

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

IN CHARACTER ANALYSIS, IT'S IMPORTANT TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE **SETTING**. THE BACKGROUND IS NEVER LEFT TO CHANCE: IT OFTEN REPRESENTS THE STATE OF MIND OF THE CHARACTERS.



WHAT IS CHARACTER ANALYSIS?

Most of the time, cultural works present characters whose characteristics can be analyzed: appearance, morals, behavior, values, interpersonal relationships and so on. These distinctive elements can be used to paint a portrait of the characters' psychological, physical and sociological dimensions.

GUIDING QUESTIONS IN BULK*

Here are a few questions to help you build your own character analysis grid. The key is to identify or formulate the questions that best apply to the analysis of the work you've chosen, as well as to the targeted medium (film, literature, visual arts, theater). In short, it's simply a matter of identifying or formulating the questions that the work will most obviously answer.

- Which actors play the characters?
 - Are they professional or non-professional artists?
 - What experience do they have in the business?
 - What are their most memorable roles?
 - Are they typical, more or less locked into a specific role?
- Are there any central characters in this work? If so, look at them from different angles.
- Look at the central characters from a psychological point of view:
 - Temperament (angry, introverted, taciturn, extroverted, ambivalent, etc.)?
 - Attitude to life: optimistic, pessimistic, resigned, defeatist, militant?
 - Love or loathing of life?
 - Qualities? Weaknesses?
 - Goals? Ambitions in life?
 - Complexes? Obsessions? Inhibitions? Superstitions? Phobias? Frustrations?
- Observe the central characters on a physical level:
 - What is their gender identity?
 - Approximate age?
 - What are their racial characteristics?
 - What is their physical appearance (height, weight, thinness, stoutness, face shape, etc.)?
 - Hair style? Type of make-up?
 - General posture? Body language?
 - Do they have a birthmark? A tattoo? A disability?
 - Do their clothes have any descriptive value? Do they reflect the character's personality?
 - Do the clothes have symbolic value for a place or time?
 - If the work takes place in the past, are the clothes faithful to the reconstruction and to the accuracy of the details?
- Take a sociological look at the central characters:
 - What language do they speak? Do they speak other languages? Do they have an accent?
 - What is their level of education? What is their trade or profession? What skills do they have?
 - Are they married? Single? Divorced? Any children? What is their relationship with them?
 - Where do they come from and what is their social class?
 - What are their values?
 - What are their consumer habits?
 - What are their political convictions? Who do we think they would vote for?
 - What is their religious affiliation? Atheist? Agnosticism?
- Are they a predictable, clichéd character? Stereotyped? Caricatured? Are they exaggerated for special dramatic effect?
- Are they plausible? Coherent? Nuanced?
- Do contrasts between characters help to define them?
- What kind of settings do the central characters inhabit? Cluttered? Symbolic? Colorful?

* Always refer to your teacher's instructions before building your analysis grid

REFERENCES

Bouchard, G., Caron, A. et Morency, N. (2018). *Les règles de l'art*. Éditions JFD.
Lever, Y. (1992). *L'analyse filmique*. Boréal.