

Characterization and motivation in uglies by scott westerfield

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



In the novel *Uglies* by Scott Westerfield, the author skillfully utilizes characterization to make his characters believable. Characterization is when the writer reveals the personality of a character. Direct characterization is when the author directly states the character trait. The protagonist or main character in *Uglies* is Tally Youngblood. The author states, "...Worse, she was ugly, but she hoped Peris wouldn't see her that way..." In this quote, Tally is described as 'ugly' because she has not undergone the surgery that every teenager goes through when they turn 16, to become a 'pretty', and she's hoping her best friend, Peris won't view her as 'ugly'. This is an example of direct characterization because the author directly states the character trait for the reader. The antagonist or the character who creates a conflict with the protagonist is Dr. Cable. According to the text, "...The woman became nothing but a monster, vengeful and inhuman. Then I'll make you a promise too, Tally Youngblood. Until you do help us to the best of your ability, you will never be pretty..." The previous quote can be explained as the antagonist is vengeful because Tally will not tell Dr. Cable where Shay is. This is a direct characterization, because the author directly states the character trait for the reader. Obviously, Scott Westerfield is a master of direct characterization.

Likewise, in the novel *Uglies*, Westerfield applies indirect characterization. Indirect characterization is found using what the character says, thinks, his actions, looks, effect on others. In this novel, Westerfield applies indirect characterization to the antagonist in this quote, "...Dr. Cable pointed at the wallscreen, and an image appeared. Like a mirror, but in close up, it showed Tally as she looked right now: puffy eyed and disheveled, exhaustion and red

scratches marking her face, her hair sticking out in all directions, and her expression turning horrified as she beheld her own appearance. "That's you, Tally. Forever..." In this quote, Dr. Cable is showing Tally how 'ugly' she appears compared to the rest of the population. Westerfield does not directly say that she is doing something evil, but the readers know that what Dr. Cable is doing is very unfavorable. As for the protagonist's indirect characterization, Westerfield did a spectacular job with writing indirect characterization for the main character, Tally. In this quote he says "She put her fingers up to her face, felt the wide nose and thin lips, the too high forehead and tangled mass of frizzy hair." In this quote, it doesn't directly say Tally is unpleasant to look at, but it says things that could signify that she is.

In my last bit of this paper, im going to explain the motivation for this novel. In this novel, our protagonist, Tally Youngblood faces many challenges. She has to choose between becoming a pretty and showing Dr. Cables where the rumored town 'Smoke' is. Her other option is being an 'ugly' forever. Tally's motivation in my novel is her fear of being ugly. She wants to be pretty, and has looked forward to being a pretty her entire life. She must choose between her fear of being insecure and ugly her entire life, or to give up the rebellion against New Pretty Town. In the novel, it quotes "Dr. Cable ignored the sob that had cut through Tally 's words '.. If you don't agree right now, I 'll find someone else. And you'll be ugly forever". Tally looked up, trying to see through the tears that were flowing freely now, to peer past Dr. Cable 's cruel mask, and find the truth. It was there in her dull, metal grey eyes, a

cold, terrible surety unlike anything a normal pretty could ever convey. Tally realized the woman meant what she said. Either Tally infiltrated Smoke and betrayed Shay, or she'd be an ugly forever...' This quote is further proof about Tally's motivation. Tally is also motivated to become a pretty because she doesn't want her best friend, Peris, To think down upon her because she is an ugly. My final quote to support this is '...The thought of what she must look like was too much. Tally collapsed on the bed, covering her face with her hands and sobbing. Peris sat next to her and held her for a while as she cried, then wiped her nose and sat her up. ' Look at you, Tally Youngblood' She shook her head. ' Please don't.'...'. And because of these quotes, that's why I believe the motivation for Tally is fear of being ugly forever.