

# Gender roles for the new house wife in fincher's 'gone girl'



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Amy and Nick Dunne in the film *Gone Girl* (2014) are first seen as a perfect match, where their easygoing, yet still romantic, love seems too good to be true. The plot escalates quickly to a suspenseful sequence of events where Amy flees her home and frames her murder to hopefully lead to the conviction of Nick Dunne. Director David Fincher incorporates several flashback scenes that display the couple's chemistry and companionship, which enables the audience to wonder what went wrong in the marriage. Amy Dunne exemplifies a modern housewife stereotype, where their role has evolved away from the physical limitations to the home, but involves the shaping of their personality to satisfy their husband's interests, limiting conflict and thus leading to a happy marriage. The struggles regarding gender roles in relationships can be identified in many melodramas, however Amy is not just caught in the conflict, but blatantly fights it.

The melodramatic *mis en scène* during Amy Dunne's monologue directly confronts this gender conflict with excessive action and speech to break away from the "cool girl" façade. This could be a bit clearer. Before her monologue, Amy states that marriage was not hard work, as the audience watches her and Nick continue to frolic like teenagers throughout their relationship. Following these events, the 2008 recession hit and while they felt the financial pressure she still persisted that she would not be the typical, nagging wife. These moments build upon this notion that Amy had been invested in her persona, which is what Nick fell in love with. Through narration, Amy explains that she kept her husband attracted to her by being the "cool girl", which is the role she played as his multifaceted wife. She made sure she was laid-back but serious, intelligent but sexy- the type of

woman to marry and bring along to a party. It could be insinuated that Amy was struggling with Nick when he was out of work, for example, but in this particular scene Amy's voiceover blatantly analyzes the deep-rooted issue with the audience while they watch her act the opposite way "cool girl" would. While she says that "cool girl" is required to smile and be sexually available, she rebels against this standard through excessive action, rapidly stuffing her mouth with a burger and fries. She continues to make melodramatic gestures by throwing junk food in the shopping cart, negating her narration that states her previous efforts to remain a size two. These movements and decisions are not necessary for her to transition into disguise, but serve to indicate the end of Amy's fake persona. The shots of her defying "cool girl" are copious and include downing a liter of soda, throwing items out of the car window, and significant use of profanity.

These excessive actions violate the sexy and composed woman that she had always been with Nick and informs the viewer that she has overcome the expectations. In a chaotic, dangerous situation an individual in reality would not think to themselves with such eloquence. Although her narration consists of short statements and profanity, which the average angry person could relate to, her tone is still cool and her words are articulate. Making the non-diegetic commentary easy to follow yet dramatic lets the audience comprehend the point that Amy makes. She states that "she [the cool girl] likes what he likes". As Amy drives down the highway she looks over to the other cars and the shots shift to slow motion, as if she is studying the women inside, and calculates what they may have to measure up to in order to relate to their men. It is hyperbole to suggest that the "edgy" woman must

be attempting to look cool for her partner. However, this idea that forming a persona for a man can be present in various contexts, ranging from hobbies to religious values, is an important point the film gets across. Amy applies her role as the low-key, fun wife to other hypothetical situations, showing that other people can create a façade according to their personal situation. Further, this short portion of the monologue calls attention to all viewers watching who may put up a front in their relationships and exposes its problematic consequence: unhappiness. The layering of montage and narration plays a significant role in the monologue in general because the viewer can witness Amy's excessive gestures and thought process. Her rebellion against "cool girl" marks a turning point in the film's plot, but the audience also takes her thoughts into consideration to understand her actions and possibly ponder their role in their own relationship.

Amy Dunne's melodramatic gestures and narration signify the control over her true self and oppose the elements of the low-maintenance woman that Nick desires. As the audience listens to her talk through the details of what her role required, they are able to further sympathize or relate to the modification of her personality. It is not just assumed that Amy was unhappy in her marriage with Nick, but she clearly comes into tension with her expectations as a woman and took action to release herself from them completely. The *mis en scène* and non-diegetic sound may not reflect a real life enlightenment, but the scene's excessive elements serve to convey Amy's grasp on her role as a wife and newfound freedom.

## Filmography

<https://assignbuster.com/gender-roles-for-the-new-house-wife-in-finchers-gone-girl/>

Gone Girl. Dir. David Fincher. Perf. Ben Affleck, Carrie Coon, Kim Dickens, Neil Patrick Harris, Rosamund Pike, Missie Pyle. Regency Enterprises, 2014. Amazon.