



INDIRECT CHARACTERIZATION IN JAMAICA KINCAID'S «MR. POTTER»

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ABSTRACT

Jamaica Kincaid is acknowledged as one of the leading women writers from the Caribbean who left the island for the United States, establishing herself as a great representative of literature. In 2002 she wrote «Mr. Potter», giving breath into a character unlike any other in contemporary fiction. In «Mr. Potter», there is indirect characterization that provides insights into the character of Mr. Potter using actions, inner thoughts, dialogues, and interactions to reveal a character's traits, rather than explicitly stating them. Certain aspects of this character are shown through his responses to situations and people around him such as being strict, disciplined and an adherent of traditional values. These examples of indirect characterization help to build a nuanced portrayal of Mr. Potter, allowing readers to form a deeper understanding of his personality, values, and the complexities that shape his character. Overall, in the following paper actions, dialogues, relationships between the characters, main character's reactions are discussed to reveal author's special style in indirect characterization.

KEYWORDS

Indirect characterization, Jamaica Kincaid, Mr. Potter, personality, speech, appearance, thoughts effect, action.

INTRODUCTION

Literature usually relies on descriptions. In the process of creating his work, the writer directly describes a

certain period, landscape, event and, in most cases, people. The main purpose of this is to bring this work

to life right in front of the reader's eyes and to ensure that he gets into it. However, sometimes the author does not give such a description directly, but reveals it indirectly, using other factors in the work. Indirect characterization in literature means describing character details such as the appearance, thoughts, actions, words and reactions from other characters for a reader to make inferences about that personage as well as their manners and personality, rather than telling them directly. This type of implicit characterizing requires a reader to engage with the work more deeply than the explicit one does so that they can understand and learn better about a character that is being portrayed by the writer. When the reader has to make conclusions for themselves and investigate different pieces of information on their own, the story and characters start to feel quite intimate. In addition, it intrigues the reader to get to know more about the character when not stating it frankly, but being subtle, dropping hints and relying on signals.

Jamaica Kincaid, who is considered one of the modern American women writers, was born in 1949 in Antigua, a country along the Caribbean Sea. Most of her works are autobiographical in nature, making his parents and people he met in his life the main characters of each of her novels and stories. Jamaica Kincaid's «Mr. Potter» is also written about her own father, and is a logical continuation of the novels «Annie John» and «Lucy», in which the author wrote about her mother. The writer created this work by combining outrage and love for his father. But the girl still has a strong feeling of love for her father, even though the father abandoned her, the daughter cannot give up on her father. The reason is that she tries to find and understand the main causes that led his father to do this, and she wants to end this

«tradition of renunciation» and gives an end to it, finally.

In «Mr. Potter» Jamaica Kincaid relies on this kind of indirect characterization from the beginning till the end of this novel to reveal the main character's personality and his spiritual world. The simple and difficult life of an illiterate taxi chauffeur who spends his days driving his blue Hillman in the wide streets of Antigua under the sunshine is told by one of his daughters, with anger and compassion at the same time, after his death who was not accepted by him before. Due to the skill of the writer, a complex character full of contradictions in his inner world is embodied before the eyes of the reader.

Since this novel is distinguished by the fact that it consists entirely of indirect descriptions, we found it necessary to pay special attention to the author's skill in depicting the personality of the main character and to analyze it.

MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

Through portraying «Mr. Potter», Jamaica Kincaid clearly reveals the chaotic way of life of the people of Antigua, but does not give a full description of the characters somewhere in the work. It is based on the characters' appearances, conversations, and their attitudes towards various situations in the work. Mr. Potter is the main character who holds the whole chain of events in this novel, and the writer gives very little description about him. In revealing his image, Kincaid emphasizes the character's appearance, speech, actions, and responses to the surrounding circumstances.

Named Roderick at birth, nicknamed Drickie by his unloving family after his parents abandoned him, he

grows up to be named Mr. Potter and lives a difficult life. Mr. Potter's poverty is explained by the fact that he works as a taxi driver for hire, that even «a blind beggar standing on the street recognizes his footsteps and never asks for money», one of the women he offends «one day took all his savings to get a car and left him», and «a pair of shoes never came easily to him.» [1, 5, 20] While, on the one hand, Mr. Potter's «admiration for Mr. Shepherd's handkerchief sticking out of his suit pocket, his well-ironed trousers and poplin shirt, and his well-polished shoes, and later wearing these clothes himself» is a clear example of the idea above, on the other hand, it indicates that Mr. Potter is an organized, neat and disciplined person. Jamaica Kincaid focused on two aspects of the appearance of the main character in the work: the first is the black body of Mr. Potter and the white shirt that he always wears, which «gives peace of mind» to the owner, through such a contrast, the writer points to the conflict in the psyche of the character, perhaps in his «dark» life, full of difficulties, Mr. Potter is looking for «light» in a sense, and this white shirt can give him this; and the second is his nose, which stood out from everyone else and «as if it was inherited by all his daughters», through which it was secretly mentioned that the character was so poor that he could not give his children anything other than that. [1, 96, 4, 167]

The main character's speech is reflected in the novel as the main means of revealing his personality. Mr. Potter is an illiterate man who cannot speak English fluently, cannot read or write, and in most cases when he is asked to speak he simply says «Eh, eh». [1, 12] Regarding women who love him and want to enter into a serious relationship with him, he replies, «I warn you against it.» [1, 118] From this evidence, the conflicts in Mr. Potter's inner world can be clearly seen. If the first

example shows that Mr. Potter is low in self-confidence, timid and a little shy, then in the second case, one can see the result of his lack of love. A young man who grew up not knowing what love is, even when he grows up, not only cannot feel this feeling, but he is also afraid to feel it. From this, one can definitely sense aspects of his behaviour, such as instability, fear, and a desire to avoid responsibility.

The actions of the main character in the novel and how he behaves in different situations are also the result of the continuous processes and changes taking place in his inner world. It is through this factor that the main character can turn into a favorite or an enemy for the reader completely. In the case of Mr. Potter, the reader is likely to experience both. For example, «every morning, Mr. Potter arriving on time at the rental car owner's garage and washing first his car, then his friend Mr. Martin's, and then Mr. Joseph's, who is brought in as a mere acquaintance», «his loving the son of one of his wives very much, even if he was not a child of his own» give evidence to his punctuality, discipline, his love for his profession, sincerity, generosity and the fact that he also has a feeling of affection and kindness, and these examples arouse feelings of respect and relief towards Mr. Potter in a reader. However, he treats women with disrespect, and does not admit any of his children while they are all being girls, especially Elaine, who is narrating the story. She says that when she was 4 years old, she waited for Mr. Potter for hours in front of his workplace and finally as soon as she saw and waved at his father, he simply ignored her that the girl described this situation, «As if I was just a dog in his way, like I was nothing to him», and this description now makes the reader hate the character of Mr. Potter. [1, 7, 156, 146]

Results It would be without any exaggeration to say that through the character of Mr. Potter, Jamaica Kincaid brings to life a figure unlike any other in modern fiction. Although the character of Mr. Potter can be considered as a very simple character, when approached from the perspective of the author's skill, we can witness that he is a very complex character. From the behavior of Mr. Potter and the attitude shown to him by other characters in the novel, there is no doubt that at first the reader will have a feeling of alienation or indifference towards this character. The reason is that «even the world was indifferent to his existence.» [1, 29]

From the appearance of Mr. Potter, his conversations and relationships with other characters throughout the story, his poverty, illiteracy, being a supporter of old traditions, order and uniformity, loyalty to his work, his boss, and his friends, we can learn that he is obedient, quiet, and kind, but these qualities do not indicate that he is a complete good person. Because it is inevitable that we will develop animosity towards Mr. Potter from the way he treats his children and women. But only after paying attention to the main reasons why Mr. Potter becomes such a person, any reader will have a feeling of understanding and pity for Mr. Potter, just like the daughter of him, Elaine. The formation of the main character's spiritual world was primarily the result of his growing up without love. Roderick or Mr. Potter, who was rejected by his parents as a child, who later served as a pawn for the family that raised him, who was ignored by his boss and the guests whom he delivered to their addresses, instead of fighting against and eliminating such treatment, quietly accepts these relationships and begins to reflect them on his behaviour. He, like other

people in his life, becomes a careless, rude, silent, weak and, most importantly, loveless person.

DISCUSSION

Although «Mr. Potter» is the story of a single man, his story is a true depiction of the way of life in rural Caribbean countries. Mr. Potter is also presented as a mirror and continuation of the history of slavery, colonization and the resulting poverty, illiteracy and despair of the indigenous people of Antigua.

When we think deeply about the inner world of the main character of the novel, we witness that Mr. Potter is as complex as his simplicity. He is a person who has internal conflicts and life problems, but he does not pay any attention to them. Because the centuries of pressure on his ancestors had been absorbed into Potter's blood. It is the understanding of this situation that makes the reader care and sympathize with Mr. Potter. The importance of this character was expressed at the end of the play, «children and acquaintances were crying complaining that Mr. Potter had left his all fortune to a distant relative.» After the death of Mr. Potter, whose existence was not even remembered throughout his life, he gains the attention of everyone. People remembered all of his good and bad deeds. In fact, they were also helpless victims of that poverty. The purpose of coming to Mr. Potter's funeral was also to gain wealth for their own benefits. His death was as important as his birth. [1, 189] So we can't just take Mr. Potter as an ordinary character. He is the character who plays the main role in the development of events in the whole work. That's why the writer uses a special way to describe him, that is, she does not describe his personality and, in general, what kind of person he is, but the emphasis is on other factors in the work such as the speech, appearance and

actions of the character which perform this task. It is worth saying that through this approach, Jamaica Kincaid leaves the conclusion about the main character of the work up to the reader. He wants readers to be curious about Mr. Potter and imagine his inner self through a careful analysis.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis given above, it can be concluded that the writer may not always use direct descriptions when introducing the character to the reader or revealing his inner image. The author can perfectly show the personality of the character by relying on other factors involved in the work. In particular, the character's appearance, clothing and speech style, inner thoughts, conversations with other characters in the work, his treatment of them, or his attitude and responses to various situations that occur in the work can serve as a mirror of the inner world of the character. Being able to use such literary auxiliary tools to reveal the psychology of the hero requires not only great skill from the author, but also places a great responsibility on the reader to be able to understand and analyze this artistic creativity and to understand the full content of the story. As the reader tries to determine the thoughts and goals of the writer, he unwittingly discovers the character of the work.

Jamaica Kincaid, one of the modern American talented women writers, was able to show her great literary skills as a writer at the highest level by indirectly characterizing Mr. Potter. This work stands out not only among Kincaid's other works, but also in modern world literature as an excellent example of an indirect descriptive approach. The author maintains this method of representation until the end of the work, and through all the other characters and situations

around the main character, he draws the image of Mr. Potter. The character expresses his inner spiritual world in conversations, by the way he dresses, behaves and reacts to the surrounding events, and the contribution of the author to it is incomparable.

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