Methods of Characterization Used in Short Story Telling

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Rezumat

Caracterizarea este procesul creării unui caracter în literatură. Caracterizarea directă este prezentată explicit de către narator sau de către personaje. Caracterizarea indirectă prezintă personajele prin diferite metode, observate în următorul articol.

Characterization is the process of creating a character in literarture, including words, actions, thoughts, appearance, other people's thoughts and perceptions about the character [3, p.55]. It is the means by which the writer brings a character to life. It is the precess of creating a character from the point of view of his physical, mental, emotional, moral and social characteristics, revealed through his appearance, thoughts, speech, feelings and emotions, actions or behaviour [1, p. 128].

There are two types of characterization:

1) direct characterization (explicit or stated);

2) indirect characterization (implicit or implied).

Direct characterization is the process by which an author tells the reader something about character's specific traits. In this case, the writer simply tells the reader what he or she wants the reader to know. Direct characterization is in contrast with indirect characterization, the latter being a process by which the author reveals information through the thoughts, words, or actions of the character. Both have a place in literature, but there are times when one method is generally prefered to the other. Diret characterization leaves less to the reader's imagination. It keeps the narrative short and increases its pace. Writers also use direct characterization to give some information about character's personality and later use indirect methods to reveal more about the character. In terms of description, direct characterization is often the easier thing to do for most writers. Many critics and teachers also consider it to be more unimaginative and boring than indirect characterization. Still, the choice of the techniques often depends on an individual preference of the writer. It may also depend on the overall tone of the prose and what the author feels is most important to convey at that particcular point [1, p.118].

The first method of indirect characterization is to use speech in a manner that adequatly represents the character and reveals certain qualities about the individual. Traits and personality of characters are revealed to the reader through the use of dialogues. This speech may be presented by an individual character, revealing certain characteristics about him, or it may be the words spoken by another character about individual. Indirect characterization also requires that the author conveys certain personal and characteristic traits though the thoughts of the characters. The manner in which these feelings are expressed determines the difference between direct and indirect characterization. For example, instead of simply stating, "Adam felt sad," the author might convey Adam's sadness to the reader by revealing the character's private thoughts [2, p.97]. Through indirect expresion of thoughts and feelings, readers might to be able to develop a better understanding and closer relationship with the character. A third method of indirect characterization is to show the effect the character has on other individuals. This is generally accomplished by revealing the thoughts and actions of the other characters in relation to the individual. The author must show how the other characters feel about the individual as well as how they interact with the character [2, p.101].

The most prominent ways of characterization are:

Speech

Characters' personalities can be greatly defined by the words they say and how they say them. The words they use can be point to intelligence or a lack of it, which also reveals their educational background. The speed in which characters speak can describe if they are generally nervous or laid back. Specific accents can set up where a character grew up. If the speech is overly hesitent, the character may be shy or unsure about something. Think about the people you know in real life, and the way they communicate with you sets up their personalities. It is the same for fictional characters.

Thoughts

Looking into the minds of characters in written stories is a privilege often given to readers. When we know the inner thoughts and feelings of a character, we are seeing a glimpse of their true personality and how they relly view the world. Seeing these thoughts shows us if the characters are rational ot irrational, confident or insecure, happy or sad and many other important personal characteristics. The emotions the character feels points to the characters let people and events affect them, which displays the basic inner structure of how the character thinks.

Effect on Others

How do the characters affect other people? And how do these people react to the character? The answer to these two questions shows the characters' personality qualities as viewed by the people that know them. This information describes how the characters handle themselves socially, and the relantionship they are able, or unable, to form with fellow characters. Does the character make other characters feel happy, uneasy, repulsed, excited, anxious, angry or scared? This will tell a reader what explicit aspects of the characters' personality are put forth to all the other characters in a story, and it help[s us to better understand how to review the character.

Actions

The actions and behaviour of the characters show what truly drives and motivates the characters. How they phusically or verbally interact with onter characters in the story shows thei overal position as good- nataured or mean- spirited, sympathetic or selfish. The behaviour that characters show is just a product of how they feel inside, and the way the character acts is such a great indicator of personality.

Looks

The look and the appearance of characters can tell a lot about them. The dress of characters also provides a look into their personalities. For example, if the characters are constantly dressed up in expensive clothing, this could point to great education and money, while the characters dressed in clothes with holes in them could appear less well-off. Howerver, since outward appearances can be deceiving, it is also important to take expression and body language into consideration.

Physical description

It is the most common way of describing a character. It identifies anything physical about the character; includes height, skin, hair and eye color, short/tall, skinny/ fat, wear glasses, how he/she walks/stands, anything physical about the character.

Name analysis

Analyzing a character's name is looking more closely to its meaning (if there is one) and describing it. Not all characters have a name with significance to the story. A lot of times though, the authors carefully choose a character's name to represent something about the character and / or the story.

Attitude/appearance

This method of characterization is the readers' description of the cgharacter's attitude. The character's attitude os how the appears to fell about what is happening to him/her in the story. Similar to how a reader may describe his attitude of were in a similar situation.

Dialogue

Dialogue is the way in which a characters talks. It includes the character's choice of works and syntax. It also includes the tone and diction of the character when he/she speaks. Is the character serious? Sarcastic? Shy? Obnoxious? Ignorant? All these qualities can be conveyed through the characters dialogue.

Reaction of others

When analyzing the reactins of others you are looking closely at how other characters in the story react to or treat the character that you are characterizing. Ractions include verbal responses and physical or emotional treatment. Character's reactions can tell you if the character you are analyzing is liked or dislaked, popular, honest, trust worthy.

Physical/ emotional setting

The setting of a story affects the characters' development as well as the plot. The physical setting of a story is where the story is actually taking place and can affect the way a character develops. The emotional setting of a story is the series of emotions that the character deals with throughout the story [1, p. 128].

Bibliography
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