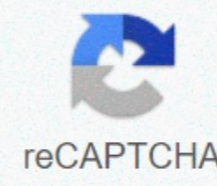




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## The gift of the magi story writing

Last updated on May 11, 2015, by eNotes Editorial. 273 O. Henry's humor and imagination conquer any journalistic tendencies he has transferred to fiction. His penchant for dramatic irony, a trademark in many of his short stories, gives his style its distinctive flavor. Gentle and ingenious, his writing is permeated by this eminently sareale quality known as human interest. This quality is best exemplified in the search for its sincerity: its desire to write about real people in real situations. Subscribe Now Della and Jim are not the products of a too sentimental imagination. The author strives to create circumstances, as well as the physical surroundings that ring true to life. Both protagonists accept life so they find it without succumbing to the negative emotions of hopelessness or despair. Della's only moment of doubt still revolves around her husband's well-being, when she seeks divine intervention so that she stays nice in Jim's eyes. Jim covers his fear of Della's disappointment with an almost unaffected nonchalance when he asks that they set aside their Christmas gifts and keep them for an unspecified future. It is only then that he reveals that he sacrificed his treasure to secure Della's wish. His certainty that both will use these elements in the future offers the unspoken thought that life is bound to improve for them. The protagonists do not react to each other out of holiness, duty or self-imposed love of sacrifice: They simply embody the twin spirits of love and Christmas. For the less-devoted O. Henry, these essences are one and the same. The author suggests that feeling should not be sacrificed for the cause of realism. Last updated on May 11, 2015, by eNotes Editorial. Count of Words: 213 O. Henry often chose to translate tragedy or misfortune into a heightened and tender look for the unlucky or underdog. He never cared about the so-called upper classes, but he preferred to gull his characters and sympathies, from watching ordinary people on the streets and in shops and cafes. This view of the world around him is very visible in the Gift of the Magi, where, in order to implement his quasi-religious message, he counterpoints the elements of love and care to those of poverty and sacrifice. The extreme devotion shown on the part of the newlyweds becomes almost incongruous when it contrasts with the dreaminess and sombreness of their material surroundings. Each comes to the conclusion that it is impossible to live Christmas without fulfilling the ultimate desire of the other. It is not the selfish magnanimity – the desire to revel in the sacrifice of giving – that motivates them. They truly embrace the noble sense of altruism. Thus, despite the poverty, the story is animated by an unexpressed hope for the future. Future, is a variant on the old theme that love conquers all, especially material obstacles.) By establishing the story of Christmas, the author suggests that simple, selfless human love is the basis of such hope for mankind. Last updated on August 13, 2020, by eNotes Editorial. Number of words: 173 \*New York City \*New York City. Crowded city where Youngs rents a second-floor apartment for eight dollars a month. It is furnished, but with furniture, obviously second hand and outdated. O. Henry skillfully evokes shabbiness of rented rooms and the building containing them, turning attention to some details, would be inoperable mailslot in the hallway and the doorbell broken. Inside the flat itself, he emphasizes worn carpet and sofa and the almost useless piece of mirror that Della has to make herself. It is essential for the narrator to explain the precarious circumstances in which the loving couple lives. The lack of any elegance or pride in their immediate surroundings must be emphasized so that readers understand why it is so vital that each other present the other character with a wonderful Christmas gift. So gloomy surroundings make both Jim and Della yearn for any possession of substantial beauty and worth as a gift. However, what each sacrifices to please the other makes the other gift useless. Last updated on August 13, 2020, by eNotes Editorial. Word Count: 881 Viewpoint In The Gift of the Magi, O. Henry uses a popular narrator to tell the story of Jim and Della Young, a poor young couple who buy each other special Christmas gifts that ironically cancel each other out because Della sells her hair to buy Jim a chain for his watch, which he in turn sold to buy her a fine set of combs for her hair. Despite the fact that these gifts are now useless, Jim and Della gave each other the greatest gift of all, which the narrator compares to the gifts given to the child Christ by the wise men, or magi: altruistic love. O. Henry uses several techniques, or literary devices, in the Gift of The Magi that are typical of most of his stories. The first of these is a narrator with personality and presence. Although the story focuses on Della's point of view – the reader sees first of all what Della sees – the story is told with a different narrative voice that directly addresses the reader like you. It's almost like the narrator is an additional character who is heard, but never seen, engaging the reader as a friend and sharing his intuitions in the Youngs situation. The narrator tells the story in a joke, in a neighboring way, with several funny asides directed at the reader. He uses casual expressions, would have taken a strong pride" and interrupts his story with phrases full of would forget the hashed metaphor. Another writer who often uses this technique, sometimes called author intrusion, is Charles Dickens. Set, though though Gift of the Magi is a famous story, O. Henry is best known for the type of story he wrote, rather than for individual pieces. All stories follow certain patterns of character, plot, structure and setting. The settings of O. Henry's stories are often grouped into five categories: the American South, the West, Central America, prison, and New York. The gift of the Magi is a story from New York. Although nearly half of his stories are set in New York, O. Henry sets the specific settings of each story with great attention to detail. In The Gift of the Magi, the writer uses frame details to show that Jim and Della are poor. As soon as the story opens, he describes the little shabby couch, gloomy view (she... looked duply at a gray cat walking a gray fence in a gray yard), the letter box in which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring. Careful rendering of the writer's setting-and mood-helps the reader understand how great the sacrifices are Della and Jim make when they sell their most valued possessions. The details of the place also help the story to appear realistic on one level, although on another level it becomes an allegory. The structure of the Gift of the Magi" is also a good example of the type of story structure, or organization, for which O. Henry became famous. One of the most recognized elements of his fiction is the surprise ending; in fact, many critics refer to the sudden and unexpected turn of events at the end of a story like the twist of O. Henry. O. Henry was an economic writer. As in this story, he often began by introducing a character and providing details about establishing this clue to the plot. The first paragraph, consisting primarily of short sentences and sentence fragments, introduces Della and her money problem. Using very little space, O. Henry gives readers a precise sense of her character, difficult situation and surroundings. He presents her decision and its aftermath in a well-constructed plot, moving quickly from introduction to action and the end of the surprise. Allusion Another element of the Gift of the Magi is allusion, or references to well-known people, places, events, or artistic works. When the narrator in this story describes Della's hair and Jim's watch, he alludes to the Bible: If the Queen of Sheba had lived in the apartment on the air tree, Della would have let her hair hang out the window one day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. If King Solomon had been the janitor, with all the treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have taken off his watch every time he passed, only to see him snatch his beard of envy. Henry's use of allusion here accomplishes three things. First of all, it's funny. The thought of the queen of Sheba living in the apartment over over from Della and Jim Young, and King Solomon's thought as a janitor—these are stupid images, designed not only to make readers laugh, but also perhaps to remind them that Della and Jim don't take their circumstances too seriously. Second, comparing Della's hair and Jim's watch to royal treasures, O. Henry tells his readers how special these objects are. Finally, this lighthearted allusion to the Bible paves the way for the more serious allusion that appears at the end of the story, when Della and Jim are compared to Magi. Start the free 48-hour trial and unlock all the summaries, Q&A, and analytics you need to get better grades now. 30,000+ book summaries 20% study tools discount Ad-free PDF content downloads 300,000+ 5-star customer support answers Start your 48-hour free trial Already a member? Log in here. The theme is a complex feature of fiction that requires more than one word to describe it. It is the essence of the story that reveals the vast meaning that lies beneath the plot (Chapter 7). Accompanied by characters and narrative techniques, it is narrowed into a main idea that eventually comes to the fore towards the end of the story. In the story, The Gift of the Magi, the basic idea is the selfless love between two young and poor couples who sacrifice their best possession to get a Christmas gift for each other. O. Henry masterfully pens the whole story that touches the hearts of readers in a remarkable way. These two aspects combine in this work to unfold the literary elements that make up the story of the Gift of the Magi. O. Henry is an omniscient narrator of the story in question. He tells the story of Jim and Della (Mr. and Mrs. James Dillingham Young) starting with their financial situation and the helplessness of della who feels terribly upset with herself for not being able to afford any Christmas present. The stress on the amount of money left in the house is a way in which O. Henry states how incredible it was for Della to accept him, that she kept counting to convince herself or to come to terms with fate. In the vestibule below was a mailbox in which no letter worked, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could convince a ring. (Chapter 5 p.88) Surprisingly, what she is most upset about is that she would not be able to give any gift to her beloved husband. Here, the relationship between Jim and Della is openly revealed to readers. Her idea of selling her beautiful hair to buy a worthy gift for Jim is very appealing to her, but at the same time it's a huge sacrifice she should make. On the other hand, Jim is considering selling his gold watch he was handed over by his great-grandfather to obtain something worthy for his wife. Emotions intensify as the narrator describes the timing of their final decision. Their intentions remain intact even after obtaining a the amount of money you might otherwise have used to purchase anything for material gain. Readers' hearts beat directly proportionalto the time as Della returns home after buying a nice chain for her watch Jim and Jim returns from the shop buying combs for his beautiful Della hair. An obvious detail of the narrative can be emphasized by the reader, which is the observation of the narrator only of Della's emotions throughout the story. O. Henry didn't mention feeling Jim while buying The Combs for Della that she long worshipped in a Broadway window. Her feminine trait is highly discussed especially when she unwraps the gift she receives from Jim: White fingers and nimble broken string and paper. And then an ecstatic cry of joy; and then, alas! a rapid female change to hysterical and mourny tears, requiring the immediate engagement of all the comforting powers of the flatmaster. (Chapter 5 p. 92) It's little that you can tell after the story ends, except for what O. Henry has to tell his readers. He refers to the mages of buying valuable gifts earlier in the story that he refers back towards the end as a biblical Christmas story. The theme is revised in a more direct tone than at the beginning of the story. Intrigue and symbolism significantly affect the narrative theme of altruistic sacrifice. The couple may have appeared as the worst to have made such a hasty move for each other, but it is the wisest of all those who exchange gifts. And the wisest of them are the mages according to O. Henry in the closing remark that addresses unswervingly readers. Previously, he referred to the sacrifice of Jim and Della, offering references to historical and biblical figures such as Sheba and Solomon for escalating the climax. If the Queen of Sheba had lived in the apartment across the street, Della would have let her hair hang out the window one day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. If King Solomon had been the janitor, with all the treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have taken off his watch every time he passed, only to see him snatch his beard of envy. (Chapter 5 p. 89) The symbolism used by the narrator is the thought process that combines imagination and words together in an articulated way to reveal the lesson behind the story. Della's hair represents beauty, and Jim's gold watch represents wealth. Each of these symbols plays a leading role in identifying the theme of the story (Chapter 7); those who give and receive gifts with pure intentions are the wisest people who have unrequited love for mankind. References Chapter 5. Plot, point of view, Ton. Chapter 7. Story: and Symbolism. Symbolism. Symbolism.