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### The Theme of Forgiveness in Jamaica Kincaid's Mr. Potter

#### Abstract

Jamaica Kincaid is one of the best novelists in American-Antiguan writer in the present times. Born in St. Johns, Antigua in 1949. She moved to United States in 1965 to work as an au pair. She published her first article "When I was 17" for *Ingénue* magazine. At this time she changed her name from Elaine Potter Richardson to Jamaica Kincaid. Her novels mostly autobiographical nature and all of her writings are in some way about her life and her family. Kincaid has described her writings are as very autobiographical. Through her writings Kincaid tells the nature of the family relationships and homesickness. Her most recent books are *My Garden* (book), *Talk Stories* a collection of her *New Yorker* writings and *My Favorite Plant*, a collection of writing on gardens. She was gardener, novelist, essayist, and gardening writer. Her writing explores colonial discrimination, gender, racism, mother-daughter relationships and nature based themes. Caribbean fiction can be very useful to convey the messages of black people and their sufferings. Here also we discuss the sufferings of that people who longing for their identity especially the narrator of the novel *Mr. Potter*.

**Key Words:** Discrimination, Identity, Homesickness, Colonialism, Caribbean, etc.....

#### Introduction

"Kincaid's lyricism ascends into the realm of the sublime" Andrew Roe, *San Francisco Chronicle*. "Kincaid's most poetic and affecting novel to date: in it she

has drawn a portrait of a figure infamous in West Indian circles but conspicuously absent from the literature of the region". Robert Antoni, the Washington Post Book World.

Kincaid's themes are differing from one novel to another one because she tells the theme that is based on her life remembrance and reminiscences. Here we discuss about the novel Mr. Potter it was originally published in the year 2002. This novel Mr. Potter has twelve parts without titles. Her novels are mostly autobiographical and this novel also the same manner. The central character of the novel Mr. Potter is a nobody, but he is also Kincaid's father. Also the narrator of the novel is the writer Jamaica Kincaid. The theme of the novel only focuses on forgiveness. Forgiveness is nothing but the action of forgiving or being forgiven. It means to stop being angry with someone who has done something wrong. In short forgiveness is a kind of art which grows friendly hood and avoids enmity. Forgiveness is a boon it reflects some good thing in every one's life. And also forgiveness is the main theme of the novel. Here I write a poem on,

#### Forgiveness

When we give forgiveness to our enemy,

It reflects our genuineness

It shows our nobility

It tells our simplicity and it explores our kindness of heart

Forgiveness is a sharp weapon,

It makes no hazards; it gives a true medicine to wounding hearts.

A nature of weapon is to tear everything, and to damage everything

To attack everyone but this kind of weapon to add good one

And to connect whoever affected by brawls it connects.

Forgiveness, is the quality of purity

Forgiveness, is the quality of crystal clear water

Forgiveness, is the quality of the divine power and

Forgiveness is the quality of mankind

So we give it to our enmity and takes friendship from enmity.

From the beginning chapters of Kincaid's novels were moves slowly and at the same time the chapters telling elaborately of the central character's nature, movement, thought and surroundings. Here the novel Mr. Potter as does the same. Here the narrator of the novel gives forgiveness at the end of the novels and takes a good relationship with all. The narrator of the novel is longing and searching for her father and identity. Who is my father? And where is he? There are so many questions in and around her mind but nobody tells the answer.

The narrator of the novel comes to search her father and she heard the information about the father Mr. Potter, he was a chauffeur in Mr. Shoul's garage. To begin Mr. Potter's day of sitting in Mr. Shoul's car and taking passengers to and fro. From this first chapter the narrator also describes the nature. Then she collected some information about Mr. Potter's background. Mr. Potter was born on the seventh day of January in nineteen hundred and twenty two in the village of English Harbour in the Parish of St. Paul. His mother's name was Elfrida Robinson and his father's name was Nathaniel Potter. And Nathaniel was the father of eleven children with eight altogether different mothers and Mr. Potter was the last. Nathaniel Potter was a fisherman and his last son Mr. Potter was a chauffeur.

Mr. Potter's life is based on struggles to live, as a Chauffeur he faces everything, and everything is hard and difficult. The way of life Mr. Potter's surroundings are cripples community. The character Mr. Shepherd taught Mr. Potter to drive it. As a driver he contacts with a variety of girls and conduct with them. Mr. Shoul's chauffeur that would have been Mr. Potter and the narrator's mother Elfrida Robinson loved him but after the narrator was born her mother never saw Mr. Potter. And then the narrator's mother was forsaken by Mr. Potter. And then the narrator tells a vague memory of him, Mr. Potter is ignoring his child.

When I was sent to ask him for money I needed to purchase my writing paper, and the full knowledge of the line drawn through me which I inherited from him, and this line drawn through me binds me to him even as it was very much meant to show that I did not belong to him, that I belonged to no one male, that I did not have a father, that no one had fathered me, and that I was female and came from the female line and belonged to my mother and to my mother only.(161)

Through this passage the narrator tells us, her father Mr. Potter did not recognize her as his child and so he denies money for her ordinary purpose. (At the same time Mr. Potter

could neither read nor write. The same was also in the narrator's mother. Both her parents could not study but the narrator is capable for reading and writing). And the Mr. Potter and the narrator were standing in a room which has three windows and the room was in a house and the house had many rooms and each room had at least two windows, sometimes three or four but each room was of this part of this entire house in which the narrator lived and discussed with her father Mr. Potter to recognize her to be one of his child. Mr. Potter is seeing her nose he realized that all his girl children had his nose and then he recognized.

Mr. Potter died; his death coincided with a natural calamity. It rained due to rain his burial was delayed for the grave diggers could not bail out all the water that had gathered in his grave before night fall. At last Mr. Potter died and the procession following the hearse bearing his coffin extended for a mile. He was anonymous and only the living can make sense of the dead, the death cannot make sense of any living thing. And some of his daughters could not make any sense of him. The coffin was passed alone without any noise and heirs because of Mr. Potter was not recognize his children and did not the follow the fatherly activities. No one cried to show over his death and no one was sorry than he had died, they were only sorry they had known him or sorry they had loved him, for he left them nothing at all because of he did not recognize all his wives and children. He left his wealth, his house and his distant relatives. And then Mr. Potter was buried. Lastly the narrator was standing alone and shed tears for her father because she did not see her mother's graveyard and she forgot everything what he has done to her and her mother. She gave forgiveness to her father so she wept at the memory of Mr. Potter.

Mr. Potter was my father; my father's name was Mr. Potter. (195)

## **Conclusion**

As we have seen in the course of our study this novel Kincaid tells us the quality of forgiveness. Mostly autobiographical, Kincaid's work is centered on the experiences of female protagonists. Here also the female narrator describes her experience for longing and searching her father and her family. The narrator of the novel Kincaid narrates her father's life from birth to death. She notes that her father was a tremendous confident man and also her father's life is based on tough passage. In Mr. Potter, Kincaid breathes life into a figure unlike any in contemporary fiction, an individual consciousness emerging gloriously out of unexamined life. As Mr. Potter's narrative unfolds in liked a brief evocative description his story becomes the story of vital, crippled community. Amid his surroundings

he struggles to live at ease to purchase a car, to have girl friends, to shake off the encumbrance of his daughters' one who will return to Antigua after he dies and tell his story with equal measures of distance and sympathy.

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