

Female Roles in Anime Essay

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Since the midterm of the class, we have watched several anime focusing on female protagonists or other important characters in a number of different roles. It is interesting to note the different views the creators have on gender roles, and how they express them in their anime, both visually and contextually. For the sake of saving time, I will explore only two anime that we have watched, namely [Ghost in the Shell](#), and End of Evangelion.

Ghost in the Shell has a strong female protagonist, Major [Motoko Kusanagi](#). She is headstrong, determined, incredibly strong, and rather overconfident as a result. A recurring theme throughout the movie is her uncertainty in her identity. Since she is a cyborg, she states that she cannot prove her existence, even if she is told that she has a human brain inside her electronic body, she has no way of proving it. Just because she has a 'ghost' does not prove that she is human.

In contrast, the apparent antagonist of the film is an electronic entity known only as the "Puppet Master". Since the Puppet Master is composed solely of data and only exists within the confines of electronics (such as computers and cyborg bodies), it has no apparent [gender](#), but is usually referred to as a male for the sake of ease. It is introduced as a character when a cyborg body is manufactured, walks out of the factory, and is hit by

a car. The body is brought into Section 9 and perplexes the residents, as It contains no brain cells, but the body seems to contain a ghost. The Puppet Master claims itself as a sentient being, capable of recognizing its own existence, and demands political asylum.

Both Motoko and the Puppet Master question their existence, but in opposite ways. The two are drawn to each other throughou...

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...are pulled into the Egg of Lilith, as she watches over it in a motherly fashion. In this role, Lilith is the mother giving birth to a new creation.

Lilith hands control of the process over to Shinji, making him the god and ruler of the new creation. The female creates, yet the male rules. Unfortunately for humanity, Shinji's loneliness causes him to accept that all beings should merge, with all remaining one sea, shapeless and genderless.

It appears that the authors of End of Evangelion intended it to question not just gender roles, but most aspects of human existence as a general theme. Ghost in the Shell focused on organic vs. electronic, but gender questions are an inherent and unavoidable companion. Both films serve their intended purpose: to make the viewer ponder and possibly question social stigmas, traditional roles, and the true meaning of human life.

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