

Thus, the story by
joyce oates cannot be
considered as a
fictionalized version
of...

[Family](#), [Father](#)



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Literature: The Second World War and its Aftermath /A Century Ends

A poem by Theodore Roethke ' My Papa's Waltz' is a representative of postwar lyrics. It describes father and son relationships, narrated retrospectively from the point of view of an adult, who used to be a participant of the action.

A question whether the poem pictures violence towards the child or on the contrary presents us warm relations between a youngster and a grown-up remains arguable. The author shows the act as a beautiful, graceful dance – the waltz. This fact directs us to the idea that for the narrator this experience was not horrible at all. He does not try to idealize his father, but we can conclude that the boy loved him. The lines: ' But I hung on like death' and ' Still clinging to your short' imply father and son being very close to each other during the boy's childhood.

We cannot claim this family was a prosperous one, as an image of badly drunken father with dirty hands and every missed step gives the idea of something opposite. The waltz is a metaphor here and though this dance like any other consists of beats and rhythms, we do not have an impression of the boy being beaten.

Another theory tells about Petty Herst syndrome, when the image of desirable reality replaces the real one, which is harsh and brutal. The image of dancing the waltz may replace the real image of the father beating his child.

However, Roethke depicted reality that surrounded him. War always brings damage, murders and annihilation of ideals. This described family was a

typical one, trying to adapt to new circumstances. Thus, the discussed question still remains arguable.

Irene and Donald Wrysons are the main characters of John Cheever's short story 'The Wrysons', portraying an ordinary family with 'limited social life' and some oddness rooted deep down in the past.

Irene's dream is the central part in the story, picturing an explosion of hydrogen bomb. The significance of her dream can be shown from two points of view. One way or another, Cheever included his speculations about war. Irene's dream may have a reference to the World War II, when atomic bomb was thrown on Hiroshima and Nagasaki or in the more global way to the end of the world. It must be admitted that dreams are the representation of our desires and fears.

Donald Wryson is another curious character, possessing his splash of oddness. His fondness of baking cakes at night, when trying to regain inner balance seems completely strange even to the modern society. Both Donald's shame of his night occupations and Irene's fear to tell her husband about the nightmare are the consequence of fear to reveal their oddness in terms of gender roles. Baking for men and reflecting on the war for women wasn't considered to be a standard at that time.

The Wrysons are obsessed with the idea of social status and appearance in the eyes of their neighbors. Their enthusiastic involvement into upzoning and sending six hundred Christmas cards every year depict their determination in showing off their 'good appearance'.

John Cheever pictured a family, which on the surface looked so ordinary and limited, being of no particular interest and deep down, behind the door it

possessed a part of oddness, which could not be shown so that not to awake gossiping. Thus, the main idea is: don't judge by appearance.

In 1966 an article about the murderer Charles Howard Schmid was published in Time Magazine, portraying the man, who killed three teenage girls in Tucson. His story became a background for the short story 'Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?' by Joyce Carol Oates.

It should be started that the magazine article was based on the true story of the serial killer and the short story – on the article, which was read by the author only to the half. This fact gives an explanation, why her story included or on the contrary omitted some details. Joyce Oates was unpleasantly impressed by it, but giving up reading it halfway didn't prevent her from visualizing some true facts in Arnold's appearance in particular. His strange boots, which distinguished him between the others, took the whole paragraph to describe.

No matter what the basis of the story was, the author always intends to bring a message to the reader. She focuses on the description of Connie to give emphasis on her becoming mature. Here one of the problems of teenagers was risen – the problem of stepping into adulthood. The main character was pictured as a typical teenager, who strives by no means look and behave mature, at the same time being innocent and young inside. Fantasy versus reality of adulthood can be claimed as the main theme of the story. The magazine article gave facts, nothing was hidden and no hints were made and the end of the story is as clear as a day. The short story has an open ending: we can only suppose what happened next.

Works cited

Theodore Roethke. ' My Papa's Waltz'. 04 May 2013

John Cheever. ' The Wrysons'. The Stories of John Cheever. Knopf Doubleday Publishing

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