

The cop and the anthem critique essay sample

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



The main character Soapy is homeless and trying to get thrown in jail for the winter so he will have a warm place to stay and food to eat. Colloquialism is used in this story when Soapy refers to jail as the island. This Colloquialism reflects the culture of Soapy. The author does this to show the setting of the story, which is New York. The “ Island” symbolizes a refuge, a place distanced from crowds and noisy civilization. And a place where Soapy can be comfortable. This is used by the author to show Soapy’s situation as a homeless person and the importance of Soapy’s need to survive the winter.

Allusions are used several times in this story. The first allusion is to the government. In the story it says Soapy has to become a Committee of Ways and Means. I didn’t notice this at first but when I re-read it I thought this had to serve a specific purpose. The Committee of Ways and Means is a part of the government that makes decisions on matters such as the how the budget is spent. Therefore, Soapy has to become a Committee of Ways and Means because he has to decide where to spend the winter.

The author uses this allusion to show Soapy’s dilemma and the decision he must make. The second allusion comes when the author is discussing why Soapy doesn’t accept charity. An allusion to William Shakespeare’s The tragedy of Julius Caesar is made. He states “ As Caesar had his Brutus, every bed of charity must have its toll of a bath, every loaf of bread its compensation of private and personal inquisition.” Looking at the relationship of Brutus and Caesar, Brutus is the close friend and servant of Caesar. Brutus ironically is the one who kills Caesar. So the author to show that for Soapy, accepting charity means he will pay the price for the charity uses the allusion to The Tragedy of Julius Caesar. This price is humility.

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Irony is used all through the story in each of the stunts Soapy pulls to try to get arrested. One example is when Soapy tries to get arrested by stealing a silk umbrella from a man. However, the man just Soapy was its rightful owner because he had found it earlier that day. The ironies are used to add a bit of humor to the story which is a common attribute of O. Henry's works.

The music being played by the organist symbolizes everything in life that Soapy used to have when he was younger, before he was homeless, when he had a family and friends. It used to show that most homeless people weren't always homeless and they enjoyed the same life as most people do. This symbolism directly leads to Soapy's epiphany.

Soapy has an epiphany after his last failed attempt at getting arrested. He's walking down the street and stops in front of a church because he hears organ music. Here the epiphany occurs and Soapy realizes he needs to leave the homeless life and go get a job. He resolves to completely turn his life around and go get a job the next morning. This is used to set up the irony and ultimate point of the story and insert the realist ideas that are found in most O. Henry stories.

Finally the final irony of the story occurs just after Soapy has had his epiphany and is turning his life around he is seen standing outside the church and is arrested for loitering and given three months on the island. Here is where O. Henry uses somewhat humorous irony to insert his serious realist view on the world.

The Island, which used to symbolize a refuge for soapy now has changed to symbolize a place isolation and loneliness from the new life he was going to have. Again here O. Henry is stating his realist beliefs.

This irony is both humorous and dark. It humorous in that soapy finally got thrown in jail, but it came when he didn't want it anymore. This is also dark because it crushed Soapy's epiphany and made his epiphany a fallacy because he cannot realize the things he became aware of in his epiphany,

In this story, we notice that the story revolves around one character. This is to focus more specifically on Soapy as to give him all the attentions he deserves. This is done by the author to allow the reader to let Soapy's character become a symbol. This focus let the reader apply Soapy's situation and Soapy's problem to a whole group of people. The homeless people of New York or the homeless around the world.

Overall the humorous irony of Soapy's exploits of trying to get arrested in the story and the dark irony of the of Soapy's epiphany becoming false make the story work as whole to bring O. Henry's realist view across in a unique way that makes this story a classic.