



Carving characters in the mind.: A theoretical approach to the reception of characters in audio described films [

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Analítica

From early childhood on we are exposed to characters in books, cartoons, films, theatre plays, and video games. Through these media we enter fascinating fictional worlds that seduce our imagination with every page or scene. As the events unfold, we become captivated by the story and its protagonists, whose deeper feelings are outlined in a succession of words and/or images that the audience needs to endow with meaning. In their search for comprehension, readers and spectators "picture" the situations described in their minds by creating multimodal representations (mental models) about the events taking place, the place and time in which they occur and, especially, the people involved. This paper is an attempt to explore how audiences receive and understand audio-described film characters. Drawing on research from Cognitive Narratology, Film Studies and Social Psychology, it will be argued that spectators and audio-description users (re)create characters, that is, they extract information from the film and they endow it with meaning with the help of their own mental schemata. Through this process they create the initial mental model of the characters, which will be updated all throughout the film experience. At the core of the model is the characters' psyche, which constitutes a conceptual framework that aids spectators by ascribing coherence to the narrative events. A case study analysing the step-by-step reception process of an audio-described character will be provided to explore how users create mental representations from the integrated information they receive from the film (dialogues and sounds) and from the audio description

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