

The Analysis of Allusions in O. Henry's Short Stories

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Received: 20 March 2025; **Accepted:** 16 April 2025; **Published:** 18 May 2025

Abstract: This article provides a comprehensive explanation of allusion. It also provides deep analysis of allusions in O. Henry's short stories.

Keywords: Allusion, intertext, reference, honor, patriotism, friendship and etc.

Introduction: The word allusion comes from the Late Latin *allusio* meaning "a play on words" or "game" and is a derivative of the Latin word *alludere*, meaning "to play around" or "to refer to mockingly." According to I.R. Galperin, allusion is an "indirect reference, by word or phrase, to historical, literary, mythological, biblical facts or to the facts of everyday life made in the course of speaking or writing (D.U.Ashurova, M.R. Galieva). Allusion is considered as one of the most frequently used intertextual marker. In fictional texts most allusions are based on the assumption that there is a body of knowledge that is shared by the author and the reader and that therefore the reader will understand the author's referent. Allusions can be used as a straightforward device to enhance a text by providing further meaning, but it can also be used in a more complex sense to make an ironic comment on one thing by comparing it to something that is dissimilar. Over time, as shared knowledge changes, allusions can also reveal the unspoken assumptions and biases of both authors and readers. There are four types of allusions. They are: religious allusion, mythological allusion, literary allusion and historical allusion.

An American writer William Sydney Porter, known by his pen name O. Henry used many allusions considerably witty through an incredible economy and grace of language. His short stories are known for their wit, wordplay, warm characterization, and surprise endings. Now, let's focus on the analysis of allusions in O. Henry's short stories.

"I was feeling like Adam before the apple stampede, and was digging my spurs into the side of the counter

and working with my twenty four-inch spoon when I happened to look out of the window into the yard of Uncle Emsley's house, which was next to the store (O. Henry, *The Pimienta Pancakes*, p.8)". In this passage allusion makes a direct reference to a biblical story of Garden of Eden where Adam ate a piece of the forbidden apple that got stuck in his throat. In this passage the hero gives into temptation and convinces himself that doing wrong is actually a good thing.

"They're golden sunshine", says he, "honey- browned by the ambrosial fires of Epicurus". I'd give two years of my life to get the recipe for making them pancakes (O. Henry, *Pimienta Pancakes*, p.11). Here is an allusive anthroponomy referenced to a famous ancient Athenian philosopher Epicurus, son of Neocles and Chaerestrates. According to some historical facts he was very famous for his excellence and kindness to everyone.

"Pulled it off", said chunk with Elysium in his grin."Rosy hit the fire-escape on time to a second, and we was under the wire at the Reverend's at 9.30 ¼(O. Henry, *The Love- Philtre of Ikey Schonstein*, p.36).In this passage there is a reference to the name of a place in an ancient Greek mythology which expresses the conception of the afterlife that developed over time and was maintained by certain Greek religious and philosophical sects and cults.

If not coin you must pay in humiliation of spirit for every benefit received at the hands of philanthropy. As Caesar had his Brutus, every bed of charity must have its toll of a bath, every loaf of bread its compensation of a private and personal inquisition (O. Henry, *The Cop*

and the Anthem, p.42). Here historical and at the same time literary allusion conveys the story of politician of the late Roman Republic Caesar's close friend Marcus Brutus and The Tragedy of Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare which express the struggle between the conflicting demands of honor, patriotism and friendship.

Disconsolate, Soupy ceased his unavailing racket. Would never a policeman lay hands on him? In his fancy the Island seemed in an unattainable Arcadia. He buttoned his thin coat against the chilling wind (O. Henry, The Cop and The Anthem, p.45). Here is a reference to Greek mythology. The word Arcadia is taken from the mythological character Arcas. In Greek mythology, it was the home of the god Pan. In European Renaissance arts, Arcadia was celebrated as an unspoiled, harmonious wilderness.

"No, m'm", said Bud. But before going he lingered while a cow's tail could have switched thrice; for man is man's ally; and even the Philistines must have blushed when they took Samson in the way they did (O. Henry, Hearts and Crosses, p.54). In this story religious allusion referenced to the biblical account Samson, who was given supernatural strength by God in order to combat his enemies and perform heroic feats such as killing a lion, slaying an entire army with only the jawbone of an ass, and destroying a pagan temple. Samson had two vulnerabilities, however: his attraction to untrustworthy women and his hair, without which he was powerless. These vulnerabilities ultimately proved fatal for him.

One day a being named Bartholomew, a sheep-man- and therefore of little account from the lower Rio Grande country, rode insight of the Nepalito ranch-house, and felt hunger assail him. Ex consuetudine he was soon seated at the midday dining table of that hospitable kingdom. Talk like water gushed from him: he might have been smitten with Aaron's rod- that's your gentle shepherd when an audience is vouch saved him whose ears are not overgrown with wool (O. Henry, Hearts and Crosses, p.55). In this passage there are two biblical references. Bartholomew was one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus, and is usually identified with Nathanael, who appears in the Gospel according to John as being introduced to Christ by Philip. By referring to Bartholomew the author states the hero Webb's insignificance in the family. Aaron's rod refers to any of the staves carried by Moses' brother, Aaron, in the Old Testament of the Bible. The Bible tells how, along with Moses' rod, Aaron's rod was endowed with miraculous power during the Plagues of Egypt that preceded the Exodus. There are two occasions where the Bible tells of the rod's power even when it was not being held by its owner.

To sum up it should be assumed that, O. Henry expressed his deep intentions through allusions and it makes the reader go deeper; activate knowledge structures about culture, history, religious, mythology, etc.

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