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LANGUAGE AND EMOTIONAL RESONANCE – NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES AND EMPATHY IN JAMES BALDWIN’S *SONNY’S BLUES* AND *THIS MORNING, THIS EVENING, SO SOON*²

This paper provides a reading of short stories “*Sonny’s Blues*” and “*This Morning, This Evening, So Soon*,” focusing on narrative techniques that are used for eliciting emotional resonance. The paper focuses on the distinction between “character identification” and “narrative situation” as pivotal and complementary aspects of evoking empathy in the reader, formulated by Suzanne Keen. “Character identification” has been studied as the key aspect of the emotional engagement of the audience, while “narrative situation” encompasses broader contexts of narration and perspective on characters. By examining both aspects through close reading and theoretical framework application in Baldwin’s short stories, the paper reveals the mastery of deeply resonant characters and narratives that foster a profound empathetic response. The analysis reveals how Baldwin’s integration of character identification and narrative situation achieves what can be termed as “broad strategic empathy,” as opposed to “bound” or “ambassadorial strategic empathy,” by connecting and resonating with universal experiences and contexts.

Keywords: American fiction, James Baldwin, narrative empathy, narrative techniques, character identification, narrative situation

Introduction

Baldwin’s short stories deal with gender, sexuality, class and race, playing out within complex cultural contexts of a predominantly Black neighborhood in northern Manhattan. His protagonists are often, though not exclusively, African American men facing internal and external obstacles in their pursuit of personal and social acceptance. While the impact of Baldwin’s fiction is incontestable, the question of how exactly his work manages to inspire change even today remains crucial. This paper argues that James Baldwin masterfully evokes empathy in his audience, making his fiction powerful and influential. It offers a thorough reading of Baldwin’s short stories “*Sonny’s Blues*” and “*This Morning, This Evening, So Soon*” while focusing on aspects that elicit emotional response in the audience. “*Sonny’s Blues*”, a story that explores the themes of suffering, family and redemption, opens with the unnamed author who reads about his brother’s arrest for drug possession. Through a series of flashbacks, the story uncovers their strained relationship

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and the differences between their approaches of dealing with life's hardships. As the narrator comes to understand Sonny's struggles, the reader gains insight into his pain and the collective struggling of his community. Similarly, *"This Morning, This Evening, so Soon"* deals with the topic of race, identity and belonging. Baldwin narrates about an African American expatriate living in Paris, reflecting on his life the very night before his return to the United States. He grapples with his fears about leaving France, and contemplates the burdens of racial history, freedom and family. The two short stories showcase the mastery of Baldwin's writing and illustrate different narrative techniques that the author employs to elicit empathy in the reader, and thus, have been selected for this analysis. The first part of the paper calls on the definitions and aspects of empathy and emotional contagion. It draws on research that proves the relevance of fiction in fostering empathy, thus setting the foundation for the following section. The main part of the paper consists of a detailed analysis of the two short stories based on Suzanne Keen's *"Theory of Narrative Empathy"* (2006), with the focus on specific narrative techniques employed. Ultimately, I argue that Baldwin's ability to evoke emotional response is rooted in his understanding of the role of fiction in fostering understanding, connection, and self-reflection, and skillfully making use of character identification and narrative situation.

Empathy and Fiction

E. B. Titchener, an experimental psychologist, first translated the German term "Einfühlung" as empathy. He explains that while we read, we assume the role of a character in the text, sharing their "gloom, silence and the sense or lurking danger" (TITCHENER 1909: 198). The initial translation was followed by Vernon Lee's lecture, a magazine piece and later a full volume on aesthetic perception and empathy. Lee identified the purpose of art as "the awakening, intensifying, or maintaining of definite emotional states" (LEE 1913: 99). In her study on emotional resonance in fiction, Keen (2006: 208) explains empathy as a spontaneous sharing of affect, triggered by witnessing someone's emotional state, directly or through reading. Latest research suggests that reading fiction is related to empathy, while reading non-fiction is not (DJIKIC et al. 2013; MAR et al. 2006; MAR et al. 2009). Moreover, Mar et al. (2006), uncovered that readers who regularly engaged with fiction had higher scores on the "Reading the Mind in the Eyes Test", in which the subjects were asked to infer emotional states from pictures of eyes, as compared to readers of non-fiction. It remained unsettled how this particular capacity to infer emotional states would be increased by reading fiction. An explanation was that increased imaginative abilities increase the potential for emotional resonance. Oatley offers another explanation, defining fiction as a safe space where emotions are voluntarily engaged. He explains that the setting allows readers to choose their level of engagement, creating perfect aesthetic distance (OATLEY 2002: 19-21). The author introduces the notion of an "unobserved observer", a reader who engages with the stories and lives of fictional characters, who does not affect them, but emotionally connects with them, specifically due to the distance that fiction creates. (OATLEY 1999 :445).

Suzanne Keen (2006: 215) coined three varieties of strategic empathizing in narratives, observed in contemporary fiction. Bounded strategic empathy responds mainly to aspects of plot and circumstance that rely on the prior experience of the reader, operates within a group of people and stems from mutual experiences. Ambassadorial stra-

tegic empathy targets specific chosen individuals and aims at cultivating their empathy for the group represented. Both limit the empathetic circle and prevent wide audiences from reaching emotional convergence with the characters. Broadcast strategic empathy invites every reader, regardless of their experiences, to empathize with the characters in the narrative. This variety of strategic empathizing draws on shared humanity and common vulnerabilities, and most contemporary fiction strives towards it, with varying degrees of effectiveness. James Baldwin's short stories display exceptional use of broadcast empathy, through his fictional narratives that transcend race and nation, despite the fact that they are often placed within complex contexts of Black neighborhoods. He taps into emotions and situations that are universally understood, such as familial conflict and the search for identity. In *"Sonny's Blues"* the relationship between two brothers is not merely a racial narrative, but a profound depiction of love, pain and reconciliation. Similarly, in *"This Morning, This Evening, so Soon"* the author writes about the sense of alienation and belonging, anxiety and hope, and these themes invite identification across broader audiences, as they are widely relatable and speak to universal truths. His stories focus on African American experience and struggles, but they do not exclude the pain, suffering and human vulnerability of other groups of people. By exploring universal pain, escapism and the need for human connection throughout the stories, Baldwin forges profound connections that cut across racial, cultural and national borders.

Character Identification

Oatley argues that identifying with a character means merging with them, assuming their role, and becoming the observed. (OATLEY 1999: 446). Additionally, he writes that fictional identification and empathy are a single, cohesive process. Both stem from the same source, share characteristics, and use 'the self as the simulation of the other. (OATLEY 2002: 20). The audience takes on the plans, goals and emotions of the characters, and despite the fact that these are a product of simulation, the feelings that are triggered are genuine. Miall and Kuiken (MIALL 1999: 134; KUIKEN et al. 2004: 277) argue the potential for character identification depends upon the degree of engagement of the literary text with the reader's own life. They conclude that those readers who linked themselves to the story through personal experiences were more inclined to report changes in self-perception and empathy. However, the notion of broadcast strategic empathy includes a strong empathetic response and even affective alignment between the reader and the characters, regardless of their shared experiences. Booth introduces the notion of character identification as a phenomenon made up of many reactions to the author, narrators and the characters, and equates it to the terms of involvement and sympathy, once again highlighting the role identification plays in eliciting an empathetic response (BOOTH 1961: 218). He further explains that character identification is an intricate, multifaceted phenomenon that should not be narrowed down to shared experiences, lack thereof, or any singular segment of the narrative. Accordingly, Suzanne Keen devised a conceptual model of narrative empathy, which includes a variety of aspects that influence character identification. She emphasized characterization as the pivotal aspect of evoking empathy in the reader, and named various dimensions and components of character identification. Namely, Keen considers the characters' names, their physical and mental descriptions, as well as the fullness and roundness of their speech and thought, the

pivotal aspects of characterization and crucial for eliciting empathy in the reader (KEEN 2006: 216). These aspects of character creation in Baldwin's short stories are discussed and analyzed in the following sections.

Naming

Literary onomastics, an interdisciplinary method of analyzing proper names in literature, is a young discipline, but an increasingly relevant one, as an increasing number of critics become aware of the importance of names in the interpretation of narratives. Keen (2006: 217) identifies utilization, abbreviation and omission of personal names as one of the techniques for eliciting emotional response in the audience. Windt-Val (2012: 278) explains that one of the dimensions of character construction of paramount importance for the evocation of empathy and identification is the author's choice of names and surnames. She elaborates by writing that names in the novel convey layers of important information such as "family history, social setting, environment, self-image, personal ambitions, social status, and relationships between the characters". Corbett (2013: 148) highlights that names provide continuity and coherence to the characters, reflecting their identity and the intended role in the narrative. He develops the idea further by saying - "The name can often substitute for a description if chosen wisely".

Baldwin omitted the names of the narrators in "*Sonny's Blues*" and "*This Morning, This Evening, So Soon*", identifying them as African American men. "*Sonny's Blues*" recounts a story of struggling estranged brothers, and is narrated through the eyes of an elder sibling following his brother's downfall into drug abuse. Through music, the narrator learns to listen, realizes Sonny's woes and struggles, and ultimately develops a deep emotional insight into his blues and his individuality. The narrator of "*This Morning, This Evening, So Soon*" is a father and a husband who battles the feelings of anxiety and alienation caused by moving from France to racially hostile America. The story follows the narrator who recalls his troubling childhood memories from The United States, communicates his dread of the upcoming move and indirectly illuminates injustices and issues in France. The choice to withhold the names of the narrators was a deliberate one, made with the intent of maximizing identification with the protagonist. By not specifying the names of the two men, Baldwin ensured that the audience emotionally coalesces with them, giving them their own names and identities. Kowalska (2015: 4) similarly notes that namelessness makes the narrator an ideal stand-in for the reader. Moreover, Baldwin begins both stories in medias res, placing the reader directly in the narrative, exploring the story alongside the narrator, and essentially becoming one with him. By doing so, Baldwin achieves the highest degrees of emotional contagion and secures the foundation for broadcast strategic empathy both for the narrator and their families.

Additionally, Sonny's name appears to be an intentional choice, as it stems from the word "son". Sonny can stand for anyone's child, and since everyone can relate to being a son, or having one, his fate deeply troubles the audience. Sonny is an addict, but he is also a person fighting for his existence in volatile and perilous Harlem and longing for connection. Sonny's name, a diminutive, expresses affection, often associated with children. By insinuating his mental or physical state to be that of a child, Baldwin is hinting at Sonny's innocence and meekness and is directing the reader into feeling protective of and empathetic towards him. In "*This Morning, This Evening, so Soon*" Baldwin carefully

shapes the identities of his characters through their names. The narrator's son is called Paul, his name is of Latin origin and it means "small or humble" (ASTORIA 2008: 231). This specific decision was again made with the intention of eliciting parental or protective feelings towards this character. This would ensure that the audience relates to the narrator, the father, in his attempts to defend him. The reader emotionally unites and identifies with the unnamed father in his endeavor to "throw [his] life and [his] work between Paul and the nightmares of the world" (BALDWIN 1966: 44).

Descriptions

The following item on Keen's list of methods of characterization that elicit emotional resonance is description (2006: 216). Corbett (2013: 110) explains that some writers deliberately limit or omit physical descriptions to deepen emotional engagement and identification in the reader. Moreover, leaving out the physical appearance of other characters, he permits the audience to picture them as anyone, or nobody in particular. This liberty facilitates immersion and identification. James Baldwin does not include almost any detailed physical description of his protagonists, the narrators or their families. In doing so, he not only enables the reader to become the narrator and picture Sonny as his own sibling or son, but also emphasizes mental descriptions provoking emotional response in the audience. Corbett (2013: 121) regards psychological depiction as more substantial for characterization and argues that the inner worlds of the characters are crucial for successful character portrayal.

The very few physical descriptions we read in "*Sonny's Blues*" serve the purpose of illustrating Sonny's mental state and his troubles and inviting the audience to empathize with them. The narrator focuses on his brother childhood appearance and explains that Sonny's face used to be "bright and open", with "wonderfully brown eyes, and great gentleness and privacy" (BALDWIN 1965: 86). This description is juxtaposed to what the protagonist imagines his brother's face to be like now, molded by his struggles and addiction. He admits that Sonny "looked very unlike [his] baby brother" (1965: 93). This details how Sonny changed with the terrible realities of his life in Harlem. Similarly, Sonny is described as having "great, troubled eyes (1965: 113). Baldwin uses this description to illustrate the toll that his experiences of being in prison and fighting his addiction have taken on him. Finally, during Sonny's performance at the nightclub, Baldwin captures Sonny's artistic essence through the description of him as one with the stage and his instrument. At the very end of the story, Sonny is described as almost transcendental, with a sense of grace and intensity with "no battle in his face" (1965: 122). This description, though not detailed, emphasizes how music allows him to transcend his pain and communicate them to his brother, ultimately bringing him peace.

In "*This Morning, This Evening, so Soon*", the narrator's son's skin is the "color of honey and fire", his hair "jet-black and curly" (BALDWIN 1965: 132). The description of his hair and skin reminds us that Paul was born to an African American father and a white mother. The father recognizes himself and his wife in their son and wishes to protect him from everything he had to endure throughout his childhood. The narrator further recounts his son's appearance as seemingly glowing, and his "small, though, concentrated being" as charging his "incredible luster to his large, and dark brown" eyes (1965: 131). He describes Paul through his energy and innocence, inviting the reader to join in

his parental care. Further, the narrator describes Harriet, his wife, as calm, and in the face of trouble, cheerful and composed, contrasting these features to his own, thus illustrating her important role in their family (1965: 121). The narrator describes her blue eyes and full pink lips, comparing her appearance to that of a child. He is illustrating his affection and the need to guide and protect her, eliciting similar feelings in the reader (1965: 135). She is illustrated through her actions showing her dedication to learn and protect her family, and the narrator's flashbacks point to the profound connection they share. Baldwin writes Harriet as a vulnerable, dedicated woman of great importance for the narrator and evokes interest in her and the good fortune of her family.

Fullness and Roundness of Speech, Thought and Emotion

Suzanne Keen (2006: 218), highlights the importance of creating multi-layered and intricate characters through 'the fullness and fashion' of their speech and thoughts. Similarly, Corbett (2013: 269) understands that giving voice to the worldviews, attitudes, beliefs and emotions of the characters as the most difficult and important aspect of characterization. He writes that speech must be rooted in character and that it must express exactly what the character's heart wishes or needs to communicate. Baldwin uses emotional language and the authentic Harlem dialect to write the interactions between his characters, employing omissions, colloquialisms and double negation. He both expresses the hearts and minds of his characters, and stays true to their identities. Consequently, the audience perceives his characters as real people and is more inclined to empathize with them, through the lines of dialogue such as: "I'll walk you a little ways (1965: 89)", "I never give Sonny nothing" (1965: 90), "ain't nothing going to happen to you" (1965: 99). Additionally, in *"This Morning, This Evening, so Soon"*, Baldwin makes use of a mixture of French and English to illustrate the double nature of the family's identity and trigger a sense of realism. The author cultivates empathy for his characters by making them authentic and believable through their speech.

The fullness of thought and emotions is realized through the unsaid, reflective passages and inner monologues through which the audience can imply the depth and nuance of the character's psychological state. The narrator of *"Sonny's Blues"* remembers having a "great block of ice settled in [his] belly" and vividly depicts his feelings upon discovering that his brother was incarcerated. We further learn about the special kind of ice making him feel like "[his] guts were going to come spilling out or that [he] was going to choke or scream", and by means of rich imagery are invited to feel it with him (BALDWIN 1965: 86). Additionally, the narrator's intense anguish at the loss of his daughter is insinuated through the act of reaching out to Sonny following years of estrangement. The narrator sees Sonny in the kids he is teaching and passers-by (1965: 88), and implicitly informs the reader of both his longing for his brother and his remorse for not protecting Sonny. However, he does not accept nor understand his brother's habits and lifestyle choices. The narrator listens to a group of women singing worship music and the music stops once Sonny enters the stage and the protagonist focuses all his attention on his brother's walk and appearance (1965: 112). This detail implies that Sonny makes everything else seem less important to the narrator, but also that Sonny's blues and habits and devotional, religious life are mutually exclusive. The protagonist remains judgmental of his brother's past and fails to fully integrate him into his Christian worldview. Baldwin

introduces the narrator through the unsaid, implied, and contradictory, making him a complex character whose emotional depth invites compassion.

In "*This Morning, This Evening, so Soon*" the reader is repeatedly reminded of the protagonist's complexity through the uttered and unuttered, his reactions and interactions and is encouraged to read into the intricacies of his character. We are invited to imply the protagonist's care for his son and the magnitude of his anxiety at not being certain of his safety in America, as he expresses his wish to "throw [his] life and [his] work between Paul and the nightmare of the world" to himself only (BALDWIN, 1965: 148). Akins (2010) writes "the protagonist feels that he cannot join the North Africans, whom he had once thought of as his brothers", nor can he display hatred towards the French, as it would ostracize him from the community (1965: 32). This crisis of identity and the sense of alienation is left unsaid, but can be implied through his interactions with his friend Boona, who is accused of stealing by American students visiting France (1965: 166). The narrator admits that he is successful because he refused to be identified with the misery of his people, admitting the nature of his crisis, stemming from the rejection of his African American identity and his troublesome past (1965: 134). Again, the character's realistic, intricate and contradictory character, needs and motivations invite emotional resonance and empathy.

Narrative Situation - the Point of View

Further, Keen is interested in how the narrative situation, the point of view and the representation of consciousness shape the reader's perspective on the characters and influence their emotional response. Keen (2006: 219) emphasizes that narrative distance and focalization affect the empathetic response in the audience, explaining that bringing the readers closer to the characters' consciousness fosters a profound emotional connection. The narrator's position and perspective, alongside his relation to other characters creates a narrative situation that elicits an emotional response. She (KEEN 2006: 216) also argues that the point of view of narration is a crucial aspect of fostering empathy in the reader, highlighting the effectiveness of making use of first-person narration. Namely, fiction in which the narrator self-reports his own life invites readers to form a close emotional bond with the narrative voice. This technique aids character identification and achieves emotional convergence with the narrator. In his short stories, James Baldwin achieves optimal aesthetic distance through the interaction of first-person narration and representation of his characters' consciousness in fictional narratives. On one hand, he executes ideal levels of detachment through the artificial nature of his stories, on the other, he invites the reader to blend with the protagonist using first-person narration. Baldwin achieves auto-biographical appearance and emotional aspect thereof, while retaining artifice and distance that allows the audience to experience emotions that are both intimate and contemplative.

The Environment Through Their Eyes

Booth (1961: 378) argues that vivid depictions of a character's inner life foster emotional attachment from the audience. By showing the story through the protagonist's eyes, the author confirms that the reader will travel with the character, rather than against him (BOOTH 1961: 245). The reader experiences the story through the eyes of the pro-

tagonist and the story world, circumstances and characters are shaped by his opinions, in the cases of “*Sonny’s Blues*” and “*This Morning, This Evening, so Soon*” the narrator’s. By narrating about the events and characters only through the protagonist’s perspective, Baldwin limits the reader’s understanding of the narrative to the narrator’s personal lens. In doing so he intensifies the impact of his experiences and draws readers into the intimate inner worlds of the characters.

In “*Sonny’s Blues*,” James Baldwin depicts Harlem through the unnamed narrator’s eyes, intertwining his personal experiences with the neighborhood itself. The narrator’s relationship with Harlem is both safe and oppressive, reflected in the motif of darkness. Darkness represents the inescapable sense of hopelessness that engulfs Harlem’s streets, but also the comfort and familiarity of his closest relationship. The narrator explains that darkness is always roaring outside (BALDWIN 1965: 112), “growing against windowpanes” (1965: 97), filling the faces and hearts of everyone in Harlem (1965: 94). His childhood neighborhood “filled with a hidden menace” (1965: 95) is described as one of “lifeless elegance”, with crowded “killing streets” which he compares to a “boiling sea” (1965: 94). Baldwin uses emotional language with negative connotations to express the narrator’s inner life and the oppressive nature of Harlem. However, darkness also embodies the safety of familiarity and shared experiences of collective survival. The narrator meditates on a peaceful childhood memory of his family, which is interrupted as somebody turns the lights on, “and when the light fills the room, the child is filled with darkness” (1965: 97). The darkness is a blanket of familiarity that ties the protagonists to his family and his past, it symbolizes both dread and protection and speaks of the nuanced emotional landscape Baldwin crafts.

The narrator in “*This Morning, This Evening, so Soon*” shapes how the reader perceives Paris and New York through his descriptions of the cities and his experiences in them. He views Paris as the place of ultimate freedom that allowed him to achieve his full potential, and become a man, a husband, a father and an artist. Through the recollections of his memories in France, the audience observes the emotional importance this city carries and empathizes with the terror of leaving it behind. The reality shifts with the protagonist’s emotions, and the family apartment reeks of departure as the lights of Paris start to fade and the trees are darkening. This convergence of inner and outer realities creates a narrative where the protagonist’s psychological experience directly influences not only his, but also the reader’s perception of the story world. Not only is the narrator leaving the place of peace and freedom behind, but he is also relocating his family to the racially hostile United States, illustrated as a cold, dangerous environment. He describes the overwhelming noise of New York (BALDWIN 1965: 143), as an “enormous, cunning and murderous beast, ready to devour, impossible to escape” (1965: 140). The contrast established between the tranquility and familiarity of France and the uncertainty and danger of America, invites the reader to assume the position of the man in the story and foster empathy for his anxieties.

Vicissitudes and Empathy

Oatley (2002: 17) finds that characters who encounter vicissitudes of life evoke emotions that readers can identify with. The audience experiences the character’s pain as their own, forming a powerful affinity and fostering a deep sense of empathy. Pain in this

sense becomes a catalyst for deeper emotional engagement and an instrument of broadcast strategic empathy. James Baldwin employs vicissitudes and personal struggles as a means of inviting the reader to witness and experience the characters' pain and emotionally converge with them. In *"Sonny's Blues"* the narrator writes to his younger brother upon losing his daughter, admitting that his grief amplified his understanding of Sonny's pain, making it palpable and real to him (1965: 110). The brothers are united by their shared humanity and vulnerability, though their pain is not provoked by the same trouble. He recognizes Sonny's song as a lament (1965: 122) and offers his brother a long-overdue place to lean. Further, the narrator's encounter with a stranger's song makes him wonder about the suffering behind it (1965: 114). This interaction highlights the transformative power of pain, connecting the stranger's experiences to her artistic expression and illustrating a genuine connection formed by expressed pain.

In *"This Morning, This Evening, So Soon"* the narrator recalls his experience working as an "elevator boy" and the vulnerability and humiliation he had to endure (1965: 149). Baldwin forces readers to confront the reality of racial injustices and underlying power dynamics that shape systemic inequities, eliciting empathy for people subjected to such conditions. In America, the protagonist is reduced to stereotypes other people hold and is completely dehumanized (1965: 151). He further reflects on police brutality in The United States and explains that every behavior exhibited by a person of color is subject to violent retribution (1965: 150). Themes of arbitrary police violence, constant threat, and systemic humiliation confront the audience with the harsh reality, evoking empathy for the characters. The author describes the vicissitudes of real people in Harlem and weaves them into a fictional narrative, inviting an empathetic response not only for the protagonist, but every person subject to this profound suffering outside of his story world.

Conclusion

Baldwin masterfully intertwines literary techniques of character identification and narrative situation with emotional depth of shared pain inviting the audience into an intimate confrontation with the characters' vulnerability. Baldwin couples deliberate use of first-person narration with minimal physical descriptions, thus creating a space for readers to project their own lives onto the characters' and deepening their emotional engagement. The strategic use of illustrated consciousness of the unnamed narrators in *"Sonny's Blues"* and *"This Morning, This Evening, So Soon"* further amplifies this effect, making the experiences of the multi-dimensional characters feel both profoundly personal and universally understood. Baldwin's exploration of themes such as familial relationships, personal identity, and social marginalization invites readers to experience the inner worlds of his characters, emphasizing the role of empathy in understanding the complexities of human existence. Baldwin's careful depictions of his characters' pain and vicissitudes, invites the reader to step into the lived experiences of grappling with social realities of racism, identity and personal suffering. The ability to capture deeply personal struggles creates a narrative space where readers of any background can see reflection of their own lived experiences, ultimately achieving broadcast strategic empathy. By allowing his characters' struggles to transcend racial, cultural, and national boundaries, Baldwin continues to speak to the contemporary reader and remains a timeless explora-

tion of human connection, vulnerability and the transformative potential of empathy and storytelling.

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JEZIK I EMOCIONALNA REZONANCA – NARATIVNE TEHNIKE I EMPATIJA U PRIČAMA “SANIJEV BLUZ” I “JUTROS, VEČERAS, USKORO” DŽEJMSA BOLVDINA

Rezime

Ovaj rad pruža analizu kratkih priča “*Sanijev bluz*” i “*Jutros, večeras, uskoro*”, fokusirajući se na narativne tehnike koje se koriste za izazivanje emocionalne rezonance. Rad se koristi razlikom “identifikacije s likovima” i “narativne situacije” kao ključnih i komplementarnih aspekata izazivanja empatije kod publike, koje je ustanovila Suzan Kin. “Identifikacija s likovima” proučava se kao ključni aspekt emocionalne uključenosti publike, dok “narativna situacija” obuhvata šire kontekste pripovedanja i perspektive. Analizom oba aspekta kroz primenu teorijskog okvira na Boldvinove kratke priče, rad otkriva veštinu stvaranja duboko rezonantnih likova i narativa koji podstiču snažan empatički odgovor. Analiza pokazuje kako Boldvinova integracija identifikacije s likovima i narativne situacije postiže ono što se može nazvati “širokom strateškom empatijom”, za razliku od “ograničene” ili “ambadorske strateške empatije”, povezujući se i rezonirajući s univerzalnim iskustvima i kontekstima.

Ključne reči: Američka fikcija, Džejms Boldvin, narativna empatija, narativne tehnike, identifikacija s likovima, narativna situacija, *Sanijev bluz*, *Jutros, večeras, uskoro*