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## Psychiatry in literature

### Personality and character

George Ikkos

In Classical Greek *πρόσωπον* means face or mask. The early Latin equivalent is *persona* and contemporary derivatives include personality, even parson. Personality therefore alludes to the face we show the world – what we bare, veil and exaggerate. Dictionaries often conflate personality and character but we may discern differences. While celebrities can be ‘personalities’, actors portray ‘characters’. The word ‘character’ has its roots in the Greek word *χαρακτήρας*, meaning ‘engraved mark’ or ‘instrument for marking’. A cutting through of a kind. Confronted with acute dilemmas we may act ‘out of character’ so to say, thus show character and make our mark!

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