

How does bennett
reveal to us the
character of lesley;
and how do we
respond to h...



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The character Lesley has been cleverly crafted by Bennett so that the audience can find humour in her inability to read people and situations, yet still pity her desperation for her big chance. By writing the play in monologue form the audience has access to Lesley's intimate feelings as the camera acts in a similar way to that of a confessional. This ensures that the audience can form their own opinion of Lesley.

Bennett's Her big chance started in his series of six monologues called 'Talking Heads'. The monologue form suits Lesley's character because if there were other visible characters, Lesley would find herself being terribly humiliated whereas as it is Lesley can manipulate what the audience are subjected to, through the monologue form. This subsequently means Lesley is not a very reliable narrator; the audience has to infer negative aspects of her character by reading between the lines. Likewise, a monologue only showcases one point of view so the playwright has to use great skill to incorporate other character's feelings through the main character, in this case, Lesley. In Lesley's monologue, the added opinions of others give the audience a better overview of Lesley's character.

When Lesley " said to Scott, 'I know why, they knew I had ideas about the part" and " he said, 'They knew you had a 38-inch bust" the viewers are able to see that Lesley has no talent and is only good for the 'fun loving' parts. Lesley then goes on to say Scott's 'mother's confined to a wheelchair, he's got a lot on his plate', this proves Lesley's failure to interpret other's opinions of her, leaving her isolated as a result. On the other hand, Lesley could be more capable than the audience give her credit for and therefore she was just be dismissing Scott's blunt comment to save her from the harsh reality.

<https://assignbuster.com/how-does-bennett-reveal-to-us-the-character-of-lesley-and-how-do-we-respond-to-her/>

All of Bennett's characters from 'Talking Heads' are isolated and alone due to their particularity. Lesley has many idiosyncrasies which cause people to distance themselves from her. She is always trying to upgrade her small extra parts - 'where you may have seen me, Simon, is in Tess. Roman Polanski. I played Chloe'. No one would have known who she was talking about because 'Chloe was the one on the back of a farm cart wearing a shawl.' Basically she was only an extra but Lesley insists on describing her part by name as if everyone remembers that part because she, herself, gave such a memorable performance. Although she has never had a serious part, Lesley still persists in calling herself 'professional to' her 'fingertips' and fails to realise that the parts she does play are not so different from her, 'fun-loving girls who take life as it comes' even if that means sleeping around to get a part. Invariably, Lesley takes pride in telling people how to do their job, thinking that her contribution is important.

Her inputs are always annoying little comments which doubt the capability of whom she is talking to like, "if it's a migraine rather than a headache Travis probably wouldn't be able to speak," and Gunther said, "Whatever you say." Not only does she interfere with the director's work but she then tells the audience that 'it's wonderful, that moment, when you feel a director first begin to trust you and you really start to build.' Here she misreads the situation as Gunther probably didn't want her to talk because she is no good at acting and she only needed to look good anyway. Another thing Lesley hadn't realised was that with all her interfering over the making of the movie Gunther had probably figured by now out how to get what he wanted out of Lesley.

An alternative example of this is going back to Lesley's audition where she couldn't help but make a suggestion, "reading generally indicates a studious temperament and I'm a very convincing reader... because it's something I frequently do in real life." I could tell he was impressed." She then carries on just because Simon was acting impressed out politeness. Even when he was showing her out she didn't get the picture and suggested putting "Travis in a bikini and give her a briefcase." Not only are these terrible ideas but she could have easily blown her audition if they based it on talent. The audience are able to see how others view her when Lesley had another thought and had to pop back. "He was on the phone. 'You won't believe this,' he was saying." Lesley saw this comment as a positive one as though her audition was incredible; the audience however are able to infer that Simon saw her audition as beyond belief and shocking.

Lesley's constant use of jargon like 'lower echelons', 'p. o. v water-skis' and 'we wrapped at about six (that's film parlance for packed up)' is arrogant and patronising it also implies Lesley is trying too hard to fit into a higher class of society as only people who aren't content with themselves feel the need to demean others. Additionally, Lesley uses "Ciao" and "that's interesting" excessively, it's as though she is trying to be more cultured or more 'interesting', when in fact it just makes her seem unintelligent due to her lack of varied vocabulary.

Bennett's humour is usually at the expense of others, similarly at Lesley's ignorance. At one point in the play Nigel mentions that the director Gunther is pleased with their progress because they are finally 'cooking with gas',

Lesley misreads this and says 'does that mean it's good... because I prefer <https://assignbuster.com/how-does-bennett-reveal-to-us-the-character-of-lesley-and-how-do-we-respond-to-her/>

electricity.' This is a classic 'bimbo' moment, created by Bennett, which the audience can use help them discover the true character of Lesley. Being vulnerable and naïve quite often leads Lesley to waking up in many strange rooms. It is pitiful that Lesley is so desperate and has no belief in herself that she feels she has to sleep with whoever it takes to get a part. This originates from her isolation, she possibly feels lonely and consequently the only way she feels wanted is if she constantly has one night stands.

At the end of the play Lesley is back where she started, in her small desolate flat. This reveals to the audience despite having just performed in a movie she has gotten nowhere as a result. In a way, Lesley can also see this unkind truth as she ends by saying that she would like to 'acquire another skill' like 'selling valuable oil paintings' or 'canoeing.' As she feels that the more you have to give the better you are as an actress. This in her case is true because she doesn't have much talent to give and is also a bad actress; it is also similar to her habit of sleeping with people. She gives them what they want and sometimes she'll get a part. She rounds off by saying 'acting is really just giving.' This line sums up her career, which is quite a sad thought, but she only ever gets used and nothing really comes out of it, because she is left in her tiny flat again on her own.

On the surface Bennett develops Lesley's character so the audience can only abhorred her and her traits, but underlying the viewers could quite possibly feel sympathetic towards her as despite all she went through she still didn't get her big chance.