

Characterization assignment

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Characters are like puzzle pieces in works of writing; they all fit together and connect to the story and the unfolding plot. Every character in literature fulfills a specific purpose. Whether it is the protagonist, antagonist, round, or flat character the author took the time to place him/her within the story so there must be some significance. In “Araby” by James Joyce, Mangan’s sister is not the main character, but is still an important element to the short story as she inspires the story’s actions. Mangan is one of the narrator’s friends who he played up and down the streets with.

Mangan’s sister stands on their porch every day to call their brother home. The narrator has the greatest crush on Mangan’s sister, and savors every glimpse of her he can get. He looks through the window every morning just to see Mangan’s sister leaving the house and then he rushes out to walk behind her very quietly until he passes her. They never really talk, but Mangan’s sister is always on the narrator’s mind. He is so obsessed with Mangan’s sister that he feels he will never gain the courage to tell her how he feels.

One morning, Mangan’s sister asks the narrator if he plans to go to Araby, a bazaar. She explains that she can’t go because there is a retreat that week in her convent, so the narrator says he will bring her back something. To Mangan’s sister the promise is insignificant, just something mentioned in the course of conversation, but to the narrator it is of great significance. The narrator is so eager to go to the bazaar, and that is all that seems to be on his mind. When the narrator finally arrives to the bazaar it starts to close down.

There is one stall open and he is going to buy something, but he feels unwanted by the lady so the narrator buys nothing. The lights then go out and the narrator stands angrily and frustrated in the dark. Mangan's sister is seen by the narrator like the virgin Mary, and symbolizes the conflicting forces of religion and worldly things in the narrator's mind. Only through Mangan's sister, the reader can come to understand that the narrator at the end of the story is not only bothered because his idea of love has been crushed, but ashamed that he could have been so foolish and childish to believe in it in the first place.

Just like Manan's sister, Layle Carter in "June Birthing" isn't the main character but still is a major part of the story. The short story "June Birthing" would be a completely different story if Layle Carter was nonexistent. Layle Carter does so much to keep Kathe Connor together; from his idea of taking the fawn to the animal shelter in town, to his soothing ways towards Kathe. At first when Kathe meets Layle he seems to come off rude, but after a while Kathe comes to realize that he is a good guy. Layle is also important for the characterization of Kathe.

By her shared feelings towards the precious fawn with Layle she is able to stay calm and keep her sanity. Layle seems to be the only thing keeping her calm as he tries to get her mind off of the baby deer. I believe the story would be completely different if Layle Carter was not in the story, Kathe Conner possibly could have gone crazy and the reader would have seen a whole different perspective of her. Unlike in the two other stories, Frank does not have such a huge influence on the main character but is still of significance to the story.

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Frank and Eveline's relationship was pleasant until her father began to voice his disapproval and bicker with Frank. After that, the two lovers met under cover. Frank is important in "Eveline" because he has the potential to free Eveline from her abusive father. Frank is super kind and gives Eveline the choice of staying in Dublin or moving with him to Buenos Aires and getting married. This gives the reader more of an insight to what type of character she is as she goes through the pros and cons.

Eveline decides to move with Frank to escape the same life her mother lived, but Eveline seems afraid to start a new life and, like all girls, changed her mind. The reader can tell Frank wants the best for Eveline as he continually yells from the docks she should come with him. As one can see, analyzing the function and significance of the characters is one way to broaden one's understanding of the story. Because each character plays such a great role in the story, even if it is not the protagonist the character is equally as important.