ABSTRACT

According to Mikhail Bakhtin, language is ideologically saturated. The verbal constructs—novelistic discourses as "hybrid constructions" here—are loci where centripetal and centrifugal forces collide. Authorial speech, narrator's speech, and also characters' speech are interwoven in the text to exhibit diverse ideas, and to disclose polyphonic textualities. In light of Bakhtin's aforementioned idea, this paper will discuss O. Henry's attempts to orchestrate "the voices of the city" in four short stories: "The Gift of the Magi," "An Unfinished Story,","Mammon and the Archer," and "An Unfinished Christmas Story." New York is portrayed as an ambivalent setting of prosperity and poverty, of dreams built up and broken. Literary devices such as twist endings, parodic adaptations and incorporated genre not only lay bare the textual fictitiousness, but question the permanency of social systems such as capitalism. In addition, the narrators' descriptions evoke concerns for the exploited within the text, while the self-reflexive authorial intrusions make comments on the hegemonic capitalism without. O. Henry, who "speaks through language," does succeed in creating texts of heteroglossia. Humanistic compassion for the exploited proletarian and social censure against capitalist violence are both displayed.

Keywords: authorial intrusion, dialogism, heteroglossia, metafiction, parody, twist ending

REFERENCES


