

Symbolism in the house on mango street



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Coming of age is like a plant, starts off as nothing but a seed, small, sweet, and innocent but slowly over time begins to grow into something much bigger. Much like a plant is a person, that can grow and learn and this can be seen in the novel *House On Mango Street* written by Sandra Cisneros. The beginning of the novel shows the sadness felt by Esperanza having to constantly move from house to house, always having to share, having responsibility of her younger sister Nenny, living in a neighborhood where she feels unwelcomed, struggling with her identity, and finally making friends but not being able to share how she truly feels because they don't understand her experiences.

Towards the middle readers can see a little transformation on the way Esperanza acts and thinks, which is more adult-like. At the end is where Esperanza grows the most she gets a job and learns to deal and cope with multiple deaths. In the novel *The House On Mango Street* written by Sandra Cisneros uses figurative language, symbolism, indirect characterization, diction, and selection of details to portray the theme of coming of age and how both good and bad experiences play an important role on how and when someone grows and matures in life.

In the first vignette *The House On Mango Street* Sandra Cisneros uses a selection of details to show a theme of coming of age and how certain experiences can cause people to grow up in different ways. For one thing, the author states but what I remember most is moving a lot (Cisneros, 1). This detail can show readers that moving a lot can mean getting to know a whole new neighborhood, never having real friends, and having to constantly try to make new friends, doing all of this many times can lead to depression

and loneliness. This supports the theme of coming of age because it shows how people start off as, which is sad and alone. Another key point, is when the author states Each time there seemed to be one more of us (Cisneros, 1). This detail shows that since her family was growing, and not only did she grow up poor, but also had to look after and take care for each child. This ties back to the theme of coming of age because being able to look after someone other than yourself shows responsibility and if someone is responsible then their growing up and beginning to mature. All in all, the theme coming of age occurs multiple times in the text to show that both good and bad experiences are an important factor in growing up, such as being faced with the struggle of moving from house to house and having the responsibility of younger siblings.

In the second vignette Hairs Sandra Cisneros uses figurative language to show the theme of coming of age and how environments and family can play a role on the amount of time it takes someone to mature. To point out, the text states And me, my hair is lazy. It never obeys barrettes or bands (Cisneros, 6). This example of personification personifies the author's hair as lazy, this shows the personality of the author to be lazy and disobedient, never following the rules. This example upholds the theme of coming of age by showing how the author starts off as, as a person, readers will begin to see the transformation from lazy and childlike to adulthood throughout the novel. Another example, stated is But my mother's hair, my mother's hair, like little rosettes, like little candy circles all curly and pretty (Cisneros, 6). This example of a simile compares Esperanza's mother's hair to candy and rosettes, which show the loving, caring, and safe feeling the mother brings to

her children. This defends the theme of coming of age because the environment and nature a person is being raised in provides an idea to how the person will grow up and how fast they will mature. All things considered, the Sandra Cisneros successfully uses figurative language to portray the theme of coming of age in her novel and shows how environments in which a person is raised in or lives in can have an effect on how and when a person grows up.

In the third vignette Boys and girls Sandra Cisneros uses symbolism to portray the theme of coming of age and how having siblings or people to look after put people on a fast path to maturity and growing up. For example, the text states And since she comes right after me, she is my responsibility (Cisneros, 8). This evidence symbolizes Nenny, Esperanza's younger sister, to be a responsibility and a chore showing how since she is older than Nenny she is given the responsibility of looking after her. This example supports the theme of coming of age by showing how the responsibility given increases based on how old a person is. Another example, is when the author states Until then I am a red balloon, a balloon tied to an anchor (Cisneros, 9). The example symbolizes the color red as her bright and vibrant personality, the balloon as freedom, and being tied to an anchor as having the responsibility of Nenny and the experience of growing up poor on Mango Street. This example confirms the theme of coming of age by showing how Esperanza is growing up and being responsible instead of worrying about herself and following her dream of having a best friend, she takes care and looks after her sister. To conclude, Sandra Cisneros does a good job portraying the theme coming of age in her novel The House On

Mango Street and showing readers how people who have siblings may mature faster than those who don't because they are given the responsibility of looking after others.

In the fourth vignette My Name Sandra Cisneros uses indirect characterization to show the theme coming of age and how thinking of one's future and trying not to follow in someone's wrong path of life shows growth and maturity. For example, the text states I would like to baptize myself under a new name, a name more like the real me, the one nobody sees (Cisneros, 11). This example shows that Esperanza is lost, she has no idea who she is, except for the fact that the name she has now is not the real her. This upholds the theme coming of age because it shows how Esperanza is confused on her identity and needs more time to figure it out in order to grow. Another example, is when the author states I have inherited her name but i dont want to inherit her place by the window (Cisneros, 11). This example shows Esperanza's thought and how she is hopeful, because she hopes she doesnt turn out like her grandmother, sad and lost. This supports the theme coming of age because it shows how Esperanza is thinking of her future and wants what is best for her, which is something that an adult would think about, which shows growth. Altogether, Sandra Cisneros uses indirect characterization to show a theme of coming of age and how people thinking about what they want for their future is a big step towards maturity.

In the fifth vignette Cathy Queen Of Cats Sandra Cisneros uses negative diction to show a theme of coming of age and how the type of people someone hangs out or associates with can affect how well that person grow up. For example, the author states words such as away, bad, and farther

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(Cisneros, 13). This example of negative diction shows the struggle Esperanza is going through, being in a neighborhood that is deteriorating because people like her are moving in. This upholds the theme coming of age because it shows how Esperanza feels misplaced and unwelcomed in a neighborhood she just moved into. Another example is when the author states words such as baby, big, and skinny (Cisneros, 13). This example of negative diction shows the type of person Cathy is, which is sweet, kind, and pure to be taking in and caring for all these different types of cats. This confirms the theme coming of age because it shows the difference between Esperanza's friend Cathy and her new friends to come who will end up being the opposite. All this shows, Sandra Cisneros conveys the theme of coming of age through the use of negative diction in her book and shows how the type of friends someone has will have an effect on the way the person grows up.

In the sixth vignette Our Good Day Sandra Cisneros uses symbolism to show the theme coming of age and how choices made by people affect the way they grow up in life. For example, the text states Two new friends and a bike too (Cisneros, 15). This example symbolizes happiness because Esperanza finally has the friends she has been dreaming about and a new bike which can symbolize freedom to go anywhere, and she doesn't have to share these new things with anyone especially Nenny which is what makes it a good day. This ties to the theme coming of age because it shows how Esperanza is progressing into an adult, having things to herself and not having to share with her sister like a little kid. Another example, is when the text states Don't talk to them, says Cathy. Can't you see they smell like a broom (Cisneros,

14). This example can symbolize the dislike Cathy has for the girls, it shows how Cathy looks down on Rachel and Lucy, but Esperanza is drawn to them because they share her status as an outsider. This example supports the theme coming of age because it shows how little Esperanza thinks about her choices, she chooses to pay for friends who seem to be trouble rather than keep the good and sweet friend she has now. Given these points, Sandra Cisneros uses Symbolism to show the theme coming of age and how the choices people choose to make have a toll on how well someone grows up.

In the thirteenth vignette *There Was An Old Woman She Had So Many Children She Didn't Know What To Do* Sandra Cisneros uses indirect characterization to show the theme coming of age and how people shouldn't have to take responsibility for random people who are obnoxious and reckless, but should instead focus on themselves and try to grow as person. For instance, the text states *The kids bend trees and bounce between cars... they think it's funny. They are without respect for all living things* (Cisneros, 29). This example shows that the kids are careless and obnoxious, never showing respect for others. This confirms the theme of coming of age because it shows how selfish people can be in the beginning, not caring about anyone they might hurt, and it shows how much growing they still have to do. Another example, is when the text states *No wonder everybody just gave up, just stopped looking out* (Cisneros, 30). This example shows how the people on Mango Street are maturing, and are learning not to worry about selfish people. This supports the theme coming of age because it shows how people are choosing to get away and not deal with childish and reckless people, instead they ignore them and grow. In a final analysis,

Sandra Cisneros uses indirect characterization to portray the theme coming of age in her novel and show how people mature best when they don't have to worry about reckless and selfish people because they are given room to grow and mature.

In the seventeenth vignette *The Family Of Little Feet* Sandra Cisneros uses symbolism to show the theme coming of age and how the decisions someone makes in a situation shows how mature that person actually is. For example, the text states Lucy, Rachel, and me tee-tottering like so. Down the corner were men cant take their eyes off us. We must be Christmas (Cisneros, 40). This example symbolizes adulthood, their wearing shoes that only adults would use and act and walk like adults. This connects back to the theme coming of age because it shows how Esperanza is growing up and starting to look like an adult and wear things that adults would. Another example, is when the text states But we don't like it we got to go (Cisneros, 41). This example symbolizes adult thinking, because it shows how the girls knew that what was happening wasn't right and was probably dangerous and decided to get out of that situation as fast as possible. This upholds the theme coming of age because it shows how the girls were finally thinking as adults because most kids wouldn't have left so quickly and might have taken the dollar the bum was trying to give them. In brief, Sandra Cisneros uses symbolism to portray the theme coming of age and how if someone tries to act and think like an adult then that can make them grow up and mature faster.

In the twenty first vignette *The First Job* Sandra Cisneros uses selection of details to show the theme coming of age and how getting a job and solving

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real life struggles is a really great step towards maturity because it shows responsibility. For example the text states Aunt Lala said she had found a job for me (Cisneros, 54). This example shows how Esperanza is stepping up as a person and is getting a job. This ties back to the theme coming of age because it shows the responsibility that is coming Esperanzas way, having a job is not easy at all, but she is doing it anyway and now will have her own money to spend. Another example, is When lunchtime came, I was scared to eat alone (Cisneros, 54). This example shows how she is being forced to overcome new challenges she is faced with in a new environment. This upholds the theme coming of age because being able to adapt to an unfamiliar environment is a skill that most adults have and that means Esperanza is becoming an adult. On the whole, Sandra Cisneros uses selection of details to portray the theme coming of age and how though life people are faced with difficult challenges and it is their responsibility to find a way to solve and adapt to these challenges.

In the twenty eighth vignette Sire Sandra Cisneros uses Selection of details to show the theme coming of age in her novel and how being in a relationship can be both negative and positive when maturing and growing up. For example, the text states that I had to prove to me that i wasnt scared of nobodyr's eyes, not even his (Cisneros, 72). This example shows how much Esperanza has grown throughout the book, she is trying to prove to herself that she is better than she thinks she is by showing herself sher's not scared. This defends the theme coming of age because it shows that she is doing this for herself not for the benefits of others, proving that she has grown since the beginning of the book. Another example, is when the text

states I want to sit out bad at night, a boy around my neck and wind under my skirt (Cisneros, 73). This example shows the need for someone, someone to be with and to have, like how Lois has Sire. This supports the theme coming of age because it shows how Esperanza is becoming a woman, and wants someone to be around with her through her life. Summing up, Sandra Cisneros uses selection of details to show the theme coming of age and how being in a relationship can either speed up or slow down the process of maturing.

In the thirty first vignette *Rafaela Who Drinks Coconut And Papaya Juice On Tuesdays* Sandra Cisneros uses indirect characterization to show the theme coming of age and how helping those in need makes people a better person and more respectful and responsible. For instance, the author states Gets locked indoors because her husband is afraid Rafaela will run away since she is too beautiful to look at (Cisneros, 79). This Shows how Rafaela is hopeless, she gets treated miserable, being locked in a house all day can make a person sad and depressed. This connects to the theme coming of age because it shows how Rafaela needs help, even though she is grown she is still treated like a child who needs to constantly be watched and monitored just because of her beauty. Another example, is when the text states We send it up to her in a paper shopping bag she lets down with a clothesline (Cisneros, 80). This example shows how the people on Mango Street and Esperanza are compassionate people, because they helped a person in need. This supports the theme coming of age because its shows how Esperanza has grown and now is the one helping people instead of being the one who needs help. As demonstrated, Sandra Cisneros uses indirect characterization

to show the theme coming of age and how doing good and helping others proves that someone is growing up and taking care of the people who need it.

To sum up, the novel *House On Mango Street* written by Sandra Cisneros uses figurative language, symbolism, indirect characterization, negative diction, and selection of details to portray the theme of coming of age and how when someone acts, talks, thinks, and dresses like an adult they are more likely to grow and mature faster than those who don't and act like a child. This shows that people mature and grow up faster when they make good choices and hang out with the right people, not worrying about people who act selfish and have reckless behavior with no regards for anyone but themselves. A person that is coming of age is like a plant, small and pure but gradually over time transitions into something that is much bigger, an adult who is responsible, affectionate, and nurturing towards others.