

Analysis of O’Henry’s selected short stories, “The Furnished Room” and “The Gift of the Magi”.

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O’Henry:-O’Henry was born on september 11, 1862, Greensboro, North Carolina, U.S.-his pen name was William Sydney Porter. His character experience humour, grim, irony and at the end having a suspense. For his studies his aunt taught him as his father died earlier. He even worked in a drugstore which was of his uncle. He was married to Athol Estes in 1887 and in 1894 he writes for humour weekly, The Rolling Stone and later on joined the Houston Post as a reporter, columnist and cartoonist.

Analysis of the short story-The Furnished Room.

The story begins with the description showing the motif that the urban city has a thousand people in them. Therefore each house has a thousand stories to tell. Perhaps most of these stories are not interesting so life there was uncaring and dangerous as mostly whenever an outsider came the harshness and cruelties of this great city which hides the original identity and appearance so it reflect the symbol broken faith as described, But everything in the city was moving, restlessly. What was on the top today was lost at the bottom tomorrow”. Even the young man was in search of his love-Miss Eloise who came to this urban city to earn name, fame and money so he is seen walking in search of this girl from building to building in the lower west side of Manhattan but his five months of ceaseless search was in vain as he was unable to find her so he became hopeless as he was unable to find her. He became tired so at a twelfth house he rents a room for himself to rest and when the housekeeper takes him to look for the room he climbs up the stairs where he say, “There were places in the wall made, perhaps, to hold flowering plants. If this were true, the plants had died long before this evening. The air was bad; no flowers could have lived in it for long” this symbolizes that the air was bad which means

lifeless living, suffocation and was abused still he rents a room there as the lodge was near the theatre which symbolizes his quest to search for his love as he was obsessed and had been searching for the girl from a longer period his long awaited separation made him more eager to find her that is why he rents a room closer to the theatre where the girl would be singing songs, whose name was Eloise Vashner who was an aspiring singer. He describes her as a fair, a medium height girl with reddish gold hair and a mole near her left eyebrow. Here, mole represents the symbol of unlucky or unfortunate mark as she herself was unfortunate to live away from her family and love. And even lost herself identity in the urban city and was unfortunate to live successfully as a singer there so even the young man could not trace her existence and appearance and gets no help from others as even the housekeeper tells him that she does not remember such kind of a girl. She never gave any hint still he eagerly asks about her by questioning the housekeeper a number of questions to the housekeeper who tells him that she does not remember a girl named as Eloise Vashner as she says, “No. I don’t remember the name. The stage people have names they change as often as their room. No. I don’t call that one to mind”. This symbolizes his obsession to find her everywhere so he even inspects the room where he stays with the hope to find her so he was always busy observing the room there with the desire to found some traces of the females who might have left their traces as he has a hope that he would be able to find traces of the girl he loves so he tries to inspect each and every sign and traces in that room there he find strains on the wall and a woman’s name carved in the mirror with a sharp object but nothing could be found that belongs to her so he became hopeless. This room which he rents is abused as” The people who had lived in that room perhaps never

knew that this room was not a home. Therefore their deep anger rose up and made them strike out". As he sat to relax on the chair," At the same time, sounds and smells from other furnished rooms came into his room" so he could hear the sound and noises of the spirit of those who once lived in there were not seen although their suffering and pain can be felt but they have no physical appearance but these sounds were heard as described," He heard someone laughing, laughing in a manner that was neither happy nor pleasant so the laughter symbolizes the coldness and harshness of the previous tenants were heard by him whenever he sat to relax if they were angry when they lived in that room as described by O'Henry," Perhaps their anger had been caused by the room's brightness and its coldness. For there was no true warmth in the room", all this describes that those who lived in that room did not live happily because the room did not provide them a sunlight and joyful appearance so the room itself is the symbol of despair as even the same was felt by the young man as whenever he was in that room,".....It had a smell that was more than bad; it seemed cold and sick and old and dying". While no peace of mind came to him as no longer has he gone to relax, suddenly the strong sweet scent of mignonette was felt and he feels her presence in that room. This smell made him remember the girl he loves so the sweet smell of mignonette is the symbol of essence of life that is why he even talks to the scent as if he is being called by the girl he loves. Then he realizes her appearance in that room. He begin to search for her but she could not find any trace which belongs to this girl could be found so he tries to find from where this smell came from as he says to himself,"...oh, God! Where did the smell of flowers come from? Since when has a smell had a voice to call? So he wondered, and went on seeking". She calls him out again he answers, "yes, dear!"as he continues to search but nothing that belongs to her so he ran downstairs to ask the housekeeper for the records of the previous room tenants. The housekeeper gave him a year worth of documents but nothing was found which could have point Eloise existence. After returning the noise became quiet in that room. The smell of the perfume has also gone. His feelings were shattered so he tears his bed sheet into strips and used it to block the door and the windows as described" When all was as he wished it, he put out the burning gaslight. Then, in the dark, he started the gas again, and he lay down thankfully on the bed" so he turns on the gas to full and with a blast so he goes to sleep and awaits death. The symbol gaslight describes the suicidal

attempt as when he looks at it he plans to attempt suicide. There is a twist and surprise in the end as the room where this man attempts suicide was same as he also met with the same fate which the girl he love met as she also commits suicide in the same room to find where this young man commits suicide to meet his eternally love after death .

Analysis of the short story-The Gift of the Magi.

Love is the guiding force in their life, it made life happy. The vitality of love in life had removed all the distress and disgust in life so in this story the motif was that historically in the bible it is written that the magi brought gifts for baby Jesus were symbols who were wiser enough to bring the most precious and priceless gifts for baby Jesus who he was born so this day was celebrated in the form of Christmas festival which was traditionally celebrated by the American's so they brought gifts out of love and respect towards god. These Magi were the kings who already had too much to gift while an ordinary couple like Jim and Della who reflects the social realities of the lower-middle class society which describes that they had too less to give to each other still they sacrificed their most priceless possession to show love towards each other. The art of gifting each other out of love is a natural idea but it was unexpected that love could cross all boundaries of huddles and difficulties in case of sacrificing something more precious and priceless for the sake of love and affection. Jim sells his watch to buy the most expensive tortoise shell hair combs ,the symbol watch describes godliness qualities of love and generosity of nature which helps a husband to show his qualities of faithfulness towards his wife-Della. While Della sells her beautiful long hair as a symbol of beauty and youth. As we can see that her beautiful hair was a symbol of beauty as Jim loves his wife's long beautiful hair. While the couple themselves symbolizes a married life filled with love and romance in the life of the couple which was fully filled with the sweetness of love, faith and togetherness they are able to live happily even had too less to afford 1 His love for her was always more but the reason why he looked at her in a strange way has another reason which she would understand after unwrapping the gift. The theme love is eminent as Jim loves Della more than anything else. And he still feels her looking pretty after her hair cut.Jim feels that Della looks still pretty with her hair cut as nothing can change her love towards him so the theme love is defined." There lays the precious gift the tortoise jeweled shells which she always wanted . As once in a shop



she saw these combs. But as these combs were too expensive so she could not buy them. But now they are hers. Perfect jeweled comb to wear on her beautiful hair. And now she finally has them with her but now her beautiful priceless hair were cut down".When Della unwrap the gift the precious tortoise jeweled shells combs were gifted to her by Jim. These she once saw in a shop. But as these combs were too expensive she was unable to purchase them. These were a perfect gift for Della but now her precious hairs were cut down to wear these on them. The theme love is eminent here as