

THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN GEORGE PETTIE'S COLLECTION OF SHORT STORIES: A *PETITE PALLACE* OF PETTIE HIS PLEASURE

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ABSTRACT

The development of the short story began even before humans could write. Storytellers often used to depend upon the rhythms, stocked phrases and rhymes to help in memorizing tales. The earliest tales were composed on papyrus in ancient Egypt. The ancient Egyptians have written most of their narratives in prose as they have reserved verse for religious hymns. One of the consoling and inspiring stories from Egyptian tales is "The Shipwrecked Sailor" (c.2000 BCE) which reassures its audience that apparent misfortune can become good fortune. Women, in addition to males, play an active role in the development of the story in *A Petite Pallace* by George Pettie. Diverse types of affection - affection for a woman, affection for a man, affection for an animal, and, finally, love for God - are fundamental to *A Petite Palace*, while the storyteller is uninterested in the economical or ideological causes for actions.

Keyword: Genre, Short Story, Women Characters

The unrest caused by the Reformation and the dictatorship of Henry VIII dashed the dreams of the humanists and authors who lived during the early Renaissance. In the late 1570s, Sidney and Spenser brought back the literary Renaissance with great success, and the 1590s saw many poets and translators who didn't write plays. The language throughout this golden period of Elizabeth was diverse, artistic, vibrant, and dignified. Ever since Rome's fall in the fifth century, historians have documented Renaissances in the eighth and twelfth centuries, respectively, under Charlemagne. However, the Renaissance of traditional principles in the fifteenth century rendered Gothic architecture insufficient. In 1604, a Neo-Latin scholar was the first person to refer to the period that occurred after the fall of Rome and before the Renaissance as the "middle age".

Alterations were made to people's ideas regarding the physical cosmos. The scholastic concept had to make way for practical testing: anatomists examined the human body; Machiavelli portrayed power politics in action, and Galileo (1564–1642) used his telescope to confirm Copernicus' (1474–1543) heliocentric hypothesis. The saint and the warrior of the Middle Ages gave way to the hero, courtier, and gentleman of the Renaissance. One of the schools of thinking that can be found in the field of literature holds the Elizabethan and early Stuart periods to represent the most remarkable century of all time. This school of thought is notable for its stringent standards and spectacular accomplishments. These decades gave birth to a legion of brilliant writers, some of whom have never been exceeded by anybody else in their field as well as bestowed upon a large number of people with less natural skills the exceptional capacity to compose with fluency, imagination, and vigor. From one vantage point, this unexpected revival appears luminous, self-assured, heroic—and late, but even more brilliant for it. However, from another angle, this was a period of extremely high trauma, during which English society witnessed significant upheavals that fundamentally altered it on all fronts and had a significant impact on every person's life.

During the fleeting and intense period in which England was assimilating the European Renaissance, the conditions that had made it possible for the assimilation to take place were already deteriorating and putting into question the recently acquired certainties in addition to the more established realities that they were dislodging. The literature is unparalleled in its intensity because of this duality, this contemporaneous perception of limitless perspectives and new doubts. The Age of Shakespeare refers to both the Elizabethan and Jacobean Periods in the development of English literature. The period of time between these two dates is known as the "golden age" of literature.

This is without a doubt the most significant era in terms of the broadening of both intellectual and geographical boundaries. This was an age distinguished by great acts and great thoughts. This is an age that is pleasing to the sense of sight as well as the mind and the imagination. There was a constant influx of fresh information coming from every angle. The great explorers of the past, such as Hawkins, Frobisher, Raleigh, and Drake, brought back with them not only physical but also intellectual riches from their travels to the East and West. Writers' imaginations were often driven up by a sense of discovery and discovery's companion, exploration.

The dramatic literary canon owes its glorious history to the intrepid sense of action and adventure that opened the path for its creation. Action, rather than supposition, is what drives the plot along in a drama. This era is sometimes referred to as the "Age of Discovery," both in reference to the emerging world and to the advent of man. The Elizabethans were captivated by Italy since it was the birthplace of the Renaissance. Everyone enjoyed travelling to Italy and staying there for a few days. Not only did people like Italian novels and writing, but they also admired Italian manners and morality. As a direct result of this, the literary canon of England has enormously expanded thanks to its imitation of Italian classics.

*George Pettie's literary contribution was limited; the only known creative work of art he created was a collection of short stories published in 1576 under the title *A Petite Pallace of Pettie his Pleasure* and the very first three segments of Stefano Guazzo's *La Civil Conversatione* were translated by him and came out in 1581. The English version of *A Petite Palace* was extremely popular during the period it was written; by 1613, it had already been printed seven times. The primary purpose of anthologies of stories and romances in sixteenth-century England was entertainment, not education. In addition to this, they were connected with female readers and were regarded to be a genre identified with women because the narratives of these books focus on issues related to love and romance. In the backdrop of the linguistic environment in early modern England, when languages such as Italian, French, Latin, and Greek retained a dominating position, composing in English revealed an author's national self-awareness and desire to encourage the usage of a vernacular language.*

The writings of Pettie are an essential document for studying the evolution of euphuism and the production of romantic novels aimed specifically at women. The practice of authoring for women and the practice of composing in a euphuistic manner are both examples of George Pettie's contributions to literary culture. Pettie attempted to get as many ladies as feasible to read his book by devoting it to "gentlewomen," ingeniously interpreting the classical sources from which the stories were derived, paying attention to love and familial themes, and offering a number of different ethical principles, avoiding placing blame on women for any unfortunate events that took place in the novels, and speaking in a "refined" manner in order to win over female readers which were one of the many strategies he employed.

*The elegant and pretentious literary style that came to be known as "euphuistic" was first completely utilized by George Pettie, who did so before John Lyly. The contributions made by George Pettie have not garnered a lot of interest from researchers. Herbert Hartman and Helen Moore, both of whom contributed to Pettie's page in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, are the individuals who provided the details of his life that can be found in the article. D. Bush did research on Pettie's anthology; nevertheless, his writings only contain a brief examination of two tales, briefly reference other tales, and offer just a basic sketch of Pettie's writing style. Pettie's collection contains a number of short stories. Rowland E. P. Ermler did some research on *A Petite Pallace* as well, and he placed an emphasis on the book's enjoyable nature without delving too far into the text. It is important to note that Pettie's stories have not been the focus of a dissertation at any point in time.*

*In general, however, this collection of stories is discussed in relation to two primary areas of academic inquiry. The first is made up of female readers of Renaissance short stories and works of female-oriented literature written in the sixteenth century. *A Petite Pallace* is regarded as one of the story collections that followed the fashion of writing for women. However, this literary work has not been extensively researched in order to demonstrate how Pettie altered the ancient tales that served as models for his works as well as the ethical lessons he hoped both his male and*

female readers would take away from his work. The second topic of research looks at John Lyly's literature and the euphuistic writing style that is connected with it. *A Petite Pallace* is regarded as an example of a euphuistic-styled piece of art. However, academics have not conducted a comprehensive study of all of the short tales collected in the book at the same time, nor have they conducted a rigorous study of the particular stylistic aspects of *A Petite Pallace* that establish the precedence of Pettie's writing to that of Lyly.

The role of women in English culture throughout the Renaissance was fraught with complexities. On the one extreme, women were still loathed and ridiculed, an approach backed by several misogynistic texts such as monographs, exempla, tales, comedies, and plays that blamed the woman for every sin imaginable. Females were likewise thought to be inferior to men. On the other side, in contrast to the demeaning of women, there was a strong belief in the concept of courtly love. This idea rests on the premise that companionship is at the foundation of everything in the cosmos; as a direct consequence of this, women came to be revered and seen as more significant than men, while men, in turn, were willing to sacrifice anything in order to win the approval of the women they cherished. Additionally, women progressively became avid readers of romances written throughout the Renaissance period; they may act as patrons of literature as well.

The custom of devoting works of literature to women in England may be traced all the way back to the eleventh century when it first appeared; when St. Brendan wrote *The Voyage of St. Brendan*, he dedicated it to not one but to both the queens. This custom has been passed down through the ages; in the sixteenth, for example, numerous authors penned pieces just for women, because doing so was in style and advantageous for the business at the same time. Obviously, male readers did not vanish, and they kept up their active participation in reading during this period; however, they are no longer the primary target audience for reading.

The story collection is clearly targeted toward a female readership, which is made clear right away when Pettie decided to devote his work to women in the preface. The stories themselves focus on topics that have traditionally been considered to be of appeal to female readers, such as romance, marriage, family dynamics, and friendship. *A Petite Pallace* is comprised of a total of twelve stories, eleven of which are derived from ancient texts and mythology from Greek culture, while the last story is founded on a hagiographical book. As a result of these alterations, they become more appealing to female audiences and impart lessons in ethics. In addition, contrary to conventional wisdom, the storyteller does not place the origin of all evil only within the domain of the female genitalia. Hardly four of the stories had women to blame for the catastrophic endings that they brought about; in the other cases, men's actions were what led to the horrific acts that occurred. Nevertheless, the conclusion of each tale includes a little lesson that is directed not only at males but also at women.

In *A Petite Pallace*, he integrates time-honoured beliefs and concepts that were prevalent in early modern England, and he uses this book to convince readers to adopt these points of view. Latin was indeed the language that was universally acknowledged to be the standard for use in academic circles and within the Christian church during the Middle Ages. During the Renaissance era, nations all around Europe began to see a steady rise in collective self, and authors proceeded to compose in their own local languages; a significant amount of writing was done in French and Italian. Conversely, the English language was considered primitive and impolite in comparison to the Romance languages. Treatises were produced by certain authors in early modern England who argued against the broad acceptance of this theory and defended the legitimacy of the English language. Others endeavoured to enhance the richness of the language by including additional vocabulary, adopting terms from French and Italian, and making use of a variety of figures of speech in an attempt to emphasize the language's aesthetic features.

George Pettie was fairly confident that the English language had the potential to be improved, and that it might become just as good for narrative as French and Italian; he wanted to express this in his anthology of tales, and in order to do so, he showed the limitless potential of English language and its capacity to enchant the audiences and readers of *A Petite Pallace*. In order to carry out his concept, he crammed the narration full of a variety of rhetorical devices. It is possible that Pettie had another goal in mind when he wrote those words, given that throughout the Renaissance era reading was frequently done in public. The utilization of these tactics made a major contribution toward creating the tales more engaging and spectacular, in addition to being more pleasant for female readers as a result of figures of speech, the narration is strengthened, the moral teachings are made more convincing, and the overall impression that Pettie intended to produce is amplified.

A Petite Pallace is not a conventional misogynistic story in the sense that it was authored by a male writer for male readers with the intention of denouncing the feminine sex and illustrating male supremacy. The book *A Petite*

Pallace of Pettie His Pleasure (1576) written by George Pettie is unmistakably geared toward a female readership. This collection of short stories is addressed to women, and throughout each of the twelve tales, female characters play a significant part in the progression of the story by appearing in prominent roles in a variety of situations. The female personalities in the collection of short stories are depicted in a variety of ways and reflect a wide range of individual qualities, including the following: they are capable of being heartless and are willing to resort to whatever means necessary to exact retribution, or they might be hopelessly devoted to their partner and prepared to sacrifice anything for their happiness. Some of them remain faithful until the very end; the rest are merely trivial.

In the short story collection, the writer does not portray women in a manner that conforms to the stereotypical idea of them as being animals that are prone to committing a great deal of wrongdoing. The feminine gender is not immediately accused of wrongdoing, while males are portrayed to be accountable for romantic mishaps and societal conflicts. This is the primary distinction that can be seen between Pettie's art and the long-standing practice of showing women that is sexist. During the Middle Ages, sexist beliefs and practices were still widely held and practiced. When it came to voicing their ideas about women, the early founders of the Church were not exactly kind. In England throughout the sixteenth century, the majority of women were not only prohibited from reading books but were also denied the opportunity to participate in literary and intellectual societies.

Having said that, it is important to keep in mind that Pettie's major objective, as he acknowledges in the prologue, is to win over ladies rather than to display an in-depth understanding of ancient literature. Diverse types of affection - affection for a woman, affection for a man, affection for an animal, and, finally, love for God - are fundamental to A Petite Pallace, while the storyteller is uninterested in the economical or ideological causes for actions. It is abundantly evident that love is the overarching theme throughout Pettie's collection of short stories; because he covers love and marriage concerns in every single one of the stories, no matter what the circumstances are. The characters may already be married, engaged, or completely disinterested in starting a family, and their love may be happy or tragic depending on the circumstances

In a nutshell, A Petite Pallace of Pettie his Pleasure is a compilation of short stories that are intended for leisurely reading. It was implied in the author's intention to stimulate the usage of English and remove its inferior position by showcasing the myriad possibilities that may be achieved with the language, and it was directed at an audience of women. The fact that all three of these elements are included in a single collection of stories is what sets it apart from other Renaissance anthologies.

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