

7.11 The function of personification

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 12 marks

KEY WORDS reverse personification 反向拟人

Objective

Build the skills to explain **reverse personification** 反向拟人.

You must be able to:

- state the CED's claim about assigning nonhuman qualities to a person
- distinguish this from personification proper
- explain what such a comparison communicates
- analyse the attitude conveyed

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

■ The claim

By assigning the qualities of a nonhuman object, entity, or idea to a person or character, the narrator, character, or speaker communicates an attitude about that person or character.

■ The reverse of 5.6

5.6 gave human qualities to a nonhuman thing. 7.11 runs the other way: a person is given the qualities of a thing. The direction changes what it does.

■ What it communicates

An **attitude**. Comparing a person to a machine, an animal or a stone says something about how the speaker regards them, and often something they would not say directly.

■ The analysis

Name the quality assigned, then name the attitude it implies. A man described as “a mechanism” is being denied inwardness, which is a judgment about him and about the speaker.

2 Practice

2.1 State the CED's claim about assigning nonhuman qualities to a person. [2]

2.2 Distinguish this from personification. [2]

2.3 The comparison communicates an attitude.

(a) State whose attitude. [1]

(b) Explain the two-step analysis. [2]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Assigning nonhuman qualities to a person communicates [1]

- | | |
|---|---|
| A | B |
| C | D |
- A** an attitude about that person
B the setting
C the plot
D the date

3.2 Personification runs [1]

- | | |
|---|---|
| A | B |
| C | D |
- A** in the opposite direction
B in the same direction
C in no direction
D only in prose

3.3 A narrator describes a colleague as “a filing cabinet”.

(a) State the quality assigned. [1]

(b) Explain what attitude this conveys. [2]
