

# READING "THE GIFT OF THE MAGI" BY O. HENRY

The collection of essays in READING "THE GIFT OF THE MAGI" BY O. HENRY

comprises 20 essays by 20 first year students of English Department of 2019, Faculty of Humanities, Andalas University, Padang. The anthology was basically the final product of one of the assignments on reading the class materials. Among a few readings they needed to read in the class of Introduction to Literary Studies, they were assigned to read "The Gift of the Magi" and then wrote an essay on it. They were assigned to analyse the intrinsic elements of the story, including theme, plot, setting, point of view and characterisation. Each of them was given a topic to examine and was supposed to write as essay of about three-four pages on the given story. Out of about 40 students, 20 essay were selected in this anthology. The students' enthusiasm to understand and discuss the class materials inspired us to channel it through writing as a way to express their understanding of the materials. 20 essays which appear in this collection represent how and how far they understood the materials as well how good their English was.

ISBN 978-623-7959-21-2



*Chief Editor:*  
**FERDINAL**

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LPPM UNIVERSITAS ANDALAS

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By

Chief Editor

Ferdinal

Penerbit

LPPM - Universitas Andalas

**Padang, 2020**

READING “THE GIFT OF THE MAGI” BY O.  
HENRY

Padang : LPPM - Universitas Andalas, 2020

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ISBN : 978-623-7959-21-2

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## Foreword

Firstly, we would like to thank the Almighty God. Because of the blessing of His grace, we were able to complete this book entitled READING “THE GIFT OF THE MAGI” BY O. HENRY.

The purpose of writing this book is to improve the academic atmosphere in the Introduction to Literary Studies class, at the English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Andalas University, Padang and explore the students’ potential in reading and writing about works of literature they read in class. The publication of this anthology owed to the help of various parties. On this occasion, the editorial team would like to express sincere thanks to:

1. Prof. Dr. Yuliandri, SH, MH, Rector of Andalas University, through LPPM, who has given birth to a policy on publication at Unand.
2. Dr. Hasanuddin, M. Si, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Andalas University, who has contributed to Unand's policy in giving birth and publishing writings in the preparation of this book.
3. Hanafi, SS, M. App.Ling., Ph.D., Chair of the Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Andalas University, who continues to encourage and provide input in the preparation of this book.
4. All teaching staff of the Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Andalas University

who have guided and provided lectures to student contributors and all students of English Department in 2019.

5. All students who have contributed in the class of Introduction to Literary Studies 2019, particularly those whose writing have been selected for this book.
6. All parties that cannot be mentioned one by one, which have helped a lot.

We realize that this book is far from perfect. For this reason, the editors expect constructive criticism and suggestions for the improvement of this book. Finally, we hope that this book can benefit us all.

Padang, 10 June 2020

Editor

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## **A. Introduction to Literary Studies**

All students at English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Andalas University, can graduate after they have passed 144 credits or more. In the first year, they will take about 20 - 22 credits of 7 - 8 compulsory subjects each semester. Introduction to Literary Studies (ILS) is one of the compulsory subjects. This subject provides basic knowledge and skills for other subjects in literary studies.

This course is designed to equip the students with the basic ability to read and analyze literary works written in English. The students are expected to understand the basic knowledge of three main genres in literature: fiction, poetry, and drama. This subject also tends to familiarize the students with three branches of literary studies: literary history, literary theory, and literary criticism.

This course specifically aims at achieving the following objectives:

1. The students are able to write the summary of a selected short story, poem or play.
2. The students are able to write new words and samples of sentences in English from the short story, poem or play and other sources.
3. The students are able to present a selected journal article in-group.
4. The students are able to write a short paper about the structure of short story, poem or play.

Students will write an essay on a work of literature through a series of tasks, including the summary of the work, group presentation on a sample of essay about a work of literature and a diary completion. This subject emphasizes the application of student center learning (SCL) method.

## B. On O Henry

O Henry, (Also known as Oliver Henry and Olivier Henry), the pseudonym of William Sidney Porter, was born on September 11, 1862 in Greensboro, North Carolina, USA. He was the son of Dr. Algernon Sidney Porter, a physician. As a child he was a book worm and read great books from fiction to non-fiction, including *One Thousand and One Nights* and *Anatomy of Melancholy*. He was licensed as a pharmacist at the age of 19 and worked at his uncle's drugstore in Greensboro, where he began to show his natural artistic talents by sketching the town folks.

Suffered from tuberculosis, Porter was triggered to heal and make effort to be so. In 1884, he travelled to Austin, Texas and settled and worked there for some drugstores. While working as a pharmacist, he began writing his early stories. As a young bachelor, he was known for his wit, story-telling and musical talents. He played both the guitar and mandolin and sang in the choir at St. David's Episcopal Church.

On July 1, 1887, Porter eloped with Athol Estes. After his marriage, he held a few positions as a draftsman and a banker. In 1894, he lost his job. He then worked full-time on his humorous weekly called *The Rolling Stone*. *The Rolling Stone* featured satire on life, people, and politics and included Porter's short stories and sketches. *The Rolling Stone* failed in April 1895, which then brought him to the *Houston Post*.

When enjoying increasing popularity as a writer in the newspaper, he was called to come to courthouse regarding his involvement in the bank shortages earlier. On the way to the court, he escaped to Honduras where he lived for 6 months. He surrendered to the court after he returned home and then was sentenced to five years in prison in Columbus, Ohio. Working as pharmacist in the prison, he had a chance to write more than 14 stories under the pseudonym O Henry.

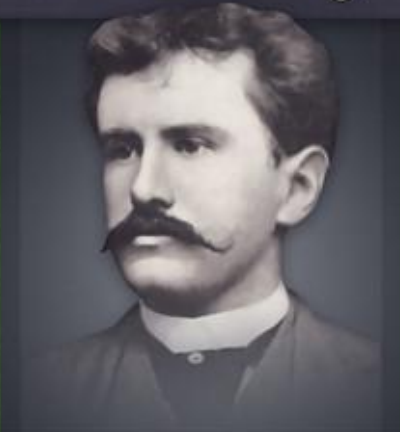
With good behavior, his sentence was reduced to three years. Soon after he was released, he went to New York City where he wrote 381 short stories, completing a story a week for over a year for the *New York World Sunday Magazine*. His readers appreciated his wit, characterization, and plot twists. Up to his settlement in the city, he had produced some collections of short stories such as *Cabbages and Kings* and *The Four Million*. His most read stories include “The Gift of the Magi” (a story about a poor couple who sell their precious things to buy present for each other), “The Ransom of Red Chief” (a story about a kidnapped boy who make the kidnappers pays his father to get him back), “The Cop and the Anthem” (a story about a man attempting to get imprisoned instead of staying a cold weather), and “A Retrieved Reformation” (a story about a criminal becoming good because of love), “The Duplicity of Hargraves” (a short story about a nearly destitute father and daughter's trip to Washington, D.C),

Being a heavy drinker, Porter suffered a lot from a number of diseases, including liver, diabetes, and heart. He died on June 5, 1910 and was buried in Asheville, North Carolina.

### **C. Students' Reading on "The Gift of the Magi"**

All 55 students taking the class of Introduction to Literary Studies were required to write a short essay on "The Gift of the Magi". Before they wrote an essay on "The Gift of the Magi", they studied five main elements of fiction such as characterization, setting, plot, point of view and theme. Then they were asked to look at the elements of two short stories, a play, poems and a novel. To evaluate their understanding, they were given five general topics and were required to write a short essay on "The Gift of the Magi". The following essays represent 20 out of the essays the students submitted on five general topics.

O. Henry



The Gift of the Magi

Source: [audiobookstore.com](http://audiobookstore.com)

**Struggle vs Foolishness in****“The Gift of the Magi”****By****Abellio Andestopano**

The story “The Gift of the Magi” by O. Henry shows the readers two different characters, a wife and a husband. With two different characteristics, this story shows them about the struggle and the foolishness of the characters and about the differences between good and bad characters. Both characters struggle to sacrifice for their loved one. At the same time, the characters also show the readers about financial foolishness, without thinking of their future relationship.

The story “The Gift of the Magi” tells the readers about sacrifices of a husband and his wife who struggle to make each other happy. They sacrifice their only treasure, the wife her beautiful hair and the husband his watch, to buy a Christmas gift for each other. They do not care about the fact that they only have one treasure and want to sell it in order to buy a gift for their loved one.



The story also shows the readers about foolishness. In this story, both characters live in poverty and only have one treasure. They want to give a gift on a very special day. Based on the story, the situation happens on Christmas day. They want to make each other happy. They do not realize they only have one great treasure. Then, both characters sold their treasure to buy a gift

The story shows the readers the activity of good and bad characteristics of Jim and Della. They almost have the same intention and idea. They want to make each other happy by giving a gift. They do some effort to get a gift by selling their precious treasure. At the same time, they do good and bad things. The characters sacrifice their only great treasure and do not think about the other thing. By sacrificing their only great treasure, the characters do something foolish.

From this story, struggle and sacrifice are the characteristics of the characters. The characters only have a great treasure. Both of these characters also live in poverty so they only have that one treasure. But, on the special day, the characters want to give some gift. They want to make each other feel happy but they live in poverty. They struggle to find their way how they could give some gift.

The wife tries to save every penny she could get for months. Unfortunately, by saving money, the woman still does not have enough money to buy a gift. The husband also tries to find the way to get money. Because they do not have enough money, they have finally sold their great treasure. At the end of the story, the characters sell their most valuable treasure. They finally do good to make each other feel happy.

The story “The Gift of the Magi” also shows some bad characters. Both characters do the same bad things. Both characters do the financial foolishness. The characters live in poverty. The characters only have one great treasure. But, the characters want to buy some gifts on special day. First, both characters try to find the way to buy a gift. They need to struggle to buy a gift. But, the characters cannot get enough money to buy a gift. The characters finally do some foolishness. The characters finally sell their only great treasure to get a gift.

Finally, both of the characters could buy a gift and make each other happy. But, the characters do financial foolishness. They sell their only great treasure to buy some gift. They do not think that they live in poverty. By selling their only great treasure, they do not have great treasure anymore.

The characters of the story “The Gift of The Magi” have two different characteristics. The struggle and sacrifice are the good characteristics from the characters. But, the story shows the readers that the characters also have the bad characteristics. The bad characteristics from both of characters are about financial foolishness.

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[pinterest.co.uk](https://pinterest.co.uk)

## The Foolishness and Bad Self-Conception in “The Gift of the Magi”

By

**Alifa Piliang**

What do you expect when you hear a story about one’s genuine love or one’s sacrifice? Do you think it is a good example or just a stupid decision? O Henry creates a short story with these themes. The short story was first published in 1905 with the title “The Gift of the Magi”. O Henry writes the story, which is focused on Della, that has a very big part of this short story. Any activities of Della will be reported. That’s what makes Della strong and viscous. Della is a protagonist. It is not surprising that her action is full of foolishness. In some cases, Della has *hypbothymia*. She has two things which illustrate that she has a bad self-conception for herself.

The image of Della is shown solely through her actions and utterances without interfering commentary, thereby suggesting an “objective” perception which leaves interpretation and evaluation solely to the judgment of the reader. So, as a reader, I have my own perception about Della. She does not represent a good character at all. She might show her pure love to her husband, James, but not self-love, which nowadays needs to be balanced.

According to Wikipedia, foolishness means the unawareness or lack of social norm which causes offence, annoyance, trouble and/or injury. If you are foolish, you may be silly, unwise, stupid, and mindless or effectively you have made a wrong impulsive judgment and behave badly with generally no serious consequences. The things such as impulsivity and/or influences may affect a person's ability to make reasonable decisions. Foolishness is different from stupidity. Stupidity means lack of intelligence. The lack of awareness makes Della become somebody fool.

Della may be intelligent but she is not aware of making and doing something wrong. She is not wise. At least, she must think about herself before thinking about the others. How could a human try to encourage someone even she/he needs it too? It's impossible actually, and that's why Della is a folly.

Della's foolishness gets worse because of some reasons. These reasons include the way Della makes decisions, the way Della communicates with her husband, and the way Della's head is full of 'Christmas gift'. First, Della makes a decision while her mind is not clear. There is no worse decision than making a decision in hard times. If we make any decisions in a hard time, the impact or the effect will come sooner. So, when you try to make any decisions, make sure you already know the impact. Della does not think twice before she sells the most precious thing in her life. Second, Della does not have a good communication between

herself and her husband. We can see it clearly when James thinks that Della wants the comb in the shop just because she ever sees it. There is an accident that will never happen if they have a good communication each other. Third, Della's head is full of 'Christmas gift'. From this case, we can conclude that Della and James are not quite close to their Creature. "She had had many happy hours planning something nice for him" (p. 2) shows that Della wants to give the best gift for James even she only has \$1.87. Money is not everything but people will do anything to get money. Because money can't buy happiness. I couldn't live through Christmas without giving you a gift", that's what Della said to Jim. If they believe in Jesus, they will not keep the thought of "the gift for Christmas" because they exactly know that Christmas is related to love even nowadays people show up their love with stuff or gift. But, is it really so?

Della might suffers from *Hypothymia*, which is a state of depression and a kind of emotional disorder. Depression can be caused by cruel treatment of the child, and then childhood experiences pour into the problem in adulthood. The cruelty is not based on a dependent situation but it can be any situation. The indication of depression is "There was nothing to do but fall on the bed and cry. So Della did it" (p. 1). Secluding and crying can be caused by the depression.

*Hypothymia* is not the only type of emotional disorder when there is an inadequate manifestation of it. After all, not only a dreary oppressed state, but also a mood that is stable

and independent of the situation can be considered a deviation from the norm. However, it is more like a mood that swings. In an unfavorable environment, conditions negatively affect the health of the immune system. “She stood by the window and looked out with no interest” (p. 2) indicates that Della’s health already weakens. We know that by the way she looks out and there is nothing interesting there. It indicates that the environment can’t deal with her feeling.

They weaken the protective mechanisms, as a result of which, a person becomes more susceptible not only to infectious pathology, but also to the negative influence of stress. The reaction to various psychological problems is exacerbated, which leads to excessive expression of negative emotions. In this case, poverty is the one that causes Della to get the *hypothymia*. Firstly, her mood just gets worse because of her absence of wealth. But then, everything becomes terrible because of her own concept. Della realizes her condition and tries to put herself in a good situation. The emotional disorder can’t heal if the patient does not realize his own feeling. *Hypothymia* is not a dangerous disorder but it needs to get healed or it will get worse. Della is not quite in danger but she exaggerates. Exaggerating means you indicate that something is, for example, worse or more important than it really is. It is exactly the same as Della’s personality.

Self-conception is the image that we have of ourselves, “Della would have washed and dried her hair where the queen could see it. Della knew her hair was more beautiful



than any queen's jewels and gifts" (p. 2) This is an example of Della's concept. She knew that she has beautiful hair and she thinks the Queen will admire it.

Self-concept is generally thought of as our individual perceptions of our behavior, abilities, and unique characteristics—a mental picture of who you are as a person. This image develops in a number of ways but is particularly influenced by our interactions with important people in our lives. Self-conception is in accordance with the age.

In this story, we can say that Della is still young. She thinks that everyone is important even when she just has one. But the way she sacrifices something for her husband is out of the box. And it makes us think that her self-conception is not good at all (we better say it is bad). It is not because of her personality but it is because of her vision about love and it is a kind of wrong love. She might think that if she does it, her husband will be happy. She does not care about her own feeling and does not communicate with her husband. She needs to conduct herself deservedly. It is the real meaning of self-love, as Della says, "Be good to me, because I sold it for you" (p. 5). From her utterances, we can see that Della has a feedback from James because she has already sold her hair for James. It looks like an impolite word to say.

So, from the passage above we can conclude that Della is not a good one at all even she sacrifices her most precious thing in her entire life. If we talk about love and sacrifice, what Della does is really touching. But, if we talk

about emotion and self-love, she is not a good example to follow because of some reasons. The first, she does not think twice to act. So her action is full of foolishness and it hurts herself even she does not recognize it. Second, it is because of her age. She is still young, so her self-conceptualization is not built yet. It causes her decision to be weird and not in accordance with the best concept of life. And after these two reasons, I can say that Della has an emotional disorder, which is called *Hyphothymia*. It is a state of depression. It will become a night mare if someone does not get any healing. So, we need to think twice before doing something or it will end with regret.

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Mario Klarer, *Introduction To Literary Studies*. London: Routledge, 2011.

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“Imperfections are not inadequacies; they are reminders that we're all in this together.”

**Brené Brown**

(Research professor, storyteller)



Source: [goodreads.com](https://www.goodreads.com)

## **The Setting of Time in “The Gift of the Magi” by**

**Alnava Puti Avinda**

In the story “The Gift of the Magi,” there are three settings, namely the setting place, the setting of time and the social setting. In this writing, I will discuss the setting of time in “The Gift of the Magi”. The setting of this story is on Christmas holiday season. Christmas is an important day for Christians. That is a big day for them, and there are many ways to celebrate it. One of the ways is giving a gift for each other like in the story “The Gift of the Magi”.

Christmas is an annual festival commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ, which is observed primarily on December 25 as a religion and cultural celebration among millions of people in the world. Millions of people around the world have been observing it with traditions and practices that are both religious and secular in nature. And during Christmas, people who celebrate it expect to give presents to others and receive presents from others. As it is written in the text, the characters roughly try to get a present for each other. The writer uses details of the setting to show that although Jim and Della are poor, they make a serious effort to give a present for their spouse.

“The Gift of the Magi” takes place during Christmas time. Christmas is also a public or international holiday in

many countries in the world. Referring to this story, I will explain the setting of time of the story: the day before Christmas and the Christmas day. Christmas is celebrated by some activities such as giving gifts to each other, gathering with family and friends, and decorating trees, house and other activities, just like what the couple in “The Gift of the Magi” do. They try to celebrate Christmas properly and full of joy. One thing that many people wait is the moment of giving and receiving presents.

The presents are left in different places. In most part of Europe, the presents are left in shoes or boots put out by the children. In Italy, the UK and USA, presents are left in stockings, often left hanging by a fireplace. The presents are opened on different days over the world as well. The earliest presents are opened on December 5 in The Netherlands. Children in the UK, USA, open their presents on Christmas day, December 25. The latest presents are opened on December 6.

In this story, Christmas for both characters is a happy and an unhappy moment at the same time. We all know that Christmas is supposed to be full of joy, but not in this story. As said that one of several ways to celebrate Christmas is giving presents for each other. The characters in this story try to have a joyful Christmas. But everything goes on the opposite way. They sacrifice their most valuable possessions for the gifts. It causes them to experience a bad Christmas day.

In the first paragraph and the last sentence O. Henry describes “and the next day would be Christmas” to prove the setting of time is on Christmas day. The detail of the place also helps the story to look realistic on one level, although on another level it becomes an allegory. The mistress of the home is gradually subsidized from the first stage to the second. Let’s take a look at the home, with a furnished flat at \$8 per week. It is not exactly a beggar-like description, but it certainly has the words on the lookout for the mendicancy squad.

In giving gifts at Christmas, people of faith must give of themselves first, and then in presents. There is no gift if there is no sacrifice, and gift giving should always involve some tears—the waters that make gifts pure. The story shows how poor family live during Christmas. We can see from the beginning of the story “One dollar and eighty seven cents” (p. 1) that is the amount of money that Della has to buy meal and the gift for Jim. The way O. Henry describes the house of the characters is really realistic so that the readers can imagine how poor they are. It says, “In the hall below was a letter box too small to hold a letter. There was an electric bell, but it could not make a sound” (p. 1). I think the house conditions can show how poor they are. Jim and Della sacrifice their valuables to buy a gift for each other. Della says, “Will you buy my hair?” (p. 3) asked Della. They are so poor that they cannot even afford a simple Christmas gift for each other.

The story tells of Mr. and Mrs. James Dillingham Young (two foolish persons in a flat who unwisely sacrificed

for each other the greatest treasures of theirs). With no money to speak of and every imaginable desire to buy a Christmas present for their spouse, these two poor characters surrender their chief possessions to purchase a gift for the other.

During Christmas, people who celebrate it expect to give a gift to each other and receive a gift from the others too. As what Jim and Della do, they sacrifice their valuables for their loved one. Because they are poor they want to sacrifice any precious valuables to buy a special gift for their spouse. “The Gift of the Magi” is a story that fits during the Christmas season because it helps readers appreciate the true nature of gift giving. It shows that sometimes it is not the material things that define value and significance. Rather, it is the inclination of one to show importance to another and try to offer something that is worthwhile and relevant to the other. Using the situation, Jim and Della are able to capture this point and enable readers to rethink about what really matters to the ones they love.

With the loss of their riches, they are no longer compared to Old Testament figures of wealth, but equated with New Testament ones—the Magi. These two young lovers are described as being foolish but sometimes it requires foolishness to arrive at wisdom.

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1906.



“At one time I thought the most important thing was talent. I think now that — the young man or the young woman must possess or teach himself, train himself, in infinite patience, which is to try and to try and to try until it comes right. He must train himself in ruthless intolerance. That is, to throw away anything that is false no matter how much he might love that page or that paragraph. The most important thing is insight, that is ... curiosity to wonder, to mull, and to muse why it is that man does what he does. And if you have that, then I don't think the talent makes much difference, whether you've got that or not.

*[Press conference, University of Virginia, May 20, 1957]*”

### **William Faulkner**



**Source: [goodreads.com](https://www.goodreads.com)**

**Third Person Perspective in****“The Gift of the Magi”****By****Firsty Mivira Fabiola**

“The Gift of the Magi” was firstly published in 1906, in O. Henry second collection of short stories. In this story, Henry tells us about an epic romance. It is not like “Romeo and Juliet” in which love is proved by death, but this story tells us that there are many things that we can do to express our love, like in this story. The couple, Della and Jim, give a Christmas present to their beloved one. This classic romance is full of sacrifice. Henry tries to show us not only the romance but also the power of love itself through taking and giving to each other. The story is about a young husband and wife with a little amount of money. But in Christmas Eve, they want to give a gift for each other. So, Della needs to sell her hair for \$20 to a nearby hairdresser, Madame Sofronie. She eventually finds a platinum pocket watch chain for Jim’s watch for \$21 and is satisfied that she finds the perfect gift for Jim. Later that night Della admits to Jim that she sells her

hair to buy him the present. Jim gives Della her present- a set of combs. It is useless now because her hair is already cut short. Della then shows Jim the chain she has bought for him, to which Jim says he needs to sell his watch to get money to buy a gift for Della. Although Jim and Della are now left with gifts that neither one can use, they realize how hard they are willing to show their love for each other, and how priceless their love really is. Henry seems to have used an appropriate third person point of view on this story because he could not be a participant on this story.

It's clear in this story that the narrator uses third person point of view. At the beginning, the narrator tells what other person has done. It is Della, who counts her money in order to buy a gift for her husband's Christmas present.

She had put it aside, one cent and then another and then another, in her careful buying of meat and food. Della counted it three times. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be **Christmas**.  
(p. 1)

The narrator uses Della, "Della finished her crying and cleaned the marks of it from her face. She stood by the window and looked out with no interest" (p. 2).

The narrator mostly tells Della's character. At first, the narrator tells how Della behaves, so that the reader can see indeed herself completely. On the other hand, as the third

person, the narrator tells other character, Della's husband. So, the narrator position is completely as a third person view of point.

As a third person view of point, the narrator places himself properly. The narrator explains the emotions of each character completely. Here, the narrator tries to be the character. The narrator is a person who tells what the characters look like and what characters have done as well. It is clear that in all paragraphs and the names of the characters, the writer is seen like a person who tells the story.

Henry uses not only the third singular pronoun but also the possessive pronoun like his or her. Both third singular pronoun and the possessive pronoun show us that the writer isn't involved in this story. He just tells us the characters and the series of events which take place. He also writes some names of character, "Jim was never late. Della held the watch chain in her hand and sat near the door where he always entered" (p. 4)

The story uses the third person narrator. It is told in the third-person, and follows Della's perspective. The narrator seems to be omniscient, as he reveals a lot about the characters, their surroundings, and circumstance. It is considered to be limited omniscience as the narrator only knows all about the major characters, Della and Jim. So, it can be concluded that this story use a third-person points of view. The narrator may not include in this story because he mostly uses pronouns.

As a conclusion, the point of view in this story is that the narrator places himself as a third person properly. He tries to show the characters, the conflict and the solution faced by each character appropriately. Sometimes the narrator seems to blend with one of the characters.

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Coomondreams.org

## The Narrator in “the Gift of the Magi”

By

**Fithryah Amirah Karini**

“The Gift of the Magi” is a short story written by a noted American author, O. Henry. The story was firstly published in 1906 as part of an anthology of short stories called *The 4 Million*. The story is known worldwide and numerous versions of it have been created. It has been made into live productions, cartoons, movies and television specials. With the story being set at Christmas, it has become a holiday staple in many areas.

“The Gift of the Magi” tells of a young husband and wife and how they deal with the challenge of buying secret Christmas gifts for each other with a very limited amount of money. In telling the whole story, O. Henry mostly uses pronouns which refer to the third-person point of view than the first-person one. We can notice it by seeing the words like she, he, her, him, and the name of person such as Della and Jim.

Beside using the third-person, The narrator also uses first-person as a point of view in the last paragraph once. We can see it from the last paragraph of the story, “And here I have told you the story of two children who were not wise”

(p. 6). From that line we know the type of first-person is a peripheral narrator.

Peripheral narrator is a first-person who is not the main character. In this type of point of view, the narrator is just being the one who tells the story by telling the activities of the characters and also telling the perspective of those characters. It is a kind of monologue but in written form.

In “the Gift of the Magi”, we can see the narrator is not included in almost the entire story and he just becomes the one who tells us the whole story. He knows what would happen and what the characters would do in the story. He knows how the story runs.

The point of view in “the Gift of the Magi” is too basic because it has no any uniqueness. The narrator mostly uses the third-person in telling the story. He only uses the other type of person which is the first-person once. He does not use both points of view equally.

The narrator has to focus on one point of view. If the narrator only wants to focus on telling the character, then he has to use the third-person as a point of view. The narrator is suggested not to use first-person peripheral narrator because it can make the reader think the narrator is subjective. Luckily, the narrator can still be objective when he uses the peripheral narrator as the type of first person point of view. We can see it in the last paragraph.



And here I have told you the story of two children who were not wise. Each sold the most valuable thing he owned in order to buy a gift for the other. But let me speak a last word to the wise of these days: Of all who give gifts, these two were the most wise. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are the most wise. Everywhere they are the wise ones. They are the magi. (p. 6)

That paragraph is enough to tell us that the narrator can still be objective even when he uses peripheral narrator type of first-person.

The proof about narrator can be still objective is when he gives the opinion not based on his personal feeling. The narrator gives an opinion about Della and Jim who are not wise in their actions but in the other case they are also the wisest in their intentions.

Again, in the third-person, the narrator only focuses on Della's thoughts. It makes us only know about Della. We only know what Della does, feels and thinks. We may know about Jim but we know him not as much as we know about Della.

We clearly know the narrator mostly uses the third-person point of view in "the Gift of the Magi". In third-person, we are also given the opportunity to see one character's innermost thoughts and feelings. The character is Della. We will know what is on her mind because the way of

narrator tells the story. A few things that make us know Della's thoughts and feelings are:

1. When Della arrived home, her mind quieted a little. She began to think more reasonably. (page 4)
2. "If Jim doesn't kill me," she said to herself, "before he looks at me a second time, he'll say I look like a girl who sings and dances for money. But what could I do- oh! What could I do with a dollar and eighty cents?" (page 4)
3. And now she said: "Please God, make him think I'm still pretty." (page 4)

Those quotations are enough for us to confirm the narrator does not use the point of view equally. The narrator does not use first-person and third-person equally. Even in using third-person itself, the narrator cannot be fair. He mostly focuses on Della than Jim.

From the explanations above, we can conclude that the narrator does not use the points of view equally. He mostly uses the third-person than the first-person points of view. Even in the third-person, the narrator just focuses on Della's side than Jim's. We can see evidence by which the narrator mostly focuses on Della in almost every paragraph of the story.

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Source: [gettyimages.in](https://www.gettyimages.in)

**Della's Sacrifice and Affection in "The Gift of the Magi"**  
by O. Henry

By

**Hanifatul Adzra**

In every story which is made, an author must have his/her uniqueness. In order to persuade the reader to read his/her story, the author has many ways to deliver the characters in the story. In "The Gift of the Magi", O. Henry tells a meaningful story about a couple in the Christmas Eve. The characters created have their own uniqueness. One of the characters in the story is Della. O. Henry develops the character of Della in an amazing way. In "The Gift of the Magi", O. Henry develops the characteristics of the major character, Della and creates her characters with sacrifice and affection through the action of the character that O. Henry delivers in the story. Della character wishes to sacrifice and has affection that can be seen in the story.

There are major and minor characters in the story. Della is the major one in the story "The Gift of the Magi". At the beginning, O. Henry tells how confused Della is when she is supposed to buy a present for Jim, her husband. But Della does not have enough money to buy her husband a gift that he wants. Della has a beautiful hair, so she sells her hair. Therefore, she can buy a gift for her husband.

In “The Gift of the Magi”, O. Henry illustrates Della as someone who has a beautiful hair, and a fashionable woman, “Della knew her hair was more beautiful than any queen’s jewels and gifts” (p. 2) that makes the readers have an image how Della looks like. Also O. Henry describes that Della’s hair is brown and very beautiful, “shining like a falling stream of brown water. It reached below her knee” (p. 3). It is the hair that could even make the Queen of Sheba's jewels seem worthless. O. Henry creates her character that has so much love for her husband. She does not blame her husband for his small income. O. Henry uses an indirect characterization in order for the reader to use the clues to figure out the information of the character. In “The Gift of the Magi,” Della is a dynamic character because she learns a valuable lesson about the price of love. Della is a round character because in the story O. Henry mainly talks about her. Her nature sometimes changes and it’s related on social life. In addition, O. Henry makes the characters sacrifice a lot. Many actions show that. This can be seen on what Della has done to her husband. The following are the actions that prove Della has sacrificed.

Will you buy my hair?” asked Della. “I buy hair,” said Mrs. Sofronie. “Take your hat off and let me look at it.” Down fell the brown waterfall. “Twenty dollars,” said Mrs. Sofronie, lifting the hair to feel its weight. “Give it to me quick,” said Della. (p. 3)

As we can look at the story, Della cuts her hair and sells it to Mrs. Sofronie to buy her husband a gift for Christmas. She does not care about the consequences that she may look ugly or weird after cutting her beautiful hair. She just wants to make her husband happy in the Christmas Eve. She searches a gift for her husband. "Oh, and the next two hours seemed to fly. She was going from one shop to another, to find a gift for Jim." (p. 3) In this excerpt the reader would think that Della has sacrificed.

The actions of Della make the reader think she has sacrificed. She can survive her struggle in giving her husband a gift for Christmas. Even though she has lost her beautiful hair, she is still happy for that. The way O. Henry makes Della's character causes the reader to get touched by her nature for her husband. It indicates that O. Henry creates this character in order to make the reader touched, because the struggle for the people we love is important even though we must immolate something that we have.

O. Henry wants the reader to learn from Della that a wife sometimes has to sacrifice for her loved one. O. Henry creates Della's character in amazing way with the actions of those of the character. Beside Della's sacrificing character, she also has an affection that makes her have a very good personality. Her affection for her husband is also significant in the story. There are some actions that the reader can see in the story that shows how Della truly has an affection nature character. The reader can look at the story with how Della

acts in the story. There are some evidence that Della has the character.

The first one is when Della wants to buy a gift for her husband but she does not have much money. It is a proof that she loves her husband so much.

Only \$ 1.87 to buy a gift for Jim. Her Jim. She had had many happy hours planning something nice for him. Something nearly good enough. Something almost worth the honor of belonging to Jim. (p. 2)

It indicates that Della loves her husband so much. O. Henry creates the character that has a nature that the reader can feel the character of Della who has a beautiful feeling for her husband.

The second proof that Della has an affection nature is when she searches gift for her husband. She goes from one shop to another just for her husband. “She was going from one shop to another, to find a gift for Jim” (p. 3). This sentence proves that Della has an affection nature that O. Henry creates indirectly in the story.

The third one is when she waits for her husband before dinner.

Jim was never late. Della held the watch chain in her hand and sat near the door where he always entered. Then she heard his step in the hall and her face lost



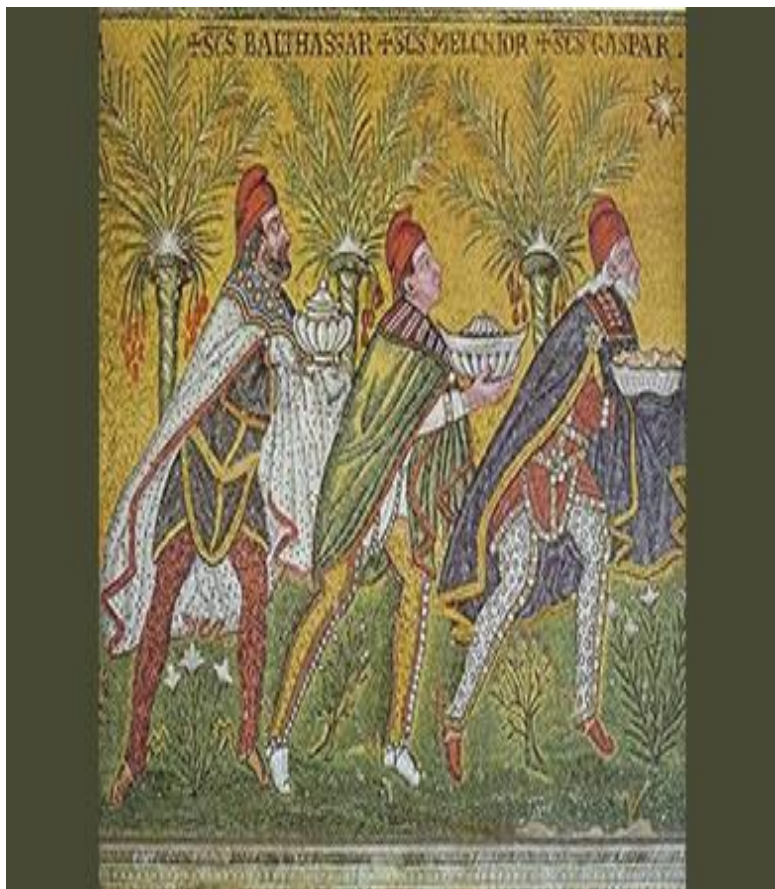
color for a moment. She often said little prayers quietly, about simple everyday things. (p. 4)

This character's action makes the reader think that Della has much affection for her husband. Although she worries about her hair, she still waits for her husband. The action of the character shows the reader the nature of the character that O. Henry creates in the story 'The Gift of the Magi'.

In "The Gift of the Magi", O. Henry develops the character Della in amazing ways. O. Henry indirectly shows the character's nature that makes the reader read the whole story. The action of the character Della shows that she has sacrificed and has affection. The characteristics can be seen in the story.

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## **The Gift of the Magi: A Perfect Denouement**

By

**Indhira Zikri Donny**

In “The Gift of the Magi,” O. Henry writes a spectacular tale of a couple struggling to get a Christmas present for his and her spouse. The two characters, Jim and Della, and their love are presented very strongly in the story. To deliver the story, O. Henry employs a very clear plot from the beginning to the end. The denouement of “The Gift of the Magi” is the most crucial part of the story. Through the story’s denouement, O. Henry does two things to make the denouement the most important part of the story. The first, the denouement serves its purpose in tying up loose ends of the story and gives a context and a deeper understanding of the story and its title to the readers. The second, it reinforces the message that O. Henry tries to convey to his readers. The story has all five sequences of plot that Freytag (1900) suggests: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement.

Childs and Fowler (2006) argue that denouement is the final part of a narrative where all secrets of the plot are unraveled and explained through the narrative or by the

author. The purpose of denouement is to reveal everything that might not be visible in the main narrative in order for the readers to have a more meaningful experience in reading the story and to give a deeper understanding of the message the author tries to convey.

The main purpose of a denouement is to tie up any loose ends that are directly or indirectly mentioned in the story. In this case, the 'loose end' that needs to be 'tied' is the title and why it is named as such. It should be noticed that not all readers come from a background that enables them to know about biblical lore. Thus an explanation must be given in order that all readers could understand the story. A first-time readers or readers who are not familiar with biblical references may find themselves stumped by the title of the story. The name 'Magi' is quite confusing and lay readers may find themselves wondering why this story is related to religion. Throughout the story, O. Henry mentions the word 'Magi' once. He has taken great care as not to reveal anything about the relation of the two main characters to 'Magi.' By doing this, O. Henry makes things vague as not to reveal everything ahead of time, but also to promise the readers an explanation on why the story is entitled "The Gift of the Magi". It is not until the very last paragraph that O. Henry finally reveals the truth about the title of the story and why the Magi were related to Jim and Della.

The Magi, as you know, were wise men—wonderfully wise men-- who brought gifts to the newborn Christ-

child. They were the first to give Christmas gifts. Being wise, their gifts were doubtless wise ones. And here I have told you the story of two children who were not wise. (p. 6)

From this excerpt of the final paragraph, O. Henry delivers two things: the first, he reveals the true meaning of the title by integrating it to the final paragraph, and the second, he delivers a suitable denouement that fulfills its purpose. It explains everything the author does not mention. Through this explicit information given directly through the narrative, readers will understand and start to draw a conclusion on what the message of the story is. It will give them a reason to read for a second time and to understand the story on another level. By so doing, the denouement is able to tie up its loose ends.

The denouement of this story is also great because it reinforces the message the author tries to give. Throughout the story, we have seen the two characters struggling and in solve the matter in the end. From that, we can guess the message O. Henry gives. The message can also be inferred from the diction and the view of the narrator. However, the denouement is where the message firmly establishes itself from the readers' guess, into something explicitly expressed by the author. The denouement indicates that only one message is true. It suggests that love is more important than any other expensive gifts. The presence of the denouement changes how a person looks at the story because it establishes

the stance that O. Henry holds when it comes to the message of the story. O. Henry makes it clear in that he intends for the story to only have one message, which the denouement reinforces.

But let me speak a last word to the wise of these days:  
Of all who give gifts, these two were the most wise.  
Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are the  
most wise. Everywhere they are the wise ones. They  
are the magi. (p. 6)

Through this excerpt, we can see how O. Henry reinforces the message of the story. He starts by comparing them to the Magi from the Bible. Then he draws a parallel between them and the Dillinghams. He gives a statement that reveals his thoughts on how the couple is better than the Magi. From the way O. Henry writes it, the readers are given the very essence without having to interpret it by themselves.

All in all, “The Gift of the Magi” has a clear cut and common narrative structure. Each part serves to give a message to the readers. However, the most important part of the story is the denouement because of two reasons. The first reason is that O. Henry explains the title of the story and why it is entitled that way in order to give a context and a better understanding to the readers, the second is that O. Henry reinforces the true message of the story through the denouement. These are the reasons why the denouement of “The Gift of the Magi” contains the most important part of the story. Without the denouement the readers will not know

why the story is entitled that way or what the author tries to convey through the story.

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*"You have to write the book that wants to be written.  
And if the book will be too difficult for grown-ups, then  
you write it for children."*

**Madeleine L'Engle**

*"If you don't have time to read, you don't have the time  
(or the tools) to write. Simple as that."*

**Stephen King**

*"We write to taste life twice, in the moment and in  
retrospect."*

**Anaïs Nin**

*"Substitute 'damn' every time you're inclined to write  
'very;' your editor will delete it and the writing will be  
just as it should be."*

**Mark Twain**

*"If there's a book that you want to read, but it hasn't  
been written yet, then you must write it."*

**Toni Morrison**

**Source: inc.com**



## **“The Gift of the Magi” by O. Henry: the Third Person Point of View**

**By**

**Khairunnisa Al Izzati**

### **Introduction**

If you are looking for a Christmas story that doesn't feature either a nativity or Santa, you can turn to "The Gift of the Magi." It is a story that reinforces the value of selfless giving. This classic story by O. Henry (William Sydney Porter) shares the story of Jim and Della who show their love for each other in a special Christmas gift despite their poverty. Hard times have hit the Dillingham Young family. Earning only \$20 per week, Jim and his wife Della can barely make ends meet and certainly can't afford to buy each other expensive gifts for Christmas. Despite this, they each want to find the perfect gift to show their love.

In a beautiful tragedy, each sacrifices something precious in order to earn the money to purchase a gift. The author refers to them as 'two foolish children' for doing so. O. Henry also describes them as wise people, for they

understand the value of love and show their love to each other.

The language of this story is too formal. The message can only be understood by adults. The illustrations in this edition are beautifully suited to the story, capturing the feeling of the relationship between Della and Jim in this classic story first published over 100 years ago.

In “The Gift of the Magi,” O. Henry uses the third person point of view. In this paper I would like to argue that the third person point of view used in this story is not able to make this story more interesting.

## **Discussion**

The story is pretty cool, but I think the use of the third person perspective to tell this story is not quite appropriate because in my point of view, the story is better and more interesting if O. Henry uses the perspective of the first person.

First-person immediately puts the reader inside the narrator’s head, which allows for an intimate portrayal of thoughts and emotions. The narrator can effectively communicate how he feels each moment, delivers insight, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches, all through the prism of the narrator. What narrator feels, the reader feels. His fears, hopes, love, and despair, all can be delivered to the reader directly and with maximum emotional impact.

Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a gray cat walking a gray fence in a gray backyard. (p. 2)

This story is too complicated to understand and a little bit hard to interpret the meaning of this story. If O. Henry used the first person perspective the story would be in a form of limited perspective. The third person point of view cannot explain more deeply into the dimension or the feeling that the characters in the story feel. It seems like the readers cannot feel their struggle for ending the grief and pain inside Jim and Della and the readers cannot understand their feeling instead.

There was clearly nothing to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it. Which instigates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating. (p. 1)

Narrator's reactions to the situations and other characters can be imparted effectively, and all this creates a strong sense of empathy in the reader. Narrator can also put across the motivations of the main characters, which to an outsider may not seem related. Yet as the readers are inside their brain the logic behind their actions make more sense.

O. Henry can understand it, but O. Henry could make it more dramatic if he just tells the story by using the first person point of view.

Therefore O. Henry can use the first person point of view in which the main character tell this stories so the story will more dramatic, interesting and worthy to read.

Where she stopped the sign read: 'Mme Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds.' One Eight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting. Madame, large, too white, chilly, hardly looked the 'Sofronie.'

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair," said Madame. "Take yer hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it."

Down rippled the brown cascade.

"Twenty dollars," said Madame, lifting the mass with a practised hand.

"Give it to me quick" said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of

the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out.  
(p. 3)

By writing in the first-person, the narrator can deliver the entire story in the narrator's voice, giving the text a clear identity and submerging the reader further into the world the narrator creates. The narrator is also able to hide exposition within a first-person stream-of-consciousness by turning it into thoughts and musings.

## Conclusion

It will be better to bring this story into the first person point of view and took Della's perspective because in this story O. Henry describes more and tells more about Della than Jim. The readers can feel their pain, struggle for their love and we can express in more wonderful point of view and the story will be deeper. Moreover, I think the narrator needs to change some hard word that cannot be understood too non-native speakers. The narrator could take a couple of simple words from other short stories.

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## O Henry's House Museum



Source: wikipedia.org

## **The Romanticism of Gift and Surprise in “The Gift of the Magi”**

**By**

**Muhammad Al Fikry**

“The Gift of the Magi” is a story written by O. Henry about Christmas day gifts. This fiction tells us the story between a woman, Della and her husband, Jim. This story provides a backdrop of romance that helps its readers to drift into the story. The words which are used by O. Henry in the title describe exactly the atmosphere of the story: a Christmas time mood and a time caused by the love story of a couple and a little disreputable. Through the background of the atmosphere in “The Gift of the Magi,” readers are able to feel the story’s atmosphere, especially the choice of words that are light enough and easy for the reader to understand.

The atmosphere of Romanticism is used a lot in this O. Henry’s story. The background of Della and Jim as a couple is a milestone in the celebration of another atmosphere into a romantic atmosphere. The romance presented in the story is not explicit, but readers can easily relate to the feelings of what the protagonist experienced in the story. We can understand how happiness during Christmas pervades the protagonist so that this setting becomes so essential as the story is driven by its pace.



- A sense of character explains romance in the story.

This story describes what the protagonist does, based on feelings. Whether it is a Christmas euphoria or a wife's love or *vice versa*, Della desires to give a gift to Jim. But the readers understands that there are few hopeful feelings that glow with happiness. Then there is the anxious feeling that rises at the beginning of the story, in the middle, and at the end of the story. The sentiments related to the story's atmosphere are felt after reading the story which involves Della as its main character, while Jim is less overstated in the story.

- The jittery atmosphere of romance.

In the story, the Christmas mood plays its role. The story of Christmas' happiness prompts Della to give a gift or a surprise to her husband, Jim. The scene in this story is all too familiar with many romantic settings of anxious, sad, and insecure heroes. This ambience which is present can be found within narrative or dialogue written by O. Henry. While the couple's romance may invite readers to dive deeper into the story, the atmosphere that is present gives rise not only to romance but also to hope, reality, disappointment, and regret. Therefore, it is said that the atmosphere blends into a very dense and thick atmosphere of romance.

- The romantic atmosphere of an understanding couple

The story tells of Della who wants to give something back to her husband by willingly selling his hair, going for the right reward, and choosing the best for everyone. She does it out of love. The readers end up with Della's attitude that throws them away, coupled with Jim's great understanding of Della. Therefore, the atmosphere of romance is both clear and obvious. This condition might be rooted in a different backdrop of one another.

We may conclude that the story is an account of a romance. Therefore, it is clear that this story has a very strong atmosphere of romanticism. Despite its existing shortcomings, the atmosphere is alive and it accompanies the pace of the story from its beginning to the end.

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*"One day I will find the right words, and they will be simple."*

**Jack Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums***

*"Either write something worth reading or do something worth writing."*

**Benjamin Franklin**

*"You never have to change anything you got up in the middle of the night to write."*

**Saul Bellow**

*"No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader. No surprise in the writer, no surprise in the reader."*

**Robert Frost**

*"Read, read, read. Read everything--trash, classics, good and bad, and see how they do it. Just like a carpenter who works as an apprentice and studies the master. Read! You'll absorb it. Then write. If it's good, you'll find out. If it's not, throw it out of the window."*

**William Faulkner**

Source: inc.com

## **The Use of Third Person Point of View in “The Gift of the Magi”**

**By**

**Nabila Putri**

“The Gift of the Magi” is a short story written by O. Henry published in 1995. It is a very good story which tells us about how a couple love and cherish each other for a special Christmas gift. We can learn from this story about how to cherish and love someone. Struggle is not just a material struggle in this story but it also relates to happiness which is not always simply a matter of money or an abundance of professions. It is a simple happiness that really matters. In this story, we can also learn how to reward someone who is special to us and how to care for each other.

Point of view is the angle of considering things, which shows us the opinions or feelings of the individuals involved in a situation. Many stories have the protagonist telling the story, while in others, the narrator might be the story teller. There are three types of point of view. They are first person, second person, and third person. First person singular point of view uses the “I”. This narrator is usually the protagonist of the story, and this point of view allows the reader to access the character’s inner thoughts and reactions

to the occurring events. Second person point of view uses “you” to narrate the story. This point of view either implies that the narrator is actually an “I” who try to separate himself or herself from the events that he or she narrates, or allows the reader to identify with the central character. Third person point of view uses “he” and “she” as the pronouns to refer to different characters. In a third person limited point of view, the reader is privy only to one main character’s thoughts.

“The Gift of the Magi” is one of many stories that uses a pretty good third-person perspective. However, there are some things that I find less appealing in this third person point of view. The story is less challenging and the ending is predictable, “There was a pier-glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pier-glass in an \$8 furnished room.” (p. 2). The third person point of view just focuses on the monologue not on the dialogue so it makes the story lack of dialogues. It makes the characters unable to participate much in the story and it makes the reader feel unchallenged to read it.

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she cluttered out of the door and down the stairs to the street. (p. 2)

The readers can also guess how the story ends. The third person’s perspective here results in a little complex story.

I think if you take the third person point of view, the reader's view of the story will be less. The third person's perspective of the story actually makes the story easier to predict and less challenging with a predictable ending. It's less likely for the readers.

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*"You must stay drunk on writing so reality cannot  
destroy you."*

*Ray Bradbury, Zen in the Art of Writing*

*"Words can be like X-rays if you use them properly --  
they'll go through anything. You read and you're  
pierced."*

*Aldous Huxley, Brave New World*

*"How vain it is to sit down to write when you have not  
stood up to live."*

*Henry David Thoreau*

*"I can shake off everything as I write; my sorrows  
disappear, my courage is reborn."*

*Anne Frank*

*"A writer is someone for whom writing is more difficult  
than it is for other people."*

*Thomas Mann, Essays of Three Decades*

**Source: inc.com**

## **The Voyage of Relationship in “The Gift of the Magi”**

**By**

**Nofrianti Fazrin**

Everyone certainly has certain relationships. Actually, everyone can't live without relationship because everyone certainly needs help from other people. Therefore, everyone absolutely has relationship in different ways. The relationship is not only built up by beloved people such as girlfriend or boyfriend as we usually know. We can make relationship wherever we are, such as with our friends, family members, neighbors, teachers, and etc. The important thing to build a relationship is interaction. The relationship can't be built up without interaction. In the relationship, we are able to recognize the character of other people with interaction. We are also able to learn useful things from that. We can learn patience, honesty, loyalty, sacrifice and we can get great experience and new things from other people. Therefore, in relationship, problems certainly occur because in relationship we interact to other people who have different characteristics from us and every people indeed make mistakes. “The Gift of the Magi” by O. Henry deals with the voyage on relationship which includes the sadness, happiness and tensed moments.



As we know, in our relationship, we interact with other people. Therefore, we may have struggles or we have different arguments that raise the problems which are related to sadness moment. It is normal, because as humans, we have feelings to respect in every situation, including sadness. According to (Dokic, 2018), sadness is an emotional feeling that is caused by disappointment, helplessness, sorrow, disadvantage, etc. It is released by some ways, such as: quiet, for long time, depression, anger, and crying. In general, everyone releases his or her sadness by crying. Actually, the sad feeling is an ordinary thing, because being sad is a human nature. In relationship, we certainly have sad moments. The relationship which is just straight without any problem will be empty and nothing special of that, because we can learn from the problem.

Actually, sadness makes up the relationship. The relationship is strong and long lasting. In “The Gift of the Magi”, O. Henry sets up the sadness moment at the beginning of the story. This is an unusual thing, because usually the author starts the story with introduction of the characters. Usually, introduction does not show character’s problem, but this is different. In “The Gift of the Magi” both characters experience the same problem. However, in “The Gift of the Magi” O. Henry just expands the character of Della. He comes up with a common social problem which is money. In this problem, sadness is presented when the characters do not find ways to solve it. Sadness is also present when the characters try their best to solve the problem with

sacrifices. It saddens when Della does not have enough money to buy a gift for her husband, Jim. Finally, she sells her hair to buy the gift. Otherwise Jim also does the same thing by selling his watch to buy a gift for Della. Although, O. Henry just expands Della's character, O. Henry also explains the sacrifice of Jim at the end of the story. O. Henry explains the sacrifice of Jim with simple statement.

Usually any relationships are colored by sadness and happiness. However, most people hope that their relationship is identical with only happiness. According to book entitled "*Hold Me Tight : Seven Conversation for a Lifetime of Love*" by Sue Johnson (2008):

... the most important thing we've learned, the thing that totally stands out in all developmental psychology, social psychology and our lab's work in the secret to loving relationships and to keeping them strong and vibrant over the years, to falling in love again and again , is emotional responsiveness".

The happiness comes up with the responsiveness from each person in a relationship.

In "The Gift of the Magi", O. Henry sets up the happiness as the ending of the story. It can be seen when Della and Jim respond the sacrifice of each of their partner with an understanding. Della and Jim can also accept disappointment as a lesson for them about true love in the relationship.

Actually, after the sad moment, the characters are able to solve their problem, O. Henry builds up the tense moment before the happiness moment. The tense moment usually happens when the problem happens too. The tense can happen in the beginning of the problem, or in the middle, exactly in raising action or in the ending of the problem. The tense moment is a tense state that is usually followed by a change of atmosphere. The tense usually shows an unpredictable thing that will happen.

In “The Gift of the Magi”, O. Henry builds up tense moment after the characters solve their problem or in the end of the problem. In “The Gift of the Magi”, The tense moment happens in this section:

Jim stopped inside the door. He was quiet as a hunting dog when it is near a bird. His eyes looked strangely at Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not understand. It filled her with fear. It was no anger, nor anything she had been ready for. He simply looked at her with that strange expression on his face. (p. 4)

In this part, I think O. Henry is good at playing the feelings of the readers. It is because O. Henry does not tell what the characteristics are at the moment. O. Henry just tells the expressions of each character. I think this is interesting because what will happen after that is unpredictable. O. Henry is good at setting up his characters too, because in the beginning O. Henry just expands Della’s character and in the

end, O. Henry makes the character of Jim is not boring because Jim comes up in this tense moment. Therefore, I think this encourages this moment because O. Henry doesn't tell much about Jim's character to make him unpredictable.

The relationship in "The Gift of the Magi" by O. Henry is tinged with sadness and happiness. In "The Gift of the Magi", O. Henry sets up the sadness moment at the beginning of story by writing the problem of the character. Then, O. Henry sets up the happiness as the ending of the story. Sadness is a form of feeling when we indeed face as a problem in relationship. However, from the sadness we can learn patience, and manage our relationship to always be strong when facing problems. When we respond to the problem with understanding to our partner, it can become a happy relationship, because if the problem is faced wisely, the relationship will be happier.

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**O'Henry and his Family.**  
**Wife -Athol Estes Porter**  
**Daughter-Margaret Sydney Porter**



 MyShared

Source: myshared.ru

## **Women and Beauty Standard in “The Gift of the Magi”: The Analysis of Della’s Insecurity**

**By**

**Nuke Aprilia Cut Meltari Gs**

“The Gift of the Magi” by O. Henry mostly talks about love story. Both Jim and Della sacrifice their most valuable things to make each other happy. Many people think that their love is pure and beautiful. Their love ends with sweet epilogue. It is a very questionable thing to know because love should not be a pathetic thing for them. They should not lose anything to prove that they love each other, especially when they do not really want to lose that thing. Loving the right person should not be painful.

This is not a shining, shimmering, and splendid story. It is a toxic relationship story especially when it comes to the woman character, Della. Della’s insecurity about the idea of being beautiful (beauty standard) is strongly described in this story. We can look at the following statements:

1) O. Henry illustrates Della as a beautiful woman with long hair. It is not a big problem until the story tells that Della sells her hair because it is the only beautiful thing that she has

when in fact; women are also pretty without their long hair even without no hair at all. We can see that women who wear *hijab* are pretty without showing their hair. Women who lose their hair due to the chemotherapy treatment are also pretty too.

2) The story tells that Della is uncomfortable with her short hair. She even prays to God, asking him to make sure that Jim still loves her. The lack of confidence and insecurity are very strong because there is a scene where Della cries when Jim looks at her short hair. If she believes that she is pretty without her long hair, she would never act like that.

3) From the story we know that Della wants to be pretty just to be loved by Jim. The hidden message is that women should be pretty if they want to feel loved. The problem is that the beauty standard itself is abstract. A woman, who is pretty based on somebody's perspective, might be ugly when it comes to someone else's perspective. However, all women are loved just the way they are. They do not have to change anything to be called beautiful.

Those points simply explain that the existence of hair is the most important thing to indicate whether a woman is beautiful or not. In fact, women are pretty the way they are. Beauty cannot be defined, and it is just about perspective. Every human also has their own characteristics in choosing someone to be their soulmate and being beautiful is not the only way to get a lover.

According to 'The Evolution of Feminine Beauty' by Jeanne Bovet from Stony Brook University, there are myriad

of ways in which an individual's physical attractiveness can be enhanced: In almost every culture, dress, jewelry, tattoo, or makeup are used to enhance beauty, and some of these techniques are very ancient (Rubin 1988; Caplan et al. 2000). Moreover, when choosing a mate, men also use non-physical features, such as voice, smell, movements, and behaviors, which can be linked to physical or physiological conditions, as well as personality, psychology, and social background, traits also linked to mate quality. The features involved into mate choice such as physical features, smell, or personality traits are not all equally weighted in mating decisions, but they all likely contribute to the general evaluation of a potential partner.

The beauty standard is not always about long hair. The standard will always change. Someone with perfect beauty standard this decade might not be good enough for the next generation. According to *The Body Project: Body & Beauty Standards* by Bradley University, conditions and gender roles change, so do ideas about beauty, there are some recent changes in the US. In the 1960s and 70s, beauty ideals for women shifted from the mature curvaceous body of stars such as Marilyn Monroe to the stick-thin, flat-chested figure epitomized by supermodels such as Twiggy or Kate Moss. The compelling fact here is that just as women started to make dramatic gains in the areas of education, employment and politics, the ideal female body began to look like a malnourished adolescence girl, weak, emaciated and non-threatening. Women may have been gaining in freedom and power, but they were increasingly encouraged to discipline



their bodies through diet and exercise to conform to ideals that were almost impossible to achieve.

To conclude, from the perspective of beauty standard, “The Gift of the Magi” can be categorized as a bad story because it is objectifying women as something beautiful to be stared at. The beauty standard of women there makes this story unsuitable to be read by such as women who battle insecurity and women who lose their hair due to chemotherapy.

The most important thing is that we should love ourselves because all of us are beautiful. Physical appearances do not matter when our inner selves are our priority. The outer self will be old and ugly as we get older but the inner self stays forever.

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*"Let me live, love, and say it well in good sentences."  
Sylvia Plath, The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath*

*"Here is a lesson in creative writing. First rule: Do not use semicolons. They are transvestite hermaphrodites representing absolutely nothing. All they do is show you've been to college."*

*Kurt Vonnegut Jr., A Man Without a Country*

*"Don't bend; don't water it down; don't try to make it logical; don't edit your own soul according to the fashion. Rather, follow your most intense obsessions mercilessly."*

*Franz Kafka*

*"I kept always two books in my pocket, one to read, one to write in."*

*Robert Louis Stevenson*

*"You can make anything by writing."*

*C.S. Lewis*

**Source: inc.com**

## **The Climax of the story “The Gift of the Magi”**

**By**

**Putri Bungsu**

“The Gift of the Magi” is a story written by O. Henry. It was first published on December 10, 1905. In this story, I believe that the author uses inappropriate climax. I am sure that the author of “The Gift of the Magi” does not tell us about sacrifice only but he also tells us about the true love. Both the husband and the wife desire to sacrifice their lovely things. They deal with the challenge of buying things precious and expensive although they do not have enough money to buy them for Christmas gift for each other.

The author’s expression of sacrifice in this story has three elements: unpredictable condition, good problem and bad plot. In this story, the author gives us more values. These elements are interesting for me. So, I would like to criticize this one.

“The Gift of the Magi” provides any troublesome condition. For example, Della sold her hair to Mrs. Sofronie’s store (paragraph 19), “will you buy my hair?” Della said to

Mrs. Sofronie. Della desires to cut and sell her hair in order to buy gold watch chains for Jim's gold watch.

Jim also sells his gold watch to buy the combs for Della (last paragraph). As Jim said "I sold the watch to buy the combs" Based on Jim's statement, he desires to sell his watch to buy the combs for Della. He has to sacrifice his lovely gold watch, but his true love to his wife is more than that. He cannot hide it.

For me, actually, it does not make sense. It seems like there is nothing else to sacrifice. The author gives many values for this such as exceeding your limits, giving a little bit surprise, increasing the harmony at home, etc. But sometimes, we should know that something excessive is not always good in our lives. Della does not have to think too much about the quantity of love that her husband has for her. She is truly pretty as being herself.

Based on "The Gift of the Magi", the author gives a good problem. For example, a day before Christmas, Della has a problem. She does not have enough money to buy a Christmas present to Jim, her husband, "she had only \$1.87 with which to buy Jim a gift" (paragraph 6). In (paragraph7) the author mentions it again, "only \$1.87 to buy a gift for him"

It will be a good process because the problem becomes challenging. It is hard to buy a Christmas gift especially gold chains with only \$1.87 cents in hand. It still

does not make sense. It might be too excessive. On the other hand, it can make the readers imagine about the struggle and the risk.

The plot of the story “The Gift of the Magi” is not good. I do not really like the plot because the author already gives a problem in the first paragraph. For example, “She had put it aside, one cent and then another, in her careful buying of meat and other food. Della counts it three times. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.” (paragraph1). He should not take it into the first paragraph, it makes me know the whole story. Even though I do not finish reading the story yet. It might be a little bit boring and not interested story.

At the beginning of the story, the author does not finish about Della’s yet. The author runs away from that story. The example “There was nothing to do but fall on the bed and cry. So, Della did it. While the lady of the home is slowly growing quieter....” (paragraph 2 - 3).

This is good because it makes me guess the next action. On the other side, it does not make me interested in the story. It makes me think this story is contradictory and so doubtful. I would think this story is strange.

“The Gift of the Magi” tells us about how a young husband and wife live their life and how they deal with the challenge of buying secret. Unpredictable condition as Della desire to cut and sell her hair to buy a wrist-hand with golden

chains. Jim does the same thing too. He sells his wrist-hand watch to buy the combs for Della. The way the author tells us love can be a crazy thing. We should know everything excessive is not good. Last, I think that the author runs away from the story because he does not finish about Della's yet.

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*"A word after a word after a word is power."*

*Margaret Atwood*

*"Tears are words that need to be written."*

*Paulo Coelho*

*"You should write because you love the shape of stories and sentences and the creation of different words on a page. Writing comes from reading, and reading is the finest teacher of how to write."*

*Annie Proulx*

*"Writing is like sex. First you do it for love, then you do it for your friends, and then you do it for money."*

*Virginia Woolf*

*"To survive, you must tell stories."*

*Umberto Eco, The Island of the Day Before*

**Source: inc.com**

## Forward Plot Impact in “The gift of the Magi”

By

Revalan Desko

### Introduction

In “The Gift of the Magi,” O Henry applies a forward plot. The story starts from the beginning without telling a past story. The story is explained structurally. It is easier for us to predict the ending of the story if the plot is a forward plot. Some readers believe that a straightforward plot is bad.

“The Gift of the Magi” uses a forward plot. We can know it by seeing how the story runs from beginning until the end without telling a past. The plot is bad because O Henry does not want to make the story complicated. The story is too easy to be predicted. It makes the readers become uninterested in the story because it is not amusing. We can know the story uses a forward plot from the first paragraph to last paragraph.

One dollar and eighty cents. That was all. She had put it aside, one cent and then another and then another, in her careful buying of meat and other food. Della counted it three times. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.” (p. 1)



“And then she jumped up and cried, “Oh, oh!” Jim had not yet seen his beautiful gift. She held it out to him in her open hand. The gold seemed to shine softly as if with her own warm and loving spirit. “Isn’t it perfect, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You’ll have to look at your watch a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how they look together.” Jim sat down and smiled. “Della,” said he, “let’s put our Christmas gifts away and keep them a while. They’re too nice to use now. I sold the watch to get the money to buy the combs. And now I think we should have our dinner.” The magi, as you know, were wise men—wonderfully wise men—who brought gifts to the newborn Christ-child. They were the first to give Christmas gifts. Being wise, their gifts were doubtless wise ones. And here I have told you the story of two children who were not wise. Each sold the most valuable thing he owned in order to buy a gift for the other. But let me speak a last word to the wise of these days: Of all who give gifts, these two were the most wise. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are the most wise. Everywhere they are the wise ones. They are the magi. (p. 6)

The story “The gift of the Magi” is written by O. Henry uses forward plot which is a the major plot that is used in every story. Forward plot makes the story easier to be predicted because the story does not have a past. We can simply predict it. The story is started from Della that has one

dollar and eighty cent and she wants to buy Jim a gift on the Christmas day. The story is ended by a scene in which they realize that the best gift is that they give all they have without sacrificing all the things because their times for each other are more valuable than any gifts.

We can see why their time is precious or why they do not need to sacrifice for each other from the following sentence, “these two were the most wise. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are the most wise. Everywhere they are the wise ones. They are the magi.” (last paragraph)

## **Conclusion**

So the story has its own plus and minus in it. In the “Gift of the Magi,” I found the minus thing. The minus thing is that the forward plot makes the story easier to be predicted. The first and last paragraph show how the readers will know that forward plot can give a bad impact. Consequently, the story is easier to be predicted and also may make the readers relatively lose interest to read the story.

*"Always be a poet, even in prose."*

*Charles Baudelaire*

*"If my doctor told me I had only six minutes to live, I wouldn't brood. I'd type a little faster."*

*Isaac Asimov*

*"The purpose of a writer is to keep civilization from destroying itself."*

*Albert Camus*

*"I write to discover what I know."*

*Flannery O'Connor*

*"Ideas are like rabbits. You get a couple and learn how to handle them, and pretty soon you have a dozen."*

*John Steinbeck*

**Source: inc.com**

## **“THE GIFT OF THE MAGI”: PLOT-TWIST**

**By**

**Rindu Salsabila**

### **Introduction**

“The Gift of the Magi” is one of O Henry’s most famous stories that was published in 1905. The story takes place at Christmas time and tells the story of a young married couple, Jim and Della, a poor couple who do not have enough money to buy each other gifts for Christmas.

The story is written in a chronological plot and tells us about many things in life especially about the sacrifice of love. The story-line is very interesting. Every scene feels very lively and flowing. So I decided to criticize one of my favorite story-lines from this short-story, which is in the climax and compilation section.

Plot twist is a literary technique that introduces a radical change in the direction or expected outcome of the plot in a work of fiction. We call it a surprise ending or situation. For example, when we watch a movie or read a book, at first everything feels fine. The story works as it should, until you read a scene that is enough to make us feel shocked and surprised and your brain starts making a

question like “This shouldn’t be like this”. If you have experienced it, you may read or watch a plot twist of the story.

There are two plot twists that I notice in “The Gift of the Magi”. Here are the things:

1. The plot-twist at the compilation, when Jim was shocked after seeing Della when he went home.
2. The second plot-twist, when Della got shocked too after Jim told her that he had sold his watch.

As a big fan of romance and a plot twist enthusiast, I am very excited to discuss about this one. What is plot twist? Plot twist is an unexpected outcome of the plot in a work of fiction. Usually the plot twist scene will surprise the reader and can sometimes change the reader’s view of the work.

“The Gift of the Magi” contains some plot twists. The plot twist of “The Gift of the Magi” is not as amazing as movies or other stories. According to the plot twist here, there is only a spike in order to dramatize the plot. The placement of the plot twist matches the plot and background of the story.

### **The first plot twist at the compilation**

When Jim arrives and stares at Della, he is shocked but he does not look angry. This creates assumptions that we want to know what he actually feels. Whether he is angry, shocked, or not. We also want to know his reaction after hearing

Della's reason why she cut her hair off which she did for buying a Christmas gift for her partner, Jim.

Actually this is a simple scene. Too simple to be called a plot twist but in my opinion, it could be called a plot twist because Jim is surprised when he sees Della's beautiful hair that has been cut. I think Jim is surprised because Della's appearance has changed. If Jim is disappointed with Della's new hair cut because he prefers his wife with long and beautiful hair.

But the reality is not the same as I think. Jim is surprised because the gift he has prepared for Della is actually a comb set for her beautiful long hair. What he thinks is that the gift might be useless because of it. I was surprised about that. What a truly sincere husband!

### **The second plot twist at the climax**

This second plot twist increasingly makes the reader surprised at the same time even more amazed by this story. The plot twist makes the climax perfect before going down to the falling action. This plot twist also makes the story more memorable and leaves deep messages about love and the sacrifice for love.

In this climax, finally we understand why Jim is shocked after he goes home and sees Della with her new hair cut. It is because Jim has already bought her combs but surprisingly Della's hair is gone. The surprise does not stop

here. When Della gave Jim his Christmas gift which is the chain for Jim's watch and explains that she got the money by selling her hair, Jim calmly reveals with a smile that he sold his watch to buy Della her combs. So her present is useless too.

This scene has a very deep meaning. The fact that their very hard efforts to get the money to buy each others Christmas gifts turned out to be in vain; they both could not use their gifts. This also invites disappointment and reader's emotion. And this scene also makes us realize that proving love is not only about giving a gift to a partner, but by always being there for your partner is also a gift that will not even be forgotten and very valuable and also priceless.

## **Conclusion**

Climax is the most intense or important point of a story; a culmination or apex. Climax usually contains the most important scene in a story and makes the story more interesting. In my opinion, the climax of the story of "The Gift of the Magi" has been made very well and interesting with a plot twist that surprises the readers.

In my opinion, plot twist is something that must be in a story or movie because it is a very important part. It can change the reader's perspective on the plot that they have enjoyed before. The plot twist also determines how the story is resolved and closed. Although the story is quite simple and mild but this story contains a very deep meaning gives us valuable life learning especially about love.

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Source: [ohenryelementaryschool.risd.org](http://ohenryelementaryschool.risd.org)

## **How the Conflict Built the Story “The Gift Of the Magi”**

**By**

**Rini Bidar Marhamah**

Every story is built by a plot or plots. The story does not exist if it is not made by plot(s). The plot is built by significant events in a given story. The issue of cause and effect makes the plot. The plot itself has conflicts to build the story. There are two types of conflict: external conflict and internal conflict. "The Gift of the Magi" is a short story in which, O. Henry presents it with an epic plot. O. Henry uses internal conflict and surprise ending to strengthen the plot.

Internal conflicts are simply the emotional, ethical, or mental struggles that a character faces while trying to decide what to do about an external problem (the goals that make up the plot). The challenge is not a physical thing in the way but a struggle within the protagonist to make the right choice. Henry chooses that kind of conflict to make this story different from other stories. Other stories often put the external conflict, in which that kind is so commonly. But, O. Henry makes this story more interesting.

O. Henry shows the readers that Della struggles psychologically and financially. She needs to decide whether she must have her hair cut or not. Della does not want to

have her hair cut. Because, the most important thing that she has is her pretty hair. Her husband loves her hair so much. She is in doubt. But, what she can do now is to sacrifice her pretty hair. She needs to sell it to another person. She does it to get money so that she can buy him a Christmas gift.

O. Henry wants to tell the readers that the wife is very hopeless. She does not know what will happen if she cuts her hair. First thing is her husband. She loves her husband so much, so she wants to show her love by buying him a gift. But, she is afraid that her husband will be disappointed. That is the main reason. Jim, her husband, must be very angry and disappointed. She is so depressed with that. But, she can do nothing. O. Henry puts that situation in this:

If Jim doesn't kill me," she said to herself, "before he looks at me a second time, he'll say I look like a girl who sings and dances for money. But what could I do... (p. 4)

Della waits for Jim to come home. If Jim loves her, he must accept whatever his wife looks like. O. Henry characterizes Jim here as a husband whose wife must obey him. It is maybe the reason why Della afraid if she meet Jim. O. Henry puts in:

Then she heard his step in the hall and her face lost colour for a moment. She often said little prayers quietly, about simple everyday things. And now she said: "Please God, make him think I'm still pretty." (p.

4)

O. Henry puts a dramatic and emotional climax. The most important thing that we focus on in this story is the climax. In this part, the conflict that happens before turns its point in here. Della finally meets Jim. Her fear becomes real. Jim looks at Della as if he does not know who she is, "His eyes looked strangely at Della" (p. 4). O. Henry wants to present that Jim does not expect that his wife has her hair cut. The hair is his favourite thing from Della. It seems that Jim wants his wife still to look pretty, not with hair like that. So, he just looks into her wife's eyes.

Della does not want Jim to look at her like that. She tries to explain that she cuts her hair to buy him a Christmas gift. She looks so desperate and fear. She struggles to make him understand her position. The important thing now is she has a gift for him. And then, she does not pay attention to her hair. O. Henry shows that:

You don't have to look for it," said Della. "It's sold, I tell you—sold and gone, too. It's the night before Christmas, boy. Be good to me, because I sold it for you. Maybe the hairs of my head could be counted," she said, "but no one could ever count my love for you. Shall we eat dinner, Jim?" (p. 5)

But, without wondering, Jim shows a gift that he has bought for her. Jim has bought a comb. In fact, Della's hair has been cut. He realizes that everything is wasted. He has to sell her watch to buy that comb and Della cuts her hair to buy him a chain to his watch.

In the end, O. Henry presents a surprise ending, which makes this story more surprising. It shows that the characters realize that the most precious gift is their love, and then, their existence. Those things are just enough to show that you truly love someone. They do not have to sacrifice anything. Moreover, if you want to show your love, just prove it by action. O. Henry shows that in:

Jim sat down and smiled.

Della,” said he, “let’s put our Christmas gifts away and keep them a while. They’re too nice to use now. I sold the watch to get the money to buy the combs. And now I think we should have our dinner. (p. 6)

Readers will assume that the ending does not happen like that. They may think that O. Henry uses a sad ending on that story. Because what happens in their conflict will be a big trouble if they do not realize it quickly. O. Henry presents that the ending of the short story does not always have a general ending which that can be expected very well. O. Henry creates a perfect conclusion in which the ending makes the readers satisfied. The point of that story has been conveyed through the ending or conclusion.

The story is built very well. The plot is epic. Every scene in this story is presented in an epic form. The conflict is strong and interesting. How the characters struggle makes this story more interesting. When the conflict is revealed, the characters try hard to struggle out. And then, when the

ending comes, it makes sense on the story. The plot and the surprise ending have been presented very well.

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*"A book is made from a tree. It is an assemblage of flat, flexible parts (still called "leaves") imprinted with dark pigmented squiggles. One glance at it and you hear the voice of another person, perhaps someone dead for thousands of years. Across the millennia, the author is speaking, clearly and silently, inside your head, directly to you. Writing is perhaps the greatest of human inventions, binding together people, citizens of distant epochs, who never knew one another. Books break the shackles of time--proof that humans can work magic."*

*Carl Sagan*

*"Words do not express thoughts very well. They always become a little different immediately after they are expressed, a little distorted, a little foolish."*

*Hermann Hesse*

*"Writing is its own reward."*

*Henry Miller*

*"A blank piece of paper is God's way of telling us how hard it is to be God."*

*Sidney Sheldon*

**Source: inc.com**

**Role of Love in “The Gift of the Magi”**

**By  
Selma Rahmani**

If you are someone who likes to read books every day, you may know that almost every book you read has a theme of love. The question is whether the theme of love has succeeded in influencing the story or just exists to give an impression or even become a weapon for critics to look for negative side in the books that they read. O. Henry in his story “The Gift of the Magi” takes the right steps to position the theme of love which he carries as a binding magnet and a release of reader interest.

In this story, we can find how each word that is strung together develops from one idea, called love. The author tries to convey a problem in point of view of a lover. This is actually reasonable because this is a love-themed story. Of course, the topic of conversation is love but I would say that the selection of this love theme can create a gap in the story. For example, there are no lessons or new sides of the world for readers to see from the story other than love. Not all readers are like this type of story, especially men.

All writers know that the earliest step of their writing is the selection of themes, because that is where the story will be built to make the emotions, feelings, natures of each character



that plays a role. From the theme as well, he can imagine the setting, how the story line is arranged, how his position as the author in the story, you can even say that the theme selection is the main foundation of a story. You really have to choose strong materials if you want the house to be sturdy, so you can build something beautiful and extraordinary.

O. Henry takes the theme of love between Jim and Della. The theme of love means that the story runs on the theme. Their love has also been well known among readers as a theme that always tells us about how important the other characters are in the life of the main character, how much they love each other, and how they deal with other things like that. Amazingly, O. Henry does not write all these three things. The idea develops to lead the theme to be widened between Jim and Della who are husband and wife. Other writers might think to bring a third person or make one of them bored with their feelings and decide to leave each other. However, amazingly, O. Henry actually comes up with a different idea. His steps should be appreciated because who would have thought, the theme of love he raises actually involves something simple but of meaningful to the characters in the story. It was very clear that the love story that he writes would be different from the others.

The theme of love is also sometimes beneficial for the writers because love is always present in human life. Of course, it will never be very hard if we talk about love. The hard thing is to differentiate each story from others, because

always and often, love can be in any form. The writer's ingenuity shapes the love between Della's hair and Jim's hard work make an interesting attraction between the reader and the story. The theme of the story is also in accordance with the nature of the writer in this story. If we can deduce from how Henry defines love from every word and behavior of Della, we can also see what kind of person Henry is because sometimes some people say that you can see your ethics from how you make a character in your story.

Sometimes, love theme can also be a good point of the story. We can take a look from "The Gift of the Magi." For example, the reader wants to find a love-themed story, surely they will look for something different, and "The Gift of the Magi" has this difference. This love story also sometimes able to reach the hearts of readers. O. Henry has managed to channel what he wants to say about how love is through the stories of Jim and Della, because sometimes there are types of readers who decide to read a book to relieve stress, to escape from the real world, of course the theme of love itself becomes a separate choice because for some reasons when talking about love, or witnessing how unites different begins, something inside us feels warm. The theme of love also benefits writers to be their tool to attract readers, especially adolescents, and that is something that the government wants to run, that the current library you probably would not think that this is a story with a love theme. Or if you are the type of reader who first reads a book from the blurb on the back cover, then you will definitely be interested in how O. Henry

defines the meaning of love through the story. Who would have thought that instead of discussing how the miracle was the writer would rather show how love changed the confidence of Della and Jim.

Then, as I mentioned before, the theme of love can also be a weapon for critics to see the flaws in a story. And (again), the theme of love is not strange because it is almost in every story. In this case, O. Henry also has a gap to make the critics find flaws in his story. The first example, we all know that this story has a theme of love, which means, every word joint here developed from the theme of love. However, Henry has taken steps in the first paragraph to explain the setting of the atmosphere of this story which takes place a few days before Christmas. Although it does not say clearly in which city the story's characters live, it seems there is something missing in this story. Henry is too focused on building every scene that he thinks can melt the reader with his love story and then forget that in addition to the theme of love, he also has other themes such as the theme of Christmas or Sacrifice. He forgets the fact that at the beginning he mentions that one of his characters, Della, wants to buy something for her husband for Christmas. Henry then builds his paragraph based on Della's feeling, emotions, worries that she cannot give a present for her husband. Henry does not discuss the part why Della is so eager to give a Christmas present for her husband. Henry does not discuss the part where he wants to tell the reader that if there is Christmas, there is a tradition of giving gifts to each other. Therefore, if you are a new reader in this

story and you do not understand anything about Christmas, you will end up being a reader who berates Della's character for acting too much just because he can't give a present.

The theme of love also sometimes makes the reader unable to find life lessons after reading the story. In this story, O. Henry only presents lessons that can be taken from love itself, so if later this reader is a child or someone who does not understand love, of course he will not get anything from this story other than the fact that hair can be sold to get a gold watch.

So, Henry's step to create the story "The Gift of the Magi" with the theme of love has actually been very brave considering he also prepares a plot and ideas that are different from other love stories. The greatest challenge of a writer is to keep his readers remember the uniqueness of his story even when the reader read millions of other stories. O. Henry succeeds in making that thought. The reader will definitely remember Jim and Della. However, the theme of love raised by Henry is also a weapon to attack him by saying that this story is still not perfect because it always talks about love, while there are many types of readers out there who might not like that type of story.

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Source: [gettyimages.com](https://www.gettyimages.com)

## **The Point of View of The Story “The Gift of the Magi”**

**By**

**Tiziana Ariyastuti**

The point of view of the story “The Gift of the Magi” is third-person omniscient. In this story, the narrator tells us about Della’s life and struggles and the narrator also tells us about everything, like what they feel and what they think. O. Henry uses this point of view and focuses on the journey of Della’s life and her struggles to give a gift for her husband, Jim. Third-person is a point of view which tells us about what happens in this story. In this story, the third-person belongs to the person or people being talked about. It tells about the character’s life and the character’s storyline.

In this paper, there are two things that I will discuss. The first one is the third-person point of view and the second one is the point of view of the Della and Jim.

### 1. The third-person point of view

In this story, I think, O. Henry uses the third- person point of view. Because, in this story, the narrator tells the story without being involved in the actual events, and the narrator knows and sees more than the characters themselves, such as their feeling, their thoughts and everything about the

characters. For example, narrator knows what Della feels and thinks.

... only \$ 1.87 to buy a gift for Jim. Her Jim. She had had many happy hours planning something nice for him. Something nearly good enough. Something almost worth the honor of belonging to Jim” (p.1)

Those sentences are a simple example of the third-person point of view, because, in those sentences the narrator seems to know what Della does and what Della thinks.

## 2. The point of view of Della and Jim characters

The second one that I want to discuss is about the point of view of the characters of the story “The Gift of the Magi”. In this story, O. Henry uses the third-person point of view, because, as we can see the narrator uses “she” and “he” when referring to Della and Jim. And also the narrator uses the names to mention all the characters and other things, “She had put it aside, one cent and then another and another, in her careful buying of meat and other food. Della counted it three times...” (p. 1).

In the sentences, the narrator uses “she” when referring to Della. In this story, O. Henry describes the situation of Della and Jim at Christmas day. O. Henry only focuses on Della’s side. In this story, the narrator tells us about Della’s struggle and sacrifice to buy a Christmas gift for her husband,

“So now Della’s beautiful hair fell about her, shining like falling stream of brown water. It reached below her knee. It almost made itself into a dress for her...” ( p. 2).

In this sentence, the point of view of the characters of the story “The Gift of the Magi”, the narrators tells us more about Della’s perspective.

So, to conclude, the story “The Gift of the Magi” uses the third-person point of view, because, as we can see, the narrators knows and sees more than the characters themselves. The narrator tells us about what they feel and think. The narrator also uses “she” and “he” when referring to Della and Jim.

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*"Writing books is the closest men ever come to  
childbearing."*

**Norman Mailer**

*"Find out the reason that commands you to write; see  
whether it has spread its roots into the very depth of  
your heart; confess to yourself you would have to die if  
you were forbidden to write."*

**Rainer Maria Rilke**

*"As a writer, you should not judge, you should  
understand."*

**Ernest Hemingway**

*"A good writer possesses not only his own spirit but also  
the spirit of his friends."*

**Friedrich Nietzsche**

*"The most valuable of all talents is that of never using  
two words when one will do."*

**Thomas Jefferson**

*"I went for years not finishing anything. Because, of  
course, when you finish something you can be judged."*

**Erica Jong**

**Source: inc.com**

**Raising Action in “The Gift of the Magi” By O. Henry****By****Yes Elga Madani Hanira**

“The Gift of the Magi” is a short story written by O. Henry published in 1995. This amazing story tells us about how important a gift is in a special day even though the husband and his wife do not have any money. However, they do not give up to give each other. In this wonderful story we can get many values about love, sacrifice, life and care for each other. Therefore, talking about caring, many people underestimate the gift when there is a special event or anything else. When you give someone a present, it means a lot to them especially on their birthday.

This story has a plot which is built by significant events. The plot has rising action. In the story, raising action is like the king in every kingdom. If the king does not stand out in the people’s live, the kingdom becomes increasingly extinct because the king is the key to the success of the kingdom and the king’s way to give a good influence on his people. His people will be calm and happy as well. Therefore, if we compare it to the plot, the rising action is the key to the success of the story and also raising action is the king of the

story. Before that, it would be good for us to know about the rising action. The rising action is a lot of incidents that can create suspense and reader's interest in a narrative way. The rising action is one element of plot. We can find it after the author introduces the character of the story. It is usually named exposition. The rising action is the essence of the story because in the rising action, usually the author puts a scene in the story that can interest the reader before the author puts the climax of the story. The story "The Gift of the Magi" is one of many stories that has a good element of plot except the rising action. However, there are two scenes in rising action that confuse me. They make me keep asking questions in my head what is wrong with this story.

They are the contradictory conditions of the characters and the characters' force of their state. When writing the story, O. Henry was supposed to have written a good rising action. If his rising action cannot interest the reader, his story may be less interesting. The story "The Gift of the Magi" has a really good rising action that is why I choose it as the topic for my final paper. The rising action of this story can impact the story through its contradictory condition and force state.

The story provides an example that is not educational. If the author puts this condition, it makes the readers think twice to understand the rising action. They will be confused by the story, especially the readers from Indonesia. Indonesian people, I believe, are too lazy to deal with

complicated things. Remember that, an author must adapt his or her story to all of the readers' properties and habits. The female character struggles more than his husband. I think it does not make any sense and it also makes the story look too dramatic because in the story Della cuts her hair off meanwhile her husband has just sold his watch. The readers may keep asking the question what her husband does and why she sells her hair, why not her clothes or her stuff or something like that because for women, their hair is their crown. It would be better when the author puts some information about the character. For example, the information about their job, background family or any information that can help readers to understand this story. Something like that will ruin the quality of a story. We should pay attention to such a small thing. Small thing which is able to decrease our story's quality. She cried for a while but then she found out that she had to take a risk. It is told that Della had an extremely long brown hair. She immediately went out of her house and searched for any store that would buy her hair.

“Dell,” said Jim, “let’s put our Christmas presents away and keep them while. They are too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And suppose you put the chops on.”  
(p. 6)

The author makes the story which is just focused on one point, a present. Yet the climax in the story is unpredictable.

He puts the scene of the story which provides the value of life that is not educational. It will be an example of someone who is less capable in managing money to force something that cannot suit with the way found. Although, it is a bad way, there will be a crime. If you want to do something, you need to think about the consequences first. The woman in the story has to struggle more than her husband. If we force to do something we want, we will lose the most valuable thing that we have. We feel sorry for that and the story will lose its true moral. Moral is an important thing in a story because in this global era, we need something that can motivate us to be a good one. We often read a book, novel, poem and something like that. So, a writer should write the stories which have many good moral lessons because our generation often imitate the scenes of the literature, watch or read without sorting them. Therefore, we must be aware of the people like that.

... Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at walking a gray fence in a gray backyard. Tomorrow would be a Christmas day and she only had \$1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. (p. 2)

I would like to conclude that the rising action of “The Gift of the Magi” can impact the story because the rising action is the essence of it. Rising action will give an impact on other elements of the plot to create a good story. It is also the

key to the success of the story. There are two scenes in this story which show the contradictory condition. The second one is force state. If we just focus in one point we might lose the most valuable thing that we have.

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*"If it sounds like writing, I rewrite it. Or, if proper usage gets in the way, it may have to go. I can't allow what we learned in English composition to disrupt the sound and rhythm of the narrative."*

*Elmore Leonard*

*"Writers live twice."*

*Natalie Goldberg*

*"To produce a mighty book, you must choose a mighty theme."*

*Herman Melville*

*"Words are a lens to focus one's mind."*

*Ayn Rand*

*"I am irritated by my own writing. I am like a violinist whose ear is true, but whose fingers refuse to reproduce precisely the sound he hears within."*

*Gustave Flaubert*

*"I love deadlines. I like the whooshing sound they make as they fly by."*

*Douglas Adams*

Source: inc.com

## **Useless Action in The Falling Action of “The Gift of the Magi”**

**By**

**Yevis Haritsyah**

O. Henry makes a simple chronological plot, which is a little bit interesting. Henry’s achievement in writing “The Gift of the Magi” is his ability to effectively present the theme through the plot. In “The Gift Of the Magi” the main complication stems from the impoverishment of the young couple, Della and Jim, who simply do not have enough money to purchase Christmas gifts for each other. The exposition of O. Henry’s poignant story suggests this problem. Also in the exposition, Della cries after counting her meager one dollar and eighty seven cents which will not pay for the beautiful watch for which she desires to give her husband for a Christmas present.

The rising action that comes from this original complication gives rise to Della’s inner conflict of cutting her hair which Jim loves and of which she is so proud. Jim too suffers from inner conflict resulting from the complication of penury as he wrestles with the idea of selling his gold watch to buy the beautiful combs for his wife’s Christmas present. This is a touching plot, but in this paper I will criticize some ideas that the writer makes.



In the story “The Gift of the Magi,” the writer definitely tells us that the resolution or conclusion of the story does not really matter that Jim’s and Della’s presents turn out to be useless. The falling action in this story takes place when Jim takes out a package from his coat and speaks to Della. He seems to feel alright. He does not mind Della’s hair is short. He asks Della to unwrap the package to make Della understand why Jim look so the first time he sees Della. She opens the package and cries hysterically. It is a set of comb made of pure tortoise shell with jewelled rims. It is all that she has dreamed for a long time. After that, Della gives Jim the chains that she has bought, and asked him to try it on his watch. However, Jim does not obey that. He throws himself on a couch and smiles. They are the wisest givers of all. But, actually the falling action of this story is too dramatic. The writer makes the story more complicated. Della shouldn’t sell her hair and also the husband shouldn’t sell his watch to buy what his wife has sold. They should attempt to find another solution.

If the writer says that they are the wisest givers, they should find other ways to make them happy and celebrate their Christmas without selling their loved things. They sell their precious things just for giving the special gifts in Christmas day. This action is absolutely useless. They can find other solutions which are more useful and wise. For example, they find a part time job and the salary can be used to buy the gifts.

In this story, the husband buys the combs for his wife, but actually the case is that the wife sells her hair to buy a gift for him. Why can the writer say that they are the wisest givers. This is definitely not wise, but I admit that the story touches my heart because the falling action or the problem solving is not good enough for me. It doesn't mean that the story is bad. The falling action is not good for me because the actions are not wise for both characters.

O. Henry's perspective according to the gifts they have given to each other are the wisest. Both Jim and Della have shown that they are willing to sacrifice the most valuable things. They have to give something to each other. That makes their "useless" gifts incredibly valuable after all: the selfless love each feels for the other is embodied in those gifts. As long as they have the gifts, they'll be able to remember them. That kind of thing can't be bought. And it makes the gifts even more special and personal than what they replace.

It leads us to another point before the exchange. Jim and Della have one prize possession. Each possession is valuable on its own and belongs to each person individually. The watch is Jim's and the hair is Della's. Both possessions are sacrificed. In the exchange, each gains something new and doesn't have any sentimental value as a token of their love for each other. That love is not something they have as individuals. It's something they share together. So, in the gift exchange, both of them come closer together in a very concrete way.

O. Henry assumes that his readers have a solid knowledge of the Bible and will not only recognize but understand the allusions he uses in “The Gift of the Magi.” But, in fact, not all of the readers know what he thought and everyone has different point of view. This allusion does two things. First, it clearly indicates the depth of Della's love for Jim and it also indicates Della's understanding of God's love.

The narrator's conversational tone also adds a bit of drama to the story. We can conclude that the most dramatic section from this story is in the falling action. The use of coincidences in the story helps make the endings more plausible, but may also make the plot seem overly manipulated, just to achieve the surprise.

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# The students of Introduction to Literary Studies

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- 1 FITHRYAH AMIRAH KARINI
- 2 ANNISA FAUZIAH
- 3 SONIA PEBRI UTAMA
- 4 ANNISA REVALDI
- 5 SELMA RAHMANI
- 6 DHIENDY N KOMVECTA
- 7 ELGA MADANI HANIRA
- 8 FIERDI HENDRI SULATA
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- 12 CYNDI ELVIMA
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- 14 NABILA PUTRI
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- 16 NUKE APRILIA CUT MELTARI. GS
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- 18 ASSHAVARIZQY ASWARD
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- 20 PUTRI BUNGSU
- 21 RINI BIDAR MARHAMAH
- 22 MUHAMMAD DUTA RAMADHAN
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- 33 TIZIANA ARIYASTUTI
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**Ferdinal** was born in July 9, 1966 in Padang Panjang, West Sumatra, Indonesia. He is now a faculty member at English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Andalas University, Padang, West Sumatra, Indonesia. He graduated from SDN Ganting Gunung Padang Panjang (1980), SMPN Gunung Padang Panjang (1983), SMAN Padang Panjang (1986), Andalas University (Padang, 1990), Western Illinois University (USA, 1997) and Deakin University (Australia, 2014). He has also received a certificate on Language Curriculum and Materials Development from RELC, Singapore (2000) and a certificate in Thai Studies Course from Prince of Songkla University, Thailand (2003). He teaches a few courses (bachelor's and Master's), including prose studies, literary theory, literature & Industry, and literature & revolution. His research interests include post-colonial issues in literature, literature & human rights, and literature & tourism. He has published a number of journal articles and books.



# Sinopsis of the Book

The collection of essays in READING “THE GIFT OF THE MAGI” BY O. HENRY: An Anthology of Students’

Essays comprises 20 essays by 20 first year students of English Department of 2019, Faculty of Humanities, Andalas University, Padang. The collection was basically the final product of one of the assignments on reading the class materials. Among a few readings they needed to read in the class of Introduction to Literary Studies, they were assigned to read “The Gift of the Magi” and then wrote an essay on it. They were assigned to analyze the intrinsic elements of the story, including theme, plot, setting, point of view and characterization. Each of them was given a topic to examine and was supposed to write an essay of about three-four pages on the given story. Out of about 40 students, 20 essays were selected in this anthology. The students’ enthusiasm to understand and discuss the class materials inspired us to channel it through writing as a way to express their understanding of the material. 20 essays which appear in this collection represent how and how far they understood the material as well how good their English was.