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REVEALING THE WRITER'S PORTRAIT IN PRIVATE EPISTOLARY OF WINSTON AND CLEMENTINE CHURCHILL

Epistolary is a literary genre pertaining to letters, in which writers use letters, journals and diary entries in their work. The epistolary method which was notably used by Samuel Richardson in *Pamela* (1740) and by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *La nouvelle Héloïse* (1761), “has the advantage of allowing the characters to tell the story in their own words <... > and it presents an intimate view of the character's thoughts and feelings without interference from the author” [4]. Originating from ancient Argon didactic letters, Greek and Roman patterns of epistles (the letters of Cicero, the *Heroides* and Seneca), intimate exchanges between couples span centuries and continents. These personal correspondences are priceless testimonies of historical events and private lives of famous people (Charlotte Brontë's notes, love notes between Anne Boleyn and Henry VIII; love letters of Charles Dickens to Catherine Hogarth). According to Andrea Clarke, “love letters are an expression of intimacy; their words allow us insight into the private relationships of people down the ages” [1].

Margaret Mullet in her study of “*Epistolography*” emphasizes distinctive features of the seven century Byzantine letters which were in Greek as they (the Greeks) could be “ambivalent about the quality of letters as ‘icons of the soul’ or mask – of both a writer and a recipient” [2, p. 882]. At the beginning of XX century with the development of a modernist movement in literature, Friedrich Nietzsche published his voluminous private correspondences. The special value of his private letters involves revealing the more homely and intimate side of an author's mind and a character, as Nietzsche “exhibits a human heart and a human sympathy” [5, p. 11]. Philosophic concepts of “an ardent love of humanity and an eagerness to promote it to a nobler Destiny” [5, p. 12], influenced the growth of literary techniques such as “stream-of-consciousness”, interior monologue, as well as the use of multiple points-of-view. Modern intimate letter brought into the Ukrainian literature a special form of men's and women's narration techniques, represented by epistolary dialogues of O.Kobylianska – Lesia Ukrayinka, V. Stephanik – V. Morachevskyi; A. Krymskyi – B. Hrinchenko. According to M. Kotsiubynska, «love letters reveal – spontaneously, but in pure form – the true nature of the person, in particular a creative person, the writer» [3, p. 57] (it is my translation here and there – O. S.). Since “love letters fully and clearly portray their author there are the fewest ‘masks’ here and they mostly show faces” [3, p. 55].

The analysis of the literary sources of intimate epistolary illustrate some specific features of personal intimate letters. One of the most distinctive characteristics of love letters is that they always presuppose separation, “since there is a both spatial and a temporal distance between the writer and a recipient, even when actual distance is short, it allows time and space for expression of intimate feelings, imagination and manipulation” [6, p. 565]. Taking into account the previous commentaries of the literary scholars and writers about personal love letters, it is necessary to analyze the

character of the sender (the writer) and his emotional connection to the recipient and how these characters, their thoughts and feelings are revealed through intimate correspondences and if there is any mutual reception between the writer and the recipient.

The purpose of this article is to analyse the specific features of the private letters between Winston Churchill and his wife Clementine and also determine the main dominants of revealing the portrait (character) of the writer and also the addressor's personal thoughts and feelings through intimate epistolary of Winston and Clementine Churchill since intimate letters are expressions of the writer's character and reflections of an author's soul as well.

Speaking for themselves, a collection of private letters between Winston Churchill and his wife Clementine, provide an intimate view of both the addressor's and the addressee's personalities, cast a true light on their mutual relationship and create a background for revealing a portrait of Winston Churchill as a writer of voluminous books besides being an important historical document and a part of the national archive in Cambridge, Great Britain.

A great deal of Churchill's personal correspondence with Clementine are lyrical effusions. After their first meeting at a ball in 1904, Winston fell in love with Clementine and initiated writing love exchanges, most of which were emotive letters, filled with sentiments and confessions in love. In one of his charming letters to Clementine Churchill wrote: *"My dearest, I hope you slept like a stone...The purpose of this letter is also to send you heaps of love and four kisses X X X X."* [7, p. 15].

There are some specific features that make love letters of the first period the most touching. Firstly, there is the mutual acceptance of both characters and secondly, the style of expressing emotions is noted for using of childish terms, creating self-images attributing to pets. The letters of Winston and Clementine were decorated with a drawing or a sketch of a cat, pig or a pug dog in the text or as signatures. Churchill referred to himself in his letters as "Pug" or later "Pig", Clementine was a "Kat" or "Cat"; she always closed her letters with affectionate words like: "Your loving & tender Clemmie"; "Your loving Clem - Pussy- Bird". Winston addressed her wife in his long letters "my sweet Pussy cat", used salutations: "My Darling Clemmie"; "My beloved"; and ended with closing remarks: "With my fondest love Your ever devoted W.", including sentiments and declarations of love: *"Sweet cat I kiss your vision as it rises before my mind. Your dear heart throbs often in my own. God bless you darling keep you safe & sound. Kiss the P.K. for me all over. With fondest love. W."* [7, p.30].

Clementine found Churchill's charm and charisma irresistible too. She adored her husband and often expressed her love and open affection for him with tender notes and sweet words. Despite dissimilarities of the couple in taste for people, in their pleasures and choice of holidays, Winston needed her advice at the time of the most "ups and downs" in his political career to deal with frustrations, family losses and hazards of war. He wrote her a letter from France in 1916 in which he adored her and illustrated the picture of the life he had to lead because of "pseudo-friends" and political crisis at home, which disturbed him. He could rely only on his wife and confessed to her in it, *"...my dearest & sweetest. The beauty & strength of your character, & the sagacity of yr judgment are more realised by me every day. I ought to have followed your counsels in my days of prosperity<..> Ungrateful country! Tenderest love to you & and the kittens..."* [7, p. 149].

Letters written in the trenches of the Western Front and at the time of his resignation from the post of the First Lord of the Admiralty in 1915 after the failure of Dardanelles campaign are an extraordinary blend of patriotism, ambition and mutual tenacity – really the heart of their long correspondence, as they convey the most harrowing and moving feelings, since the author deeply felt the political disgrace and reproaches of conscience, from which he might never have recovered without his wife's counsel. In July 1915 Churchill wrote a farewell letter to his wife with preamble: to be sent in the event of his death. He begged his wife: “*Do not grieve for me too much <....> Death is only an incident, and not the most important that happens to us in this state of being. On the whole, especially since I met you, my darling one, I have been happy and you have taught me how noble a woman's heart can be <...>. Meanwhile look forward, feel free, rejoice in life, cherish the children, guard my memory. God bless you, goodbye, W.*” [7, p. 111].

By expressing his sacrificial love, revealing his painful inner fight, all that helped to create richer, more detailed his character's portrait of a person with a subtle soul constitution who could be sensitive at times and sympathetic in spite of misfortunes and tragedies in the life of the Churchills. Churchill was an amazing correspondent and never stopped using complimentary language in his messages to a wife. They both admitted in their letters: “*I eagerly longed again and again for you to be here*” [7, p. 341]. Churchill, who was a man seeking his place, steering in “troubled waters”, emphasized the role of Clemmentine she played in his life in January 1935. She was a “beacon of sanity” and “a star” to him, with her support he was sure to weather all the stresses and strains: “*In your letter from Madras you wrote some words very dear to me about my having enriched your life. I cannot tell you what pleasure this gave me, because I always feel so overwhelmingly in your debt, if there can be accounts in love*” [7, p. 376].

During the next several decades Churchill's “star” remains the principal theme of the correspondence and its emotional focus.

Churchill's identity, his individual style of covering events in these letters is attributed to his authentic manner of characterizing the details and people due to his own vision of the situation, the aspect of perception it, psychological climate and the objective vision of it so a true to life picture is being emerged due to the combination of such subjective versions of the situation described by the writer. Winston Churchill was capable of more than just bombast, his writing passages as well as speeches are full of playful metaphoric and aphoristic expressions displayed to great effect in this collection too. The language of his letters to his wife contains a wide range of metaphors, allegories and other stylistic or rhetoric techniques which develop sometimes strange but moving epistolary intimacy effects and serve reflections of his emotive and creative nature: “*Your sweetness & beauty have cast a glory upon my life*” [7, p. 39]. Through the prism of the writer's self-characterization the reader receives a portrait of the human being (the writer) with his inner thoughts and feelings, but more fully the writer's character is revealed through the recipient's evaluation and response to the character's personality. We should not miss the letter of Clemmentine, written in June, 1940 as a response to Churchill's “rough, sarcastic & overbearing manner” of behaviour towards his colleagues and subordinates: “*I must confess that I have noticed a deterioration in your manner & you are not so kind as you used to be <...> With*

this terrific power you must combine urbanity, kindness and if possible Olympic calm. Besides you won't get the best results by irascibility & rudeness" [7, p. 454].

Taking into consideration the analysis of the specific features of Winston and Clementine Churchill's private epistolary, it is necessary to conclude that these charming personal letters provide an intimate look at Churchill's character which revolves at the background of political intrigues, ambitions, and remarkable military adventures, that is combined with the love of a wise woman who made a great contribution into literary and political career of Britain's extraordinary genius. Due to a masterful combination of lyrical effusions and epic passages, Winston and Clementine Churchill's private letters, introduced into *Speaking for themselves*, gave us a clearer perception of the subjects that absorbed them revealing private thoughts on love and marriage through the prism of the writer's characterization of self, people, historical and political backgrounds.

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