

FEMINIST PORTRAYAL IN O'HENRY'S *A SERVICE OF LOVE***G. Sivasamy****ABSTRACT**

Love is not just in sharing the warmth of affection instead it is more about the emotional strength that one has in undergoing the pain and hardwork with empathy in helping the beloved assisting his needs by suppressing the luxury and richness. The extent in which one goes in proving this makes him/her the greatest. Love is not valued how much you give but it is valued how much you share. Since sharing is something that assists the emotional background whereas giving is something that helps financially. Feminist role is all the most important in influencing ones behavior and attitude. Eventhough the characters Joe Larrabee and Delia Caruthers suppress the facts to each other it is really not viewed as cheating instead their suppression increases their love. I like to present *A Service of Love* by O'henry with some of the feminist terms.

Key words: Sympathy, Empathy, Need, Urge and Strive.

Empathy encompass a broad range of emotional states, from caring for other people and having a desire to help them, to know what the other person is thinking or feeling, to shape the line between self and other. It is the capacity to respond with an appropriate emotion to another's mental states and the capacity to understand another's perception or mental state. When one loves one's Art no service seems too hard. This is how the story begins and the readers are motivated with an intuition that these words will have a lot of significance in one's life since the one or the other might have seriously thought of sacrificing this thing or that thing in getting their success in love. The beginning words itself gives a hint on the empathy of the characters.

We are introduced a character probably the hero of the story Mr. Joe Larrabee who came out of the post-oak flats of the Middle West pulsing with a genius for pictorial art. His interest and profession was on drawing pictures that made him drew a picture of the town pump with a prominent citizen passing it hastily at the age of six which was framed and hung in the drug store window. That proved

to be a great success of a boy whose painting was given much importance even at that age and probably his interest might have developed. This had influenced him greatly and he began to develop his interest in painting at the age of twenty he left for New York with a flowing necktie and a capital.

As we are introduced with the young man whose interest was on painting from early stages of his life who had a lot in doing something with his profession we are introduced a lady Delia Caruthers from a village in the South and she was directed by her relatives to go North. Never think that she was the one to involve in the noble or prestigious profession that could earn a lot of money and respect by attending a few cases but it is the profession of ordinary that a woman of any kind can easily prefer. Another important step was the struggle of women to enter acknowledged professions such as law, medicine and science. (Agosin 2001: 34). Joe and Delia met in an atelier where a number of art and music students had gathered to discuss on various fields. By "gender" we mean the ways a society organizes people into male and female categories and the ways meanings are produced around those categories. (Tsing et.al 1990: 2).

We were not given any hint whether their discussions developed in due course and fetched some fruitful outcome or not but we are prominently given the idea that Joe and Delia fell in love with each other thereby developing a new life. They were introduced not as the characters those waste their time just in loving but we were presented them as the ones those took steps to be known as the husband and wife at the earliest by marrying each other. She was a kind of woman who had not considered marriage as the one that prevents woman from establishing in various fields but she had the will that she could develop well in the fields of interest even after marriage. For too many women, marriage seemed to mean a life of drudgery, invalidism, a dwindling of personality, a submergence in others – a black hole of the self. (Matthews 2003: 96 - 97).

Soon Mr. and Mrs. Larrabee fetched a job as housekeeping maintenance in a flat which was to them so easy and without much problem like the other fields. Women remain more likely to be in social settings where there is less political information and work in jobs that are less affected by political issues. (Gimpel et.al 2003: 40). It was a lonesome flat even then they preferred it to continue their profession and they were happy with the reasons that they had their Art, and they had each other. They considered that the work suited each other without the difference of being a man or a woman. Women were by no means powerless. (Green 1995: 37). They were both happy in their work as housekeepers and in their life as partners.

As the story proceeded further we were given the chief of Mr. Joe who was painting in the class of the great Magister whose fees are high that made him renowned and Delia was studying under the reputed disturber of the piano keys Mr. Rosenstock. We are not given the just the gist of happiness as the story proceeds on since we have the deciding factor mainly the money that can change the happiness into nothing if it runs short. The affectionate couple experienced this in their life. They were mighty happy as long as their money lasted. If we have a lot of money we can do anything and everything interestingly and involvement if we don't have the money it will affect a lot. The question of the meaning of life in general is meaningless because life has a meaning to anyone who has interest in it. There may be individuals who are completely devoid of any interest in anything. (Fadiman 1990: 246).

The love of the couple is the same as they had before. We can say that the love had changed to a great extent by reaching a great extent. Their aims were very clear and defined. Joe was to become capable very soon of turning out pictures that old gentlemen with thin side-whiskers and thick pocketbooks would sandbag one another in his studio for the privilege of buying. Delia became familiar with music but this had not lasted long and she became scornful with Music and whenever she saw the orchestra seats and boxes unsold she worried a lot because now both the couples began to know the importance of money on one's life. She had lost the power of control over her emotions and had a sore throat and lobster in a private dining-room and refused to go on the stage. Power is when you have control over someone or something. (Mulvaney 2003: 58). It became a worrisome life to the loving couples without money which made them a life without chats after the day's study, the pleasant dinners and fresh light breakfasts, the interchange of ambitions, the mutual help and inspiration and stuffed olives and cheese sandwiches.

When one loves one's Art no service seems too hard. So, Delia said she must give music lessons to keep the chafing dish bubbling. Sympathy is a feeling and concern. Or it can be the perception, understanding, and reaction to the distress or need of another human being. Sympathy does not require the sharing of the same emotional state. Instead, sympathy is a concern for the well-being of another. She decided to fetch a job to get a source of income in order to assist her husband. Traditional Schooling emphasizes that "masculine" cognitive virtues as rationality and objectivity, to the detriment of women's own "feminine" cognitive faculties such as empathy and subjectivity. (Koertge 2003: 105). The urge of getting a job made her go out for two or three days she went out canvassing for pupils in

order to get a source of income and to help her husband financially. She decided that she too had the responsibility in helping the family financially and that would help her husband a lot financially. Just as men's free labor was predicted on their capacity to support families, so women's was assumed to sustain the family labor of men. (Harris 2001: 23). One evening she came home elated and she informed her husband that she had a pupil so gleefully. She found her the pupil, General A. B. Pinkney's daughter—on Seventy-first street. She praised them a lot including their splendid house. By this time the readers were given a hope that the loveable couple will get their needs satisfied since she will get an income from them.

She introduced her pupil as Clementina who was the daughter of the General. Study after study has found that both men and women continue to define household work as "women's work." The sexes agree that men should bear more of the breadwinning responsibility than women. Whereas women should be more responsible for family work and child care (Stivers 2000: 31). She made him believe that she had a lot of love on her already. Who was so delicate and who dresses always in white, and the sweetest, simplest manners! Only eighteen years old. To whom she was to give three lessons a week with \$5 a lesson. A need is something that is necessary for organisms to live a healthy life.

Needs can be objective and physical, such as food, or they can be subjective and psychological, such as the need for self-esteem. She felt so independent in taking decisions with the trust she had on her husband since she believed that her husband will not intervene in her decision. "If independent means doing what you want to do when you want to do it, I really don't always feel independent, and I do resent it on some levels." (Henry 1994: 65). She was also sure of getting two or three more pupils. She was presented as the character who was in need of physical needs to help her husband financially and as well as psychological needs by making him not to worry for her day to day needs.

The words worried him a lot and he told her his decision without intervening in her decision that he can sell papers or lay cobblestones, and bring in a dollar or two instead of attending the paintings for which he was replied by her to proceed on with his work without caring for her labor. She wanted him to keep on his studies. Girls learn to fear success and to underachieve, concealing intelligence and initiative in order to be accepted as 'feminine'. (Rogers 1979: 18). She convinced him by saying that she had not quit my music and gone to work at something else. She told him that she will teach and learn and she was always with her music. And the work of her will fetch her money and happiness which can make them live happily as millionaires on \$15 a week. She also told him not to

think of leaving Mr. Magister. He was unable to resist her but he replied that he hate her for giving lessons.

Joe informed her that Magister praised his sketch and Tinkle gave his permission to hang two of them in his window which he may sell one if the right kind of a moneyed idiot sees his painting. Delia gave him a accepting reply that he will sell that painting. The work load made the Larrabees take early breakfast. Joe was affectionately attended by his wife. He was enthusiastic about some morning-effect sketches he was doing in Central Park, and Delia packed him off breakfasted, coddled, praised and kissed at 7 o'clock. She cared the needs of her wife and she took care of herself to proceed on with her work. "Women worked roughly 15 hours longer each week than men. Over a year, they worked an extra month of twenty- four- hour days a year. Over a dozen years, it was an extra year of twenty-four-hour days." (Levit 1998: 42 - 43). For Joe art was an engaging mistress. It was most times 7 o'clock when he returned in the evening.

The story proceeds on with the work and affection of the couples, at the end of the week Delia, sweetly proud but languid unenergetic, triumphantly tossed three five-dollar bills on the 8×10 (inches) centre table of the 8×10 (feet) flat parlour. "Sometimes," she said, a little wearily, "Clementina tries me. I'm afraid she doesn't practise enough, and I have to tell her the same things so often. And then she always dresses entirely in white, and that does get monotonous. The way in which she praised her while she joined in duty changed by now and she says that she worried a lot for her dress. "On nearly all counts, women appear more 'at home' at work, and happier to be there, than do men." Women also exhibit a greater sense of commitment to their workplace and a greater support for company values. (Helgesen 1998: 67 - 68).

She introduces Gen. Pinkney as the dearest old man who visits her sometimes when she was with Clementina at the piano, he was a widower. She praises that she was stronger than she looked. She got attached to her, and she was so gentle and high bred. The readers are given a hint that she was working in a congenial atmosphere where problems were little to arise. Developmental theory is based on the assumption that traditional societies are characterized by sharply differentiated gender roles that discourage women from working outside the home. (Inglehart 2003: 29). Joe, began to earn a little besides Delia's earnings. He wished that she could the fat man with a woolen muffler and a quill toothpick, who saw the sketch in Tinkle's window and thought it was a windmill at first then he bought

it. He also ordered another—an oil sketch of the Lackawanna freight depot—to take back with him. It was greatly appreciated by Delia so heartily and said that he was bound to win.

The story proceeds further the next Saturday evening when Joe reached home first and spread his \$18 on the parlour table and washed a great deal of dark paint from his hands. Half an hour later Delia arrived with her right hand tied up in a shapeless bundle of wraps and bandages which worried her husband a lot and after the usual greetings he asked her how that had happened to which Delia replied with a laugh, but not very joyously. She explained him that Clementina, insisted upon a Welsh rabbit after her lesson. The General ran for the dish although there wasn't a servant in the house. In serving the rabbit she spilled a great lot of it, over her hand and wrist. And the dear girl was so sorry for her act. Gen. Pinkney rushed downstairs and sent somebody to a drug store for some oil and things to bind it up with. She concluded saying that it doesn't hurt her so much by now in order to make her husband not be nervous. Joe took her hand tenderly and pulled some white strands beneath the bandages. Morality is doing what is appropriate and what is just within your circumstances but ideally it is not going to affect – I was going to say, “ideally it wouldn't negatively affect another person,” but that is ridiculous because decisions are always going to affect another person. (Gilligan 1982: 96). Delia told him that it was something soft with oil on it. She tried to divert his concentration on seeing the money by asking Joe had he sold another sketch?

Her husband asked her the time that the incident took place since we know that all persons can never be liars all the time. Dele replied him that it was five o'clock. The words probably the truth came out of her while she told the word "The iron" which was later managed by her by replacing the rabbit. She also tried to distract him by asking him to visit Gen. Pinkney. The affectionate husband want no more arguments on that incident since he became suspicious and he asked her to sit down for a moment, Dele and drew her to the couch, sat beside her and put his arm across her shoulders and asked her what was she doing for the last two weeks. “The symbol of success was once a ladder – now it's a jigsaw puzzle.” (Rayner 1983: 45). She tried to maintain her words that she was telling the truth but at length down went her head and out came the truth and tears. Certainty, forced untimely on a sick person, drives the unconscious deeper underground. Only timely instilled certainty starves the unconscious and strengthens the ego to face reality. (Ruitenbeak 1973: 304).

She confessed that she could not get any pupils and at the same time she couldn't bear to have her husband give up his lessons that made her work in laundry for ironing shirts in Twenty-fourth

street. That made her introduce imaginary characters to her husband. In the workplace, women encountered forms of discrimination and inequality to which they had not previously been exposed. (Wolbrecht 2000: 151 - 152). And when a girl in the laundry set down a hot iron on her hand that afternoon she was all the way home making up that story about the Welsh rabbit. She also asked him about his improvement in selling his paintings. She wanted to know how he suspected her that she wasn't giving music lessons to Clementina. Traditional Schooling emphasizes that "masculine" cognitive virtues as rationality and objectivity, to the detriment of women's own "feminine" cognitive faculties such as empathy and subjectivity. (Koertge et. al 2003: 105).

The readers were so curious to know how her husband could have suspected her words but it became a common thing in a while when her husband revealed her the truth that he might not have known that until that night since he was the one who sent up that cotton waste and oil from the engine-room that afternoon for a girl upstairs who had her hand burned with a smoothing-iron. He too worked in that laundry for the last two weeks. Consciously or unconsciously, Enlightenment thinkers refused to detach women's and men's social roles from the description and depiction of physiological differences. (Harding 1986: 117). Strive is the great effort to achieve or obtain something. In this story we were presented both the husband and the wife who took great effort to hide their difficulties that they underwent in their workplace to make the other not to get any trace of worry on thinking of the condition of the other. He continued his reply with the creations of a purchaser from Peoria. They laughed and Joe began saying when one loves one's Art no service seems but Delia stopped him with her hand on his lips. Equality is no longer something we need to beg for from others. This paradigm shift demands that women begin to see themselves as potent agents of change with many resources, rather than as helpless victims. (Wolf 1993: 52).

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