

Tribhuvan University

**Fetish Culture in the Selected Stories of O. Henry**

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English, Faculty of Humanities and Social  
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Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in English

by

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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled

### **"Fetish Culture in the Selected Stories of O. Henry"**

is my own original work carried out as a Master's student at the Department of English at Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus except to the extent that assistance from other's in the thesis design and conception or in presentation style and linguistic expression and duly acknowledged.

All sources used for the thesis have been fully and properly cited. It contains no material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree at Trivhuvan University or any other educational Institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis.

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**Letter of Approval**

This thesis entitled "**Fetish Culture in the Selected Stories of O. Henry**" submitted to the Department of English, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus Tribhuvan University Kathmandu, by Kenita Subba has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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## **Fetish Culture in the Selected Stories of O. Henry**

William Sydney Porter (1862-1910) was an American short story writer. He was known by his pen name O. Henry. As a child, Henry was always reading everything from classic to dime novels. His favorite novel was Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. In 1896, while he was working in Austin Bank as a teller, a shortage in the cash accounts was attributed to him and he was sentenced to a term in jail. It was during this imprisonment that he assumed the name of O. Henry began writing stories. Henry wrote many famous stories in his life. He wrote over 270 stories but not a single novel. Most of his stories are set in his contemporary presents, the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and he very much carried the flag of great American tradition through his stories. He wrote some funny stories too which seemed to contain moral. Mostly, his stories are famous for their surprising endings and ironic coincidences. The collection of his short stories were immediate popular. They included *The Four Million* (1906), *Heart of The West* (1907), *The Trimmed Lamp* (1907), *The Gentle Grafter* (1908), *The Voice of the City* (1908) etc. He was awarded by yearly prestigious prizes.

This study focuses on fetish culture from the stories of O. Henry, "A Service of Love," "The Skylight Room," "The Romance of a Busy Broker," and "The Gift of Magi. These all stories have highlighted love and sacrifices however, they are also focused on Fetish Culture.

### **Concept of Fetishism**

#### **Introduction**

This study focuses on fetish culture. Oxford Dictionary meaning of fetish is a strong and unusual need or desire for something. Fetish is an object that believes to have magical power to protect or aid its extravagant trust as well as fetishes are those

people who worship to the fetish things to pursue happiness and satisfaction. The culture is the ideas, customs, and social behavior of a particular or society or culture is the social behavior and norms found in human societies.

Fetish culture is related to the theory of fetishism (commodities and reification). A 'fetish' derived from the French 'fetiche' which comes from the Portuguese 'feitico means 'artificial' and 'facere,' ' to make,' is an object believed to have supernatural power, or in particular, a human made object that has power over others. The theory of commodity fetishism originated from Karl Marx. He borrowed the concept of "fetishism" from *The Cult of Fetish Gods* (1760) by Charles de Brosses. Initially, the Portuguese developed the concept of the fetish to refer to the objects used in religious cults by West African natives.

Different theorist and critics have defined Fetishism as their own way. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines, "The fact that a person spends too much time doing or thinking about a particular thing and an object that some people worship Fetish that fact of getting sex pleasure from particular things or an object that some people worship because they believe that it has magical power" (567). At present time, people are spending much time of thinking about particular thing. People have distinct nature so they perform according to their behavior. Some people worship fetish object because they have blind faith in it to get happiness. At a same time some people worship fetish objects for getting sex pleasure. People are prioritizing the money and objects to bring easy settlement in the society by not caring what they are losing in their lives as a result that ruin their lives.

*Encyclopedia Britannica* defines, "In psychology-A fetish is an erotic attachment to an inanimate object or an ordinary asexual part of the human body or the necessity to use a nongenital object in order to achieve sexual gratification. The

object is most commonly some other body part" (575). As it said, fetish is an erotic relation with manmade objects where people search option to fulfill their sexual satisfaction. They are connected with fetish objects because they take it as part of sex organ. They use it for their sexual contentment.

According to *Encyclopedia Americana*:

Fetishism has different but related meanings in anthropology and psychiatry. The various anthropological usages have the common element of belief in or worship of object called fetishes, regard as having super natural power. Fetishes that are the habitats of supernatural beings are commonly worshipped; when power inheres in a fetish, feelings of awe and respect for it. Fetishes are often kept, carried, or worn to protect and bring good fortune. (137)

A word, 'fetishism' is defined by the anthropology and psychiatry. According to anthropology, fetishes are those people who believe or worship of object which have magical power. Basically, fetishes are worshipped, kept and carried out it to bring happiness as well as good fortune. Similarly, according to *College Dictionary*, "Fetishism is a belief in, preference for, or use of fetishes as well as excessive or blind devotion" (487). Fetishism is a kind of belief where the fetishes have blind devotion on it. They want to prefer fetish objects and use it. They are continuously carried out those fetish objects to get happiness and quality life. They have excessive thrust so they can't think other matter.

In addition, Sigmund Freud has also connected fetishism with sexuality. He defines, "The fetish is a substitute for the penis... for a particular and special penis that had been extremely important in early childhood but had later been lost" (1). It should normally have been given up, but the fetish is precisely a designed to preserve



it from extinction. To put it more plainly: the fetish is the substitute for the woman vagina that the man once believe in and for reasons familiar to people do not want to give up. It means, people are searching option to get sex pleasure so they get in fetish culture. In the absence of sex organs, they use fetish objects as sex organ which is denoting as special male organ 'penis' and female sex organ 'vagina'. So that people never want to lose these things from their lives.

According to Andrew Robinson, "To make a fetish of something is treat it as if it has powers which at least on its own merit" (n. p). According to him, if people want to fetish or desire to have something in their lives, they have to behave or treat fetish objects as if it has magical power. When people treat fetish object as valuable things they start to worship to the fetish objects. Manmade things make possible to be involved in the fetish culture. People are involved in fetish culture when they show their blind faith in it and treat it as a tool or magical pot to change their lives. He adds, "Commodity fetishism is only in a social system where labour is socialized." When people follow the system of the society they become socialized and commodity is possible. They start to believe in commodities by developing the fetish culture.

According to Karl Marx in *Das Capital*, "A commodity is in the first place, an object outside us, a thing that by its properties satisfies human wants of some sort or another" (17). In the commercial age, commodity is in the first place. The things or properties may satisfy to the people .They give more space to that properties by thinking that give more satisfaction in their lives. He adds, "Social relationships are continually mediated expressed with objects (commodities and money)." According to Marx, human beings are social animal so they live in the community or society. They have socio-economic relationship in the society. During journey, they establish such relationship so that each and every time people are connected with objects and

money. Human beings have such nature where they always influenced by the fetish things and expressed with it to show their happiness and satisfaction.

Michael P. Todaro and Stephen C. Smith, "Economic is a social science. It is concerned with human beings and the social system by which they organize their activities to satisfy basic material need and nonmaterial wants because they are social scientist..." (12). Economic is related to the commodity so while defining Economic, people come to know that it is a social science because people always connected with society. They concern with economic activities which able to make survivable in this contemporary world. People are social scientist so they always try to establish economic relationship in society and involve such kind of economic activities where commodities are played vital role to operate the system of the society.

### **Summaries of the Stories**

In O. Henry's stories "A Service of Love," revolves about young couple love, sacrifice and hope. Joe and Delia are as the lover at first and they get married later. Joe is an aspiring art student where is Delia is a talented piano student. Both are from different places. They have come to take their art class. They meet and fall in love. They started to share same roof. When they have money, they have been enjoying their life happily but they face economic crisis later. They are unable to pay fee for their teachers. They want to continue their classes but they did not have money that situation make them to do low wage job. Lastly, they sacrifice their art and ambition to make each other's dreams come true.

Likewise, in "The Romance of a Busy Broker," O. Henry tells the tale of a busy man who does not have time for his family named Harvey Maxwell. He is too busy in his office even he does not time to talk with his wife .He wakes up and goes to office. He engages with paper, telephone, meetings all the time.

He is working as machine. Suddenly when he gets time to take lunch, he realizes that what they missed. He forgets who is his wife? So he proposes his wife once. He has become as paralyzed and incomplete. He gives more time to the financial world which destroys the nature and human mind.

Another story, in "The Skylight Room," by O. Henry describes the beautiful story of a young poor girl who has hard times in life. She has a strong desire to make her life better so she has dreamt all about that things. In the process of making her dream come true, she did many jobs but could not satisfy her so she works harder and harder. She becomes weaker and weaker. Then, she becomes unconscious.

Similarly, in "The Gift of the Magi" by O. Henry tells the story of a young poor class couple named Della Dillingham and James Dillingham. They are husband and wife. They have unconditional love for each other. They are poor so they can't buy gifts for each other. Later, they think that gifts have such power which can make happy otherwise time to buy watch for her husband. James also thinks as Della and he sells his platinum watch to buy a comb. At last, both sacrifice their precious things.

### **Common Features of "The Gift of the Magi", "A Service of Love", "The Skylight Room" and "The Romance of a Busy Broker"**

All the stories have focused on the fetish culture where every character is fetisized in the story. The features are as follows:

- In "The Gift of the Magi", When Della sells her precious hair for her husband happiness and James sells his watch for his wife happiness, both prioritize to the objects. James and Della develop blind faith in those things to search happiness which is one of the part of fetish culture.
- In "A Romance of a Busy Broker", Harvey Maxwell is sexually fetisized when he again proposes her wife to marry.

- In "Service of Love", Characters are involved in the fetish culture when both face the economic crisis during their journey.
- In "The Skylight Room", The lady has a dream to be wealthy for this, she makes a journey where she success to involve in the fetish culture.

### **The Theoretical Perspective on Fetish Culture**

The idea of fetish has a particular in the writings of both Marx and Freud. It implies for these two theorists of the social, a particular form of relation between human beings and object. In the work of both, the idea of the fetish involves attributing properties to objects that they do not really have and that should correctly be recognized as human.

Karl Marx was a German philosopher, economist, historian, political theorist, sociologist, journalist and revolutionary socialist. He has developed theory related to the class consciousness. He had borrowed the word "fetish" and he had connected it with commodity. Later, he had developed the theory commodity fetishism to address the class in the capitalist world. He has written a book, *Das Capital* where he defined commodity fetishism. According to him, "A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of labour" (37). As it said, commodities are mysterious thing because working people appear as an objective in the social characters. Money and man made things are mysterious because it has controlled to the working people. It has power to modify them into commodity.

Marx adds, "The fetishism of commodities has its origin as the for going analyses has shown, in peculiar social character of the labour that produces them" (37). Working class people's unusual social characters aid to produce the fetishism of commodities in the society. They have established relationship with products of their

work. So, they have become commodities. The existence of the thing "commodities" its value make them commodities in the commercial world where they forget to give important for their own value. While he was writing about commodity fetishism, he has given an example of Robinson Crusoe's experience. And he has mentioned:

Moderate though he be, yet some few wants he has to satisfy, and must therefore do a little useful work of various sorts, such as making tools and furniture, and taming goat, fishing and hunting. Of his prayers and the like we take know account, since they are a source of pleasure to him, and he looks upon them as so much recreation. In spite of the variety of his work, he knows that his labour, whatever its form, is but the activity of one and the same Robinson. Whether one kind occupies a greater space in his general activity than another, depends on the difficulties greater or less as the case may be to overcome in attaining the useful effect and at. (39-40)

Like Robinson, People want to do different kinds of job which may make them happy. They do distinct jobs or work till they get pleasure and satisfaction with that work. People think, to change work is the greatest source of happiness and pleasure. People do because their difficult situation which is very effective for them. People always want do something which take them in the height of satisfaction so they always seek new thing to get pleasure in the society. In the above example has cleared that people have thrust to have something which forces to do different kind of work. People change their desire according to the situation the way they are living.

According to Andrew Robinson, "In commodity fetishism, people have an experience of being controlled by the activities and movements of inanimate objects" (n. p). Human beings are associated with social system where they socialized and

transformed into commodities. After that, they start to control the inanimate objects. They develop belief its power to change their lives or fortune. People have such culture which aid to develop fetish culture so they are circulated by the activities of the fetish objects. They search their satisfaction in those things on these days.

Rebecca Tromsness claims, "Marx, using a 'materialist' approach, argues that real social relation of production are masked by the presents of commodities within a capitalist society." According to her, Marx uses word to show social relationship in the society. The people keep relation with circulation of commodities where their relation is commodities (money and object). Simply, it displays that relation is masked by the object or money in the present society. People are involved in the fetish culture which has justified that they are associated with every single object. It has proved that people can't do anything without accumulated with fetish objects in these days.

Tim Dant says, "For Marx the reality of commodity is its representation of congealed labour through which it derives its value. In its unreal or fetishised form the commodity appears to have intrinsic value derive from its material character" (n. p). He says that commodity is the representation of solid labour which derive its value. People have become commodities which show its exact value in the society. Commodity has its integral value when people give them priority with its material character.

Dant adds, "The fetish object will, for example, influence the lives of its human worshippers, determining some of their actions and modification their belief. In the process the object is mediating the powers delighted to it by worshippers" (n. p). The lives of human being are influenced by the commodities (money and objects) and determined their action by using it. Commodities help to modify their believe

what they had before involving in the fetish culture. In the process of developing fetish culture, they do worship that thing which empowered its power. A fetish is created through the veneration or worship an object that is attributed some power or capacity, independently of its manifestation of that capacity. The process of attribution the object may indeed manifest those powers when the people that object which make it special.

According to Carla "Zizek argues that individuals know very well that relation between people are behind relation between things but that they act nevertheless as though commodities embody value and thus produce social reality as fetishistic 'illusion'" (n. p.). Basically, people know how they embody with commodities. They keep relation with commodities value so they produces social reality as illusion. When the people have blind faith in it, they establish new relation with fetish objects which has become as illusion. It can never give fantasy to them for ever after.

Carla further says, "The misrecognition involved in commodity fetishism is not on the level of knowledge,-that people do not know that economic exchanges are the reification of social relations but that it is on the level of practice itself" (n. p). As he said people are unknown about the commodity fetishism so they have developed blind faith in it. They don't know that economic exchanges are the concrete thing of social relation. People establish socio-economic relationship in the society and continuous practice to make it possible to take its level in the peak of the priority.

Another prominent theorist Sigmund Freud who was an Austrian neurologist and the founder of psychoanalysis, a clinical method for treating psychopathology through dialogue between a patient and a psychoanalyst. He has talked about fetishism by connecting sexuality. He describes, "Fetishism as a response of the

refusal to acknowledge.” As he is said that the part of the male child, the absence of a penis on the mother’s body. This refusal occurs because to recognize its absence suggests the possibility castration for the little boy. In other words, that he too might lose her penis. He therefore substitutes a presence for the absence that he finds. The substitute object is often related to the area of the body where the traumatic realization would have taken place.

Freud further says, “A number of men whose object –choice was dominated by a fetish. There is no need to expect that these people come to analysis on account of their fetish. Usually, they are quite satisfied with it, or even praise the way in which it eases their erotic life" (1). People want to express their sex desire with object but when their choices are dominated or controlled by the fetish, they don’t need to analysis with that. They try to satisfy their sex desire with fetish things. People always try to search option to make their desire fulfill so that they come to introduce with fetish culture.

This study has carried out these theorist views on fetishism where all the stories of O. Henry, have followed that theory and ideas to prove it as fetish culture.

### **Implication of Fetishism in the Stories**

This research has tried to look at fetish culture in the selected stories. There are different ideas, theories and criticism that express about fetish culture.

### **Fetishism in "The Gift of The Magi"**

Karl Marx claims that, "Fetishism is the perception of the social relationship involved in production as economic relationship among the money and commodities.” “The Gift of The Magi.” Starting line, "One dollor and eight-seven cents..." (1). It shows its connection to the above definition of fetishism. The story has started with money which clarifies that this story is based on fetish culture where the characters of



the story have established socio-economic relationship in the society. Calculating money by Della to buy the present to her husband justifies that she is literally connected with fetishism.

Another example, "Three times Della counted it ..." (1). She has succeeded to establish economic relationship. This line clearly shows that the character Della is involved in financial activities. She has succeeded to establish economic relationship. Similarly, another example from the same story, "Tomorrow would be Christmas day and she had only \$ 1.87 with which to buy Jim a present..." (1). This line also has given clear concept about fetishism. It shows that money and present (commodity) are the most important for the characters in the story. Here, the prominent character Della has only \$ 1.87 Dollar who wants to buy gift for her husband. The economic relationship is visible in Della's wishes.

According to Tim Dant, "The fetish object will, for example, influence the lives of its human worshippers, determining some of their actions and modification their belief. In the process the object is mediating the powers delighted to it by worshippers" (n. p). These lines are applied for the event which has taken from the "The Gift of The Magi." The event is; "Tomorrow would be Christmas day and she had only \$ 1.87 with which to buy a present. She had been saving every penny she could for month..." (1). Here, the prominent character Della is making a way to involve in the fetish culture. She collects money for several months to buy Christmas gift that means her belief is modifying after worshipping it. Della's life has highly influenced by the commodities which is shown in the story. Della is giving priority to it so that the value of commodities (object) have become higher and higher.

Another example, "Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are only \$ 1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent

planning for something nice for him..." (1). Della has been empowering those things which have clearly explained in the above lines. She has planned for several months ago that means she is hoping to change their lives after buying a gift for her husband. When she develops fetish culture, slowly, that commodities is assisting to modify her believe. Della is strongly worshipped to the objects. She is thinking, that object will bring smile on face of her husband. She has spent her valuable time for saving money just to buy a gift. It seems, she has empowered those objects. When she starts to save a penny to purchase a gift for her husband, she starts to indulge into fetish culture. It seems. She has extravagant desire to purchase that gift.

The statement of Tim Dant is, "The process of attribution of object may indeed manifest those powers when the people make it special" (n. p). These ideas are implied in the event of the story, "The Gift of Magi" example:

Will you buy my hair? Asked Della. 'I buy hair' said Madam. 'Take yer hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it.' Twenty dollars,' said madame, lifting the mass with a practiced hand. 'Give it to me quick,' said Della...she was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.... (2)

Here, Della is making the present special so she is very hurry to reach to the shop where she wants to buy presents. She is too hasted to sell her precious hair and purchase a gift for her husband. This all event has showed that Della makes the object very special which show its clear power to control to Della. It has immense value in the life of the Della and Jim. Similarly, a statement "Fetish is a kind of belief where the fetishes have blind devotion on it." These lines are followed by the event of the story. For instance, "I had my hair cut off and sold it because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present..." (3). In this event, Della seems to have excessive devotion towards commodity because she cuts off her precious hair

and sold it in the market to buy a platinum fob chain. She has a belief that can bring tremendous bliss in their married lives so she has indulged in fetish culture as fetishes.

Each and every character of the stories of O. Henry, has become fetish within their journey. Some characters are not only circulated by the commodities to survival but they are also connected with it to fulfill their sexual lives. They want to show it as their sexual option. According to the Sigmund Freud, "A number of men whose object – choice was dominated by a fetish .There is no need to expect that these people come to analysis on account of their fetish. Usually, they are quite satisfied with it, or even praise the way in which it eases their erotic life" (1). These lines are followed by the event which is taken from the story "The Gift of The Magi." For instance:

For these lay the combs- the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshipped for in a Broadway window. Beautifully combs, pure tortoiseshell, with jeweled rims- just the shed to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew...she held out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.... (4)

Della has got a set of combs and Jim gets a chain. According to Freud, straight things symbolize the male organ 'penis' and circle shapes symbolize the female organ 'vagina'. As he said, both characters seem to search another option to fulfill their sexual thrust. It seems that both aren't satisfied with each other so they give the presents to each other to make each other sexually satisfied. Della has comb that means, she has a option to make her sexual life happy. Similarly, Jim has a watch (chain) that means he searches option to get pleasure for his sex life. Psychologically, the fetish objects might become as option or choice to the people. Here is also

applied. Both, Della and Jim, have option and both are controlled by the fetish objects. This event has proved that the characters are sexually fetishes. They are in sexual fetish culture and fetisized in the story. They are moved both psychologically and materialistically way. They are sexually unsatisfied so they seem hurry to buy the things to make satisfied. Both have the specific interest in a particular object which helps to incite a strong sexual response.

### **Fetishism in "The Skylight Room"**

The statement of Tim Dant is, "The process of attribution of object may indeed manifest those powers when the people make it special" (n. p). These ideas are implied in the event of the story, "The Skylight Room." For example, "As she lay on back she tried twice to raise her arm. The third time she got two thin finger to her lips and blew a kiss out of the black pit to Bill Jackson. Her arm fell back limply..." (18). The character Miss Lesson is giving flying kiss to get bliss from that star. She is fragile, she can't even work though she is looking up and talking with star. It means, she is hoping to get it. She loves too much because she knows that it has huge power to change the world. She is making star very special so that it has been sparkling brightly. She has made it special which is clearly showed its power. If she doesn't have money she has to die with an empty stomach. This is a rule of commercial age. No one can live without commodity but it has proved that Miss Lesson attribution of money and make special in the story. She gives more value to the commodity. She believes that it has great value with its material characters.

Same statement has followed by the event which is taken from the story "The Skylight Room." For example, "Good-bye, Billy,' she murmured faintly. ' You're millions of miles away and you won't even twinkle once. But you kept where I could see you must the time up when there wasn't anything else ..." (18). In these lines,

Miss Lesson is in a serious condition. Her health isn't good. She is about to die but she has a strong desire which is alive inside her. She is in that condition but she is thinking about commodity (Billy). She worships a lot in the last event too. She has hoped to have her life better in the next life too. She can't speak properly even though she has pronounced that word Billy which stands for commodity (money). When analyzing this event, the character has showed her immense devotion towards the commodity.

Karl Marx claims that, "Fetishism is the perception of the social relationship involved in production as economic relationship among the money and commodities" (n. p). Another example, "Everyday Miss Lesson went out to work. At night she brought home paper with handwriting and made copies with her typewriter. Sometimes she had no work at night and then she would sit on the steps up the high stoop with the roomers..." (18). These lines are also connected with the above definition. Here, Miss Lesson is a typist who works to survive in the planet. Sometime she doesn't have work so she searches option for living her life happily that means she follows the social systems where she has to establish new relation with money. She established it because of her social character and behavior.

Similarly, "Eight dollars? Said Miss Lesson. Dear me! I'm not Hetty if I do look green. I'm just a poor little working girl. Show me something higher and lower..." (16). Miss Lesson has been influenced by the materialist world. Lack of money, she can't afford big and luxurious room which she always wants to have in her life. She is simply a hard working girl. She glimpses, "Miss Lesson looked up into the firmament and cried with her little gay laugh: 'Why, there's Billy Jackson! I can see him from down here, too. 'All looked up – some at the windows of skyscrapers, some casting about for an airship, Jackson-guided..." (17). In these lines, Miss Lesson is

searching better life and money which might give happiness. Here, Billy Jackson stands for money and happiness. That means, her action has been modifying her belief. She is highly influenced by the fetish objects so she is dreaming about Billy Jackson.

Similarly, she thinks, "It's that stars, 'explained Miss Lesson, pointing with a tiny finger. 'Not the big one that twinkles'..." (17). These lines explore that Miss Lesson dreams about her brighter life as sparking star. She has strong desire to be a wealthy person in the society. So, she is just pointing that star which is very far away from her. She is trying to indulge in the fetish culture by showing the star to her friends. Likewise, another event has also connected with above mentioned statement. For instance, "The steady is blue one near it. I can see it every night through my skylight..." (17). Miss Lesson gives names to that star which colour is blue. She is used to look that star every night which proves that she is developing blind faith on it. She is dreaming, means she is worshiping that star or commodity. Here, star is helping to modify her belief about it and slowly she involves in the fetish culture. She has developed faith so she has dreamed all night. She thinks, that will come one day and rescue her from poverty. She has taken commodity as a magical weapon which might change her life for a short time.

From the same story's event, "He doesn't show up very well from down here, 'said Miss Lesson'. You ought to see him from my room. You know you can see stars even in the daytime from the bottom of a well. At night, my room is like the shaft of a coal mine, and it makes Bill Jackson look like the big diamond pin that – Night fasters her kimono with..." (18). An action of Miss Lesson has determined to her. Her dreaming action, her praising action has mediating its power. She is admiring because she takes it as magical weapon. She worships it and practices it which make possible

to pick up its height. She is inviting to all to involve in the fetish culture. She is showing the hope and making them as optimistic people in the story. All are looking up in the sky that seems, all want to have same thing. And all are influenced by the commodities. All want to worship to the star which has named as Bill Jackson. In this line, Big Diamond is an object which is symbolized the property. Miss Lesson is highly empowering its power by admiring each night and day. It has proved that, Miss Lesson has developed fetish culture in the story.

### **Fetishism in "A Service of Love"**

Karl Marx claims that, "Fetishism is the perception of the social relationship involved in production as economic relationship among the money and commodities." For example, "They were mighty happy as long as their money lasted..." (19). from the story of "A Service of Love." This line declares that the characters are connected with money so that they are happy. They are connected with money which might give happiness in their journey.

Likewise, while Andrew is clarifying the concept of fetishism, he says, "In commodity fetishism, people have an experience of being control by the activities and movements of inanimate objects" (n. p). These lines have implied in an event which are taken from the story "A Service of Love." For example:

Money was lacking to pay Mr. Magister and Herr Rosenstock their prices. When one loves one's Art no service seems to hard. So, Delia said she must give music lesson to keep the chafing dish bubbling.'Joe, dear,' she said gleefully, 'I've a pupil. And, oh, the loveliest people! My pupil is his daughter Clementina. I dearly love her already. She's a delicate thing – dresses always in white; and the sweetest, simplest

manners! Only eighteen years old. I'm to give three lessons a week; and, just think, Joe! \$5 a lesson. I don't mind it a bit.... (21)

These events have explained that people are very much influenced by materialistic world. Here, in these lines have also carried out the same issue which has showed in fetish culture. The characters Delia and Joe, both are husband and wife. Both love to each other. When they have a lot of money, they have good life and happy life. According to Aristotle, "Man is by nature or social animal." Here, human beings are social animals so that they are followed by the system of society. When they are socialized in the society, they become fetishes. At first, they were controlled by the money but at that time they didn't feel about the impact of money. But later, when Delia and Joe face economic crises, they feel that they really need money to run their lives. They can't give fee to their art teacher and they have to give up their art for the sake of money which is made by man. Slowly, they have more controlled by the money, so that Delia indulges in fetish culture.

Meanwhile, Joe also has to do work to make money. Both run after money for their better life but it makes them as slave. They are operated according to money. That means, the movement or financial activities make them to move forward. Each and every time, they are controlled by the money and they are circulated by the financial activity. They feel the value of money so that they can start to worship and run after it. And they develop fetish culture.

### **Fetishism in "The Romance of Busy Broker"**

In the story "The Romance of a Busy Broker." "On the exchange there were hurricanes, landslides and these elements disturbance were reproduced in miniature in the Broker's offices. Maxwell shoved his chair against the wall and transacted business after the matter of toe-dancer..." (69). These lines are also clarifying about



fetishism and fetish culture. Here, in these lines, glaciers, volcanoes, snowstorms are commented with work. The character Maxwell is doing work in his office as toe-dancer. The character Maxwell's behaviors and his busy schedule show that he is trying to establish economic relationship by following social system. He is doing hard work means, he is making money a lot which things can be seen in these above lines.

Rebecca Tromsness claims that, "Marx, using a 'materialist' approach, argue that real social relations of production are masked by the presence of commodities within a capitalist society" (n. p). This statement has been applied in this story, "The Romance of Busy Broker." For instance, "The Broker's hour is not only crowded but the minutes and seconds are hanging to all the straps and packing both front and rear platforms..." (69). The character who is a broker, he doesn't have enough time to care of himself and others. It seems that every minute and second is precious for him to establish as a noble person in the society. He is trying to take new relationship with economy by keeping himself busy in the society. He keeps a new relationship with commodity (money). That means, the socio-economic relationship is masked by the money in the society which vivid picture has been portrayed by the character Maxwell. Here is another additional example:

And this day was Harvey Maxwell's busy day. The ticker began to rest out jerkily its fitful coils of type, the desk telephone had a chronic attack of buzzing. Men began to throw into the railing, Jovially, sharply, viciously, excitedly. Messenger boys run in and out with message and telegrams. The clerk in the office jumped about like sailors during a storm.... (69)

These lines are also shown, that all the characters like messenger boy, Clerk and Boss Maxwell are very busy. It seems, they are running after commodity. There, every

activity shows that they are running after money where all are controlled by the materialistic world. The commodity is making them as slave. This event has shown that all characters are very hurry to keep new relation with finance. In the society, they are materialist because they are bounded by the things or commodities. The society is simply circulated by the commodities.

Here is also, Maxwell, boy and Clerk are social animals, they are doing their works because they wanted to be an aristocrat so Maxwell takes deep relationship with it. That clearly shows, they are circulated with commodities and their every action has determined them in the society. If the characters don't involve in the activities they can't do anything for their lives. So, they are very busy to make money as well as to make their lives better. Similarly, all the events of the stories have also connected with the above mentioned statement. Every character is bending when commodities show them way to move so that they can't give up to follow for the sake of anything else. They are influenced by the commodity so they are very busy to accomplish their whole tasks and they don't have time to have Tiffin also.

Here is another supporting line which is, "Orders to buy and sell were coming and going as swift as the flight of swallows..." (69). The line has been giving clear concept that the capitalist world has been controlled by the selling and buying of objects. People are controlled by the economic activities. Another example is:

Man was working like some high geared, delicate, strong machine-  
strung it full tension, going at full speed, accurate, never hesitating,  
with the proper word and decision and act ready and prompt as  
clockwork. Stocks and bonds, loans and mortgages, margins and  
securities.... (70)

These lines are intertwined with the statement which has presented by the Carla. He says, "The misrecognition involved in commodity fetish is not on the level of knowledge that people do not know that economic exchanges are the reification of social relation but that is on the level of practice itself" (n. p). While connected both, it has declared that the characters of the story, have been practicing which make possible to empower its value. All are doing hard work as machine, they are in speed to complete their work. They are working as clockwork. Every work which is mentioned, there is clearly proved that the characters are unknown about the commodity fetishism so, they are developing blind faith in it and they work as machine just to make money.

Equally, the characters don't know that economic exchanges are the concrete thing of social relation. They establish such a new socio-economic relationship in the society where the society is covered by the commodities. People cannot do anything without commodities in their regular activities. People can run their lives when they do have belief in the commodities otherwise they become powerless in the society.

Generally, society is shaped by the economic level of the people. The characters, which are having experience of being controlled by the commodities in the society, they do involve in fetish culture and praise to the fetish objects as God. In addition, example from the same story:

Don't you understand?" said Maxwell. "I want you to marry to marry me. I love you, Miss Leslie. I wanted to tell you, and I snatched a minute when things had slackened up a bit. They're calling me for the 'phone now. Tell him to wait a minute, Pitcher. Won't you, Miss Leslie?... (72)

These above lines are connected to the sexual fetishism. The protagonist is sexually fetisized in the story during his journey. The Maxwell is a very busy broker who doesn't have enough time for his personal life. He forgets everything that what had happened in the past. He just got involve in his work. Once he forgets his wife and he teats as normal employee. When he separate few times, he again proposes her wife to marry. This shows that Maxwell arouses sexual interest so he proposes his wife again. He is involved in sexual fetishism. He wants to fulfill his sexual interest by remarrying his wife.

Finally, Maxwell succeeds to involve in sexual and commodities fetishism in the story during his journey of life. He becomes as fetishes whose has strong desire to achieve something which make him happy as well complete. It shows, people often search sexual satisfaction when they have enough money. It also tries to show that people aren't satisfied without those things. Here, Maxwell is also tried to pursue sexual and economic satisfaction at any cost.

### **Conclusion: Fetishized with Commodity and Sexuality**

The research has analyzed the fetish culture in the selected stories: "The Gift of The Magi", "A Service of Love", "The Romance of a Busy Broker" and "The Skylight Room," of O. Henry. These stories examine power of money and fetish objects that have brought happiness or existent in the society. It also shows the power of a manmade objects that have controlled others so they finally, ruin their lives. These stories ironically present the vivid picture of the real world which is similar to the present. While researching, the researcher has used the theory of commodity fetishism and sexual fetishism to prove as fetish culture in the stories.

Henry reflects the culture of his time in the story which is rooted in the commercial age (society). Setting of the stories is America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The

life style of the American, class difference of the society and nature of the people have displayed in the stories through the characters. He has highlighted the theme of love and sacrifice along with implicit picture of fetish culture.

All the stories are fascinating which shows the fetish culture by developing fetish nature toward money and material things. They have become fetishes during their journey. For instant, Della and Jim, Miss Lesson, Delia and Joe, and Maxwell are involved in the fetish culture. They are running after commodities to make their lives better and worship it a lot. Della and Jim, have excessive devotion toward objects, they are helping to empower it. They are circulated by the things. When the plot of the story is moving, gradually, the characters are indulged in the fetish culture. Similarly, Miss Lesson, who has a strong desire to be a wealthy person so she dreams all night. She talks about star which is stands for property. She runs after commodity so she praises that star a lot. That star is helping to change her belief.

Likewise, Mr. Maxwell also involved in the fetish culture. He is very busy man and he doesn't have enough time to remember other part of his life. He just wants to make his life better in the society so that he runs after making money. Commodity might give happiness at a time it will ruin his life too. To become a noble person is his desire which is the quality of the fetishes so that he involves in the fetish culture.

Each movement and event has impacted by the commodities. Starting of the story is a proof to say, these are related to the fetish culture. All the characters have involved on it due to their situation that they face in their journey. In the present day, people are bounded with commodities. They are strongly praised to the commodities. Commodity is played the important role to operate the life of human beings.

The researcher has found out that people have been becoming fetishes since they follow the system of the society. People enjoy these days by connecting to the fetish culture. People have strong desire to have better lives so they are ready to do anything for their lives. Willingly and unwillingly, they are involved in the fetish culture as well as many things are there which play vital role in their lives to be fetishes. Commodities have such magical powers which have power to run to the human being in these days and human beings are becoming more materialist by developing such strong desire to make each other happy. They don't know what the commodities mean for them so that they develop blind faith on it.

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