

The Last Leaf: A Psychological Study of the Characters

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Abstract: In the world of literature, short stories are created to entertain readers in a single sitting. This study investigates the psychological aspect of the characters in O. Henry's *The Last Leaf* by studying more about the characterization, the figures of speech being used, and the writing styles of the author that are visible in the passage. The researchers review and analyze the data of the chosen literary work using a qualitative method of discourse analysis and are substantiated by the Psychoanalytic Theory and the Russian Formalism Theory. The findings of the study show that the characters in the story depict different types of psychological aspects. In the study, depression, anxiety, denial, and frustration are found in the characterization. Meanwhile, fear, despair, anxiety, confusion, depression, sympathy, denial, grief, guilt, hope, surprise, and sadness are found in the figures of speech analysis. Moreover, hope, anger, frustration, isolation, and despair are found in the writing style analysis of the study. In addition, future researchers are recommended to conduct a psychological analysis of the characters, a deeper study of the figures of speech being used, and a stronger discussion about the writing styles in the story.

Keywords: characters, emotions, epidemic, O. Henry, psychological.

1. Introduction

Literature is widely acknowledged as a reflection of society. Literature, in its corrective function, mirrors societal problems in order to make society aware of the problem and make amends (Shalini & Samundeswari, 2017). More than a mirror, literature is a medium of self-expression that writers have utilized to convey emotions and thoughts. Moreover, writers in literature transform real-life occurrences in society into stories and present these to society in a way in which people take a close look at the issues happening in society.

Discerning the in-depth meaning of a literary work is a crucial skill a reader must learn to incorporate into reading. Sehandi, as mentioned in Septiadi et al., describes how literature in psychology is an analysis of literature through its psychological aspects. There are three areas that are closely related to character and characterization that need analysis, and these are: author psychology, personalities in literature psychology, and readers in literature psychology. Authors create works that represent not only what is in one's mind, but also what others around the world think. Authors must be able to express feelings as well as consider the readers' take on it. At

some point, some reader would miss and overlook an important detail in a passage that is needed to investigate the author's real intention of writing such a piece. This could be due to a lack of knowledge about the writing styles and the functions involved in the delivery of the story. It is the method used by an author to convey the message intended to be conveyed. The ability of a reader to recognize the elements of style that an author uses also serves as a guide that leads to comprehension of the story. Acknowledging these elements is a challenge that readers must pass through to move forward and point out the figures of speech that are present in a written work.

In the field of study, literature helps convey to the reader the life and journey of a certain character in a story. Psychology, on the other hand, gives a better understanding of the emotional and mental situations of the characters. Together, these two studies create a common ground in explaining the depth of a story. Psychology, in general, studies all the processes of the cognitive aspect as well as the emotions of a person. Literature and psychology may vary from one another, but the two fields both deal with human emotions, as well as the reactions to certain situations, by utilizing various theories, methodologies, and frameworks (Aras, 2015).

O. Henry's *The Last Leaf* is one of the world's finest short stories. It ventures into the story of two friends, Johnsy and Sue, whose passion for painting paves the way to developing a friendship and measuring it on the hardest days of their lives. The two main characters possess different attitudes; one is optimistic and the other is pessimistic. On the other hand, Behrman, an old man living downstairs from Sue and Johnsy, also possesses a different perspective on life. Throughout the literary work, the psyche of the characters is the most notable, and it is the main focus of the researchers. In reading, it is critical for readers to form emotional attachments to specific works of literature. By studying the psychological aspects of the characters in O. Henry's *The Last Leaf*, this is utilized to further explain the existing psychological dilemma of each character and how the author presented different aspects of human emotions in the form of writing through the passage of the said literary work.

This study aims to investigate the characters' psyche in the story *The Last Leaf* by O. Henry. Specifically, it looks into the characterization, figures of speech, and writing styles of the

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story. Characterization is studied by looking into the distinction of the character's personalities. Also, figures of speech are being studied as it helps to understand the characters underlying thoughts and emotions and the utilization of writing style are analyzed to determine the psyche of the characters.

In order to analyze the main problem and sub-problems, this study is supported by Psychoanalytic Theory by Sigmund Freud and Russian Formalism Theory as proposed by Victor Schklovsky.

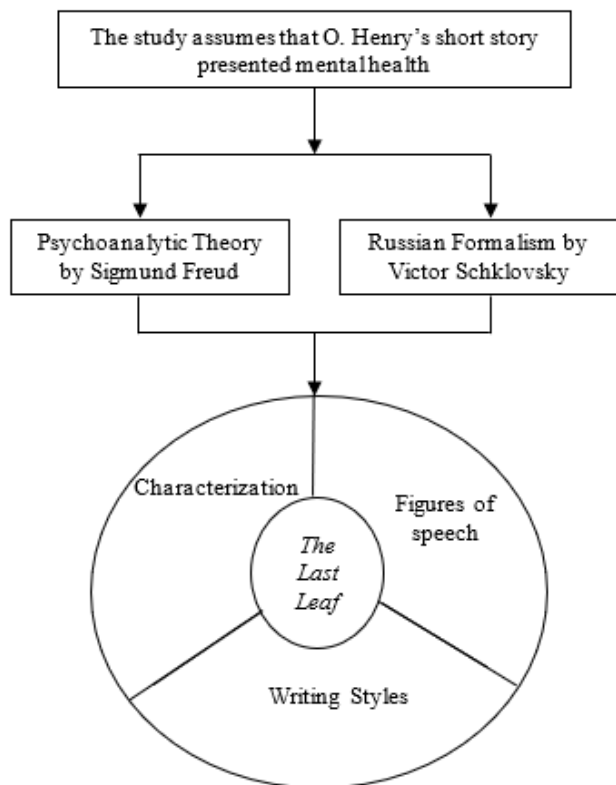


Fig. 1. Schematic presentation of the theoretical background of the study

Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory of personality is the first theory to be utilized. According to the American Psychological Association, it promotes the awareness of unconscious and repressed emotions and behaviors, allowing the person to express themselves. It aims to uncover the unconscious desires and conflicts that need to be reflected upon.

This approach is the perfect tool to decipher a character's psyche, especially in the protagonist's case, which has prevalent neurotic tendencies. A character's personality holds the greatest impact in a story; its importance lies in how smart and effective an author decides it to be, as characterization is the backbone of a storyline. One of the most efficient ways of understanding the deeper meaning of a story is to acknowledge and get to know its characters, and that way it guides the reader throughout the progress of the story ("Formalism in Literature: Definition, Meaning and Characteristics," 2019)

Russian Formalism Theory is also used as it deals with textual meaning. According to this theory, the text's contextual meaning is ignored in order to focus on the text itself. It interprets the meaning of the text by analyzing the words

without taking into account the writer's biography or the socioeconomic background of the text. Furthermore, formalism looks into the formal devices or the formal structure of the text and tries to understand its meaning. It includes the literary devices and writing style of the story. One of the influences of Russian Formalism is the writing technique of defamiliarization. It is a term for presenting things to something unfamiliar as part of its creativity.

This study is mainly for the students who want to delve into the deeper meaning of the story. The study also includes psychology, since the focus is on the psyche of the characters; thus, it is beneficial to students in the fields of literature and psychology. This is also to help understand the technicalities of the story, including the literary devices being used, as the story includes more than just the figures of speech to describe the psyche of the characters.

The main focus of this study is the psyche of the characters in O. Henry's *The Last Leaf* and limited only to the sub-problems being presented, specifically the characterization, figures of speech, and writing styles.

2. Literature Review

The following readings relate and support the main problem and sub-problem of the study.

Characterization brings a story to life by making characters more dynamic and engaging. Characters in good characterization are often realistic, which means acting in ways that are true to human experiences. Characters make decisions, experience emotions, and exhibit reactions that are true to life. These human expressions make the characters more compelling and relatable to the reader. Furthermore, the characters evolve in tandem with the plot. As the story moves, the protagonist transforms, encountering and reacting to other characters, settings, and situations. This reflects how a person grows in the real world and exemplifies the sense of progression from the beginning to the end of a story ("Characterization in Literature: Definition and Examples", n.d). This article will be utilized in the study understand the characters and how the characters' personalities and perspectives help the plot drive forward.

Subsequently, in an article, Layfield (n.d) discussed that figurative language is the unusual and non-literal use of words, phrases, and sentences. It is the linguistic technique that writers use to describe unfamiliar things and scenes in a more relatable manner as it enhances the reader's imaginative mind. This technique is part of the author's way of storytelling as it adds effects to the scenes in a way that gives a visualization of the story. On the same manner, Wiehardt (2020) talks about having a simple description turn into something evocative that improves the story's settings, scenes, and emotional effects and makes prose into something poetic. It also serves as a reader's guide in analyzing the underlying literary symbolism and themes that, in the hands of creative authors, ordinary writing becomes literature. The use of figurative language in short stories is greatly associated with how the author wants to portray the message of the story to give a description of the indescribable emotions presented in the story. Figurative language gives life to the emotions of the characters in a story,

which gives readers a better view of the mental and moral qualities of one.

After all, in writing, it is important to create a certain mood for the readers to feel. The choice of words by the author is one element of writing that greatly affects how the mood in the story is being presented. From an online article of (Glazer, 2017), expression is a matter of showing rather than telling. In writing, it is important to be crucial with the vocabulary and grammar in the story, as well as connect it with the writing styles of the author. The studies being mentioned are supporting elements that elaborate as to how the author's writing style greatly affects the story. The articles cited expand the understanding of the readers as well as the writers on how this technical part of writing creates such a big difference in the story. Analyzing the writing style of the author is essential as it contains more accurate data in terms of the language being used, gives a clearer understanding of what the writer wants to express, and the overall impact of the story.

3. Methodology

This study utilizes qualitative research, specifically discourse analysis. Qualitative research is used in formulating meanings through the actions and decisions of the characters. While understanding the vivid descriptions present in the story, its sole focus is on the quality of experience that all humans experience. And by then, the psychological aspect of the characters is determined. Discourse analysis is a research method used to analyze the sub-problems of the study in formulating new ideas about the story's characters. Through the use of this method, the research problems are thoroughly investigated to obtain the study's objectives purpose.

The primary source of data is from Neon Hist, uploaded to zlibrary ebook which consists of 7 pages, first published in 1907 under the author's collection named The Trimmed Lamp and Other Stories, first publication in hardcover; it has 260 pages, originally published by Doubleday, Page & Company in 1912, 1906 and 1907 copyrights.

This study follows three phases: Phase 1 Characterization, Phase 2 Figurative Language, and Phase 3 Writing Style.

A. Phase 1. Characterization

Phase 1 tackles the analysis of the characterization. The characterization is analyzed through Freud's Psychoanalytic

theory. This phase also scrutinizes the lines of the characters that determine the distinction of each character's psychological aspect. Moreover, a table is used in this phase titled Character Analysis.

B. Phase 2. Figures of Speech

Phase 2 discusses the analysis of 5 the figures of speech. The lines extracted from the studied short story are analyzed through Viktor Shklovsky's Russian Formalism Theory to distinguish the personification, metaphor, simile, irony, foreshadowing, and imagery present in the story that evoked the psychological aspect of the characters. Thus, Figures of Speech table is used in this phase.

C. Phase 3. Writing Style

Phase 3 tackles the analysis of the writing style. The writing style is analyzed through Viktor Schklovsky's Russian Formalism Theory to scrutinize the writing style that helps to determine the psychological aspect of the story. Moreover, this also scrutinizes the writing styles of the author to determine the psyche of the characters through the vividness, mood, syntax, and word choice that is shown in the table that is utilized in this phase.

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the data in order to answer the sub-problems raised in the study generated through literary methods used.

A. Characterization

Table 1 presents each character's psychological aspect.

The table indicates the distinction of each character's psychological aspect by scrutinizing the lines of the characters in the story. It shows that the characters have a different intensity of emotion that leads the characters to experience some psychological factors that impact their mental and emotional state.

Johnsy, a young artist, is the main character of the story, which has the most prevalent psychological aspect that expresses signs of depression. In the narrative, the village where Johnsy live is occupied by pneumonia epidemic. Due to the lethality of pneumonia, it affects the mental health of Johnsy that caused her to easily conclude that the small chance to

Table 1
Character analysis

Characters	Lines	Psychological Aspect
Johnsy	"Twelve," she said; and a little later, "Eleven"; and then, "Ten," and, "Nine"; and then, "Eight," and, "Seven," almost together.	Depression
	"Leaves. On the tree. When the last leaf falls, I must go, too.	
	"Because I want to see the last leaf fall. I have done enough waiting. I have done enough thinking. I want to go sailing down, down, like one of those leaves."	
	"It is the last one, I thought it would surely fall during the night. It will fall today, and I shall die at the same time."	
Sue	"I've been a bad girl, Sue. Something has made that last leaf stay there to show me how bad I was. It is wrong to die."	Remorse/Guilt
	"Dear Johnsy! Think of me, if you won't think of yourself. What would I do?"	Anxiety
Behrman	"Will you promise me to close your eyes and keep them closed? Will you promise not to look out the window until I finish working?"	Anxious
	"What! Are there such fools? Do people die because leaves drop off a tree? I have not heard of such thing."	Denial
Behrman	"Who said I will not come?Go. I come with you. For half an hour I have been trying to say I will come. God! This is not any place for someone so good as Johnsy to lie sick. Someday I shall paint my masterpiece, and we shall all go away from here. God! Yes."	Frustration

recover means her life is about to end. Eventually, what Johnsy heard from her surroundings greatly affects her mental and emotional state that triggered Johnsy to show signs of giving up, as it is reflected in this line:

“Twelve,” she said and a little later, “Eleven”; and then, “Ten,” and, “Nine”; and then, “Eight,” and, “Seven,” almost together. Leaves on the tree. When the last one fall, I must go, too. I’ve known that for three days. Didn’t the doctor tell you?

It is expressed in these lines that Johnsy begins to count the remaining days of her life to wither. As Johnsy watches the leaves to wither and fall, she starts showing hopelessness and refuses to fight the illness that affect her mental health and worsen her condition. In that manner, Johnsy slowly show sign of a person who is depressed and her emotions is uncontrollable as it seems like her mind is clouded by negative thoughts. It can be noticed that some things change in Johnsy, specifically, the way she thinks and acts strangely. Furthermore, it is more evident in the story that Johnsy who dreams to paint the Bay of Naples loses hope to continue living which can be shown in these lines:

Because I want to see the last leaf fall. I have done enough waiting. I have done enough thinking. I want to go sailing down, down, like one of those leaves.

It is clearly indicated that Johnsy is certain in the idea that her life is about to end. Johnsy is getting impatient for the last leaf to fall as she relays an indirect message to her friend that she had enough of suffering from the disease and anticipated to sail down together with those leaves. As time passes by, there is no sign of hope concerning Johnsy’s situation. It only shows and interpreted that Johnsy made a promise to herself that when the last leaf falls that is the time where Johnsy wants to give up too as it is clear in these lines:

It is the last one I thought it would surely fall during the night. It will fall today, and I shall die at the same time.

Johnsy handles the situation in a wrong way and thinks about the aftermath once her illness becomes worse. Johnsy let herself entertained the worst scenarios her mind plotted that lead her to think that the solution of her suffering is death. It is a big factor that contributes to the mental health issues of Johnsy because of the lethality and misery of the disease that caused Johnsy to extremely suffer. Therefore, the character of Johnsy is categorized as a person who has depression due to the situation that somewhat affected her mental health and made Johnsy overly overly emotional about her condition. Johnsy’s showing signs of depression may not be as severe as others, but depression is not about the severity of what the persons feel. The fact that Johnsy only thinks death is the solution of her suffering, it affects her mood, and the strange change of behavior is categorized and considered as a person who is depressed.

On the other hand, there is the character of Sue, a friend of Johnsy who plays a significant part in the story, which helps highlight the main character’s emotional and mental state. The character of Sue is instrumental in revealing the condition of Johnsy. Other than contrasting the emotion of Johnsy, Sue also represented the psychological aspect of an anxious persona. This is clearly evident in these lines:

Will you promise me to close your eyes and keep them closed? Will you promise not to look out the window until I finish working?

When the doctor is talking to Sue about the condition of her friend and how it is getting worse day by day and trying to figure out its cause, Sue noticed that Johnsy started to act strangely which made Sue conflicted about handling the situation. Sue thought that it didn’t make sense that her friend was relying on the recovery of her sickness through the falling leaves. Sue notices that Johnsy is not paying attention and Sue starts to feel anxious about the situation and what is happening to Johnsy. In this line:

Dear Johnsy! Think of me, if you don't think of yourself. What would I do?

It is apparent in these lines that Sue’s anxiety is growing. The situation of Sue being a friend to Johnsy shows the justification of Sue’s anxiety. At the same time, she is anxious about what might happen to Johnsy, as she couldn’t read the inner thoughts of Johnsy and Sue could only observe the changes in mood and behavior of her friend.

The story does not only revolve around Johnsy and Sue, as there is another character that greatly contributed to the progression of the story. Behrman is an old painter – a sixty-year-old man who had no success as a painter. In the story, it is clearly mentioned the intention of Behrman in talking about a great picture where Behrman called it his masterpiece. Sadly Behrman had never yet started to paint the picture. It is easily be concluded that the character of Behrman is a frustrated and ambitious artist. Later on, Behrman heard about the condition of Johnsy through Sue. Upon hearing the news, Behrman made it hard to believe how a young and ambitious woman is changed by the disease and expressed his denial of believing in such an idea. It is clearly shown in these lines:

What! Are there such fools? Do people die because leaves drop off a tree? I have not heard such a thing.

It simply shows how he does not acknowledge such thought and situation to be possible. However, Behrman still believes that it is his responsibility to do everything that could possibly help Johnsy and Sue. After hearing the truth regarding Johnsy’s condition, Behrman expressed distress and showed frustration towards the situation he is in. Nevertheless, the action of Behrman is the opposite of what came out of his mouth. Behrman appeared unconcerned about the two young artists, but on the inside, despite his terror, Behrman is a kind and sympathetic person. To add, Behrman’s frustration heightens concerning achieving his dream, especially because of the inability to change the situation or achieve something, as shown in this line:

Who said I will not come? Go. I come with you. For half an hour I have been trying to say I will come. God! This is not any place for someone so good as Johnsy to lie sick. Someday I shall paint my masterpiece, and we shall all go away from here. God! Yes.

The frustration he feels is not only because of Johnsy’s condition. Aside from that, Behrman’s root of frustration is not being able to paint the masterpiece he really wanted to achieve. The situation of the two young artists is one of the factors that

contributed to his frustration. Moreover, as the story closes to its end, it reveals that Behrman died because of pneumonia. Eventually, his death left a great impact on the development of the main character and made a big leap of change in Johnsy's life.

This phase is analyzed through Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory, as this theory is ideal for deciphering a character's psyche, especially in the case of the main character that experiences neurotic tendencies and other characters that are also not emotionally stable. This phase utilized Psychoanalytic Theory in analyzing the psychological aspects of each character for the reason that it helps to determine the distinction of each character's personality. In addition, this theory allows the readers to understand the characters by exploring the desires of the characters that are sometimes hidden in their unconscious minds. Moreover, characters' personalities have the most impact in a story; their importance is determined by how clever and effective an author decides to make them as characterization is the backbone of a storyline. According to a website titled *Characterization in Literature: Definition and Examples (n.d)*, characterization brings a story to life by making characters more dynamic and engaging. The characters make decisions, experience emotions, and exhibit reactions that are true to life. These human expressions make the characters more compelling and relatable to the reader. It means that characterization is an efficient way to understand the deeper meaning of a story, to recognize and to get to know the characters.

Thus, the psychological aspects found in the characterization are depression, anxiety, denial, and frustration.

B. Figures of Speech

Table 2 presents the extracted lines that determine the figures of speech.

The table shows that the first figure of speech evident in the story is personification, presenting pneumonia as a chivalric gentleman, which is apparent in the line:

Mr. Pneumonia was not a nice old gentleman. A nice old gentleman would not hurt a weak little woman.

Undoubtedly, it is personification in the way of giving humanistic features to the sickness called pneumonia found at the beginning of the story. Pneumonia has the ability of a human

which has fingers that can touch humans to infect them and the ability to travel, an indication of having feet to go to places and spread his sickness, which made the doctor call him Mr. Pneumonia. The description of pneumonia gives away an artistic touch that improves the scene and emotional effects that terrify the people living in the village. The thought of possibly being infected with the disease can develop fear. It seems that Mr. Pneumonia is the invisible enemy to the villagers that is hard to kill since it attacks unexpectedly; not knowing what to do to avoid its attacks brings fear to people.

Apart from personification, the figure of speech that is evident in the story is a metaphor. It is shown in this line:

I want to see the last one fall before night. Then I'll go too.

The line utilizes metaphor as it associates two different things as the same thing, considering that an ivy leaf does not correspond to a person's life. In this story, when Johnsy gets infected by the disease, the thought of making a direct relationship between an ivy leaf and her own life can be seen. In the story, you can visualize the ivy tree that is metaphorically associated with Johnsy's life, and from that, you can analyze the significance it has in presenting the main theme of the story. Provoking feelings of despair and anxiety, the feeling of despair is clearly represented by her, who has lost all hope of living because of suffering from pneumonia. It is the line that shows anxiety:

It doesn't have any sense in it. What does an old tree have to do with you? Or with your getting well?

Another literary device that is evident is simile. Johnsy's sudden change of perception about life has to leap her into considering herself as one of those ivy leaves on a tree outside her window. It shows through the line:

I have done enough waiting. I have done enough thinking. I want to go sailing down, down, like one of those leaves.

Johnsy eventually lost all her hope of living, which is why she thinks of becoming just like those leaves that fall off the tree. Hopelessness is one of the indications of depression that the line invokes. A simile is a comparison of things of different kinds in a way that they are similar and is used to make a description more vivid that highlights the likeness of both things and another description that is presented as simile is:

...His shoes and clothes were wet and as cold as ice.

Behrman's situation shows the life of a person fighting for

Table 2
Figures of speech analysis

Lines	Figures of Speech	Psychological Aspect
"Mr. Pneumonia was not a nice old gentleman. A nice old gentleman would not hurt a weak little woman."	Personification	Fear
"I want to see the last one fall before night. Then I'll go too."	Metaphor	Despair
"It doesn't have any sense in it. What does an old tree have to do with you? Or with your getting well?"		Anxiety
"I want to go sailing down, down, like one of those leaves."		Confusion
"He was helpless in pain. His shoes and his clothes were wet and as cold as ice."	Simile	Depression
"Are such fools? Do people die because leaves drop off a tree? I have not heard of such a thing."		Sympathy
"Mr. Behrman died of pneumonia today in the hospital."	Irony	Denial
"Didn't you wonder why it never moved when the wind was blowing? Oh, my dear it is Behrman's great masterpiece"		Grief
"Something has made that last leaf stay there to show me how bad I was."	Symbolism	Guilt
"Someday I hope to paint the Bay of Naples."		Hope
"_ he painted it there the night that the last leaf fell."	Imagery	Surprise
"He had always talked of painting a great picture, a masterpiece."	Foreshadowing	Sadness
"But first bring me a looking-glass, so that I can see myself. And then I'll sit up and watch you cook."		Hope

life alone. By using simile, it enhances the reader's experience by tickling their imaginative minds. Another feeling that the line presents is sympathy; sympathizing with Behrman's situation and how he has to endure that kind of life all alone. A scenario that can give us a peek at his possible emotional response is alcoholism, which became the coping mechanism for his dream that seemed to be unreachable and how others had viewed his life as a result of a failed journey of an ambitious artist.

The most prevailing one is the irony which is from Behrman's point of view. In this line:

Are there such fools? Do people die because leaves drop off a tree? I have not heard of such a thing.

Truly, this line is an irony of Mr. Behrman's life. An irony is something that you thought could not happen but happens otherwise; just as how he did not believe someone could die on those ivy leaves. Additionally, this line is also an example of irony, which gives another opportunity in life to Johnsy and Sue, despite it being bad and sad news that a co-artist and friend could hear,

Mr. Behrman died of pneumonia today in the hospital.

One type of irony used in the story is a situational irony, which means a certain circumstance can possibly change into something you never expected to happen (MasterClass). Indeed, irony is one of the tools that writers use as it can effectively add depth and substance to every piece of writing. The story is clearly an example of situational irony, as the readers believe that Johnsy will die in the end because she has lost all hope in living and fighting the illness, but the author proves us all wrong by revealing that it is Behrman man who died at the end, which was far too unexpected. An equally ironic scenario of the story is how Behrman eventually fulfilled his ultimate dream and that is to paint a masterpiece that holds a significant role in Johnsy's recovery, a single ivy leaf on the wall outside Johnsy's window.

Then, symbolism is a literary device that gives authors the power to manipulate words, as words' meaning cannot be limited to a single meaning, and that is how symbolism works in enhancing literature. And the line that denotes symbolism in the story is:

Something has made that last leaf stay there to show me how bad I was.

This line from Johnsy can be interpreted as her way of reflecting after knowing that the last leaf that stayed is what Behrman painted on the wall to give a sense of hope in her situation. Consequently, after feeling intense grief from his death, she developed a feeling of regret, and because of what happened, guilt crept into her mind.

Imagery is also one of the most prevalent figures of speech that a reader can point out in reading the story that is presented

in the line,

– he painted it there the night that the last leaf fell.

Sue's line gives off an imaginative visualization of Behrman's condition; during a cold winter night with the thought of saving one's life, and that is Johnsy's precious life. He is putting his own life on the line just to make a change by painting something that is against his belief about human life and its relatedness to an ivy tree's leaves.

Foreshadowing may give hints of futuristic happenings, but readers tend to overlook those hints and eventually realize it by the end of the whole story. Just as how readers still get surprised by the story's ending despite its foreshadowing, this scenario has a provoking sadness in the readers for the fact that he painted the masterpiece that one's been wishing for at the expense of his own life. The foreshadowing that is found in the story is,

But first bring me a looking-glass, so that I can see myself.

Johnsy is no longer trapped by the strange ideas plotted by her own mind. It clearly shows that Johnsy has not given up on life after contemplating and realizing that it is not right to think about death as it may put Behrman's sacrifice to waste.

This implies that figurative language helps understand the characters' underlying thoughts and emotions. It indirectly reveals the characters' unspoken thoughts. Schklovsky's Russian Formalism Theory helps in analyzing the figurative language found in the dialogues of the characters. Defamiliarization is the feature found using the theory. It is how the figurative language projects the lines in an unfamiliar way to the readers, and they simply need to look beyond what it really means.

Hence, the figures of speech in the story invoke the following psychological aspects: fear, despair, confusion, depression, sympathy, denial, grief, surprise, guilt, hope, and sadness.

C. Writing Styles

Table 3 which presents the psychological aspect in the story with the use of the writing style.

The table shows vividness as part of the writing style used by O. Henry to further express the emotions in the story. When the doctor consults with Sue about Johnsy's situation, the lines:

She has a chance, if she wants to live. If people don't want to live, I can't do much for them. Your little lady has decided that she is not going to get well. Is there something that is troubling her?

Vividness is important in writing as it supports how emotions are being reflected in the story, and as for O. Henry's work, it made it more compelling. In writing, vivid imagery creates a mental picture for the reader. It makes reading more enjoyable since the words appeal to the senses (Goodwin, 2018). In the story, Johnsy's severe pneumonia becomes the very reason for the character's pessimistic approach to life. But with this line

Table 3
Writing styles analysis

Writing Styles	Lines	Psychological Aspect
Vividness	"She has a chance, if she wants to live..."	Hope
Mood	"Are there such fools?"	Anger
	"Think of me, if you won't think of yourself. What would I do?"	Frustration
Syntax	"Couldn't you work in the other room?" asked Johnsy coldly.	Isolation
Word choice	"When the last one falls, I must go, too..."	Despair

uttered by the doctor, it gives additional light to Johnsy's struggle. With the line being more vivid, it gives more emphasis to how hope is being presented in the story.

In writing, it is important to note how the mood is being presented as well. The mood is one that sets the tone for what the story should feel like. It brings out the aura of the story and how it should be felt. Mood is an important literary element for bringing a story together and eliciting an emotional reaction from readers. This reaction allows readers to feel emotion and identify with characters in a tale, making it more meaningful and memorable ("Mood-Examples and Definition of Mood as a Literary Device," 2021). In the story, there are certain lines that really set the mood:

Are there such fools? Do people die because leaves drop off a tree? I have not heard of such a thing. No, I will not come up and sit while you make a picture of me. Why do you allow her to think such a thing? That poor little Johnsy!

In this line, Mr. Behrman expresses strong emotions to indicate how Johnsy, the ailing character, seems hopeless as the character is hopelessly relying on the vine outside the room. Because of this, Mr. Behrman added emotions that are not yet seen in the story until Mr. Behrman shows anger.

Dear, dear Johnsy! Think of me, if you won't think of yourself. What would I do?

Sue is Johnsy's friend. In this line, it is clear how the character is completely frustrated with the current situation of Johnsy. Even when things are dark and frustrating, the character demonstrates the importance of always looking on the bright side of things.

Another aspect of the writing style that is evident in the story is the proper usage of syntax. Syntax is a collection of rules that assist readers and authors to understand what they're reading. It's also a useful technique for writers to employ in order to achieve certain rhetorical or literary effects ("Syntax in the English Language: Definition, Examples, and 3 Ways to Use Syntax Effectively," 2021).

"Couldn't you work in the other room?" asked Johnsy coldly.

In this line, Johnsy's desperate attempt to isolate is clearly emphasized because of how the grammar rules are being used. It is important to maintain a cohesive work, and with the help of syntax, writers are able to express what they want to express cohesively. This writing style worked well with O. Henry's advantage in delivering a piece that any reader could understand.

Lastly, one of the writing styles that complete the reason why O. Henry's *The Last Leaf* is notable is the word choices used by the author to reveal situations. A robust word choice makes it simpler for readers to understand the concept. It clarifies, explains, and expands ideas (Academy, 2021).

Leaves. On the tree. When the last one fall, I must go, too I've known that for three days. Didn't the doctor tell you?

In this very line, it is noticeable how the last leaf is being compared to a person's life. Technically, the last leaf is being used as a figurative representation of death. Because of how severe the character's situation is, Johnsy decided to at least base his life on the leaves outside the apartment's window.

Word choice is one of the most crucial things a writer must consider as it affects the implication of the story.

This phase corroborates the claim of the Russian Formalism theory by Viktor Shklovsky, as it justifies that the writing styles being used in the story become the solid foundation of this work of art. Hope, anger, frustration, isolation, and despair are found as the psychological aspects of the writing style.

In this section, the results indicate that there are psychological aspects present in the story. Furthermore, the discussion indicates the connection of the sub-problems, namely characterization, figures of speech, and writing styles, in the story. In characterization, the characters' dialogue helps the readers recognize the meaning and the theme. However, to better understand the whole story, everything starts by analyzing the characters. Another best way of understanding the characters is through the dialogue used, and that is how the usage of figurative language improves the character in presenting emotions. It is one of the artistic ways of telling a story, and it also challenges the readers to articulate the meaning of each line the characters would say. To add, each character's line goes beyond what they really want to say, which is where the Russian Formalism Theory comes in to extract the prevalent psychological aspects that the characters portray. In addition, dialogues can also contribute to presenting the characterization of the author by bringing life to his thoughts. A psychoanalytic theory is utilized in figuring out the psychological aspects that the characterization implies. Therefore, the sub-problems are connected to analyzing the psychological aspects that are present in the story and knowing the distinction of each personality.

5. Conclusion

A discourse analysis of O. Henry's short story, *The Last Leaf* and its elements shows that the characters are the ones that bring life to the story. In order to understand the in depth thought of the story, reading and pointing out the prevalent factors of the story guides how to get the point that affect the characters' psychological aspects by critically analyzing how they react to the situations. The characterization ones analyzed will be useful in understanding the characters' roles and course of action as a whole. Pointing out the figurative language and perceiving it beyond its artistic manner of presenting ideas, as it unconsciously insinuating the characters' inner thoughts. Importantly, authors' writing style matters in probing the whole story in terms of the structure of presenting the story's main theme and how the characters' are designed in portraying its role. As a result, connecting all three phases can be a great basis for extracting the characters' psychological aspects and it further shows what really the main thought of the story is.

In terms of analyzing the psychological state of the characters, the Freudian theory is utilized in properly linking the thoughts, actions, and words of the characters that help in figuring them out psychologically. Emotional expression in the story makes the inner thoughts that are being investigated in the story. The usage of language and utilization of words indicates an emotional effect on how it is being delivered. The significance of figurative language is insinuating the characters'

emotions and inner thoughts through its lines. Dialogues depict the psychological aspect of the characters and how it is presented in the story.

To draw an inference, the short story, *The Last Leaf* by O. Henry has characters' that portrays diverse psychological aspect in responding to a sudden change of situation. In terms of figurative language utilization, it directly shows the characters' intentions, but it also adds an artistic demeanor to the story. Freudian analysis and formalism holistically scrutinize the whole story and vividly show the thoughts and emotions of the characters. Therefore, based on the findings, *The Last Leaf* by O. Henry presents psychological aspect through investigating the characterization, figures of speech, and writing styles of the story.

Statements and Declarations

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