

PORTRAYAL OF FEMALE CHARACTERS IN O'HENRY'S SHORT STORIES

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ABSTRACT

This present article tends to show that woman characters and their special personalities made us to think about it and analyses thoroughly. We can see here the change of O' Henry's perspectives at looking on the world. It is dealing the subjects of the all stories. It is very interesting the researcher to see that how these characters are behaving with others. Their actions and motifs made them to be ordinary citizens of New York City.

Key Words: Female Characters, short story, O'Henry

Characters are the focus of the story. It consists with how the characters within the story are narrated. Writer went to portrait their behaviors, appearance, culture, language, their beliefs, and customs. There the voice of the author or age, or century. story writers in short stories there

are usually fewer characters compared to a novel and He usually focuses on one central character or protagonist. O' Henry had showed real picture of America. if we enter deeper level we will be able to analyses these characters with introspective that many of major characters came out of his life and time in the west, particularly in south Texas , Austin and Houston. O'Henry was 20 in 1882 when a family friend asked him to return and live on sheep and cattle ranches that the family managed on the Nueces River. There he was a guest, but he worked alongside the ranch hands, listened to their short and tall tales round the campfires, rode the range with them, and witnessed firsthand the range wars between the cattlemen and rustlers. Whatever he saw and heard stuck in his mind sort of a burr.

O' Henry created quite 200 characters, composites and variations of the lads and women he had seen, lived among and worked with: cowboys, outlaws, train robbers, saloon keepers, gamblers and prospectors, tramps, swindlers, country store proprietors, lawmen, schoolmarm—characters he could choose between to populate his stories like a casting director with a corral full of actors. O' Henry had showed real picture of America. if we enter deeper level we will be able to analyses these characters with introspective that many of major characters came out of his life and time in the west, particularly in south Texas , Austin and Houston. O' Henry was 20 in 1882 when a family friend asked him to return and live on sheep and cattle ranches that the family managed on the Nueces River. There he was a guest, but he worked alongside the ranch hands, listened to their short and tall tales round the campfires, rode the range with them, and witnessed firsthand the range wars between the cattlemen and rustlers. whatever he saw and heard stuck in his mind sort of a burr. O' Henry created quite 200 characters, composites and variations of the lads and women he had seen, lived among and worked with: cowboys, outlaws, train robbers, saloon keepers, gamblers and prospectors, tramps,

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Let us analyze each-every character and focus subtlety of characters of each short story. We have plenty of characters in O' Henry short stories like of the more than 300 short stories written by William Sydney Porter under the pen name of O' Henry, about 50 of them were supported his life and times in the West. Many reflect the nearly 16 years he lived in South Texas, Austin and Houston.

Porter was 20 in 1882 when a family friend invited him to return and live on sheep and cattle ranches that the family managed on the Nueces River. Porter was a guest, but he worked alongside the ranch hands, listened to their short and tall tales round the campfires, rode the range with them, and witnessed firsthand the range wars between the cattlemen and rustlers. For his Texas stories, he created quite 200 characters, composites and variations of the lads and women he had seen, lived among and worked with: cowboys, outlaws, train robbers, saloon keepers, gamblers, prospectors, tramps, swindlers, country store proprietors, lawmen, school characters he could choose between to populate his stories like a casting director with a corral full of actors.

There are ample of characters from O'Henry's short stories. Those are as follows:

Sue

She is a young artist who works for a magazine. She is caring and supportive of her friend Sue. She is also very positive and optimistic when it comes to tough situations. She even pays the bills for doctor and food during Johnsy's illness. It's her insistence that leads to Behrman's decision to paint the leaf outside Johnsy's room. She shows bravery in a dire situation again when she informs her friend about Behrman's tragic end.

Johnsy

Johnsy is a young artist who dreams of visiting Naples, Italy and paint the bay there. Even though she is strong and caring, she falls victim to depression after contracting pneumonia. Her depression sinks her deeper into misery as she starts to see her life wither with shedding leaves of winter. However, she is revived by a painting made by her neighbor Behrman who paints an immaculate leaf outside her window. She accepts her folly and weakness and fights on to live and paint for years to come. In a way, she becomes Behrman's masterpiece.

Della

Patriarchy's foundation has rested for millennia on the unwritten but rigorously enforced rule that women and children keep the secrets of men, and suffer abuse in silent shame. We can see that Della feared to be present in front of Jim after selling her hair and she was described as the one to have a boyish look than a womanish look. This might have surely worried her a lot but she cared little for that and she took her decision to gift Jim a valuable present. She was ready to face the comments that may result by her boyish look. Women lack a positive

emotional vocabulary about money. While many of the great stories about men are stories about the romance between men and riches, women have very little narrative.

One character took on a life that has lasted quite a century: the Cisco Kid, a posh good guy/bad guy who became a staple of every form of storytelling in the 20th century, right down to a 1972 song called “The Cisco Kid” by the group War. Porter depicted his characters at work, as seen during this passage from “The Higher Abdication”:
 “Six cowpunchers of the Cibolo Ranch were waiting round the door of the ranch store. Their ponies cropped grass near-by, tied within the Texas fashion—which is not tied at all. Their bridle reins had been dropped to the world, which may be a more effectual way of securing them (such is the power of habit and imagination) than you could devise out of a half-inch rope and a live-oak tree.”¹

When Porter visited nearby San Antonio, he tucked away pictures of the sidewalk games of chance, the drifters trying to find a handout, the town folks with their fancy clothes and the city itself. Such imagery found an area in “The Higher Abdication”:
 “The winding, doubling streets, leading nowhere, bewildered him. Then there was a little river, crooked as a pot-hook that crawled through the center of the town, crossed by 100 little bridges so nearly alike that they got on Curly’s nerves.”²

Porter saw the temporary tent towns, where every other storefront was a saloon or gambling room or both that moved with the railroad construction gangs crossing the state, and he witnessed the outlaws and ranch hands fogged with whiskey who shot up the towns on their answer. A passage from “The Reformation of Calliope” reads:
 “Glass fell like hail; dogs vomosed; chickens flew, squawking; feminine voices shrieked concernedly to youngsters at large.”

The social and gender factors also influence the writers to a greater level thereby affecting or effecting life and sacrifice. It does not mean that all people who show their love to their beloved will be reasonable in all ways and means it may be wise to certain people and foolish to some others. Love is not valued on the cost of the present but it is valued on the sacrifice. I like to present ‘The Gift of the Magi’ by O’ Henry with the predominance of Super ego and self-actualization as proposed by the psychologists that led a couple sacrifice for true love.

“One character took on a life that has lasted more than a century: the Cisco Kid, a complex good guy/bad guy who became a staple of every form of storytelling in the 20th century, down to a 1972 song called The Cisco Kid”³ by the group. O’Henry depicted his characters at work, as seen in this passage from The Higher Abdication:

“Six cowpunchers of the Cibolo Ranch were waiting around the door of the ranch store. Their ponies cropped grass near-by, tied in the Texas fashion—which is not tied at all. Their bridle reins had been dropped to the earth, which is a more effectual way of securing them (such is the power of habit and imagination) than you could devise out of a half-inch rope and a live-oak tree.”⁴

O’ Henry visited nearby San Antonio, and then he tucked away pictures of the sidewalk games of chance, the drifters looking for a handout, the city folks with their fancy clothes and the city itself. Such imagery found a place in The Higher Abdication:

“The winding, doubling streets, leading nowhere, bewildered him. And then there was a little river, crooked as a pot-hook, that crawled through the middle of the town, crossed by a hundred little bridges so nearly alike that they got on Curly’s nerves.”⁵ O’ Henry saw the temporary tent towns, where every other storefront was a saloon or gambling room or both that moved with the railroad construction gangs crossing the nation, and he witnessed the outlaws and ranch hands fogged with whiskey that shot up the towns on their way out. A passage from *The Reformation of Calliope* reads: “Glass fell like hail; dogs vomosed; chickens flew, squawking; feminine voices shrieked concernedly to youngsters at large.”⁶

In addition to his two years on the ranch, O’Henry’s Texas influences included working at the state land office and a bank in Austin and a newspaper in Houston and position as a draftsman at the land office led him to a search for the Lost Bowie Silver Mine that introduced him to the Hill Country. From the directions on a 30-year-old document, Porter and two others set out through Pleasant Valley, Dripping Springs, Johnson City and Fredericksburg to Menard County. The directions were too vague, and they never found the treasure. As a bank teller, Porter was responsible for the accounts each day. Somebody had been dipping in the till. Numbers didn’t balance. Banking regulators noticed. O’Henry, charged with embezzlement of money, took the rap and went to prison. Very this experience taught him about bank frauds and bank examiners, and they became story devices. During this time in prison, where he heard the adventures of a train-robbing cellmate, gave him material for stories of outlawry that ring with authenticity.

Characters drawn from all walks of life in the story of “The Hiding of Black Chief,” Caesar in “A Municipal Report,” and Lizzie in “The Guilty Party” are only isolated examples of O’Henry’s proficiency in creating a vivid sense of the texture of language for the reader by reproducing native dialect, be it Western, southern, or even “New York.”

CONCLUSION

O’ Henry’s all characters are complex in nature. Due to this reason only he succeeded to achieve his desirable result that surprise ending. He brought up his characters in the environment as in urban city like New York, in the advent of industrialization a begging of modernism. With the advent of modernism cities like New York are studded with public, crowd and pollution from companies, man is forgetting humanism, money oriented man has been established. We have many characters which are portrayal of gallery of real characters in the stories of *The Furnished Room*, *The Last Leaf*, *The Gift of The Magi*, *The Cop and The Anthem*, *The Green Door*, *After Twenty Year*, *A Retrieved Reformation*, *The Third Ingredient*, *The Princess and The Puma*, *Buried Treasure*, *An Unfinished Story*, *Babes in the Jungle*, and *The Call of The Tame*. These selected stories do not only give the reader a chance to read some of the best known of his works but also bear ample evidence of the wide range of his writings. Humorous and energetic, O’ Henry’s stories are marked by coincidence and surprise endings. They offer an insight into human nature and the ways it is affected by love, hate, wealth, poverty, gentility, disguise, and crime. O’ Henry’s depiction of his characters and their unique situation continue to weave their magic over

readers almost a hundred years after the author created them. This is a must-read for all short story lovers as well as for those who want to take a dip into the world of classics. The second aspect is his unique insight into the social conditions of his time.

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