

# The types of women in movies

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Monday Mar 14, 2016 7:30 PM PDT



1 **The Ugly Duckling:** Any movie in which an obviously attractive teenage girl is asked to portray  
2 a role where she's called ugly for wearing a pair of glasses and having her hair messed up,  
3 leading to a makeover montage where someone gets her some decent clothes and contact lenses  
4 and combs her hair, which solves her popularity problem. On the one hand, this type of character  
5 and story can be seen as a criticism of society's cruelty towards those that are different, and  
6 maybe make a commentary about body image issues as they apply to women. However, when  
7 the makeover comes and basically buys into all of those societal standards of what a beautiful  
8 woman is supposed to be, any commentary or criticism goes out the window, since the message  
9 of the story is no longer about inner beauty. Instead of admiring what's different, it's a fantasy  
10 about fitting in and how something different wasn't so different at all when given opportunities.

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12 **The Ingénue and the Free Spirit:** A young woman whose innocence or "purity" of spirit is a  
13 feature of why she's desired. The woman's innocence is a character attribute which will "save"

14 her male partner from his depression, dysfunction, and problems. This is either expressed  
15 through a virginal woman who represents a truer path towards love and fulfillment, or a quirky  
16 woman living life honestly and to the fullest, who somehow takes a liking to a dull, sad sack guy  
17 in need of help. The problem with these types of characters is they only really exists to serve the  
18 goals of the men, without any real agency. So many times the characters can fall into being  
19 "appealing props to help mopey, sad white men self-actualize."

20 **The Uptight B Word:** Any female character who's the counterpoint and main antagonist of the  
21 fun loving guys at the center of a story. In a lot of films from the 1970s and 1980s, there's a  
22 weird tendency for the uptight female antagonist to be redeemed through sex. Basically all the  
23 female antagonist needs is for someone, usually a manly man, to love her and she stops being so  
24 mean. If it's not sex which changes things, then becoming motherly toward a child character will  
25 bring out the character's feminine instincts and mellow her disposition. Similar to the "ugly  
26 duckling," an uptight woman usually is dressed badly or conservatively, hair up in a bun or  
27 ponytail, which allows for us to know she's okay when the hair comes down or a makeover  
28 occurs.

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30 **The Seductress:** Ever notice the trait usually shared by Femme Fatale killers in thrillers and  
31 mysteries? They're sexually aggressive. In most works, if a woman likes to have sex, she will  
32 almost always either be vapid, treated like a whore, or ultimately fall into being depicted as the  
33 "crazy girl" in the story.

34 **The Final Girl:** The final girl usually has a unisex name (e.g., Ripley, Sam, etc.) and is usually  
35 portrayed as an idealization of female innocence. She's probably not sexually experienced,  
36 doesn't drink, doesn't smoke, doesn't do drugs, and more likely than not is a bit of a Mary Sue.  
37 As many have noted, the final girl seems to be based on conservative attitudes of what they think  
38 women "should be." On the other hand, the final girl is usually separated emotionally from her  
39 parents and the horror of the story tends to be connected to the sins of the parents, which is  
40 hidden behind a facade of family values.

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42 **The Fat Girl:** Usually the sidekick to the main female lead. She might not even be fat or  
43 overweight, and may well be attractive, just not Hollywood attractive (i.e., she's not thin to the  
44 point of being near anorexic). The Fat Girl's job is to be the exuberant, sassy friend that's there



45 to dish on guy problems...and be the shoulder to cry on in any romantic comedy when the  
46 relationship goes wrong at the end of the second act.

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48 **Action Girl:** An interesting dichotomy of the 1970s and 1980s era of exploitation films. Some  
49 feminists saw sexism in the T&A or the acts of violence directed at the female characters.  
50 However, the other side of the argument is that some of the exploitation films were also the first  
51 films to have strong female characters that weren't dependent on men to "save" them.

52 **Eye Candy:** Like the action girl, this character tends to be undressed a lot. Unlike the action girl,  
53 an eye candy character exists only to be an attractive sight for teenage boys and 40-year-old  
54 teenage boys. She's there to either show her body, tease showing her body, and generally isn't  
55 really a character that bears any substance to the plot. She's an object that encapsulates sexual  
56 fantasies. Many times she's paired with a man twice her age who might be near Social Security  
57 age.

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59 **The Unsatisfied Wife or Girlfriend:** A female character that is so unhappy in her marriage  
60 she attempts to break out of it, usually in the worst ways imaginable. This tends to include  
61 extramarital affair, prostitution, and murder, especially if the unhappiness becomes so strong it  
62 causes the character to veer into "psycho woman" territory. Whether or not the situation may be  
63 partially her doing or no fault of her own doesn't matter. Most stories are very moralistic and  
64 want to end with a happy conclusion. So instead of acknowledging that some people shouldn't be  
65 together or the possibility that sometimes people should be with the "other" person, most movies  
66 will gravitate toward reuniting couples after their problems, and reaffirming the sanctity of a  
67 committed relationship.

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