

English 102

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



English 102 14September2012 Becoming Yourself Alberto Alvaro Ríos' short story *The Secret Lion*, captures the spirit of a coming-of-age story between childhood and adolescence through the eyes of two boys, presumably from a lower-class Latino background. Through the use of various symbols, the theme of change is made apparent through the first-person, unnamed narrator. The use of this narrator is what shapes the story and the lessons learned within. Due to the author's choice of careful character construction within the unnamed narrator, the reader faces a significant amount of emotions and reactions within a very brief, yet compelling short story. The usage of the first-person point of view immediately presents the narrator to be a round character, due to the intimate opportunities the style of writing provides for fiction writing. Although we do not know the narrator's name, due to the narrative style the audience can relate to the stories and experiences the character has. We know how the character feels internally quite often, which is iconic of the round fictional character. For example, we are provided internal insights that only a round character would allow the audience the opportunity to discover. For example, the character reveals how he felt " personally abandoned somehow" when describing junior high school (Ríos 201). We also discover a lot about the character's personality through the actions and habits mentioned in the story. The following passage exemplifies a traits only a round character could have: ".. what we would do down there was shout every dirty word we could think of, in every combination we could come up with, and we would yell about girls, and all the things we wanted to do with them. " (Ríos 201) This reveals that the narrator and his friend Sergio are going through a hormonal, rebellious stage

where new sensations and impulses drive what pretty much most junior high student males' experience. Since he is a round character, the reader has a stronger connection with him, and ultimately will reap the moral of the story the author wanted to provide. Due to the usage of the round character, the narrator's motivations are very apparent. The motivations explain why the character is doing what he is doing. If the narrator was a flat character, the context of growth the two boys experience within their travels would be lost, and the story would lose an immense amount of what makes it so compelling. For example, without revelations of the motivations the character speaks of, then the story would be more or less just two boys simply walking around outside the desert, arriving to a golf course, and leaving. The passage revealing what the children did to protect their treasured metal ball states " We came up with the answer. We dug a hole and buried. And we marked it secretly. Lots of secret signs... We dug up the whole bank, and we never found it again. " (RÃos 202) Without knowing that they were trying to hide this discovery and cherished item and then return to search for it, the audience would be left wondering exactly why these two children are digging up holes on an entire bank in the middle of an arroyo. Also, his motivations real why the character does what he does in terms of story progression. Without motivations, there would be no engaged plot with a rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution, rendering this work just a series of meaningless anecdotes. Because we know the background of the character as a middle school student itching to discover life, we can understand why he and Sergio leave adventuring to the arroyo and head to the mountains in the first place (RÃos 205). They wanted to find out what the

adults, specifically his mother, were keeping from them first hand; all because she told them not to worry about lay on the other side of the pass. Their motivation and intrigue to discover what secret they had been missing out on led them to ultimately discover their version of heaven (the golf course) and ultimately the impermanence of life and change is inevitable. Due to the character's said discovery that change is the only the thing that is permanent, makes him a dynamic character. He goes from being a curious, innocent naïve boy at the beginning of the story who found magic in matters that were familiar to the realization that some things you love can be taken away from you, and that sadly, the grass is sometimes greener on the other side of the fence. This is revealed in the penultimate paragraph when the boys who had dug up the entire mound looking for their new treasure at the beginning of the story " didn't look so hard for it" the second time (RÃos 204). This newfound peace and acceptance that things get taken away is what makes the character dynamic; without the narrator would have not learned anything, been a static character, and the reader would have been left with an uncertainty no successful fiction author wishes to convey. Ultimately, the unnamed narrator in *The Secret Lion* drives the story with his well-said first person point-of-view. Due to the choices the author made when giving the character his traits of being a round, dynamic character, the story's themes of change and acceptance are successfully conveyed. Works Cited RÃos, Alberto Alvaro. " *The Secret Lion*. " *Literature: Reading, Reacting, Writing*. Ed. Laurie G. Kirsner and Stephen R. Mandell. United States: Uhl, 2013. 201-205. Print.