

The analysis of bella's femininity in the movie twilight

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THE ANALYSIS OF BELLA'S FEMININITY IN THE MOVIE TWILIGHT by Brigita Slavinskaite Department of English Philology Vytautas Magnus University Short Story Theory Kristina Aurylaite 11 November 2010 Every society has its norms, stereotypes and expectations which are learned. For example, there is belief that biological difference between a man and a woman confirms the need for different social gender roles (Haeberle 1983). Gender roles are roles which are culturally assigned to males and females (" Encyclopedia of Sex and Gender: Men and Women in the Worlds Cultures").

Therefore females are expected to be feminine. That is, pretty, religious, passive, obedient and domestic. While males are expected to be masculine: strong, active, dominant, materialistic and assertive.

However, these expectations in different societies as well as in different historical periods can be different. About two hundred years ago women did not have a right to vote but now they can even become presidents (" 19th Amendment to the U. S. Constitution: Women's Right to Vote (1920) - Transcript"). Therefore, women have much more independence nowadays when they had earlier.

This essay will consider stereotypical expectations for women in the modern society.

The characteristics of the main protagonist, Bell, in the Twilight movie will be analyzed. Firstly, this essay will examine the most evident features of her as of feminine character: appearance and the use of language. Secondly, it will look at Bella's behavior and character. Finally, the conclusion will be made and it will explain to what extent Bella is constructed as a stereotypically

feminine character. From the first impression about Bella some characteristics can be revealed.

She is good-looking, slim girl with long and wavy hair (Twilight Figure 2). In the film there are at least four scenes where she is called " ' beautiful' " (Twilight 01: 47: 20), " ' pretty' " (Twilight 39: 18), " ' gorgeous' " (Twilight 12: 08), " ' cute' " (Twilight 01: 06) or simply " ' nice' " (Twilight 01: 47: 00). The boy, who falls in love with her, Edward, calls her his " ' personal brand of heroin' " (Twilight 54: 30). This imaginative comparison reveals his strong physical attraction and passion. He felt the attraction instantly, even before they even had a chance to talk for the first time.

Therefore Edward's passion is based only on Bella's physical attractiveness. Other men at school show her sympathy and compete for her attention as well. She is like a " ' shiny, new toy' " (Twilight 08: 06) for the boys. Edward would not fall in love with her and the other boys would not sympathize for her if she was not attractive. So the emphasized importance of a woman's physical attractiveness and beauty is a stereotypical feature in the society.

There is also a difference in Bella's and Edward's language. This difference is reflected in the scene of Edward's confession (Twilight 49: 40).

Cullen talks in long sentences. He says " ' I still don't know if I can control myself' " (Twilight 54: 49) and " ' I never wanted human's blood so much in my life' " (Twilight 53: 54). Bella Swan responses: " ' I know you can' " (Twilight 54: 54) or " ' I am here. I trust you' " (Twilight 54: 06).

The girl uses short responses. Bella is trying to show her reliance upon him and that she is ready to be with Edward no matter what could happen in the <https://assignbuster.com/the-analysis-of-bellas-femininity-in-the-movie-twilight/>

future. Her language is also more emotional than Edward's who constantly looks quite reserved and calm.

When Edward in a calm manner said that she must live apart from him, Bella's speech revealed she was disturbed: " ' No! I can't...

I can't just leave you! ' " (Twilight 01: 45: 25). A number of studies show that women tend to use more polite expressions, tag questions, hedges, emotional vocabulary and minimal responses. They attach more importance to listening of others. Therefore, use fewer interruptions than men (Masaitiene 34) and this tendency is reflected in Bella's speech as well. As a result, the conversation, as well as the relationship, is controlled and leaded by Edward.

Bella tends to follow the conversation rather than starting and leading it. She is emotional, sensitive and passive in her speech and, therefore, she is feminine character. She is also fragile. She needs to be rescued when rapists follow her in the street (Twilight 39: 28), when a dangerous vampire tries to attack her (Twilight 01: 24: 00) and when she almost gets crushed by car (Twilight 21: 15). She is insecure and constantly needs to be saved by a stronger person, in this case - Edward. " ' He could do whatever it takes to protect her.

' " (Twilight 01: 33: 00).

As a result, she is physically weak and needs protection and, therefore, could be treated as a stereotypical female character. On the other hand, there are some reasons why Bella could not be treated as a stereotypically feminine.

She strives for independence from her father. Bella says that " ' One of the best things about Charley: he doesn't hover' " (Twilight 04: 01). In other words, she avoids his control and wants to make her own decisions.

The girl also does not resign with situation when she does not know the truth about Edward and tries to discover it (Twilight 33: 38).

In the restaurant she insisted on him revealing the truth: " ' I want to know the answers' " (Twilight 42: 30). She is not even afraid to criticize the man she loves. Once, Bella told him that his moods are changing so fast (Twilight 30: 33). Finally, her last words in the film are " ' No one surrender tonight but I wouldn't give in. I know what I want' " (Twilight 01: 53: 15).

These words reveal that sometimes she can be very persistent, stubborn, reaching for her goals and not listening to what men insist. She also decided to go to the ballet studio alone.

The girl knew that great danger or even death was lurking for her there. She based this brave decision on love because dying in a place of someone she loves " ' seems like a good way to go' ". Her persistence, some struggle for independence and blind courage are characteristics of muscular character and that is a reason why she cannot be treated as a completely feminine hero.

This essay has shown that in the biggest part of the film Bella is a stereotypically feminine character according to her appearance, speech manner, physical weakness, some acts and decisions.

However, she is not stereotypically feminine in some cases of her braveness, persistence and struggle for independence. Despite the fact that Bella is fragile and incapable of defeating a vampire, she chooses to go and face him. She decides to sacrifice her own life for the people she loves. Therefore Bella's behavior also represents eternal values which are common to every spiritual person in general rather than to a person of one certain gender type.

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