

# Femininity in american cinema



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Femininity in American Cinema The attempt to implement some form of categorization of human characteristics and behaviors into the two seemingly distinct classes, namely "feminine" and "masculine" would be to openly rely on the currently dominant, yet often misrepresented culture of society, as well as to lay stress on the dependence of the perspectives on the essentialist notions of the binary woman/man[1]. During the so-called Golden Age of Hollywood, which lasted from the end of the silent era in American cinema in the late 1920s to the late 1950s, movies were issued from the Hollywood studios like the cars rolling off Henry Fords assembly lines[1].

Most Hollywood pictures were based on scripts which had a plainly obvious adherence to the tried and tested formula of the attraction between the sexes, where the feminine element played centre stage. The female was largely seen to be responsible for the occurrence of the various events in the plot, which were unfailingly the result of the male-female chemistry prevalent in the perception of society.

A classic example of the feminine element in American cinema would be the 1998 romantic comedy "You've Got Mail". Meg Ryan portrays Kathleen Kelly who is involved with Frank Navasky (Greg Kinnear), while maintaining the fact that the two were otherwise acquainted in business. While Frank, as a newspaper writer for the New York Observer, is devoted to the typewriter, Kathleen prefers her laptop and logging into her AOL e-mail account [1]. This maybe interpreted as a portrayal of the sense of adaptation of the modern female as opposed to the modern male who maybe seen as sticking to the traditional path of existence. A further shade of thought may lie in the storyline where the hero runs a considerably large bookstore with

commercial values taking the forefront, while the heroine runs a small corner shop book store. This may be a subtle allusion to the subordination supposedly meted out from one gender to the other, in the backdrop of a long online courtship without either party being aware of the other's identity.

Yet another 1998 film, " Savior", portrays a different shade of the feminine element. The film portrays a Serbian woman and her newborn child being escorted by an American soldier to a safe house during the Bosnian War. This may well be an allusion to the primitive idea of the protection warranted by the fairer sex. The portrayal of the feminine element here, as with most of the citable examples, is largely an instrument to emphasize the different shades of the masculine form. The men who assist the female are invariably labeled Good, while the men who act against the female are labeled Bad. Even in the context of the modern American female being an independent and liberal valued individual, the idea behind the film makers' storylines remains primitive. The new age blockbusters such as Spiderman also portray women as the needing protection from the male dominant. Also, the negative attitude of the male labeled to be the villain is seen to affect the so called hero only when it is targeted directly at the female element. This basic trend is essentially the nature of the feminity angle in virtually all of American cinema, in spite of being projected against varying backdrops and at various ages.

#### Works Cited

[1] " Youve Got Mail.", " Feminity", " Savior", Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. 24 Jul

2007, 03: 13 UTC. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 2 Aug

2007