

TED ANKARA COLLEGE FOUNDATION HIGH SCHOOL

EXTENDED ESSAY

English B

Research Question

Analysis of the role of the “fifth business” Reverend Jacobs regarding the themes; addiction, religion, music, afterlife, and comparison of him with respect to the main character Jamie Morton in the novel “Revival” by Stephen King.

Candidate’s Name: Mehmet Ali Genç

Supervisor’s Name: Hacer İnce

Candidate’s Number: 001129-0035

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Abstract

This essay has provided a critical investigation of characters in Stephen King's novel "Revival". My research question in this extended essay is "Analysis of the role of the 'fifth business' Reverend Jacobs regarding the themes; addiction, religion, music, afterlife, and comparison of him with respect to the main character Jamie Morton in the novel 'Revival' by Stephen King." In order to find an answer to this question, deeper analysis of the novel and main characters were needed. In addition to that, I divided the research question into subtopics. First, the "fifth business" Charles Daniel Jacobs was analyzed in order to understand the character and further investigate his effects on Jamie. Then Jamie Morton was analyzed who is the main character in the story. With the analysis of two essential characters, it was possible to investigate the effect of "fifth business" on Jamie Morton.

Throughout this investigation, several themes of the novel were considered and they were addiction, music and what comes afterlife. Themes helped reveal a lot of points about the subtopics and several quotations.

The term "fifth business" wields a huge meaning underneath it. Fifth business is essentially, a person who has a special role in someone's life. That role is not being a friend nor enemy. It can be interpreted as a "change agent" to someone's life. With investigating the role of "fifth business" in main character Jamie Morton's life and analyzing the interactions between them, it was possible to reach a personal conclusion directly linked with the research question, which was, it is possible to find a "fifth business" in our lives, who is essential to realize the course of our lives and how and why things can change in our lives.

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I. Introduction

People in our lives can be categorized into three types; our family and our close friends, friends that we encounter often, and the people who have ephemeral parts in our lives. However, sometimes, there is one type which does not fit into these categories, the “fifth business”.

In the novel “Fifth Business” by Robertson Davies, the “fifth business” is described as “Those roles, being neither those of Hero nor Heroine, Confidante nor Villain, which were nonetheless essential to bring about the Recognition or the dénouement, were called the Fifth Business in drama and opera; the player who acted these parts was often referred to as Fifth Business.”¹ That definition describes the “fifth business” Reverend Jacobs’s role in the novel “Revival” word by word.

Most of the events in the novel “Revival” take place in Maine, United States. Morton family is a working middle class with three sons and one girl. One of their sons is Jamie Morton, the main character, who is mostly interested in music, art and more social things. He is deeply connected to his sister who is like a mother to him. The “fifth business” Charles Daniel Jacobs is a 25-year-old Reverend who is highly intellectual, smart and glamorous. He is a genius in electrics and magnetism. He is very affectionate to his wife and his son.

The main character Jamie Morton first met his “fifth business” Jacobs when he was just 6 years old. In 1962 Jacobs became the newest pastor in a town in Maine. Jamie was playing with some dirt when suddenly a shadow fell over him. It was Reverend Jacobs visiting the Morton Family in a walkabout. That is the beginning of everything for Jamie. After that moment everything started to change and got linked with the Reverend in Jamie’s life. As Jamie told “What I was thinking is that your shadow has been over me for my whole life.” (King, 321) As stated in this quotation the relationship they had influenced Jamie through his entire life and changed him in various ways as a person. Indeed, this change is mutually linked with the themes of the novel, and it will be analysed through this essay.

Two themes of the book, ‘what happens after life’, and ‘religion’ are introduced firstly in the novel with the death of Reverend Jacobs’s wife and his beloved son. This event pushed the

¹ "Fifth Business." Wikipedia. 2014. Web. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fifth_Business>.

Reverend to become the fifth business and question the existence of a divine being and affecting Jamie while doing so. Reverend has an eccentric personality. He trusts electricity and science more than anything and he believes that the only way to reach and understand the divine being is the way of science, especially electricity and magnetism like stated in this quote, “Electricity is one of God’s doorways to the infinite.” (King, 29) On the other hand, Jamie Morton has different ways from Jacobs. He does not search the divine being and he does not care about mundane things. He is more of an emotional and artistic guy. They are both addicted to different things and affectionate to different things, however they are not opposite of each other.

Throughout the novel all the themes such as friendship, music, addiction and questioning life and incidents are presented with the bond between the main character Jamie Morton and his fifth business and nemesis Reverend Jacobs. With the investigation of the characters, we may find some answers to the role of the “fifth business” in Jamie’s life, and maybe in our lives.

Additionally, Reverend Jacobs is a fascinating game changer for the life of Jamie and he is totally out of any league to put him under a title; therefore, the writer describes him as the “fifth business”. This will also be explained further and evaluated throughout the essay. While shaping the storyline lucidly by using Reverend Jacobs, Stephen King generally refers to addiction, religion, music and what comes afterlife, which leads us to the research question: Analysis of the role of the “fifth business” Reverend Jacobs regarding the themes; addiction, religion, music, afterlife, and comparison of him with respect to the main character Jamie Morton in the novel “Revival” by Stephen King.

Therefore, this essay will elucidate the relationship between these characters and the characters will be analysed individually first, and then will be examined comparatively in terms of: mottos, motives, acts and emotions, attitudes and behaviours they possess to miscellaneous kinds of situations and people. This will light up to determine to what extent the “fifth business” Charles Jacobs has a role in the life of Jamie and to what extent these characters are similar and different.

II. The Fifth Business: Charles Daniel Jacobs

The main character Jamie Morton describes Reverend Charles Jacobs as “my fifth business, my change agent, my nemesis.” (King, 1-2) However, Stephen King put a slightly different meaning to fifth business, which is “This the joker who pops out of the deck at odd intervals over the years, often during a moment of crisis.” (King, 1) and “When he turns up in a film, you know he’s there because the screenwriter put him there.” (King, 1) In that case, the screenwriter is God or divine beings which put Reverend Jacobs into the life of Jamie for a reason, as Jamie believes. There are several reasons for that but in order to understand that, some background information is needed.

Firstly, the plot of the novel leans on the loss of someone who is precious to the main character Jamie Morton, and his “fifth business” Charles Daniel Jacobs. Jamie lost his mother, father and his sister throughout the novel. Similarly, Jacobs lost his wife and son in a car accident, where no one was guilty, right after he was appointed as a pastor to the town where Jamie used to live. Because there were no one guilty for that accident and no one to blame, Jacobs started to question God. As a Reverend with very high faith, he lost his hope for God. After the accident he gave a ceremony to the church. His speech was a blasphemy. He offended everyone in there but not Jamie. Just oppositely Jamie also lost his faith towards God. When this happened Jamie was 6 and Reverend was 25. And then they went to different ways. However, Reverend Jacobs had already lost his inner peace and in order to get back the peace he lost, he started searching for another reason to live.

In order to continue living peacefully Reverend Jacobs searched for a reason for everything. People do not accept things as they are so easily if that situation upsets them deeply and affects their beloved ones. They search for answers, and when they cannot find one they link it with a divine being. However, people fail to link things to a God when agonizing things happen to them or to their loved ones, just the opposite what Reverend did as it can be seen in this quotation: “For most of my life I’ve railed against those who try to explain that stupidity and pointlessness with prattlings about faith and children stories about heaven. Such nonsense never comforted me...” (King, 338) It can be understood that, Jacobs, a former reverend, gave up on religion for explaining the deaths of his wife and son. When a person’s beloved one dies so

randomly and surprisingly, anyone can breakdown so easily. In that case, even the most faithful ones can turn to an atheist. Like Jacobs, a Methodist reverend, who had unbreakable faith and trust for God through his whole life, turning into an atheist.

Another point is, there is no answer in King's novel where reality is deeply criticized. He has poked, prodded, and thumbed open loopholes in the fabric of reality. Like Kafka and Lovecraft, he has used realism to the opposite effect of Updike: not to reflect and praise reality, but to question its very limits.² Accepting that "there is no answer" is the hardest statement that needs to be accepted for inner peace. However, it is impossible for a rationalist like Jacobs to accept an incident that has no valid reason. He leans on science even if he is a reverend. He is far away from being a dogmatic person as it can be seen in this quotation, "What are electrons exactly? Charged atoms, the scientist say. Okay, that's fine as far as it goes, but what are atoms?" (King, 29) Reverend did not accept things like they are, or didn't say it just the way of God. As it can be seen in the quotation, he seeks for answers.

Reverend Jacobs believed that these two things; God, and science, are in a harmony and electricity is the way God shows itself to the world. Reverend Jacobs is like a half-mad scientist. Although he was a reverend, he was occupied with science in his free time. Stephen King portrays him as a truly smart man and an inventor with a fascinating foresight. "I believe the days of television antennas are numbered. In another ten years, TV signals will be carried along the telephone lines, and there will be a lot more than three channels. By 1990 or so, the signals will be beamed down from satellites." (King, 39) He said that in 1962 and predicting something like that is a sufficient piece of proof of Charles Daniel Jacobs's brilliance. It can be interpreted that Stephen King tries to show the readers how brilliant Reverend is, and also it is a foreshadowing that he will invent more things in the last parts of the book.

In order to cure their own helplessness people try to help or change others because people are the only interactive things that can make someone find their inner peace or a reason to continue living. There always needs to be answers in order to create hope for people like him. In his mind God cannot make anything without a reason or purpose, however this belief failed to explain his wife's and son's death. Therefore, he opposed the system at all and tried to find his way out, which is finding answers and acting as a God. As it can be observed in this quotation "Such a gift from God that it makes us feel godlike every time we flip a switch, wouldn't you

² "'Revival' by Stephen King." Boston Globe. 2014. Web.
<<https://www.bostonglobe.com/arts/books/2014/11/08/book-review-revival-stephen-king/rZTyJv1HescSysnqD0404L/story.html>>.

say?" (King, 17) Reverend Jacobs with this thought in mind found his own way to cure his helplessness and that is electrical nerve stimulator. Electrical nerve stimulator is one of Jacobs's inventions. It changes the acts of brain by sending minuscule electrical impulses to the various parts of brain. With that invention he made it possible to cure cureless diseases, prevent addictions, and fix body organs. This way Jacobs believes he can cure things that has no valid reasons to appear. This way he opposes the enigma of the unanswered or answerless situations by himself like the previous situation he encountered. In short, he played God, because he believed that the God he believed failed and he needed answers.

In order to find the answers he was seeking, he behaved pragmatist towards life, because the people he cured was no other than some objects with some stupid beliefs as Jacobs believed, which can be clearly seen in the following quotation: "They have set aside what brains they have-and many of them have quite a lot- and put their faith in that gigantic and fraudulent insurance company called religion" (King, 249). He implies that, religion is just a fake insurance for afterlife. The difference between other people and him is that, other people believe in religion because they fear what will happen to them afterlife, however, Jacobs's main aim throughout the novel was to find what lies after death with the guidance of science. The accident that killed his family changed his view entirely so that he has started to believe the secret of afterlife lies in science not in religion or God.

The only reason he continues to cure people is that, they are cureless. Therefore, they go to faith doctor like him. By curing cureless people Jacobs thinks that he can do the impossible, or find an answer to an answerless question such as the concept of God. Searching for the reason of his wife's and son's death and searching the mysteries of God are the only ways he has, in order to keep his insanity.

III. Jamie Morton

Jamie Morton's whole life is formed of music and addiction. He was a very naïve boy with good intentions. However, it could be said that Jamie had two turning points in his life. The time he met Reverend Jacobs and the time when he started playing music and using drugs. Moreover, both his addictions and Reverend Jacobs are linked and they form the climax.

Addiction of Jamie is not just limited to drugs and smoking. Another very significant addiction of him is music. Music helped Jamie to recover from what happened in town and his lost beliefs towards religion. The quotation from the novel "...playing filled that hole in me. It was its own thing, an emotional truth. Playing made me feel like a real person again." (King, 89) proves that. When something very agonizing happens such as loss of someone or a big change in their life, they tend to make a bond with something for the feeling of being secured and for the sake of quick and relieving solutions to their problems. This is how people start doing drugs. After Jamie lost all of his beliefs and his "good friend" Reverend Jacobs, his life ended up in void. Thoughts of afterlife, religion and all the other depressing situations made Jamie so uncomfortable that he accepted the first addictive things he encountered.

In addition to that Jamie is more of an artistic guy. His only interests are music and mostly guitar. He makes a living with his music. At the end of the book he was in his fifties and he was still working at a studio. His social skills are prominent through his whole life.

Furthermore, Jamie's character is a passive one. He mostly wants to play some music and do drugs. He is indifferent about life and religion. Because of his passiveness, his personality was wide open for any external factors. In this case that factor was Jacobs. When Jacobs came with the proposal of showing him what lies afterlife Jamie did not even show any interest to it. Even if he is emotional, he is not spiritual. He is more related with mundane things. He could even be considered as lethargic in his youth while he was doing drugs. He even saw what comes afterlife and he just lives on.

Even if Jamie does not believe in any religion, because of his experience with Jacobs' electrical nerve stimulator and the images he sees, he starts to doubt about the reality: "Once upon a time I would have said we choose our paths at random: this happened, then that, hence the other.

Now I know better. There are forces.” (King, 83) Change of Jamie’s mind set and his opinions is displayed through this quotation. Jamie believes what happened to him, his addictiveness and his relationship with Reverend Jacobs had to do with “forces”. That is again because of the “fifth business”. It can be interpreted as someone put Reverend Jacobs to the life of Jamie for a purpose.

All in all, Jamie’s character is small compared to Jacob’s even if he is the main character. Personality of Jamie was shaped through the novel by only using Jacobs. Without Jacobs, Jamie would be an ordinary human. However with his “change agent” and his “fifth business” Jamie changed in various ways. This should be taken in consideration that Jamie cannot be analysed separately without Jacobs. In order to analyse Jamie, effects of Jacobs on Jamie must be analysed.

IV. Impact of “Fifth Business” on Jamie Morton

Reverend Jacobs is not just a random character in the life of Jamie. Reverend Jacobs is a complex man with very complex thoughts and actions. Even his story needs another book to comprehensively tackle everything at once. However, Jamie and Reverend Jacobs can't be analysed separately.

That's being sad, Jamie and Jacobs are actually metaphors of something else which is again must be handled together. Stephen King said *Revival* was partially inspired by *Frankenstein*, and it can be said that Jacobs is the Victor Frankenstein character³, while Jamie is at best Henry Clerval, Victor's barely glimpsed childhood friend. This situation makes it harder to analyse the effect of Jacobs on Jamie, because Jacobs is more like an actual main character with much deeper personality, however that much of a big character leaves a huge mark on smaller characters, which is totally traceable, and this is the aim of this part.

Role of “fifth business” on Jamie Morton can be seen directly by this quote: “When I think of Charles Jacobs-my fifth business, my change agent, my nemesis- I can't bear to believe his presence in my life had anything to do with fate. It would mean that all these terrible things - these horrors- were meant to happen. If that is so, then there is no such thing as light, and our belief in it is a foolish illusion. If that is so, we live in darkness like animals in a burrow, or ants deep in their hill.” (King, 2) This quotation is from the beginning of the novel and it actually tells the reader so much about the book and storyline. There are many things that need to be unpacked. Firstly, the term “fifth business” has a key role in this situation, as explained earlier. However, change agent is a rare term in this novel. Although it is rarely used by Stephen King, it wields too much meaning in it. Stephen King generally uses “change agent” with “fifth business”. “Change agent” means, someone or something that is only responsible for changing various parts, processes, and properties of some organization or people.⁴ In this case, Jamie believes that Jacobs is the change agent in his life. He was there to affect the life of Jamie in various ways.

³ "Stephen King Returns to the Horror Genre." (2014). Guardian. Web.

<<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/nov/07/revival-by-stephen-king-review-horrific-glimpse-abysse>>.

⁴ "Change Agent: Definition, Role." (2014). Web. <<http://study.com/academy/lesson/change-agent-definition-role-quiz.html>>.

Secondly, the term “nemesis” also wields a lot of meaning and foreshadowing. Nemesis means eternal enemy. But why does Jamie describes Jacobs as his nemesis? Actually, they are enemies only in the last parts of the novel. The situation about the relationship between Jamie and Jacobs is not that simple, therefore Jamie calls Jacobs the “fifth business” not a hero nor a villain.

At the beginning of the novel, Jamie was Reverend Jacobs’s favourite student, and Jamie totally admired him, and when they got separated and went on different paths, Reverend Jacobs started to, as Stephen King says, pop out of the deck at very unusual times, like someone put him there. Stephen King foreshadowed that in the beginning of the novel, “Paths cross all the time in this world of ours, sometimes in the strangest places.” (King, 5) With those interactions at odd times, Jamie’s personality, and his whole have been shaped. There were several breaking points in Jamie’s life and they were all linked with Jacobs. For example, Jamie was in a mess because of the drugs. Jacobs saved him from his addictiveness, however, because of his electrical impulses to Jamie’s brain, Jamie got into another mess which Jamie told as “horrors”. After Jamie found out Jacobs’s bad intentions, Jacobs became his nemesis. However, it was totally different when Jamie was a boy.

To brief, he shaped the personality of Jamie, firstly mentoring him when he was 6. Through this mentoring Jamie gave up on God inevitably. Jacobs became his friend then he saved the life of Jamie and fixed his life, and then he made Jamie to witness the most terrifying thing in the universe, the image of afterlife. It can be easily seen that Jacobs controlled the course of events in Jamie’s life, like his duty was that. Once he was done, he just passed away, leaving all that weight to Jamie’s shoulder, which left Jamie in need of psychological support.

V. Conclusion

In this study, it has become obvious that “Revival” by Stephen King has much more extensive and deeper meaning under it. The themes afterlife, music and addiction are directly presented to the reader with the main character and the “fifth business”. The analysis of our research question: Analysis of the role of the “fifth business” Reverend Jacobs regarding the themes; addiction, religion, music, afterlife, and comparison of him with respect to the main character Jamie Morton in the novel “Revival” by Stephen King led us to conclude that role of the “fifth business” Charles Daniel Jacobs is to dominate and rule the life of Jamie. His sole purpose is to show up at necessary parts of the novel, in order to intervene the life of Jamie and change something while doing so.

It was understood that, themes; afterlife and addiction are dealt with all throughout the novel, where in this case, Jamie’s addictions are drugs and music, and Jacobs’s addiction is electric. Main events in the storyline started with the concept of afterlife, which is death of the family of Jacob, and ended with the concept of afterlife, which is seeing afterlife itself.

All in all, the “fifth business” Charles Daniel Jacobs has a deeper personality, more interesting background, and more complex properties. However, that character was created in order to create and support another character, and that character is Jamie. Jacobs is not a villain, he is not the good guy, and he is not a random friend of someone in the story. He is the “fifth business” and the “change agent” of Jamie. Jamie is not Jamie without Charles Daniel Jacobs. And in some points of our lives, we have our own “fifth business”.

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