
ANALYZING FILM

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- ▶ Four Lenses:
 - ▶ Plot
 - ▶ Character
 - ▶ Dialogue
 - ▶ Theme

ANALYZING FILM

- ▶ Four Lenses:
 - ▶ Plot = Structure
 - ▶ Character = Function
 - ▶ Dialogue = Purpose
 - ▶ Theme = Meaning

PLOT/STRUCTURE

- ▶ Movies generally work on a three act structure:
 - ▶ I - Set-up
 - ▶ II - Confrontation
 - ▶ III - Resolution

PLOT/STRUCTURE

▶ **Act One - Set-up**

▶ The Opening

- ▶ Introduction to the setting and characters

▶ The Hook

- ▶ The incident that begins the quest

▶ The Lock

- ▶ An event sets the characters on their path - no turning back

PLOT/STRUCTURE

▶ **Act Two - Confrontation**

▶ Deconstruction Test

- ▶ First real conflict that challenges the protagonist

▶ Transition

- ▶ Another minor obstacle that begins a turning point for the protagonist

▶ Reconstruction Test

- ▶ Conflict that tests the protagonist and shows them making progress

▶ All is Lost

- ▶ Major disaster that severely hinders the protagonist's quest

PLOT/STRUCTURE

▶ **Act Three - Resolution**

▶ On the Offensive

- ▶ The protagonist and their allies begin the final major conflict

▶ Final Struggle

- ▶ The Climax of the story, all the important stories come to a head and the protagonist and antagonist battle

▶ Denouement

- ▶ Final wrap-up, stories are completed, future suggested

CHARACTER/FUNCTION

- ▶ Characters are used to tell the story. They are the vehicles that give us the meaning through their action and dialogue.
- ▶ There are 12 archetypes of characters that exist. Each major character in a film falls into one or more of the archetypes.
- ▶ Not all archetypes are used in a single film. Some may be well hidden or not what you expect
- ▶ Often overlap in some characters
- ▶ Every archetype has a shadow - a dark reflection

THE HERO

- ▶ The person with the plan. They are armed with skills to help them in the upcoming conflict and know how to use them. They are confident and able. They will suffer a crisis of confidence at one point in the movie that they overcome.
- ▶ **Strengths:** Courage, Strength (physical or mental), and ability
- ▶ **Weaknesses:** overconfidence and ego
- ▶ **Desire:** To prove their worth
- ▶ **Examples:** Aragorn *Lord of the Rings*, Anakin Skywalker *Star Wars EP II and III*, Any Tom Cruise character.
- ▶ **Shadow:** arrogant, reject help, oppressive, and ignore all good to achieve their goals.

THE CHILD

- ▶ Utterly innocent; the child grows to lose it. No matter what happens, it is about becoming more experienced and losing innocence. They begin as a very optimistic and overly-joyful character that eventually learns the reality of the world around them.
- ▶ **Strengths:** Optimism, imagination, and enthusiasm
- ▶ **Weaknesses:** Not physically powerful and naïve
- ▶ **Desire:** To be happy
- ▶ **Examples:** Frodo *Lord of the Rings*, Dorothy *Wizard of Oz*, Alice *Alice in Wonderland*
- ▶ **Shadow:** Ignorant of the world, terribly naive to the point of being dangerous to others. Ignores reality and often has a sheltered life.

THE ORPHAN

- ▶ Utterly alone and completely misunderstood, the orphan wants to find meaning in his or her life, and wants something special - and it usually does. Over the course of the story, they discover the true meaning of family and friendship and begin a new and happier life.
- ▶ **Strengths:** Survival Instinct, empathy, and perseverance
- ▶ **Weaknesses:** Wanting to fit in and lack of confidence
- ▶ **Desire:** To connect with others and to thrive
- ▶ **Examples:** Harry Potter *Harry Potter*, Oliver Twist *Oliver Twist*
- ▶ **Shadow:** Self-pity, mistrustful, constantly negative, and willing to be abused rather than be alone.

THE CREATOR

- ▶ This character wants to make something of themselves by creating something extraordinary. They are determined and headstrong, making many sacrifices along the way – sometimes even making the greatest sacrifice. They are single minded and highly creative.
- ▶ **Strengths:** Creative, driven, and execute their vision
- ▶ **Weaknesses:** Personal sacrifice, egotism, and perfectionism
- ▶ **Desire:** To create a legacy
- ▶ **Examples:** Willy Wonka *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, Tony Stark *Iron Man Films*
- ▶ **Shadow:** Abandons morality in creation, insensitive, playing god, and believes the end justifying the mean.

THE CAREGIVER

- ▶ This character will always be there, for better or worse. They are the most selfless character in the story. They can be anyone, a partner, husband/wife, parent, sibling, or a best friend. They are often not the main character, but usually play an important role in the story.
- ▶ **Strengths:** Generosity and selflessness
- ▶ **Weaknesses:** Being taken advantage of
- ▶ **Desire:** To protect and save someone and to help others
- ▶ **Examples:** Samwise Gamgee *Lord of the Rings*, Mary Poppins *Mary Poppins*
- ▶ **Shadow:** Enables weakness or bad behaviour, selfish, bitter, demands acknowledgement, and guilt trips others for their 'sacrifices'

THE MENTOR/SAGE

- ▶ Very common character that the protagonist meets and gives important details of the world and trials that lie ahead. Often a trainer, parent, teacher it is someone who has knowledge to pass on. They guide the protagonist on the road they are on.
- ▶ **Strengths:** Wisdom and experience
- ▶ **Weaknesses:** Unwillingness or inability to act and cautious
- ▶ **Desire:** To help the hero push past their boundaries
- ▶ **Examples:** Gandalf *Lord of the Rings*, Obi-Wan Kenobi *Star Wars EP IV - VI*
- ▶ **Shadow:** Difficult to corrupt, may become apathetic, overly critical of those not like them, aloof, possibly addicted to mind-numbing substances in order to cope with their knowledge.

THE JESTER

- ▶ There is always one in the crowd: the character who says things to get a laugh. They are laid back, silly, and lazy. They are the one we point and laugh at even though we entirely understand them. They want people to “calm down” and “chill out”. They are used as comic relief in films. Originally they were characters who taught the hero not to linger on earthy delights on their quest.
- ▶ **Strengths:** Likable, funny, and joyous
- ▶ **Weaknesses:** Very frivolous and accomplishes nothing
- ▶ **Desire:** To be happy. Live for today not tomorrow.
- ▶ **Example:** Timon and Pumbaa *The Lion King*, Tigger *Winnie the Pooh*, Merry and Pippin *Lord of the Rings*
- ▶ **Shadow:** Prone to addiction, utter apathy, no future, and a major lack of impulse control.

THE MAGICIAN

- ▶ These characters are the masters of the universe: they know secrets that would confound anyone else. They seek enlightenment and true knowledge. Unlike the sage or mentor they want to control rather than assist. They might not be literal magicians, but their abilities are behind the comprehension of the characters in the film.
- ▶ **Strengths:** Knowledge (sometimes forbidden) and power
- ▶ **Weakness:** Hubris or pride (creating their own downfall)
- ▶ **Desire:** To bind chaos to order. To control.
- ▶ **Examples:** Sherlock Holmes, Jay Gatsby *The Great Gatsby*, Ursula *The Little Mermaid*, Saruman *Lord of the Rings*
- ▶ **Shadow:** Master manipulator, controlling in all the most evil ways, heartless, and only wanting to use, manipulate and control.

THE RULER

- ▶ It is not easy being a ruler. How does one do it? They often have many issues to contend with all coming from their rule. Some rule with absolute power, others learn from it. The ruler is a complex archetype used in various different ways in film. They are sometimes seen as perfect leaders - what we want in a leader, other times a warning of what a bad leader can do.
- ▶ **Strengths:** Leadership, power, and charisma
- ▶ **Weakness:** Suspicion and inability to delegate
- ▶ **Desire:** To control and hold onto power
- ▶ **Examples:** Macbeth, Mr. Burns *The Simpsons*, Mufasa *The Lion King*, King Arthur
- ▶ **Shadow:** Extreme power and control. Cannot be toppled without a drastic loss on the other side of the battle

THE REBEL

- ▶ They desire to change what is going on in the world. They see something wrong and want to change it, and they often do whatever they can to do so. They are either actively participating in the downfall of a government or just do things differently because that is what they believe.
- ▶ **Strengths:** Resourcefulness and perseverance
- ▶ **Weaknesses:** Do not have power in status or resources; “small”
- ▶ **Desire:** To change the world for the ‘better’
- ▶ **Examples:** Katniss Everdeen *The Hunger Games*, Sirius Black *Harry Potter*, Robin Hood
- ▶ **Shadow:** Can lose their way and friends, turn to crime, and get lost in it

THE LOVER

- ▶ This character will do anything for love, whether it is a good idea or not. We usually like them for it, but sometimes we groan as they make silly decisions time and time again. They will either get their man/woman in the end, or learn a terrible lesson about love by the end of the film.
- ▶ **Strengths:** Devotion and passion
- ▶ **Weaknesses:** Will sacrifice nearly anything: life, liberty, and identity
- ▶ **Desire:** To be loved and in a relationship
- ▶ **Examples:** Romeo and Juliet, Beauty and the Beast *Beauty and the Beast*, Anna *Frozen*
- ▶ **Shadow:** The seducer, manipulating people in order to be in a relationship, regardless of the moral cost, liar, manipulator, objectify others, and prone to addiction

THE EXPLORER

- ▶ Hopes to escape the confines of their mundane life by travelling or exploring new places. They do not want to stay idle, but they want to go out, see, and learn. The explorer wants to find a more fulfilling life and knows it is not where they currently are.
- ▶ **Strengths:** Quick thinking, resourceful, and curious
- ▶ **Weaknesses:** Impulsive
- ▶ **Desire:** Exploration, to discover, and to find a place to belong
- ▶ **Examples:** Indiana Jones *Indiana Jones*, Ariel *Little Mermaid*, Belle *Beauty and the Beast*
- ▶ **Shadow:** Push others away, a loner, aimless wanderer or thrill seeker, they disappoint themselves, and refuse any attachment.

DIALOGUE/PURPOSE

- ▶ What the characters say in the film determines the purpose of the film.
- ▶ The three roles of dialogue are to:
 - ▶ Provide Information
 - ▶ Advance Plot
 - ▶ Convey Character

PROVIDE INFORMATION/ADVANCE PLOT

▶ Exposition

- ▶ A way to tell the audience background information on the setting, plot, or character.
- ▶ Best way is to **show**, don't tell.
- ▶ Bad Example: when characters say something to each other, that they would already know but it is clearly for the audience's benefit: "They died when I was 6, remember?"
 - ▶ [Dead Parent Test](#)

CONVEY CHARACTER

- ▶ The dialogue someone says allows us to know what and who they are.
- ▶ How they respond to simple dialogue, what they say, how they say it, and who they say it to, is all important.

THEME/MEANING

- ▶ The hardest and most difficult part of understanding a film
 - ▶ What is the point of it?
 - ▶ What is it trying to tell us, about society, ourselves, and the world?
- ▶ Looking at the structure, characters and dialogue, what can we piece together to tell us what the movie is really about?

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