1991). Reading as a Woman, Feminism. An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism., Ed. by Robin R. Warhol and Diane Price, Rutgers University Press, p. 509.

¹³¹ Lotman, Yu.M. (1970). The structure of the literary text, M.: Higher school, p. 320

view, which consists in that the narrator relies on the individual consciousness of one of the characters.

Although in some episodes of the cycle the phenomenon of polyphony arises, which manifests itself in a comparison of “mutually exclusive subjective-indigenous worlds.”¹³² Richard and Joan, existing in the same life reality, but in general, the author's emphasis is on the inner world of Richard Manle. This creates a unity of impression, which is pronounced at the structural level of the cycle. The semantic center of most of the short stories is dialogues, the main character of which is Richard (“Snowing in Greenwich Village” - Richard’s dialogue with Rebecca, “Giving blood”, “Twin beds in Rome”, “March through Boston”, “Your lover just called” , “Waiting up ”, “The Red-Herring Theory”, “Sublimating”, “Nakedness”, “Divorcing: fragment ”, “Here come the Maples” - dialogues between Richard and Joan, “Taste of metal” - dialogue between Richard and Eleanor, “Eros Rampant” - Richard’s dialogue with Joan and Penelope, “Separating” - Richard’s dialogue with Joan and children, “Gesturing” - Richard’s dialogue with Joan, Richard and Ruth). The peculiarity of these dialogues lies in the fact that in them the author reproduces the process of forming the feelings, thoughts and intentions of the hero. In the dialogues between Richard and Joan (the short story “Eros Rampant”), Updike conveys the desire of the protagonist at any cost to convict his wife of infidelity, fixes a change in his internal state. At first Richard was restrained and tactful, then, stunned by his wife's confessions, he became sarcastic and ironic, and towards the end of the dialogue - perplexed and miserable:

“How often have you been with him?” - Richard asks his wife about her lover. “I don’t know. Since April, of and on. Her hands appear to embarrass her; she places them at her sides, against her cheeks, together on the bedpost, of. ‘I’ve been trying to get out of it, I’ve felt horribly guilty, but he’s never been at all pushy, so I could never really arrange a flight. He gets this hurt look.

Do you want to keep him?

With you knowing? Don’t be grotesque.

But he cares for you in a way I just don’t.

Any lover does that.

God help us. You’re an expert.

Hardly.

¹³² Ibid

What about you and Mack?

She is frightened. Years ago. Not for very long.

And Freddy Vetter?

No, we agreed not. He knew about me and Mack.”¹³³

Disclosure of the image of the protagonist is also facilitated by his internal monologues. In them, the writer’s inclination toward in-depth psychologism manifests itself most vividly, which testifies to Updike’s keen interest in all kinds of changes in the person’s inner life. Indicative in this regard, Richard’s internal monologue, reflecting his state of mind before breaking up with Joan and the children (“Separating”): Richard was anxious, he was overcome by a desire to restore order in the house before leaving: replace window screens, transom cords, hinges and latches - because he, like Houdini, was preparing to escape. Lock. It is also necessary to replace the lock in the door that opened onto the covered veranda ... While he was fighting with screws, a tree, confused instructions and pieces of iron, thoughts about his family, about the relatives he was going to leave, stubbornly crowded in his head.

The hero’s inner monologue, in which he reflects on the main driving forces pushing a person to do certain things (“Here come the Maples”), should not be overlooked: “Yes, he thought, that had happened. In life there are four forces: love, habit, time, and boredom. Love and habit at short range are immensely powerful, but time, lacking a minus charge, accumulates inexorably, and with its brother boredom levels all. He was dying; that made him cruel. His heart flattened in horror at what he had just done. How could he tell Joan what he had done to their marriage license? The very quarks in the telephone circuits would rebel.”¹³⁴

The dynamic model of repetitive development is manifested at the level of problems. Throughout the cycle, the protagonist tries to define key concepts of marriage and love. It should be noted that the hero’s perception of these conceptually significant concepts is not unambiguous at different stages of the spouse’s relationship. The author traces the evolution of the main character’s positions, which contributes to the creation of narrative dynamism. It is noteworthy that the hero’s interpretation of the above concepts occurs in a metaphorical form, moreover, in the first short stories of the cycle the concept of marriage prevails in the hero’s mind, whereas in the second half of the work the protagonist’s desire is matured not

¹³³ Updike, J. (1979), “Too Far to Go”, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, p.83

¹³⁴ Ibid, p.158

only physically, but also spiritually, who has become wiser, to define a more abstract concept of love.

The main metaphor transforming the picture of the world is the metaphor of mutated transformations. In the Updike cycle, this is a transition from one stage of life to another - from youth to adulthood, from one state to another - from faith in love to unbelief and philosophical interpretation of this feeling. So, in the first short stories of the cycle ("Giving blood"), the hero's feeling of love, euphoria from harmony with a loved one is associated with exaltation - he seems to soar above the clouds from happiness. At a time when he is overwhelmed with warm feelings for Joan, Richard feels that he belongs more like a celestial than an earthly sphere: "His blood and Joan's merged on the floor, and together their spirits glided from crack to crack, from star to star on the ceiling."¹³⁵

Over time, the hero moves from a state of love to jealousy, his attitude to the concept of marriage changes. The author introduces into the narrative a symbolic image of a gravestone arising in the arguments of the protagonist about his relationship with his wife: "Bleeding, mangled, reverently laid in its tomb a dozen times, their marriage could not die. Burning to leave one another, they left, out of marital habit, together. They took a trip to Rome."¹³⁶

It should be noted that such an existence in two spheres - earthly and heavenly was adopted by Updike as the law of the universe. The metaphor of two unity, ambivalence, existence on the brink, found in the Centaur, is one of the main artistic principles of the writer, which is embodied in the cycle "Too Far to Go" due to the transition of the hero from one state to another. The metaphor of the story is more than just a stylistic device, contributing to the disclosure of the image of the hero. In the art world, the Updike metaphor is the basis of all metamorphoses ... from those that occur within the path to those that are played out in myth.

In the second part of the cycle, the hero's interpretation of the concept of love is connected with the metaphor of transformation. At the beginning of the Eros Rampant short story, irony is the dominant mood of a protagonist trying to define this feeling. Love at this stage is perceived by him as a mundane category, devoid of any deep meaning, which is emphasized by the writer at the syntactic level: Richard's use of simple uncommon sentences gives the impression of stating a mundane fact that does not require detailed consideration and

¹³⁵ Updike, J. (1979), "Too Far to Go", New York, Alfred A. Knopf, p.28

¹³⁶ Ibid, p.35

deep thought: the Maple Family House is full love ... Richard is in love with his wife ... Mr. Maple loves Mrs. Maple.¹³⁷

The hero's transition from faith in love to unbelief is emphasized by contrasting Richard's perception of this feeling at the beginning of the short story "Eros Rampant" and at the end. The change of state of the protagonist is expressed at the lexical level with the help of adjectives and a verb that create a depressing presentiment of an impending crisis and disappointment. The creation of this effect is facilitated by the use of the noun ink, which symbolizes the thickening of colors: "Love, a cloudy heavy ink, inundates him from within, suffuses his palms with tingling pressure as he steps close to her, her murky face held tense against the expectation of a blow."¹³⁸

The further evolution of the concept of love in the hero's mind is reflected in the short story "Sublimating" in which the protagonist compares this feeling with a children's swing: love is like a children's swing, bearing in mind that relations between spouses cannot constantly balance at the same level: ups invariably replaced by falls, moments of bliss interspersed by periods of disappointment. In this, according to the hero, the deep meaning of the concept of love consists, and he approaches the definition of this feeling from a philosophical point of view.¹³⁹

The theme of art is closely connected with the image of Richard Maple in the cycle. Although the hero does not openly express his opinions on literature, music, and painting in the pages of short stories, he is a creative person in all the components of the cycle, who, like Updike himself, looks at the world through the eyes of the artist. It should be noted that the closest writer to various types of art is not music, not poetry (that is, not sound), but painting, a visible image of things. Having preferred literature in his youth, Updike does not forget his love of painting, endowing his heroes with the worldview of the artist. In the writer's work, this is reflected primarily in the special susceptibility of his characters to form and color. Noteworthy, from this point of view, are the associations of the hero of the autobiographical essay Updike A Dogwood Tree, who sees the emerging form and color in a sheet of white paper. For a young man who associates a blank sheet of paper with the universe, it seems to be full of meaning and value, radiating radiance. The concept of radiance radiance is key in the poetry of Updike - the artist. Like the transcendental philosophers, like Emerson, who saw

¹³⁷ Updike, J. (1979), "Too Far to Go", New York, Alfred A. Knopf, p.75

¹³⁸ Ibid, p.83

¹³⁹ Ibid, p.112

everything in the rays of light penetrating him from the inside, Updike does not place the source of radiance outside of existence, not above it, in the heights of the spirit and inside of everyday life, inside matter itself.

The significance of color for the Updike artist is very great, since in him he sees a manifestation not only of the beauty of the world order but also of material evidence of the inner meaning of things. Thus, color, like light, becomes in the poetry of Updike a category not only physical or aesthetic, but also moral. Natural form and color conquer unbelief and death in the writer's works, reality triumphs in its original beauty. The duty of art, according to Updike, is respect for reality, and the duty of the artist is to humbly capture and transfer to paper the world that appeared before him. Already in the first collection of short stories, Updike acts as a painter creating still lifes from people, events, objects, memories, feelings and sensations. On the pages of the short story *Still Life*, the writer creates the image of a modest young American Leonard Harz, who lives in England and studies at an art school. Having gone on vacation to Europe, the hero in his thoughts remains with the girl he liked - the Englishwoman Robin. Describing Leonard's experiences and dialogues of young people, Updike, as a conscientious artist, depicts reality in great detail.

In the cycle ““Too Far to Go”,” the hero's perception of reality through the prism of the artist's vision is manifested in numerous allusions to the masterpieces of world literature and painting. So, in the short story “March through Boston”, Richard compares himself and Joan during their meeting with the heroes of the ancient Greek myth Orpheus and Eurydice, whose images in ancient literature embodied a strong, all-consuming feeling: “At this corner, from the Stygian subway kiosk, he had emerged with Joan – Orpheus and Eurydice – when both were students.”¹⁴⁰

Continuing the association of the heroes of the cycle with the characters of ancient literature, in the short story “Taste of Metal”, Updike, using Richard's lips, likens Joan to the heroine of the tragedy of Euripides: “Like Iphigenia, who sacrifices her life for a fair wind for the fleet in Aulis, Joan climbed into the car of a stranger.”¹⁴¹

In the short stories "Eros Rampant" and "Gesturing" allusions to the paintings of the beloved artist Updike-Vermeer appear. Describing his bachelor's apartment in Boston, the hero notes that the black and white tiled floor resembled Vermeer's paintings. “The floor was not

¹⁴⁰ Updike, J. (1979), “Too Far to Go”, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, p.51

¹⁴¹ Ibid, p.59

the usual wall-to-wall shag or splintered wood, but black and white tile, like the floor in a Vermeer; he glanced to the window, saw the skyscraper, and knew that this would do.”¹⁴²

Images of paintings by the same painter arise in the consciousness of the hero when he watches Joan: “Her gesture as she tips the dregs of white wine into a potted geranium seems infinite, like one of Vermeer’s moments frozen in an eternal light from the left.”¹⁴³ In the short story “Marching through Boston”, a group of priests who came into the view of the hero is associated with “But then he saw ahead of them, scattered like the anomalous objects with which Dalí punctuates his perspectives, receding black groups of white clergymen.”¹⁴⁴

Most often on the pages of the cycle there are references to canvases reflecting the beauty of the female body. The author’s put into the mouth of the protagonist, comparisons of Joan with the heroines of world famous paintings are not accidental, since, from the point of view of Updike himself, for many men a naked woman is the most beautiful sight ever presented to their eyes. The female body on our planet is the main aesthetic object. In tune with this quote, the statement of the French sculptor, woman-lover Auguste Rodin, which Richard recalls: “He recalled a remark of Rodin’s, that a woman undressing was like the sun piercing through clouds.”¹⁴⁵

The quintessence of the hero’s thoughts on female beauty in the cycle is the short story “Nakedness”. Joan’s movements remind Richard of the characters in the Renoir painting: “At the same moment as he tugged to pull the sheets over their heads, she sharply flung them aside. She disengaged herself from him, lifting her leg like the near figure in Renoir’s Bathers.”¹⁴⁶

The nakedness of the spouse evokes in the consciousness of the hero associations with the canvases of Titian, Manet, Goya, Muik, Michelangelo: “She had returned, his lover, still naked, saying, ‘Nothing.’ She had walked naked through her own downstairs, a trespasser from Eden, past chairs and prints and lamps, eclipsing them, unafraid to encounter a burglar, a milkman, a husband; and her nakedness, returning, had been as calm and broad as that of Titian’s Venus, flooding him from within like a swallowed sun. He thought of Titian’s Venus, wringing her hair with two firm hands. He thought of Manet’s Olympia, of Goya’s Maja. Of shamelessness.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² Updike, J. (1979), “Too Far to Go”, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, p.136

¹⁴³ Ibid, p.77

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, p.47

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, p.116

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, p.117

¹⁴⁷ Updike, J. (1979), “Too Far to Go”, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, p.118

Although, from the point of view of American scholars of the writer's work, this work, taken in the context of the entire cycle, does not contribute to its dynamics, but this short story, to a greater extent than the other components of ““Too Far to Go”,” emphasizes the fact that the protagonist perceives reality through the prism of art.

An analysis of the short stories that make up the “Too Far to Go” cycle allows us to conclude that the image of Richard Maple carries a great ideological, artistic and structural load, as it is one of the signs that underlie the combination of cycle components into a single whole. The cycling function of the image is realized due to the prevalence in the majority of short stories of the same form of narration - reflection of the event plan from the subjective psychological point of view of a man. The interpretation of the concepts of marriage and love, which are conceptually significant for the writer's art world, is given by Updike from the point of view of the protagonist.

Conclusion

The short story took a special place in the American literary process of the twentieth century. Among the genres, it was the short story that most sensitively reflected the changes taking place in the world. Genre originality is due to the specifics of the worldview of its creators and the features of the socio-cultural development of the United States during this period. The trend toward cyclization of short stories is clearly manifested in the work of Updike, as evidenced by the cycles “Too Far to Go”, “Olinger Stories”, “Bech: A book”, “Bech is Back”. The cyclization of the Maple couple stories gives the author the opportunity to trace the dynamics of the relationship of the characters and the features of their worldview at different stages of marriage, to show the relationship of various aspects of family life.

The work of Updike is rightly considered by American literary scholars in the context of the works of J. D. Salinger, D. Cheever, D.K. Oates, A. Maltz. In-depth psychologism and lyricism of the stories of Updike reveals its typological relationship with the short stories of S. Anderson, F. Fitzgerald, E. Hemingway, F. O'Connor. Most often, researchers compare the work of Updike with the heritage of Salinger. The basis of this comparison is a common theme, the continued interest of these writers in the young generation, and the peculiarities of reflecting the specifics of American life. When determining the place of Updike in the history of the American short story, it is necessary to take into account the writer's attitude to America of the 50-70s, its culture and literature, the institution of family and marriage, since the topic of the relationship between a man and a woman is the main thing in the work of Updike, included in his short story cycle “Too Far to Go”.

The attitude of American society towards the institution of family and marriage during this period was ambiguous. The myth created in the post-war years about the ideal American family was dispelled by the end of the 50s, the number of divorces increased in the country, moral principles degraded, the traditional idea of marriage and parenting lost its relevance. Changes in the sphere of American family life received a wide response in the media, and the image of a broken family began to prevail in the literature of that time. Updike's reflection of the changes taking place in American society was due to the writer's realistic worldview, which was formed at the very beginning of his career, during his collaboration with the New York magazine. Although the variety of trends existed in US literature of the 50s and 70s (realism, modernism, existentialism) the work of Updike had an undeniable effect. Updike's contribution to the development of the contemporary American short story genre is associated with an in-

depth psychology that is so relevant for American literature of the 50s and 70s, the strengthening of the lyrical beginning, and the use of montage and cyclization techniques.

The innovations mentioned above were reflected in the short story cycle “Too Far to Go”. Before the author included in the cycle, the stories composing it, were part of the cycles ““The Same Door””, “Pigeon Feathers”, “The Music School”, ““Museums and Women””. An analysis of the stories of the “Too Far to Go” cycle in the context of these collections allows us to identify features of the writer's art world and to trace the formation of his style. The attention of Updike in the years 50-70 was focused on the process of forming the personality of a teenager and the peculiarities of the worldview of an American, a representative of the middle class. The main topics of the collections mentioned above are the topic of self-determination of a person, his search for his place in society, the topic of the unattainability of the ideal, the theme of memory.

The formation of a person's personality is studied by Updike to a large extent on the example of the relationship between modern man and woman. In the collection ““Museums and Women””, the writer simulates the future cycle by combining several short stories about the Maple couple in a separate part. The main cyclic-forming beginning, reflecting the unity of the author's intention in the short story cycle ““Too Far to Go””, is a complex of family-everyday motives: adultery, a fundamental difference between the nature of a man and a woman, a “strong” beginning in marriage, separation. These motives are revealed in accordance with the “dynamic model of repetitive development”, as a result of which, in each subsequent story of the cycle, the same motive acquires a new meaning and sound. The development of the complex of family and everyday motives is based on the Updike reflection of the heroes' perception of short stories of categories conceptually significant for the art world, such as marital fidelity, self-sacrifice, the status of a man in the family, spiritual, psychological intimacy between spouses. The conflict of short stories included in the “Too Far to Go” cycle is based on the clash of two polar worldviews of different views of man and woman on the nature of marriage. All the events that make up the storyline of the short stories are reflected by the writer from the point of view of a man. The image of the main character Richard Maple is the dominant of the cycle that determines his reception. It is in the mouth of the protagonist that Updike makes discussions about the concepts of love and marriage, which are important for the writer's artistic world.

The theme of art, which is realized through many numerical allusions to the masterpieces of world literature and painting, singing the beauty of the female body, is closely connected with the image of Richard Maple in the cycle. The title of the work "Too Far to Go" symbolizes the path, road, movement, the universal symbol of change or development, which found expression in countless myths and legends. In psychology, travel symbolizes longing, as well as the search for one's place in life. Many initiation rites also prescribe a journey, which symbolizes the transition from one stage of life to another. In the Updike cycle, this is a symbol of the development of relations of heroes, the transition from one stage to another from falling in love to unbelief and infidelity, from a superficial, trivial perception of a feeling of mutual affection for a philosophical interpretation of a feeling of love. This is a kind of metaphorical journey, a transition from one level of relations at which spouses, although formally united by marriage, are deprived of spiritual unity, to another level. Formally terminating the relationship, the characters retain a subtle, but very strong interconnection, invisible to others.

To uncover the theme of the family and create a complex psychological picture in the stories of the cycle, Updike uses a number of techniques that characterize the features of his style. The main feature of the writer's prose is the metaphor of the narrative. Along with numerous metaphors, he resorts to the technique of the stream of consciousness, symbolism (at the level of names of short stories, images, colors), parody, irony, pun. Updike also often uses allusions to biblical texts, ancient Greek myths, works of world literature and painting. At the heart of the compositional construction of short stories of the "Too Far to Go" cycle is the alternation of dialogues and monologues. The semantic center of most of the short stories is the dialogue, in which Richard Maple becomes the main character. The internal monologues of the protagonist, which are most often his memories of the past, often violating the rhythmic model of the narrative, testify to Updike's keen interest in various changes in the human inner life.

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