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Elmira Muratova

Candidate of Philological Sciences
Associate Professor, Uzbekistan State
World Languages University
Tashkent, Uzbekistan
E-mail: elmira-muratova@list.ru

Эльмира Муратова

Ўзбекистон давлат жаҳон тиллари
университети доценти, филология
фанлари номзоди
Тошкент, Ўзбекистон

JAMES JONES AND HIS SHORT STORIES ON LIFE CHALLENGES FACED BY AMERICANS IN THE XX CENTURY (Devoted to the centenary anniversary of the writer)

ЖЕЙМС ЖОНС ВА УНИНГ 20-АСРДА АМЕРИКАЛИКЛАР ЮЗЛАШГАН ҲАЁТИЙ МУАММОЛАР ТЎҒРИСИДАГИ ҚИСҚА ҲИКОЯЛАРИ (Ёзувчининг юз йиллигига)

ANNOTATION

АННОТАЦИЯ

The article, dealing with the centenary anniversary of James Jones, presents her own subdivision of his creative work into periods, given that the author of the article was the first researcher in the former USSR and the USA defending her monographic work in 1981 on “Problems of War and Peace in James Jones’s creative work”. The aim of her article is to highlight the role of a short story genre in evolution of American writers, including James Jones, choosing their themes and further confirming the manner and peculiarities of their writing style in their novels. The main part of the article is devoted to the analysis of the short stories (which were only 13), published by James Jones in his collection entitled “The Ice-cream Headache” and Other Stories”. The researcher presented her interesting classification of them, showing their different grouping by themes, main characters with their psychology that affected their behavior and, naturally, the writer’s intention to show his attitude to the events described in each story.

Key words: monographic work, periods, classification, psychology, intention, war-veterans, wounded physically and mentally, evolution.

Жеймс Жонснинг юз йиллик юбилейига бағишланган ушбу мақола муаллифи 1981 йили собиқ Совет Иттифоқи ва АҚШда “Жеймс Жонс ижодида уруш ва тинчлик муаммолари” мавзусидаги илк монографик ишини химоя қилган биринчи тадқиқотчи саналади. Мақолада Жеймс Жонс ижодий ишлари муаллиф томонидан даврийлаштирилган. Ундан мақсад – америкалик ёзувчилар, жумладан, Жеймс Жонс ижодининг такомиллашувида, таракқиётида ҳикоя жанрининг ўрни, ижодкорларнинг мавзу танлаши, роман ёзиш услуби ва ўзига хос хусусиятларини ёритиб беришдир.

Мақоланинг асосий қисмида Жеймс Жонснинг “Музкаймакка бош оғриғи” деб номланган тўпламга киритилган ҳикоялар (13 та ҳикоя) таҳлил қилинади. Тадқиқотчи ушбу ҳикояларни мавзуси, характерга таъсир этувчи психологияга эга бўлган асосий қаҳрамонлар ва, табиийки, ҳар бир ҳикояда тасвирланган воқеаларга ёзувчининг муносабатини намоён этувчи мақсади бўйича гуруҳларга ажратиб, ўзига хос ва қизиқарли таснифни тақдим этган.

Калит сўзлар: монографик иш, даврлар, тасниф, психология, ният, уруш қатнашчилари, жисмонан ва руҳан жароҳатланганлар, эволюция.

INTRODUCTION

Among American writers who devoted almost all of his works to the problems of war and peace, the name of James Jones (1921-1977) stands out. They first started talking about him in 1951, when his novel "From Here to Eternity" was published. A. Mulyarchik, many years later, noted in his work "Post-war American novelists" that "many of the topics that became popular and even common in post-war American prose were stated by Jones in his first novel. Alienation and lack of communication, anonymity, depersonalization – all these socio-psychological categories and the calculations leading to them are presented here in the convex scenes of army life" (Mulychik A., 1980; 278].

James Jones' literary work spans a thirty-year period (the first work appeared in print in 1948, the last in 1978). Although a long way has been traveled, relatively little has been written.

The creative search for the writer was difficult and very problematic. Having no special literary education (the war prevented), but, eager to say a lot about his generation, which had just returned from the fronts of the Second World War, young Jones tried to find a literary form that would more fully reflect the essence of the problems of his time.

In the late forties and in the fifties, as never before, the social contradictions of the richest country in the world intensified. "Partisan Review", summing up the past decade, wrote in 1960: "What they meant to us – these ten years! How miserable, how inactive we have remained all these years! We are mired in our cynicism, irritability, indifference, lethargy; everything important that happened in the world happened without our participation, and the world went forward, not paying attention to us, and life rushed and rolled back in huge waves while we were relaxing on the beach or sitting idly in front of the TV. It is sad that most of us have remained unfit people – locked in ourselves, strangers to everyone and everything, and at the same time quite content with ourselves" [Partisan Review, 1960; 93].

Over a thirty-year period, the literary skill of the writer has undergone significant evolution. In order to systematize the stages of this evolution, I consider it appropriate to divide his work into three periods. 1948-1962 (*From Here to Eternity*, *Some Came Running*, *The Pistol*, *The Thin Red Line*) – the first period is the time of Jones becoming a writer, the definition of the main direction in his work. The years 1967-1974 (*Go to the Widow-Maker*, *The Merry Month of May*, *Touch of Danger*, *Viet Journal*) cover the second period, characterized by a large number of themes and special means for creation of images. The writer tries to be in the center of all the turbulent events of that time and somehow determine his attitude to what is happening around him. It might seem that Jones deviated from his leading theme – the theme of war and a veteran soldier. But with a careful reading of these works, we can see that one of the main characters in them is still a war veteran.

The years 1975-1978 (*WWII*, *Whistle*) belong to the third period of his work. During these years, Jones returns to his big topic again, and evidence of his increased writing skills is his last novel "Whistle", (*По первому зову* – my translation, and in

the official translation is *Только позови* translated by N. Zlobin).

Suggesting such periods of his creative work it should be noted that I exclude the collection of short stories from the second period, published in 1968. This is due to the fact that all the stories were written by the author in the period from 1947 to 1958, although not all were then published.

MAIN PART

In this article my intention is not to review his main works, it seems to me appropriate to start with the analysis of his stories, which played a significant role in shaping Jones' writing skill.

In 1968, James Jones, already a well-known novelist, published a story-book entitled "The Ice Cream Headache" and Other Stories". The appearance of a collection of short stories by the author of military novels somewhat surprised the literary community. However, it should be noted that a story (Short Story) at all times attracted leading American writers, and not only American ones. "Everywhere in the world, whenever a short story is discussed", writes Walter Allen, "a handful of names crops up, Chekhov and Maupassant, always, then Poe and Kipling and Joyce, and probably Katherine Mansfield and Hemingway as well. And this tells us two things. The short story, as we think of it today, is both an international form and a recent one, essentially a modern form" [Allen W., 1981; 3]. It was used by Washington Irving, and Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Poe, and Mark Twain, who, in fact, were the founders of certain areas in the evolution of an American short story.

W. Irving and N. Hawthorne – the ancestors of the psychological story, E. Po – a detective story, M. Twain – the classical version of a humorous story. The novelists of the twentieth century also began with a short story. Although at the beginning of the century, as Allen notes, the "Short Story" genre in America seemed to disappear altogether, or was sucked "into the swamps of daily journalism and magazine fiction" [Allen W., 1981; 59]. But the great name of O. Henry brought back the life of "Short Story". We meet a psychological story in the works of Jack London, S. Anderson, T. Dreiser, F.S. Fitzgerald, E. Hemingway, W. Faulkner and others. For these writers, the main task was to show the tragic existence of a man in the world of a dollar, where social contradictions have intensified more than ever. On the one hand – the growth of material well-being (the 1920s), on the other – the moral decay of a person in a society of "great opportunities". "The national genre" of American literature in the second half of the twentieth century, still performs the role of a public pulse, a sensitive locator that captures social and spiritual changes in the life of American society". D. Salinger, D. Cheever, V. Malamud, D. Updike, I. Shaw, D. O'Hara, D. Baldwin, J.K. Oates and many others appear on the literary scene.

Letters so different in their manner, almost all prose writers in their short stories tried to raise, first of all, moral problems, to show the spiritual world of their heroes. Fixing some kind of a phenomenon – an event in the daily life of their characters, most writers tend to create an action-packed story, based, often, on a real fact, which makes it especially close and understandable to the reader. Hence the conclusion – in

the American short story, the primary role in reflecting the development of society is assigned to the social short story. However, the spiritual crisis that has swept America since the late 60s contributed to the development of psychological novella, but even in it the plot was built on some kind of a social conflict. The degree of sounding of social and moral motives is not the same, but, as a rule, they sound in one chord.

American writers “were led to the short story in part by what Henry James would have called the ‘thinners’ of American life”, concludes A. Walton Lits, “its lack of a rich and complex social texture: the brief poetic tale, rather than the sprawling novel of manners, seemed the natural form for their intense but isolated experience. At the same time they were acutely responsive to the development of English and European Romanticism. This collision of local and fragmental social experiences with a cosmopolitan artistic vision proved ideal for the growth of the short story” [Lits, 1975]. Consequently, we can conclude that an American short story of the twentieth century focuses on the disunity of people, on the growth of egocentric relations in capitalist society. Thus, the genre “Short Story” almost always plays an important role in the creative evolution of almost all American writers. Here, the writer tries his hand, poses and tries to solve a number of problems, determines his creative position. As I. Vinogradov correctly noted at one time, “the short story was one of those literary phenomena in which the social content was more easily seen and more evident than in many others ...” [Vinogradov I., 1934; 12]. For most writers, a short story became a springboard to great prose.

James Jones, in fact, also began his literary work with a small form. In 1948, he managed to publish his first short story, “The Temper of Steel” (*Стальной нрав*), in the March issue of the magazine *Atlantic monthly*. As Jones himself writes, before the appearance of his first novel with the publication of stories, he was unlucky. The genre of a story was very attractive to the novice writer, however, he wrote relatively few stories (thirteen), since, working on them, he wrote novels at the same time. Now that all his works are known, it is safe to say that already in the first stories the leading anti-war theme of the writer looms. “Raw” compositionally and stylistically, they concealed in themselves that huge stock of incurable pain and suffering for his generation that Jones carried through all his creative work. He used to call his generation “Unfound” generation (*Ненайденное поколение*) to distinguish it from those called “Lost” generation that appeared after the First World War. His explanation was very simple – “...they were lost. We were not even found, because we were born in the time of Great Depression and our parents were busy to find food for us and not to teach us how to brush teeth and make our beds. And when we reached 20 years we found ourselves in the trenches of the Second World War.

The author himself finds it difficult to say what he loves more – to write novels or stories. In the preface to the compilation, Jones gives a rather original comparison. “The process of writing a story is a series of outbreaks of disease where the crisis comes instantly and the outcome is either positive or negative. The process of writing a novel is like getting sick ... a long-term illness without special outbreaks that needs to be treated for a long time. So choose” [Jones J., 1968]. And yet, he preferred the

“long illness”. Jones said that the novel is one of the few surviving forms of art in which the author can express his individual point of view. The writer is not alone in his original statement about writing a story and a novel. About the peculiar attitude of G. Greene to a short story V.V. Ivasheva writes in her book “What Time Saves” (*Что сохраняет время*) – “Greene takes a story as a form of escape from having to live with the same character for several years (as happens when creating a novel), being infected by his jealousy, his meanness, dishonest methods of his thought, committing the vileness of betrayal with him” [Ivasheva V., 1979; 249].

Edgar Allan Poe spoke at his time: “In brief tale ... the author is enabled to carry out the fullness of his intention, be it what it may. During the hour of its perusal the soul of the reader is at the writer’s control. There are no external or extrinsic influences – resulting from weariness or interruption” [Atlantic, 1948]. It should be noted here that in the stories of E. Poe it was hardly possible to meet the image of the USA and its people. The action often took place outside the country.

It is curious that, while preparing the collection for publication, Jones decided not to redo a single story, although he understood that not all of them were equal. He was afraid that, improving them, he could spoil, deprive what he loved most of all in them – “the spirit of youth, emotional freshness ... I think I can’t remake them, since I’m not the same person who wrote them” [Jones J., 1968], (as noted above, stories were written from 1947 to 1958, and the collection was published in 1968). And yet, Jones wrote a lengthy preface to the collection and provided almost all the stories (except “Just Like the Girl ...” and “The Way It Is”) with the author’s commentary, trying to reveal to the reader the background and purpose of writing this or that story.

So, the collection includes all the stories of the writer, some of which were previously published in various magazines [Atlantic, 1948]. The subject of the stories is quite extensive. However, they are so different in content, they are united in one initial motive – a person (whether an adult or a child) is alone in the vast world with his own problems, his spiritual anguish and, almost always, unhappy. By the way, Jones remained true to his original principle until the end of his life. All the stories of the collection (the author calls two of them novellas – “None Sing So Widely”, “The Ice-Cream Headache”) can be divided into three groups: military, socio-psychological, children. The principle of such grouping lies in their subject-thematic unity, however, it is very arbitrary, since the war is still present, although invisibly, in the second and third groups. And, of course, in every story, psychological problems are raised to one degree or another.

If the composition is taken as the basis of unity, the grouping will be somewhat different from the first one. According to this principle, we could combine the stories “The Temper of Steel”, “The King”, “A Bottle of Cream” and “The Ice-cream Headache” the composition of which is based on the displacement of time layers. One narrative is organically woven into another, but at the same time, each can exist as an independent story. We can use another principle of grouping, taking as a basis the author’s manner of writing. Given the above, we should highlight the stories that are distinguished by the lyricism of the narrative (“None Sing So Wildly”, “Sunday

Allergy”, “The King”, and “The Valentine”). No matter how the stories are grouped, one thing is clear – they are all alike in their problems, the drama of the events described. In my opinion, however, it is more advisable to adhere to the first principle of grouping, since for Jones the plot, the idea of the work, and not the means of translating this idea are of paramount importance. But here it should be noted that the main thing for him was a man with his mood, psychology and feelings.

The stories “The Temper of Steel” (1948), “The Way It Is” (1949), “Two Legs for the Two of Us” (1947), “Greater Love” (1949), which we defined as military, are written in the same style as previously published but later written novels about the war. Their heroes are represented in the same psychological perspective, their attitude to the war, to the army. The hero from the story “The Way It Is” – Slade says: “This war is not indifferent to me. I can die in this war. But I'm a cynic in relation to the army”. Angelo Maggio, one of the heroes of the novel “From Here to Eternity”, also expresses his contempt for the army, which is for him the embodiment of violence against man. He is ready to do anything to escape, to break out of the millstone of a military mill, but it grinds him and, in the end, destroys him.

Jones’ military stories could be called the first test of the pen of a veteran-soldier who could not help telling people the true essence of the war (Jones wrote the motto under the self-portrait “Old soldiers never die. They write novels!”). The stories became like rough work-pieces of his future novels. In his stories, the soldier is shown in various situations, but the effect of the war on his psyche is the same everywhere. The wound inflicted by the war on his heroes is incurable. Deliberately uncomplicated in plot, even intentionally rude in style, they open the curtain of lies and hypocrisy about military romance.

The plot of military stories is based on some, at first glance, an insignificant episode of the war, often experienced by the author himself. However, if in the stories “The Way It Is” and “Greater Love” the action takes place during the war, then in “The Temper of Steel” and “Two Legs for the Two of Us” – war arises associatively. Such construction of a plot only enhances the psychological burden of the war on the consciousness of his heroes. Back in 1935, V.Goffenschefer wrote: “If a novelist comes to an artistic synthesis of reality through a detailed analysis carried out here on the pages of the novel, which our reader zealously and strictly monitors, then the analytical work of the novelist is outside the scope of the short story. He gives in the short story the finished results of his analysis. But behind them the deep part on which the synthesis rests should be felt. If this deep foundation is not there, these are just failures” [Goffenschefer V., 1935; 56].

It seems to me important when analyzing the stories, given their small numbers, to dwell in more detail on each of them individually. This will enable us to more clearly imagine the formation of ideological positions and creative principles of a young writer.

One of the first stories of the collection – “The Temper of Steel”, according to Jones himself, bears the stamp of the influence of E. Hemingway. The writer suggests that readers themselves find the idea of this story, be able to subtract it between the

lines, the tool which is very similar to Hemingway. And the author himself, at the same time, as if not trusting the reader, at the end of the story reveals his ideological meaning. Bronislaw Zelinsky noted in the article “Do Hemingway and Faulkner Have Heirs?” that such writers as Irwin Shaw, Norman Mailer, Herman Wouk and James Jones belong to the Hemingway School, if we speak about their style [Zelinsky V., 1963; 30].

The story “The Temper of Steel” is written with elements of retrospection. The story begins quite banal: two of the guests being invited to dinner are talking about African knives. (By the way, the writer himself had a magnificent collection of knives). To achieve a strong emotional impact on the reader, to help him/her understand the psychology of the hero’s behavior, Jones shows two opposite characters. One is a cynic, a knife in his hands is nothing more than a toy, and he even proudly talks about his adventures and knife fights. The other, with one sight of a knife, shudders from unpleasant memories he has experienced only once, but tormenting him constantly. And here the author shifts the time layer of the story, transferring the reader along with his hero to the battlefield. Johnny, the hero of the story, relives the day when he kills the Japanese in cold blood. Then it did not seem so unnatural to him, but now the knife in the hands of the interlocutor causes horror in him. He cannot forget that incident, tries to find an excuse for his cruelty, even he recalls a similar episode having occurred in the First World War. And still, he was guided only by his personal motives – the fear of being accused of cowardice, the desire to overcome the fear in a battle. Perhaps he internally protests against the war machine, which seeks to instill cruelty in soldiers, but is completely powerless to break it.

The episode with the murdered Japanese occurred with Jones himself in the jungle of the Hawaiian Islands. They met completely unexpectedly, and in a deadly battle, Jones killed him with a knife. In the pocket of the murdered man he found a family photograph. The fact of killing an ordinary man, who had a wife and children, shocked him. He could no longer fight, and for that he was demoted to privates and sent to prison. The fact that he once was in a military prison, Jones himself denies. However, the excellent description of Schofield Prison in the first novel “From Here to Eternity” only confirms this. The episode in the trench described in the story “The Temper of Steel” with some modifications, Jones later transferred to the novel “The Thin Red Line”, but there the soldier already realizes the meaninglessness of what is happening. He had no personal hatred for the murdered Japanese soldier, but he could not have acted differently; otherwise, he himself would have been killed. Soldiers, as the author wants to show, are just fine grains of sand in a huge world storm called War. In the book “World War II”, Jones characterizes the war in a peculiar way – “... modern warfare is not a war of man against man ... This is a war of machine against machine. Industry – versus industry” [Jones J., 1975; 150]. It is quite obvious that then the writer’s approach to the war, to its character and essence could not be different. “Only on the basis of the analysis of the policy that led to the war and continues in the war”, – writes V.V. Shelyag, – “it is possible with scientific thorough approach to reveal the goals of the war, to understand in the interests of which classes it is being

waged, and therefore to give it a moral and political assessment” [Shelyag V., 1978; 98]. And yet, as for Jones, he was firmly convinced of one thing, that there should be no more wars at all, especially world wars. As mentioned above, Jones is very close to Hemingway in his position. Their voices sound in unison. In 1948, in the preface to the new edition of “A Farewell to Arms”, Hemingway wrote: “I believe that all who profit from the war and who contribute to its kindling should be shot on the very first day of hostilities by trusted representatives of honest citizens of their country, whom they send to fight. The author of this book would gladly take on the mission to shoot them if those who went to war properly authorized him to do so”.

The pathos of rejection of the war with its cruel laws accompanies all the work of Jones. “Not a single writer in modern literature”, – according to American critic Maxwell Geismar, – “has portrayed with such force the process of dehumanization and the price of the humanity involved in it, like James Jones. For all heroes, it proceeds individually; however, after the first killing they all overcome (in the process of becoming “veterans”) a sense of panic, hysteria, and even cowardice” [Geismar M., 1962; 32]. They become “unmanned machines”. In an effort to show a person in the most critical moments of life, Jones tries to reveal, thus, the main character traits of his personages.

The case described in the story “The Way It Is”, resembles a scene from a later short novel, “The Pistol”. Describing a separate episode of the war years, the writer tries to show the essence of the war, comprehend the ethical problems that concern his heroes. Apparently, the extreme clarity of the idea highlighted in the plot, kept Jones from commenting on it in the preparation of the collection.

The story is full of irony and sarcasm. The meaninglessness of what is happening on the island (guarding, allegedly a strategic road) represents for the author and his heroes the meaninglessness of the war itself, in which they take part, not knowing in the name of what. The drama of the action in the story, and later in the novel “The Pistol”, is achieved with a strong wind, which does not cease, which dominates everything that is happening. Jones wrote that he used the incessant wind as a symbol of constant violence against man. The attitude of the characters to the events developing in the story enables the reader to imagine the characters of the heroes, expertly drawn by the author. The writer creates two opposing types of soldiers. The first type is Slade, the main hero of the story, whose character emerges from his conversation with others, his assessment of everything that happens. Reading the story, we clearly imagine this soldier, his psychology, his attitude to the war, to the US army. Jones sets up the anti-militaristic sounding of the story almost exclusively in a moral and ethical way, bypassing the sharp corners of social problems.

The second type is Mazzioli, the eldest in the security group, the ordinary military bureaucrat who adheres to each letter of the order, is rude to his subordinates, and makes up in front of his superiors. This is an obedient screw of a military machine. Slade and Mazzioli can be called prototypes of the heroes of Jones' future military novels, and the juxtaposition of the two types of characters will become the basis for the compositional structure of his works. In revealing the characters of his heroes, the

artist attaches great importance to the dialogue. According to Jones, his conversations are better, and it's easier to write them than the narrative part of his works (we find the same approach in Hemingway's works). The drama, laconism and depth of thoughts embedded in the dialogue are not inferior to the "Hemingway style".

With the writing of the story "Greater Love", Jones seriously thought about a book, devoted directly to military operations, and as a result the book "The Thin Red Line" was published, in which this story is almost completely included. By the way, the tradition of using stories in whole or in part in subsequent novels has been around for a long time. So, in his stories Herman Melville raised the problems that we then encounter in his novels. Or, for example, W. Faulkner's stories were also later either whole chapters of his novels ("The Bear" was included in the novel "Go Down, Moses"), or an integral part of some episode ("The Evening Sun" in the novel "The Sound and the Fury"). The theme of the meaninglessness of death, which lies at the heart of the story "Greater Love", is continued throughout the writer's works. This was also a very characteristic feature of the writers of the "Lost generation" who survived the First World War.

Jones witnessed the incident described in the story, and believed that nothing could be worse than participating in the burial of his own soldiers. He said that they always laughed a lot so as not to go crazy. This story tells about four comrades, seemingly completely different, with their fate, their problems. But in a battle they seem to merge together, being completely depersonalized. And in the eyes of readers they are people without past and without future, deprived of any individuality, existing only in the space called "battle" – "they all four seemed to be wearing the same poultice face" [Jones J., 1968]. Moreover, the American soldier realizes that his opponent, about whom the most terrible things were said, turns out to be just as a simple soldier "with the same poultice face". But Jones makes it clear that this is not surprising, because they both receive the same orders and instructions from their command, since in the end their ultimate goal is one.

The artistic device used by Jones in this story gains even greater power in the novel "The Thin Red Line", which clearly senses the writer's ironic attitude towards the faceless society of machine guns, which is symbolized by the army in his novel. "...they all believed that they make decisions, live as they want, and proudly called themselves free personalities. In fact, they were here and will be here until the state, through other unmanned machines, orders them to go somewhere and they go" [Jones J., 1962; 4].

Jones understood that all responsibility for the crippled fates of millions of people rests with the ruling circles, which go to greater lengths for the sake of "ownership". Having gone through the crucible of the war, Jones hopes with all his heart that it will be the last. He puts his faith in the mouth of one of the characters: "... this war, in order to end the war altogether, we really think so ... think about our sons. Maybe the Russians also say that" [Jones J., 1962; 17].

The story "Two Legs for the Two of Us" stands out a bit in the group of military stories, both in its plot and style. The humanist writer shows us another human tragedy.

Here, for the first time, Jones reveals to the reader the injured soul of a war invalid. He was constantly occupied by the psychology of a person who returned “from there”, from the front), who knew the bitter truth of life, that a prosperous world, which he considered unshakable, in which he was taught to believe, does not actually exist (the problem will be clearer in the novel “Whistle”). In his position and views, the hero of Jones is very similar to Faulkner’s Bayard (“Downed Banners”), whose existence is subordinated to one single goal – to “break his neck” in any way, or to Hemingway’s Krebs (“Home”), whose “earlier usual routine evokes in him only annoyance and disgust. The terrible experience gained by the war, unknown to all of them (those in the rear – EM), (they did not also experience the Second World War – EM), he is estranged from the whole world with his philistine concerns and illusions” [Startsev A., 1972].

Already in the story “Two Legs for the Two of Us”, Jones’s ability was manifested by insignificant, at first glance, strokes to convey the internal state of his heroes. Although the whole conversation is built on crude soldier’s jargon, in the few phrases with which George (one of the heroes of the story) refers to his beloved women, we feel all his tenderness for her, gratitude for her love for him. But he does not want to stay with her, does not want to be a burden, and does not want to accept her pity. He will be able to live alone. He and his friend now have one road along which they will go “on two legs for the two of them”. Behind all this drunken bravado, it is felt that the soldiers are deeply suffering. The war, which they did not need at all, had already “killed” them, eradicated everything humane from them, embittered them against the whole world. The only consolation for them now remains alcohol and fleeting free love. A.I. Startsev quite rightly remarked that “from a military trauma, a heightened enjoyment of life originates ...This unusual in its intensity sensation is akin to the feeling of a soldier on vacation or in the rear, with all his senses – who knows, maybe in the last times – absorbing peace and joy of being before returning to the fire” [Startsev A., 1972; 307]. These words of the critic were said about the heroes of the young Hemingway, but it would be absolutely legitimate to attribute them to the heroes of Jones. Both world wars brought the same results.

The story “Two Legs for the Two of Us” can be called a sketch for future large canvases, which became his novels “Some Came Running” and “Whistle”. Jones could not help returning in his novels to this topic, which worried him all his life, and just like Hemingway, his first task was, he thought, that he was obliged to “write about himself and about his generation everything that he himself experienced and felt with all his heart” [Startsev A., 1972; 314].

The conflict of the hero with the society is the main storyline of most of Jones’ works. And even conflicts, seemed to be of a narrow family plan, – are products of the same contradictory society. This can be proved by his stories from the collection, which we defined as socio-psychological, although the whole drama of the events described in them is also an echo of the past war: “Secondhand Man” (1948), “None Sing So Wildly” (1948), “The King, (1955), “Sunday Allergy” (1957). In these stories, the inner world of the heroes comes to the fore; the author seeks to show

the philosophy of their life. In their composition and plot, they are very diverse, but in the psychological characteristics of the characters they are united by the famous Hemingway implication, which firmly entered into the general poetics of modern Western prose.

The plot of the story "Secondhand man", which was not published earlier, is based on the experiences of the writer himself, who after the hospital was demobilized and spent some time in the mountains, leasing a house there. At that time, he drank a lot, trying in this way to drown the memories of the war. The story is full of pessimism and hopelessness. "We are all weak. All. Everyone, – says the heroine. – "There are no more powerful people in America". This statement carries on the main ideological burden of the story, the entire course of events which logically confirms this. The deliberate escapism of the hero in his desire to break away from the society around him in order to recover not only from physical malaise, but also from spiritual emptiness, suffers a complete failure.

The writer does not comment on anything, speaking as if as an outside observer. The reader is invited to sort out the bare, unsubstantiated facts, the arrangement of which replaces the author's comment. As if nothing had happened to the hero. Just at a restaurant, he chatted a bit with the waitress, drank a little; men's conversations at the barbers reminded him of an army where soldiers could talk about anything without women. Real life turned out to be more attractive and familiar, and the artificially created world was fragile. Conscious of his guilt before his wife, Larry (the hero of the story), however, cannot change anything. And the couple understands that their dreams burst like soap bubbles, and the house turned out to be a card house. A person is infected with the "disease" of society deep inside and it is not possible to escape from it. Jones wants to say that the inexorable process of decay cannot be stopped.

The idea of the "Roman Empire of the period of decline" arises in many works of the writer. These are the thoughts of Frank and Grant about the post-war world what will happen to America in it (the heroes of the novel "Go to the Widow-maker") and the thoughts of Dave Hirsch ("Some Came Running"): "Is this, in the end, the decline and death of the Roman empire? A repetition of what happened then?" [Jones J., 1957; 1233]. The same tragedy is also planned among the heroes, in many respects the autobiographical short story "None Sing So Wildly", where friends of Silvanus (we will meet them later in the novel "Some Came Running" in the images of Dave and Bama) lead a reckless lifestyle. Thus, the problems raised in these stories put them on a par with the story "Two Legs for the Two of Us", which enables us to make another conditional grouping according to the principle of preparations for future novels.

In the short story "None Sing So Wildly" Jones activates the reader to the utmost; without any imposition of his opinion, he compels himself to come to an understanding of what led the heroes to empty burning of their lives. In the cruel and vile world of business, they feel like newcomers from another planet called the War, and where their shelter was dirty dugouts and trenches. "These people", – as D. Zatonsky rightly notes, – "are morally traumatized, seriously experiencing their "spiritual ill-being"... because there is no means other than their own internal forces that could ease

unbearable pain” [Zatonsky D., 1962; 11]. In the same state is Sylvanus, on behalf of whom Jones narrates. He cannot go on a break with friends with whom he fought for the sake of the whim of his beloved, since he himself, like them, suffers deeply in this world that does not accept him and which is alien to him. Therefore, “... he preferred solitude in the forest. It seems that there will never be garbage in the forest, and he felt safer in the forest than in the city. After humans, bears, deer and (even) cats seemed so peaceful and calm. In general, who would ever think of dropping an atomic bomb just onto a forest?” [Jones J., 1968; 68]. The mention of the atomic bomb is not accidental. The short story was written in the midst of another wave of the Cold War, and it is not surprising that the propaganda hype around the “Russian threat”, the impending third world war, was ridiculed by Jones.

Another, no less important problem was raised by the writer in the novella “None Sing So Wildly” – this is the problem of human dignity, the right of a person to be a man (this idea is present in various versions, as in this novella, gradually in all of Jones' works). The hero of the novella, and along with him, the author is deeply indignant at the scene of violence and humiliation of the young man. This can be, in his opinion, only under fascism and even in “free” America. “In the arena of 'big politics', where American liberal democracy makes its loudest promises”, – says Howard Zinn, – “there is nothing for an ordinary American to do: he has an opportunity to “self-determine”, to do something important for his own life and everything around him, it doesn't give” [Zinn, H., 1977; 134]. Using Hemingway's “iceberg”, Jones expresses his attitude to the incident with just one sentence – “For a minute it seemed to me that I was in Georgia”. The subtext of the author is very clear. Georgia was one of the most reactionary southern states of America, where freedom and human rights, especially for a Negro, were only on paper. So why fight, why try to change a world based on lies, a world in which you have to pay for everything, even for love. And the heroes rotate as if in a vicious circle, not seeing a way out of it. It seems that the author himself does not know how to remake such a deceptive world. That is why those heroes who are still trying to find a way out either die (Pruitt, Dave), or, finally, abandoning the struggle, go with the flow, suffering all their lives (Grant, Bama). The same fate befell, at one time, the heroes of the writers of the “Lost generation”. The motives of these writers are palpable in almost all of Jones' works, but he cares about the problems of his time, the fate of the people living next to him.

In the stories “The King” and “Sunday Allergy”, the artistic embodiment of the plot appeared in a slightly different, sentimental way. After reading “Sunday Allergy”, the magazine editor exclaimed: “Oh my god, Jones! We cannot publish your stories like that. You are considered a great warlike person, a writer of stories about the war”. Of course, he was wrong. The beautifully presented “small topic” in this story is consonant with some short stories written by J.K. Oates, whose works are full of gentle warmth, emotionality, simple humanity.

The social motive in the story “Sunday Allergy” sounds muffled, the author focuses on the moral problem, the moral aspect of human life. The characters of this story were also affected by the war, although indirectly. Two young women, who have

been living in New York for a long time, are very lonely and unhappy, like almost all the “small people” lost in this vast, cruel world are unhappy. Both are worried that they cannot marry, but it’s not so easy to arrange their fate at the age of 30, when most of the young people died on the fronts of the Second World War. And then frequent random hobbies devastate them, torment their souls. Being deceived once, they lose faith in people forever. The story has a very original compositional-plot approach to unraveling the causes of their disorder. Moving away from the direct accusation of society, Jones resorts to allegory. “We just have to get rid of Frederick, the Cat ...” – says one of the heroines, considering the cat guilty of her suffering. The author knows how to subtly convey the mental state of his characters, it is felt that he suffers with them and would be happy to help. Yes, he doesn’t know how, since “feeling the moral rottenness of his life, he shares in many respects the worldview of its flawed forces”, – wrote M. Mendelsson about Jones in 1960 [Mendelssohn M., 1960].

In America, it’s not only “small people” who suffer, the fate of many talents in this country is also bleak, as the story “The King” testifies. First published in the *Playboy* magazine in 1955, the story tells of the sad fate of the kings of jazz – almost all of them end up living in poverty. By the way, Jones, being a very musical person, was always interested in the fate of the musicians. Moving to Paris, he even dreamed of writing a novel about Django Reinhardt, the then famous gypsy guitarist. This idea subsequently had to be discarded, since there was not enough factual material.

In the story “The King”, the writer pays tribute in a considerable degree to documentary prose. The names of the kings of jazz are all genuine: the life-story of one of them, Willie Jefferson, was really as tragic as it was presented in the story. It is quite obvious, in this aspect, the writer’s socio-critical view of his country, where talented people cannot always find support and recognition. (We see a wider panorama of the life of Bohemian people in the novel “Go to a Widow-Maker”). To contrast the social vices of his country, the author deliberately resorted to the two-pronged composition of the story. As mentioned above, this is like a story in a story, and these two stories, as Jones noted, are not related to each other, but are connected spiritually. Such a structure does not imply the climax of the story; the reader must feel it himself. The first is the story of a beginning jazz band, which, due to objective reasons, nevertheless breaks up, and the second is the history of the formation of jazz in America. However, facts alone without the writer’s imagination would not give the story the emotionality and tragedy that make it a work of art.

The three trumpet kings before Louis Armstrong are mentioned; after their first success, having no support for their talent, they lead out a miserable existence until the end of their days. And the fate of the participants in a small orchestra created back in school, as if in miniature, reflects the deplorable fate of many talents in America. Jones wrote: “For me, the real story is the story of the college orchestra, and what happened to its members – it is the fate, comprehended by hundreds and thousands of others” [Jones J., 1968].

Jones was especially keen on the fate of children, alone in the ruthless world of adults. He always dreamed of writing a children’s novel, but there were many novels

about childhood in the Midwest, and he decided that a collection of stories about children would be more appropriate. Children's stories were written in the late 50s, when he was busy writing another novel and, as a result, he wrote only five stories that were included in this collection. The stories "Just Like the Girl..." (1956), "A Bottle of Cream" (1957), "The Tennis Game" (1958) devoted to the relationship of parents and children in the family, in particular a mother and a son. The stylistic variety of stories about children is striking, which, however, does not deprive them of their internal unity in relation to the artistic content. According to the plot, they seem to continue one another, although they are compositionally different from each other. If the first story is built in the form of a simple narrative, then the second is the memory of already an adult person about one episode of his childhood, and the third one is the boy's thoughts. However, they all solve a single ideological and artistic problem. In all three stories, we feel hostility towards the mother, not only of the child, but also Jones himself, whose childhood was a bleak one. It may well be that stories about children are inspired by memories of his youth. "Every art is autobiographical", – writes J. Carol Oates, – "it captures the artist's spiritual experience, his desire to explain something to himself: explaining to himself, he also explains this to others" [Oates J., 1973]. And for Jones, as for Hemingway, in general, it is typical to write only about what he, himself saw and experienced.

The author loves his little heroes. Neither the years of depression, nor the horrors of the war, first "hot", then "cold", killed a man in him who managed to create images of boys with such warmth and with some avaricious tenderness. The artist penetrates the inner world of his characters, through a prism of their perceptions the adult world appears before us. The unsightly relationships of parents in the family are hit by a boomerang in raising children, shaping their worldview ("Just Like the Girl ..."). The loss of trust and mutual understanding introduces a stream of estrangement into children's attitudes towards their parents. Little heroes already know the price of lies ("A Bottle of Cream"), understand such "categories" as bribery, hypocrisy ("Just Like the girl ...", "The Tennis Game").

The most unsightly, Jones considers even vile, is the mother's behavior in the story "Just Like the Girl ...", who makes her son spy on his father. To make the reader keener on contempt for mothers of this kind, the writer uses a dialogue that not only fully represents the personage's character, but also shows the author's attitude. "It was almost like the game where someone asks the question and you have to give the right answer or pay a forfeit, except he always got so scared it wasn't any fun".

The story "A Bottle of Cream" is one of James Jones' favorite stories. The hero is represented in two temporal planes – in the present and in the past. In the present, the storyline is "embroidered", mainly by the thoughts of the hero, which undoubtedly represent the position of the author himself: "This is a serious crime – a drunk driver behind the wheel. And this happens for two reasons. Firstly, we are a nation of car enthusiasts, and secondly, we are a nation of drunkards. Everyone knows this, but it's considered indecent to talk about it". You cannot explain otherwise the fact that the hero of the story became the owner of the bar, as his father bequeathed: "Bars are a

money enterprise because people will always drink” [Jones J., 1968].

Returning to the problem of drunkenness and bars in the novel “The Merry Month of May”, Jones elaborates on the reason somewhat, calling his generation – drunkards. In the world of business and pure-minded people, there is no peace anywhere; there is no consolation, even in religion. “...what are the real ... churches of today, in mid twentieth century? Where is the one ... place where a modern city man can go if he wants a dim, quiet place to commune with himself? ...Where nobody will ... bother him. Or make him feel guilty. Or tell him what he ought to do or believe, or try to change his philosophy or ideology or faith. Where in short he can be by himself in quiet contemplation and suck spiritual nourishment from the liquid communion in his hand and clarify his head. Where! Bars! That’s where! And that’s the only where” [Jones J., 1971; 114].

Retrospection into the past begins in the story by mentioning the name of Chester, who turned out to be a notorious criminal. The case carries the main plot load, a technique used by the author to increase the tension of a dramatically developing action. A bottle of cream bought by a boy accidentally turns sour; on the way back to the store, the boy accidentally drops it and it crashes. A small, helpless little man cries bitterly, because he cannot go to the owner of the store for another bottle, knowing that he will not believe him. But he cannot even return to his mother, whose character looms before us through the erratic thoughts that arise in her son's head. Jones cites only one phrase, but the capacious meaning of the words included in it allows him to reveal to the reader the relationship of his son and mother – not love and understanding, but fear and punishment.

Chester accidentally approaches the boy, who immediately understands everything and buys him another bottle of cream. The expressiveness of the subjective assessment of Chester’s act by the author is so strong that the reader involuntarily comes to the conclusion that this can only be done by a person who deeply understands the suffering of another, albeit, at first glance, negligible who is experiencing injustice and cruelty of people. Who knows? Perhaps such a life embittered Chester and subsequently led even to the dock. The writer does not impose this conclusion on the reader, but it suggests itself. This is precisely the characteristic feature of Jones' style, with half-tones and half-hints to make the reader think about the serious problems of human life. “...I wanted to be able to say something about Justice, whose statue still rises above the door ... But I don’t know what to say” – the main part of the “iceberg” of the idea “floats under water”, the reader himself must try to discern it.

A boy named John from the story “The Tennis Game” seemed to have come out of the story “A Bottle of Cream”, a little matured, but even lonelier. The boy’s behavior is a kind of protest against the tyranny of his mother, who did not allow him even to play calmly. The main means of expressing the boy’s motives is an internal monologue, which was used by the author to emphasize his absolute loneliness. John even played tennis alone, about the garage door. He had absolutely no friends. The writer deliberately details the process of the game so that the reader can clearly imagine the psychology of a teenager. The climax of the story – “the defeat of the

baron” – is a monstrous sight. The boy literally tortures himself. All his anger at his mother (to whom he does not dare to raise a hand), at his unhappy fate, he brings down upon himself. Experiencing terrible pain, he, nevertheless, receives great satisfaction, feeling himself a master of the situation, a strong personality. In fact, Jones approaches the issue of preserving personality not from social, but from a biological point of view. “I think”, the author says, “it is an interesting case of masculine masochism, a phenomenon that often occurs in my generation born of mothers such as the mother in this story [Jones J., 1968; 182].

Very touching and lovingly written the story “The Valentine” (1957), which can be called another episode from the life of John Slade (“The Tennis Game”). Here the lyrical manner of writing was manifested, which, in general, is not very characteristic of the writer. The scene in the store where the hero buys a box of chocolates for the girl, and the scene of giving a gift on the Valentine's Day is perfectly described by Jones. The artist, resorting to contrast, reveals the condition of the boy, his mental confusion and perplexity when he turns out to be ridiculed by the guys. Against the background of arrogant, self-confident young people, the hero looks even more miserable and helpless. And what is remarkable, the author's irony is absolutely absent in the interpretation of this image. On the contrary, the writer is full of sympathy and mercy for him. Moreover, he is outraged that no one cares about the feelings and sufferings of the boy. Jones also makes the reader think, “Are we all in such a state?” We can add to the writer's statement about his nation another feature of the Americans – individualism, which is fraught with selfishness.

Thus, in the three stories analyzed above, the plot of which at the beginning seems insignificant, at least not problematic, there is a deep social meaning. As a rule, there are no sharply expressed social conflicts in Jones' stories, and the author, as if, does not hint at them. However, penetrating into the essence of the story, the reader comes to such conclusions, the significance of which is perhaps comparable to the conclusions of most works of the “great prose”. The short story “The Ice-Cream Headache” is an attempt by Jones to understand the reasons for the breakup of many families, the curse that prevails over family ties and its emergence. The plot is based on the thoughts of the hero, a seventeen-year-old youth, about the moral problems that arise in people's lives. He is trying to understand what destroyed the once-respected family of his ancestors in the city. Before the hero's mental gaze, the whole life of the grandfather and his four sons passes, accompanied by his subjective assessment. The history of the Dylan clan (surname of the hero) can be singled out in an independent story (the composition of the story “The King” is repeated). This is a vivid, almost “Faulkner” example of the life of many American families. Analysis of specific events helps to draw a conclusion in the study of the objective reality. Debauchery and drunkenness – these are the causes of the “death” of the family. But vices do not disappear without a trace. The past dominates the present. And the events described in the present are a direct result of a vicious heritage. Jones simplifies the problem. He again has a purely biological approach in analyzing causes. The influence of some of Freud's ideas is clearly felt here. Freudianism justifies violence, cruelty, preaches

humility and the thought of the helplessness of any attempt to change the world for the better. And “Jones thinks of all modern society as the embodiment of innate cruelty, destructive and self-destructive instincts” [Gaysmar M., 1967; 207].

On the one hand, the author considers everything that happens to the hero to be quite logical and, even as if, does not condemn him. On the other hand, the writer erects an obstacle on the way of the youth to achieve his goal. The output, however, is not sufficiently reasoned. Pure chance (headache) stops Tom (the hero of the novel). If it were not for the sudden illness that Tom took as retribution for trying to sin, nothing would stop him from meeting his sister and her girl-friend. Vice was laid in him by his ancestors. So his grandfather lived, so his father lives, so he will live, himself, his entire generation. The author presents to readers only with an endless, erratic stream of thoughts seething in the fragile consciousness of a young man, without even hinting at the specific conclusions that we should draw. Undoubtedly, the collapse of the once-solid family is associated with processes characteristic of the life of a society whose ulcers Jones exposes and does not accept. But, as M. Mendelssohn noted, James Jones was not able to overcome to the end the spiritual dependence on the social situation of his time.

CONCLUSION

And yet, in his stories, Jones was able to show increasing individualism, moral impoverishment, the tragedy of life in contemporary to him society. The smooth, outwardly calm tone of the narrative of his stories, at the same time, is full of drama and bitterness. This is especially evident in children's stories, where the future of adolescents, hopelessly lonely, is as hopeless and gloomy as the present of their parents. This is easily proved if you put the stories of Jones in the chronological sequence of their plots. Then it turns out that the unfortunate people who have lost faith in life in military and socio-psychological stories are grown up adolescents from his children's stories.

Of course, carried away by exploring the inner world of his characters, which are often based on the life experience of the writer himself, Jones sometimes softens the social climate in his stories, which cannot be said about his novels. Nevertheless, comparing it with Hemingway, we can say that this artist also does not always reveal his soul, doesn't negotiate much, he puts it “under water”. Jones, as it were, relies on the reader, believes that he will be able to subtract subtext between the lines and draw conclusions for himself.

As I tried to show, the main theme of the writer is anti-war. However, in the presented collection one can outline various motives and themes, which testifies to the writer's attempt to show the versatile social life of his country. The form used by Jones in the stories being analyzed is characterized by the presence of a central episode in each short story, drama expressed in an abundance of dialogues, lyrical motifs that often turn into pessimism. Despite the documentary coating of many stories, the author does not put himself to the position of an outside observer – he is experiencing what he describes, one might even say empathize.

In this regard, Jones can, to some extent, be compared with W. Faulkner, about whom Walter Allen said that he “was seized by his characters and by his tragic vision of the South which he dramatized through them. He was constantly adding to that vision, revising it, making it richer, more detailed, more compelling and authoritative as imaginative history, making it more truthful. In the reader’s mind his opus constitutes a whole world to which the short stories contribute. They will always be overshadowed by the novels, but they express with comparable hallucinatory power, the same vision of a society shaped by tragic experience” [Partisan Review, 1960; 188].

All these features prepare us for the perception of the method and style of Jones as a whole and, moreover, the definition of his best novels. Each Jones’ short story is interesting in itself. It is the brick that underlies the building of his creative work.

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