THE INFLUENCE OF NEOCONSERVATISM IN THE DEPICTION OF VIOLENT NON-NORMATIVE WOMEN IN EROTIC THRILLERS FROM 1980 TO 2000

by

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U.S. erotic thrillers of the 1980s and 1990s are intrinsically intertwined with the socio-political history of the culture wars. Both the counter-culture movements and a laxation of cinematic censorship during the 1960s resulted in an increase in sex and violence on-screen, in addition to non-normative behavior. Thus, the culture wars began, with neoconservatives and antifeminists in the late 1970s to the 1990s pushing for traditional family values against a backdrop of loosening social mores. Violent non-normative women in erotic thrillers of the 1980s and 1990s highlighted antifeminist sentiments of the era through literalization of non-normative lifestyles as dangerous to traditional family values and U.S. culture.

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Introduction

Time and time again, women are labeled as "dangerous" for partaking in illicit sexual activity on-screen and in real life. Women are not supposed to desire; that would be an exhibition of dominance and counter societal gender roles of femininity and masculinity.[1] As a result of Second Wave Feminism and the Sexual Revolution of the 1960s, women had more sexual freedom than ever before.[2] An antifeminist backlash arose in the 1970s within the U.S. against these progresses, determined to limit newly gained liberties through political and media discourse.[3] The decrease in censorship within the film industry during this era correlated with an increase in sex and violence on-screen, which often reaffirmed traditional gender roles.

The erotic thriller genre capitalized on the culture wars of the late 20th century through films that combined soft-core sex scenes and violence against a backdrop of heteronormativity. Yet what is at the forefront of these films are violent, sexual women, resisting societal norms of gender, race, and sexuality through their lustful and often violent behavior.[4] While the women in these films use physical violence, their existence as sexual beings is a form of retaliation against a society that restricts them. These women are non-normative as they transcend gender expectations of the ideal cisgender woman, who is submissive to her male partner.[5]

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[1] See Rodríguez 140 for discussion on female sexuality and shame from an intersectional lens.

[2] Allyn 18 outlines the intersections between the Sexual Revolution and Second Wave Feminism.

[3] Faludi xx writes that "the antifeminism backlash has been set off not by women's achievement of full equality but by the increased possibility that they might win it."

[4] Williams x and Martin 1 claim that women are "othered" by their lack of conformity to gender norms in erotic thrillers.

[5] Gender normativity is defined as "behavior that is compatible with cultural expectation" by the American Psychological Association.

The non-normative women in erotic thrillers during the 1980s and 1990s were primarily white, single, cisgender career women who engaged in excessive premarital sex, sometimes in non-heterosexual unions. While non-normative women include those whose identity contradicts societal norms, the erotic thriller primarily focuses on women who have the potential to be normative but decide not to for personal benefit, or non-normative women struggling to conform through violent means. Non-normative women and their sexuality are seen as dangerous to society because they illuminate a future in which the ideal cisgender man is obsolete, in which all normative women are turned violent by the dangers of feminism and exist without men. Therefore, non-normative women are perfect villains for the erotic thriller, a genre that is defined by gender dynamics and often involves the disruption of the nuclear family.[6]

The erotic thriller is an amalgamation of genres—noir, rape revenge, thriller, romance.[7] It can be big-budget or independent, released in theatres or direct-to-video. What ultimately defines the erotic thriller is a general plot: people involving themselves in sexual acts that result in violence to themselves and/or those around them. Whether they are non-normative women hunting down their rapists or non-normative women threatening the safety of their lover's family, these films explore common societal anxieties around gender. The antifeminist politics of the 1970s and beyond can be viewed in how feminist women are depicted on-screen in these films.[8] Hollywood cinema, which is more economically than creatively driven, made billions of dollars

[6] See Piddock 66 for why the non-normative woman in erotic thriller "signifies a backlash."

[7] See Williams 21 for an explanation of gender fluidity in the erotic thriller.

[8] Andrews 11 writes that "soft-core texts register an opposite postfeminist anxiety through "backlash" scenarios that undermine feminist advances."

from erotic thrillers in theatres and direct-to-video. Viewers want to be titillated by the forbidden, and no topic is more mysterious to the American public than female and queer sexuality.[9]

This thesis utilizes historical context of the U.S. culture wars of the late 20th century in conjunction with film analysis to explore how gender is represented in erotic thrillers from 1980 to 2000. The representation of non-normative women in erotic thrillers was debated in the clash between feminism and traditional family values in the socio-political sphere of the 1980s and 1990s. Chapter one provides a historical context of Second Wave Feminism of the 1960s and 1970s and the neoconservative movement that emerged in the late 1970s to counter cultural changes around gender roles and sexuality. Arguments of neoconservatives in support of traditional family values of the late 1970s and the 1980s, particularly anti-ERA propaganda, are introduced to explain how traditional family values became embedded within American culture. Reagan's presidency, gender politics, and antifeminism of the 1990s are discussed in order to analyze false pro-woman narratives that emerged to reaffirm female subjugation within a sexual empowerment facade. The lack of intersectionality in Second Wave Feminism and Third Wave Feminism is briefly examined to address how societal progresses often disregard women of color.

Chapter two covers the history of violence and sex in American cinema through the lens of censorship. The first half discusses the Production Code and resulting genres and sub-genres that included violence and sex within and outside of strict legal parameters. The overview continues into exploitation cinema and New Hollywood, in

[9] For the complicated relationship between forbidden female sexuality and cinema, see Andrews for 11 – 15.

order to explain how erotic thrillers emerged from noir, exploitation, and changes in censorship. The second half of the chapter discusses the shift to blockbusters during the 1980s to the 1990s and contrasts sex and violence in 1970s films versus modern action thrillers, which all impacted the representation of sex and violence within the erotic thriller.

Chapter three is a literature review of erotic thriller studies and analysis of erotic thrillers from a historical context. The neoconservative history and film history of the prior chapters provides a basis for analyzing the effect of socio-politics on erotic thriller cinema. Defining the rape revenge genre within the erotic thriller, the chapter utilizes original analysis in comparison with prior scholarship. The chapter is divided into a section regarding rape revenge erotic thrillers, a case study of *The Hand that Rocks the Cradle,* and ruminations on queer women in erotic thrillers.

The erotic thriller of the 1980s and 1990s is emblematic of the societal shifts occurring within the nation and societal anxieties around sex and gender. This thesis highlights how erotic thrillers reflected Second and Third Wave feminism and antifeminism through the lens of the culture wars and censorship influence. Without understanding history, it is impossible to create inclusive cinema. Erotic thrillers promoted traditional family values and often shamed women for their attributes that did not align with gender roles. The erotic thriller genre and violent non-normative woman are imperative for addressing not only current horror cinema, but U.S. filmography and the influence of our socio-political climate. Media has a profound influence on how we view ourselves and the people around us. The erotic thriller sheds light on not only have

women were viewed in the 1980s to the 2000s, but also how non-normative behavior is treated in current day United States.

Chapter One: Neoconservative Historical Context

The combined efforts of Second Wave Feminism, the Civil Rights Movement, the Sexual Revolution, and opposition to American involvement in Vietnam during the 1960s and 1970s resulted in a drastic cultural shift in how Americans viewed each other and the world around them. The distinctions between gender, race, class, and sexuality blurred, as youth began to realize that the country their parents believed in was governed by an upper-class, white, male, Protestant hegemony. Traditional family values were unrealistic for young people due to loosening sexual norms. Studies by the Associated Press found that 27% more women from 1975 to 1979 had premarital sex than from 1960 to 1964 and the U.S. Census notes that the marriage rate for women dropped 13.7% from 1950 to 1970.[10] By 1979, feminist activist Betty Friedan, famed for kickstarting Second Wave Feminism with her book *The Feminine Mystique*, noted in the *New York Times* that "only 17 percent of American households reported a father as the sole wage earner, a mother as a full time homemaker, and one or more children," (SM10). The denouncement of societal gender roles by counter-culture youth caused both conservative and liberal thinkers to join the cultural backlash, or neoconservatism, in maintaining traditional family values.[11] Neoconservatism of the late 1970s reinforced antiquated stereotypes around gender, sexuality, and race in order to contain the unraveling of their white, heteronormative society.

[10] See U.S. Census Bureau (2012) Table MS-2. Estimated median age at first marriage, by sex: 1890 to the present.

[11] Cooper 51 writes that "it was in reaction to this countercultural and antinormative left—a left that challenged the sexual foundations of the Fordist consensus —that neoconservatism was born."

Neoconservative Arguments

Neoconservatism was predominantly founded by a group of Jewish New York liberals frustrated with the Democratic party's acceptance of counter-culture ideals around sex and gender during the late 1960s.[12] Revolving around neoconservative magazine *Commentary*, these intellectuals fought against what they considered the radicalization of the Democratic party with traditional family values and economic conservatism.[13] Neoconservatism was not a new concept; it simply reinforced societal norms on how people should behave. The support for the nuclear family, or a father who works and a mother who cares for the children, was economically rather than religiously motivated for many neoconservatives.[14] They theorized that the conjunction of social services and Second Wave feminism degraded the family and the country, as it placed the economic burden of single mothers and people of color on the entire nation.[15] As neoconservatives were mainly middle to upper-class and white, these groups were less likely to rely on social services. The American Dream has been historically positioned in the media as the white middle-class American family and the advancement of these groups keeps power in the hands of the white and privileged. Neoconservatives disparaged single career women as they did not want to pay for social services, which did not affect their demographic of white, upper-class nuclear families.

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[12] Hartman 40 defines neoconservatism as "a label applied to a group of prominent liberal intellectuals who moved right on the American political spectrum during the sixties, took form precisely in opposition to the New Left."

[13] See Hartman 40 – 69 for the history of 1960s and 1970s neoconservatism in the United States.

[14] See Faludi 229 – 257 for the Religious Right's response to feminism.

[15] Cooper 9 writes that "Neoliberals are particularly concerned about the enormous social costs that derive from the breakdown of the stable Fordist family: the costs that have been incurred, for example, by women who opt for no-fault divorce, women who have children out of wedlock or those who engage in unprotected sex without private insurance; and the fact that these costs accrue to the government and taxpayer rather than the private family."

Neoconservatives based their support for traditional family values on the idea that more single women resulted in an increase in unemployment.[16] Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, a set of social service policies from 1964 to 1965 that aided many single women and people of color, was considered to be the cause of inflation by neoconservatives. However, the causes of inflation during the 1970s were a combination of multiple factors, such as increasing debt from the Great Depression and Nixon's reluctance to raise taxes during the Vietnam War.[17] Neoconservatives countered that more single mothers and divorced women resulted in higher rates of unemployment and usage of social services, leading to high taxation that hurt American middle-class families. With the rise of career women and single men, many neoconservatives worried that the family wage would decrease, resulting in smaller salaries. Therefore, neoconservatives ultimately prioritized white nuclear families over communities that needed more economic support due to institutionalized inequality based on the principle that white American families are necessary for capitalism to function.

It is crucial to note that 1970s neoconservatives targeted white women in their fight against Second Wave Feminism, as women of color were often excluded. Despite a lack of media representation, women of color were involved in promoting feminism at the same time as white women.[18] While the majority of well-known feminist groups

[16] See Cooper 9 -12 for the connection between 1970s inflation and the neoconservative push against social services.

[17] DeLong 247 writes that "The National Industrial Recovery Act and the abandonment of the gold standard at the nadir of the Great Depression generated a year of nearly 10% inflation. But aside from wars and Great Depressions, at other times inflation is almost always less than 5% and usually 2-3% per year-save for the decade of the 1970s."

[18] Baxandall writes "African American Women have historically had a stronger tradition of honoring women's independence, often due to necessity, than have white women. Surveys done in the early 1970s show that, in general, Black women were more feminist than white women in their attitudes toward

during the 1960s and 1970s were white women, many women of color founded activist groups that promoted intersectional women's liberation.[19] The activist groups Sisterhood of Black Single Mothers, Mothers Alone Working and the Mount Vernon/New Rochelle, were made up of primarily black women promoting gender and racial equality (Baxandall). One of the most notable working-class feminist groups during the 1970s was the Coalition for Labor Union Workers, founded by a black woman with several black women officers on the board (Depliss 34). While white feminists were in the mainstream, black feminists and racial inequality issues were in the background of the Second Wave Feminist movement. Neoconservatives correlated feminism with white feminist career women, as this was the media narrative.[20]

By using pro-women language and detailing their value to society, neoconservatives of the 1970s attempted to convince white women that Second Wave Feminism was harmful for them. Aggrandizing the importance of the housewife to society was one way that neoconservatives appeared to be on the side of white women. In the popular antifeminist book *Sexual Suicide* (1973*)*, author George F. Gilder writes that the woman "is the vessel of the ultimate values of society. The society is what she is and what she demands in men" (Howard and Tarran 42). The argument that women were to blame for poor male behavior stemmed from the concept of inherent gender and sex differences. Gender stereotypes identify the cisgender woman as pure and moral

specific issues such as daycare, equal pay, equal work, and equality in relationships."

[19] Polatnik 2 writes "in the late 1960s, many White women who advocated women's liberation began to make it their central or even exclusive political focus, whereas most women of color who advocated women's liberation tended to spread their efforts among racial, class, and specifically women's issues."

[20] Baxandall quotes Elizabeth Toledo, NOW vice-president of action and organizer who on February 2022, 1998 claimed at the Women of Color and Allies Summit that "Women of color have shaped the feminist movement from its inception in this country, yet the public face of feminism is often seen as white."

due to her lack of sexuality, while men are at the whims of their sexual urges. Gilder claims that the home is where children learn what is right and wrong, which places the misdeeds of men and society as a whole on womankind. This type of language attempted to entice white women to the side of neoconservatism by exaggerating their moral compass. However, it also threatened these women to remain in their place; otherwise the state of the world was at threat.

The push for an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) by feminists in the 1970s was perhaps the biggest threat to neoconservatives. The law would legalize rights for women that allowed them to leave the home, such as pay-check equality, and choose their own lifestyle outside of the confines of men. Phyllis Schlafly, one of the leading antifeminist activists and traditional family values supporters of the era, published a rebuttal to the Equal Rights Amendment in her 1972 conservative newsletter *The Phyllis Schlafly Report*. The article, titled "What's Wrong With 'Equal Rights' For Women," surmised that family life could fulfill a woman's needs by giving her security and comfort over the stress of a career. Schlafly epitomized the viewpoints of neoconservatives from a pro-woman standpoint, rather than an occupation, as she believed having a family gave women total fulfillment. She also proposed that the Equal Rights Amendment would make laws applicable to men also applicable to women, such as the draft. Schlafly became one of the most prominent figures of the anti-Era campaign among antifeminists with her campaign to defeat the amendment.[21]

Print media galvanized neoconservative thinking starting in the late 1970s by publishing a series of studies and articles correlating Second Wave Feminism to an

[21] See Hartman 88 – 89 for a history of Phyllis Schlafly's contributions to the Roe v. Wade debate.

increase in crime and the overall degradation of the nation. One of the main arguments against feminism of the late 1970s was that white women and children were at risk of drug use, pre-marital sex, non-heterosexual sex, and other non-normative activities without a traditional family home life. In 1976, *the New York Times* published the article "Is Feminism Linked to Rising Crime Rates? A Link Between Feminism, Crime?" The article claimed that women's increased access to civil liberties resulted in proliferation of female crime, as women felt more empowered to act on their whims. The article quoted Los Angeles Police Chief Edward M. Davis heavily, who claimed that the lack of mothers in the home resulted in more "juvenile crime," as it was the mother's job to teach her children how to behave (Cimons f1). Davis continued that "if mommy believes in swinging, she believes that you can lie, cheat and steal, that you can do whatever you want to," adding that this can lead to "the use of dope, stealing, thieving and killing" (Cimons f1). The neoconservative opinion of Second wave feminism in the 1970s and 1980s began to take a hold with anecdotal evidence and fearmongering in the media, in addition to scientific journals. A psychological report conducted by researchers Alfred B. Heilbrun Jr. and David M. Gottfried in 1988 reported similar findings, with the authors hypothesizing that changing gender roles for women due to feminism allowed women to feel more empowered to commit criminal acts. Historian Susan Faludi writes in *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* that these studies arose due to pressure on US Census Bureau demographers from the Reagan administration.[22] The lack of nonpartisan viewpoints in

[22] Faludi 8 writes that " during the Reagan administration, US census bureau demographers found themselves under increasing pressure to generate data for the government's war against women's independence, to produce statistics proving the rising threat of infertility, the physical and psychic risks lurking in abortion, the dark side of single parenthood, the ill effects of day care."

many journalistic sources during this era popularized the belief that traditional family values were best for all Americans.

Neoconservatives also targeted the LGBTQIA+ community as they believed homosexuality degraded traditional family values. Neoconservative writer Midge Decter wrote in *Commentary* that homosexuality

> mocked…. family men, caught up in getting and begetting, thinking of mortgages, schools, and the affordable, marking the passage of years in obedience to all the grubby imperatives that heterosexual manhood seems to impose.

In other words, same-sex desire could convince heterosexuals that the nuclear family equaled entrapment. Yet LGBTQIA+ individuals in the 1970s and 1980s was still considered a criminal behavior, consequently resulting in arrests, violence, and a lack of social services for the community. Professor Michael G. Lee writes that "the availability of supportive resources in mainstream society remained scarce, given that many members of the medical and mental health establishments still adhered to the premise that homosexuality was a mental illness" (168). Despite non-normative sexual behavior amongst the LGBTQIA+ community becoming increasingly accepted due to the sexual revolution, the notion of homosexuality as a criminal act resulted in legalized discrimination. Gay bars were routinely raided, with people of color, drag queens, and lesbians routinely arrested, while white, male customers were allowed to leave.[23] The Stonewall Riots in 1969, a series of demonstrations against police raids at the Stonewall Inn, brought the undercurrent of LGBTQIA+ rage to public awareness.[24] The lack of

[23] Matzner 2 writes "the more "deviant" patrons (that is, drag queens and butch lesbians, especially if they were "colored") would be arrested and taken away in a paddy wagon, while white, male customers looked on or quietly disappeared."

[24] Halkitis 1 writes that "The events at the small bar in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of New York City that commenced on June 28, 1969 and lasted for five days ignited a social movement that had been in the making for decades."

public policy response to the AIDS epidemic solidified the anti-LGBTQIA+ sentiments of the U.S. government in the 1980s. Despite people of varying sexual identities dying of HIV and AIDS across the nation, Reagan and his administration refused to make a statement until 1985 or legalize many AIDS drugs due to the cabinet's opposition to homosexuality on religious grounds.[25] Schlafly was one of the leading activists against the Gay Rights Movement of the 1980s, using similar language to disparage their political gains as she did with Second Wave Feminists and the ERA.[26]

1980s and 1990s Post-Feminism

By the 1980s, Second Wave Feminism's reputation was thoroughly degraded by the Reagan administration with their support of the nuclear family. Due to his background in the film industry, Reagan knew how to cultivate his image and ingrain cultural messages through simple slogans and television appearances. The image of family man Reagan as a savior of American society propagated neoconservatism within his base.[27] Similar to most mainstream antifeminists and neoconservatives, Reagan claimed to support women, stating in his 1982 State of the Union that his cabinet's support for women was "firm and unshakable." In 1981, Reagan signed the Executive Order 12336, or the Task Force on Legal Equity for Women and a Fifty States Project, in order to "examine State laws for discriminatory language." However, this action proved to be emblematic, with one third of budget cuts affecting social service

[25] See Prince and Risely 185 for the Reagan administration's first response to the AIDS epidemic.
[26] See Schlafly 'Feminist Fantasies' 103 – 104, 105 – 106, 107 – 109, 122, 208 for her thoughts on the vulgarity of homosexuality.
[27] Prince and Risely 188 write that Reagan knew how to manipulate the media, presenting an image "of a dedicated patriarch come to restore America to greatness."

programs that mainly aided women.[28] These cuts affected social security, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, government assisted housing and food stamps.[29] In addition, only three out of fifty-three judges appointed to judicial positions were women and there were no women within his cabinet. His support of women appeared to be rhetoric and his antifeminist campaign in the guise of traditional family values strengthened as Reagan's popularity rose.

By 1984 and Reagan's reelection, his real stance on Second Wave Feminism was clear, as he buckled down with antifeminist propaganda during his last term. In his 1984 State of the Union, Reagan praised antifeminist activists, stating that "bedrock values of faith, family, work, neighborhood, peace, and freedom…help bring us together as one people." Spokeswoman Faith Whittlesey called feminism a "straight-jacket," in a speech titled "Radical Feminism in Retreat" that same year and in Reagan's 1985 State of the Union, he proclaimed "if the family goes, so goes our civilization." This belief that heteronormative white America relied on the nuclear family fueled Reagan's base and turned white women away from feminism.[30] In 1986 the administration released a report titled "The Family: Preserving America's Future" that summarized these statistics into an argument for why public policy must support the nuclear family. The post-feminist landscape was nearing amid Reagan's

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[28] See Faludi xvii.

[29] Schafran A23 notes the budget cuts that specifically affected women.

[30] Gelenter writes in neoconservative magazine commentary "The social rule decreeing that mothers stay home functioned in much the same way. Some women were indeed constrained; many others were protected. Most mothers, my guess is, have always valued the best interests of their children above money or power or prestige, and still do." This guilt trip tactic was used by many antifeminists to emphasize the importance of childbearing and staying at home.

neoconservative propaganda, as negative stereotypes of Second Wave Feminism were propagated in the media.

The connotation of Second Wave feminism as a radical movement by the 1980s turned white women against feminist activism or identification with the term. Susan Bolotin wrote in *The New York Times* that the failure of the ERA in 1982 was the turning point for feminism's reputation, fully solidifying its new reputation as a "radical" and "separatist" movement. Feminist activist Jane Mansbridge added to this claim with the idea that the political climate would have to be completely altered for the ERA to win, as both conservative politicians and middle-class white women had turned their back on feminism. In Bolotin's article, published shortly after the failure of the ERA, college student Diana Shaw claimed that "I don't label myself a feminist. Not for me, but for the guy next door that would mean that I'm a lesbian and that I hate men." Another career woman in the article, account executive Jessica Jackson, theorized that the connotation between lesbianism and feminism deterred college women from associating with the term or involving themselves in feminist events or groups. Even for white mainstream women who were not convinced by the nuclear family, the idea of losing male attention was too drastic for them to consider feminism.

The political climate remained neoliberal, with George H.W. Bush continuing Reagan's neoliberal agenda.[31] When Democrat Clinton was elected in 1992, some wondered if the country would return to the progressivism of the 1960s.[32] Yet Clinton's

[31] See Sandbrook 27 for the transition from Reagan to Bush.

[32] Harrison 4 elaborates that "Bill Clinton had come into office in 1992 amid a wave of optimism for a Democrat government committed to addressing social inequalities, but his brand of 'third way' politics, which prioritized electability over ideology."

policies aligned with Reagan's neoliberalism around race, gender, and sexuality, as he attempted to appease both parties.[33] Mandatory minimum drug sentencing during Reagan's administration and white flight from cities furthered the "us" versus "them" rhetoric from a racial lens, as a decrease in social services and raising incarceration rates affected people of color. The Clinton administration's adoption of "Don't Ask Don't Tell," lack of support for Affirmative Action despite increasing attacks from the right, and color-blind policies alluded to a new era of post-progressivism.[34] Clarence Thomas' appointment to the Supreme Court despite Anita Hill's sexual harassment testimony proved that society was unwilling to address intersectional feminist issues, only appearing progressive at face value by appointing a black man.[35] Historian Colon Harrison wisely notes that

> the widespread desire for black representation in the Court appeared to triumph over the wish to acknowledge the injuries suffered by a black woman. Echoing the problems of the Black Power and feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s, it once again seemed that women were invisible in race politics and race was invisible in gender politics (15).

[33] Sandbrook 27 writes that Clinton was centrist, "proved distinctly willing to ditch long-cherished liberal programmes in the name of the new order."

[34] Harrison 21 notes that "the reigning philosophy of the Clinton administration in its early years had been to smuggle in policies assisting racial communities as a 'hidden agenda' beneath an overt rhetoric of benefits for all."

[35] Harrison 15 writes that "the widespread desire for black representation in the Court appeared to triumph over the wish to acknowledge the injuries suffered by a black woman."

Despite an increase in public black feminist voices during the 1990s, the same issues that plagued Second Wave Feminists continued to threaten intersectional equality in Third Wave Feminism.

As Mary Ann Glendon summarized in the *Los Angeles Times* in 1995, white people now associated feminism with a "sour attitude toward family life, its rigid party line on gay rights and abortion and its puzzling combination of sexual anger with sexual aggressiveness." Many white women claimed to be "post-feminist" during this era, as they worried career advancement would ruin their chances of matrimony.[36] Yet the majority of this neoconservative attacks on feminism positioned feminism as a single movement with a common ideology, when in reality, the history of feminism has been debated amongst intersectional scholars.[37] Feminist scholar Stephanie Renz writes that

> this largely pessimistic interpretation is also prominent in early media articulations of postfeminism that link it to anti-feminist and media-driven attempts to turn the clock back to pre-feminist times, fueled by the conservative governments that defined 1980s Reaganite America (5).

The concept of feminism as a single ideological entity ignores black feminism of the 1960s and 1970s and the rise of Third Wave Feminism in the 1990s.[38]

While neoconservatives had successfully associated Second Wave Feminism with radicalism and man-hating during the 1970s, they had failed to decrease sexual activity among women. Traditional family values were therefore reframed in the concept of "do-me feminism," which promoted female sexuality in the hopes of

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[36] See Martin 59 – 72 for a history of 1990's feminism trends.

[37] Genz 20 writes that antifeminism "presupposes a distinction between a more 'authentic' and unadulterated feminism on the one hand, and a suspect, usually commercialized postfeminism on the other; it assumes that feminist engagements with postfeminism are uniform and it does not take into consideration the range and scope of issues involved in feminist identification."

[38]

attaining a man for marriage. "Pop feminism" of the 1990s encouraged women to buy certain items or appear a certain way to express their independence, ultimately a marketing ploy to promote capitalist growth.[39] Magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* advertised new sexual positions to try, lingerie to wear, and other such suggestions to please women and their heterosexual, male partners.

"Pop feminism" even transcended into the gun industry, with raising awareness of date rape and sexual assault resulting in increased marketing by the gun lobby (Winddance 8). In March 1989, Smith & Wesson placed the Ladysmith gun on the market, with a smaller grip specifically marketed at women.[40] In 1993 the NRA created the "Refuse to Be a Victim" campaign in 1993, encouraging women to "empower" themselves through gun ownership and protect themselves and their families.[41] If a woman had a gun, neoconservatives argued, she shouldn't need to cry rape. The sexual woman of the 1960s and 70s, unafraid of her desires and willingly to act on them, subverted gender norms. Genz writes that

> do-me feminism blend[s] the sometimes-conflicting ideologies of women's liberation and the sexual revolution by heralding sexually provocative appearance and behaviour (including exhibitionist stripping) as acts of female empowerment (139).

In other words, female sexuality was promoted through a heterosexual lens of seducing men, ultimately catering to male desire. The obsession with feminine enhancement

[39] Genz 258 writes that "authenticity links individual selfhood to neoliberal capitalism and requires consistent labour to achieve and maintain its own authentic capital. This establishes a cyclical process whereby authenticity is used not only to sell the (self) brand but also to verify and validate it."
[40] Winddance 8 notes that Ladysmith guns were "not the first small handguns, they were more fashionable than earlier models."
[41] Winddance 8 writes that the "Refuse to Be a Victim" hijacked the language of feminism and female empowerment" and "deployed the rhetoric of empowerment to encourage women to empower themselves by purchasing the latest designer handguns."

through these post-feminist movements reaffirmed traditional gender dynamics and was the antithesis of feminism, or the social, political, and economic equality of the sexes.

Neoconservatives viewed the Second Wave Feminist woman as the villain, stealing jobs from men and corrupting children. The LGBTQIA+ woman was even more terrifying; in that she threatened the very existence of men entirely. If women did not need men financially, sexually, or romantically, would they eradicate the sex entirely? The erotic thriller genre emerged during the late 1970s to contemplate the role of women in a post-progressive climate. While these films were often melodramatic and unrealistic in both style and plot, the violent non-normative woman within many of these films derived from genuine social anxieties regarding women's autonomy.

Chapter Two: Film History of Violence and Sex

The non-normative woman within the erotic thriller emerged from a history of the Production Code from the 1930s to the late 1960s, exploitation film of the 1960s and 1970s, a transition from exploitation to mainstream in the 1970s and an increase in on-screen violence and lack of censorship from the 1970s to the 1980s. The Production Code, implemented in 1934, drastically affected how audiences view sex and violence in the movies. While violent non-normative women were prevalent in pre-code cinema, mainstream post-code films only included vengeful women if they were dead by the end of the film. Erotic thrillers emerged in the 1980s as an intersection between the titillation of sex and violence in exploitation cinema and the conservative morals of censorship amid the context of neoconservatism.

From the Production Code to New Hollywood: 1930s to 1970s

The rise and fall of the Production Code from 1934 to 1968 played a significant role in how sex, gender and violence were viewed on-screen.[42] The vamp archetype, films starring villainous sexual women who preyed on men for their personal gain, and gangster films, were exceedingly profitable during the early 1930s.[43] Yet conservative audiences worried that the depiction of violence and sex in these films would detrimentally influence youth (Schaefer 4). In the early days of cinema, state censorship boards decided whether to screen or ban films according to their specific Protestant guidelines. The Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association of America was founded in 1922 in order to self-regulate and place the ideological authority within the

[42] See Maltby 37 – 72 for the Production Code.

[43] See LaSalle 2 – 19 for vamp definition and cinema history.

major production studios. The president of the MPPDA, William Hays, created a list of "Don'ts and Be Carefuls" with the Studio Relations Committee in 1927, which was largely disregarded due to a lack of legal pressure. The MPPDA continued to face heavy criticism from religious and educational organizations and consequently published the Production Code in 1930, which banned explicit sexuality, violence, blasphemy, and miscegenation, unless wrongdoers were clearly punished by the end of the film. The code was voluntary until 1934, when studios forced filmmakers to submit their scripts for examination to the Studio Relations Committee. Economically intimidated, studios mainly adhered to the Production Code and the conservative morals they reaffirmed.

Noir films of the 1940s to 1950s were crime films that included non-normative women, labeled femme fatales, but punished according to the rules of the Production Code.[44] Femme fatales wrecked the peace and tranquility of heteronormative society and tortured the male hero at the center of these films. Film historian Andrew Dickos argues that the sexually aggressive woman threatens masculinity and is punished not only according to the Production Code's view on immortality, but society's image of a healthy woman (163). The denouncement of the femme fatale as immoral in noir cinema contrasts the lack of punishment for vamps during the pre-code era.[45] However, not all films of the Production Code era abided to such conservative morals. Exploitation film purposely provoked censorship boards through vivid allusions to non-normative sex and violence, through the theory that audiences crave what is forbidden.

[44] See Naremore 165 for how the femme fatale reformed until censorship.

[45] See Belton 236 and Dickos 156 – 163 for the femme fatale in erotic thrillers.

Exploitation films were independent productions that exploited societal fears of sex, gender, and race for audiences from the 1940s to the mid-1970s under the guise of education.[46] Exploitation filmmakers used the Production Code as a list of what to include in their films, as they surmised that audiences wanted to watch taboo topics. Framing these films as instructive, often with false support from medical professionals or educational groups, exploitation cinema appeased the Production Code with the claim these films would discourage audiences from immoral activity. Still facing significant legal conflict, exploitation films were distributed discreetly in underground theatres and eventually grindhouse theatres dedicated to the genre by the 1960s (Schaefer 7).

Sexploitations films from the 1960s and 1970s were the sub-genre most similar to the erotic thriller through the combination of sex and violence for viewership pleasure. Roughie's, a sub-genre of exploitation, emerged in the mid 1960s with plots involving a sexually unsatisfied married woman who falls in love with her rapist.[47] Rape revenge narratives shortly followed in the 1970s, in which abused women hunted down their rapists.[48] The line between rape revenge and erotic thriller blurred in the late 1970s, as feminist film theorist Jacinda Read argues that rape revenge is not a genre but rather a theme often included in erotic thrillers. While exploitation cinema grew popular amongst the counterculture, the demise of the Production Code by numerous lawsuits and legalization of hard-core pornography foreboded an end to the genre (Andrews 134). Now that explicit sex and violence could be seen on-screen in either pornography

[46] For an overview of exploitation cinema see Schaefer "Shocking!" 17 – 41.
[47] See Gorfinkel 25 for a definition of "roughies."
[48] See Read 11 – 33 for a definition of rape revenge films.

or mainstream film, independent films with small budgets, lesser production value and soft-core pornography were not as enticing to audiences. What was once taboo to audiences was now freely accessible and the decimation of the Production Code consequently brought the demise of the exploitation film.

The Production Code crumbled in the late 1960s due to a lack of enforcement and pushback from filmmakers, specifically the *Burstyn v. Wilson* Supreme Court case in 1952 which granted cinema First Amendment rights.[49] The year 1968 cemented the finale of the Production Code, with The Motion Picture Association of America's new rating system that categorized films as appropriate or inappropriate for certain aged audiences. An influx of experimental, morally challenging, and violent films began to emerge within the mainstream, directed by up and coming young filmmakers who went to film school and grew up watching television and exploitation. These filmmakers and their films were entitled the "New Hollywood." James Kendrick writes that New Hollywood was "an outright slap in the face" to the conservative film industry, similar to how the counterculture and civil rights movements of the 1960s changed American politics (35). The popularity of violent films such as *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) resulted in a proliferation of ground-breaking cinema, from drug fueled experimentalism in *Easy Rider* (1969) to socialist ruminations in *They Shoot Horses Don't They* (1969). Exploitation filmmakers such as Brian De Palma transitioned to the mainstream with horror such as *Sisters* (1973) and *Carrie* (1976) that combined attributes of both mainstream noir and exploitation cinema. Italian American filmmakers Martin Scorsese and Francis Ford Coppola explored masculinity and the boundaries of violence in a

[49] See Kendrick 33 – 47 for the demise of the Production Code and the rise of New Hollywood.

slew of gritty realist films including *Taxi Driver* (1976) and *The Conversation* (1974), respectively. Yet an entirely different violent film was in the works with the demise of the Production Code, that often reaffirmed the societal norms that other upcoming filmmakers critiqued: the blockbuster action film. While the dark realism of late 1960s cinema alluded to non-normative themes and moral ambiguity, blockbuster action films often reaffirmed conservative family values.

Conservatism in Hollywood: 1980s to 1990s

While the 1970s produced an influx of violent, experimental content by new-coming filmmakers, the profitability of *Jaws* (1975) and *Star Wars* (1977) and controversy regarding on-screen violence popularized the action film over art-house violence. Both conservative and liberal audiences were concerned by the increase in violence in cinema during the late 1970s and 1980s, yet their motives sprung from different ideologies. In his book *Hollywood Bloodshed: Violence in 1980s American Cinema*, film historian James Kendrick writes that liberals were concerned by violence targeted at marginalized groups, while conservatives were worried about the moral implications of on-screen brutality.[50] He continues that the lack of "social significance" in blockbuster action films compromised both sides, as "pure action films [allow audiences] to experience gory thrills vicariously without being disillusioned, disturbed, or threatened" (204). With tough guys like Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger in lead roles, audiences were reassured that the senseless violence in

[50] Kendrick 55 writes "liberal groups were troubled by the fact that violence was directed at historically marginalized groups— gays, women, and African Americans, in these cases— while conservatives were more concerned about the intense nature of the bloodshed and, in the case of Cruising and Dressed to Kill, its association with graphic sexuality."

these films would result in a happy ending.[51] While Scorsese and Coppola continued to produce thought provoking violent content, action films that did not dwell on bloodshed were often the most profitable, even if they didn't achieve critical success. Film historian J. Hoberman notes in *Make My Day: Movie Culture in the Age of Reagan* that "disaster films effectively denied that Americans had become permissive and jaded or that traditional values has broken down" (23). This trend continued through the 1990s and up to today, with popular blockbusters continuing with sequels.

Yet the introduction of Betamax in 1975, the first home video viewing and recording system, drastically changed the movie-going climate and resulted in peak proliferation of direct-to-video films in the 1990s.[52] The erotic thriller, which popularized in the mainstream with the success of *Fatal Attraction* (1987), was one of the main direct-to-video genres. While erotic thrillers in theatres and direct-to-video often reaffirmed neoconservatism and Reaganism family values through the depiction of the unstable feminist woman, others countered societal beliefs around gender and sexuality through insightful feminist perspectives. The non-normative women in *Bound* (1996) are heroes, despite being openly queer, while their male counterparts are foolish abusers. Yet progressive films such as *Bound* were countered with numerous predatory lesbian and bisexual tropes in erotic thrillers from *Showgirls* (1995) to *Wild Things* (1998). The contrast between the masculine male savior in blockbusters and the violent

[51] Kendrick 81 notes "Sylvester Stallone, Charles Bronson, Chuck Norris, Clint Eastwood and Arnold Schwarzenegger take away this sense of impotency. They are mythical figures, bigger than life, who solve all problems. You feel you can't do anything, and then you go to a movie where somebody just takes the law into his hands."

[52] Williams 6 – 21 discusses the effect of home viewing machines and direct-to-video, noting that by "by 1993, a year of peak production for the erotic thriller in cinemas and DTV, the total number of VCRs owned by American households was 80 per cent."

non-normative woman in erotic thrillers of the 1980s and 1990s can be seen as reminiscent of the conservative conflict around gender roles. If the cisgender, straight white man is always the hero, why must women avenge him in erotic thrillers? Is the vengeance these non-normative women feel against the patriarchy justified?

The popularity of filmmaker Quentin Tarantino speaks to the culture wars and the cyclical nature of violence and sex and American cinema, as he popularized the exploitation film in a mainstream context. The aesthetic and plot elements of 1970s exploitation were visualized in all of Tarantino's films, through active parody which exploited gender, race, and sexuality for audience enjoyment. Sex and violence will always challenge the viewer, regardless of the intent of the production studio or the director. The erotic thriller exacerbated these controversies, similar to Tarantino's work in the 1990s and up to today and caused American audiences to rethink their values. Were violent women just as justified as men in receiving justice or were their actions emblematic of the dangers of feminism?

Chapter Three: Defining the Erotic Thriller From 1980 to 2000

Fatal Attraction (1987) and *Basic Instinct (*1992) are undoubtedly the most popular films of the erotic thriller genre and two of the highest grossing films of all time.[53] While erotic thrillers have existed since the mid 1970s, *Fatal Attraction* was one of the first mainstream erotic thrillers to vividly capture societal anxieties of the single, sexually active career woman as a threat to the nuclear family.[54] This message clearly resonated with audiences, as erotic thrillers flooded the theatres and direct-to-video during the 1980s and 1990s, with the largest number of erotic thrillers released in 1993.[55] Yet a film genre's success does not exist in a vacuum; the antifeminist backlash of the 1980s and 1990s influenced the depiction of non-normative women in erotic thrillers as dangerous to traditional family values and American society.

While the women in erotic thrillers from *Dressed to Kill* (1980) to *Cruel Intentions* (1999) do not always engage in bloodshed, their very existence as independent, sexual beings is a form of violence. In her book *The Monstrous Feminine*, Barbara Creed defines non-normative women in erotic thrillers as femme castratice, or a woman symbolically castrated due to her feeling wronged by society. The femme castrice is either a castrating female psychopath or a woman seeking revenge on men who have raped or abused her. The non-normative women in classic erotic thriller narratives are femme castrice, reacting violently for personal gain and fulfillment, such as serial murderer Catherine Tramell in *Basic Instinct* and Bridget Gregory in *The Last*

[53] Williams 2 – 3 notes that "Fatal Attraction" and "Basic Instinct" are the two highest grossing erotic thrillers of all time, making 156 million and 117 million, respectively.
[54] See Cohen and Davis for primary analysis of how both films depict the feminist woman as dangerous to society. See Deleyto, Hewitt and Bromley 2, Holmlund, Pidduck 75 – 63, Rohrkemper 1 and Williams 182 for secondary analysis of how the women in both films are a threat to the family.
[55] See Williams 2 – 7 for the popularity of the erotic thriller.

Seduction. Tramell has a habit of killing men with ice picks during sex, while Gregory manipulates her lovers into criminality and runs away with the cash. These women have no excuse for their villainy; they enjoy toying with men with their violent sexuality for personal enjoyment.

In a psychology article on revenge narratives, authors Starzynska and Budziszewsk argue that women act violently in self-defense and in order to feel safe, while men use violence to control others.[56] While studies prove that men and women experience anger equally, it is the way they exhibit their anger based on societal gender expectations that differs.[57] As women are taught to be meek and passive through social constructs, they are less likely to show aggression than men, who are taught that violence is a form of masculinity. In other words, men are socialized to exhibit anger as a sign of dominance, while women are socialized to exhibit anger as a defense mechanism. Femme castrice in erotic thrillers therefore contradict societal gender roles of how they should engage in aggression, as they are exhibiting dominant male behavior.

Yet by separating non-normative women into two binary categories of femme castrice, castrating men, or castrated themselves, Creed overlooks the intersection of both actions. In other words, the line between rape revenge and erotic thriller is so intertwined that many of the non-normative women in these films are both castrated and castrating femme castrice. Hedra in *Single White Female* (1992), for instance, is both a castrating and castrated woman. She is castrated due to the tragedy of her twin sister's

[56] Starzyńska and Budziszewska 3 write "violence for women is directly linked to a threatening feeling of the loss of control over oneself and one's emotions. Men, on the other hand, see violence as a basic instrument helping them to achieve their goals through the gain of control over others."
[57] See Archer for gendered differences in aggression.

death and castrating towards men due to her bisexuality and homicidal behavior. The intersections of identity are important in defining the motives for violent non-normative women in erotic thrillers and important for historical analysis, since these identities are often a threat to traditional family values.

Creed writes that “the femme castratice female psychopath transfers into a monster [in order to seek] revenge on society, the heterosexual nuclear family.” This transformation from woman to monster is caused by motive, sometimes feeling wronged by heteronormative society in the case of Thana in *Ms. 45* (1981) or desperately wanting to become normative, as seen by Peyton in *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle* (1992). After being brutally raped, Thana begins a quest to kill all men, which destroys the nuclear family due to the man’s role of sole breadwinner. In the case of Peyton, her traditional nuclear family was destroyed by the assault accusations of another woman, Claire, against her husband. In order to attain the nuclear family she once had, Peyton ultimately shatters Claire’s idealic family to have as her own. Despite the motive differences of these two erotic thrillers, both films position the single non-normative woman as a threat to men and the nuclear family.

Erotic thrillers are an amalgamation of genre from melodrama to horror; they can include plots that often exaggerate or contradict human psychology. When someone is most rejected by a lover, killing them is usually not the first reaction. The same goes for rape revenge plots; torturing and killing your rapist might be a fantasy, but not one usually acted upon. Erotic thrillers exist in the world of extremes — extreme sex, violence, and reactions to traumatic events. Studies have shown that the combination of violence with sexuality excites the brain, and violence and sex are the two main themes

of erotic thrillers.[58] Since the combination of violence and sex is a box office jackpot, erotic thrillers can function outside the bounds of rationality in order to make a profit and satisfy consumers. [59] In preview screenings of *Fatal Attraction*, audience members reportedly yelled "kill the bitch!" at Glenn Close's deranged adulterer Alex.[60] Due to protests against an unsatisfying ending, the version screened in theatres had the wife kill Glenn Close. The new ending allowed for the non-normative woman (Alex) to be punished by a normative woman (the wife), ultimately reaffirming gender roles. Audiences wanted to see the non-normative woman tortured, perhaps an influence of anti-feminist sentiments during the era.

Rape Revenge Erotic Thrillers of the 1980s and 1990s

Rape revenge films in this era can also be classified as erotic thrillers, as they involve the same narrative of a sexual woman engaging in violence and discuss the socio-politics of the culture wars, particularly regarding date rape.[61] The anti-rape movement began in the 1970s, led by Second Wave Feminists, and struggled to receive political support due to anti-feminism amongst neoconservatives. The movement resulted in hundreds of rape crisis centers around the nation and eventually the removal of marital-rape exemptions in the 1980s.[62] Yet the Violence Against Women Act, signed in 1994, was the first federal law to designate funding for the prosecution of rape and sexual assault. This monumental piece of legislature arrived after decades of pushback, with neoconservatives finally relenting as they wanted to appear tough on crime. While

[58] See Feshbach 29(A) for analysis of how audiences react to violence and sex on-screen.
[59] See Barranco 77 – 95 for the increase in ticket sales with violent films.
[60] See Williams 2 for information of preview screenings of "Fatal Attraction."
[61] Read 41 – 42 argues that the rape revenge film transfers from eroticism to violence.
[62] See Corrigan 9 – 65 for the history of anti-rape legislature.

most neoconservatives were anti-rape, they actively refuted the concept of date rape and claimed that feminists overexaggerated the prevalence of violence against women. In an article for *Commentary* in 1991, Norman Podhoretz argued that the concept of date rape meant that seduction would be legally defined as rape. [63] Podhoretz blamed "lesbian and other man-hating elements" for such "no means no" propaganda, as he claims feminists are pushing the date rape agenda to turn women toward lesbianism. Phyllis Schlafly furthered this thinking in 1997 in protest to the Violence Against Women Act, writing that women were asking for governmental aid from date rape and sexual harassment in situations that prior to Second Wave Feminism, "unsophisticated high school girls could handle with confidence, knowing that a No would be respected," (Academia's War Against Marriage). Debates around rape and victim blaming heightened during this era, as realities and growing understanding of rape countered neoconservative propaganda that gender inequality was over and already won by Second Wave Feminism.

It is no coincidence that the drafting of the Violence Against Women Act in the 1990s and growing support of anti-rape movements coincided with false rape narratives and statutory rape in erotic thrillers. *Poison Ivy* (1992), *The Crush* (1993), *The Last Seduction* (1994), *Disclosure* (1994), *Wild Things* (1998) and *Cruel Intentions* (1999) all include a narrative in which a violent non-normative woman cries rape or involves herself with an older man for personal gain. The prevalence of false rape narratives in erotic thrillers, regardless of the filmmaker's intentions, spreads the idea that false rape

[63] Podhoretz writes "if we pause for a moment and remind ourselves that overcoming a woman's resistance by "verbal and psychological" means has in the past been universally known as seduction, it will immediately become clear that we are in the presence here of nothing less than a brazen campaign to redefine seduction as a form of rape, and more slyly to identify practically all men as rapists."

allegations are common. According to the study "False Allegations of Sexual Assault: An Analysis of Ten Years of Reported Cases," the prevalence of false rape allegations is estimated to be only 2 to 10% (Lisak 1318). All of the previously mentioned films position the accused male as a victim, which further backs the idea that sexual women are a threat to society, rather than rapists. Sociologist Pilar Rodríguez Martínez writes that Second Wave Feminists defined sexual violence on the differences between sex and gender, identifying men as perpetrators based on their superior strength and women as the only possible assault victims.[64] The framing of all sexual violence as inherently patriarchal contributes to antifeminist accusations of Second Wave Feminism as "manhating," as sexual violence occurs to people of varying identities.

Feminist theorist Jacinda Read argues in *Watching Rape* that rape is a threat to both the family and the career woman, as it can disrupt pre-existing relationships and result in pregnancy that prevents the woman from working. Read uses erotic thrillers that contain rape narratives, including *The Last Seduction* (1994) and *Showgirls* (1995), in her analysis that rape revenge films are influenced by the social movements of their respective eras, including Second Wave Feminism and antifeminism. Read continues that rape revenge is a theme rather than a genre and can be labeled as anything from noir to erotic thriller. Furthermore, Read writes that rape is implicit in the erotic thriller, even if it is not physically seen, as the violation of a woman's rights by society can be viewed as rape. Rape revenge films of the 1980s and 1990s are erotic thrillers, as the

[64] Martínez 149 writes Second Wave Feminists "assume that the conduct of men is a byproduct of their anatomy, such that if men seem to be more violent than women it is because of their superior physical strength. In addition, this would mean that *all* men have greater physical strength relative to *all* women and can potentially display the same violent social conduct toward them. In the same vein, *all* women are potentially victims of male violence."

cross-contamination in plot and fluidity of genre is too similar to be separated. Both films labeled as erotic thrillers and rape revenge films counteract gender expectations by depicting women as dominant in the face of patriarchy.

According to Barbara Creed, femme castrice who act in self-defense are usually in rape revenge narratives, such as Nomi Malone in *Showgirls*. Morality is black and white in these films; Malone's best friend Molly did not deserve to be raped, and their accusers are portrayed as brutal psychopaths. Creed furthers the argument that the erotic thriller and the rape revenge narrative are one in the same despite plot differences, as the women in them can be listed under the definition of femme castrice. Both erotic thrillers and rape revenge narratives exist within the genre of horror, which literalizes society's fears about the world around them. Non-normative women are simply an exaggeration of societal fears regarding the consequences of feminism and how women react to the constraints of traditional family values.

Femme castrice who act in self-defense in rape revenge erotic thrillers also threaten masculinity as they counter-act male violence against women. By taking the law into their own hands and attacking their rapists, the woman switches the power dynamics taken from her through the act of rape. The female protagonists in many rape revenge themed erotic thrillers are non-normative, often financially independent, and sexually active while unmarried. Clover notes that in rape revenge films, being raped results in the woman's body symbolically re-gendered as a man, allowing them to take on male attributes of aggression while reversing the predator and prey dynamic with their attacker. The rape scenes in erotic thriller-rape revenge hybrids of the 1980s and 1990s are vehemently unsexual, especially in comparison to the eroticization of rape

themes in early grindhouse pictures. The men are animals and their predator prey dynamic with the main character makes her an animal as well. These films undergo the assumption that when someone is raped, they can never be the person they once were. This relates to traditional concepts of virginity, in that the first time is momentous and a woman is sullied afterward if not in a loving marital union. So, if a woman can no longer be feminine after being raped, rape revenge films transform her into a man, a violent predator who only believes in violence. While rape revenge narratives can be empowering for survivors, Clover also comments that this could fuel antifeminists with the belief that if women "just toughen up and take karate or buy a gun, the issue of male—on female violence would evaporate," (143). This places the responsibility on the survivor and can contribute to victim blaming sentiments, rather than society as a whole coming together to prevent rape from occurring. However, the act of rape, as previously mentioned, destroys the nuclear family and rape revenge narrative insists that the victim can defend herself rather than rely on a man to protect her.

Disclosure (1994) involves both a false rape accusation and a male victim of sexual assault by a woman, which counters the Second Wave Feminist dismissal of men as assault victims yet also depicts sexual career women as potentially violent. Michael Douglas plays Tom Sanders, a hardworking executive at a tech company who is swindled out of a promotion by Meredith Johnson (Demi Moore), his ex-lover. Now his boss, Johnson invites the married Sanders up to her office for the intention of seduction. Sanders repeatedly refuses sex, pushing Johnson away she unbuttons his shirt and touches his crotch. Yet he becomes erect, torn between his attraction to Johnson and

allegiance to his wife. Afterward, Johnson claims that Sanders attacked her in order to get him fired. Here plays out the classic erotic thriller trope: a married man has an affair with a violent non-normative woman who proceeds to ruin his life, eventually failing. But in other erotic thrillers the sex is consensual, even initiated by the male victim. As the stereotypical genders of perpetrator and victim are switched in this scenario, so are the roles of masculine and feminine. Johnson becomes the man, emasculating Sanders as not only his boss, but as a sexually available person in comparison to his maritally restricted one. At one point in the assault Sanders loses his temper and rips open Johnson's blouse violently, asking her "is this is what she wanted," preparing to rape her. Sanders disregards the idea and runs out of the office with Johnson screaming after him. The idea that men have no sexual restraint comes to play again, as Sanders so desperately tries to gain the control he has lost in this dynamic.

Sanders ultimately triumphs: Johnson is fired after her deeds come to light and a different person gets the promotion, this time a woman who deserves the position "regardless of her gender." In other words, a woman who is as equally hardworking as the other men in the office and does not need to use her sexuality like Johnson. The film, regardless of intention, is a clear example of post-feminism and the idea that women are taking advantage of progressive politics. In other words, if bosses concede to feminist demands in the workplace and accept date rape claims, women will take advance through the use of their dangerous sexuality. The women in these reverse rape films rarely use physical violence — sexuality is their power.

The Crush (1993), *Wild Things* (1998) and *Cruel Intentions* (1999) all include underage high school girls making false rape claims for their own advantage. The idea of predation starting in girls from a young age serves as a terrifying reminder to parents to instill traditional family values, and moral sexual codes, in their daughters. Although the men in these films are already attracted to and fantasize about these women, the villainous teenagers are the ones who make the first, nonconsensual move. These lends itself to the myth that men are all beasts who cannot control their hormones and always want to have sex. Anyone can be assaulted, regardless of gender. Despite their protests, when the men in these films say "no," they really mean "yes," a common argument against the legitimacy of date rape. If someone is attracted to their perpetrator, how can they be assaulted? This concept is brought up in these films, particularly those with young female villains, as their youth indicates innocence and naivety of wrongdoing. In these films, the women simply abide by their primal needs —– sex and attention — which the films indicated by the suggestive clothes they wear.

Post-progressivism in "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle"

The erotic thriller *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle* (1992) is similar to many in the genre as it depicts a single white woman attempting to destroy a family. The post-feminist landscape of the 1990s is illuminated within the film, with diatribes on "having it all" and the concept of being "baby crazy." Color-blind politics, in addition to racism within white feminism, can also be viewed in the treatment of people of color in the film. The post-progressive climate of the 1990s is epitomized by the white nuclear

family at the center of this film, as both antifeminism and racial progressivism are tossed to the wayside in favor of white, heterosexual dominance.

The film begins from the perspective of housewife Claire, pregnant with her second child and content with her daughter Madeline and husband Michael. Solomon, their mentally disabled handyman and the only black person in the film, has a fatherly relationship with the daughter Madeline. When Claire is assaulted by her gynecologist, she reports him, resulting in the doctor committing suicide due to increasing allegations from multiple women. His wife Peyton has a miscarriage from the stress and vows revenge on Claire's family. While Claire looks for help around the house so she can explore her passion of gardening, Peyton poses as a nanny and slowly wreaks havoc on the lives of the family. After Claire discovers the truth about Peyton, Peyton attempts to violently steal Claire's daughter and new born baby. Claire saves her family by pushing Peyton out of a window with Solomon's help.

Unlike most erotic thrillers of the era, *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle* is written by a woman, Amanda Silver, who had personal experience balancing career and children.[65] While many accuse the film of promoting sexist stereotypes, Silver claimed in an interview with *The New York Times* that the film was intended to examine the difficulties of having both a career and family for women. She emphasized the danger of trusting strangers to take care of your children and your life when you are a career parent. Silver's intention for the film may not have been inherently misogynist, yet the nuclear family is presented as the most beneficial lifestyle for women throughout the film. When Claire attempts to work again, building and maintaining a personal

[65] At the time of Weintraub's interview, Silver's son was 7 months old.

greenhouse, she is so overwhelmed with her duties as a mother that she hires Peyton. Choosing to balance work and family by hiring a nanny, Claire puts herself and her family in danger, jeopardizing their previous tranquility. Claire becomes more unhinged as Peyton eases her way into the family and slowly kicks her out, building upon the neoliberal idea that a woman cannot function outside her traditional housewife role. The depiction of Peyton as baby crazy, breast feeding Claire's child and corrupting Madeline against her mother, also aligns with the neoliberal concept that women become insane without a nuclear family structure. This fear is literalized when Claire kills Peyton out of self-defense, inadvertently becoming a violent non-normative woman by reclaiming her position as woman of the household. *Fatal Attraction* and *Poison Ivy* also use this theme, showcasing a woman behaving violently in order to steal a family from another woman. This contrast between the good and bad woman is furthered by film historian Janet Staiger, who writes that the contrast between the good and bad women in film operates from the "virgin/whore dichotomy," or the societal expectation that women must be solely promiscuous or virginial (xiv).

Institutionalized racism and ableism are present within the film in the depiction of Solomon, a black disabled man. The film begins with Solomon suspiciously walking around the house, dramatic music in the background, with Michael assuming him to be a predator. Claire clarifies that he was sent by the Better Days Society to help around the house, a program that gives jobs to intellectually disabled people. He bonds with Madeline and the rest of the family, as though he is a part of their circle. Claire even comments that they should make up more activities for Solomon to do around the house to keep him around. When Peyton arrives, Solomon immediately suspects her of malice

and catches her breastfeeding the baby. Peyton retorts by framing Solomon as a pedophile, banishing him back to his living facility. Peyton, slim, blonde, and attractive is framed as the antithesis of Solomon's large, disabled black man. Claire immediately trusts Peyton, reverting to the family's first impression of him as a large, black man creeping around the house of a white family.

Although Solomon is accepted at surface value by the family he works for, his lower racial and intellectual status, in addition to basically being their servant, creates a divide that makes the family more likely to listen to a white stranger, such as Peyton. This color-blind mentality, in that Claire and Michael accept Solomon on a surface level but deep down recognizes his difference and discriminate against him is indicative of post-progressive 1990s politics. By trusting Claire's judgement over Solomon's, despite his close connection to the family, the film proves that the progress of the Civil Rights Movements did not end racism. The assumptions Claire and Michael place upon Solomon are similar to the assumptions made against women during the 1990s. If we are all equal, then feminism and social justice are dead, which in term results in further inequality due to the lack of intersectional policy.

The disregard for Solomon in *The Hand that Rocks the Cradle* is metaphorical for the tension between black and white feminists during Second and Third Wave Feminism. Despite Solomon knowing the family prior to Peyton, she is trusted over him due to implicit racism and ableism. The lack of media attention to non-white feminists is symbolic of the family's preference for Peyton over Solomon, even though Solomon is the person with their best interests at heart. Intersectional feminist scholar Rosalynn Baxandall notes that

> African American Women have historically had a stronger tradition of honoring women's independence, often due to necessity, than have white women. Surveys done in the early 1970s show that, in general, Black women were more feminist than white women in their attitudes toward specific issues such as daycare, equal pay, equal work, and equality in relationships.

Black women experience both racial and gender discrimination, which many white feminists have difficulty fully understanding as they have not experienced such bigotry firsthand. Many Second Wave Feminists constituted that men and women were inherently different (Martínez 147). The concept that black and white people are inherently different was another institutionalized concept to moralize slavery and stereotypes of the era can be seen in Solomon's portrayal. Solomon is framed as a pedophile by Peyton and the family believes it without question, just as they assumed him to be a stalker in the beginning of the film. Immoral sexuality is a racial stereotype of black men and pedophilia is a common misconception of the mentally disabled. The family believed Peyton, as her claims fit easily into preconstructed stereotypes. Solomon is not symbolic for black feminists; rather, he is symbolic of the lack of intersectionality within the mainstream feminist movement and white feminist disregard of people of color.

The lack of an intersectional framework in *The Hand that Rocks the Cradle* is emblematic of the post-progressive 1990s climate. As the majority of erotic thrillers exclusively involve white characters, analyzing the racism within these films primarily derives from the absence of people of color. *The Hand that Rocks the Cradle*, in addition to *Showgirls*, provide a glimpse of 1990s racial and gender politics through the inclusion of both non-normative white women and black characters. Not only are white non-normative women a threat to heteronormative society, but people of color also

threaten the social hierarchy of the United States. LGBTQIA+ individuals were another threat to traditional family values and the erotic thriller also capitalized on this anxiety.

The Violent Non-normative Woman in Queer Erotic Thrillers

Erotic thrillers of the 1980s and 1990s are palpable with non-normative tension, from lesbian experimentation in *Cruel Intentions* to cisgender male rivalries over women. The prevalence of bisexual, lesbian, and transgender murderers in these erotic thrillers correlated with societal fears of the AIDS crisis and the connections between Second Wave and Third Wave Feminism and lesbianism. As previously argued, non-normative women are dangerous to the family as they threaten the eradication of men. Queer women further this narrative, as their interest in other genders beyond cisgender men allow for non-traditional relationships and more freedom to live outside of the nuclear family.

Basic Instinct (1992) was one of the first erotic thrillers to draw these connections and was heavily criticized by the LGBTQ+ and feminist communities as "anti-gay" and "anti-woman."[66] Numerous LGBTQ+ groups protested during filming, claiming that the depiction of a bisexual woman as a villain and a white straight man as a victim was perpetuated stereotypes of the LGBTQ+ community. The film is set and filmed in San Francisco, presumably the heart of the gay liberation movement, which consequently had an extremely politically active LGBTQ+ community. Hundreds of San Francisco residents were afflicted by the HIV+ virus and the homophobic sentiments of the film, set in their town, which hit a nerve for many in the community. Screenwriter Joe Eszterhas met with city officials, members of women's groups and LGBTQ+ groups

[66] Lew 11 gives primary information regarding LGBTQ+ protest of "Basic Instinct."

regarding their concerns and agreed to script changes. Yet the director and producer rejected the changes and finished the film with the original script, denying the homophobia within the narrative.[67]

The disregard for feminist women and LGBTQ+ communities in the making of *Basic Instinct* despite the inclusion of bisexual and lesbian characters alludes to the intended audience for erotic thrillers — heterosexual men. Feminist film theorist Celestino Deleyto argues that *Basic Instinct* is an exercise in male paranoia regarding homosexuality and non-normative women. Michael Douglas's Detective Nick is emasculated by Catherine Tramell not only by her seductive hold over him, but his lack of sexual experience and experimentation in comparison to her. As a bisexual, Catherine Tramell has experience with both men and women, something that Detective Nick longs for with coded to be gay friend Gus, but heavily suppresses. Gus openly admits to Nick that he does not like women and professes his dislike of Catherine as Nick becomes intimate with her. Catherine's lover Roxanne, who murdered her entire family, also expresses distaste for Nick due to her obsession for Catherine. Gay jealousy as a violent threat underscores the film, particularly through the ambiguous ending which makes it unclear whether Catherine or Roxanne is the murderer.

The murderous gay man and the murderous transgender woman are also common threads in the erotic thriller, as they take up the same antifeminist sensibility that non-normative lifestyles threaten the American family. *Cruising* (1980), which was protested by many gay groups, investigates the serial murdering of gay men and transgender women in New York City gay clubs. The film is an allegory for the AIDS

[67] Williams 152 - 162 addresses the attempts to change controversial parts of the script.

epidemic, which killed off the community in terrifying numbers. *Dressed to Kill* (1980), inspired by *Psycho* (1960), regards a psychiatrist who becomes a woman when he is sexually aroused, and then kills said woman. Even *Sleepaway Camp* (1983), although slasher film rather than erotic thriller, involves a homicidal transgender girl. The prevalence of murderous lesbians, bisexuals, gay men, and transgender women in erotic thrillers and horror cinema of the 1980s and 1990s is too common of a trope to be overlooked. It is no coincidence that these thrillers emerged during the peak of the AIDS epidemic, for which conservatives blamed gay sexual activity.[68] From the viewpoint of conservatives, LGBTQIA+ lifestyles were literally killing people, just as they feared non-normative women would eradicate men.

Alternative Reading of Erotic Thrillers

The connotations of homosexuality, feminism and violence in erotic thrillers led many scholars, such as Susan Faludi's arguments in *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*, to concur that the genre reaffirms traditional family values and denounces non-normative lifestyles. Yet as Jacinda Read wisely writes

> the concept of hegemony allows us to see film either tell dominant patriarchal stories (mainstream film) or oppositional feminist stories (alternative film or readings against the grain of mainstream film), the concept of hegemony allows us to see film as the site where dominant and oppositional meanings are negotiated and transformed (247).

Due to censorship and institutionalized discrimination, Hollywood has a long-standing history of depicting white, normative lifestyles on-screen. The inclusion of feminist women, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and people of color, even when problematic, can be

[68] Halkitis writes "the framing of gay liberation as the catalyst for the AIDS crisis is rooted in a deficit-based approach to understanding the health of our population."

viewed as defiance against a system that disregards those who aren't white, straight, wealthy, and Christian. Regardless of the filmmaker's intention, the usage of non-normative characters as main and supporting roles in erotic thrillers defies the hegemony. Although non-normative women in these films may be greedy and violent, they are also independent and know what they want. In other words, they have power over the men in their lives, which counters the lack of authority women were allowed in the 1980s and 1990s. A woman's right to choose, a woman's right to say no, a woman's right to marry someone besides a cisgender man: these were all topics heavily up for debate. From the failure of the Equal Rights Amendment to the appointment of Clarence Thomas, a woman's autonomy over her own body has been denied during the very eras that erotic thrillers became prominent. Perhaps this is why LGBTQIA+ audiences have latched onto erotic thrillers and made films such as *Showgirls* and *Poison Ivy* cult classics.[69] To see yourself up on a movie screen is to see yourself represented, even if that representation is problematic.

Scholarship on "the gaze" illuminates the influence of non-normative women on-screen; their inclusion in cinema is a form of rebellion. In her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Laura Mulvey coined the term "the male gaze," or the act of objectifying a woman on-screen through a male perspective. bell hooks furthered this idea with the concept of the oppositional gaze in "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectator," which states that there is power in a black woman's gaze. This concept has been furthered by scholars including Teresa Di Laurentis and Judith Butler,

[69] Martin 63 notes "the abject complicates the established social binaries of the symbolic order – that which is upheld by the male gaze. What is perceived as contradicting the symbolic order is thus coated or associated with abjection in the films."

regarding the queer gaze and the female gaze; the gaze of a non-normative individual is a form of rebellion. [70] Although erotic thrillers often contain an intensive male gaze through tilts and pans that eroticize the female body, the non-normative woman herself often looks straight at the camera and eroticizes her male counterpart through her feminist gaze.

Non-normative woman Matty Walker in *Body Heat* (1981) contains both a male and female gaze, as she uses her sexuality to take advantage of men. Early in Walker's courtship with lawyer Ned Racine, several men glare at the two of them seated next to each other in a bar. When Walker informs Racine that she has denied the advances of many of the bar's regulars, Racine comments "maybe you shouldn't dress like that." She retorts "this a blouse and skirt. I don't know what you are talking about," which he counters with "then you shouldn't wear that body." The male gaze is palpable in this scene, in which not only Ned and the bar regulars gaze at Walker's body, but the audience. Yet Walker utilizes her sexuality for purpose, her sex drive often more rampant than Racine's in later scenes. Walker allows Racine to objectify her so that she will be too distracted to notice that she is double crossing him, framing him for her husband's murder so that she can escape a millionaire. One could argue that the depiction of Walker as a money crazed, sexual being is a representation of societal fear around female sexuality, utilized for the titillation of men. Yet Walker is smarter than Racine, she double crosses him multiple times and puts him in jail for actions. Walker rejects Racine several times in their initial encounters, appearing to give in only after he follows her to her home and breaks in. Racine may think that he has ownership over

[70] The most prominent of these scholars include Teresa Di Laurentis and Judith Butler.

Walker, seducing her when she wanted to resist, yet she chose him ahead of time as the right man to con. Walker prevails by the end of the film, outsmarting her lecherous husband and Racine. While Walker may be a villain, she is also a anti-hero — she used her sexuality to her advantage in order to seek revenge against men who objectify her. Teresa Di Laurentis writes that "identification with the look is masculine. and identification with the image is feminine" (133). *Body Heat* begins with a male gaze, as the audience is treated to luxurious pans up and down Walker's body, yet it ends with female identification. The audience does not hate Walker, in fact, we admire her strives to achieve wealth and independence outside the confines of men.

Many later erotic thrillers followed a similar thematic trend as *Body Heat*, or a woman seducing a man in order to convince him to steal for her, ultimately double crossing him and escaping with the money. *The Last Seduction* (1994), *Bound* (1996) and *Wild Things* (1998) all incorporate this plot, with the latter two including queer female protagonists. *Bound* involves two lesbians, Corky and Violet, who come up with a plan to run away from Violet's abusive gangster boyfriend and steal money from the mob. Rather than villainize these non-normative women, both films involve the women getting away with their crimes and having happy endings. If the audience roots for the non-normative women in these films, how can they be disgusted by them? Their actions are a form of self-defense against the lascivious men who abuse them and their violent behavior is consequently justified.

Yet is the acceptance of sexist behavior in erotic thrillers a form of settling? In other words, is the limited representation of non-normative present in erotic thrillers progressive in comparison to films without non-normative characters progressive? The

majority of erotic thrillers from the 1980s and 1990s were written and directed by cisgender men. This is a common issue within Hollywood, a lack of women, people of color and LGBTQIA+ individuals behind and in front of the camera. The inclusion of representative filmmakers in the erotic thriller canon in the 2010s has revolutionized the genre, such as the Soska sister's filmography[71], and predicts a more uplifting creative future for Hollywood.

[71] Jen and Sylvia Soska have directed several sex-positive rape-revenge and erotic thrillers, including = *American Mary* (2012) and *Rabid* (2019).

Conclusion

Erotic thrillers from 1980 to 2000 reflected, but did not reaffirm, the neoconservative pushback against the progressivism of the 1960s and 1970s. This thesis discusses the erotic thriller within the Hollywood industry, due to analysis of the socio-political national climate. However, erotic thrillers and rape revenge narratives are prevalent in cinemas around the globe. Japanese horror cinema has a complicated history with rape narratives, with films of the 1990s and early 2000s by upcoming auteurs giving survivors their well-deserved revenge.[72] British erotic thrillers such as *Possession* (1981) and *Dead Ringers* (1988) also involve the collapse of the traditional family as their neoconservative prime minister Margaret Thatcher enacted similar political viewpoints as Reagan. Cinema is an international movement, with influence spreading back and forth across the globe. The themes and stylistic choices of erotic thrillers of the 1980s and 1990s have a lasting impact on cinema, even if those in the erotic thriller genre are less respected as noir.

Similar to the exploitation film, erotic thrillers are often connoted as "trashy" in the cinema canon, due to their problematic content and overdramatic production value. Erotic thrillers do not shy away from the realities of sexism and racism; often, they revel in their ignorance. Perhaps this is why society deems the erotic thriller as a B-movie. Today's audiences are uncomfortable with the blatant bigotry that existed during this time. While the depiction of sexual women as predatory is not progressive, the unabashed sensuality within these films is more direct than many Hollywood films today. The women in these films are not side characters without personality; while they

[72] See the films of Takashi Miike and Sion Soto.

are often one-dimensional, they are also loud, unapologetic, and violent. They are the antithesis of what a woman should not be according to societal rules: dominant.

The popularity of the erotic thriller subsided in the 2000s, coinciding with the rise of the internet. Now that people were no longer buying direct-to-video films, which is where the majority of erotic thrillers headed, there was less of an interest due to the limitlessness of online media. Yet modern feminist filmmakers are building upon this history by subverting the inherent sexism in the genre and allowing the viewers to root for vengeful non-normative women. Films such as *Jennifer's Body* (2009), *American Mary* (2010), *Raw* (2016), *Revenge* (2017) and *A Vigilante* (2018) allow the non-normative women within these films to enact revenge on the men who hurt them, while owning their sexuality. It is no coincidence that a proliferation of modern rape revenge films emerged along with the #metoo movement, as women began to stand up against their abusers in the film industry and other occupations. Film history has taught us that politics coincide with cinematic trends and these modern films are no different.

The erotic thriller is relevant today because of the prevalence of violent non-normative women within these films; she is a threat to men, as she is financially independent and sexually liberated. The culture wars will always exist in contrast with increasing public acceptance of intersectional feminism and non-normative lifestyle, making erotic thrillers a necessary cinematic scholarship. Erotic thrillers not only provide a looking glass to the inadequacies of our past, but hint at a wider range of roles for women in cinema. The violent non-normative woman has autonomy over her own desires and clashes against the restrictive world of the erotic thriller.

Future erotic thrillers can further the non-normative narrative by excluding toxic themes of racism and sexism in favor of progressive politics.

Filmography

American Mary. Directed by Jen and Sylvia Soska. Universal Pictures, 2012.

A Vigilante. Directed by Sarah Daggar-Nickson. Badlands Entertainment, 2012.

Basic Instinct. Directed by Paul Verhoeven. Carolco Pictures, 1992.

Body Double. Directed by Brian De Palma. Columbia Pictures, 1984.

Bound. Directed by Lana and Lily Wachowski. Dino de Laurentiis, 1996.

Cruel Intentions. Directed by Roger Kumble. Columbia Pictures, 1999.

Cruising. Directed by William Friedkin. United Artists, 1980.

The Crush. Directed by Alan Shapiro. Warner Bros, 1993.

Disclosure. Directed by Barry Levinson. Warner Brothers, 1994.

Dressed to Kill. Directed by Brian De Palma. Orion Pictures, 1980.

Fatal Attraction. Directed by Adrian Lyne. Paramount Pictures, 1987.

The Hand That Rocks the Cradle. Directed by Curtis Hanson. Hollywood Pictures, 1992.

Jade. Directed by William Friedkin. Paramount Pictures, 1995.

Jennifer's Body. Directed by Karyn Kusama. 20th Century Fox, 2009.

The Last Seduction. Directed by John Dahl. Incorporated Television Company, 1994.

Ms. 45. Directed by Abel Ferrara. Navaron Films, 1981.

Poison Ivy. Directed by Katt Shea. New Line Cinema, 1992.

Psycho. Directed by Alfred Hitchcock.

Rabid. Directed by Jen and Sylvia Soska. Back 40 Pictures, 2019.

Raw. Directed by Julie Ducournau. Universal Pictures, 2016.

Revenge. Directed by Coralie Fargeat. Canal+, 2017.

Showgirls. Directed by Paul Verhoeven. Caroloco Pictures, 1995.

Single White Female. Directed by Barbet Schroeder. Columbia Pictures, 1992.

Sleepaway Camp. Directed by Robert Hiltzik. American Eagle Films, 1983.

Sliver. Directed by Philip Noyce. Paramount, 1993.

Wild Things. Directed by John McNaughton. Columbia Pictures, 1998.

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