

Character analysis thesis example

Family



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Introduction

In literary works, writers normally utilize characterization technique in revealing the personalities of their characters. This technique is categorized into direct and indirect characterization. In direct characterization technique, the writer usually makes statements that are direct about the traits of the characters. On the other hand, in indirect characterization, readers draw conclusions about the characters based on how such characters act, think, and look, in addition to what the other characters think about them. Both Walker and Maupassant utilize these techniques in “Everyday Use” and “The Necklace,” to bring out the characters of Dee and Mathilde respectively. This essay therefore expounds on the characters of these two and compares and contrasts these characters where it describes their motivations, individual characters, and conflicts. In addition, it analyzes their similarities and differences.

“Everyday Use,” centers on an encounter between the members of rural Johnson family. After reading this epic piece of writing, we realize that Dee is used by Walker as an object of awe, agitation, and jealousy among her family members, whereas as an individual this character searches for a sense of self that is stronger and also searches for her personal meaning. Her judgmental nature has actually affected Maggie and Mama, and her desire for approval essentially runs deep in them. Nonetheless, Dee doesn’t make much effort to win their approval. Unflappable, bringing with confidence, and not easily intimidated, Dee in fact comes across as insensitive and arrogant and even Mama sees her qualities that are admirable as annoying and extreme (Walker 45).

In addition, Walker portrays Dee as ambitious, good looking, and educated. We are told that Mrs. Johnson gathers money at her church to help Dee attend school. We observe that education has essentially been extremely crucial in forging Dee's character. However, at the same time this education has actually split Dee off from the rest of her family members. For instance, Mama says, " She used to read to us without pity; forcing words, lies, other folks' habits, whole lives upon us two, sitting trapped and ignorant underneath her voice" (Walker 73) In other words, Dee has in real sense moved towards different traditions from her family members.

In " The Necklace," we understand that Mathilde essentially desires to be a glamour girl. This character is in real sense obsessed with glamour. She desires fancy, expensive things, and life that go with them. Nonetheless, her family does not have the wealth to make her dreams come true. Instead, we understand that she is married by a little clerk and they dwell in an apartment that is very shabby. This makes her shed tears and she hates her life and her husband for their living conditions. This is proved by the author writing that, " She weeps all day long, from chagrin, from regret, from despair, and from distress" (Maupassant 6) Thus, she is portrayed as materialistic. What she wants is expensive stuffs in her life. Maupassant writes that, " She let her mind dwell on the large parlors, decked with old silk, with their delicate furniture, supporting precious bric-a-brac, and on the coquettish little rooms, perfumed, and prepared for the five o'clock chat with the most intimate friends (Maupassant 3)." This clearly proves her materialistic behavior.

Additionally, Maupassant portrays Mathilde as promiscuous. After reading this classic piece of writing we get to know that Mathilde wants men. She

wants attractive, rich, charming, and powerful men. The author tells us: “She would so much have liked to please, to be envied, to be seductive and sought after. (Maupassant 5)” What is more interesting about her is that she appears to be more interested with men than they are interested in her. Thus, this clearly depicts her promiscuity. From the above discussion, it is correct to say Mathilde is also greedy, easy goer, and weak.

After analyzing these characters from the two literary works, it is now possible to clearly expound on their similarities and differences. We observe that these two stories feature two women (Dee and Mathilde) who are actually unhappy with their economic and social life. They are also disappointed in certain aspects of their lives. We understand that the two are selfish. Their behaviors clearly prove this. For instance, we have seen that after Dee gets her education, she does not want to associate herself with the other family members. Mathilde on her part refuses to accept her situation in life hence this shows that she is a selfish person. The two also share the characteristic of egoism. By Dee refusing to follow her culture, it clearly demonstrates her egoism. Therefore, her ambitions, good looks, and education make her egocentric. On the other hand, Mathilde also has this characteristic. Her ego makes her not to accept her situation.

The other instance of similarity between Dee and Mathilde is that both of them are both dynamic and round characters. We observe that these two characters evolve through the course of these stories. The authors have used them as main characters since many things in the stories revolve around them. They contribute to the development of the major themes in the two pieces of work. We can also describe them as round characters. This is because both Walker and Maupassant develops them fully since after

reading the two stories we get a good picture of their personalities and looks.

Conversely, Dee and Mathilde do not have many differences. We understand that Dee is educated but Mathilde is not. In addition, despite her good looks, Dee is not like Mathilde who we understand that is promiscuous and wants attention from men. Furthermore, Dee has an epiphany while Mathilde does not have. We observe Dee changing her understanding about the family traditions after getting education. On the other hand, Mathilde does not have an epiphany.

Accordingly, from this discussion it is correct to say that Walker and Maupassant utilize both direct and indirect characterization techniques to clearly bring out the characters of Dee and Mathilde respectively. Through these techniques we discover that these two characters are round and dynamic, and their selfish and egoistic natures make them to have conflict with their living situations.

Works cited

Walker, Alice, and Barbara Christian. *Everyday Use*. New Brunswick, N. J: Rutgers University Press, 1994.

Maupassant, Guy. *Short Stories of De Maupassant: Including the Necklace, a Passion, the Piece of String, Babette, and the Wedding Night*. New York: The Book League of America, 2000.