

This present thesis explores the typical narrative technique, i.e. surprising ending in O'Henry's short stories. The typical surprising ending in association with narrative analysis through poof structuralist lens drives the themes of deception mistaken identity, the unchangeable nature of the fate and the resolution of seemingly unsolvable difficulties separating two lovers in O'Henry's Works.

In O'Henry's works it's the common people who save for the nights they can dress to impress and mix with the wealthy people. Some more themes are the pretense and reversal of fate, discovery and initiation through adventure, the city as a playground for imagination, and the basic yearning for all humanity. O'Henry's main theme is pretense the desire to pose as what one is not is the most persistent theme. The Duel relates to the theme of the city as an imagination.

The duel has the city glowing with lights seen at midnight from a hotel window: "there arose the breath of gaiety unrestrained, of love, of hate, of all the passions that man can know. There below him lay all things good or bad, that can be brought from the four corners of the earth to instruct please, thrill, enrich, despoil, elevate, cast down, nature or kill...." (Pizer and Herbert 415).

The first theme is surprise ending of O' Henry. He uses this in a large amount of his stories. The readers who read his works are eagerly waiting for a surprise ending (Garcia 155). O'Henry's works basically all contain a surprise ending. They lead us on it the beginning with a thought that everything is going according to plan.

O'Henry has used the first person and the third person narrative in most of his stories. The narrative sounds authorial voice. In the use of narrative technique he is unique in many respects. First Henry gives the impression of 'surprisingending' or the 'Twist in the fail'. He wants his stories end in such a humorous or twisted manner. He is humane and he used subtle irony in the description and dialogues. Whatever he

wants to say, he is clear, as writer, he used dialogues, incidents and characters for the development of plot. He also employs flashback techniques of narration. O'Henry commits himself to the use of flashback profusely. he also employs nostalgic memory, suspense thrill and realism. The flashback technique is used in the first person narrative. Memories from the past are retold to another character. It is also used in the self explanatory style. As life is complex, O'Henry is complex. The style of the writer is complex and inimitable. He is unique and possesses individual idiosyncrasies. Through they appear very simple the deep meaning hidden in the stories are unfathomable.

O'Henry's short story might to be spun in words and structures in order to bring out the described story of some value. The meaning is the first, the art of narration in the next. As the author narrated the story, the intended meaning is brought out. Meaning and narration are inter-mixed. While narrating the story, O'Henry used various techniques. He used the first person narrative in many of the short stories. He makes his short stories very popular and unique with "O'Henry's writing techniques", which is manifest in the /well-conceived outline, well-knit suspense, intricate plot, Humorous coincidence and surprising ending. Two of the technique are very popular; they are "surprising ending and smiles full of tears."

In his short stories, O'Henry shows his ingenious conception while creating the plot. His works are full of humour and readers can't help smiling or even laughing; but after that what readers feel left in their hearts, is only sorrow. That's the reason why people agree with the phrase "smiles full of Tears".

On the other hand, while his stories are ingenious conceived, the endings are always contrary to readers' expectations. Through his stories' endings are always surprising, they are not beyond reason, for they conform well to the logic of life.

O'Henry lets us, the readers, think that we have it figured out but we don't. He has something waiting for us at the end of the book. Something that would seem like it came out of nowhere. Hyder E. Rollins said, "The conclusion is an enigma" (157). He has the reader under suspense until the last sentence. This is shown in O. Henry's story 'The Gift of the Magi' where a husband sells his watch to buy his wife some combs she worshipped and the wife cut sold her hair to her a chain for his watch.

This was such a surprise because the readers never expect this in the beginning. The readers never expect the wife to cut her hair when her husband was buying her combs, and the husband to sell his watch when his wife bought him a chain for it.

Also O'Henry had an idea that life is a surprise that the unexpected continually happens. Rollins commented on Henry's idea saying that "He is then, a pure romanticist who strives earnestly for realistic effects" (157).

A romanticist is a person who acts on impulse. They hate conformity, they loathe following the rules. They prefer to make their own rules, and they are in touch with nature. Rollins says that O'Henry is romanticist because of his idea that life is surprise. His notion of mystic vision of life has given the unique mystic shape to his stories.

Similarly, Eugene Current Garcia said that "The most obvious technical manifestation of O'Henry's delight in the unexpected is in his famous surprise endings." (Current Garcia, O'Henry, 137)

O'Henry's way of using these surprise endings really plays a vital role in most of his stories. His stories are perhaps been known for their surprising endings. A surprise at the end of the story can bring joy to the readers. The key to a surprise is that it has to be believable.

In the same way, O'Henry's one of the prominent techniques is the use of local colour. His writings take the speech patterns and rhythms of the common folks and adds "vivacity, variety, and interest of his stories" said Eugene Current Garcia. (Current Garcia, O'Henry. 142)

According to Dorothy L. Sayers, surprise is a hallmark of mystery and dictative fiction and the setting forth of riddles to be solved in the chief business of an author in genre. In this sense, almost all O'Henry's stories might broadly be labeled "mysterious".

Evans Walter "A Municipal Report : O'Henry and Postmodernism" Tennessee studies in literature 26 (1981) : 101 - 116 Recognizing modern criticism's either trite interpretation or complete indifference to O'Henry's work, through the fiction of postmodernist like Vladimir Nabokov, John Barth, Robert Coover, and William Gass, Evans remarks on a radical revisioning of Peter's literary contributions.

Eichenbaum, Boris. O'Henry and the Theory of the short story. Translated by I.R. Titunik. Ann Arbor : University of Michigan, 1986. Originally published in Russia in 1925, this study reflects both the Russian interest in O'Henry as a serious writer and the brand of criticism known as Russian formalism. Because Formalism was more concerned with technical achievement than thematic profundity, O'Henry who was a technical master, is a perfect candidate for the exercise of his kind of analysis.

This research work analyses O'Henry's narrative technique in his short stories through defamiliarization and poststructuralist lens. Defamiliarization is the term introduced in 1917 by Victor Shklovsky in his essay 'Arts as Technique'. To explain his thinking behind defamiliarization, Shklovsky claimed that the technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar'. It means art is the way of experiencing the artfulness of

an object: the object is not important. In fact Shklovsky invented the term defamiliarization as a means "to distinguish poetic from practical language on the basis of the former's perceptibility" (Crawford 209). Essentially, he is stating that poetic language is fundamentally different than the language we use every day because it is more difficult to understand. Poetic speech is framed speech whereas prose is ordinary speech.

The distinction between artistic language and everyday language, for Shklovsky, applies to all artistic forms :

The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not they are known. The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar' to make forms difficult to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic and in itself and must be prolonged. (Shklovsky 16)

Similarly, poststructuralism designates a broad variety of critical perspectives and procedures that in the 1970s displaced structuralism from its prominence as the radically innovative way of dealing with language and other signifying systems. A conspicuous announcement to American scholars of the poststructural point of view was Jacques Derrida's paper of "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences", delivered in 1966 to an International Colloquium at John Hopkins University. (The paper is included in Derrida's 'Writing and Difference', 1978). Derrida attacked the systematic, quasi-scientific pretensions of the strict form of structuralism - derived from the Saussure's concept of the structure of language. Derrida attacked on the concept of the western canonization of 'Logo centrism' or dependent on the notion of a self-certifying foundation, or absolute, or essence, or ground, which is ever needed but never present. Other contemporary thinkers to Derrida were Michael

Foucault, Jacques Lacan, Ronald Barthes. They altered the traditional claims for the existence of self-evident foundations that guarantee the validity of all knowledge and truth, and establish the possibility of determine communication. This antifoundationalism in philosophy, conjoined with skepticism about traditional conceptions of meaning, knowledge, truth, value and the subject or 'self' in evident in some current exponents of diverse modes of literary studies, including Feminist, New Historicist and Reader Response criticism. In its extreme forms, the post structural claim is that the workings of language inescapably undermine meaning in the very process of making such meaning possible, or else that every mode of discourse "constructs", or constitutes, the very facts or truths or knowledge that it claims to discover.

O'Henry's humor and imagination conquer any journalistic tendencies; he may have transferred to fiction. His penchant for dramatic irony, a trademark in many of his short stories, gives his style its distinctive flavor. Gentle and ingenious, his writing is pervaded by that eminently salable quality known as "human interest." This quality is best exemplified in his quest for sincerity: his desire to write about real people in real situations.

Henry and his works are mainly famous for the themes of humanity, vivid plots, frequent coincidences, surprising ending, and humorous language and so on. Yet, O. Henry's distinctive narrative strategies have not drawn so much attention from critics as they are deserved up to the date. In view of these conditions, the present study is an attempt to analyze O. Henry's classical short stories by using relevant modern narrative theories so as to find out its skillful narrative techniques and reveal its distinctive narrative strategies. In other words, it aims at presenting a new perspective for research on O. Henry's works.

In "The Last Leaf" we have the theme of commitment, sacrifice, friendship, compassion, hope and dedication. Throughout the story there is a sense that all three painters mentioned Sue, Johnsy and Behrman are committed to something. Sue has a piece to draw and is working on it throughout the story, while Behrman though he hasn't completed his masterpiece remains focused on it. And Johnsy though not painting is committed to dying as soon as the last ivy leaf falls from the vine. By highlighting each character's commitment Henry may also be suggesting that those who live their lives artistically are driven or focused. Unlike the majority of people who may live their lives working nine to five and forget about work as soon as they clock out.

Henry also appears to be exploring the theme of friendship. There is the obvious friendship between Sue and Johnsy with Sue remaining focused on helping Johnsy get better. Also Behrman, though when first introduced to the reader comes across as being a stubborn old man, he is in reality fond of both Sue and Johnsy. This fondness is probably based on Behrman's understanding of how difficult life is for an artist. It is only at the end of the story that the reader realizes just how committed or fond of Johnsy and Sue, Behrman actually is when he sacrifices his own life in order to save Johnsy's.

It is also noticeable that Johnsy very early on in the story gives up any hope of living. This lack of hope in many ways is mirrored. He remains practical, aware that there is nothing he can do for Johnsy unless she herself also has the will. He feels that rather than focusing on the leaves on the vine it would be more logical for her to focus on her recovery from pneumonia. Though it is also plausible that Henry may have deliberately set the story with one medical doctor and three artists in it to highlight the differences in interpretation of all three when it comes to defining logic. Just as all

three artists are committed to giving their all for their art, likewise Johnsy is committed to dying.

There are some symbols in the story, which may be important. Each leaf that Johnsy sees falling from the vine in many ways leads her into further despair. However when Behrman paints the one leaf it symbolises hope for Johnsy. Something that is noticeable when her health improves on her discovery that the last leaf has not fallen. The weather itself may also be symbolic as Henry may be using the weather to highlight how for some people's life is not as easy as it is for others. Rather as previously mentioned artists are driven by their art unlike the majority of people who will work and clock off. An artist's home is their work. It is also noticeable that Henry makes a comparison between the worlds of Art and Literature in the story.

'Young artists must pave their way to Art by drawing pictures for magazine stories that young authors write to pave their way to Literature.' This line may be important as by comparing both the world of Art and Literature to each other Henry may be highlighting again the sacrifices that an artist or a writer must make.

The ending of the story is also interesting because it is only at the end does the reader understand the sacrifice that Behrman has made. He has given his own life in order to save another person's life and in many ways the single leaf that he has painted on the wall is his coveted masterpiece because it has rejuvenated Johnsy. Just as the pneumonia was taking a toll on her lungs the last leaf has given her back her breath or life. Something that is noticeable when the doctor arrives and notices an improvement in Johnsy's well-being.

It is also interesting that on seeing the last leaf Johnsy no longer views life as negatively as she has previously done throughout the story. Rather she realises that 'it is a sin to want to die.' This line may be important as it is possible that Henry is

suggesting that regardless of how one feels an individual should never give up. That they should keep trying just as Behrman did till the end when he finally managed to complete his masterpiece and restore hope into Johnsy's life.

In this story, hope is the hero. The will to live, to survive is another name of the hero. Friendship has also played an important role in the story. When Johnsy contracted pneumonia, Sue could have left her friend to death by abandoning her as both of them were still struggling to earn a living. But she did not do so and instead took care of her sick friend in every way possible. She worked very hard by illustrating stories in magazines to earn money and to be able to take care of her sick friend. Also, Sue's friendship with Johnsy changed to maternal love which is proven by her dialogue- '...Try to get some broth now, and let Sudie go back to her drawing, so she can sell the editor man with it, and buy port wine for her sick child, and pork chops for her greedy self.'

In the story, the gruffest character, Mr. Behrman, "was a fierce little old man, who scoffed terribly at softness in any one." And yet it is Behrman that takes the very compassionate step of painting the last leaf, which in essence, saves Johnsy's life. Thus, it can be brought to conclusion that he sacrificed his life to save Johnsy's as a selfless act. He had always considered himself as 'especial mastiff-in-waiting to protect the two young artists in the studio above.' And he had been true to his words as he loses his life to save Johnsy's.

Concluding, we can say that friendship and sacrifice has played a vital role throughout the whole story.

"The Gift of Magi" is the tale of a young couple who are short of money but desperately want to buy each other Christmas gifts. The husband sells his only favorite watch to buy a set of combs for his wife, while she uses the money from

selling her beautiful hair to buy him a pocket chain. The author arranges the entire plot just to make readers anticipate the excitement of the outcome. From the beginning, the readers keep guessing what the couple will buy for each other, and the irony of their gifts is the greatest suspense the author puts into this story. Finally the author gives the answer to the readers question in the ending:

Here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi.

The author's answer was that there will be none of the gift in the world more valuable than love. Love is supreme, and it's beyond all the other material objects in this world. Only by love can we be connected tightly and faithfully. This is the theme of the story.

Della and Jim are not the products of an overly sentimental imagination. The author strives to create circumstances as well as physical surroundings that are true to life. The protagonists do not react to each other out of saintliness, duty, or love of self-imposed sacrifice: They simply embody the twin spirits of love and Christmas. For the less-than-devout O. Henry, these essences are one and the same.

Similarly, another famous story, "The Cop and the Anthem" has the main character was trying to find shelter for the coming winter by getting himself thrown into prison. After all his attempts were in vain, he found himself moved by the anthem of the church. Hearing this he decided to make a new man of himself by conquering the evil that had got the best of him. But not until the anthem was finished, this time

he was 'hopefully' arrested for doing nothing. When Soapy had realized how foolish he was and had decided to live a new life, his previous activities deprived him of the right. The ending makes us think about society and its treatment of Soapy. What made the story so successful was the ending. The sudden turn of events not only gives readers a sudden fall, but also forces us to think about our own lives.

Breaking a shop window is one of the first things Soapy does to get arrested. This could symbolize his feelings about material wealth—not only does he not like it, he wants to destroy it and show he has no regard for it. It could also symbolize the broken nature of his heart during this time in his life.

After he hears the anthem coming from the church, we learn that Soapy once had and is now regaining religious aspirations. Religious people are sometimes known for shunning material possessions and only using what is needed. Maybe Soapy's seeming disregard for wealth can be translated into something positive through religion.

Like many of O. Henry's stories, "The Cop and the Anthem" is set in New York City in the late part of the 1800s and first ten years of the 1900s. The story features one night in the life of Soapy, a homeless man trying to get arrested so he can have a warm place to be during the winter.

In this story, the setting is very realistic. Henry is trying to give us a realistic impression of New York City, one that will ring true to New Yorkers and even to people who have never been.

Although O'Henry's New York City setting is detailed, it is also minimal. O'Henry doesn't give us a lot of description. A shop window is simply a shop window whose details are not evident. Maybe this vagueness is part of Henry's attempt to make the story feel like it could happen anywhere.

Soapy lives on a park bench in Madison Square, which is on the corner of Fifth Avenue and Broadway in New York City. Even a hundred years ago, this was a center of money and power, a shopper's paradise. Soapy is surrounded by all the finest things money can buy. He sees wealthy, powerful people eating in fancy restaurants, wearing fancy clothes, and enjoying expensive entertainments.

Soapy's life seems the reverse of this. He only looks for enough to get by. He doesn't seem to envy or desire money or what it can buy. Perhaps this lack of desire for material things is part of why Soapy became homeless. Maybe he had nothing to motivate him to work, and realized he could survive without doing much at all.

But Soapy does become motivated to work. But what motivates him is not money, or even better living conditions. Soapy finds nothing appealing in the lives of New York City's wealthy and fabulous. What actually inspires Soapy is something very different.

“The moon was above, lustrous and serene; vehicles and pedestrians were few; sparrows twittered sleepily in the eaves—for a little while the scene might have been a country churchyard”.

It's this contrast between two very different settings, both of which contain very different types of wealth that makes setting very important in this story. New York City and surrounding areas are actually home to many a natural paradise. Other than the fact that the leaves are falling and it's getting cold, this is the first time we've seen Soapy observing nature. The writing style becomes a bit more melodic as Soapy's mood changes along with the setting. This tells us that Soapy values nature, natural beauty, and quiet.

The conjunction of Soapy's receptive state of mind and the influences about the old church wrought a sudden and wonderful change in his

soul. He viewed with swift horror the pit into which he had tumbled, the degraded days, unworthy desires, dead hopes, wrecked faculties, and base motives that made up his existence.

Due to this change of scenery, Soapy is able to gain a new perspective on life. He is able to realize what he really does value—nature, quiet, churches, music, and friends and family.

The story is set in New York City and presents a realistic look at that famous place back in the early 1900s, over a hundred years ago. The narrator even gives us the names of the streets Soapy walks down in his quest for arrest. This means we could use the book as a map and retrace most of Soapy's steps if we felt like it.

When talk about a story's tone we are looking at how the author feels about the characters and subject matter of the story, and even toward his or her audience. The readers sympathize with Soapy and are credulous to know whether Soapy will be able to turn his life around when he gets out of prison in the spring.

He couldn't bear anyone who seemed to be in want. Why it seems I've seen him give a five dollar-bill to a hungry sandwich-board man. Has-beens appealed just as strongly to his sympathy. Down-at-the-heels actors, writers, and artists could always get a "loan," as he insisted on calling it.

This gives us a good idea of how O'Henry might have felt about Soapy and others in his situation. Like Soapy, he doesn't really care about having a lot of money; his motivations for wanting to change his life go deeper than money.

He wants to feel clean inside; he wants to have friends and family; he wants to re-join the people of the world. O'Henry is known as one of the masters of this form, especially because of his "twist" endings.

Soapy had confidence in himself from the lowest button of his vest upward. He was shaven, and his coat was decent and his neat black [...]. If he could reach a table in the restaurant unsuspected success would be his. The portion of him that would show above the table would raise no doubt in the waiter's mind.

This passage doesn't seem to be making fun of Soapy, or feeling overly sorry for him either. By giving us this comical image of a man who's a gentleman, O'Henry encourages us to relax and enjoy Soapy's adventures. Until the part of the story where Soapy has his change of heart, Soapy's night of trying to get thrown in jail is told like a playful adventure, rather than a desperate attempt to find food and shelter. This is probably meant to show us how Soapy himself feels about his situation. Until he realizes he could have something better, he doesn't seem to take his problem of finding food and shelter that seriously.

Neatly upon his left ear on the callous pavement two waiters pitched Soapy. He arose, joint by joint and beat the dust from his clothes. Arrest seemed but a rosy dream.

The words "rosy dream" sound poetic and has a melodic feeling to it. This melodic quality builds throughout the story, preparing us for the moment Soapy hears the church organist playing the anthem. This melodic quality helps us feel something of the melody Soapy is hearing:

There was time; he was comparatively young yet; he would resurrect his old eager ambitions and pursue them without faltering. Those solemn but sweet organ notes had set up a revolution in him.

We can notice that the playfulness drops out of the story. This reflects Soapy's changed mood when he is serious and enthralled. Instead of seeing life as a kind of

joke the anthem makes Soapy see life as both serious and beautiful, something worth taking a chance on again. This use of melody to help get across Soapy's different moods

A dead leaf fell in Soapy's lap. That was Jack Frost's card. Jack is kind to the regular denizens of Madison Square, and gives fair warning of his annual call. At the corners of four streets he hands his pasteboard to the North Wind, footman of the mansion of All Outdoors, so that the inhabitants thereof may make ready.

Henry could have just said, "A dead leaf fell in Soapy's lap. This is winter's warning to the people that they need to get ready for cold days. By contrast, we might have to dig around a little to understand what O'Henry is talking about, especially at the beginning of the story.

And the anthem that the organist played cemented Soapy to the iron fence, for he had known it well in the days when his life contained such things as mothers and roses and ambitions and friends and immaculate thoughts and collars.

This is the cue of Soapy's past. We know that he is homeless, has been so for several years, and that he's spent the past few winters in the jail on Blackwell's Island. What we don't know is how he got this way. The anthem triggers memories of his life when it was better.

We learn that Soapy used to have a nice life, one that included church, "immaculate thoughts," and collars, which are what priests and ministers wear. When he remembers this old life, Soapy is finally able to see his current life clearly, and he doesn't like what he sees:

He viewed with swift horror the pit into which he had tumbled, the degraded days, unworthy desires, dead hopes, wrecked faculties and base motives that made up his existence.

This passage suggests that the choices Soapy has made have led to his current life. At the same time, it suggests that it happened by accident, that he "tumbled" into his situation. Maybe it was some combination of the two. Whatever the case, the anthem fills him with the power and the drive to turn his life around. He has no doubts, in this moment anyway, that he can do much better. We are told,

Those solemn but sweet organ notes had set up a revolution in him. To-morrow he would go into the roaring downtown district and find work. A fur importer had once offered him a place as driver. He would find him to-morrow and ask for the position. He would be somebody in the world. He would— (43)

The anthem helps Soapy want something more out of his life than what he has now. For Soapy, getting what he *used* to want presents an obstacle to his new goals and plans. They cop might represent obstacles Soapy will have to overcome to reach his dreams.

We might look at the cop and the anthem as different parts of Soapy's life, or as two different paths available to him. The anthem represents the life he used to have, and wants to have again. The anthem represents a path where Soapy can live a good life on his own terms. Everybody has their own idea of what a good life. Soapy's goal isn't really to go to jail, but to have a warm place to live for the winter. When he hears the anthem he feels empowered to achieve that goal without sacrificing his freedom.

The cop represents the life Soapy has now, one where he is either avoiding the police or looking for the police to arrest him, depending on the season. The cop represents a path where Soapy has to be under someone else's authority, where he has to do what others tell him to do.

Just when Soapy changes his mind about spending his winter in jail, the law closes in on him. This is a classic O'Henry "twist" ending. It *twists* our brains. Twist endings usually have two other features—they are ironic and open to more than one interpretation.

As we said, twist endings are usually always ironic. In "The Cop and the Anthem" the irony is this: just when Soapy realizes he wants a better life, he's arrested and sentenced to exactly what he wished for in the beginning—a three month stay in jail.

We can argue that Soapy's behavior in the story suggests that he has a mental illness that might prevent him from changing his life, even if he is willing to. They might point out that breaking windows and pretending to sexually harass a woman suggests that Soapy has some serious problems that a little organ music won't cure.

The ending seems a little bit abrupt. Here are the last two lines of the story:

"Then come along," said the policeman.

"Three months on the Island," said the Magistrate in the Police Court the next morning.

It jumps from Soapy's arrest to his sentencing. This abrupt turnabout right after Soapy's change of heart adds to the irony and twistiness of the ending. It surprises us and catches us off-guard. Most good stories start with a fundamental list of ingredients: the initial situation, conflict, complication, climax, suspense,

denouement, and conclusion. Great writers sometimes shake up the recipe and add some spice.

O'Henry doesn't really give us time to feel any suspense after the climax. Things leap abruptly to the denouement and the ending. If there is a suspense stage in this story, it comes in between the complication and the climax.

This story's conclusion comes at us so fast with just that one line from the judge sentencing Soapy to jail for the winter.

The first character we meet is the landlady who is a bit snobbish. She has a number of rooms available to let. The largest rooms (and the most expensive) bring her great satisfaction. Ascending the stairs brings us to smaller and cheaper rooms. The smallest room is an embarrassment to the landlady that she has the housekeeper show this room.

Miss Leeson, a young typist who rents "the skylight room" because it is the only room she can afford. It's a tiny room with a small iron cot. The room's only redeeming quality is the skylight.

On summer nights, the roomers gather on the front steps to pass the time and talk. Miss Leeson is very popular due to her youth and charm. One of the older men becomes enamored with Miss Leeson.

During these summer evenings Miss Leeson tells everyone about one of the stars she can see through the skylight. She has named the star Billy Jackson. The school teacher, Miss Longnecker, corrects Miss Leeson announcing the correct name of the star. Miss Leeson declines to be corrected and clings to her name of the star.

Some time passes and Miss Leeson falls on hard times since she can no longer find employment. She is so destitute that she can't afford to eat. She grows weak and frail. She encounters the man, the one who wants to marry her, on the stairs. He

proposes marriage. He lays before her rescue from her plight but declines the offer. She is barely able to reach her room and falls onto her cot, too tired even to undress. She looks up at her star. Even in this weakened state, she can't bring herself to call her star by its correct name as she recalls Miss Longnecker's correction. Her last act is to raise two fingers to her lips in a kiss to her star, Billy Jackson.

Next day, having not seen Miss Leeson, they force the door open and find her barely alive. The ambulance is called, and the doctor arrives to attend to the sick girl. He carries her down the stairs and takes her to the hospital. In typical O'Henry fashion, we get the surprise ending - the doctor's name is William Jackson.

Miss Leeson is supporting herself as a typist. As parents, we should promote this quality - this determination to support ourselves. She was content to live within her means even though she lived in a tiny room and slept on an iron cot.

Miss Leeson has an ideal of true love and romance in her mind and in her heart. She clings to this ideal even when she becomes destitute and is starving. She does not compromise. Miss Leeson's dream comes true. Her prince rescues her. We shall assume that Dr. Jackson is a prince who is worth the wait.

There is a short exchange of words between the doctor and the landlady. We don't hear the conversation, but she does receive a sharp rebuke for her poor treatment of Miss Leeson. The snobbish landlady was insensitive to Miss Leeson. We should keep ourselves alert and sensitive to the needs of others.

O'Henry has a peculiar skill in bringing characters from all the realms of the society into his works. His richly applied wit, well arranged wordplay and vivacious characterization are the major characteristics of O'Henry stories. Each character is clearly illustrated in his stories, given attention to the minutest details of the character and as a result there is a photo reality portrayal of fictional persona. O'Henry chooses

his characters from a variety of social classes, ranging from rich ladies to poor maids, from policemen to vagabonds which makes his stories more realistic.

Schools and Schoolsis about a naïve rich class girl who, unlike the custom of those days, cannot really fit into the ‘fashion’ of upper class lifestyle. Nevada Warren couldn’t get a school education or training in a finishing school because of her irresponsible father. Dealing with the challenges of a modern city like New York is a Herculean task for her. Warren is sent to her rich uncle Jerome by her father who couldn’t support her, from some undeveloped Latin American town. As soon as she steps into the modern New York life, she realizes that, to win the game of life in the city, she needs to know the art of pretension and lying in addition to her innocent charm and beauty. She tries hard to hide the fact that she can’t read or write in front of her uncle, Barbara, uncle’s step niece and Gilbert-his adopted son with whom later she would develop an affection. For this, Nevada has to pretend that she is not at all interested in the letters sent by Gilbert and allows the curious and jealous Barbara who had a liking towards Gilbert to open them and read aloud. To this Nevada gives a very convincing excuse that “Nobody writes me anything that everybody mightn’t read”.

The title of the story ‘Schools and Schools’ clearly intends to something Nevada lacks and earnestly longs for. She is bitterly ashamed of her illiteracy and afraid of her uncle, Barbara and more than anyone, Gilbert finding it out. Yet she is not a hypocrite in reality because she confesses about her lack of school education to Gilbert when he asks her hand in marriage. Nevada has a rival at home- Barbara, rival in education, accomplishments, wealth and most of all in Gilbert’s love. Hence she has no choice than acting as a well-schooled lady in order to keep up with the Joneses. That is why she pretends to enjoy the theatre, automobile ride, being a connoisseur of

leather gloves and doing other upper class publicity stunts. But at heart, she is a sensible and honest woman with her natural charm and childish innocence.

The title can also mean that of the two different schools of lives where Nevada and Barbara got trained.

In 'Schools and Schools', the first school could be the one in which the simple, innocent and honest people get trained- the natural school of life, of country sides. The other school could be where artificial, hypocrite, pretentious and manipulating people get trained to cheat others- the school of city life. Barbara can read from Nevada's face that she cannot read or write. So, she finds this as an opportunity to create a dispute between Gilbert and Nevada by smearing on Gilbert's character. The spontaneous lie she could produce after reading Gilbert's harmless letter is a proof to Barbara's evil character despite of her school education and extra reading in Jerome's library. By this the author points out that mere education doesn't guarantee any character formation in a person. Character formation has to be attained by the company of good people and careful rearing. This lack of character is the one which makes Barbara a hypotenuse of the love triangle of herself, Nevada and Gilbert. Believing what Barbara said about the letter, Nevada runs to Gilbert's studio in the middle of the night, in a terrible snow storm in order to help him, thinking that he might be ill and needed her help. This shows the commitment of Nevada to Gilbert and her boldness to leave the house in a wrong time, risking her image in the society. Her unconditional love towards Gilbert wins his heart and at that very moment he decides to marry her.

The ending of the story, with the famous 'O'Henry Twist' is also a lesson to the readers. It shows how wise Gilbert is in his decision to marry such an innocent girl to treasure her for the rest of his life. Surely Nevada is a precious girl with her

extraordinary nobility and goodness which is not smeared by the city culture. Even when Gilbert knows that Nevada could be easily fooled and exploited, he doesn't make a move to take advantage of her. Instead, he acts wise and possesses that rare girl for his own life without wasting her for his carnal pleasures. The author uses his didactic skills to indirectly correct the loveless marriages rooted in money and class in the then American society.

Schools and Schools begins with a detailed sketch of old Jerome, misleading the readers to think that he might be the central character. This is another specialty of O'Henry stories. On the contrary the latest character Nevada becomes the protagonist of the story. Manipulating the readers with such a clever shifting of focal points is a part of the art of short story writing. Conjuring up other characters along with the major characters and portraying them with utmost care is also one of O'Henry's many skills. There is a universality in his stories, teaching the readers the importance of genuine relationships and unconditional love between men and women.

Rosita McMullen is portrayed as a prize to be won by a horse race between men. Johnny was deeply wounded by his loss, so much that it changed him to a completely atrocious person. A series of unfortunate events followed after his defeat to Madison Lane. He tries to kill Madison in his own wedding ceremony. He failed in his attempt and promised to return back on Christmas for vengeance. From then on, there was no turning back, it was the birth night of the dreaded Frio Kid.

O'Henry illustrates how dangerous and blinding love can be. There is anticipation whether the Frio Kid would eventually show up on Christmas and give his fatal gift to Madison Lane to whom he had lost the love of his life. The loss of love had turned his heart into stone. We can sense that whatever the ending is, it is bound to be tragic. But there is also a sense of hope, like in every O'Henry story, a

hope of change, a hope that every human being has at least an ounce of softness in his heart. It is beautifully carried out in the story.

At one instance the cold heart of Frio Kid had stirred from the blossoms of the ratama tree that reminded him of Rosita and at another instance he was reminded of the pain that caused him to be the dangerous man he was. He decided that it was about time that he had fulfilled his promise to Madison Lane. Rosita had been ever fearful of his return. On Christmas she talks to a man dressed as Santa Claus. She pours her heart out to him, how she feels paranoid of Frio Kid's return and how she still believes that there is always the slightest hint of goodness in even an abominable heart. This has made the reader anxious whether the Frio Kid was disguised as Santa Claus who gives gifts and whether he has come to give his pending gift to Madison Lane. The Santa Claus tells Rosita that her gift is waiting in the next room where Madison Lane had been sitting and then disappears.

The master of surprising ending leaves us in awe again. The question whether Frio kid really gives his gift on Christmas hooks the reader to the end. Later it is found that Frio Kid was really disguised as the Santa Claus who had come to give his pending gift of death to Madison Lane but with a change in heart by Rosita's talk, he gave the gift of life of her husband and tragically gets shot during his escape.

It was considered an improper act to shoot the bride and groom at the wedding" and the guests defend the couple. The shooter is deterred, but makes his intention known to "shoot better next time".

"Many tales are told along the border of his impudent courage and daring. But he was not one of the breed of desperadoes who have seasons of generosity and even of softness. They say he never had mercy on the object of his anger. Yet at this and every Christmastide it

is well to give each one credit, if it can be done, for whatever speck of good he may have possessed. If the Frio Kid ever did a kindly act or felt a throb of generosity in his heart it was once at such a time and season, and this is the way it happened.

In these stories, O'Henry mixes disparate social classes and educational backgrounds. Through his adept use of dialogue, he contrasts differing characters and pits them against his own omniscient narrative voice, providing humor as well as depth.

In this particular story the two friends resolve to meet after twenty years in New York wherever and whatever they will be. This is O'Henry's another short story with a surprising ending. As we read along, we notice that Bob is a restless and ambitious man. He had broken the law and adopted a charlatan life to make fortune. The way Bob talks is informal and he uses words such as fellow, chap, chum etc. These choice of words also gives an impression of the character of the person to the reader. Unlike Bob, Jimmy is a focused, devoted and a truthful man. It is revealed that Jimmy had become a policeman and Bob had become a most wanted thief. However, in their encounter Bob couldn't recognize Jimmy but Jimmy discerned Bob immediately as he had been waiting there as promised.

The story ends with a note that is handed to Bob by another person who also happened to be a policeman. The note stated that it was Jimmy whom Bob had been talking to all along and that he also learned that Bob was on the run in the entire city. But somehow he couldn't arrest him because even after twenty years, Jimmy couldn't look away from the fact that Bob had been his good friend. At the same time he also couldn't turn away from his duty and let the criminal on loose slip away. So, he had summoned another officer to arrest him.

The story is about the acrimonious change that time can bring. The sentences like, "Twenty years is a long time to change a good man to a bad man", "Somehow I couldn't do it on my own" convey the theme of the story. Like in every story a coincidence has led to a very surprising ending. The story at first lead us with a thought that everything is going according to the plan. He lets the reader think that we have it figured out but we haven't. It always has us something waiting in the end which is what keeps the reader indulged till the end.

After twenty years is an ironic short story written by O. Henry. O'Henry is famous for ironic stories, twisted plots and surprise endings. Written in third person, omniscient point of view, the story is about two friends who had made an appointment twenty years ago to meet at the appointed spot at the same time. The tone of the story is suspicious which leads to a surprise end.

In the dark, on the street of New York at 10 o'clock, Bob is waiting for his friend when a cop arrives. Bob assure him that he came to meet his friend after twenty years. Another man approaches and greets Bob. The two friends walk along the dark streets, sharing the stories of their past, until they come across the lights of a shop and Bob realizes that the man in front of him is not his friend Jimmy Wells. The man tells Bob that he's under arrest and gives him a note from patrolman Wells. Soon Bob realises that the cop he met earlier was in fact his friend Jimmy Wells. The story revolves around the main characters, 'Silky' Bob and Jimmy Wells. The characterization in this short story is mostly indirect as the traits of one character's personality are expressed in the dialogues of the other character or their own.

In the story, Bob is described as "a pale, square-jawed face with keen eyes, and a little white scar near his right eyebrow" and "with an unlighted cigar in his mouth." Bob is a rich man "his scarf pin was a large diamond, oddly set", he is

wearing a handsome watch with small diamonds on its lid. He is a luxurious, ambitious and materialistic person. He's a greedy man who wants to get more and more luxuries. He traveled West and spent the twenty years of his life as a successful, luxurious and rich man. He earns much wealth through illegal ways. He is proud of his accomplishments in West as he tells The Cop "it has given me everything I asked it for". He is sharp and a confident man. In the story he is referred as 'Silky' Bob, this implies that he is a fraud.

When the reader reads the story again, the details of the story take a completely different meaning. The policeman himself was Jimmy Wells. He was at the appointed spot at the appointed time, and he met his old friend there. However, when he met Bob, he saw not just his old friend, but a wanted man. He didn't feel that he could arrest his friend himself, so he asked Bob if he would "call time" on his friend. Bob's answer gave him enough time to have a different man come around, pretend to be Jimmy, and finally arrest Bob. When the second man comes around, he never actually answers Bob's question, "Is that you, Jimmy Wells?" Instead of answering the question with a "yes" or "no," he avoids the question and lets Bob think he is Jimmy. He carefully avoids direct mention of his own life, mentioning only that he has a place in one of the city departments (not specifying that it is a police department), and lets Bob do most of the talking. Bob is thoroughly convinced that this is his old friend - until they reach a street light. Part of O'Henry's success in this ironic story lies in that not only Bob was fooled, but the reader also is fooled until the very end of the story.

When Bob saw his companion's face in the light and realized that the man he was conversing with was not his old friend, he became upset, stating that even twenty years couldn't change the shape of a man's nose. The man that Jimmy had sent to meet

Bob, however, pointed out that twenty years can change a good man to a bad man. Bob may have made his fortunes in the West, and Jimmy may have stayed at home, but Bob had become a notorious criminal while Jimmy had gone the opposite direction, becoming an upholder of the law. "After Twenty Years" was referring to the two friends meeting after twenty years. Twenty years is also a typical sentence for serious crimes. Twenty years in the West changed Bob from a good man to a bad man, but twenty years in prison could also have the opposite effect, changing Bob from a bad man into a good man.

A little irony can make a world of difference in writing. A person could understand "After Twenty Years" one way the first time he or she reads it, but understand it a completely different way the second time. O'Henry's characteristic use of irony makes his writings interesting and intriguing. Because of irony, "After Twenty Years" has become a favorite - both for its intriguing plot and literary quality.

Sometimes, one of the most difficult lessons for us to learn as we get older is that people, including ourselves, change. Although we might be able to recognize the physical features of people we once knew, some of their other qualities could very well be altered beyond recognition - especially after 20 years.

Despite its surprisingly short length, O. Henry's *After Twenty Years* has three different thematic elements woven into the plot.

Many of us probably know what it's like to feel compelled to do something out of friendship. Maybe it's working for no money, listening to long stories, or traveling hundreds of miles after 20 years. Bob clearly values the bonds of friendship that were forged between him and Jimmy all those years ago. However, it seems some of the knots may have come loose over the years that tied Jimmy to Bob.

Loyalties to people and ideas can sometimes be difficult to maintain, especially when they're split between a person and an idea that might be close to our hearts. Keeping their 20-year appointment to the minute, Bob's loyalty to Jimmy is obviously unwavering. However, now that he's a policeman, Jimmy's loyalties to Bob and to the law are put to the test when he discovers his old friend is a wanted fugitive.

Whom would you trust more: a police officer who arrested his best friend, or a 'dirty cop' who allowed his once closest companion to escape? Despite what we might think, it's clear that Bob isn't able to trust Jimmy when it comes to keeping him out of jail. Actually, by the end of the story, it doesn't seem that Bob's able to trust Jimmy about very much at all.

In the story the man and the woman meet at a very romantic setting. They meet in the woods and share a brief romance in the form of stares and silence. They are portrayed as the star crossed lovers when it is revealed that the man is from an upper class family and tries to forget the woman thinking that she is a peasant's daughter. The man's love is clouded by his responsibilities towards his family. On the other side of the story, it is revealed that woman too had given up the thought of her love at first sight because she too, like the man had misunderstood him for a mere hunter who could not afford any dowry if they were to tie the knot.

The readers are well acquainted that O'Henry is a romanticist because of his idea that life is a surprise. He emphasizes on how each life is entangled with destiny and fate. Even in this story we can sense a hint of reconciliation. In the second part of the story it is cited that there is a huge wedding of aristocrats. Van Winkler is giving in and incinerating his reminiscences of his past love, the girl costumed as a Swiss peasant. He had resolved to move on and accept the fate of his love and put his

responsibilities and reputation of his family first. On the other side, Augustus Vance is also crumbling the Edelweiss flower that the hunter had showered upon her. She too had accepted the defeat by her fate as she knew that a mere hunter could never fulfill the dowry her family would ask. It is then vivid that the two of them had a misunderstanding about their identity and it is revealed in a rather humorous way how they had been swayed by the winds of fate to each other without their acknowledgement.

The readers are quite humored by how fate has played with the emotions of two individuals just so that they can cherish each other for the rest of their lives. This romantic coincidence has kept the story flowing naturally till the very end.

The blurring of rigid generic boundaries is an axiomatic facet of O'Henry's short stories. The traditional definition; and interpretative approached have treated genres as fairly distinct and bounded categories, discussions of generic mixture have tended to illustrate exceptional rather than common generic practices. We can explore generic mixing in O'Henry's short stories, there is always a pinch of melancholy. humour, coincidence in his stories but the most common trait of O'Henry's stories has always been a surprising ending. His collection of the stories explores and dissolves all the boundaries of culture, family, class, language, community and race. People from all walks of life can relate to his stories in even a least way. This is his way of connecting with the readers his mastery in the art indulges the readers and keeps them anticipated till the end because of its unpredictable plot. It is bound to leave the readers smile with tears in the end. In short, this research has come to a conclusion that the short stories of O' Henry are the diaspora of all genres.

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