

"LOOK, YOU'RE NOT ALONE—THIS HAPPENS TO EVERYBODY", ACCEPTANCE OF UNABASHED TRUTHS IN ALICE MUNRO'S STORIES

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ABSTRACT

Awarded the 2013 Nobel Prize in Literature for her work as "master of the contemporary short story", Alice Ann Munro is a Canadian author writing in English. Munro's win is a triumph for the genre of short fiction. Munro's tradition is different not only in the choice of genre but also in the choice of subject matter. Munro is interested in the domestic and all her stories are mainly set on a smaller canvas. Her characters are an ordinary young girl coping with her perplexed feelings, a frustrated married woman regretting her wrong choice, or realising her own limitations, an aspiring writer, a girl escaping from parental home and responsibilities; pondering over the mother daughter relationship, a woman escaping marriage, falling in love, in lust, sneaking around on spouses and enjoying it, telling sexual lies, doing shameful things out of irresistible desire, wallowing in the seamier and meaner and more vengeful undersides of human nature, the telling of erotic secrets and rejoicing in the fullness and variety of life. Such trivial and ordinary characters lead lives of extraordinary and enormous drama, driven by the great internal forces that drive all important experience: rage, love, jealousy, spite, grief. It's these propulsive, suffocating forces inside us that make moments of life so vivid and shocking, so wild and dramatic. But such forces are voiced not in a dramatic or extraordinary language, but a plain pared back language that is perfectly suited to the understated characters and the ordinary worlds which her characters inhabit. And this language is breathtaking, that cracks the landscape open, shocks and illuminates like a streak of lightning because through this, she tells; not only the stories of these characters but irrefutable truths of human nature very thoroughly, rather ruthlessly.

Alice Munro has always insisted not to subjugate her work to any theories. She says in an interview "I want people to enjoy my books, to think of them as related to their own lives in ways." (Asberg). This article endeavours to only recollect such honest diggings of human nature by Alice Munro where the reader can relate to the feelings of her characters and is forever changed after entering her world of strained human interactions, quiet desperation and irrefutable truths.

KEYWORDS: Truth, Honesty, Ugly Feelings, Actual, Shame, Embarrassment