

Damon salvatore essay



Damon Salvatore, a paradox of all things devastatingly horrible and strikingly beautiful. In the television series, *The Vampire Diaries*, Damon Salvatore continuously battles between the complexities of being a hero and a villain. Of all the characters on the show's landscape, Damon is without a doubt the most fascinating and the most complicated. His demonic tendencies, full of bloodlust, juxtaposes with a bone-deep sorrow that is saturated in his own history as son, brother, and vampire all compose of the enigma of his character.

Damon Salvatore is the walking wounded; every sin and pleasure of vampirism is etched on his skin, all of the unrequited desires of immortality rest within his character and he acts them out repeatedly, in the form of his unrequited love and humanity that threaten to pour out from his calloused demeanor. His complexity lies in his emotions; the real emotions, not the ones he pretends to have; not even the ones he reluctantly admits to having, but the ones that he subconsciously feels, the ones that he could never really put into words no matter how much he dare tried.

It is these emotions that drive Damon's actions and reactions, and it is these emotions that make him feel as though he can't control himself. The contradictory nature of Damon charges us to look at him as a way to uncover the definition of what it means to be monstrous, not just the operational definition but in a more humanistic aspect and how that definition is often unstable and not entirely inhuman.

Using the social-cognitive and trait theories, the analysis of personality will demonstrate why Damon Salvatore is so conflicted by his constant struggles

of allowing his emotions to guide his decisions; battling between being beauty and the beast. To start off, by looking at the character of Damon Salvatore from the Social-Cognitive perspective, we can see how the situation, the environment, personal thoughts and feelings can affect a person and vice versa (Myers, 2013).

Damon is the kind of person to surround himself with laid back people who want to have fun drinking until the wee hours of the morning rather than people who would kill his buzz; this environment is what he chooses and it ultimately shapes him and alcoholic tendencies. Reciprocal determinism conveys how our personalities mold how one would react and interpret certain situations (Myers, 2013). If one is more relaxed then a more a calm interaction will occur but if a person tends to be more aggressive, the interaction could result in harm.

With Damon, you constantly see his brashness and impulsiveness heed way, throwing away any conscious thought process and settling for violence and this is seen when he encounters a brawl between two people and instead trying to stop the fight or figure what is going on, he thrashes and snaps the neck of another vampire just to lash out (Dries, 2012). His presence is one that constantly leaves people on edge because it is never plausible whether he will strike or remain calm and that shows how a person can also influence their surroundings and how people react to each other.

Our day to day lives are influenced by various factors such as our nature, cultural and social experiences as well as our thoughts (Myers, 2013) and that is the exact case with Damon. We can see the influence of social-culture

aspects through his childhood experiences. When he was human, he had nobody to turn to; his father showed him nothing but disdain, always favoring his younger brother, Stefan. “ You’ll have to forgive me if I have trouble respecting a deserter. All I have is disappointment” just because he chose to drop out of the confederacy and “ disgraced” his father (Plec & Williamson, 2010).

The life that his father wanted for his eldest son; becoming the heir of the plantation, he would have been expected to take over from his father, leaving him stuck in a place that had no respect for him, a place that had shown no love for him. Those cultural expectations did not work with his charismatic charm and in his human days, he did not want such a small life. Damon’s social support limited to his brother as he lost his mother who had died after giving birth to his younger brother, Stefan, who always seemed to do everything right, favored in the eyes of everybody, always first choice while Damon was thrown onto the back burner.

When Katherine came along (Plec & Williamson, 2009), he thought his prayers had finally been answered. Here was a girl who could show him the world, take him to places that he could never have gone otherwise, introduce him to a world that would accept him for who he is. Because he was so invested in believing in this salvation, he distorted many aspects of their relationship; her inability to be monogamous; her growing relationship with his brother; the fact that she was, essentially, a vampire, one that relished in the idea of murder and manipulation.

He was so blind to everything else, so head over heels in love with the illusion that his love-starved psyche had created for itself, that when the possibility of living forever without it arose, he chose death instead. Life was never kind to him, and of course after realizing that he had been granted immortal life, he indulged in the darkness, pushing all the cruelties of being human along with it. That is apart of who Damon is, he pushes away thoughts and feelings that he does not want to deal with because he doesn't want to feel pain.

In addition, when a person has gone through as much as Damon Salvatore has, of course there are consequences and the physiological influences he undergoes demonstrate just that. Through learned responses, Damon resorts to always going to his wealthy companion, his bourbon, for a distraction, drinking himself into oblivion most of the time. This excessive drinking seems to influence his actions as it always leads to a rash decision. After searching for Katherine for 150 years, she rejects him by claiming that she " never loved him and that it was always Stefan. Once again, his brother wins. Drowning his wits in whiskey, he makes an out of the blue love confession to Katherine's doppelganger, Elena, who mirrors almost the same exact words to him " I love Stefan, it's always going to be Stefan. " Driven by extreme rage and hurt that was heightened as he always closed off his emotions, he lashed out by snapping Elena's brother's neck. (Plec & Williamson, 2010) We can clearly see that when vexation and frustration march through, violence is what he resorts to, in order to block out the pain.

One could look at this as a person who murders or someone who needs desperately to be loved as his actions are driven by just that, frustrating

love. With everything in his past, his unconscious thought process makes trust a major issue as he thinks that “ that only person [he] can count on is [himself]” (Plec & Williamson, 2010) All these concepts of the social-cognitive perspective help understand the complexity of Damon Salvatore. To add to the previous points, when looking at his character from the Trait perspective, we can try to categorize his personality traits according to how he behaves. Myers 2013) Anyone can see that as layered of a character Damon is, he would not just belong to a certain category, just like everybody else, he is a combination of various traits. Damon Salvatore always seem to border along the very unstable to stable line, all depending on the situation he is in. Early on in the plot of the series, Damon appears as a sarcastic, shameless, and vindictive brother whose aim is to destroy whatever shred of normality or decency his younger brother, Stefan, might achieve. He mocks Stefan and goes on a killing rampage.

Throughout the series we see his conflicting emotions, trying to keep his humanity off while growing affectionate towards Elena. Damon’s weakness is revealed by Katherine’s betrayal. (Conrad, 2010) His fears of abandonment and his need to love and be loved (social-culture influences), fully demonstrate that at the heart of his monstrosity, is humanity, discarded and disowned humanity. It is as if he has a need to show that he isn’t human or good. Damon demonstrates that by being taken on impulse, killing the football coach after Stefan tried to point out that he believed Damon still had humanity left in him.

That kill was to prove a point (Bryan & Kilgman, 2009). He needs people to fear him because he cannot open up again, in fear of being battered and

bruised once again. In contrast, we see his tender side in the very same episode when he sneaks into Elena's room and watches her sleep, stroking her cheek and giving her a longing look as she resembles his long lost love. He constantly seems to fighting and struggling with his inner self, not wanting people to see the good in him because "when people see good, they expect good and [he] doesn't want to live up to anyone's expectations. (Blewiweiss & Brian, 2012) The "Big Five" concept of expanded traits can also help define Damon's persona more precisely. On the scale of conscientiousness, we can see that Damon is very high on the impulsive level, acting first and thinking later when his anger gets the best of him, resulting in physical harm. ? It is ironic that at the heart of Damon's character the monster that appears most startlingly is a very human impulse – the need to dictate, to control. He often barks orders like a general and seems out of control, but it's quite the contrary.

Damon is a dictator, a strategist. His calculating nature stands in opposition to a more grotesque fear of abandonment by others; Damon's darkest fear is self-abandonment. The monster in the mirror, for Damon, is uncontrolled hunger, unchecked need, and uncontrolled thought. In terms of agreeableness, Damon is very ruthless in his actions, selfish in terms of getting what he wants yet down the scale he is also very tender hearted, as he is selfish for love. "I don't care about Bonnie, I will always choose you. (Narducci, 2011) He will put the people he loves first, no matter the consequences others may face. Suspicions run high as he has been crossed by every person he has ever trusted, his brother and Elena included. On the scale of openness he is in the middle; practical yet imaginative. Looking at

extraversion, though he could be deemed a sociopath, he is very sociable and loves a good party, even though his definition of party may include getting drunk and indulging in sorority girls blood for a good time and an escape from the pain (Young, 2010).

All these factors from the trait theory all contribute to the making of Damon's character. To conclude, both these perspectives portray Damon's vacillation between hero and villain, accentuating his status as the monster at the heart of the story. In a world where humanity can be cruel, Damon Salvatore represents a glimpse at how we conceive, in some small part, what that monster looks like. He is beautiful; he is flawed; and more times than not, he is more human than monster. A monster who just wants to be human again more than anything. He is beauty and he is beast.