

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
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Characters in Michelangelo Antonioni's Films

CLAUDIA (in "the Adventure") Agreeable

Character Claudia is a good friend to Anna and a loyal lover to Sandro; unfortunately, those two roles conflict. Although she is confused and torn by that conflict, compared to the narcissism and decadence of the other characters, she appears as a genuine and sympathetic person. Unlike them, she is capable of spontaneity and ruthless honesty. When asked to explain what she meant by saying that her childhood was 'sensible,' she answers, 'I mean, without money.'

Torn Claudia tries desperately to avoid betraying Anna, while at the same time she fights to deny her attraction to Sandro. It is a conflict that tears her apart. A good illustration of the inner struggle occurs when she takes a train to avoid Sandro, only to find that he is on the train. She begs him to go away, to 'get this sacrifice [of denying their love] over with.' She is troubled by the reality of her increasing love for this man, who just three days ago was engaged to Anna. 'Who would have thought,' she says, as much to herself as to Sandro. 'You and Anna.' Shaking her head, she jumps up and shouts, 'How can it take so little to change, to forget?' Sandro says it doesn't take much. 'It's sad,' she says, 'so sad...I'm not used to this. I'm not ready for it...Sandro, why don't you help me?' He suggests that the only way they can help each other is to accept their love, but she won't hear of that. 'No,' she says, 'that's not it. Get off at the next station.' That is the last thing she wants—to lose Sandro—but her loyalty to her friend is an even stronger emotion. In a final, agonised attempt to reconcile the situation, she screams, 'Just let me be.' Throughout this scene, and indeed the last third of the film, we see Claudia tear herself apart, blaming herself for loving a man.

Joyful The depth of Claudia's despair is only equalled by the heights of her soaring joy. The see-saw of her emotions reaches its zenith the morning after they have made love and Sandro has asked her to marry him. As she dresses in their hotel room, she listens to a popular Italian love song and dances around mouthing the words, 'No, no. I will never let you go. You are mine forever.' Her face is lit with manic joy as she prances around, playing the love-sick girl. When Sandro says, in a straightforward tone, that he'll meet her in the piazza, she swoons and impersonates the love-crazed singer. It is a total transformation from the guilt-stricken person of only a day before. Now, when she expresses such delight, we see how terrible her struggle has been.

Compassionate At no point in this long film does Claudia show hatred or act with anything less than kindness. Although she is sometimes flustered, frustrated and defiant, she is always sympathetic. The defining moment of her complex character comes in the final shot. She has just discovered Sandro having sex with another woman in the hotel. She, the betrayer, has been betrayed. It is the lowest point of her despair. She runs out of the hotel onto the street and stops, appropriately enough, in front of a church. She bursts into tears. Sandro follows, sits on a nearby bench and begins to sob. She approaches and stands close behind him. He has stopped crying, but he hangs his head. He turns to say something but stops, too ashamed. Slowly, unseen by him, she raises a hand, withdraws it and then places it on his head to comfort him. They are both broken-hearted, but he is the guilty one. She is the saviour.