

PORTRAIT DESCRIPTION AND AUTHORIAL LINGUISTIC PERSONALITY IN
LITERARY PROSE: STRUCTURAL TYPES AND FUNCTIONAL
INTERPRETATIONS

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Abstract: This article explores the role of portrait description as a means of representing the author's linguistic personality in literary prose. Drawing on major theoretical classifications of portrait types and their functions, the article examines how outer and inner character features interact to form a multidimensional literary image. The analysis focuses on the correlation between explicit (physical) and implicit (psychological) portrait layers, emphasizing the importance of linguistic details in revealing the author's viewpoint and evaluative stance. A brief case study from Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* illustrates how descriptive strategies contribute to constructing complex character images and reflecting the author's linguistic worldview.

Keywords: Portrait description, linguistic personality, character image, evaluative portrait, descriptive portrait, stylistic devices, literary linguistics, *Jane Eyre*.

Аннотация: В статье рассматривается роль портретного описания как средства выражения языковой личности автора в художественной прозе. На основе существующих классификаций портретов анализируется взаимодействие явных физических признаков и скрытых психологических характеристик, формирующих многослойный образ персонажа. Особое внимание уделяется оценочному, ситуационному, описательному и лингвистическому типам портрета и их функциональному назначению в тексте. На материале романа Шарлотты Бронте «Джен Эйр» показано, как портретные детали, стилистические средства и эмоционально маркированная лексика раскрывают авторскую позицию и способствуют развитию образа персонажа. Результаты исследования подчёркивают значимость портретного описания в передаче концептуальной картины мира автора и формировании читательской интерпретации.

Ключевые слова: Портретное описание, языковая личность, образ персонажа, оценочный портрет, описательный портрет, стилистические средства, лингвистика художественного текста, «Джен Эйр»

Introduction

The author's image is most clearly articulated through the standpoint conveyed in a literary work. When the narrator openly evaluates characters and their actions, the reader can easily infer the author's position. However, when the writer withdraws from direct commentary and delegates the narrative to a character or witness, the resulting internal perspective enhances the authenticity



of the story. This narrative technique, widely adopted in prose from the second half of the nineteenth century, assigns the storyteller the role of ensuring the credibility and immediacy of events.

Portrait description serves as a central component of character construction. It encompasses both typical, socially conditioned features and individual traits that distinguish a character from other members of their community. Through specific combinations of these features, the author conveys not only the character's personal attributes but also a broader ideological evaluation of the social environment represented.

This article examines different classifications of portrait description in literary texts and highlights how portraiture details contribute to revealing the author's linguistic personality.

Methods

The study employs qualitative textual analysis grounded in existing linguistic and literary classifications of portrait description. Key theoretical frameworks include:

- **A.N. Bespalov's typology** of portrait descriptions (portrait-stroke, evaluative, situational, descriptive; subdivided into fragmented and detailed).
- **I.A. Bykova's distinction** between concentrated and non-concentrated portraits.
- **E.A. Goncharova's division** into qualitative (static) and functional (dynamic) portraits.
- **E.Y. Kusko's concept** of the linguistic portrait as a representation of character speech, worldview, and ideological stance.

These frameworks are applied to selected examples from Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* to demonstrate how portrait techniques function within a literary work.

Results

3.1. Classifications of Portrait Description

Across the reviewed literature, several major portrait types emerge:

1. **Portrait-stroke** – short, minimal descriptions consisting of one or two salient features.
2. **Evaluative portrait** – characterized by explicit authorial or narrator evaluation.
3. **Situational portrait** – features appear in connection with specific narrative circumstances and reflect the character's behavior across contexts.
4. **Descriptive portrait** – provides extensive detail; may be **detailed** or **fragmented**, depending on the quantity and consistency of features.^{[1][2][3][4][5]}

3.2. Explicit and Implicit Layers of Portraits

Every portrait contains:



- an **explicit layer** (physical traits),
- an **implicit layer** (psychological and conceptual traits).

These layers may align or contradict each other, producing four possible combinations:

1. positive outer–positive inner,
2. negative outer–negative inner,
3. positive outer–negative inner,
4. negative outer–positive inner.

Such combinations reveal the interplay between linguistic structures and conceptual content within the literary portrait.

3.3. Character Portraits in Jane Eyre

Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* provides a vivid example of a **changeable (dynamic)** portrait, as Jane's appearance and inner world evolve throughout the narrative. Her early depiction is marked by negative external evaluations, such as the metaphor "little toad," illustrating social rejection and emotional hardship. Conversely, later descriptions, though still emphasizing unconventional features ("peculiar," "fleshless," "haggard"), introduce positive evaluative markers ("rather like it," "agreeable"), highlighting the narrator's nuanced perception of Jane's character.

These linguistic choices reflect the author's empathy and deeper understanding of Jane's inner resilience, revealing Brontë's own evaluative position toward her heroine.

Discussion

Portrait description functions as a key instrument for verbalizing the author's linguistic personality. Through the selection of expressive details, metaphors, emotionally marked words, and stylistic nuances, the author communicates implicit meanings and personal attitudes. Both physical and psychological components of the portrait construct a conceptual world picture that aligns with the author's ideological perspective.

Moreover, the linguistic portrait—as defined by Kusko—illustrates how a character's speech patterns, worldview, and ideological evolution reflect broader authorial intentions. In *Jane Eyre*, Brontë's descriptive strategies illuminate Jane's moral strength and emotional depth, contrasting inner and outer qualities to challenge societal preconceptions.

Thus, portrait description not only contributes to character individuation but also serves as a channel through which the author's linguistic and ideological identity becomes perceptible.

Conclusion

Portrait representation in literary prose embodies a complex interplay between explicit physical description and implicit psychological characterization. Various types of portrait structures—



evaluative, situational, descriptive, fragmented, concentrated, and linguistic—serve complementary functions in shaping the reader's perception of the character. Importantly, portrait description acts as a means of revealing the author's linguistic personality, as it reflects individual stylistic preferences, evaluative attitudes, and conceptual worldview.^[1] Through detailed and dynamic portrayals, authors such as Charlotte Brontë demonstrate how portraiture techniques can illuminate both external traits and the deeper spiritual world of characters, ultimately enriching the narrative and enhancing its interpretive potential.

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