

William m. inge term paper

[Life](#), [Love](#)



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Introduction

William M. Inge was a renowned American novelist and playwright. The reputation of his Literature works has been acknowledged in the whole of America. Most of the protagonists of his works are encumbered with frustrating sexual relations. In the 1950s he produced a series of memorable productions which included, *The Picnic*, *The Bus Stop* and *Come Back Little Sheba*. The trio is characterized with strained relationships which are a real projection of the contemporary society. This write up therefore seeks to address the relationships between the couples in this plays and I will look into how in the 1950's how other plays got written. Also how relationships were in the 1950's to show the uncharted territory he crossed in his plays.

Main Text

This play, *The Bus Stop*, takes place 30 miles to the West of the city of Kansas inside a restaurant. The bus stop is a play involving young lovers who struggle in search of love in the contemporary society. Unlike other earlier William Inge's works, this play does not involve a critical focus on

relationships. Rather this work is considered superficial and as such many refer to it as superficial romantic comedy. This has been used by critics by asserting that it is short of in-depth relationships compared to earlier works. The play is full of sentimental characters. The icy conditions prevailing in the city of Kansas leads to the stop of inter-state bus. The passengers introduction is done one by one, each with his/her own conflicts and quirks (I. William 9; Gale).

In this play, Inge lays much emphasis on the main couple; Cherie and Bo Decker. Cherie is a nightclub dancer and singer who is battling with overwhelming love of Bo Decker. On the other hand, Bo Decker is a cowboy and a ranch owner who hails from Montana. He is passionately in love with Cherie as he is no longer a virgin.

The play commences at the bus stop where Grace and Elma are waiting for the bus arrival and the passengers. They are both waitresses in the restaurant where the diner will be hosted. They are discussing romance. Grace was abandoned by her husband while Elma is desperate and single. Will, the sheriff, announces that due to snowstorm the bus and its passengers will remain in the restaurant until when normalcy resumes in the road.

When the bus arrives, Cherie enters and seems scared of her fellow passenger; Bo Decker. As the bus driver, Carl and Dr. Lyman walk in, it is evident that Grace and Carl are in love. After whispering, they leave presumably for Grace's apartment.

In this play Bo believes that Cherie has fallen for him, in addition, abducted Cherie in the aim of marrying her (I. William 29). The confrontation that involves Bo and Will reveals that Cherie is not in love with Bo as she asks protection from the sheriff. Another relationship that unfolds is that of Dr. Lyman and Elma. He starts by seducing her and makes an arrangement for them to meet at Topeka.

Inge, in this play, clearly portrays a society where relationships are forced and mostly male chauvinism dominates relationships. This single diner night shows how people confront each other in order to realize their motives. The relationships are marked by outright frustration, laughs and tears.

The play, *Picnic*, opens in the Labor Day weekend in Kansas City. It takes place in the backyards of Flo Owens and Helen Potts. Both are widowed. Flo lives with her two daughters; Millie and Madge and a spinster school teacher. On the other hand, Helen lives with ailing and elderly mother. Into this feminine atmosphere, Hal Carter, a young man, comes in. Hal's animal vitality angers this women fraternity. He is sired of parents who neglected him and is conscious of his failings (Gale 18).

The arrangements for the town picnic are under way. During the dance music, Hal's sexual joy projected in the dance with Madge differently affects the other characters. As Rosemary's teacher friends are conversing about love and good times, she is aching loneliness. This is due to her boyfriend, Howard, who has rejected her pleas for marriage.

Madge is in dilemma on who to marry. This is between Alan, the rich suitor and her connection with Hal. Her mother wants her to marry the rich suitor for material wealth. Madge's mother is not interested in the effect the relationship bestowed to her daughter will have but only selfishness drives her to that extent. Madge likes Hal despite the fact that she does not show her directly the passion she has for him (I. William 85).

The play portrays a society where they are looking for perfect relationships. Loneliness is seen on most of the ladies in this play. For instance, Millie, the spinster teacher and Rosemary are all lonely. Flo has no husband, though not fully explained in play, she runs the house single handedly.

The relationships portrayed by Inge in this play are not platonic. The relationship between Rosemary and Howard ends where she insists for marriage after sex. Madge goes ahead to have sex with Hal at the most tender age of the relationship. The relationship between Madge and Alan is based on riches. Owing to the fact that Madge has only the elementary high school education and she is only a store attendant, leads to the mother's choice of the rich suitor. She even terms Madge as the only asset she has in trade. Helen and Flo are portrayed as women without husbands. Though not explained fully in the play, it leaves the audience with many questions on the genuineness of these relationships. To many, this is an indication that, their husbands left after the burden of house chores and family maintenance became unbearable. It may also be interpreted to mean that, they left after the love became sour.

In this play, *Come Back Little Sheba*, Inge focuses on the most controversial issues affecting the society. It extensively analyzes sexuality and pregnancy in the society more so out of the wedlock.

This play opens in Delaney's kitchen where Doc is preparing breakfast. Marie who stays with Doc wakes up early in order to study for the exam in hand. The two starts conversing on how Doc changed his profession from a doctor to a biologist after the third year of studies (Frank 45).

Lola, Doc's wife, thinks that Bruce, Marie's boyfriend, on arrival must see a clean house as such she spends time cleaning the house. She goes on to purchase curtains and takes lilac for the tables' centerpiece from Mrs. Coffman. Doc suspects that there is a relationship between Marie and Turk. This is revealed when he inquires from her wife if there was a man in the house the previous night (That New Magazine, Inc 53). Lola is unaware that Turk slept in her house with Marie; it comes to the open when Turk sneaks from Marie's room only to run into Doc.

On arrival, Bruce, prefers taking cocktail in a restaurant. This is aimed at securing privacy with Marie and leaving Lola in the House. Relationship between Lola and Doc is full of problems. Doc comes home late and drunk and even sometimes does not come home. Lola met Doc when he was a medical student in the college. She ends up getting pregnant thus giving rise a child born out of wedlock. This is what Doc claims led to their marriage and spoiling his ambition in the medical field. It also led to his drinking spree and considers himself totally wasted by the relationship. He insists that he was forced to marry and goes on to insult her as slut. This relationship, like other

relationships in this play, is characterized by sex out of the wedlock and frustrations.

Alcohol has taken a center stage in many relationships in this play. Many a times, Doc is overwhelmed by his alcoholic nature to the extent of forgetting his relationship with Lola. This has a negative impact on the welfare of the family. In one instance, Doc under the influence of alcohol chases Lola threatening to chop her up. As such alcohol is a major threat to relationships.

Turk and Marie are students in the same college and in a relationship. Doc is aware of this and recognizes that Turk is an opportunist and does not respect Marie. His doubt is affirmed when one evening as he was moving from the kitchen overhears the voice of Turk in Marie's room. Feeling protective and incensed Doc wishes that he had an opportunity to throw Turk out of Marie's room. This angers him and almost falls to the temptation of drinking as he considers this as a solution to relationship problems (Jeff 78). Doc is concerned about this relationship as it reminds him of the memories of his relationship when he was a young student in medicine. He is afraid that Marie and Turk might repeat the same mistakes.

Bruce and Marie are in an intimate relationship. Though not critically focused, it is evident that the two are in a close relationship and Lola is in dire support of the two. Lola goes on to ensure that Bruce is comfortable with Marie when he comes and prepares the foodstuffs in advance and also makes the house to be spotlessly clean. Bruce wants a private life with Marie and therefore prefers to have diner in a restaurant rather than in Lola's place.

The relationship between Lola and Marie is evident from the perspective of their interaction. Despite Marie being an outsider, a college student who shares the same apartment with her, she is hospitable to her. She offers to have the same cooking arrangements with her. Their relationship is strong and Lola goes on to make Marie's boyfriend, Bruce, comfortable. Lola is stressed by the way his husband is behaving and seeks refuge emotionally in Marie. The husband is usually violent and aggressive and suggests that she (Lola) is the cause of his marital unhappiness (Londré 41).

The other relationship depicted in this play is the one between Lola and Little Sheba. Lola had a graving love for the dog which had got lost for many years. She believes that one day the Little Sheba will avail itself and be able to tame it. In some instances, Lola dreams about the Little Sheba. She occasionally has nightmares about its whereabouts and his husband is far much fascinated by such passion towards animal.

Generally, in this play women seem to be the one deciding on the various issues concerning the family relationship. We see that they are the ones who start the relationship e. g. the case of Lola and Doc and also they can terminate the relationship as in the case of Marie and Turk.

Conclusion

The works of Williams Inge are a clear reflection of the relationships that take place in the contemporary society. Inge in his satirical focus on the society has extensively explored relationships. In his works most of the relationships are strained and sex before wedlock is prevalent. In other cases, drinking has been seen as solution to the problems that exist in

relationships. Though Inge writes for the 1950s, his definition of the ideal societal relationship is not up to date achieved. Many relationships today depict the features of those explained by Inge in the 1950s.

Annotated bibliography

Frank, Northen. *Survey of Contemporary Literature*. Michigan: salem, 2003.

Frank's book is a collection of literary works of great authors in the contemporary society. It among others includes the play of William Inge "The Bus Stop". It gives a review of how this book relates to the contemporary society.

Frank in this book observes that, The Bus Stop is a comedy on Relationships that focuses on the relationships of the current society. He offers clear picture of the relationships of the present society and offer advice to those in the current society who are affected by relationships

Gale, Thompson. Book Rags. November 2005. 12 December 2010 .

Thompson in this website gives an overview and a guide towards understanding the book Picnic. He successfully does this by giving a brief plot of the book and finally details on themes and characters in this play.

Thompson observes in his analysis of the themes that, the feminine atmosphere in Kansas city is not only lonely but also frustrated in relationships.

Jeff, Johnson. *William Inge and the subversion of gender: rewriting stereotypes in the plays, novels, and screenplays* . California: McFarland, 2004.

Johnson observes that William Inge found early success as a winner of an award for Drama. In this book he observes the literary works of William Inge and the major themes surrounding it.

A close study of the work of Inge observes that his major study was on Gendermandering, the gender roles in relationships in the society which Inge fully exploits for dramatic and help in subverting the expectations of the society. Primarily Johnson observes that the text is giving full emphasis on gender and relationships.

Londré, Hardison Felicia. *Words at play: creative writing and dramaturgy*. New York: SIU Press, 2005.

Londre in his book words at play analyses drama from the works of literature icons in this field. Focus is much given on the works of William Inge.

Londre praises the works of William Inge especially in bringing out one of the burning issues that the society is scared of confronting but slowly engulfing silently: relationships.

William, Inge. *Bus stop* . New York: Random house, 1955.

This is the original text from the author: William Inge

It is a comical play on relationships at the restaurant during diner. The major relationship in focus is that of Cherie and the Cowboy from Montana.

William, Inge. *4 plays: Come back, Little Sheba; Picnic; Bus stop; The dark at the top of the stairs* . New York: Random House, 1958.

These are the original texts of the plays that William Inge authored.

William Inge in this plays gives a definition of relationships in the 1950s which is also relevant in the present day societies.

Works Cited

Frank, Northen. *S urvey of Contemporary Literature* . Michigan: salem, 2003.

Gale, Thompson. *Book Rags* . November 2005. 12 December 2010 .

Jeff, Johnson. *William Inge and the subversion of gender: rewriting stereotypes in the plays, novels, and screenplays*. California: McFarland, 2004.

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