



WOMEN'S LOVE IN O. HENRY'S SHORT STORIES

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Abstract: This paper aims to highlight the position of women's love as depicted in O Henry's short stories. O Henry has created stories about women based on his observations of women in their distinct places and eras. The women in their stories are either from the middle or lower classes. The aristocratic women are never shown by the author. Because the writer is from the middle class, he surely talks about the women's love he has encountered, been moved by, and fully understood in his own circles. Women are simple, alert, frank, cheerful, thankful, kindhearted, courteous, self-respecting, and gifted with many other good attributes in many of O. Henry's writings. It is not an exaggeration to say that he genuinely related with their concerns. His genuine pity for them was awoken by their agonies, misfortunes, and true testimonies of their hard fight, and his anecdotes paint a bleak picture of persecution and humiliation to which they were inhumanely subjected. He genuinely cared about their well-being. O. Henry's approach toward women is unquestionably decent and kind. In addition, he is a strong supporter of women's rights to the place and status they deserve in society. As a result, he emphasises the dignity of women by saying, "Holy is the wife; revered the mother."

Keywords: *women, love, sufferings, struggles and humiliation*

INTRODUCTION:

Maupassant writes in his story, "Our Hearts": "It is a short word, but it contains all; it means the body, the soul, the life, the entire being. We feel it as we feel the warmth of the blood, we breathe it as we breathe the air, and we carry it in ourselves as we carry our thoughts. Nothing more exists for us. It is not a word; it is an inexpressible state indicated by four letters..."

Love is an undeniably all-encompassing and all-pervading emotion. It appears in practically every aspect of life. Its importance in all forms of literature, regardless of time and geography, is enormous. O. Henry, as a champion of the common man and an interpreter of modern society, cannot be unmoved by the universal allure of love with his acute observational abilities. Henry depicts real life, complete with all of its hardships and tragedies. He also expounds on life through the lens of its supreme passion, love. He makes the best of his ability to demonstrate how love influences human life in a variety of ways. Many of his stories deal with various facets of love in various forms, styles, and subject. Love is generally a major potent element in constructing the social context with O. Henry. Many of his stories unmistakably demonstrate that love is a guiding factor in human life. In human life, he witnessed both periods of crisis and moments of happiness.

He was a reserved individual. He was such an introvert that he couldn't express his emotions when he fell in love with Athol and eventually eloped with her against all odds, including her parents' severe objections. Of fact, his marriage only lasted ten years since Athol died suddenly and unexpectedly in 1897 after a protracted bout with tuberculosis. In 1907, he married Sara Lindsay Coleman, his childhood sweetheart. But his regular family life was ruined by his abnormal alcoholic addiction, which made his marriage sour and unpleasant. His unpleasant marital

life shows up in his stories on occasion. "The Green Door" is an excellent example of this, in which he expresses his disdain for marriage and romanticism.

It's impossible to say how much O. Henry was inspired by his contemporaries when it came to women's love. But there is no doubting that he represented the pains, sufferings, and tragedies of women, as well as their struggle against social injustice and humiliation in a male-dominated society, while telling the tale of their struggle for existence, with great care and affection. Like his predecessors, O. Henry was quick to recognise the importance of love in their lives, and a close inspection of his stories reveals that he was equally excellent at describing the various elements of love.

O. Henry handled the episodes involving their small joys in life, their manifestations of love, and their moments of pleasure in the company of those who pleaded to woo them in various situations very deftly in comparison to the depiction of agonies, torture, neglect, and humiliation to which the women were subjected in contemporary society. In pieces like "The Trimmed Lamp," "Brickdust Row," "A Lickpenny Lover," "An Unfinished Story," "The Memento," "Psyche and the Pskyscraper," "The Romance of a Busy Broker," "The Ferry of Unfulfillment," and many others, she paints a picture of severe struggle in the life of shop ladies. O. Henry also depicts the hidden flow of their love, which is evident in certain occasions despite the fact that it is suppressed. Despite the ongoing oppression and repression they are forced to live under, their zest for life looks unaffected. Love and romance in the poor, mistreated working girls are sometimes suppressed under difficult conditions. O. Henry, who is sympathetic to melancholy women, illustrates the moments in their lives when flashes of love emerge gustily and then fade away, leaving a temporal difference over their dreary and monotonous daily routine.

O. Henry shows how love becomes an inescapable fact in Rosalie's life in "The Memento." Rosalie gave up her career as an actor because she was so disappointed and appalled by the mistreatment and humiliation she had received. Despite this, she saw in Reverend Arthur Lyle a man who was "different from the men in the audiences" and thought he was deserving of love. She was fearless and unafraid to fall in love with Arthur because of the overwhelming and compelling intensity of love. Finally, they married, which provided Rosalie with some escape from the clutches of a number of amorous men. Significantly, she underwent a significant alteration as a result of the marvelous power of soothing, consoling love. Rosalie's discernment allowed her to distinguish between a sincere lover and a false one. Her knowledge led her to recognise that the objects of allurements and temptation that were brought to her were only intended to bring her to destruction. Of course, the answer is O. Henry tells us that jealousy is a common feature of romantic relationships. A lady can hardly stand another woman, especially when the latter is a threat to her courtship. As soon as Rosalie learned about Arthur's new love affair, she became envious and self-conscious. Rosalie, on the other hand, misinterpreted his platonic affection for a relationship with another woman.

Despite her difficult circumstances, O. Henry depicts the infrequent moments of happiness in Florence's life in "Brickdust Row." When Blinkers, a well-to-do man, approaches her with an offer of love, her reaction is palpable. She gives no affirmative response, despite the fact that she spares her time in his company out of politeness. Of course, she eventually decides against marrying Blinkers due to his high social rank, which is completely incompatible with hers.

O. Henry depicts the conquering force of love and its powerful influence on Maxwell Harvey, a typical forgetful broker, in "Romance of a Busy Broker." The highly absent-minded busy broker's business rendered him completely unconscious to the fact that he had married Leslie, his stenographer, the night before. Miss Leslie was dutiful, truthful, simple, and soft-hearted, and her love for Maxwell was real, despite Maxwell's lack of time and opportunity to respond. However, there came a point when he had to say something openly: "I just have a few moments to spare. In that point, I'd like to say anything. Are you willing to be my wife? I haven't had the opportunity to make love to You in the traditional sense, but I adore you." Leslie was astute enough to recognise Harvey's predicament and responded softly and lovingly: "Now you know. It's this old business that's kept everything else out of your mind for the time being".

In "An Unfinished Story," O. Henry vividly depicts Dulcie's unwavering devotion to General Kitchener, her "ideal of a gallant knight." Dulcie is adamant that there is no place for deception in the realm of love. Even if she is away from her beloved, the spirit of her genuine love for him prevents her from succumbing to any temptation. She is adamant about not infringing on the sacredness of love.

In the case of his storey "A Lick penny Lover," Henry's women's love is primarily founded on sociological considerations. Irving Carter, a millionaire, was irresistibly attracted to Masie, the story's shop girl heroine, and made an earnest request for her consent to marry him. Irving's tenacious pleading perplexed Masie, who was torn between two options: pursuing a career at the glove counter or living a wealthy, trendy, and snug life with a millionaire. Finally, she opted to cling to her drab existence at the "Biggest Store," expressing little interest in the possibilities of a better life. Like Florence in "Brickdust Row," she knew that the vast disparity in their "Stations" would jeopardise their long-term partnership.

In "Psyche and the Pskyscraper," O.Henry focuses on the well-known issue of triangle love. Daisy, the story's heroine, had captured the hearts of both Joe and Dabster. Joe, the owner of " the smallest store of New York" seemed to be the appropriate person to be her suitor, according to the heroine. She also thought Joe's storey was " it was cozy and warm and homelike," and she eventually surrendered to him. In numerous other stories by O. Henry, the heroines frequently reject love offers because of socioeconomic status incompatibility. Daisy, on the other hand, saw that, given his position, it would be prudent to chose Joe as a lover. Daisey is one of O.Henry's poor working girl heroines for whom love had real value in her life.

In "The Trimmed Lamp," Henry not only depicts Lou and Nancy's difficult existence, but he also demonstrates how love plays an important role in their lives. In response to Dan's offer of love, Lou, who works as an ironer at a laundry, falls in love with him. Nancy, a department shop employee, is a more ambitious person than Lou. She is proposed to by a bald young man wearing diamond cufflinks. Nancy, on the other hand, declines his proposal on the grounds that "his family only permits him to spend \$20,000 a year." Lou is displeased by her decision, and she, too, rejects Dan's proposition in order to live independently. Nancy, who is attracted to Dan because of specific attributes he possesses, decides to marry him. When the two friends meet up again three months later, Lou has undergone a complete transformation, sporting new looks decked with priceless furs and gems. She is taken aback when she learns from Nancy that she is marrying Dan. Lou's own tragedy for choosing the route of disaster is shown by this revelation. In this case, Henry demonstrates how, in real life, a problematic scenario might occur when two ladies fall in love with the same man. What offers delight to one person eventually brings happiness to another.

In his poem "The Furnished Room," O.Henry discusses how the intensity of passionate love might lead to self-immolation. This is exactly what happens in the life of the young man who searches the lodgers desperately for his sweetheart, Miss Vashner. It's a cruel twist of fate that he boards in the same room as his beloved. He gropes about the room, smelling her aroma. Finally, in a fit of rage, he kills himself in the same room where Miss Vashner committed herself.

CONCLUSION:

In O.Henry's views, women's love isn't always just an intense feeling. He also depicts love as a lifelong passion that is intense and diversified in scope. It can be both self-defeating and ennobling at times. In the storey "A Retrieved Reformation," it is O.Henry's view that love has immense ability to achieve wonders, as demonstrated in Jimmy's letter to Billy, his friend, after the farmer's determination to give up the sinister profession of a robber. In stories like "The Gift of the Magi," "The Last Leaf," "A Service of Love," and others, O.Henry depicts the impact of ennobling and unselfish love. The depth of Jim and Della's love, a poor couple in "The Gift of the Magi," appears to have given their souls a touch of grandeur. The couple's mutual flame of love is so intense and so deep that they are willing to part with their most prized possessions without hesitation for the pleasure of the other.

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