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THE NURTURER VERBAL PORTRAYAL IN CINEMA: NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

Summary: The research focuses on psycholinguistic analysis of a female cinematic archetype. The characters' narratives are predominantly defined by the heroines' archetype and personality; to a lesser extent by the context of the cinematic story. The study is based on Jung's idea of the archetype as a repetitive image of the collective unconscious, common for different cultures, languages, and societies. Each archetype performs a certain function in the plot, predetermined by a number of constant motivations, defining the characters' (verbal) behavior. Post-Jungian researchers have developed various typologies of psychological archetypes. Among the proposed repetitive images, one of the most recognized is the Great Mother / Caregiver / Nurturer, which is distinguished by care, protectiveness, devotion, and sacrifice. Maslow's hierarchy of human needs serves as the basis for delineation of archetypes. Despite numerous changes in the representation of female characters in mass culture cinema, the Nurturer archetype (term by Schmidt, 2007; Cowden, LaFever, & Viders, 2013) stays essential and frequently exploited. This study focuses on the verbal representation of the Nurturer archetype in three top box office cinematic stories recreating the *Beauty and the Beast* motif, namely *Beauty and the Beast* (2017), *The Twilight Saga* (2008-2012), and *Fifty Shades* trilogy (2015-2018). The paper focuses respectively on the turns of Belle, Bella Swan, and Anastasia Steele, leading female protagonists representing the Nurturer archetype in the examined franchises. The founding idea of the present paper postulates that the verbal representation of the same archetype bears similar narratives, which mediate the heroines' needs and motivations. The aim of the research is to establish the set of narratives, characteristic of the Nurturer archetype in contemporary cinematic stories. The Nurturer archetype is an altruistic, parental character, distinguished by protectiveness, compassion, and generosity. The Nurturer needs to care for the loved ones, which defines her narratives about providing food, comfort, safety, protection and reassurance, dependence, stability, love, and affection. The 'virgin-beast trope' predetermines the heroine's narrative of a romantic relationship.

Keywords: female character, psycholinguistic image, qualitative analysis, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Twilight Saga*, *Fifty Shades of Grey* trilogy

1. Introduction

Recently there has been a significant increase in the number of female protagonists in moving image narratives, both in film and TV (Bassil-Morozow, 2018, p. 115). Despite the growing number of new heroines, attempting 'to overthrow binary gender expectations, and to explore the issues encountered by women as independent questors on the way to autonomous existence' (Bassil-Morozow, 2018, p. 116), the archetypal representatives of traditional gender roles are still popular and widely exploited in the mass culture cinema.

Cinematic narratives employ archetypes as easily recognized images, having clear-cut motives and needs. The idea of the archetype rooted in the collective unconscious as proposed by Jung (1968), has been further developed by researchers in different fields of study. Several classifications of archetypes, focusing on individuals' psychological characteristics have been proposed and applied since then (Mark, & Pearson, 2001; Schmidt, 2007; Faber, & Mayer, 2009; Cowden, LaFever, & Viders, 2013). However, there has been no attempt to compose a typology of psycholinguistic archetypes to account for common narratives in the verbal portrayal of definite archetypes. As narratives about an individual's life trajectory, including subjective descriptions of the past and the future, appear to be central to selfhood and identity (Hirsh, & Peterson, 2009, p. 524), the present paper proposes a set of narratives characteristic of the Nurturer archetype (the term by Schmidt, 2007; Cowden, LaFever, & Viders, 2013).

The research employs the cinematic characters' language analysis. The material under investigation consists of the turns of three female characters featured in nine English-language mass culture films. Being the leading female protagonists in the researched films, and representing the same 'virgin-beast trope' (the term by Maas & Bonomi, 2021) within one of the *Beauty and the Beast* cinematic stories, the Nurturers demonstrate similar narratives, characteristic of the archetype and trope. The turns taken for the research belong to Belle (*Beauty and the Beast*, 2017), Bella Swan (*Twilight*, 2008; *New Moon*, 2009; *Eclipse*, 2010; *Breaking Dawn – Part 1*, 2011; *Breaking Dawn – Part 2*, 2012), and Anastasia Steele (*Fifty Shades of Grey*, 2015; *Fifty Shades Darker*, 2017; *Fifty Shades Freed*, 2018).

The nine films of the same motif target diverse audiences from children (*Beauty and the Beast*, with no age limitation), and teenagers (*The Twilight Saga*, 16+) to adults (*Fifty Shades* trilogy, 18+). Hollywood's ability to communicate with mass audiences throughout the world, across barriers of class, race, and nationality, echoes Disney's own incredible success in the global marketplace (Mollet, 2020, p. 7) due to the companies' extensive usage of archetypal images.

2. The Beauty and the Beast motif

Likely originating from a Greco-Roman folktale and situated within the second-century book, the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, the tale of *Cupid (Eros) and Psyche* is often read as the transformative union of the soul with love. The essence of the tale found a form in the *Beauty and the Beast* fable and continues to thrive (Horvath, 2020, p. 171). Texts that resonate with an audience often give way to retellings and reworkings, the purposes of which may vary from being highly critical of the source text to illustrating a desire to never allow the original story to end (Leavenworth, 2011, p. 69).

Other than the most widely-recognized *Beauty and the Beast* tales of de Beaumont and Disney, a number of writers from all over the world have recreated the tale (Consiglieri Pedroso's Portuguese tale *The Maiden and the Beast*, Evald Tang Kristensen's Danish tale *Beauty and the Horse*, the Italian tale *Zelinda and the Monster* and Chinese folk tale *The Fairy Serpent* to name several) (Banks, 2022, p. 1). Each writer has retold the tale according to the expectations of his society, however, all the stories perpetuate the idea that submissive young girls are to accept their Beastly suitors and show love, affection, or commitment to them. If they do this, they are rewarded by Beasts' metamorphosis into handsome suitors (Banks, 2022, p. 2).

The Twilight Saga, which keeps the general idea of the *Beauty and Beast* motif and describes the relationship between an immortal and a mortal, also contains analogies similar to those found in the *Eros and Psyche* myth (Horvath, 2020, p. 171). The *Fifty Shades of Grey* series, which began as a *Twilight* fan fiction, *Master of the Universe*, published under the penname Snowqueens Icedragon on FanFiction.net

(Wilt, 2014; Larabee, 2015) shares with its counterparts basic elements of the motif story: 'the vulnerable virgin heroine and the aloof, dark and handsome hero locked in a cat and mouse pursuit of an intermittent love/hate relationship that culminates in a denouement of reconciliation and happily-ever-after' (Al--Mahadin, 2013, p. 567).

The indicated stereotypical norms, portrayed in all kinds of media are tropes. As readers (or viewers) digest a new story, if there is a discernable trope within it the reader/viewer does not experience the story for the first time, but implicitly reads/views both stories simultaneously, recognizing the old in the new, validating the trope. One of the common heterosexual relationship tropes is that of a passive female (virgin/beauty) and an aggressive male (beast) who must be tamed (Maas & Bonomi, 2021, p. 512). The ever-present 'virgin-beast trope' stays popular with the public as evidenced by its representation in nine of the top fifty-five box office films with a leading female character over the last twenty-five years.

Beauty and the Beast (2017) is Disney's live-action adaptation of their most critically and commercially successful fairy tale of the Eisner era (Mollet, 2020, p. 153). It reveals the narrative of the Beast's transformation into the considerate, loving, and self--sacrificing man through Belle's friendship and care (Jeffords, 1995, p. 170). Belle is presented as an enlightened, resourceful, keen-on-reading feminist, having aspirations far beyond the 'provincial town' in which she lives (Mollet, 2020). The context is situating the story in a small French town of the fifteenth century and an enchanted castle in a nearby forest.

The Twilight Saga of romance fantasy films based on the book series of the same name was released in 2008-2012. It tells the love story between teenager Bella Swan and vampire Edward Cullen, their subsequent marriage, and having a daughter. The context places the story in a contemporary American town where ordinary people unknowingly coexist with vampires and shapeshifters. The heroine is a high--school introverted intellectual, ready to sacrifice her life and humanity to save the ones she loves; the male protagonist is a self-loathing blood-sucking monster in dire need of emotional healing and love.

The *Fifty Shades* film trilogy was released in 2015-2018, becoming the seventh highest-grossing R-rated franchise of all time. It tells the story of a romance between Anastasia Steele (a reserved and naive literature student) and Christian Grey (a handsome but intimidating billionaire). The context varies considerably as 'the unfamiliar, sordid world of dungeons and bondage, discipline, sadism and masochism (BDSM) was brought to bear upon the life of a character most young women could relate to' (Al-Mahadin, 2013, p. 567).

Critics consider that these three relationships demonstrate unhealthy features masked in romanticization; the inherent disproportional power dynamic of the virgin-beast trope results in the male partners using their 'beastly power' through threats, intimidation, isolation, and stalking to control the subordinate and virginal female partner. In response, the female partners try to 'tame the beast', but ultimately suffer harm as a result (Maas & Bonomi, 2021, p. 511). Still, the trope reverberates with the wide public and seems natural due to the psychological characteristics of the leading heroines. Their calm, caring, and reassuring essence and the basic need to heal and support create believable images of the Nurturer archetype. The Beasts are shown to have lost their mothers in their early years; two of them have had to stand the cruel treatment of their fathers (the Beast in *Beauty and the Beast* and Christian Grey in *Fifty Shades* trilogy). Edward (*The Twilight Saga*) lost his both parents but was not treated cruelly, his trauma roots in the inner conflict over the loss of humanity and becoming a monster. Thus, all the male protagonists need a Nurturer to step into their mothers' place.

3. The Nurturer archetype

Any person (and thus a fictional character, being a simplified replica thereof) is compelled to satisfy his/her physiological and higher-level needs to survive and self-actualize. The basic needs are those for food and water, heat, safety, belonging, and love as distinguished by Maslow in his classification of human needs (Maslow, 1943). The person to satisfy the survival needs of the loved ones is the representative of the Universal Mother / Caregiver / Nurturer archetype.

As argued by Faber & Mayer, the Caregiver (or Universal Mother) is represented by caring, compassion, and generosity. Persons of the archetype are commonly protective, devoted, sacrificing, nurtu-

ring, and parental; they are usually very benevolent, friendly, helping, and trusting (Faber, & Mayer, 2009, p. 309).

Mark & Pearson similarly define the Caregiver as an altruist, moved by compassion, generosity, and a desire to help others. Her worst fear is that something will happen to a loved one – and on the Caregiver's watch (Mark, & Pearson, 2001, p. 209). The researchers draw parallels between the Caregiver archetype and prehistoric mother goddesses, being revered for the power to give birth as well as the capacity to support life through providing food, comfort, and nurturance. Throughout history, the Caregiver as an archetype has been associated with maternal feelings of protectiveness toward children and the willingness to do what is necessary to take care of them, even if doing so requires considerable sacrifice (Mark, & Pearson, 2001, p. 210).

Likewise, Cowden, LaFever, & Viders distinguish the Nurturer archetype, whose goal is taking care of everyone around her. She makes sure that all her loved ones are happy and content before thinking of herself. Common sense and a steady hand make her an ideal mother, companion, or friend. People depend on her competence and steadiness in moments of crisis. She is the glue that holds everyone and every situation together. She has a need to be central and indispensable in the lives of those she loves. The one problem this woman has is her inability to say "no." The Nurturer has a terrible time disappointing anyone (Cowden, LaFever, & Viders, 2013, p. 92).

Schmidt defines the Nurturer as the archetype ruled by the sense of duty to help others (Schmidt, 2007, p. 44). Belle (*Beauty and the Beast*, 2017) helps her father to fix a music box, teaches a girl to read, and assists the inhabitants of the enchanted castle to protect their home against intruders. Bella helps her mother and later father with the household duties (*Twilight*, 2008), participates in destroying Victoria (*Eclipse*, 2010), and fighting off the Volturi (*Breaking Dawn – Part 2*, 2012). Anastasia replaces Kate in interviewing Christian Grey and helps with arranging his photo session (*Fifty Shades of Grey*, 2015); she works as a shop assistant and later as an editor assistant (*Fifty Shades Darker*, 2017) and comes to rescue the captive Mia Grey from Jack Hyde (*Fifty Shades Freed*, 2018).

The Nurturer has dreamed of having children for most of her life, and when she has them, they become her life. If she is unable to have children or if she is looking for the right father to come along, she channels her energy into helping and caring for others. She is often found in the nursing and healing professions (Schmidt, 2007, p. 45). Belle nurtures the Beast, wounded by wolves on his way to rescue the runaway girl. Belle feels responsible for him and cannot let the altruistic though bad-tempered beast bleed to death. Bella (*Breaking Dawn – Part 2*, 2012) is protecting her otherwise invincible vampire husband with a mental shield against the villainous Jane, who mentally inflicts pain on her victims. Anastasia (*Fifty Shades Darker*, 2017) is waiting on Christian to come home after the helicopter accident. The Nurturers heal their respective beasts' psychological traumas and provide them with emotional support.

4. Narratives of the Nurturer characters in a *Beauty and the Beast* story

As each researched story targets a particular age and social category, the content (a model of heterosexual relationship), the archetype of the leading female characters, and their core narratives stay the same, while the context (the circumstances of the story), stock characters and periphery narratives of the characters change. According to the author's previous research, the Nurturer's narratives are those about providing food, comfort, safety, protection and reassurance, dependence, stability, love, and affection (Berezhna, 2022, p. 47).

The Nurturers in the researched films demonstrate narratives typical for the archetype in general and themes characteristic of the *Beauty and the Beast* motif stories. The leading narrative is that about caring. The Nurturer worries about the well-being of the loved ones:

> Belle: *Goodbye, Papa… Stay safe. / Papa! What are they doing to him? He's in trouble! / Let him out! He's hurt* (*Beauty and the Beast*, 2017).

> Bella: *Be careful* (*Twilight*, 2008). *I can't even think about someone hurting you. / You feel like you have a fever. Are you okay?* (*New Moon*, 2009). *I think they left to keep us safer… I'll never let anybody hurt you. / Take care of my daughter* (*Breaking Dawn – Part 2*, 2012).

Anastasia: *Is he okay? Is he in a lot of pain?* (*Fifty Shades of Grey*, 2015). *He's gonna be fine. He has to be okay. / I was so scared. I thought I lost you forever* (*Fifty Shades Darker*, 2017). *Fly safe. / Is the baby… the baby's okay? Is Mia okay?* (*Fifty Shades Freed*, 2018).

Even her love story is often based on pitying the male character and her wish to heal his physical and emotional traumas:

Belle: *If you held still, it wouldn't hurt as much… Try to get some rest* (*Beauty and the Beast*, 2017).

Bella: *Damned? Like hell? …you couldn't be damned. It's impossible… Carlisle told me how you feel about your soul. I don't believe that* (*New Moon*, 2009).

Anastasia: *Oh. You were adopted at age four. / She seduced you? So, she introduced you to all this? Mrs. Robinson?.. She's a child abuser* (*Fifty Shades of Grey*, 2015). *Are these burns? Who did this to you?* (*Fifty Shades Darker*, 2017).

The Nurturer is eager to help:

Belle: *Monsieur Jean! Have you lost something again? / I want to help you. There must be some way to break the curse* (*Beauty and the Beast*, 2017).

Bella: *All right. Do you want a ride to school or something?* (*Twilight*, 2008). *Do you need some help with those? / Are you sure, there's nothing I can do to help?* (*Eclipse*, 2010).

Anastasia: *What can I help you with?* (*Fifty Shades of Grey*, 2015). *Do you need a hand with that? / So if you need anything, I'm available* (*Fifty Shades Darker*, 2017). *Okay, big guy, come on. Lean on me* (*Fifty Shades Freed*, 2018).

The Nurturer often focuses on the themes of food, nutrition, and cooking. The narratives are of symbolic meaning as nutrition represents care. When Belle is scared and angry at the Beast, she denies him her company at the dinner table: *I'd starve before I ever ate with you* (*Beauty and the Beast*, 2017). When she starts caring for him, Belle sees his discomfort at using silverware and quietly shows an example of drinking soup straight from the plate.

Bella's care about her father frequently involves his nutrition: *You finished (eating)? / You should order one (salad) for yourself next time. Cut back on the steak* (*Twilight*, 2008). With the plot development, she worries about the nutrition of her vampire family: *Well, I'm not gonna let you starve* (*Eclipse*, 2010).

Anastasia cares for her friend and roommate Kate when the latter falls ill: *I'm gonna make a sandwich. Do you want one?* (*Fifty Shades of Grey*, 2015). The focus of her nutrition narrative is frequently Christian. First, she sees him as a generous philanthropist: *Is that something that you feel passionate about? Feeding the world's poor?* (*Fifty Shades of Grey*, 2015). Then, she represents a popular trope of 'the morning after', as she cooks wearing his shirt: *You hungry? Because I'm making pancakes* (*Fifty Shades of Grey*, 2015). After a short break-up, she agrees to share a meal with Christian, revealing her hunger for his attention: *I will have dinner with you. Because I'm hungry* (*Fifty Shades Darker*, 2017). At the restaurant, Anastasia disagrees with his choice of dish, demonstrating her demand to have an independent opinion on their further relationship: *Um, actually, I'm gonna have the quinoa salad* (*Fifty Shades Darker*, 2017). Generally, she demonstrates her eagerness to cook and please him: *Medium rare, just how Sir likes it* (*Fifty Shades Freed*, 2018).

The Nurturer provides emotional support and reassurance; she speaks about affection and stability. The idea of parting with the loved one is unbearable:

Belle: *Of course I came back. I'll never leave you again. / We're together now. It's gonna be fine. / Come back. Please don't leave me. I love you* (*Beauty and the Beast*, 2017).

Bella: *I'm only afraid of losing you. / I was unconditionally and irrevocably in love with him. / You want me to go away? No, I can't… I can't just leave you… We can't be apart. You can't leave me* (*Twilight*, 2008). *I love you. / I belong with you. / You can't break up with me* (*New Moon*, 2009).

Anastasia: *I've fallen in love with you* (*Fifty Shades of Grey*, 2015). *No, no, please don't go… Don't leave me. / I know that we haven't been together very long, but I love him so much. He's the one* (*Fifty Shades Darker*, 2017). *I vow to be your faithful partner in sickness and in health. I promise to love you unconditionally, to honor and respect you, to bring you solace in times of*

> *need. I promise to cherish you as long as we both shall live. / I'm angry with you, Christian. You left me when I needed you (Fifty Shades Freed*, 2018).

The Nurturer is ready to take significant risks and even sacrifice her life to protect those she loves. When the Beast captures and imprisons Bella's father for trespassing and plucking the rose, Belle prefers to take her parent's place: *I asked for the rose. Punish me, not him* (*Beauty and the Beast*, 2017).

Bella is first ready to die trying to protect her mother: *I'd never given much thought to how I would die. But dying in the place of someone I love seems like a good way to go* (*Twilight*, 2008). Then she cannot stand the idea of Edward being tortured and killed: *Stop! Please! Stop! Just stop hurting him! Please! Please! No! No! Kill me! Kill me! Not him* (*New Moon*, 2009). In the end, she decides to proceed with her dangerous unnatural pregnancy irrespective of the risk to her life: *I can do this. I'm strong enough… Everything's gonna be okay… I'll hold on as long as I can… (Breaking Dawn – Part 1*, 2011).

Anastasia risks her life and the life of her unborn child to rescue her sister-in-law from Christian's nemesis Jack Hyde: *Oh, my God. Mia. Jack, I brought you all the money. It's all in the car. Just let me have Mia. Jack, please just let us go. I did what you wanted. I gave you what you asked for* (*Fifty Shades Freed*, 2018).

The ideas of children and motherhood are of crucial importance for the Nurturer. She is the ultimate Mother figure, taking care of everyone around. Discouraging underage pregnancies in her young female audience, Belle proclaims to Gaston: *I'm… not ready to have children* (*Beauty and the Beast*, 2017). However, she demonstrates a motherly function by teaching a local girl how to read. The child narrative is additionally embodied by Chip, Mrs. Potts' son.

For teenagers and mature women (the target public of *The Twilight Saga* and *Fifty Shades* trilogy), the motherhood theme is distinguishing. In general, female characters in *The Twilight Saga* create a narrative in which motherhood is the only licit objective of womanhood. This theme returns with increasing frequency through *New Moon* and *Eclipse*, reaching its apotheosis in *Breaking Dawn* (Whitton, 2011, p. 125): *I know this seems like a scary thing, but it's not. It's like this miracle or something (Breaking Dawn – Part 1*, 2011).

Anastasia's narrative of motherhood is about unconditional love and priorities: *I will choose this baby over anybody because that is what decent parents do. It's what your mother should have done for you, and I am so sorry that she didn't… You're not happy about this baby. I got that… But babies happen when you have sex… So we can either do this together… or I will do it without you* (*Fifty Shades Freed*, 2018).

If the Nurturer is allowed enough screen time to reveal her background story, the audience sees the heroine's relationship with her parents. Bella and Anastasia both have a solid father at their back, clueless but loyal and dedicated, as well as a somewhat ditzy mother (Wilt, 2014, p. 198). Belle adores her loving artistic father having lost her mother many years ago. For Belle's family, the loss was a traumatic experience: *It was the one story Papa could never bring himself to tell. I knew better than to ask* (*Beauty and the Beast*, 2017). If present, the Nurturer's mother is rarely a nurturing figure, which explains the heroine's necessity to don the mantle. In the lives of Bella and Anastasia, the mother is barely there, concentrating on her romantic life and personal interests:

> Bella: *I would miss my loving, erratic, harebrained mother… My mom remarried, and… Phil… travels a lot, and my mom stayed home with me, but I knew it made her unhappy, so I figured I'd stay with my dad for a while* (*Twilight*, 2008).

> Anastasia: *Um, my mother is on husband number four. She's an incurable romantic* (*Fifty Shades of Grey*, 2015).

The void is filled in the stories by other Nurturers, as the heroine needs friendships with other women, who see value in motherhood and service (Schmidt, 2007, p. 45). Thus, Belle befriends Mrs. Potts, the castle's teapot/housekeeper. Bella looks up to Esme (the adopted mother of five young adults) and Emily (the mother figure of the werewolves pack). Anastasia admires Christian's adoptive mother, Dr. Grace Grey (who is in the healing profession as typical for the Nurturer).

The father figure is essential, in his own way sometimes more important than the mother is. He is the source of unconditional love and support in the absence of mother and the first object of the Nurturer's care:

Belle: *Forget you? Everything I am is because of you. / I love you too, Papa. / Papa! Don't hurt him! / I'm worried about him. He's never been on his own* (*Beauty and the Beast*, 2017).

Bella: *But my dad is there... He could get killed because of us! We have to go back!* (*Twilight*, 2008). *I love you, Dad. Forever* (*Breaking Dawn – Part 1*, 2011). *I'm so glad Charlie found somebody to take care of him* (*Breaking Dawn – Part 2*, 2012).

Anastasia: *My dad died when I was a baby. So, I was raised by my stepfather, Ray. He's amazing. / Dad! Hi!.. That's okay. You're here, that's all that matters* (*Fifty Shades of Grey*, 2015).

Another prominent narrative of the Nurturer is the theme of home as a safe place for the family. The word 'home' marks the place, where the Nurturer belongs. Thus, for Belle, it is first the house of her father: *Papa… Your hands are ice. We need to get you home*, later it becomes the castle of the Beast: *Let's go home* (*Beauty and the Beast*, 2017).

Similarly, for Bella it is first the house where she lives with her mother: *So I can't bring myself to regret the decision to leave home*, then it is the house of her father: *I have to go home. Now* (*Twilight*, 2008). The day before her wedding, she changes 'home' to 'house': *Okay, go, before they break my house* (*Breaking Dawn – Part 1*, 2011).

Anastasia lives in different places: *Will you just take me to my house? / I really don't see why we can't just go back to your apartment. / I need to get some things from my apartment…* (*Fifty Shades Darker*, 2017). But the places she calls 'home' are those she shares with Christian: *Now, maybe we could take this celebration home. / And this is not a prestige project. This is gonna be our home* (*Fifty Shades Freed*, 2018).

The following narratives are distinguishing for the leading female characters within the motif stories of *Beauty and the Beast*. The heroine is presented as reserved, self-conscious, considered odd by other people; a loner.

Belle: *Papa, do you think I'm odd? / The villagers say that I'm a funny girl… but I'm not sure they mean it as a compliment… Almost as lonely as your castle* (*Beauty and the Beast*, 2017).

Bella: *I'm really kind of the more suffer-in-silence type. / Oh. Prom. Dancing. Not such a good idea for me. / Is there something wrong with me? / What if they don't like me? / I don't really mind being alone* (*Twilight*, 2008). *I hate being celebrated* (*New Moon*, 2009).

Anastasia: *I don't think I'd fit in here. Look at me. / Organized group activities aren't really my thing. / Don't you like me the way I am?* (*Fifty Shades of Grey*, 2015).

Bella and Anastasia are prone to self-depreciation due to the imbalance between the heroines and their respective love interests:

Bella: *You don't want me?.. (I am) Not good enough for you. / Because it doesn't make sense for you to love me. I mean, I'm nothing* (*New Moon*, 2009).

Anastasia: *I'm nothing. He'll get tired of me. / I'm scared. I know you say that I'm enough. But there are certain things that you are used to getting that I will never, ever, ever be able to give you* (*Fifty Shades Darker*, 2017).

Belle reveals her self-evaluation in the conversation with Gaston: *I might be a farm girl. But, I'm not simple…* (*Beauty and the Beast*, 2017).

A part of the heroine's identity is greatly influenced by literature, which gives her a high standard for the life she dreams to have. For Belle, this hobby is sufficiently abnormal to be looked upon as odd by the townspeople (Mollet, 2020, p. 154):

Belle: *Thank you. Your library makes our small corner of the world feel big. / Actually, Romeo and Juliet's my favorite play* (*Beauty and the Beast*, 2017).

Bella: *I actually really just want to go to this bookstore* (*Twilight*, 2008).

Anastasia: *(My thing is…) I don't know. Books? / Am I a romantic? Well, I study English Lit. So, I kind of have to be* (*Fifty Shades of Grey*, 2015).

The beasts' suitability for their respective heroines is underlined by the former's being sensitive, intellectual, and well-read. The Beast reads *King Arthur and the Round Table*, Edward freely cites *Romeo and Juliette*, and Christian quotes *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

The heroine's life is boring and uneventful; her love life is inexistent until she meets the beast:

> Belle: *Little town / Full of little people / Every morning just the same. / There must be more than this provincial life* (*Beauty and the Beast*, 2017).

> Bella: *Like what? Like watch baseball on the flat-screen? Eat at the diner every night? Steak and cobbler?.. That's not me* (*Twilight*, 2008).

> Anastasia: *I was reading Austen and Brontë and nobody ever measured up to that. I guess I was waiting for something exceptional. And then I met you* (*Fifty Shades Darker*, 2017).

The integral part of the narrative is an unsuitable partner, representing ordinary life. In Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, Belle is a classic introvert. Gaston, by contrast, shows the worst side of an extroverted nature, loud, boastful, and desirous of attention from the crowd. These opposites do not get along, which creates some dramatic conflict (Smith, 2015, p. 51):

> Belle: *Gaston… we could never make each other happy. No one can change that much… and I'm never going to marry you…* (*Beauty and the Beast*, 2017).

> Bella: *I just think it means, you know, something a little different to you. So… Jacob, please, don't do this. Because you're about to ruin everything…* (*New Moon*, 2009). *I thought you understood. I don't feel that way for you…* (*Eclipse*, 2010).

> Anastasia: *No, José is more like family. He's not my boyfriend. / Waiting. Never one I've wanted.* (*Fifty Shades of Grey*, 2015).

Greatly significant in the 'virgin-beast' trope is the heroine's narrative about the beast's abusiveness. The beast is described as cold, domineering, cruel, intimidating, and moody. He locks the heroine up, limits her communication with friends and relatives, stalks her, and orders her around:

> Belle: *Are you so cold-hearted… you won't allow a daughter to kiss her father goodbye? / You've taken me as your prisoner and now you want to have dinner with me? / Well, if you hadn't frightened me, I wouldn't have run away. / Well, you should learn to control your temper! / …he was mean and he was coarse and unrefined* (*Beauty and the Beast*, 2017).

> Bella: *You know, your mood swings are kind of giving me whiplash. / Did you follow me?.. So you followed me. / Why did you hate me so much when we met? / …there was a part of him, and I didn't know how dominant that part might be, that thirsted for my blood* (*Twilight*, 2008).

> Anastasia: *So, you're a control freak? / I find you intimidating… Not to mention high-handed. / You're so bossy. / Is this what our relationship will be like, you ordering me around? / Why do you want to punish me? Why do you wanna hurt me?* (*Fifty Shades of Grey*, 2015). *You were getting off on the pain you inflicted. / This isn't a relationship, Christian. It's ownership* (*Fifty Shades Darker*, 2017). *You can't keep me in a cage* (*Fifty Shades Freed*, 2018).

The next important stage in the 'virgin-beast' relationship comes when the heroine starts seeing something positive in the beast, justifies his actions, and protects him against public opinion:

> Belle: *And now he's dear and so unsure / He's gentle and kind. / He's not a monster, Gaston. You are! The Beast wouldn't hurt anyone* (*Beauty and the Beast*, 2017).

> Bella: *I can see what you're trying to put off, but I can see that it's just to keep people away from you. It's a mask (Twilight, 2008). They never hurt anybody* (*New Moon*, 2009). *…someone like you. I mean, someone capable of courage and sacrifice and love* (*Breaking Dawn – Part 1*, 2011).

> Anastasia: *I just wonder if perhaps your heart might be a bit bigger than you want to let on? / Um, he was really polite, and… courteous, and very formal, and… very smart. And intense… I can understand the fascination* (*Fifty Shades of Grey*, 2015). *I mean, it's complicated, but I've never been happier* (*Fifty Shades Darker*, 2017).

The narratives about virginity and having sex are significant in the stories, targeting teenage and adult audiences. In *The Twilight Saga,* the initiative belongs to Bella, while Edward sticks with the 'ancient' notion of abstinence until marriage:

> Bella: *Please just don't worry about that. Edward is… old school… Dad. I'm a virgin! / I want you… Try. Just try… You really make me feel like I'm some sort of villain trying to steal your virtue or something* (*Eclipse*, 2010).

Bella's evaluation of sex is positive even though it involves pain as Edward fails at controlling his supernatural strengths being intimate with her:

> Bella: *I'm fine… Why can't you see how perfectly happy I am?.. I mean, we knew this was gonna be tricky, right? I think we did amazing. I mean, it was amazing for me* (*Breaking Dawn – Part 1*, 2011).

In the *Fifty Shades* trilogy, it is Christian who introduces virginal Anastasia to the world of BDSM practices. The heroine's narrative contains explicit descriptions and specific terminology, underlining the interlacing ideas of pain, submission, and pleasure:

> Anastasia: *Do women do this to you? Or do you… You're a sadist?.. Why would I do that? To please you? How? You'll punish me… / How could I know what I'd be willing to try? I wouldn't know. Because I haven't… / I'm not exactly jumping at the opportunity to get whipped and tortured in your red room of pain. / "The Submissive shall submit to any sexual activity demanded by the Dominant and shall do so without hesitation or argument"* (*Fifty Shades of Grey*, 2015).

5. Conclusions

Contemporary cinema is a complex construct, an intersection of social, psychological, cultural, and linguistic patterns that serve not only to entertain the public but also to reflect and influence society. Women in films are often depicted as the incarnation of the Great Mother (Caregiver / Nurturer) archetype – caring, protective, and nurturing. Their recognizable narratives on providing food, reassurance, safety, and support are globally deemed appropriate and natural. The Nurturer archetype is highly compatible with the *Beauty and the Beast* motif ('virgin-beast' trope) as the female characters in the stories are caring and submissive. Over the last twenty-five years, nine films representing the combination comprise the top 55 box office cinematic stories.

The Nurturer focuses on the physical and emotional well-being of the loved ones. She freely provides her help and support, from something as mundane as cooking and cleaning to the ultimate sacrifice of her life in order to save her child/parent/partner. Her identity is wrapped up in those she loves; her life is senseless without them. It makes the theme of leaving unacceptable and painful. The idea of motherhood is sacred for the Nurturer as she strives to have and bring up children. Her relationship with mother is of reversed nature as the Nurturer assumes the role of mother in the family. She admires other, more experienced Nurturers. She appreciates her father as he not only provides love but also accepts her caring in response. Home is paramount for the Nurturer as it is the safe place for the whole family.

The *Beauty and the Beast* motif defines the heroine's narratives about her being lonely and considered odd by commoners, infatuation with literature, and dull, uneventful life (unlike the one described in the novels) before she meets the beast. The heroine is not satisfied with the suitors pursuing her as they do not correspond to the high standard defined by the stories she reads. She describes the beast first as rude, authoritative, dominating, oppressive, and stalking. Having spent some time together, she sees him as a traumatized little boy, caring, intelligent, sensitive, in dire need of protection, and healing. The 'virgin--beast trope' predetermines the narratives about the innocence of the heroine, and her painful but pleasurable initiation into sex life.

Further research might focus on the composition of narrative typology, distinguishing female cinematic characters of different archetypes. Being based on the highest-grossing English-language films of the 21st century, the typology might reflect the global vision of women in the modern world.

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